



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# ONE Voice

## Outreach, News, and Events *August 2019*

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

### Staff Comings & Goings at Lower Great Lakes FWCO

We have had several staffing changes in the last two months at the Lower Great Lakes FWCO! Three of our staff moved on to other careers outside of the Service this past July: Ted Lewis, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) biologist, Eric Bruestle, Native Species Biologist, and Matt Sevilla, Maintenance Worker Helper. They all made valuable contributions to our Great Lakes program! We thank each of them for their hard work while part of our team and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. Chris Osborne accepted a new biologist position with us and is stationed up in Oswego, NY. Chris will be assisting with the Lake Ontario large vessel program for coldwater fish surveys with partner agencies, including New York DEC and the USGS. We've also welcomed several new seasonal technicians who have been making huge impacts to our field programs. Megan Kocher and Molly Schultz started with our Habitat program, Kyle Morton began working with our Native Species program, and Jo Johnson started working with our AIS program. Their assistance in the field has been critical this summer and we are delighted to have them onboard! (Contact: Michael Goehle)



### Connecting with Families at America's Largest County Fair

Lower Great Lakes FWCO has been participating in the Erie County Fair for over 10 years in Hamburg, NY, and this year was no different. From August 7 to 18, the FWCO and Iroquois NWR offices connected with about 7,300 people on a variety of topics from lake sturgeon to Asian carp, to fishing and birding, and careers in the Service. The office also provided a special kids' area for the "Junior Rangers Angler Program" at their booth. (Contact: Denise Clay)

### Habitat Restoration

Lower Great Lakes FWCO, Trout Unlimited, and Monroe County Parks recently worked together on a habitat restoration project in Oatka Creek. They installed large wood and boulders in a degraded section of the stream to create structure, complexity, and juvenile trout rearing habitat. Another win for fish! (Contact: Tom Hoffman)



### SNAP! is a Hit!

June 18<sup>th</sup> marked the last day for the Students, Nature and Photography (SNAP!) Program for the Lower Great Lakes FWCO and Iroquois NWR this summer. The nine SNAP programs were composed of three stations and reached over 350 students. At station one, students learned about different types of water bugs. Station two was comprised of photography opportunities in a forested area, and station three included photography in a park area. Most of the students were 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders from the North Tonawanda School District near Buffalo, NY, and were excited to be outside exploring nature. Students received a framed copy of his or her favorite picture to keep as a souvenir

of their trip outdoors. (Contact: Sasha Azeez, HAF Intern)

### Iroquois NWR Visitor Center and Swallow Hollow Walk with Genesee Community College

On Friday August 9<sup>th</sup>, Professor Pat Seidel brought his class from the Medina branch of Genesee Community College out to Iroquois NWR to participate in a scheduled nature immersion walk. Staff from the Refuge and volunteer, David Shepherd led the class along Headquarters and Swallow Hollow trails while helping the students learn about different plants, animals, and habitats found on the Refuge. The walk provided the class impromptu encounters with a garter snake, a mole, and turtles! (Contact: Eric Schaertl)



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>

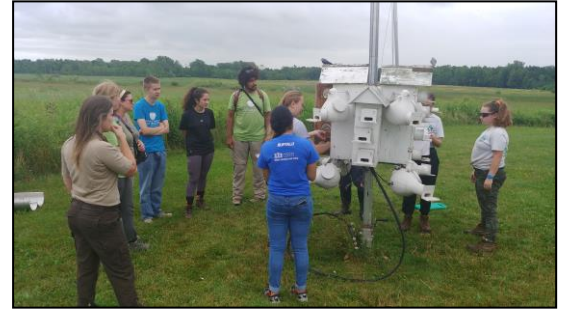


### **Cooperative Work by YCC...YELP!**

The crews of Iroquois NWR's Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's Young Environmental Leaders Program (YELP) joined forces to conduct conservation work and learn from one another. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, YELP came to the Refuge and helped YCC and volunteers with purple martin banding. Then, both crews went out with NYS DEC biologists to collect some purple loosestrife biocontrol beetles. On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, YCC met up with the YELP crew at Hyde Park, Niagara Falls, NY to release the beetles on some invasive loosestrife. Both crews worked together restoring habitat, conducting routine maintenance, testing water quality, and installing interpretive signs. (Contact: Sasha Azeez, HAF Intern)

### **Cavity Nesting is a YCC Favorite**

Bird banding is one of the most interactive learning experiences at the Iroquois NWR. Local bluebird expert, and Refuge volunteer, Carl Zenger, taught our YCC crew some of the best techniques for banding migratory birds, specifically eastern bluebirds and purple martins. Banding has helped the Refuge monitor bluebirds and purple martins. Working with these birds also taught the YCC interns about bird development, social behaviors, and feeding patterns. This was a great way to get their feet wet in the world of conservation. Thank you to all who helped educate this great group of students. (Contact: Eric Schaertl).



### **Sasha Azeez: A Woman of No Egrets**

In my six months as a Hispanic Access Foundation Intern at the Iroquois NWR, I have connected with over 1,200 people through Refuge special events, interpretive programs, and outreach events. Whether it is giving a plant identification walk or coordinating invasive honeysuckle removal, I have met passionate people through every aspect of my position. I have also been lucky enough to go out and do exciting work in nature. I have done things such as purple martin banding, goose banding, vernal pool surveys, and bat surveys. These past few months have been great experiences. (Contact: Sasha Azees, HAF Intern)

### **Iroquois NWR Bio Interns**

This summer, we gained new skills and practiced techniques used by professionals to manage natural resources for wildlife, and monitor birds. We banded many species of birds, from tree swallows at the Refuge to angry Canada geese with the NYS DEC. We became familiar with handling and banding birds of all sizes and temperaments. We also participated in the Northeast Regional Forest Inventory. During this, we brushed up on our plant ID skills, and learned more about the composition of the flora on the Refuge. Overall, we've had an exciting summer. (Contacts: Brandon Metzinger and Jake Lovullo, INWR Biological Interns)