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Making Waves

Habitat Monitoring on Upper Miss

Staff from La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Genoa National Fish Hatchery and the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge along with volunteers assisted Jeff Janvrin from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on a Mississippi River habitat study. The goal of the study is to document pre and post project fishery status concerning two habitat projects in Pool 9. Boat electrofishing was the method used to collect fish at sites that were randomly chosen. The fish were identified to species and their total length was measured. The fishery data collected will be used to evaluate the Capoli Slough (pre-project) and Pool 9 Islands (post-project) habitat projects.

The Capoli Slough project would restore and stabilize islands to protect the area from large wind fetches. Breached areas would be stabilized using rock sills, and partial-closing structures would be constructed to reduce the effect of main channel flows. Material to restore the island complex would be dredged from the immediate

vicinity to provide additional deep-water fish habitat benefits. The project would provide both fish and wildlife benefits by creating a “shadow” effect behind and downstream of the islands. About 700 acres of backwater habitat would be directly affected.

The Pool 9 Islands project was completed in 1995 and involved the construction of a C-shaped rock fill island complex. The island complex parallels the main channel for a half mile and extends into the backwater about a quarter of a mile at the upper and lower ends. The island complex eliminates direct sediment-laden flows through 140 acres of backwater during normal river flow and improves water clarity for the growth of aquatic plants in 180 acres of the backwater. In addition, dredging in the backwater and the addition of rock substrate to the island increased habitat diversity for fish.



Scott Yess Photo

Ann Blankenship (Upper Mississippi River NWR- McGregor District) holds a northern pike collected while electrofishing survey to evaluate two Mississippi River Habitat Projects.



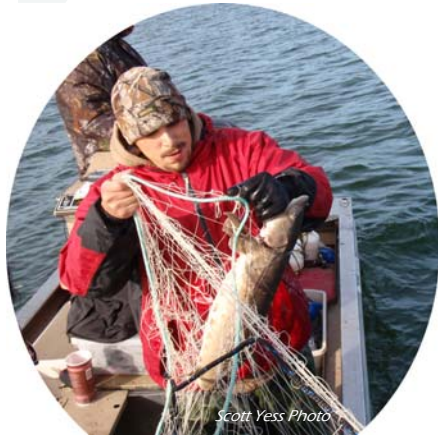
Scott Yess Photo

Huge perch netted by Alexandra Wardwell (USFWS) during electrofishing survey.



Report written by: Scott Yess





Curtis Uran works gillnet during lake sturgeon survey

A Lake Sturgeon Success Story is unfolding on the White Earth Reservation. In the mid 1900's lake sturgeon disappeared on the Reservation and were lost from the entire Red River Watershed. Their populations were decimated as a result of habitat alterations, dam construction and pollution. Due to the efforts of the White Earth DNR, Rainy River First Nations and US Fish and Wildlife Service these majestic fish are making a come back on the Reservation. Great recognition should go to Randy Zortman and his staff at White Earth DNR and Joe Hunter and his staff at Rainy River First Nations who have worked with three fishery stations; La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Genoa National Fish Hatchery and La Crosse Fish Health Center.

A lake sturgeon management plan for the White Earth Reservation was completed in 1998 and after nine years of successful stocking, survival

Lake Sturgeon Population on the Rise in White Earth Lake

and growth have been documented. Results from the October 2009 survey indicate many lake sturgeon are surviving and growth and condition are good. The population is increasing with forty five lake sturgeon collected in two days of netting. During a similar effort in 2003 only two lake sturgeon were caught. Several year classes were represented with lengths ranging from 6 inch fish to a 34 inches (8.5 lbs), and all fish were in good condition. The management plan calls for one more year of stocking then an evaluation will be made on the stocking recommendations.



Jerald Roberts holds healthy lake sturgeon from White Earth Lake



Randy Zortman, Curtis Uran and Jerald Roberts from the White Earth DNR

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