

# US Fish & Wildlife Service FieldNotes

## Fish Habitat Restored in the Trenton Channel of the Detroit River

Region 3, October 15, 2009

The Detroit River has experienced substantial improvement of environmental quality over the past 35 years, and that improvement has resulted in dramatic improvements in the fishery. Fishery scientists have documented the recovery of walleye from crisis levels in the 1970s and a return of lake sturgeon and lake whitefish to the river after several decades of absence.

Recent U.S.-Canadian research and monitoring under the Huron-Erie Corridor Initiative has shown that, in general, environmental pollution is no longer limiting the fishery and that lack of proper spawning habitat is now the factor most limiting fish productivity. Scientists and managers are now able to restore habitat that was historically lost through building and dredging of shipping channels, and lost through waterfront developments.

BASF Corporation recently constructed nearly one acre of habitat for walleye, largemouth and smallmouth bass, and lake sturgeon in the Trenton Channel near the company's Riverview property. In spring of 2009, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey fishery biologists collected walleye and lake sturgeon in spawning-ready condition at this new habitat site. Lake sturgeon, a remnant of the dinosaur age, is a key indicator of ecosystem health and is considered a keystone species by scientists and fishery managers. Monitoring will continue to track fishery use and reproductive success at this site in the future.

In 2008, BASF completed an environmental remediation project at this property in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). This important remediation project has helped lay the foundation for the fish habitat restoration in the Trenton Channel of the Detroit River.

The Detroit River and Lake Erie are well known as the walleye capital of the world. Walleye fishing brings in more than \$1 million each spring to the Downriver economy and walleye fishing tournaments on the Detroit River have offered more than \$500,000 in prize money. FLW Outdoors has also held the Chevy Open bass tournament on the Detroit River, an event that offered \$1.5 million in prize money and resulted in bringing in \$4-5 million to the Detroit metropolitan economy.

**Contact Info:** Larry Dean, 612-713-5312, [Larry\\_Dean@fws.gov](mailto:Larry_Dean@fws.gov)