



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# ONE Voice

*Outreach, News, and Events*

*Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge / Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office*

## September 2015



**Refuge Staff Assist with Wildfires (September):** The Fish and Wildlife Service's fire management program includes fuels management, wildfire management, and wildfire prevention. This wildfire season has been a particularly difficult one, with fires all throughout the west, risking people's homes and lives. This year, we were able to send one of our Biological Science Technicians, Madeline Prush, out west to help work with a crew on one of those fires. Madeline played an integral role in wildfire management as she served on a team at the Scotchman's Gulch Fire near Missoula, Montana. She spent long days hiking, digging lines, and suppressing the fire. We are so proud of her work for FWS and happy to have her home safe and sound! (Contact: Madeline Prush)

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife Project (PFWP) – Grabowski (September):** In September, staff from Iroquois NWR and the New York Field Office completed a Partners for Fish and Wildlife project on private property in Middleport, NY, just northwest of the refuge. The project involved restoring a wet hay field to a 2-acre emergent marsh. The restoration area had been in a hay crop for many years, but the area was often too wet to cut hay resulting in the area being left fallow. USFWS staff constructed a small berm and removed soil, creating a wetland dominated by shallow water with two deeper holes to ensure some open water persists throughout the growing season. Unfavorable weather and equipment problems caused several construction delays, but the final product is a beautiful emergent wetland that will provide habitat for dozens of wetland dependent wildlife species. (Contact: Paul Hess)



**Erie Canal Aquatic Invasive Species Surveys (August 31-September 4):** Lower Great Lakes FWCO biologists completed their fall survey of invasive plants and fish throughout the New York State Erie Canal. We are pleased to report that Hydrilla has not migrated down the Erie Canal from Tonawanda Creek. Tonawanda Creek was treated for Hydrilla this past June. No new invasive fish or plant species were found. (Contact: Sandy Keppner)



**Satellite Tag Search (September 1):** At midnight on August 31<sup>st</sup>, four pop-off satellite tags (PSATs) detached from lake trout in the depths of Lake Ontario and headed for the surface. Within a few hours, solar panels on the tags had powered them enough to transmit their positions to native species biologists at the Lower Great Lakes FWCO. This began a two week search for the first release group of PSATs, which were spread from Hamilton, Ontario to Rochester, NY. Although the tags are extremely difficult to see in the water, using a combination of satellite positioning and radio telemetry, all four tags were recovered. These tags provide highly accurate depth and temperature habitat preference information for lake trout that would be impossible to reliably collect any other way. (Contact: Curt Karboski)

**Invasive Species Crew Brings It Home Big (September 1):** Ever seen an American eel this big? Neither have we! This American eel was collected on the lower Niagara River near Youngstown during an electrofishing survey as part of the Lower Great Lakes FWCO Invasive Species Early Detection & Monitoring program. American eel are fairly rare for us, and this is one of the largest we've ever collected! (Contact: Robert Haltner)



Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge  
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/iroquois/>

<https://www.facebook.com/IroquoisNationalWildlifeRefuge>

Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/lowergreatlakes/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LGLFWCO>



**Fisheries Staff Assist with USGS Lake Trout Cruise (September 8-14):** Lower Great Lakes FWCO biologists Stacy Furgal and Curt Karboski assisted DOI partners - the USGS Lake Ontario Biological Station- with their fall lake trout sampling cruise. Biologists worked aboard the 70ft. research vessel Kaho pulling nets, processing fish and extracting coded wire tags. The fall lake trout survey monitors the population and age structure of both stocked and naturally reproduced trout along the south shore of Lake Ontario, providing researchers with valuable information on the recovery of this important native species. (Contact: Curt Karboski)

**Buffalo Audubon Career Fair (September 19):** The Buffalo Audubon Society hosted its first annual Career Fair at Beaver Meadows (Java Center, NY), focusing on educating the public and high school students about environmental careers and the types of work being completed by natural resource organizations. Although attendance was light, the audience reached was from a large geographic area including Tonawanda, Alden, Newfane, Lockport, Amherst, Warsaw, Letchworth, Holland, Toronto, Ontario. Other organizations conducted nature walks, bird banding, and videography, while the Lower Great Lakes FWCO demonstrated some science and technology equipment used for side scan sonar imagery and mapping. It was great to support our ongoing partnership with Buffalo Audubon at this new event. (Contact: Chris Castiglione)

**Outdoor Environmental Education Fun (September 19, 26-27):** Staff from the Lower Great Lakes FWCO were excited to participate in the 15th Annual Reinstein Woods Fall Festival in Cheektowaga, NY. The festival saw over 2,500 visitors who explored nature activities, exhibits, and live animals brought to them by more than 30 environmental and nature-related organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Service. More fun art and science projects were created the following week at the New York Power Authority's (NYPA) Wildlife Festival, including learning the art of gyotaku (fish printing) using replicas of local freshwater fish. The NYPA Wildlife Festival received nearly 18,000 visitors. The event was a great opportunity for sharing our conservation message and getting to know our community. (Contact: Denise Clay)



**Urban Students Learn about Nature through SNAP! (September 21):** Two 4th grade classrooms from the Elmwood Village Charter School had the fortune of experiencing the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge through the eye of a lens during our Students, Nature and Photography (SNAP!) program. This was the first time this Buffalo City School has worked with Lower Great Lakes FWCO and Iroquois NWR biologists and volunteers to learn about and photograph nature, as well as write about the experience. Students will receive a framed print of their selected photograph that includes their reflections to share with friends and family. (Contact: Denise Clay)

**Fish Passage Project on Chautauqua Creek, Westfield, NY (September 25):** Rock ramps were constructed below two dams on Chautauqua creek to allow migratory fish such as steelhead trout access to an additional 10 miles of high quality spawning and nursery habitat. A previous project on the lower dam created a notch where wood boards can be inserted to stop sea lamprey upstream access during their migration. Construction was completed at the end of August. Fish surveys by New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Chautauqua County Soil and Water Conservation District and Lower Great Lakes FWCO biologists in late September found steelhead upstream of both barriers. Construction of a rock ramp at the third barrier will be completed in 2016. This project was funded by the Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. (Contact: Betsy Trometer)

**Learning About Sturgeon at the Salmon River Hatchery Open House (September 26):** In conjunction with National Fishing and Hunting Day, staff from the Lower Great Lakes FWCO participated in the 20th Annual NYSDEC Salmon River Fish Hatchery Open House in Altmar, NY. Activities highlighted fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation opportunities in the Salmon River Greenway and included environmental education programs and displays; stream ecology for kids; hatchery tours; fly-fishing demonstrations; fishing instruction and outdoor recreation related vendors. Over 2,000 people visited the Lower Great Lakes FWCO display featuring a 4-foot lake sturgeon model, providing kids an opportunity to experience what it's like to be a Junior Fish Biologist! (Contact: Denise Clay)