



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

ONE Voice

Outreach, News, and Events *November 2018*

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



A New Sampling Location to End the AIS EDM Season

The Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office's (FWCO) Aquatic Invasive Species Program (AIS) expanded their Early Detection Monitoring (EDM) program to the Saint Lawrence River this year. Staff traveled to Clayton and Massena, NY in early November. During a portion of this trip, we partnered with the Environmental Division of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, who provided local knowledge and access to tribal waters, in search of new invasive species. Two AIS crews electrofished and netted 30 different fish species from over 32 sampling sites. One species of interest was the invasive tubenose goby (*Proterorhinus semilunaris*), which were collected at multiple locations in Clayton. While tubenose goby has previously been

reported in this area, this was the first time the Service collected them. Fish tissue samples were sent to the Service's Northeast Fishery Center, who is building a genetic key for identifying these invasive species. Water samples were also collected, and the presence of eDNA from invasive species will be also analyzed the Northeast Fishery Center. This trip to the Saint Lawrence River completed our 2018 AIS EDM field season. We will return next year and continue our surveillance of invasive species in the St. Lawrence River. (Contact: Rebecca Aubrey)

Iroquois NWR Volunteer Hits Milestone of 32,500 hours

Refuge Volunteer Carl Zenger hit the milestone of 32,500 volunteer career 506 hours during the Fiscal Year 2018. Carl has been a big part of the refuge for almost 20 years and has contributed in many different areas from maintenance to outreach and education. He was instrumental in creating the Refuge's bluebird, swallow and purple martin banding and monitoring programs, and continues to coordinate those programs with Refuge staff, volunteers, and graduate students from neighboring universities. He has contributed thousands of hours to interpretive programs, and organizing special events. Over the decades, he's done quite a bit of mowing too - enhancing habitat for wildlife, as well as keeping the grounds around the Refuge looking nice. Not to mention, he is one of the founders of the Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. The Refuge and Friends of INWR are so very grateful to Carl. We hope he never retires... from being a volunteer!

Photo Caption: Volunteer Carl Zenger receives special recognition for amassing 32,500 hours donated to the refuge. Celeste Morien, Friends of Iroquois NWR.



Some Fish Don't Mind the Cold (and Neither Do Biologists!)

Eric Bruestle, Biologist with the Lower Great Lakes FWCO assisted USGS colleagues with their Lake Ontario bottom trawl surveys to assess the benthic (bottom-dwelling) fish community. Deployed from the 70-foot RV Kaho, trawl nets were dragged along the lake bottom. In recent years catches from the deepest parts of the lake contain more and more deepwater sculpin. These native fish were thought to have all but vanished from the lake in the 1950s, perhaps due to alewife consumption of sculpin larvae. With the disappearance of deepwater sculpin, lake trout, their primary predator, was forced to shift to a

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/iroquois/>
<https://www.facebook.com/IroquoisNationalWildlifeRefuge>

Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/lowergreatlakes/>
<https://www.facebook.com/LGLFWCO>

diet of alewife which continues to be a major impediment to lake trout recovery. Living at depths of over 200-meters, these unique fish are perfectly adapted to life on the bottom with a flattened body to hug the bottom and upward-facing eyes to see what is above them. They also possess protective spines on their dorsal surface but are nonetheless heavily consumed by lake trout. The resurgence of this species is a positive step towards reestablishing the role of native species in the Lake Ontario food web. (Contact: Eric Bruestle)

2018 Annual Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. Meeting

On November 10, Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. held their annual membership meeting to present accomplishments of FY2018, including photo contest winners, their FY2019 budget, and elect new board members. The Friends have committed to over \$20,000 in project support for FY2019 including special events funding, environmental education, habitat work, and MOTUS tower installation. The highlight of the day was announcing the photo contest winners. Every year the photo quality goes up, as does the difficulty in judging! All photos can be seen at

<http://www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org/annual-photo-contest/>

Photo Caption: Eighth Annual Amateur Photo Contest Winner for Youth: Deegan Bragg.



2018 Refuge Waterfowl Hunt Was Second to One!

506 hunters participated in this year's waterfowl hunt program, which ended on November 15th. A total of 1,423 birds were harvested during this time for a harvest ratio of 2.81 birds per hunter, making it second best harvest ratio in refuge hunt history. The refuge received many accolades from hunters on the quality of hunting conditions, including the opportunity to harvest birds by the large number that were around.

Photo Caption: Excellent morning on Iroquois NWR marshes. (Jacob Cochran, USFWS)

Friends of Iroquois NWR Present at Second Annual Environmental Fair

On November 28-29, members of Friends of the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. talked to students at Akron Central School's 2nd Annual Environmental Fair, about mammals, birds, and the unique habitats found at the refuge. Students also learned about growing organic foods, bee keeping, wildlife rehabilitation, how to identify local birds and animals, invasive species, water pollution, recycling rainwater, and recycling at home. All 450 kindergarten through 12th grade students attended the fair. This was the second year for the fair, with Friends attending both years. The fair began in 2017 when high school student Dylan Scotch felt students needed more knowledge of current environmental issues. (Contact: Denise Clay)