



United States Department of Interior

Fish & Wildlife Service
Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office
405 North French Road, Suite 120A
Amherst, New York 14228



LOWER GREAT LAKES FISHERY RESOURCES OFFICE

MONTHLY REPORT July 2003



405 NORTH FRENCH ROAD
SUITE 120A
AMHERST, NEW YORK 14228
COMM: 716-691-5456
FAX: 716-691-6154
E-MAIL: FIRST NAME_LAST NAME@FWS.GOV
WEB: HTTP://LOWERGREATLAKES.FWS.GOV

LGLFRO Staff

Chris Castiglione, GIS Specialist
Molly Connerton, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Cara Ewell Hodkin, Biological Technician
Kofi Fynn-Aikins, Chief
Mike Goehle, Fishery Biologist
Sandra Keppner, Invasive Species Coordinator
Allyson Knapp, Biological Technician
Mike Sowinski, Biological Technician
Geoff Stevens, Biological Technician
Gail Testa, Administrative Officer
Betsy Trometer, Fishery Biologist
Gwen Warren, Office Automation Assistant
Mike Weimer, Fishery Biologist
Emily Zollweg, Fishery Biologist
Jessica Morgan, Biological Technician
(on temporary duty from Iroquois NWR)

Volunteers

Mark Spara, Jaime Woodall

LAKE STURGEON RESTORATION

Emily submitted a proposal to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust to support a lake sturgeon GIS database and webpage project next year (7/22). This funding would allow for a significant upgrade to the database and webpage and make the webpage available to our partners and the public.

A draft of the proceedings of the Great Lakes Lake Sturgeon Coordination Meeting was completed by the steering committee and submitted to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust (7/25). These proceedings will help guide funding priorities for sturgeon research in the coming year.

Three subadult lake sturgeon were caught on setlines in Peggy's Eddy of the lower Niagara River (7/30-31). One dead sturgeon was reported by a recreational diver near Oak Orchard. The diver provided pictures and other useful information.

LAKE ONTARIO

Betsy continued the Lake Ontario biomonitoring program. With the help of staff and volunteers, they collected samples at three nearshore stations in Lake Ontario and one nearshore station in Lake Erie (7/7, 7/8, 7/22, 7/25). Four embayment and nine nearshore sites are sampled 12 times a year, and offshore sites are sampled a couple of times a year. Samples are collected for phosphorus, chlorophyll a, and zooplankton analysis. The purpose of this program is to monitor key lower trophic variables that will characterize overall ecosystem change.

LAKE ERIE

Betsy continued the Lake Erie lower trophic level monitoring program. With the help of staff and volunteers, they collected samples at two stations outside Buffalo Harbor (7/2, 7/17, 7/29). A total of 18 stations in Lake Erie and two in Lake St. Clair are sampled 12 times a year. Samples are collected for phosphorus, chlorophyll a, zooplankton, and phytoplankton analysis. The purpose of this lakewide program is to monitor key lower trophic variables that will characterize long-term ecosystem changes.

INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM

Erie Canal

Mike G., Geoff, and Mark Spara (volunteer) completed the field work portion of the Erie Canal invasive plant survey (7/14-17). Sites near Tonawanda, Rochester, Montezuma NWR, and

Fulton (Oswego River) were assessed for species and percent cover of aquatic vegetation. Notable invasive species observed included waterchestnut and Eurasian watermilfoil. Other samples are being positively identified by the U.S. Geological Survey, Center for Aquatic Resource Studies in Gainesville, FL.

Round Goby

Mike S., Geoff, Allyson, and Jamie Woodall conducted surveys on three Lake Ontario tributaries (Four Mile Creek, Keg Creek, and Yanty Creek) (7/23-24). All creeks were sampled using a seine net at the mouth and upstream locations to determine the presence and range of round gobies and document native fish species. Goby were captured at the mouths of Four Mile and Keg Creeks. No gobies were collected at Yanty Creek.

Asian Carp

Mike G. and Mark Spara continued an investigation of Asian carp habitat suitability in Buffalo Harbor and Presque-Isle Bay (7/9-10). Data being collected includes plankton density and water quality parameters to determine if conditions are favorable for Asian carp to invade these habitats.

FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (FEDERAL LANDS)

Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS)

Impacts of grass mowing on bird species

Molly, Jessica, and Cara, with the help of staff and volunteers, continued the point counts and nest searches at NFARS and the nearby BFI landfill (our non-mowing site). Point counts are conducted approximately every 10 days, and nest searches will be conducted weekly through mid August. This study is examining the difference in bird species and nesting success between the mowed NFARS and non-mowed grassland.

Management for the Control of Purple Loosestrife and Common Reed

Molly, Jessica, and Cara continued the surveys for estimating the abundance and distribution of purple loosestrife and common reed, as well as monitoring the presence and impact of the released beetles on purple loosestrife. These sampling sites will

continue to be monitored through the fall and next year to evaluate the effectiveness of the beetles as a biological control. In addition, the effectiveness of mowing to control both purple loosestrife and common reed will be evaluated.

Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers

Betsy submitted the final report, *The relative abundance and activity patterns of Short-eared Owls, Northern Harriers, and associated fauna on Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station*, to the 914th Air Wing / Civil Engineering (AW/CEV) (7/28).

Fort Drum

Mike W. and Emily conducted fishery and plant surveys at Mud Lake and Conservation Pond (7/7-11). Eurasian water milfoil was present in Mud Lake, but not Conservation Pond. A common loon hatchling and parent were also sited at Mud Lake.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) AND DATABASE MANAGEMENT

Chris and Stuart Eddy (Great Lakes Commission) moderated the Great Lakes Regional Data Exchange web-based conference (7/8). The web-based conferencing technology allows participants to access presentations, white boards, polling capabilities, and application sharing through the internet. This conference focused on GIS-related projects within the Great Lakes and the availability of spatial data.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Mike G., Mike S, and Helen Domske (NY Sea Grant) hosted an “Educators and the Erie Canal Workshop” in Lockport, NY (7/29) for 16 science educators from the western New York area. The participants learned about various invasive fish, plants, and plankton, as well as prevention measures. Participants were also given an update on the 2003 LGLFRO Erie Canal survey as well as an electroshocking demonstration.

OTHER

The LGLFRO welcomes Cara Ewell Hodkin, Biological Technician, to our staff. Cara will be working primarily 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.