



# United States Department of Interior

Fish & Wildlife Service  
Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office  
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## LOWER GREAT LAKES FISHERY RESOURCES OFFICE

# MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT March 2003



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### LGLFRO Staff

Chris Castiglione, GIS Specialist  
Molly Connerton, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Kofi Fynn-Aikins, Chief  
Mike Goehle, Fishery Biologist  
Sandra Keppner, Invasive Species Coordinator  
Mike Sowinski, Biological Technician  
Gail Testa, Administrative Officer  
Betsy Trometer, Fishery Biologist  
Gwen Warren, Office Automation Assistant  
Mike Weimer, Fishery Biologist  
Emily Zollweg, Fishery Biologist

### Volunteers

### LAKE STURGEON RESTORATION

Emily prepared briefing statements summarizing lake sturgeon activities for local congressional representatives scheduled to meet with Kofi.

Emily collated information from each of the Great Lakes Fishery Resources Offices on the commercial fisher sturgeon tagging/monitoring project. Abstracts of the report, *Lake Sturgeon Assessment Assistance by Great Lakes Commercial Fishers, 2001-2002*, were distributed at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Lake Committee meetings in March 2003. The report is available from Emily, or can be downloaded from the Great

Lakes Lake Sturgeon homepage  
(<http://midwest.fws.gov/sturgeon/index.html>).

### GREAT LAKES BASIN ECOSYSTEM TEAM (GLBET)

Chris participated in a conference call of the GLBET Executive Committee to discuss the upcoming full Team meeting (3/4). The Sturgeon, Islands, and GIS/DSS Committees updated the Team on the status of their projects and future plans.

Sandra and Emily participated in a conference call of the GLBET Executive Committee to discuss the upcoming full Team meeting (3/26). The meeting scheduled for early April was postponed due to travel and budget restrictions and schedule conflicts with the Region 3 Management Team. The Committee agreed to have several key staff meet to discuss the changing direction and focus of the Team. The name of the Committee was also changed to the GLBET Steering Committee.

Sandra is working with Mike Hoff (USFWS - Region 3) to develop project ideas for the GLBET Invasive Species Committee which has been identified as a candidate focus area by the Steering Committee.

### LAKE ONTARIO

Mike W. submitted an interim report to the International Joint Commission (IJC) summarizing progress to date on the project *Calibration of Remote Sensing Imagery* (3/26). This project is part of a bi-national study investigating the effects of water level management on Lake Ontario coastal wetlands.

Kofi, Emily and Molly attended the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Lake Ontario Committee meeting in Niagara Falls, Ontario (3/26-27).

## **LAKE ERIE**

Betsy prepared a report summarizing the status of burbot in Lake Erie for inclusion in the Lake Erie Coldwater Task Group Annual Report. The report was distributed at the Annual Meeting of the Lake Erie Committee (3/24-25).

Betsy summarized the 2002 Lake Erie Lower Trophic Level Assessment Program data for the Lake Erie Forage Task Group Annual Report. The report was distributed at the Annual Meeting of the Lake Erie Committee (3/24-25).

Kofi attended the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Lake Erie Committee meeting in Port Huron, MI (3/24-25).

## **INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM**

### **Coordination**

Sandra and Mike G. completed and prioritized the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Program 2003 Scope of Work for submission to Washington and Regional Office staff.

Mike G. participated in the monthly Regional ANS Coordinators conference call (3/4). Participants discussed upcoming meetings, re-authorization of the National Invasive Species Act, and expected budget decreases.

Sandra participated in a conference call of the Northeast ANS Regional Panel Steering Committee (3/12). Participants discussed plans for the upcoming full Panel meeting and the Rapid Response workshop, re-authorization of the National Invasive Species Act and the potential role of the Panel and its members in supporting re-authorization, and committee progress.

Sandra participated in a meeting with Jamie Geiger (Assistant Regional Director - Fisheries) and Dave Perkins (Regional Office - Fisheries) to brief Rick Bennett (Deputy Regional Director) on ANS issues, needs, and priorities (3/19). Sandra forwarded follow-up information to Rick regarding the status of state management planning in the northeast and the Region 3 Invasive Species Team.

Mike G. and Sandra prepared five briefing statements for local congressional staff scheduled

to meet with Kofi. The statements addressed aquatic nuisance species in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, Asian carp, the Erie Canal, and aquatic nuisance species issues.

Mike G. and Mike W. met with Lauren Makeyenko and Karen Wallace (Tiff Nature Preserve) to discuss plans for a wetland habitat/invasive species workshop to be held at Tiff (3/13).

### **Erie Canal**

Mike G., Sandra, and Mike W. met with Helen Domske (NY Sea Grant) to discuss plans for the 2003 Erie Canal Science Educator Workshops (3/4).

### **Asian Carp**

Mike G. submitted the proposal, *Habitat Suitability in Eastern Lake Erie for Two Species of Asian Carp*, to the Great Lakes National Program Office (3/28). This study will investigate habitat suitability for bighead and silver carp in Presque-Isle, PA, Buffalo Harbor, and Buffalo River.

## **HABITAT EVALUATION/RESTORATION**

Mike W. attended a meeting of the Seneca Bluffs Wetland Restoration Committee Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), held at the Erie County Department of Environmental Protection in Buffalo, NY (3/28). The LGLFRO agreed to conduct a fish community assessment at the Buffalo River site, and will coordinate these activities with Ecology and Environment, the consultant supervising overall assessment and restoration activities.

Mike W. constructed 12 bat roosting boxes for installation by Erie County Boy Scouts at a wetland restoration site in the Town of Amherst, NY (3/7). In addition, the LGLFRO will provide assistance in planting several hundred trees at the site during late April.

Mike W. and Emily participated in a meeting sponsored by the IJC and The Nature Conservancy at University of Buffalo on water level fluctuations and impacts on various species (3/20).

## **FISH PASSAGE**

Chris participated in the National Fish Passage Committee conference call to discuss the upcoming committee meeting (3/26). The meeting agenda and location were discussed and the draft interactive mapping system was made available to the Regional coordinators. This web-based tool will allow users to access barrier information over the internet and edit information for the individual barriers.

## **FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (FEDERAL LANDS)**

### **Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS)**

Betsy and Tony Wagner (Buffalo Audubon Society) completed winter bird-of-prey spot mapping surveys (3/7, 3/14 and 3/24). The target species are the short-eared owl and the northern harrier.

Betsy and Molly submitted the following three proposals outlining 2003 work plans: *Impacts of grass mowing on bird species in the semi-improved areas of the NFARS airfield*; *Management for the control of purple loosestrife and common reed on the NFARS*; and *Impacts of storm water discharge from NFARS to Cayuga Creek*. The work is scheduled to begin in May.

## **GIS AND DATABASE MANAGEMENT**

Chris participated in a conference call of the Region 5 GIS Coordination Team to discuss the Region 5 GIS Workshop held at the Regional Office in January (3/4). The Team reviewed participant survey results and discussed future plans for the technical support, outreach, and spatial data library committees.

Chris participated in a conference call for the R5 GIS Coordination Team Spatial Data Library Committee (3/27). The committee discussed various alternatives for acquiring, storing, and distributing spatial data.

Chris coordinated a conference call to discuss GIS coordination efforts within the Great Lakes basin (3/26). Representatives from the Service, USGS (Tunison Laboratory for Aquatic Sciences, Great

Lakes Science Center, and the Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center), Great Lakes Commission, Michigan DNR, and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources participated. Participants described current projects and identified areas of overlap for technical assistance and potential coordination.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

Mike W. was interviewed on the Adelphia Network "Crossroads" show (3/24). The interview covered a variety of topics, including the LGLFRO's aquatic nuisance species and habitat restoration programs, as well as native species restoration activities. The show aired on 3/25 and 3/26.

Mike W. led a workshop on native aquatic ecosystems for approximately 45 Boy Scouts, Scout Leaders, and parents in the Town of West Seneca (3/25). Activities included a Powerpoint presentation, fish identification techniques and tips, and a casting competition.

Mike W. gave the presentation, *Aquatic Critters of the Lower Great Lakes* as part of the Hamburg Natural History Society's "Invited Speaker" series (3/27). The presentation was held at the Gateway Center in Blasdell, NY and was attended by over 70 people.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

Emily completed the course "Leadership Skills for Non-Supervisors" in Philadelphia, PA (3/12).

## **OTHER**

Kofi was among a group of supervisors and managers from the USFWS Northeast Region's Fisheries Program that visited Capitol Hill (3/10-14) to brief their Congressional delegation about the National Fisheries Strategic Plan, and other fisheries activities in Congressional districts. Kofi met with Congressional staff representing New York state's Great Lake's Region.

All staff participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Complex Retreat

hosted by the Allegheny National Fish Hatchery in Warren, PA (3/17-18). The staff discussed the National Fisheries Program Vision for the Future and improving our outreach and education programs through target audience profiling. Staff were treated to a tour of the Kinzua Dam as well as the hatchery.

Mike W. attended the annual meeting of the New York State Wetlands Forum in Saratoga Springs, NY (3/10-12). Presentations given at the meeting included current regional wetland habitat restoration techniques and ongoing projects, as well as potential opportunities for interagency collaboration on future wetland-related endeavors.

Mike G. attended the March general membership meeting of the Western New York Chapter of Trout Unlimited (3/25). Mike discussed partnership opportunities including a proposal to the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation entitled, *Fly-fishing and Ecology Training: Reaching Out to Under-Represented Minorities in Western New York*.

Emily participated in the New York Chapter of the American Fisheries Society Executive Committee meeting at the Cornell Biological Field Station in Shackleton Point, NY (3/25). Planning has begun for the continuing education workshop on GIS and the 2004 annual meeting. The new design for the Chapter website was unveiled and discussed.

LGLFRO staff participated in the second session of the Time Management Training (3/13). The staff focused on successes and failures of implementation during the last two weeks and time management skills that can be applied to project planning.

The LGLFRO welcomes Molly Connerton, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, to our staff. Molly will be working on Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station projects.

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.