

Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office News

SCHOOLING BEHAVIOR

In this newsletter, we highlight some great training opportunities we completed this year.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pierre, SD

Winter 2019

A Shocking Good Time

Jennifer Johnson, Jason Kral, Dylan Turner, and Dan James attended “Principles and Techniques of Electrofishing” training in Spearfish, SD during October. They learned about the scientific foundation of electrofishing, how to safely and effectively use electrofishing equipment, and application of these concepts

in the field by conducting a 3-pass backpack electrofishing depletion survey for trout in Spearfish Creek. We also conducted a safety inspection and electric field testing on our station’s electrofishing boat.

Team members electrofish Spearfish Creek (top) and learn about boat electrofishing safety checks (bottom).



Becoming Sturgeon Surgeons

Jason Kral and Jennifer Johnson traveled to Columbia, MO in October to learn about surgical implantation of transmitters, identification of sex and reproductive stage, ultrasound techniques, collection of blood samples, and egg biopsy sampling for pallid sturgeon. In addition, they learned about active tracking methods for a pallid sturgeon telemetry project in the lower Missouri River.

Training for this project provided the skills necessary to implant fish with transmitters and obtain information about fish movement, behavior, habitat use, sexual maturity, spawning locations, and spawning cues of this endangered fish. The information gained will ultimately assist with recovery of the pallid sturgeon.

Jennifer Johnson practices surgery on a shovelnose sturgeon.



Flexing Our Mental Mussels

In August, Jennifer Johnson and Dylan Turner attended “Conservation of Freshwater Mussels” training in Moline, IL. This training taught freshwater mussel anatomy, identification, and sampling techniques. Classroom activities included identification of native mussels and hands on dissection of a live mussel!

Students were also able to use techniques learned in class to sample mussels in the Mississippi River and tour the National Button Museum.

This training broadened our team’s knowledge base and prepared us for future mussel projects.

Jennifer Johnson (right) observes a freshwater mussel dissection.

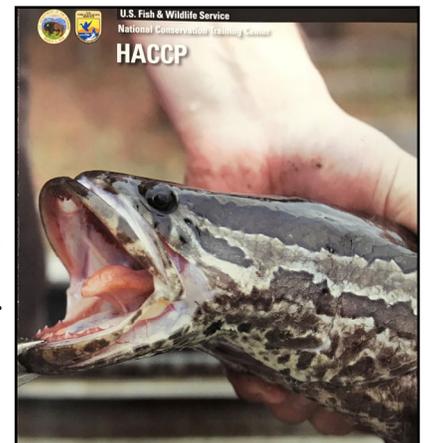


AIS Combat School

Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is one of our station’s primary concerns when doing field work throughout the three states we work in. To strengthen our knowledge about spread prevention and good practice efforts, Dylan Turner, Jason Kral, and Dan James attended a two-day

Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) training course held in Lincoln, NE.

After completion of the course, we reviewed and updated our station’s HACCP plans to ensure we are doing everything possible to prevent the spread of AIS. Currently, all of us at Great Plains have completed this valuable training.



Station Update

Congratulations! Dylan Turner accepted a permanent biologist position with Ecological Services in Pierre, SD. We are sad to lose a valuable team member from our FWCO, but happy for his career move, that he’s staying with the FWS, and that he isn’t moving away from Pierre!

Presentations

Johnson, J. *Observations of Pallid Sturgeon in the James and Vermillion Rivers, South Dakota.*

Oral presentation. University of South Dakota Missouri River Symposium.

Kral, J. *The James River Confluence: a Hotspot for Pallid Sturgeon? Oral presentation. University of South Dakota Missouri River Symposium.*

Reports

Pierce, L., D. James, and D. Turner. 2019. *2019 Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Program Annual Report: Segments 5 and 6. Submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers MRPP.*

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