



Columbia Fishery Resources Office Accomplishment Report

November 2004



Partnerships and Accountability

Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy Meeting

Project Leader Tracy Hill along with Service representatives from Refuges, Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Ecological Services attended the Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy Meeting. The Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy (CWS) program is the result of tireless efforts on the part of local and state governments, and NGOs to secure federal funding for fish and wildlife conservation. CWS are designed to benefit nongame species, especially those species in decline. Funding is appropriated by Congress annually with each state allocated funding based on land area and population. Missouri is utilizing a GIS based approach to list areas of concern which they identify as Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs). Approximately 15 interested groups (State and Federal Agencies and NGO's) attended the meeting to discuss and identify COAs. States must have an acceptable Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy developed by October 2005 to continue to receive this funding from Congress. Partnerships between Federal and State management agencies within the Great Lakes Big Rivers Region are necessary for protecting and managing the fishery resources of that region. Partnerships in aquatic resource protection and management are an important component of the "Partnership and Accountability" priority of the Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future.

Contact: Tracy Hill

Fisheries Office Expands Partnerships to Include Four Legged Friends

Two Federal Protective Services officers, along with their dogs "Roxy" and "Katy", regularly use the boat barn of the Columbia Fishery Resources Office to maintain bomb materials identification skills. Our facility is conveniently located halfway between the officers' stations in St. Louis and Kansas City. Our boat barn is filled with the usual smells of an active fisheries monitoring program such as fish, nets, gasoline and motor oil. This makes it an ideal training facility, as the dogs must "sniff out" other specific dangerous smells from this array of background aromas. Partnership with Federal Protective Services allows Columbia FRO to expand communications with officers responsible for our staff and facility's safety and security. Additionally, the frequent presence of the officers and their canine partners in the facility may act as a deterrent to potential future criminal activities. In the next phase of the dogs' training, Columbia FRO will be taking the officers and their canine partners out on boats on the Missouri River. The dogs will need to be familiar with boarding and searching vessels when the officers assist the U.S. Coast Guard in the ports of St. Louis and Kansas City.

Contact: Joanne Grady

Annual Fisheries Coordination Meetings

Project Leader Tracy Hill along with Regional Fisheries Program staff participated in Annual Fisheries Coordination Meetings with the states of Iowa and Missouri. The purpose of the meetings was to improve communication and accountability to the Service's state partners regarding plans, accomplishments, and commitments. The meetings were convened to allow the State Fishery Management Agencies and the Service's Fisheries Program to discuss areas of mutual concern, improve communication, discuss problems (if any) and maintain effective working relationships. The meetings provided an excellent opportunity to identify challenges facing the state and federal fisheries programs, develop common commitment to achieve mutual goals and agree upon recommendations for future activities. Partnerships in aquatic resource protection and management are an important component of the "Partnership and Accountability" priority of the Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future.

Contact: Tracy Hill

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management Columbia FRO Hosts Gerry Jackson and Todd Turner



Fisheries ARD Gerry Jackson and Fishery Biologist Colby Wrasse remove sturgeon from gill nets on Missouri River.

On 17 November 2004, the Columbia Fishery Resources Office hosted the Region 3 Assistant Regional Director of Fisheries, Gerry Jackson and the Fish Hatcheries/Fish Health Team Leader, Todd Turner. Gerry and Todd spent the day pulling gill nets with Biological Technician Corey Lee, Project Leader Tracy Hill, and recent addition to the Columbia FRO staff Fishery Biologist Colby Wrasse on the Missouri River at Overton Bottoms in Rocheport, MO.

Experimental gill nets are a standard gear type utilized in the protocol for the Pallid Sturgeon and Associated Fish Community Assessment Project which is funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In four gill nets, two of five gill net-susceptible target species were captured, including 25 shovelnose sturgeon and two

sauger. Also captured were several species of Catostomids, including a river redhorse and a white sucker. Nine different species were captured in the gill nets. Work on this project allows the Columbia FRO to assist the Service's Fishery program to achieve its goal of identifying priority actions to eliminate the threats causing declines of native fish species.

Contact: Corey Lee

Leadership in Science and Technology

Columbia FRO works with Iowa State University on data analysis

The Columbia FRO has collected four years of fish community assessment data from three side channels and associated main channel habitats on the lower Missouri River. These side channels are managed by Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and vary in morphology, hydrology, and management. Through cooperation with the Iowa State University Coop Unit and the Statistics Department, habitat use by native fishes within these side channels and respective main channel habitats will be analyzed using multivariate techniques. Knowledge of how these habitats are used by juvenile and adult fishes will enable the FRO to make recommendations to refuge staff to adaptively manage these side channels to increase habitat diversity for the benefit of native fishes. Sound science is the foundation of successful aquatic resource management. Work on this project is an example of how the Columbia FRO is working with partners to conserve and manage self-sustaining populations of native fish.

Contact: Louise Mauldin

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Shallow Water Habitat Initiative

The fourth collaborative effort between multiple state and federal agencies on the Corps of Engineers efforts to develop a monitoring plan for the Shallow Water Habitat Initiative took place in Columbia, MO in November. Wyatt Doyle represented the Columbia Fisheries Resources Office in discussions with the Corps of Engineers on how they will implement a fisheries monitoring plan for shallow water habitat creation on the Lower Missouri River. Modifications of dike structures on the Lower Missouri River are being made to increase the availability of shallow water habitat in the Lower Missouri River. The extent that fish use these structures before and after modification is imperative to determining whether water flow changes will need to occur to further increase availability of habitat. Creating a scientifically sound monitoring and evaluation project is essential for peer scrutiny and continued enhancement of shallow water habitat. This needs a resource accomplishment!

Contact: Wyatt Doyle

Workforce Management

Columbia FRO biologist interviewed for Natural Resource Conservation Class

Two undergraduate students of the University of Missouri interviewed Louise Mauldin, Fishery Biologist of the Columbia FRO, for their Natural Resource Conservation class. Class assignment for the non-biology majors was to interview a professional in a natural resource field. Two sophomores, majoring in business, chose to learn more about the discipline of fisheries by interviewing a Fishery biologist. Questions about the general job duties of a fishery biologist, education, experience, and current job market, were just a few items discussed. The Fisheries Program relies on a broad range of professionals to accomplish its mission. Without their skills and dedication the Program could not succeed.

Contact: Louise Mauldin

Columbia FRO Biologist Receives Database and Statistics Training

Jennifer Johnson, Fishery Biologist, at the Columbia Fishery Resources Office, completed twelve hours of Microsoft Access training and sixteen hours of SAS training during October and November. The courses were offered by Information and Access Technology Services at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Microsoft Access courses focused on creating fields and tables, relationships and queries, and forms and reports. SAS training focused on data entry, regression, and analysis of variance. The knowledge gained through the Microsoft Access training will allow CFRO staff to establish and maintain databases for data collected during sampling. The SAS training will increase the staff's ability to analyze data collected quickly and efficiently.

Contact: Jennifer Johnson

Columbia FRO Welcomes New Fishery Biologist to our staff

On November 15th, Fishery Biologist Colby Wrasse joined the Columbia Fishery Resources Office. Wrasse joins Columbia after two and a half years service with the Carterville FRO in Southern Illinois. The Columbia FRO brought Wrasse aboard to assist with the ongoing pallid sturgeon monitoring project on the Lower Missouri River. While at Carterville, Wrasse worked mainly as a biologist on large rivers, examining habitat use of sturgeon on the Mississippi River and completing a three year project monitoring fisheries response to dredge spoil placement on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Wrasse is a graduate of Southern Illinois University Carbondale where he earned a Bachelor's of Science in Zoology.

Contact: Colby Wrasse