

Missouri River FWCO

Bismarck, ND

February, 2020 MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Program summary

Ryan continued entering over a 1,000 pallid sturgeon catch records from across the range into the National Pallid Sturgeon Database. This included incorporating genetic, steroid hormone, and ultrasound results as well as additional tag information such as implantation of telemetry tags. Produced a presentation for the Upper Basin Pallid Sturgeon Workgroup outlining our 2019 field activities. This included comparing the changes in the PSPAP sample design that were implemented in 2019 to the previous sample design that began in 2005.

Native Species Restoration

Discussions were held to review the needs of the pallid sturgeon data management to assist with recovery and monitoring efforts. This effort would link several data sources to build a complete network for researchers and enhance management decisions.

Sikes Act

Work continued on the Minot Air Force Base mammalian inventory. Species previously documented on Base that were observed in January include white tailed deer, raccoons, a domestic cat, coyotes, ringed neck pheasants, tree squirrels, and white tailed jack rabbits. New this month was a short-tailed/least weasel, as seen in the second picture below.



Aquatic Invasive Species

An Invasive Carp strategy was developed for the ARD meeting and the Missouri River Asian Carp Technical Committee met to share information prior to the MRNRC subcommittee meeting in June.

A cooperate bighead and silver carp mapping effort within the Missouri River Watershed began between the Missouri River and Columbia FWCs. The goal of the mapping effort is to identify stream reaches that have been documented with bighead and silver carp, along with fish passage barriers upstream of those locations. This map will provide a starting point to coordinate surveys for silver and bighead carp with other Federal, State, and Tribal agencies in the following months.

Additionally, the Missouri River and Columbia FWCs are working together on a bighead carp spawning and larval drift modeling effort. The team has been working to develop a model that will identify suitable stream reaches for bighead carp spawning and larval drift through using publicly available data.

Fish Passage

The Little Missouri River Watershed Fish Passage surveys were completed this past fall through cooperation between the USFWS and Wyoming Game and Fish Department. We identified 27 fish passage barriers throughout the watershed. The majority of those barriers, 19 of the 27, were less than three feet high. Moving forward, these documented locations will serve as a starting point to help prioritize where we could work with willing landowners and local governments to improve fish passage within the Little Missouri River Watershed and help insure a sustainable future for aquatic life.

Results from the Little Missouri River Watershed fish passage surveys were presented by Tait during a poster session at the Dakota Chapter of AFS Meeting in Spearfish, South Dakota.

Great Plains FHP

Project summaries were created and the updated website went live (www.prairiefish.org). The updated Strategic Plan was staged to share for additional inputs and finalization.

Partnership

Tait and Steve attended the Dakota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. Following the event, our FAC/State Coordination meeting was held at the D.C. Booth NFH with staff from both SD, ND and USFWS in attendance. Topics included Invasive Carp & AIS, R3 (Recruit,Retain,Reactivate), Land acquisition at DC Booth, Big and Smallmouth Buffalo, Watercraft legislation. Sicklefin & Sturgeon chub, among a laundry list of shared resource issues.

Staffing

A major effort was initiated to hire seasonal staff to help complete this year's projects. Over 90 applicants were reviewed and the hiring process continues. It has to be said that the earlier release of the certificates of eligibility has been very helpful.