



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

ONE Voice

Outreach, News, and Events December 2017

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge/Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office



Iroquois NWR Welcomes Two New Employees

Iroquois NWR was fortunate to transfer two new employees to the refuge this past year. Michael (Mike) Senske and Kathryn (Kate) Brenner are transferring to the refuge from other stations within the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We are thrilled to have them on board. The additional help around the refuge has been invaluable.

Mike Senske was a local transfer from the Lower Great Lakes FWCO in August. Mike has worked with the USFWS for two years as a Maintenance Worker. He is a 16-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard where he served as an Aircraft Metals Technician out of Niagara Falls, NY. During 14 of those years, he served as a full time DOD Federal Technician, making tools, maintaining aircraft,

welding, and as a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Specialist. Mike also worked in the private sector creating plastic injection molds, welding plastics, and in tool & die. He received his training from the Erie Regional Skill Center and obtained his MIG and TIG welding certificates through the military. Growing up in northwestern Pennsylvania, Mike spent most of his childhood in the woods exploring, hunting, fishing, or logging. Mike enjoys spending time with his wife Jessika and son Reece and getting outdoors to take advantage of all western NY has to offer.

Kate Brenner transferred to Iroquois NWR in November. Kate has been with the USFWS for 5 years now. She started her career with the USFWS as Biological Technician at the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge in Southwest Washington. Then, she moved to western Louisiana for a Wildlife Biologist position with Ecological Services. Most recently, Kate joins us as a Wildlife Refuge Specialist from Ohio River Islands NWR in West Virginia. Kate is also a veteran having served with the U.S. Army, Minnesota National Guard. She served for 6 years with a Med-Evac unit out of St. Paul, MN as an Automated Logistics Supply Specialist. Kate has a Bachelor's Degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Science from Oregon State University.

We are very excited to add Mike and Kate to the team at Iroquois NWR. Please join us in welcoming them!

AIS Team Detects a New Species

One of the best opportunities to detect an invasive species is while they are most abundant in the form of larvae. Indeed, we caught significantly more larval fish this year with the addition of new gear – a larval seine - and improved sampling techniques. We also detected a known invasive species - the tubenose goby (*Proterorhinus semilunaris*), in Presque Isle Bay, Erie, PA. Researchers with the Gannon University had previously reported the tubenose; however, because the population is low in size, we hadn't yet captured it with our sampling methods. The tubenose goby is a close relative of the round goby; the primary morphological difference between the two species is there are tubes located on the nose of tubenose. Capturing the tubenose goby with our new gear validates our new sampling techniques are more effective. Identification of this species was confirmed using a new microscope with better resolution and magnification. (Contact: Sandy Keppner)



A comparison of the Round Goby (top) and the Tubenose Goby (bottom)



New Connection at Urban Charter School's Science Night

On December 5, fish biologists from the Lower Great Lakes FWCO participated in the first ever Science Night at the Westminster Charter School in Buffalo, NY. In conjunction with National Computer Science Education Week, this new partner in STEM/STEAM hosted a variety of science related activities from partner organizations, as well as student designed projects. The USFWS display featured an interactive watershed for families to see how runoff, pollutants, and other issues can affect groundwater. (Contact: Denise Clay)

Oak Orchard Swamp Christmas Bird Count

On December 28, 2017, 31 volunteers participated in the 49th Annual Oak Orchard Area Christmas Bird Count. The National Audubon Society, in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, sponsor Christmas Bird Counts annually throughout the country. Each count consists of a tally of all birds seen within a fifteen-mile diameter circle on one calendar day that falls within a 15-day period at the end of December and the beginning of January. Audubon Christmas Counts have been taking place for 118 years and provide valuable information on the range expansion or narrowing of wintering bird populations.



In total, these observers tallied 58 species and 8,944 individual birds. Last year, we tallied about the same numbers of both species (56) and individual birds (8,691). In comparison to previous years, absolute numbers of wintering birds are trending downward, while the number of species found has remained constant. A new bird species for the count was a single Blue-winged Teal that apparently did not migrate. High species counts were: Wild Turkey - 122, Blue Jay - 272, Yellow-rumped Warbler - 22, Dark-eyed Junco - 750, and Pileated Woodpecker - 16. Low counts were: Mallard - 7, American Kestrel - 1, Cedar Waxwing - 1, and Great Blue Heron, never absent from the count history, at a low of 1, as it was last year. Thank you to everyone who participated - we rely on your support every year to continue this important tradition. (Contact: Celeste Morien)