



# United States Department of Interior

Fish & Wildlife Service  
Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office  
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Amherst, New York 14228



## LOWER GREAT LAKES FISHERY RESOURCES OFFICE

# MONTHLY REPORT September 2003



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### LGLFRO Staff

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Mike Goehle, Fishery Biologist  
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Allyson Knapp, Biological Technician  
Mike Sowinski, Biological Technician  
Gail Testa, Administrative Officer  
Betsy Trometer, Fishery Biologist  
Mike Weimer, Fishery Biologist  
Emily Zollweg, Fishery Biologist

### Volunteers

Glenn Ruggles, Gwen Warren, Bill Warren, Margaret Siller, John Foust, Jesse Raeder, Jon Tarasiewicz, Tom Diggins, Joe DiNardo, George Johnson, Michael Johnson, Doug Perrelli, Joseph Hodkin, Justin Borgosz, Richard Watt, Justin Watt, Nathaniel Watt, William Okura, Donna Riley, Steve Gerry, Debbie Gerry, Erica Filk, Tiffany Anzalone, Scott Schlueter, Lisa Solberg

### LAKE STURGEON RESTORATION

Emily submitted two proposals for quick response funding to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) related to lake sturgeon restoration (9/3). The first proposal would renew work on the Oswegatchie River stocked population of lake sturgeon. The second proposal would initiate a study of effective hatchery methods for rearing lake sturgeon.

Emily assisted the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the USGS-Tunison Lab personnel with marking approximately 2000 lake sturgeon at the Oneida

Hatchery for stocking in New York State waters this autumn (9/12).

Approximately 900 were stocked in the Genesee River (9/23) as part of continuing efforts on two EPA-GLNPO funded projects. This experimental stocking and subsequent sampling efforts by LGLFRO and USGS will be useful to determine habitat preference by juvenile lake sturgeon in the river and rates of contaminant uptake. These efforts may eventually result in the return of spawning adult sturgeon below the falls in Rochester in future years.

Joint sampling by Emily and Dawn Dittman (USGS) resulted in three recaptured stocked lake sturgeon 0.3 miles downstream of the release site in the week following stocking. DEC Region 8 Regional Director, Sean Hanna, joined the crew for stocking of the lake sturgeon (9/23) and sturgeon assessment (9/29). Media crews were also given tours of the project and were present for stocking (9/23) and assessment activities (9/26).

### LAKE ONTARIO

The Lake Ontario biomonitoring program continued this month. Betsy, with the help of staff and volunteers, collected samples at three nearshore stations in Lake Ontario and one nearshore station in Lake Erie (9/2, 9/17, 9/18). A total of 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.

Betsy and Dale Honeyfield (USGS) submitted the proposal, *Development of practical hatchery techniques for re-introduction of bloater chub to*

Lake Ontario, for the USGS Science Support Partnership Program (9/3).

## **LAKE ERIE**

The Lake Erie lower trophic level monitoring program continued this month. Betsy, with the help of staff and volunteers, collected samples at two stations outside Buffalo Harbor (9/9). 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., Margaret Siller (volunteer) and volunteers from Finger Lakes Community College completed the fall invasive fish monitoring of the Erie Canal (9/15-18). No new invasives were collected. An invasive waterchestnut plant that was removed by hand in July in the Cayuga-Seneca Canal did not appear to have grown back.

### **Round Goby**

LGLFRO staff and 16 volunteer anglers conducted a "Round Goby Round-Up" in the western end of the Erie Canal to determine the range expansion of round goby (9/6). Anglers fished for gobies at ten sites between Tonawanda and Gasport, NY while LGLFRO staff used bottom trawling just east of Lockport. Although no gobies were captured, this intensive effort allowed a large portion of water to be monitored at one time and is again planned for 2004. Anyone interested in participating in next year's event should contact Mike Goehle at ext.32

### **Ruffe**

Mike G, Cara, Mike W, Emily and volunteers from Youngstown State University completed the fall ruffe surveillance surveys on Lakes Erie and Ontario (9/22-26, 30, 10/3). This survey is conducted twice per year at eight harbor sites between Toledo, OH and Rochester, NY. No ruffe were captured.

## **Asian Carp**

The LGLFRO received 5,800 FWS version Asian Carp ID cards (9/8). These laminated cards show how to identify bighead and silver carp and provide phone numbers for eight FWS offices in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River regions. They will be distributed to bait stores, anglers, and at outreach events.

## **HABITAT EVALUATION/RESTORATION**

Mike W. and Mike S. conducted bathymetric and topographic surveys at Four Mile Creek State Park, a coastal wetland location along the south shore of Lake Ontario (9/24). The surveys are being conducted in support of an ongoing bi-national study investigating the effects of water level management on Lake Ontario nearshore habitat.

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

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

Betsy submitted the final report, *The distribution and abundance of purple loosestrife on the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station*, to the 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing/Civil Engineering (AW/CEV).

### *Impacts of storm water discharge*

Betsy and Cara completed the fall benthic macroinvertebrate collection in Cayuga Creek. Samples were collected from six locations on the Creek (9/25, 9/29-10/2). The macroinvertebrate community will be used to evaluate the water quality of the creek upstream, on, and downstream of NFARS.

### **Fort Drum**

Indian and Narrow Lakes fish collected within the last year were shipped for mercury testing to Laboratory and Environmental Testing in Missouri (9/16).

Fishery and habitat surveys were completed on Conservation Pond and Mud Lake (9/8-10). Fishery and habitat survey sites were determined for Black Creek.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

The LGLFRO staff, with help from its volunteers and partners, held its annual Fish & Wildlife Festival (9/13). The Festival educated the public about the importance of the lower Great Lakes and the variety of projects and activities performed to conserve this resource. Over 1,200 attendees had the opportunity to view live fish and animals, experience hand-on demonstrations, test their knowledge, and enjoy some live entertainment while learning about the lakes and their resources. We'd like to thank all our partners for their help and contributions: Friends of the Lower Great Lakes, Tops Markets, Knoll's Mobile North, Gander Mountain, First Niagara Bank, USFWS Allegheny National Fish Hatchery, USFWS Law Enforcement – Amherst, USFWS Sea Lamprey Control Program, USFWS Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Paul Schnell and 'Liberty', NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Dr. Birdd, Ron Pastor, and all our volunteers.

Mike W. gave a demonstration of fishery survey techniques for use in streams to a graduate class from Buffalo State College (9/20). Backpack electrofishing and seining was conducted, and an overview of riparian habitat types was provided to students and course instructors.

Mike W. and Helen Domske (NY Sea Grant) conducted the first portion of the Great Lakes Fisheries Leadership Institute at the LGLFRO (9/30). Participants included teachers, charter captains, and representatives from angling organizations and state agencies. Mike provided an overview of methodologies and techniques that are currently used by biologists to investigate fisheries resources questions, and discussed how watershed and species-specific management plans are formulated.

Mike G. and Allyson represented the LGLFRO in the Gander Mountain "Kid's Fish Day" at Hoyt Lake in Delaware Park (9/27). The

LGLFRO display included posters of office programs and outreach materials. Over 750 kids were given fishing poles which they used to catch bluegills, bass, and bullheads from Hoyt Lake.

Mike W. and Emily represented the LGLFRO at the annual Reinstein Woods Fall Festival, held at the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve in Cheektowaga, NY (9/20). The LGLFRO display provided an overview of current office programs and activities, and included live fish, aquatic insects, and amphibians. Over 2,500 people attended the event, which was organized and sponsored by the NYSDEC.

Emily and Betsy represented the LGLFRO at the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Wildlife Festival at the Robert Moses Power Vista (9/27-28). The office display, brochures, posters, live lake sturgeon and lake sturgeon video were very popular with both kids and adults in attendance. Approximately 15,000 people visited the festival.

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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.