Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT©

A Publication of the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council
http://www.great-lakes.org

December 2009
Vol. 20, No. 16

Army Corps closes Little Calumet River for further immediate treatment & research

No Asian carp collected above electrical barrier; safety zone rescinded

CHICAGO – The Asian Carp Rapid Response Workgroup on late December 7 completed fishing and research operations near the O'Brien Lock in an attempt to locate Asian carp after eDNA sampling in the area tested positive for the invasive species. The U.S. Coast Guard enforced a safety zone on the Little Calumet River from December 4 - December 7 for further treatment of the Chicago Waterway System

The IL DNR had requested the safety zone to support fishing operations and research for Asian carp in the Little Calumet River and the Cal-Sag Channel during a period of already reduced traffic. The safety zone, from mile marker 321-326.5 was closed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and included the O'Brien Lock while they set gill nets and did electrofishing again.

The Workgroup used commercial fishermen and federal fisheries personnel to deploy nearly 3,000 yards of fishing nets along a 5.5-mile stretch of the Cal-Sag Channel. While the nets were successful in collecting more than 800 fish, no Asian carp were found. The catch included more than 700 common carp and 10 other species.

The fishing operations that began on December 1, wrapped up late on December 7. On Monday evening, the U.S. Coast Guard reopened the Cal-Sag Channel and Little Calumet River to vessel traffic. While the fishing operations and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal rotenone application have thus far confirmed just one bighead Asian carp, the Workgroup expects their work to continue for some time.

U.S. Geological Survey biologist Duane Chapman said he didn't expect many or even any Asian carp would be found floating after the poisoning. In the tests he did to determine how much of the toxin rotenone would be required to kill the carp, they dropped to the bottom after they died, and the teams on the canal and channel were looking for floaters.

Chapman added, "I have a strong doubt that we will see any bighead or silver carp for a few days or more, if

Corp closes Little Calumet

Continued on page 5

In this issue…

Asian Carp Treatment update

After shutting the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to all commercial and recreational traffic at 8 AM, biologists working with the Asian Carp Rapid Response Workgroup began applying rotenone Wednesday evening, Dec. 2, on a 5.7-mile stretch of the canal. This was after a small flotilla of electroshocking boats worked their way over that 5.7-mile stretch looking for desirable game fish. What they ultimately found was a small sampling of some largemouth bass, which were relocated to the Des Plaines River.

It was estimated that less than 3% of the fish that were shocked were game fish; the remaining were shad, common carp, and a few catfish and bullheads.

Officials then launched what's believed to be the largest deliberate fish kill in state history Wednesday night. Crews earlier dumped 2,200 gallons of the toxin rotenone into the canal. Dozens of boats combed the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal starting in the pre-dawn hours on Dec. 3, ultimately finding a lone Asian carp among tens of thousands of poisoned fish, about 50,000 lbs. of dead or dying carcasses.

Asian Carp Treatment update

Continued on page 4

Walleye in Saginaw Bay carry less PCB contamination than a decade ago

Walleye swimming in Michigan's largest watershed are 80 percent less contaminated with PCBs than they were in 1997, according to a study published recently in the Journal of Great Lakes Research.

PCB levels have dropped 80% since 1997, said study author Chuck Madenjian, a biologist at the USGS Great Lakes Science Center. He credits the drop to a dredging project in 2000 that pulled more than 340,000 cubic yds. of polluted sediment out of the Saginaw River.

"This dredging was really effective in bringing down those concentrations to some really low levels," said Madenjian.

General Motors Corp. factories and municipal wastewater treatment plants dumped PCBs in the Saginaw River beginning in the 1940s, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1998, that agency, the state of Michigan and the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe reached a settlement with General Motors Corp. and the cities of Saginaw and Bay City, Mich. to pay for the dredging.

Though the PCBs were dredged nearly a decade ago, this new evidence of cleaner fish is still significant because scooping polluted dirt out of a waterbody doesn't always mean wildlife gets cleaner, Madenjian said.

"You would expect in general that it would happen, but sometimes you get mixed results," he said.

A 1997 project that pulled 100,000 cubic yards of DDT-laced sediment out of San Francisco Bay left some fish more contaminated than they were before the dredging.

Madenjian tested fish from the Tittabawassee River, a tributary of the Saginaw River that eventually flows into Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay. When Saginaw Bay walleye swim upstream to spawn, most head up that river system until they hit a dam on the Tittabawassee River on Dow Chemical Co. property in Midland, Mich., Madenjian said.

"You have the bulk of the spawners from the entire bay being concentrated right there at this Dow dam," he said. Dow Chemical is responsible for widespread dioxin contamination in the Saginaw Bay watershed. Dow, Michigan's environmental agency and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently reached a tentative agreement on a plan for the chemical company's dioxin cleanup. The plan is open for public comment until December 17. ✧

What's to like about Wind Farms?

There are many proposals for offshore and onshore wind farms. We oppose all wind farms — offshore and onshore — for many reasons, all the right ones.

Environmentally, esthetically, economically and from a conservation perspective, they are wrong. They create noise, lower residential property values; destroy ranges for wildlife and cattle and compromise pristine wilderness and shorelines. They indiscriminately kill wild birds, endangered birds, all kinds of birds, numerous birds and their habitats. They adversely affect bats, killing millions of them yearly, thus increasing mosquitoes and subsequently requiring more chemical spraying. They have a negative and deadly impact on wildlife.

Electricity produced by wind farms costs more than that produced by traditional energy sources, they threaten crop production, dry up and heat regional soils affecting agriculture and exacerbating droughts. Wind farms require massive governmental subsidies. They only produce energy when the wind is blowing.

Folks may say they want them, but not in their own back yards. They are not an environmentally friendly power source.

So…what's to like about them? ✧

Inland Seas Angler
GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

Publisher
Dan Thomas, 630/941-1351
Editor
Jeanette Thomas
Webmaster
Robert James, 630/530-7760

Address Change:
Send six weeks in advance with old mailing label to GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT, P.O. Box 297, Elmhurst, IL 60126, (630) 941-1351; or staff@great-lakes.org.

Lake Huron commercials want walleye

DETROIT (AP) – One of Michigan's most successful commercial fishermen is suing the state to try to overcome a decades-old ban on catching walleye in the Great Lakes.

Dana Serafin of Pinconning is forced to release thousands of walleye from his nets while catching other fish in Lake Huron. In 2008, he proposed a three-year study of the walleye population that included a provision for him to keep and sell some of his haul. No thanks, replied the state Department of Natural Resources.

"They're the bully in the lake, 2 to 3' long — we have pictures," said Serafin's lawyer, Anthony Calamunci. "In Saginaw Bay, there is cannibalization going on. It's killing perch and whitefish at enormous rates. There's not enough food." Calamunci filed a lawsuit in April in federal court in Bay City, claiming the state's ban on commercial walleye fishing is a constitutional violation that diminishes the value of Serafin's license. The DNR is asking a judge to dismiss the case.

"The restrictions on walleye fishing have been in place for at least 35 years, long before Serafin obtained his first commercial license," Assistant Attorney General Louis Reinwasser said in a November 13 court filing. Michigan law gives the DNR "complete discretion to limit the amount of fish taken by species and kind," he wrote. The DNR describes Serafin, 42, as the largest commercial fisherman on Lake Huron, catching 990,000 pounds of whitefish worth approximately $1 million in 2008. His license is "indisputably" valuable, despite the walleye ban, Reinwasser said.

A DNR official, James Dexter, suggested that the state does not want to change the policy because that could reduce the walleye population and disappoint recreational anglers. The fish can be found across the Great Lakes region, and Michigan's neighbors have similar restrictions.

"It is estimated that more than two million Michigan residents fish for sport in the state's waters, and thousands more travel from all parts of the world," Dexter, who oversees fishing regulations, said in an affidavit. "The economic impact is estimated to be $2-4 billion annually."

Calamunci accuses the DNR of treating walleye like a "sacred species." He said Serafin at a minimum would like to keep some walleye as well as tag others and return them to the lake. "And then over a three-year period we could test the impact on other species. There's a science to this," the lawyer said. He noted that Canada allows commercial fishermen to keep walleye caught on its side of Lake Huron and sell them to stores and restaurants.

U.S. District Judge Thomas Ludington has scheduled a hearing for February 10. ✧

MI Tribes reach resolution on Mullett Lake walleye fishery

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the five Tribes in the 1836 Treaty-ceded territory of Michigan have reached a collaborative resolution to address the walleye fishery on Mullett Lake in Cheboygan County that will allow for harvest of walleyes to continue on the lake in 2010 by both Tribal subsistence fishers and state-licensed recreational anglers.

The resolution includes the state and Tribes working together to develop a multi-faceted approach to monitoring and enhancing the walleye population over the next five years, through the 2014 fishing season.

The plan includes fishery management changes by the state and collaborative assessment monitoring by both the state and the Tribes that encompasses continued creel surveys for the 2010 fishing season, a joint assessment of the entire chain of lakes, and in the longer term the potential to develop a joint fish stocking effort.

During discussions with the Tribes, Michigan Fish Chief Kelly Smith said there was concern on both sides about the fishery survey conducted on Mullett Lake in 2009. "There is overall uncertainty about the population estimate of adult walleyes in Mullett Lake," Smith said. "The range is 2,001 to 3,577 adult walleyes. There is also some uncertainty on both sides about the interaction between the lakes in this particular chain of lakes — Mullett, Burt, Crooked and Pickerel."

Allocation was a suggested option because it provided greater control over the total amount of walleye that could be preserved in Mullet, said Parker. Parker concluded that he is optimistic that the collaborative approach agreed to between the state and Tribes takes everyone's concerns and needs into consideration.

Fisheries regulations will be developed, Smith said, that use the upper range of the population estimate to calculate safe harvest levels. The state and Tribes have agreed to set a safe harvest level of 40% on Mullett Lake, and the DNR Fisheries Division will recommend a modification to the Mullett Lake fisheries order to change the state regulations to meet the new harvest level. The new regulation will be taken up at the December NRC meeting in Lansing. ✧

Great Lakes Trivia

. The Great Lakes encompass an area of more than 94,000 square miles and hold more than 6 quadrillion gallons of water, about one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water supply.

. The Great Lakes Basin is home to more than 33 million Canadian and U.S. citizens.

Asian Carp Treatment update – continued from page 1

The one bighead carp was discovered nearly 500' above the Lockport Lock on Thursday, Dec. 3. Workgroup biologists believe there is a high probability that additional Asian carp were killed during the toxicant application but may not be found. It is believed Asian carp respond differently to rotenone than other fish, dying and sinking to the bottom.

An important question biologists will try to answer is how large a population of Asian carp exists above and below the electric barriers. Researchers collected fish DNA indicating that the invasive carp are present in the canal and have advanced beyond the barriers, but there have been no actual sightings of the carp in those locations.

Illinois DNR spokesman Chris McCloud said some of the data collected last week will help biologists figure out the reliability of those DNA samples. "We have to know where they are and how many there are," he said.

"The cold water temperatures on the canal this week means far more fish are sinking to the bottom of the waterway than will float to the top. Over the next several weeks and months, some fish may float to the surface but the majority of fish will break down naturally below the surface," said Illinois DNR Fish Chief Steve Pallo.

The workgroup has collected thousands of fish, mostly common carp, from the canal since cleanup efforts began on December 3.

The workgroup is now focused on efforts above the electrical barrier system near the O'Brien Lock in an attempt to find Asian carp in areas where positive eDNA tests have been found. Positive Asian carp DNA evidence exists over nearly 10 miles of the Cal-Sag Channel and Sanitary and Ship Canal above the barrier.

Maintenance on the electric barrier, IIA, was completed and the barrier was returned to operation at 10 PM on Friday, December 4.

The workgroup has been using commercial fishermen, augmented with state and federal fisheries personnel, to deploy commercial fishing gear in a 5.5-mile stretch of the Cal-Sag Channel. Fishing operations used nearly 2,000 yards of fishing nets deployed for two overnight periods. Nets were deployed over portions of the reach since December 1 and have been highly successful in collecting fish, although no Asian carp have been collected.

Spokesmen for the workgroup say they will consider additional rotenone application in specific areas above the barrier as a sampling option.

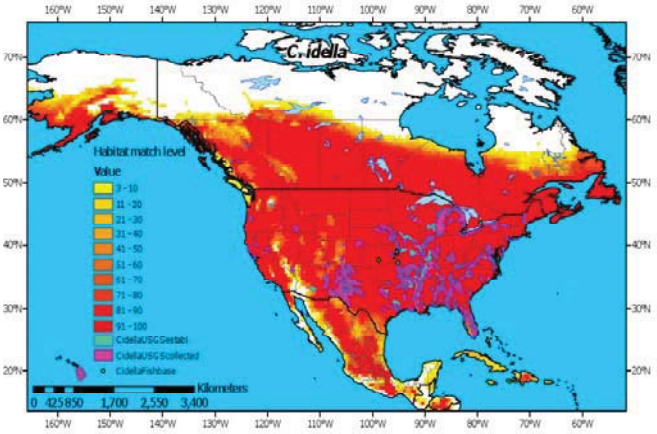
Fishing nets would effectively sample the entire reach and provide the best evidence of the potential presence and abundance of Asian carp in this stretch of channel. It would also confirm the exact location of any fish collected. Any Asian carp collected will be removed from the system, providing a measure of population reduction.

"The effort near the O'Brien Lock is fundamentally different from the action below the barrier. The purpose of applying rotenone below the barrier was to ensure no Asian carp advanced up the channel while the barrier was powered down for scheduled maintenance. In addition, rotenone would provide little if any information about the presence and abundance of carp in this reach upstream," said IDNR Assistant Director John Rogner.

Rogner added; "We are also looking at bubble curtains, a constant wall of live bubbles we've tested on some fish that repels them. We are also experimenting with steady streams of noise that bothers fish." "We also are studying methods that have been successful in controlling sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, such as capturing and sterilizing fish so they can't reproduce" he said.

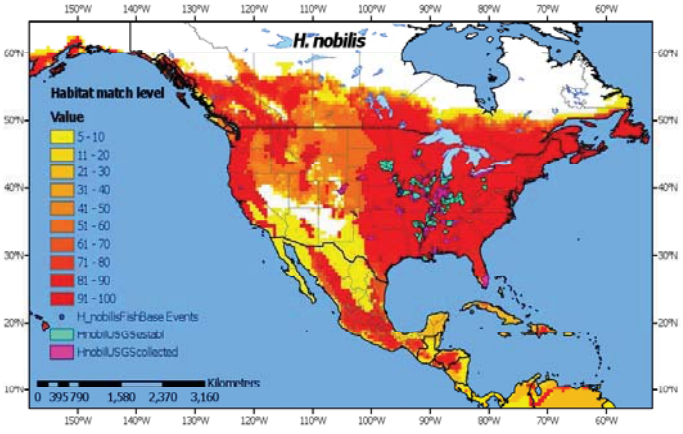
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, meanwhile, is reviewing all available data and may make a decision soon

Potential Distribution – Silver Carp



These maps were peer reviewed and published in the primary literature (Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences) and use more rigorous scientific methods than those produced in the 2005 Canadian risk assessment. Using the two (2005 risk assessment and these maps from the 2007 paper) provide a good view of the assessment of biological risk of Asian carps. According to DFO, all Canada Rivers are at risk. *Dept of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2007*

Potential Distribution – Bighead Carp



Click on the maps and pull corner to enlarge.

on closing down one or more of the locks near Lake Michigan, to prevent potential or additional migration of Asian carp into the lake. Many issues are being weighed including the impact to commercial barges and the movement of commodities such as raw building materials, coal and petroleum into the area. That decision could be made any day.

The Asian Carp Rapid Response Workgroup includes the Illinois DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USEPA, USFWS, U.S. Coast Guard, USDA, and Wisconsin Sea Grant. Many other agencies supplied support and expertise. Fisheries management agencies from all eight Great Lakes States, Ontario and Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided manpower and support to the operation. More than 350 people contributed to the efforts on the ground during the week's operation. ✧

Corp closes Little Calumet for further immediate treatment & research

Continued from page 1

ever, after the poisoning is done." So the discovery of one dead bighead proves a couple of things: that Chapman was right, there could be more dead Asian carp rotting on the bottom, and the risk these invaders pose to the Great Lakes food chain and valuable sport fish species is far too high to take any more chances.

The finding of eDNA appeared to serve its purpose as an early warning system and suggests that Asian carp may have reached the Cal-Sag Channel. Based on recent sampling and the fish collection efforts there, the Workgroup believes that if Asian carp are present, their numbers are likely very small. The Workgroup and its partners are committed to remaining vigilant in the future and exploring all options available to prevent the spread of Asian carp to the Great Lakes.

Among the next steps already underway to prevent the spread of the destructive fish to the Great Lakes:

►Illinois Department of Natural Resources and other workgroup partners are evaluating the week's efforts and will develop options for additional carp population assessment and control in the Cal-Sag Channel and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, as well as other areas of the Chicago Waterway System.

►U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue their eDNA sampling effort with U. of Notre Dame researchers.

►U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are focused on addressing potential bypass issues (along the Des Plaines River, I&M Canal, Grand Calumet and Little Calumet River), the interbasin study and expedited construction of barrier IIB.

►The Rapid Response Workgroup partners are evaluating a range of additional options and consequences for Asian carp prevention management strategies in the waterways—and potentially, further into the Great Lakes.

In other action:

►The Army Corps of Engineers will/has resumed genetic testing for Asian carp on the canals and rivers in and around where the Chicago area's waterways meet Lake Michigan.

►Chicago Mayor Daley and his Great Lakes counterparts demanded on December 11 that the governments of the U.S. and Canada do more to save the shoreline and protect the Great Lakes from the Asian carp and other invasive species.

►Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm on December 2nd, instructed Michigan's Attorney General Mike Cox to file a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Illinois and the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago to force the temporary closure of three Chicago area locks heavily used by boats and barges.

►Some environmental groups on November 20th called for the immediate closure of all Illinois locks leading to Lake Michigan. ✧

WI - Doyle signs new invasive species law

Local legislators' work to prevent the spread of invasive species is now the law.

Gov. Jim Doyle late last month signed into law invasive species legislation written by Senator Bob Jauch, D-Poplar, and Rep. Nick Milroy, D-Superior.

The comprehensive legislation strengthens enforcement of restrictions on the transportation of aquatic invasive species. It was a high priority during the citizen led Superior Days effort for several years. "Unchecked spread of aquatic invasive species poses economical and ecological peril to Wisconsin waters and increased enforcement authority is one of the keys to preventing that damage," Jauch said.

This legislation has been long sought by the Wisconsin Association of Lakes that worried Wisconsin's law didn't go far enough to prevent the movement of invasive species from one lake to another, he said.

The lack of a statewide law resulted in a patchwork of local regulations. This bill significantly increases our statewide efforts to control the spread of these damaging invasive and exotic species that choke our lakes and waterways, Jauch said.

The new law establishes statewide enforcement on transport of invasive species and is patterned after a similar law that has had success in Minnesota. The law gives any law enforcement official author-ity to remove aquatic animals and plants and issue a fine if there is non-compliance with a removal order. ✧

DNR calls on Coast Guard to toughen ballast water rules

MADISON – As the public comment period for proposed federal ballast rules wound down, DNR Secretary Matt Frank urged the feds to set a single national treatment standard for oceangoing commercial ships to reduce their risk of introducing new invasive species to the Great Lakes and other U.S. waters.

"We believe that is it possible to prevent ship-mediated spread of aquatic invasive species into Wisconsin's waters in a manner that supports a viable shipping industry," Frank said in comments submitted to the U.S. Coast Guard November 30.

"A national standard will resolve many issues due to the patchwork of discharge laws existing among the Great Lakes states," he said.

Frank urged the Coast Guard to adopt the same numerical standard that Wisconsin adopted in the state ballast water regulations the DNR announced November 19. Wisconsin's treatment standard, which new ocean going vessels will need to meet in 2012 and existing vessels in 2014, is 100 times more restrictive than the proposed standard for the International Maritime Organization.

"The Department remains convinced that the IMO standard, alone, is not protective enough to achieve the needed safeguards against this significant vector for additional AIS," Frank said.

He strongly urged the Coast Guard to set a more aggressive deadline than 2016 for ships to install ballast water control measures, noting that technology will likely be available to meet Wisconsin's 2012 deadline for ocean-going vessels.

He called on the Coast Guard to act quickly, noting that ballast water discharges have been the major source of new aquatic invasive species to the Great Lakes. "These invasive species take a steep toll on our Great Lakes, inland waterways and $13 billion dollar tourism industry." ✧

Just-Signed "Energy and Water" Bill

Brings habitat improvements to Great Lakes

Congress provides, and the president accepts, additional funds for the "Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program"

ANN ARBOR, MI – The Great Lakes Fishery Commission today commended Congress and the president on the passage and signing into law of the fiscal 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, legislation that funds essential water projects throughout the United States. The bill, signed October 28th, 2009, includes $2.4 million for the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program (GLFER), a program authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to partner with state and local agencies or private groups to implement projects that protect and restore habitat, fisheries, and the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The Great Lakes comprise a nationally and internationally significant fishery and ecosystem that requires restoration and improvement. To further that goal, the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 authorized $100 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to partner with state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations to plan, implement, and evaluate projects that support the restoration of the fishery and the ecosystem.

"Since its inception, GLFER has brought much-needed restoration dollars to the Great Lakes region for projects such as dam removal, fish passage around barriers, shoreline improvements, and fish and wildlife habitat recovery," said William Culligan of the New York State DEC, chair of the GLFER Review Committee. "The funds provided for fiscal 2010 will allow the corps to work with state and local agencies, and perhaps non-governmental organizations, to complete projects already in progress and to begin new high-priority restoration initiatives." ✧

Despite economy, tackle and fishing license sales up 8%

Increase mirrors fishing's heyday in the 1960s and 1970s

State DNR agencies reported, as of September 1, 2009, a 7.7% positive change in the number of licenses sold year-to-date compared to the same months last year. The same states also saw a seven percent increase in the number of licenses sold in July 2009 compared with July 2008.

Fishing license sales increased at a faster rate in the 1st quarter of 2009 compared to the 2nd quarter. Increases of 20% or more were common in the first quarter. However, a larger volume of sales occurred in the second quarter — the peak period for license sales nationally — and had a greater effect on the year-to-date sales trend than first quarter license sales.

In general, more fishing licenses are sold during the 2nd quarter than any other time of the year. Reasons for the 2009 license sales increases range from a slow economy, allowing people more time to engage in outdoor activities, to recreational fishing being a lower cost alternative to other forms of recreation. ✧

Law protects pocket-knife classification

The United States Senate recently passed crucial legislation that will protect pocketknives used by tens of millions of Americans. The amendment was included in the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill and will keep pocketknives from being classified as illegal switchblades. U.S. Senators John Cornyn (R-Tex.), Mark Pryor (D-Ark.) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) authored the amendment and were instrumental in its passage through Congress. U.S. Congressmen Bob Latta (R-Ohio) and Walt Minnick (D-Idaho) also played vital roles in the amendment's passage in the House. Obama signed an amendment to the Act October 28. ✧

PA - Susquehanna River fish disease issues

Low oxygen/warmer water likely factors

Smallmouth bass in the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, PA are exposed to oxygen levels that are low enough to cause stress during the first few months of their lives. Low oxygen and the relatively warm water of the Susquehanna River are likely contributing factors in the die offs of baby smallmouth bass since 2005.

These are among the key findings of a new federal study to understand why baby smallmouth bass have been dying of infection, while older smallmouth bass and other fish have been largely unaffected. The infection is caused by Flavobacterium columnare, a bacterium that typically afflicts stressed fish. Public concern has been raised about the long-term viability of the smallmouth bass population on the Susquehanna, a river known for sport fishing.

Shallows with slow-moving water along the river margins are considered nurseries for baby smallmouth bass. "Nursery microhabitats are places for young fish to avoid predators and avoid the swift currents of the main channel of the river. Our work demonstrates that these nursery areas often have oxygen levels that are lower and more stressful than those in the swifter-moving and deeper waters of the main channel where the adult fish live," said U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientist Jeff Chaplin, who led the study in partnership with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), and the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection.

There are many other water-quality factors and pathogens that were not evaluated in the study that may be putting additional stress on the fish in the Susquehanna River leading to the bacterial infections.

This study included continuous monitoring at seven sites from May – October 2008, to characterize water–quality conditions in some of the affected reaches of the Susquehanna River.

Study Highlights

►Nursery microhabitats had lower oxygen than the main channel:
Oxygen levels fell below the applicable national criterion (5.0 mg/L) for up to 8.5 hours on more than 30 percent of days at one nursery microhabitat compared to no days in the nearby main-channel habitat. Oxygen levels at a second nursery microhabitat fell below the criterion in about 20% of days, compared to only 6% in the nearby main channel.

►Conditions in 2008 were more stressful than they were in the 1970s:
In the Susquehanna River at Harrisburg, daily mean dissolved oxygen levels averaged 1.1 mg/L lower and daily mean water temperatures averaged 1.4°F warmer in 2008 compared to historical datasets from 1974 through 1979.

►The Susquehanna had higher temperatures than nearby rivers in 2008:

►During the monitoring period of May through September, the average daily mean water temperature of the Susquehanna River at Harrisburg was 3.2°F warmer than the Delaware River at Trenton, NJ and 6.1°F warmer than the Allegheny River near Pittsburgh, Pa. To read the full study: http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2009/1216/ ✧

WI Deer hunters urged to help eliminate feral pigs

State wildlife officials are encouraging hunters who have small game licenses heading out for Wisconsin's deer hunting season to keep an eye out for **feral pigs**. Since 1997 feral pigs have been found in at least 39 Wisconsin counties.

"Each year we receive reports of feral pig sightings and harvests from around the state," says Brad Koele, wildlife damage specialist for Department of Natural Resources. "Most of these reports are of 1 or 2 pigs.

Feral pigs can be found across a wide variety of habitats and are highly destructive because of the rooting they do in search of food. They're also efficient predators preying on many species including white-tailed deer fawns and ground nesting birds like grouse, woodcock, turkeys, and songbirds.

Feral pigs in Manitowoc County

Feral pigs are known to carry a number of diseases of danger to humans and the domestic swine industry. For removal purposes, feral pigs are currently considered unprotected wild animals and may be hunted year-round. The only day they cannot be hunted with a gun is the Friday before the nine-day gun deer-hunting season. Also, feral pig hunting hours are the same as for deer during the nine-day season. During the rest of the year, there are no hunting hour restrictions for feral pigs. There is no bag limit on feral pigs. Landowners may shoot feral pigs on their own property without a hunting license. Anyone else can shoot a feral pig as long as they possess a valid small game license, sport license, or patron license and have landowner permission if they are on private land.

Information on **feral pig hunting**, including a list of counties where feral pigs have been sighted or killed, is available on the DNR Web site. State officials request that anyone shooting a feral pig call a DNR service center or contact a DNR wildlife biologist so that blood and tissue samples can be collected for disease testing in collaboration with USDA and the State veterinarians office. ✧

Pesticide levels decline in Corn Belt rivers

Concentrations of several major pesticides mostly declined or stayed the same in "Corn Belt" rivers and streams from 1996 to 2006, according to a new U.S. Geological Survey study.

The declines in pesticide concentrations closely followed declines in their annual applications, indicating that reducing pesticide use is an effective and reliable strategy for reducing contamination in streams.

Declines in concentrations of the agricultural herbicides cyanazine, alachlor and metolachlor show the effectiveness of USEPA regulatory actions as well as the influence of new pesticide products. In addition, declines in concentrations of the insecticide diazinon correspond to the EPA's national phase-out of nonagricultural uses.

Scientists studied 11 herbicides and insecticides frequently detected in the Corn Belt region, which generally includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska and Ohio, as well as parts of adjoining states. This area has among the highest pesticide use in the nation — mostly herbicides used for weed control in corn and soybeans. As a result, these pesticides are widespread in the region's streams and rivers, largely resulting from runoff from cropland and urban areas.

Elevated concentrations can affect aquatic organisms in streams as well as the quality of drinking water in some high-use areas where surface water is used for municipal supply. Four of the 11 pesticides evaluated for trends were among those most often found in previous USGS studies to occur at levels of potential concern for healthy aquatic life. Atrazine, the most frequently detected, is also regulated in drinking water.

Only one pesticide — simazine, which is used for both agricultural and urban weed control — increased from 1996 to 2006. Concentrations of simazine in some streams increased more sharply than its trend in agricultural use, suggesting that non-agricultural uses of this herbicide, such as for controlling weeds in residential areas and along roadsides, increased during the study period.

The USGS study is based on analysis of 11 pesticides for 31 stream sites in the Corn Belt for two partially overlapping time periods: 1996 to 2002 and 2000 to 2006. Pesticides included in the trend analyses were the herbicides Atrazine, acetochlor, metolachlor, alachlor, cyanazine, and prometon, and the insecticides chlorpyrifos and diazinon. Additional detailed analyses of relations between concentrations and use focused on four herbicides mainly used for weed control in corn at a subset of 11 sites on the main rivers and selected large tributaries in the Ohio, Upper Mississippi and Missouri River basins.

Concentrations of many other pesticides that were less prevalent than the 11 included in the study were below analytical detection limits in most samples and thus could not be analyzed for trends. Glyphosate, an herbicide that has had rapidly increasing use on new genetically modified varieties of soybeans and corn, and which now is the most heavily used herbicide in the nation, was not measured until late in the study and thus had insufficient data for analysis of trends. ✧

Ohio Wildlife Council votes on fishery management changes

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Wildlife Council has approved changes that will affect Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch, crappies in 44 inland lakes, and Ohio River catfish according to the Ohio DNR.

The change to the timing of when bag limits are set for Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch was passed. New bag limits will become effective on May 1 instead of March 1. Changing this effective date allows for the walleye and yellow perch quotas set by the Lake Erie Committee to be considered prior to setting the bag limits.

The Lake Erie Committee comprises fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canadian and U.S. agency on the Great Lakes facilitate the committee's work. Each year the committee sets the total allowable catch for walleye and yellow perch from Lake Erie. Total allowable catch represents the number of fish that can be caught by sport and commercial fishers without putting the stocks at risk. From the total allowable catch for the lake, individual state quotas are calculated.

Adding 38 lakes to the current list of six lakes that have 9-inch minimum size limits on crappies was also approved. A bag limit of 30 crappies on all lakes with 9-inch size limits was also passed, which now equal 44 lakes across the state. Alum Creek, Caesar Creek, Deer Creek, Delaware, Seneca and Tappan Lakes have had the 9-inch minimum regulations for years.

An extension of the statewide catfish regulations to the Ohio River was passed. Ohio River anglers will be allowed only one channel catfish 28 inches or longer with no limit for channel catfish under 28 inches. In addition, only one flathead and one blue catfish 35 inches or longer may be possessed with no limit for flathead and blue catfish under 35 inches.

Input was sought at six public open houses at various locations across the state and a central statewide hearing. Information recorded at these open houses along with comments from the state hearing was forwarded to the division's central office in Columbus, where proposed rule changes were considered. ✧

State/Tribal Wildlife Grants Program receives funding boost from Congress

Increase will help state fish and wildlife agencies address environmental threats to some of the nation's most imperiled species

Washington, D.C. – Last month, Congress approved $90 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program as part of the $32.2 billion Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation Act for 2010. The increase is $15 million over last year's level and also includes a change in the nonfederal match requirement from 50% to 35%.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program, now in its 10th year, is a principal source of funding for implementation of congressionally required State Wildlife Action Plans in every state and territory. The Plans assess the health of each state's wildlife and habitats, identify the problems they face and outline the actions needed to conserve them over the long term to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

The increase in federal dollars comes at a time when state fish and wildlife agencies are increasingly challenged to address the impacts of invasive species, habitat loss and degradation and the exacerbating affects of climate change.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program was started in 2000 to meet a longstanding need for funding of fish and wildlife species that are typically not hunted or fished.

The apportionment of funding through the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program is based on one third of land area and two-thirds on population. For example, for fiscal year 2010, the state of Washington will receive about $1.5 million in apportionment funds. The program also will provide tribes with $7 million for a competitive grants program. An additional $5 million will be made available to states for a competitive grants program. ✧

Officers seize illegal gill net – 1,100 lbs of fish in Big Bay de Noc

Three Upper Peninsula men were implicated in an illegal gill netting operation on the waters of Big Bay De Noc in Delta County. Conservation officers from the DNR made contact with three men illegally harvesting fish using a gill net in the early hours of Monday, November 2.

Officers seized 1,100 pounds of fish, which consisted of primarily whitefish, with a very small amount of burbot and walleye. The wholesale value of the whitefish was approximately $860. In addition, a 14-foot boat, motor and trailer were confiscated, along with 1,200 feet of gill net and other gear used in the operation.

A misdemeanor charge will be sought through the Delta County Prosecutor's Office for fishing with an illegal device, along with a felony resisting and obstructing an officer charge for one of the men who fled the scene on foot.

Condemnation proceedings were initiated by the officers for all of the gear seized. For the fishing violations, the men could face up to 90 days in jail and receive up to a $1,000 fine. In addition, the cost of restitution for the fish could range into the thousands of dollars. The penalties for resisting and obstructing an officer are up to two years in prison and up to a $1,000 fine. ✧

New York DEC hails "No Discharge Zone"

Designation for South Shore Estuary

Effective immediately, more than 110,000 acres of New York's South Shore estuary waters are now designated as a "No Discharge Zone" and the release of sewage from boat toilets and holding tanks is prohibited. Commissioner of Environmental Conservation Pete Grannis hails the federal measure as a means to significant improvement in the area's water quality. ✧

Senate gives Obama authority to pull the plug on your Internet

CNET News has obtained a summary of a proposal from Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) that would create an Office of the National Cybersecurity Advisor. That office would receive the power to disconnect, if it believes they're at risk of a cyberattack, "critical" computer networks from the Internet.

"I regard this as a profoundly and deeply troubling problem to which we are not paying much attention," Rockefeller said, referring to cybersecurity (S. 773). This is causing a flurry of opposition from groups like Campaign for Liberty, which has sent out letters to their members appealing for them to take action against passage of this bill, stating:

"If the 'Internet Takeover Bill' passes, Obama can silence his dissenters directly by ordering a shut-down of all Americans' access to the Internet. But that's not all. Even outside of periods of White House-declared 'emergency,' this bill mandates that private-sector networks only be managed by government-licensed cybersecurity professionals."

Mich OKs Great Lakes Research Center

The state Legislature has given Michigan Tech U. a go-ahead for its planned $25.3 million Great Lakes Research Center. The Legislature decided to let the school seek construction bids. The center is planned for a waterfront site near Michigan Tech's campus in Houghton. The state is to pay 74% of the cost and the university 26%.

The 49,000-square-foot center will house laboratories, boat maintenance facilities, offices and conference rooms. It also will accommodate joint activities of researchers from Michigan Tech and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' environmental lab in Vicksburg, Miss. ✧

Pure Fishing and Dyneema sign strategic agreement

Partnership to further drive innovation and advancements in premium fishing lines made with Dyneema

URMOND (NL), SPIRIT LAKE (USA), 5 November 2009 – Dyneema and Pure Fishing announced the signing of a new global strategic agreement that will strengthen and increase their joint commitment to the research and development, marketing and sales of high performance fishing lines made with Dyneema.

The partnership will lead to developing premium fishing lines that meet and exceed the most demanding performance expectations in strength and abrasion resistance. Pure Fishing lines made with Dyneema provide exclusive solutions to experienced anglers. Pure Fishing lines made with Dyneema offer unsurpassed performance. Besides its unparallel strength, the lines are also extremely thin making them near invisible to fish while also increasing the reel's line capacity. In addition, the lines provide low stretch, allowing fishermen to instantly 'feel the fish bite'.

"We work hard to ensure we can provide our customers with products they can trust. Our customers can expect from us best-in-class Superline products designed to incorporate abrasion resistance, outstanding line-sensitivity and most importantly unmatched strength provided by Dyneema," said Clay Norris, Senior Product Manager, Pure Fishing. "This is why we believe DSM Dyneema is an ideal partner with a proven performance track record for us to team with. Put simply, the world's best fishing lines deserve Dyneema, the world's strongest fiber."

"Continuous product innovation and strategic collaboration with partners who are leaders in their field are two of the core pillars of our business model," said Marcel Alberts, Global Sports Marketing Manager, DSM Dyneema. "We are really pleased in joining forces with Pure Fishing and are confident it will lead to even higher performing fishing lines that will continue to delight the more discerning angler who demands more from his equipment."

About DSM Dyneema

DSM Dyneema is the inventor and manufacturer of Dyneema, the world's strongest fiber. Dyneema is an ultra strong polyethylene fiber that offers maximum strength combined with minimum weight. It is up to 15 times stronger than quality steel and up to 40% stronger than Aramid fibers, both on weight for weight basis. Dyneema floats on water and is extremely durable and resistant to moisture, UV light and chemicals. The applications are therefore more or less unlimited. Dyneema is an important component in ropes, cables and nets in the fishing, shipping and offshore industries. Dyneema is also used in safety gloves for the metalworking industry and in fine yarns for applications in sporting goods and the medical sector. In addition, Dyneema is also used in bullet resistant armor and clothing for police and military personnel. Dyneema is produced in The Netherlands and in Greenville, North Carolina. DSM Dyneema is also a partner in a high modulus polyethylene (HMPE) manufacturing joint venture in Japan. Further information on DSM Dyneema is available at www.dyneema.com and www.feelthefishbite.com. ✧

New legislation will protect fishing, hunting on federal land

Two bills introduced by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R- AK) and Rep. Dan Boren (D- OK) will protect recreational hunting, fishing and shooting on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.

Backed by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance (USSA), HR 3749 and the Senate legislation are companion bills collectively known as the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act. They will prevent situations from emerging where public land is closed arbitrarily for hunting, fishing and shooting, mandating that such closures be done through a reasonable and transparent process.

Specifically, both bills would ensure that:

* Federal public land managers with the U.S. Forest Service and BLM provide for the use of and access to public lands for hunting, fishing and shooting,
* An "open until closed" policy is established for the lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM unless public and Congressional notification is given,
* Land managers are urged to lease land for shooting ranges by having the lessee offer suitable assurances to remediate leased lands at the termination of the lease, thus remedying concerns expressed in the past by the BLM over damage to land used for shooting,
* Skilled volunteers be used on federal public lands not open to hunting when wildlife management requires the culling of animal populations,
* Congress receives an annual report detailing any closures of land to fishing, hunting, or shooting and the reasons for the closures.

"Both bills will guarantee that access for America's sportsmen to prime public land won't arbitrarily be denied," states USSA President and CEO, Bud Pidgeon. "The USSA wholeheartedly supports these bills and urges sportsmen everywhere to contact you members of Congress and urge them to sign on." ✧

From all of us to all of our many members, and friends...

Season's Greetings

As we reflect on 2009, our soldiers on active duty around the world, our own safety, our health, family and all we have to be grateful for...our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year in 2010.

"...behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour..." Luke 2:10-11

Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year