

UMRCC Fish Technical Session

Fall Meeting

Date: October 29, 2020

Time: 1PM-4:30PM

Location: Virtual Only

WebEx: <https://mminsusa.webex.com/mminsusa/e.php?MTID=m9f80bcd04bb607c17deb27ac13f0f8ce>

Call-in number: 1(877) 934-4843

Participant code: 67698821

~55 Attendees

Agenda:

1:00 Greetings and UMRCC Coordinator Report--Neal Jackson

UMRCC Spring Virtual Meeting-FTS to host Spring FTS virtual meeting prior to UMRCC Spring Meeting

Neal Jackson requested an update to the Fisheries Plan

1:15 Lock & Dam 22 Fish Passage Project Update--Mark Cornish (USACE)

Please reach out to Mark Cornish for presentation information; mark.a.cornish@usace.army.mil

No questions

1:40 Tournament Bowfishing in Illinois: Scale and Impact on Freshwater Fish Communities--Jeff Stein (IL Natural History Survey)

Please reach out to Jeff Stein for presentation information; jastein@illinois.edu

(Q) Nick Schlessler: How does bowfishing harvest compare between commercial and native species? (A) Jeff Stein: Did not make comparisons between commercial and native species, but the data is available

(Q) Brian Nerbonne: How does the harvest from tournaments compare with what is available? Are they selecting for species, or just reflecting what is out there? (A) Jeff Stein: Anglers are attuned to species preferred habitat. Anglers are savvy to know where large body fish are congregating.

2:05 LTRM Fish Vital Rates--Andy Bartels (WI DNR)

Please reach out to Andy Bartels for presentation information; abartels@contractor.usgs.gov

(Q) Jeff Janvrin: How is water chemistry of origin being determined? Do you have locational data on where fish were sampled and natal origin to plot occurrence in the floodplain? Are bluegill migrating great distance to spawn? (A) Andy Bartels: Too soon to tell. More analyses need to be done.

(Q) John West: 2018 microchemistry, where do open rivers show on the graph? Mixture of migrant vs local.

2:30 Break

2:35 Discussion: “Willow Cat” (Tadpole Madtom) Regulations on the Upper Mississippi River (Scott Gritters)

Please reach out to Scott Gritters for presentation information; scott.gritters@dnr.iowa.gov

Rebekah Anderson and Scott Gritters emailed a willow cat/general bait questionnaire to state reps (responses not listed in this section, included separately)

Tadpole madtoms are backwater dependent species. Why are they listed as historical below Pool 20?

MN doesn't allow bait imports

Steve, Lake City, MN: harvest by a license bait dealer, can be sold to bait shop, no transport in and out of the state of MN, capture within the water body and use there

Jim Lamer: In 2015, we did really well catching tadpole madtoms using tandem mini-fykes, n=291 in Pool 19 (from backwaters and vegetated main channel borders). If an interest to target them, could be a good gear to use. Can share the data if interested (response to comment about madtoms being difficult to sample)

Dave Glover: <https://ifishillinois.org/invasive/madtoms.html>

Heidi Keuler: Tadpole madtom - OREIT project too maybe? I like IL DNR's page.

3:00 Discussion: Bait Regulations on the Upper Mississippi River (Rebekah Anderson)

MN: Strict bait rules in MN, adequate to protect resources, enforcement is difficult and confusing. Chipping away at bait rule modifications, specific allowance for caste nets for gizzard shad, created two exceptions to generalized bait rules. Need better enforcement and interpretation clarity

IA: (Scott Gritters) Get in the weeds quickly, must get a better answer to our anglers. Commonly asked to open bait rules, not easy. Commonly get conservation officers saying only use native species, but earthworm, black cricket are not native species. It becomes difficult, open to interpretation, bait rules need change, but who is going to make the change? You will get bombarded with hatred

WI: (Jeff Janvrin) Adequate to protect, however, worth while to take a look if modifications are needed. Willing to be a part of the conversation, don't see a need right now, unless peer reviewed science states willow cats, ect. detrimental to fisheries

WI harvest of bait from Miss River: BAIT-MINNOW HARVEST IS CLOSED TO ALL PERSONS ON ALL VHS KNOWN AND SUSPECT WATERS. Minnow harvest gear is prohibited on these waters. Waters include Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, the Winnebago system, the Mississippi River, the Wisconsin River up to the Prairie du Sac Dam and all waters connected to these waters up to the first barrier impassable to fish.

IL: (Dave Glover) Are adequate, agree they can be confusing, generally not allowed to move fish between water bodies, disease and AIS, definitely to flexible if new info arises, regs are different across shared waters

MO: (Travis Moore) Interesting, MO doesn't do much with bait rules, anytime we have it's a big drawn out process, common sense things become difficult, not always worth the headache

Neal Jackson 2019 report entire laws regs and policies:

<http://www.mrbp.org.php72-38.lan3-1.websitetestlink.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Live-Bait-Pathway-Report-Final-Report-June-14.pdf>

Dave Glover: <https://www.nbc.com/saturday-night-live/video/bassomatic/n8631>

Andy Bartels (WI): walk around on ice the end of year you see what everyone is using laying on the ice, bait goes into water when ice melts. Concerned about that. Rules are good. Compliance to the rules? Anglers assume bait is a part of natural system, not a big deal

Scott Gritters: We have to get to an answer about moving bait from state to state, something game wardens can enforce. Solution: Form a committee?

Neal Jackson: Glad we have raised awareness and started this discussion; take problem in manageable pieces, clarify, develop

Rebekah Anderson: Bait comparison table to be listed on UMRCC website

3:20 FTS Updates:

- Bowfishing Letter
- *Planning to revise, exec board agreed letter needed work. Negative tone. Bowfishing as a disturbance factor portrayed more negative than other water uses. Expand letter audience beyond fish chiefs, state the need for more information on rough fish that bowfishers target, include Jeff's research. Rebekah Anderson requested help. Jason DeBoer agreed to help revise letter*
- UMR Creel Survey
- *Creel Survey committee formed, reps from all states. Have met 3 times. Agreed to move forward with planning despite hurdles and unknowns. Funding, state involvement, personnel, states' abilities to receive funding. Discusses states' specific goals and objectives. Discussed Rec Use vs Standard Creel. States agreed Rec Use is better. Historically FTS adopted the Rec Use Survey over the Standard Creel in the 70s. Next meeting in November to discuss pool scale locations. If others are interested in joining the committee please reach out to Rebekah Anderson (Rebekah.anderson@illinois.gov)*
- Fisheries Compendium distribution (Nick Schlessler)
- *Compendium is now on the UMRCC FTS page*
- *Updating FTS email list, please let Rebekah Anderson know if you are not on it*
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3:40 Agency Updates **Representatives, please send updates to Rebekah.Anderson@illinois.gov prior to meeting

Agency Updates

Minnesota (Nick Schlessler):

Staffing changes –

Dan Dieterman retired from the MN DNR after 30+ years of fisheries work in August of 2020

COVID Policy –

Work from home until at least June 2021. Limited to 1 occupant for vehicles and 2 per boat. Staff can access office, but must report to supervisor and complete self administered health screening prior to going in. Limited overnight stays allowed with approval, but out of state travel unlikely in foreseeable future.

LTRM Update—

All LTRM netting was completed for all three sampling periods per Minnesota Covid 19 guidelines with a crew of 2 People. Trawling was completed for Periods 1 and 2 and some electrofishing was done to collect vital rates fish only.

Top 6 species count to date. Some jars still need to worked up

BLGL 1226

ERSN 1105

WTBS 843

WDSN 770

GZSD 551

YWPH 515

Large Lake Update –

Second highest Walleye CPUE and highest Yellow Perch CPUE on record captured during 2020 Gillnetting in early October. We seem to have produced strong Walleye year classes at least 2-3 of the last 4 years. This includes what we believe is the first back to back strong Walleye year classes since 1965.

Regulations update –

New regulations on MN/WI border waters went into place in spring of 2020 (Feb in MN April in WI). Have been broadly accepted especially with the high use/harvest seen during the spring of 2020 as the COVID pandemic set in.

(Q) Ryan Hupfeld: Nick, are there any evaluations of the effectiveness of reduced bag limits happening?

(A) Nick Schlessler: Nothing immediate. The next creel cycle on Pool 4 would be scheduled for 2023 or 2024 I'd have to look for sure.

(A) Ryan - we are not doing any formal evaluation of the regulation changes. It would have been a monumental task since we made changes for most gamefish species. The intent of the changes was not to address any specific population issues. We took a much broader approach to

"modernize" regulations that have been in place for 30 to 60 years. It was also an attempt to bring us closer to inland water regulations of both states. Also gave us a lot of input and perspective from anglers.

Wisconsin (Jeff Janvrin):

Field work on the Mississippi River by Wisconsin was limited to essential site visits for HREPs or channel maintenance coordination from March – August. Agency COVID protocols were followed by the River team to allow for fall lake unit, adult walleye/sauger, YOY walleye/sauger and HREP sampling. However, agency COVID protocols still limit participation in field visits to only those meetings that are essential. The majority of WDNR staff have been teleworking since mid-March with expectations this will continue into 2021.

Prior to the fall 2020 field work, staff have been entering historic fisheries data, participating in numerous web-based meetings, and sifting through emails. Following is a summary of the projects and sampling staff have done since March.

Sampling

Lake unit sampling was conducted in Pools 5, 5A, 7, and 10. This is part of an annual fall backwater electro fishing sampling that rotates annually/semi-annually. This includes continuation of post project assessment of a mitigation project at Pettibone Lagoon in Pool 8, which will be sampled in November.

Late fall HREP assessment is currently underway at several locations in Pools 4 – 11. Sampling of pre and post HREP sites is coordinated with the states of Iowa and Minnesota to avoid overlap of sampling within the same locations. Some HREP sites WDNR has/will sample are: Pool 8 Phase II, Long Lake (7), Iowa waters of Reno Bottoms (9), Lake Onalaska (7), Johnson Island (6), Wing Lake (8), Ambro Slough (10), McGregor Lake (10), Spring Lake (5) and others. Adult walleye and sauger sampling was conducted in mid-October to assess size structure of populations below three different locks and dams (4, 7 and 8).

YOY walleye and sauger sampling below locks and dams 4, 7 and 8 is recently completed. Sampling occurs after main channel water temps have been below 10C which occurred week of Oct 19. WDNR has been doing this assessment for decades. This sampling is conducted to determine trends in YOY CPUE to determine year class strength. Preliminary results from tail of Lock and Dam 4 suggest 2020 YOY cpue for walleye and sauger were below long term average. Otolith sampling is underway in a variety of pools following the guidance provided by the Wisconsin DNR. Ten bluegill per half inch group will be collected from Pools 5 and 10. In Pool 8, WDNR is collecting samples from 2 different quality of over-wintering sites (10 BLG/half inch/site) to see if quality of OW habitat shows any differences. These samples will be compared to similar otolith sampling being done by Iowa and Illinois within overwintering sites in their areas. Additionally, WDNR is collecting largemouth bass otoliths from overwintering sites throughout Pool 8 (10/inch) and yellow perch from Lake Onalaska in Pool 7 (10/inch). All these lucky stones will keep folks busy throughout the winter, which will be welcomed if WDNR continues to work remotely in the coming months. Thanks to Iowa DNR for passing along advise and lessons learned from their past otolith sampling.

Projects

WDNR staff have been busy with several projects along our border. HREP planning is ongoing for Lower Pool 10 HREP (IA), Reno Bottoms (9-IA/MN) and Harper's Slough flood repair (9-IA). McGregor Lake HREP (10-WI) went from Plans and Specs development to awarded just a

few weeks ago. Contractor plans on starting placement of some sand and fines this year yet, and tree clearing during the winter. Channel maintenance had already placed sand at the site over the summer. Another project staff have been busy with is Pierce County Island in upper Pool 4 to be implemented under Section 204 authority. A final feasibility report has been completed and WDNR is currently negotiating cooperators agreement.

Channel maintenance dredging kept staff busy with weekly internal coordination meetings throughout the summer. The bulk of the workload has been carried by Sara Strassman.

Illinois (Dave Glover):

- COVID19: majority of Division of Fisheries staff encouraged to telework outside of field work; all field work has been approved and now allowed to accumulate overtime; budget uncertainties remain, but Division of Fisheries is likely not going to be as affected due to how funding is provided compared to other offices/divisions.
- Staffing: lots of retirements, so many employees are pulling double or triple duty; announcement for Commercial Fishing Biologist position closed at the beginning of September and hope to have someone in place by end of the year.
- Sampling: majority of large river sampling is ongoing/complete (includes historical fixed site sampling, Long-Term Electrofishing (LTEF) random site sampling, and of course Long-Term Resource Monitoring sampling); some sampling cancelled due to lack of help (e.g., catfish hoop netting / tagging) and low water prevented access to some historical sites.
- INHS update: INHS with assistance from ILDNR tagged 226 Flathead catfish with vhf tags on the Dixon Pool of the Rock River to evaluate natural and artificial nest use. Also, to evaluate dam passage and movement in the UMR, INHS and IDNR, along with USGS and USFWS, several fish were tagged this summer from 6/10/2020 to 6/23/2020. Efforts results in tagging 150 Bigmouth Buffalo and 132 Asian carp across Pool 15, 16, and 19.
- New HREP: Quincy Bay (Pool 21) was recently approved as an HREP project by USACE Mississippi Valley Division and either the Quincy Bay Area Restoration and Enhancement Association or the Quincy Bay Park District will serve as the non-federal sponsor

Iowa (Scott Gritters):

Guttenberg Fish Management:

- Several HREPs in the works on Pools 9 and 10
- Conway; McGregor Lake, Lower Pool 10 islands; (Planning repair of Harpers Slough flood damages)
- Lansing bridge replacement to begin 2023; mussel surveys in area this fall to determine best staging area
- Bluff Slough train derailment restoration- Mussel restoration stockings completed this fall with Ongoing Mudpuppy work and coordination with Trustees for habitat restoration
- Balltown train ethanol spill settlement is near
- Summer LTRM style electrofishing was suspended this year due to Covid, however local staff were able to complete walleye wingdam surveys

- Overwintering surveys taking place now on past and future HREP areas
- Installed a new accessible boat platform in Lansing has received raving reviews from customers
- Presently collecting walleye and sauger for mercury sampling

Bellevue Fish Management:

- Worked with the City of Bellevue to receive a MFT grant and finally able to replace the broken ramp this fall (Pool 13)
- Working with Jackson County Conservation Board on replacing the Spruce Creek Ramp (Pool 12) in near future
- Had several fish kills this season, most natural kills due to warm summer but also had a large ammonia spill that killed many fish and mussels in the Bee Branch Basin in Dubuque. Some ammonia may have made it into Pool 12
- Lots of issues with Willow Cats and bait rule interpretation
- Covid impact on Tournament Fishing, some cancelations and lots of adjustments in procedures
- Numerous sovereign lands permit due to low water and years of extensive flooding. Mostly major erosion issues with landowners and business along the river.
- Night walleye surveys at Guttenberg- Low catch rates but some decent sauger reproduction maybe
- I-74 Bridge replacement is behind schedule but lots of mussel surveys going on and planning on what the environmental impacts will be with the replacement bridge
- Starting overwintering EF surveys - Trying to hit Sunfish, Stone and Tippies Lakes in Pool 12, Middle Sabula in Pool 13 and Beaver Island in Pool 14.
- Lots of effort in getting the 2020 UMRCC face to face ready to go, then dismantling the 2020 UMRCC and now starting conversations on the 2021 virtual meeting in Iowa

Fairport Fish Management Station:

- Random electrofishing in Huron Island. 22 random sites were completed within the Huron Island complex. Some of these sites were within the HREP. I also collected some spines off channel catfish and flathead catfish during this survey for aging. They will be processed this winter. I am planning on doing some electrofishing within Huron Island this fall.
- Collecting fish for Lewis Bruce's Statewide Mercury study in Pool 16. The list of species that we needed to collect includes crappies, bluegill, largemouth bass, white bass, northern pike, freshwater drum, walleye, and flathead catfish. Everything has been collected for this study except we need to get some additional pike and flathead catfish.
- Jeremiah Haas has been experimenting with mussel cages here at the hatchery.
- Turtle sampling was completed for the Statewide Turtle study. Baited turtle nets were set in Pool 16, Wiese Slough (Cedar River), and Deep Lakes (Sand Pits in Muscatine County). Fairport has also been collecting turtles on the hatchery grounds during pond harvest.

- We are currently working on night electrofishing for walleye and saugers in Pool 16 in Davenport. We have also been collecting white bass during this survey and collecting aging structures from them as well.
- Due to Covid we put some of our sampling projects on hold this summer. These include Pool 16 random electrofishing, Pool 16 random hoop netting, Pool 18 Random sampling, and trammel netting for shovelnose sturgeon on Pool 18. We plan on continuing with these projects next year.
- Reach 8-9 sampling was put on hold this past spring and summer due to Covid. We are planning on starting that sampling next year as well.
- I have been gathering information/data on channel catfish and flathead catfish on the Mississippi River for Iowa's Statewide Catfish Management Plan.
- The Master Walleye Circuit World Walleye Championship was recently held in the Quad Cities and that brought up some questions and discussion about the use of willow cats as bait.

Bellevue Research Team:

- We completed pre project sampling for the 2nd consecutive year at Steamboat Island HREP. Backwater areas are very shallow and hard to navigate. I haven't worked up the data yet, but catches were largely composed of smaller Bluegills and Largemouth Bass.
- We also completed sampling post riprap placement at Albany Island. Catch rates of sportfish (e.g., Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, etc.) were greatly increased compared to pre riprap placement.
- Walleye wingdam sampling was completed on Pools 11 and 13 to evaluate length frequency and effectiveness of slot limit. Data has not been worked up yet.
- Yellow Perch tracking has been ongoing in Pool 9 for the past year. Yellow Perch appear to be using habitats with little to no velocity and in substantial amounts of aquatic vegetation, especially Vallisneria. Again, all anecdotal at this point.

*Scott Gritters: ** Mercury sampling presentation in the future, UMR fish and how they test for mercury*

Missouri (Travis Moore):

FWS (Rebecca Neeley):

- USGS deployed 2 FWS real time receivers in support of INHS commercial harvest
 - Boston Bay – Pool 18
 - Credit Island – Pool 16
- Deployed stationary receivers in Pools 5A-10, INHS deployed FWS receivers in Pools 14-19
- Deployed 2 additional real time receivers in support of MNDNR efforts in Pool 8
 - Assisting with the tracking of 5 recently tagged AC in Pool 8
- Tagged five AC in Pool 8 in coordination with the MNDNR
- FWS built new hydroacoustics boat over last winter.

- Hydroacoustic scans were conducted in Pool 8 in support of the MNDNR proposed MUM events.
- eDNA sampling was conducted in Pools 13 & 14 in mid-October, results are pending
- eDNA sampling will occur the week of Nov 2 in Pool 8 in support of the MUM efforts
- Conducted fish health surveys with the Fish Health Center in Pool 5, 8 & 10.
- Support the U of MN, Jeff Whitty from Peter Sorensen's lab, in the collection of fish for tagging in Pool 8.

USACE:

Rock Island: Karen Hagerty

STL: Brian Johnson

USGS:

UMESC: Marybeth Brey