



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 April 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
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

LAKE STURGEON RESTORATION

Planning Meetings

Emily met with Doug Carlson (NYSDEC) (4/11) and Dawn Dittman (USGS) (4/18) to discuss lake sturgeon restoration goals in NYS and opportunities for partnership on restoration projects.

Black River

Emily and Mike S. surveyed the Black River for lake sturgeon (4/29-5/1). Despite the use of three different capture techniques in areas with ideal temperature and flow characteristics needed by pre-spawn sturgeon, no sturgeon were captured. While in the area, verbal reports by numerous anglers and local citizens were collected regarding lake sturgeon. Accounts of lake sturgeon from three to seven feet in length as recent as last year and dating back to the 1950's were reported. Anglers reported catching lake sturgeon while fishing for walleye

and bullhead from May to June. Divers have also reported observing lake sturgeon while diving.

Siting Program

Two sturgeon were reported through the siting program in April, one by OMNR caught by a commercial fisherman (mortality in net), and one by a beach walker on Grand Island, NY (dead on shore).

GREAT LAKES BASIN ECOSYSTEM TEAM

Emily participated in a demonstration of a web-conferencing tool available at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) called Horizon Live. This high-speed tool will provide versatility for presentations, conferencing, and demonstrating specialized software over the Internet. This will promote outreach and collaboration with partners and co-workers in other offices, without the expense and time commitment of travel.

LAKE ONTARIO

Mike W. conducted preliminary assessments of nine New York coastal wetland locations along the south shore of Lake Ontario (4/3). Selected sites will be surveyed this spring and summer as part of the bi-national study investigating the effects of water level management on Lake Ontario coastal wetland ecosystems.

LAKE ERIE

Botulism Conference

Kofi, Emily, Mike G., and Molly attended the 3rd Annual Lake Erie Botulism Conference sponsored by NY, OH, and PA Sea Grant (4/3). The conference was held at the Holiday Inn in Amherst, NY and was attended by 70 people from state, federal, academic, and non-governmental organizations. Participants reported on their research results from last year.

HABITAT EVALUATION/RESTORATION

Mike W., Mike S., and Emily participated in a community tree planting and habitat restoration project in Amherst, NY (4/27). Over 800 trees of various species and sizes were planted along ponds at the town's municipal composting facility. The event was hosted by the Cub Scouts of Western New York, the LGLFRO, the Town of Amherst, and the Air and Waste Management Association.

FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (FEDERAL LANDS)

Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS)

Three proposed projects for the NFARS were accepted: *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.* Jessica Morgan, a Biological Technician from Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, will be assisting with these projects. Betsy, Molly, and Jessica received training on procedures to follow while working on the NFARS airfield (4/29). The work will begin in May.

Fort Drum

Earth Day

Emily and Mike W. developed posters titled "*Brook Trout Restoration and You!*" and "*Manage Your Own Backyard Wildlife Refuge!*" for Earth Day at Fort Drum (4/25). Mike W. and Emily hosted approximately 900 school children in 4 hours, giving explanations of sea lamprey threats and life histories, unique characteristics of lake sturgeon, habitat information, and hands-on activities with a frog, crayfish, rock bass, stickleback, and minnow. Other booths at the fair displayed furs, taxidermy mounts of beaver, birds, skunk, and otter, sediment flow and prevention demonstrations, energy saving techniques, composting demonstrations, pottery making, bird feeder construction, archeology demonstration, forestry techniques, and more live fish on display by the NYSDEC.

Semi-Annual Natural Resources Conservation Meeting

Emily and Mike W. met with Fort Drum and NYSDEC personnel (4/28), at Fort Drum to discuss natural resource issues on the base and the progress of projects for the past six months. This casual

meeting proved to be very informative with many good questions addressed.

West Creek and Trout Brook surveys

Mike W. and Emily placed temperature monitors in West Creek and Trout Brook as part of a habitat-monitoring project that will commence in fall 2003.

GIS AND DATABASE MANAGEMENT

Chris participated in an Aquatic GAP conference call with staff from the USGS (4/9). Participants discussed the status of the Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, New York, and Coastal sections of the project.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Mike G. participated in the 2003 Career Day at Frederick Law Olmstead, School #56 (4/2). The presentation was made to approximately 75 students in grades 6 through 8 and focused on the career of biologist and the role of the LGLFRO and USFWS.

Sandy and Mike G. presented invasive species information at the 2003 State of Lake Erie Meeting (4/5), sponsored by Dick Smith (NYS Assembly) in coordination with Helen Domske (NY Sea Grant). Sandy presented an update on round goby expansion in Lake Erie. Mike presented information on Asian carp and their potential impact to Lake Erie waters. This meeting was attended by 175 sportfishers, outdoor enthusiasts, and the general public.

Mike G. submitted the proposal, "*Fly-fishing and ecology training: reaching out to under-represented minorities in western New York*" to the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (4/9). The LGLFRO will collaborate with Trout Unlimited and Tiff Nature Preserve to increase minority participation in sport fishing through one-week workshops that will teach fly-fishing skills and awareness of stream and lake ecology.

Mike G. gave a two-hour, "Aquatics" presentation for the Western New York Envirothon Workshop at the Erie County Forest in Sardinia, NY (4/10). The Aquatics class was composed of 15 students from nine western New York high schools who took part in classroom

and field activities focusing on the aquatic environment. Activities included aquatic insect collection and identification, measurement of stream discharge, oxygen, and pH. Students also determined stream quality based on biotic index scores of the stream invertebrates collected.

Molly, Kofi, and Gail participated in the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge Open House (4/26). The LGLFRO display included our 22' Boston whaler along with posters on lake trout, lake sturgeon, wetland, and purple loosestrife projects at the LGLFRO.

STAFF TRAINING

Chris, Molly, Mike G., Mike S., Betsy, Sandy, and Emily completed the American Red Cross First Aid and CPR training (4/8).

Mike W. attended the second training session for the "Leadership Pathways" program held at the regional office (4/7-4/11). Topics related to building individual supervisory and leadership skills were covered in a variety of formats. The last phase of the program will involve a work detail, followed by a close-out session ("graduation") to be held early next year.

Mike G. completed the Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC) (4/22-25).

OTHER

Mike W. began a detail at the Regional Office to help coordinate work on the Northeast Region Fisheries Strategic Plan, currently being put together by regional project leader workgroups, as well as staff from the regional office (4/29-5/2). The plan is intended to provide guidance for the regional fisheries program for 2005-2009, and represents an implementation of the goals described in the National Fisheries Program "Vision for the Future".

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.