



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

ONE Voice

Outreach, News, and Events *December 2019*

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



Coldwater Species Test the Mettle of Fish Biologists

From November through December, scientists at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) assisted the U.S. Geological Survey and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to evaluate the populations of Cisco, a species of salmon-like whitefish. Surveys were conducted in the major embayments of Lake Ontario in New York, including Sodus, Irondequoit, Port, and Chaumont Bays. This fish spawns in cold water around late November to December, but some similar species lay eggs in the colder months of January and February!

Cisco, sometimes called Lake Herring, are native to Lake Ontario. They were historically a major food source for Lake Trout. Their populations, however, were decimated in the early 1900s by overharvesting and the introduction of invasive species. Restoring the native populations would help rebalance the food web by providing a more diverse array of food sources for gamefish. One of the healthiest populations of Cisco in Lake Ontario returns to Chaumont Bay every November to spawn. For nearly a decade, eggs from these adults have been raised by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and experimentally stocked in southern embayments to promote natural reproduction. (Contact: Gregory Kronisch)

Paint and Sip: Hot Cocoa Edition

On Saturday, December 14th, Hispanic Access Foundation intern Sasha Azeez organized a "Paint and Sip: Hot Cocoa Edition" at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. The painting class was led by volunteer Susan McDonald, a painting instructor and school teacher. At the beginning of the event, people were greeted by the sight of a hot chocolate bar. The class of 17 people were then taught how to create a winter landscape painting through a step-by-step process. At the end of the class, many people were surprised at how well their paintings had turned out, and were eager to do more painting activities in the future. (Contact: Sasha Azeez)



Improving Culverts for Fish

With funding from the National Fish Passage Program (NFPP), the Lower Great Lakes FWCO and partners completed the replacement of an aging, undersized, and perched culvert with a 20-foot open bottom arch culvert on Tiffany Hollow, Delaware County, NY in mid-December. This NFPP project opens 3.7 miles of quality stream habitat for Brook Trout. (Contact: Betsy Trometer)

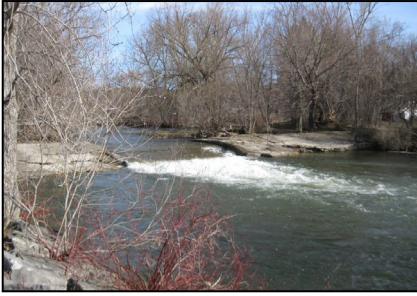
Aquatic Invasive Species

Early in December, the Lower Great Lakes FWCO and the Regional Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator participated in the annual Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Early Detection and Monitoring meeting in Bloomington, MN. The meeting brings together project leaders and biologists from each of the FWCOs in the Great Lakes to report annual

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>

accomplishments, share lessons learned and new technology, and identify any needs to be addressed in the following fiscal year implementation plans. As a basin-wide program, the Great Lakes is recognized for its leadership in early detection and referenced as a demonstration of how early detection efforts can be done on a broader geographic level. (Contact: Sandra Keppner)



Dam Removal Project Gets Traction

On December 31, 2019, employees of the Lower Great Lakes FWCO attended a meeting with partners for the Pike Dam Removal Project on Wiscoy Creek (Lake Ontario watershed). Attendees reviewed study design options, a timeline for construction in summer 2020, and pre-proposals to both the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act and Sustain Our Great Lakes Grants to secure additional funding needed to complete the project.

(Contact: Betsy Trometer)

Lower Great Lakes Office Brings On Two New Staff

The Lower Great Lakes FWCO is excited to welcome two newcomers to the office. First, we have hired Alex Gatch, a native of the Finger Lakes region, as a new Fish Biologist in the native species program. Alex completed his B.S. in Biology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2016 where he conducted research on mercury concentrations in lake trout from the Finger Lakes. After graduating, he worked as a fisheries technician at Cornell University studying salmonid population dynamics in the Adirondack Mountains. Alex then worked as a fisheries technician at the US Geological Survey on Lake Ontario monitoring forage fish and salmonid populations. In 2019, he received his M.S. in Fisheries Science from Purdue University where he studied methods in restoration of spawning habitat used by native fish such as Lake Trout, Walleye, and Lake Whitefish.



Also joining our team is Greg Kronisch who will work with the Native Species program at the Lower Great Lakes FWCO as a Fish Biologist. Originally from southeastern Connecticut, he ventured to New York to receive a B.S. in Aquatic and Fisheries Biology from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). Afterward, Greg worked at the USGS Tunison Laboratory of Aquatic Science evaluating fish assemblages in St. Lawrence River tributaries and later culturing salmonid species for experimental stocking. He returned to SUNY ESF in 2017 to complete a M.S. in Fish and Wildlife Biology and Management studying fish assemblage dynamics of Onondaga Lake in Syracuse, New York. Greg is making the transition to working with only one species at a time. His current projects involve Lake Sturgeon acoustic telemetry and migration. (Contact: Dimitry Gorsky, Ph.D.)

