



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

La Crosse Fish Health Center

December & January 2012 Monthly Highlights

The La Crosse Fish Health Center (LFHC) is located in Onalaska, Wisconsin and is responsible for fish health management within the Big Rivers/Great Lakes region of the upper Midwest. Primary responsibilities include inspection, certification and diagnostic services for federal hatcheries, providing inspection and laboratory services for state, federal and tribal agencies, surveillance of target pathogens as part of the National Wild Fish Health Survey, providing training in fish health management, monitoring use of drugs and chemicals for national fish hatchery use, researching fish health management and assisting in design and implementation of surveillance, and control of invasive aquatic pathogens in cooperation with state, tribal, federal and non-governmental agencies.

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Two Year Bait Fish Study Comes to a Close

By Beka McCann & Corey Puzach

December of 2011 marked the end of a two year long bait fish study conducted by staff at the La Crosse Fish Health Center. The lab began testing bait fish, including fathead minnows, golden shiners, and white suckers, in February of 2010. The study was the result of a legal settlement by four baitfish companies that were charged with violating the Lacey Act by importing bait fish from outside the state without valid import permits and health certificates. The Lacey Act makes it unlawful "to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any fish or wildlife taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law or regulation of any state or in violation of any foreign law."

The investigation was a joint effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The companies pled guilty to violations of the Lacey Act and were sentenced to fines, probation, up to two random site visits per year, and testing of monthly imports for two years.



Fathead minnow displaying lesions and hemorrhaging USFWS B. McCann

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Baitfish continued

The companies submitted a list of their anticipated imports for each month and lots were picked at random to be tested. All testing occurred at the expense of the baitfish companies.

All fish were tested for the presence of viral and bacterial pathogens and parasites. Over the course of two years, many parasites were detected, the most serious being the invasive Asian Tape-



Golden shiner infected with Asian Tapeworm USFWS B. Lasee

worm *Bothriocephalus acheilognathi*. The lab also isolated several species of pathogenic bacteria including *Aeromonas salmonicida* and *Renibacterium salmoninarum*. Also, the lab was able to detect the presence of many viruses, including golden shiner virus, fathead minnow nidovirus, and a number of non-target and currently unknown viruses. These unknown viruses are currently undergoing further characterization, including electron microscopy, sequencing, and genetic analysis.

Cool Water Fish Culture Workshop Presentation

by Corey Puzach

In January, Fish Biologist Corey Puzach presented at the 2012 Cool Water Fish Culture Workshop. The workshop was held in Stevens Point Wisconsin. Attendees represented many state, federal, and tribal conservation organizations. Representatives from several commercial vendors were also in attendance. There were more than 80 people in attendance and more than 30 presentations. Corey's presentation summarized the preliminary results from a two year study examining viruses, bacteria and parasites of baitfish from Wisconsin.

Asian Carp Tissue Cell Culture

By Eric Leis

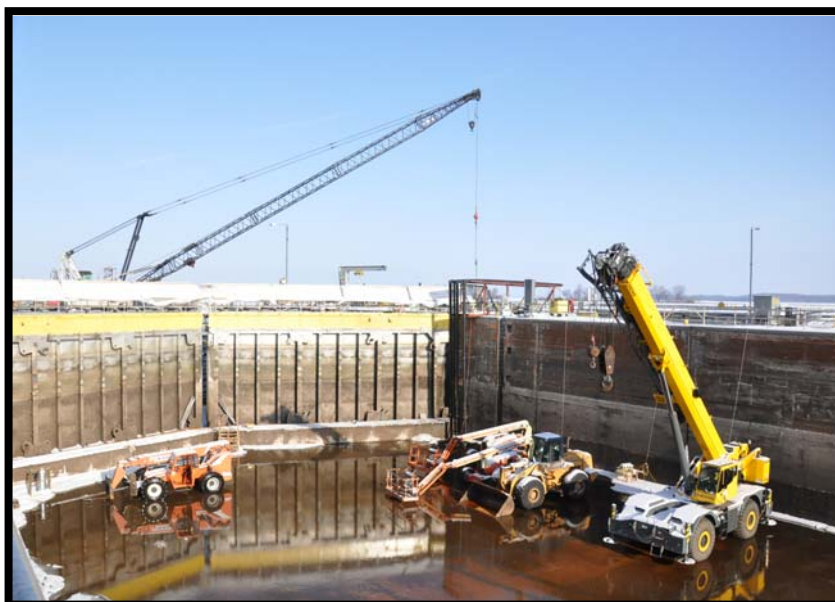
A meeting was held with staff from the La Crosse Fish Health Center, the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center (USGS), and the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse with the hope of finding a piscicide that can be used to fight the Asian carp invasion. The first step in the process is to develop cell lines from big-head and silver carp tissues. Once tissue cell culture lines have been established then the hope is to test an array of chemicals to determine if they have the potential for application as a piscicide. While the cells are not yet ready to be tested, they are showing promising signs that perhaps they will be ready soon for chemical testing. Until they are ready, all we can do is wait and watch the cells grow.

Fish Health Center Goes on a Good Dam Tour

by Sarah Leis

In January, La Crosse District Refuge invited staff from the fisheries offices at the co-located resource center on a tour of Lock and Dam 7 on the Mississippi River.

The tour was coordinated by Sharonne Baylor with the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. This year the Army Corp. of Engineers was doing routine maintenance of the Lock and Dam. The tour provided a unique look at Lock and Dam 7 because the chamber was empty of water. Scheduled maintenance like this occurs every 13 to 20 years to make any required repairs and repaint the chamber gates.



A view of the equipment required to repair the Lock and Dam USFWS S. Leis

Public Outreach

Kids Ice Fishing Event at Genoa National Fish Hatchery

by Sarah Leis

Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) hosted the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Fisheries Services (FUMFS) annual ice fishing event. This was the third year Genoa NFH volunteered to have the ice fishing clinic on a hatchery pond. Staff from the La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), the La Crosse Fish Health Center (LFHC), Game Warden Dale Hochhausen (WI-DNR), and Coulee Region Adventures assisted Genoa NFH and FUMFS volunteers throughout the event. Eric Leis gave an informative safety talk and ice fishing tips prior to allowing children and their families on the pond to catch fish. As families fished for trout on the hatchery



Ken Visger, board member of FUMFS, welcoming participants to the ice fishing event USFWS S. Leis



Nathan Eckert helping a young angler hook a fish USFWS S. Leis

pond, volunteers and service employees went around and provided fishing tips, baited hooks, and removed trout. Many thanks to Genoa NFH staff, FUMFS volunteers, and other service employees for their hard work at putting on another successful ice fishing event.



Eric Leis providing assistance to ice fishing participants USFWS S. Leis

Leadership in Science and Technology

FBMS Training

by Ashley Kast

Ashley Kast, La Crosse Fish Health Center, and Nancy Christopherson, La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, attended FBMS training the week of December 12th at the Regional Office in Bloomington, MN. The four day training included information about roles and what each participant will be doing in FBMS.