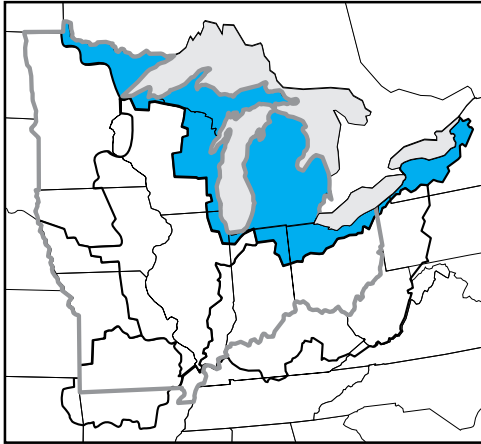




Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem



USFWS Field Stations

Forty-three field stations are located in this ecosystem: 6 National Wildlife Refuges, 1 Wetland Management District, 11 Law Enforcement Offices, 10 Ecological Service Field Offices, 3 Private Lands Offices, 5 National Fish Hatcheries, 4 Fishery Resources Offices, 2 Biological Stations, and 1 Fishery Center.

Partners

United States Geological Survey, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Michigan State University, Great Lakes Commission, Bay Mills Indian Community, Chippewa/Ottawa Resource Authority, Erie, Michigan, Superior & Huron commercial fishers, Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Ecosystem Description

The Great Lakes Basin ecosystem is the largest body of freshwater in the world. It holds 18 percent of the world's supply of fresh water, covers 95,000 square miles with 9,000 miles of shoreline, includes 5,000 tributaries, and has a drainage area of 288,000 square miles. More than 35 million people live in the Basin and depend upon its natural resources. This binational basin shared between the U.S. and Canada is subject to ever-increasing national and international attention on issues such as the introduction and expansion of nonindigenous species, the precarious nature of aquatic and nearshore communities and habitats, and contamination, all of which affect ecosystem health.

Landscape Priorities

The Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem Team is focusing much of its efforts on the basin-wide issues of lake sturgeon restoration and island conservation. Both of these issues will benefit from the team's expertise in areas such as migratory birds, invasive species, and habitat restoration.

■ *Assess Great Lakes islands*

There are about 30,000 islands within the Great Lakes. These islands form the world's largest freshwater island system; however, little is known about them. The team recognizes the

importance of islands to wildlife-- particularly migratory birds, fish, and endangered species. The team's intent is to complete an assessment of the islands for protection and restoration efforts.

■ *Restore lake sturgeon*

Given the benefit of a greater level of collaboration between team members, Service programs, and other stakeholders, the team chose lake sturgeon restoration as a priority. The Service's efforts to restore the lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes are addressing restoration on several fronts, including population assessment, assessment of the genetic make-up of various stocks, development and implementation of recovery plans, and development of fish passage technology.

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