



United States Department of Interior

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Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office
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LOWER GREAT LAKES FISHERY RESOURCES OFFICE

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT February 2003



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Gwen Warren, Office Automation Assistant
Mike Weimer, Fishery Biologist
Emily Zollweg, Fishery Biologist

Volunteers

Mike Hereth, Chad Jaquith

LAKE STURGEON RESTORATION

Emily met with Doug Carlson and Steve LaPan (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)) to discuss LGLFRO lake sturgeon activities for 2003 (2/18).

LAKE TROUT RESTORATION

Betsy completed the administrative report, *Study of Lake Trout Mortality Following Offshore Stocking in Lake Erie*. This project was conducted in May of 2002. The purpose of this study was to estimate yearling lake trout mortality associated with the stress of stocking. The lake trout were put into a pen and held at a fixed depth for 15 hours,

after which the pen was brought to the surface. Percent mortality was 29%. The mortality was mostly due to very low oxygen in the tank onboard the boat.

Betsy and Kofi attended the annual Lower Lakes Lake Trout Coordination Meeting in Oswego, NY (2/11-12). Topics discussed included lake trout assessment findings, marking, sea lamprey control, and hatchery issues, and Early Mortality Syndrome studies. Betsy gave a presentation summarizing the offshore stocking study conducted in 2002.

Betsy attended the Lake Erie Committee's Coldwater Task Group meeting in Sandusky, OH (2/20). Participants discussed completion of the annual report, the offshore stocking study, the use of a new genetic strain (Klondike) of lake trout in Lake Erie, and the status of the lake trout population estimation model.

GREAT LAKES BASIN ECOSYSTEM TEAM (GLBET)

Chris C. participated in the GLBET Executive Committee conference calls (1/6 & 2/3). Committee reports for the Lake Sturgeon, Islands, Outreach, and GIS/DSS committees and plans for the upcoming Team meeting were discussed.

LAKE ONTARIO

Kofi and Mike W. met with Dr. Joe Atkinson (State University of New York at Buffalo) to discuss the status of the office's activities on the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Water Level Study (2/19).

LAKE ERIE

Betsy attended the Lake Erie Committee's Forage Task Group meeting in Sandusky, OH

(2/21). Participants discussed completion of the annual report, the status of forage fish, 2003 hydroacoustics survey plans, and lower trophic level monitoring.

NIAGARA RIVER

Emily attended the New York Power Authority (NYPA) scoping meetings for aquatic resource issues (2/13, 26-27). Information was presented on studies contracted by NYPA on flow fluctuations, aquatic habitat, and NYPA plans for future studies on these and other aquatic resource issues related to the relicensing process.

INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM

Coordination

Sandra and Mike G., in cooperation with PA and OH Sea Grant, led the Northeast Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) training session in Hadley, MA (2/25-26). The training included presentations from invited speakers, instructional presentations and videos, a hatchery tour, and break-out sessions for participants to develop a draft HACCP plan for a facility. Twenty-two participants, representing state and federal hatchery and fisheries staff and private aquaculture organizations, received certificates of completion. Sandra gave the presentation, *Aquatic Nuisance Species in the Northeast: Issues, Response, and Management*.

Erie Canal

Mike G. and Sandra met with Garry Smythe (Stantec, Inc) to discuss plans for completing the Erie Canal Dispersal Barrier Analysis (2/5). Mr. Smythe is the lead biologist working on the project contracted to Stantec, Inc.

Mike G. submitted a pre-proposal to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust to study *Cercopagis pengoi* distribution in Cross Lake.

HABITAT EVALUATION/RESTORATION

Mike W. and Chris Enser (Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District) analyzed aquatic macroinvertebrates and fish samples collected as part of a pilot project to assess the status of biotic communities at selected stream restoration sites in Erie County (2/28). The results will be summarized

in a report, and follow-up surveys will be conducted during 2003 for statistical comparison.

FISH PASSAGE

Chris C. and Mike W. attended a meeting to discuss partnerships and coordination of stream restoration and fish passage projects in Cortland, NY (2/25). Representatives from the USFWS, Upper Susquehanna River Coalition, NYSDEC, Cornell University, and National Resource Conservation Service participated. Participants discussed current and potential projects within the Susquehanna and Finger Lakes watersheds.

FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (FEDERAL LANDS) **Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station**

Betsy and Tony Wagner (Buffalo Audubon Society) continued winter bird-of-prey spot mapping surveys (2/3, 2/10, 2/19, and 2/24). The target species are the short-eared owl and the northern harrier.

Fort Drum

Emily, Mike W. and Mike S. met with Frank Flack (NYS DEC) and Ray Rainbolt (Fort Drum) to discuss management options, information needs, and activities planned for Fort Drum (2/18).

Emily and Mike S. assisted Ray Rainbolt and Boy Scout Troop 26 with construction and placement of fish habitat structures in Remington Pond (2/19). Christmas trees and pallets were assembled into bundles and placed on the ice where they will sink when the ice melts. Locations were chosen based on depth, the lack of suitable habitat structure, and accessibility to shore anglers.

Mike W. and Mike S. completed the analysis of field collected specimens (fish, macrophytes, and invertebrates) from Remington Pond, Fort Drum, New York. Data from the laboratory work is being analyzed and will be included in the final fishery management report, to be provided to Fort Drum staff in April, 2003.

GIS AND DATABASE MANAGEMENT

Emily finished updating the Lake Sturgeon Tributary Database and GIS with information from partners. She identified spatial information for US entries. Chris and Emily converted the database to MS Access format.

Chris assisted with coordination of the 2003 Region 5 GIS Workshop held at the Regional Office in Hadley, MA (1/29-30). Chris presented information on the Great Lakes Aquatic GAP project, which he is working on with the USGS.

Chris attended the annual workplan meeting for the Great Lakes Aquatic GAP project (1/23-24) at the Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor, MI. Participants discussed the status of the riverine and coastal GAP projects, completion of year 1 deliverables, budget for the upcoming year, and action items and deliverables for year 2.

Chris attended a meeting with Jim McKenna and Dick McDonald (USGS) in Albany, NY. The accuracy and quality of the NYSDEC biological database and the need to incorporate GIS with this biological information were discussed.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Mike W. attended a meeting of the planning committee of the 2004 Great Lakes Student Summit Conference at Tiff Nature Preserve in Buffalo, NY (2/6). Funding acquisition, the conference agenda, and the division of duties between partners were discussed.

Mike G. and Emily presented information on LGLFRO activities to a University of Buffalo Fisheries class (2/12). Emily discussed the sturgeon program and Mike G. demonstrated sampling gear and laboratory equipment.

STAFF TRAINING

Mike W. completed the first session of the Region 5 Leadership Pathways training in Hadley, MA (2/10-14).

LGLFRO staff participated in the first session of Time Management Training (2/27). The staff focused on identifying individual time management needs and priorities, time management skills and

techniques, and setting individual action-based goals to implement during the next two weeks.

OTHER

Kofi attended the USFWS Great Lakes Fish Team meeting in Ashland, WI (2/27-28). The focus of the meeting was the basin's lake trout and lake sturgeon restoration efforts. In addition, the participants discussed interagency coordination and fish health concerns within the basin. Kofi gave a presentation on how he and the staff at the LGLFRO developed a Friends Group.

Mike W. and Mike S. completed an inventory of potentially hazardous chemicals currently located at the LGLFRO. The inventory was included in the office's safety manual, and is required for compliance with Regional Safety Guidelines.

This monthly report provides a brief, in-house report on recent activities, issues or events of the Lower Great Lakes Office. Its contents should not be used or cited elsewhere in any way without first contacting our staff. This is to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information.