

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE COLUMBIA FISHERY RESOURCES OFFICE ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT



...Dedicated to Conserving Big River Ecosystems in America's Heartland.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

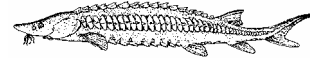
Conservation priorities set for the Central Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion

Fishery Biologist Louise Mauldin participated in an aquatic experts workshop hosted by the Nature Conservancy in Omaha, Nebraska. The Nature Conservancy is currently designing portfolios of conservation areas within and across the Nation. These ecoregional portfolios represent the distribution and diversity of native species, natural communities and ecosystems. This planning workshop was held to aid the Nature Conservancy in developing conservation priorities for freshwater biodiversity in the Central Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion. This ecoregion includes the lower Platte, Kansas, Nishnabotna, and Missouri River ecological drainage units (EDUs). Workshop participants reviewed and refined the aquatic system classification for rivers and streams within these EDUs. A list of aquatic conservation targets, including imperiled species and species of concern, were reviewed and updated. They discussed specific goals for these conservation target portfolios. Information and relevant data on the location and quality of conservation targets was also assembled. Participants identified highest priority conservation areas and conservation areas that most effectively met their goals. Columbia FRO continues to work with states, tribes, NGOs, and other partners to identify and prioritize actions that will be most effective and efficient in achieving desired resource goals and outcomes.



Louise M. Mauldin





Annual Missouri Natural Resources Conference

Biological Science Technician Jennifer Johnson of the Columbia FRO traveled to Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri to attend the Missouri Natural Resources Conference in February. The focus of this year's conference was "Shaping the Future with Leadership". Johnson attended workshops on Advances in Ozark Streams Assessments, Real World Collaborative Leadership, and a Technical Paper Session in Fisheries. She also attended the Missouri Chapter of the American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting.

Participation in the workshops provided current information on field assessment techniques used for restoration and ecological monitoring techniques, physical habitat assessment protocols, conflict management in natural resources, and summaries of fisheries projects throughout the state of Missouri. The attendance at the conference provided Columbia FRO staff the opportunities to meet natural resource professionals throughout the state of Missouri.

Jennifer L. Johnson

Missouri River Project Review



Biological Science Technician Jennifer Johnson of the Columbia FRO presented her masters research proposal entitled "*Reproductive Development of Selected Macrhybopsis Chubs in Relation to Environmental Variables in the Lower Missouri River*" on February 7th at



the Missouri Department of Conservation's Resource Science Center. Representatives from the Service as well as the Missouri Department of Conservation, U.S. Geological Survey and the University of Missouri were in attendance.

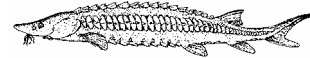


The research project review provided an opportunity for constructive critical review from a variety of agencies and served as an example of collaborative research being conducted between the Columbia FRO and other agencies.

Jennifer L. Johnson

Sicklefin Chub





AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Mississippi River Basin Sturgeon Tagging Database Planned

Columbia FRO is partnering with Missouri Department of Conservation to create a single database for lake and shovelnose sturgeon tag information within the Mississippi River basin. Multiple states and federal agencies and universities are currently tagging lake and shovelnose sturgeon with a variety of different tags and data formats. Reporting of recaptured tag information from sturgeon has been difficult at times because agency ownership of the tags is sometimes unknown. One centralized location for obtaining information for a recaptured sturgeon will simplify data collection efforts and improve the quality and quantity of recapture information. Columbia FRO has extensive experience with tagging databases given the office's involvement with managing the MICRA multi-state paddlefish tag database.

This project will assist the Service's Fishery Program with meeting its Partnership and Accountability goal by developing collaborative conservation strategies for aquatic resources.

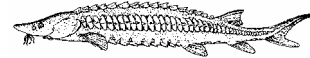
Andy B. Starostka

PUBLIC USE

Columbia FRO Collects Fish for the Bass Pro Shop Aquarium

During the month of February Fishery, Biologists Corey Lee, Andy Starostka, Nick Frohnauer, Colby Wrasse (Columbia FRO), Andy Roberts (Ecological Services), and volunteer Cliff Wilson collected fish for a Bass Pro Shop aquarium. Bass Pro Shop, a national retail store specializing in fishing, hunting, and outdoor equipment, uses large aquariums as a central attraction in their stores. The fish in these aquariums are viewed by thousands of people daily. The newest store, soon to be opened in Columbia, Missouri, will feature a large aquarium containing many fishes found in the Missouri River. To date, species collected for the aquarium include lake and shovelnose sturgeon, blue catfish, channel catfish, sauger, blue sucker, smallmouth buffalo, common carp, redhorse long and short nose gar, freshwater drum and goldeye. Fish were collected from the Missouri River while sampling on the pallid sturgeon monitoring project and are representative of common riverine fishes. Public aquariums are valuable educational tools which increase aquatic awareness and peak interests in fishing and resource conservation. This type of public outreach is especially important for Fishery Resources Offices who deal with large rivers and often suffer from a lack of knowledge and concern by the general public. Providing education to people on large river ecosystems is a critical step in conserving America's fisheries. Columbia FRO will also be taking part in Grand Opening Ceremonies at the Bass Pro Shop in Columbia. Our staff will be on hand to field questions from those who stop by the aquarium.

Colby J. Wrasse



LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Continuation of Habitat Assessment Implementation

Fishery Biologists, Wyatt Doyle and Andy Starostka, along with Project Leader, Tracy Hill, participated in another collaborative effort to develop protocols for Shallow Water Habitat Assessment. Columbia FRO staff was part of a larger collaborative group of biologists providing the expertise required by the Corps and partnering State agencies to set out the framework of sampling and project design for upcoming implementation of this critically important monitoring effort. Shallow water habitat monitoring will provide data designed to illustrate the effectiveness of created habitat in the Lower Missouri River. Pallid sturgeon recovery has been linked to several factors including the need for shallow water habitat at critical life stages. This monitoring effort represents the Corp's



Lisbon Bottoms Chute Big Muddy NFWR

attempts to evaluate sturgeon use of these constructed habitats. Innovative sampling techniques and collaborative work with Corps of Engineer's and USGS' geomorphologists will take this project to a higher level of scientific knowledge by incorporating hydrologic, geomorphologic and biologic interactions never collectively summarized in the Missouri River before.

This effort will continue to strengthen our scientific knowledge and provide leadership in aquatic habitat restoration and endangered

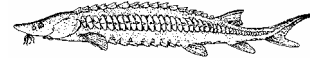
species recovery by collaboratively melding a diverse field of experts in State and Federal agencies. Coordinating this Habitat Assessment and existing Pallid Assessment programs will enhance our ability to understand native, invasive and endangered species populations on the River.

Wyatt J. Doyle

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Region 3 Fisheries Project Leaders Meeting

Project Leader Tracy Hill, Fishery Biologist Wyatt Doyle and Administrative Officer Becky Clearwater traveled to LaCrosse, WI on 7 February to attend the Region 3 Fisheries Project Leaders meeting. The purpose for the meeting was to bring together key staff from the field and regional offices to discuss how to work together more effectively as a management team. The meeting also provided the Great Lakes and Big Rivers programs the chance to address common challenges and opportunities. During the first day of the meeting each project leader was given the opportunity to share with the group his or her individual management style or philosophy and how these are employed in the



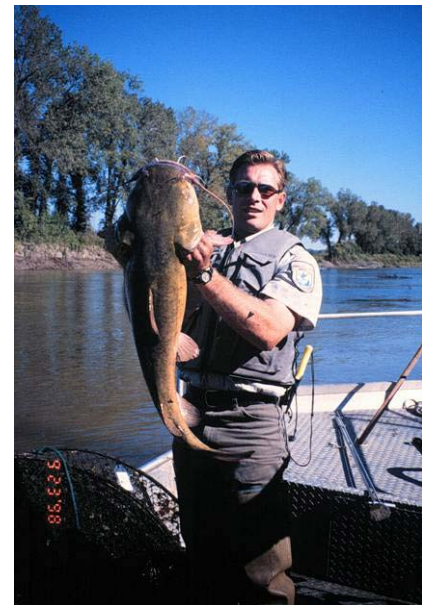
day-to-day operations of the field station. During the second day of the meeting the participants were given the unique opportunity to gain a perspective on Regional Director Robyn Thorson's vision for Region 3 and where the Fisheries Program fit into that vision and to gain a similar perspective from Assistant Director Mamie Parker for the National Fisheries Program.

Development and leadership training for an effective workforce are essential to the current and future operations of the Service's Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program. Leadership training efforts such as this are consistent with goals and objectives of the Service's Fisheries Vision for the Future and are critical for the agency to address the increasing concerns for protecting the nation's aquatic resources.

Tracy D. Hill

SCEP Graduate Returns to Columbia FRO

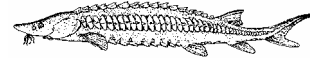
Fishery Biologist Jeff Finley has returned to federal service at the Columbia FRO. Finley began working for the USFWS in April 1998 as a fisheries technician with Columbia FRO under Project leader Jim Milligan (retired). Upon returning to classes at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1999, his service continued through the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). Finley was the first student entered into the SCEP program at Columbia FRO. An advocate of students professional development and president of Missouri's First Student Subchapter of the American Fisheries Society (FASS) he aided the Project Leader in enlisting classmates into the Service's other student program (STEP) Student Temporary Employment Program. To date both programs are a critical component to the stations activities.



Upon graduation, the Service was unable to retain Finley as he accepted a position with the Missouri Department of Conservation operating a 40 foot long, 3200 gallon mobile aquarium used for angler recruitment and aquatic education www.mdc.mo.gov/fish/kidsfishing/mobileaqua.

Jeff is now working in pallid sturgeon assessment on the Missouri River and additionally in outreach and education. Finley will spearhead the Columbia FRO's monthly accomplishment report, update the website, and expand aquatic resource education work in schools and at public venues. He intends to align outreach efforts for FRO's and Hatcheries associated with Conserving large river ecosystems in America's Heartland. Jeff Finley's return to the Service supports the "Workforce Management" goal of the Fisheries Vision for the Future by filling a critical vacancy with well qualified individuals.

Jeff M. Finley



Missouri Natural Resources Conference 2005 Student Job Fair



Fishery Biologist Corey Lee and Project Leader Tracy Hill attended the Student Job Fair of the 2005 Missouri Natural Resources Conference in Osage Beach, MO. The Student Job Fair is an excellent opportunity to reach a highly diverse category of students from across the Midwest. Columbia FRO used this forum of over 200 natural resource students to establish initial contacts with aspiring biologists in aquatic conservation and advertise employment opportunities while promoting Columbia’s Fishery Program and work

on the Missouri River. Job Fair attendees were eager to ask questions and learn about the Service’s job opportunities. Increasing students’ awareness of opportunities within the office will enhance our ability to hire competitive employees in the future. Lee answered questions from the public on a variety of subjects including endangered species such as pallid sturgeon, invasive species such as Asian carp, aquatic species, and habitat conservation.

Participating in Public Outreach events such as this enables the Columbia FRO to assist in achieving “Workforce Management” priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Corey W. Lee

Columbia FRO Welcomes New Fishery Biologist

Fishery Biologist Nick Frohnauer joined the staff of the Columbia FRO on February 20,

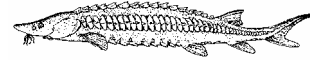


2005. Nick has a diverse background in marine, lake, small stream and large river systems. He received a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison majoring in Biological Aspects of Conservation with a minor in Environmental Studies. After doing an internship with the Mississippi Long Term Resource Monitoring project in Lake City, MN, Nick earned a M.S. degree in Fish Biology at Iowa State University. His Master’s project focused on population and angler characteristics of the unique Shoepack Lake muskellunge located in

Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota. Prior to joining the staff at the Columbia FRO, Nick worked in Idaho inventorying fish species in tributaries to the Snake River for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Nicholas K. Frohnauer





Columbia FRO Staff

Tracy D. Hill – Project Leader
Joanne M. Grady – Assistant Project Leader
Louise M. Mauldin – Fishery Biologist
Wyatt J. Doyle – Fishery Biologist
Andrew B. Starostka – Fishery Biologist
Corey W. Lee – Fishery Biologist
Nicholas K. Frohnauer – Fishery Biologist
Jeff M. Finley – Fishery Biologist
Colby J. Wrasse – Fishery Biologist
Jennifer L. Johnson – Fisheries Biological Sciences Technician
Casey L. Bergthold – Fisheries Biological Sciences Technician
Cliff D. Wilson – Fisheries Volunteer