



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Cartersville National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

Accomplishment Report: December – January 2008

We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future. – George Bernard Shaw

The Cartersville National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance aquatic ecosystems in much of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers and portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio by working to protect and restore habitat, manage and control aquatic nuisance species, conserve and restore native aquatic species (particularly interjurisdictional fish such as sturgeon and paddlefish), and improve sport fishing on federal lands.

Our recent activities are summarized below, but for additional information or questions please feel free to contact us:

<p>Rob Simmonds, Project Leader (x14) Greg Conover, Assistant Project Leader (x13) Shelley Simmonds, Administrative Asst. (x10) Nate Caswell, Fishery Biologist (x12) Nathan Richards, Fishery Biologist (x17)</p>	<p>Cartersville NFWCO U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 9053 Route 148, Suite A Marion, IL 62959 (618) 997-6869 (618) 997-9185 (Fax) rob_simmonds@fws.gov</p>
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AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Carterville NFWCO Completes Fish Community Surveys for the Winter Season in the Middle Mississippi River

Carterville NFWCO completed pre-project monitoring of the fish community during the winter season in the Herculaneum and Trail of Tears reach of the Middle Mississippi River for the Stone Dike Alterations Project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St.



- Matt Wegener, USFWS

Carterville NFWCO biologists Nathan Richards (left) and Nate Caswell (right) brave the elements while trawling during December within the Trail of Tears reach of the Middle Mississippi River.

Louis District is planning a project that will alter the configuration of dike fields in the Herculaneum reach to restore some habitat diversity in the river. Notching of wing dikes and constructing chevron dikes will create island and side channel habitat that this particular reach is lacking. During November and December 2007, Carterville NFWCO conducted surveys of the fish community in these reaches to obtain baseline data for evaluating potential benefits of restoration for the fish community. A suite of fishery gears (electrofishing, mini-fyke nets, hoop nets, gill nets, and trawling) was used to capture a wide range of species. Surveys were also conducted at a similar "control" reach located near Trail of Tears State Park in

Missouri. This will help to determine if any changes in the fish community at Herculaneum are systemic or the result of restoration activities. – *Nathan Richards*

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Carterville NFWCO Contributes to Upper Illinois River Dispersal Barrier Panel Meeting

Carterville NFWCO recently attended the Dispersal Barrier Panel meeting held January 17, 2008 in Chicago, Illinois. This meeting is represented by individuals from federal, state, local, and private entities, and is designed to discuss all aspects of an acoustic network and an electric dispersal barrier designed to keep bighead and silver carp from entering the Great Lakes. The acoustic network consists of 12 stationary receivers and 38 tagged bighead and silver carp that are located within a 60-mile stretch of the upper Illinois River from Starved Rock Lock and Dam to the electric dispersal barrier near

Lockport Lock and Dam. This network is designed to monitor the movements and dispersal of bighead and silver carp in the upper Illinois River.

Carterville NFWCO biologist Nathan Richards presented information to the Panel which summarized all bighead and silver carp movement from the acoustic network in 2007. Major movements included 1 bighead carp that moved upstream through the Marseilles Lock and Dam, 1 bighead carp moved a total of 29 miles through the Marseilles Lock and Dam twice, and 2 silver carp moved downstream through the Starved Rock Lock and Dam and out of the study area. Although movement during 2007 was relatively limited, Carterville NFWCO expects movement rates to increase in spring 2008 during high water levels. Panel members used this information to discuss ways to improve the acoustic network in preparation for this expected increase in movement. – *Nathan Richards*

National Asian Carps Management and Control Plan Approved by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

Bighead, grass, and silver carps have established reproducing populations over a large geographic range in the central United States and probably will continue to expand unless a concerted, proactive effort is made to restrict their introduction and spread. Numerous strategies and plans to manage and control Asian carp species are actively being developed by federal, state, and tribal agencies; non-governmental organizations; private commercial interests; and the public.

The Asian Carp Working Group is a group that was comprised of members from several different agencies and organizations. This group's sole purpose was to develop a plan that would describe the required steps and procedures needed to prevent future introductions and manage existing populations. The final product recognized 48 strategies and 131 recommendations to manage and control Asian carp in the United States.

After years of hard work by the Asian Carp Working Group, approval of the '*Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States* was received from the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force in November 2007. The management plan provides a mechanism for national coordination of multi-agency efforts to control wild populations of Asian carps. Advance planning and coordination are essential to determine the availability of resources (e.g., staff, equipment, expertise, and funds) needed to effectively integrate and mobilize these resources, and to determine methods for evaluating success. Management and control of Asian carps will be most efficient and effective when actions are integrated within nationally or regionally coordinated strategies. – *Greg Conover*

- Richards and Wegener retrieved and downloaded data from 7 stationary receivers within the Marseilles and Dresden Island Pools in the upper Illinois River. Carterville NFWCO purchased and deployed 12 receivers in a 60 mile reach of the river which will detect movements of 38 bighead and silver carp tagged with transmitters. No significant movements were detected by the 7 stationary receivers during December.

AQUATIC HABITAT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- R. Simmonds continued working with others towards establishing the Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership. We are currently working to schedule a partnership meeting in April to determine goals and objectives that will help us to get the most out of a strategic planning workshop for National Fish Habitat Program (NFHAP) partnerships in the USFWS Midwest Region. Including the meeting and subsequent workshop, we should make major steps forward in becoming a fully recognized partnership under NFHAP and thus become eligible for funding (not to mention better focusing our efforts in the basin and better taking advantage of existing funding and programs).

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT



- Nate Caswell, USFWS
Ken Heflin has been volunteering his time at Cartersville NFWCO since the beginning of January 2008.

Volunteer Helps Out at Cartersville NFWCO

Cartersville NFWCO has recently been fortunate enough to receive a great deal valuable volunteer assistance. Ken Heflin, a recent graduate of Southern Illinois University, contacted our office in late 2007 and has been volunteering at Cartersville NFWCO since the beginning of January 2008. Ken recently completed his Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIUC), and is currently seeking employment in the Chicago, Illinois area. In the meantime he has been helping Cartersville NFWCO complete some much-needed maintenance work. Before attending SIUC, Ken was a carpenter's apprentice for four years. His carpentry, plumbing, and mechanical abilities have proven to be very valuable. With a great deal of upcoming fieldwork, Cartersville NFWCO is also planning to hire Ken on a limited appointment to fill our immediate staffing needs. Ken is an example of how the Service often depends on the time and skills of dedicated volunteers to accomplish its mission. – Nate Caswell

New Project Leaders Indoctrinated – Project Leader Academy Completed

New Project Leaders Mark Brouder, Roger Gordon, and Rob Simmonds recently traveled to our National Conservation and Training Center to attend a newly formed course designed to give us a jump start. USFWS found that we often had Project Leaders making 'discoveries' several years into their new assignments, often wondering why they hadn't 'heard of this sooner.' A major part of the course was dedicated to feeding us a great deal of information that will hasten our learning and improve our effectiveness. The combination of self-discovery exercises, instructors, guest speakers, and some time with seasoned leaders, provided numerous opportunities for us to make discoveries and ask lots of questions. In addition, we also had the opportunity to give some thought to our stations, where they are, and what our vision was for the future. This was a great exercise that left us with something concrete for us all to take back to our stations. We each presented our vision to our classmates, and I must say, we truly do have some inspiring new Project Leaders in USFWS. I'm certainly proud of the company I keep between the seasoned folks I work with and the new people coming on board. – *Rob Simmonds*

Carterville, Columbia, and La Crosse NFWCO's Come Together to Discuss and Solve Common Issues

For the first time in recent memory, staff from Project Leaders to Biologists to Technicians from each of the 'River Offices' came together to learn from each other and to discuss common challenges. The setting was informal, the topics were varied, and the outcome was resolution, or at least productive discussion, on a number of fronts. As important as any agenda topic were the introductions of each person present. Introductions alone took a couple hours for the roughly 15 people present given all the questions that followed each introduction and the discussion and suggestions that were generated. Topics covered throughout the two day meeting included implementation of HACCP plans to minimize spread of aquatic nuisance species through our activities, data analysis/study design, WRDA, technical assistance to NWR's, collection of pallid sturgeon broodstock, NFHAP partnerships, fish passage projects, outreach (including a 'turn in program' in La Crosse County for unwanted medications so they don't end up in surface waters causing problems such as endocrine disruption in fish), sampling gears and techniques. – *Rob Simmonds*