



President's Message, *Brian Metzke*

As the end of 2015 approaches several members of our Chapter are busy preparing for the 2016 annual conference. There are frequent meetings of the planning committee, website updates and management of registrant information. Decisions are being made regarding presentation formats, banquet menus and the conference schedule. The annual conference truly is a product of the preparation by a determined group of dedicated individuals. And in this particular case, the conference has required coordination between two organizations (ILAFS and ILMA).

Of course, the success of the annual conference also is dependent upon the attendees. Attendees' support (both financially and with their presence and participation) is the elemental substance of the annual conference. Looking back at the best conferences of the past decade it is clear attendance is tied to event quality. As individuals, attendees benefit from successful conferences as well. Conferences keep attendees abreast of projects

and studies occurring throughout the state, broaden their understanding of fisheries science and develop social connections that can continue for decades.

I acknowledge current political environment has made it difficult to fully participate in our careers or educations. None of us know if these struggles will continue into the annual conference season, but be assured that the conference planning committee is dedicated to bringing our Chapter's members an outstanding educational and social experience this spring. ...*(continued page 3)*



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Chapter Objectives:

- Promotes training of fisheries professionals.
- Provides education outreach to the citizens of Illinois.
- Fosters research in fisheries and aquatic sciences.
- Provides sound fisheries policy information.
- Enhances communication and synergistic relationships amongst fisheries professionals.

Chapter Officers and Chairpersons

President: Brian Metzke

President-Elect: Steve Pescitelli

Secretary: Jim Lamer

Treasurer: Rich Lewis

Past President: Scott Stuewe

Excom Members at Large: Karen Rivera/Kevin Irons

Committee Chairpersons:

Archival: Rich Lewis

Arrangements: Scott Stuewe

Awards: Nerissa McClelland

Continuing Education: Ben Lubinski

Environmental Concerns: Rob Colombo/
Randy Sauer

IL Environmental Council: Vic Santucci

IL Wildlife Action Team: Trent Thomas

Membership: Matt Diana

Newsletter: Brian Metzke/Mark Fritts/ Jason
DeBoer

Raffle: Blake Ruebush

Resolutions: Rob Hilsabeck

Student Concerns: Nerissa McClelland

Student Subunits:

Eastern Illinois: Hanna Kruckman

Southern Illinois: Alex Loubere

University of Illinois: David Bogner

Western Illinois: Eli Lampo

Website: Matt Diana/Ann Holtrop

NCD Committee Reports Representatives:

Centrarchid: Josh Sherwood

Esocid: Rob Colombo

Ictalurid: Jeremy Tiemann

Rivers and Streams: Trent Thomas/Steve Pescitelli

Walleye: Jason DeBoer/Mike Garthaus

Thanks to Our 2015 Corporate Members

The Chapter thanks the Professional Association of Conservation Resource Managers (PACRM) for their continued support of our annual conference.

The Chapter also thanks our 2015 corporate members. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting our organization, please contact the membership committee chairman, Matt Diana (mattd@illinois.edu), for more information.



**Illini
Muskie
Alliance**



**Illinois Council
Trout Unlimited**

President's Message

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And, if the ineffectiveness of our State government continues and your ability to attend is threatened, I suggest you explore untraditional means of making the trip to Springfield; double up on rooms, stay with one of the many people who live in Springfield or apply for travel grants.

Let's show the public that we are dedicated to providing quality fisheries science despite our newfound burdens.

Sincerely,

Brian

A Note On Membership Dues, Brian Metzke

There are two avenues for paying membership dues to the Chapter in a typical year: 1) Paying directly to the Chapter through our website or indirectly while paying Parent Society dues, or 2) including dues in the annual conference registration fees. Please note that this second option will not be available this year as we are having a joint conference with the Lake Management Association.

This year, your membership renewal options will be:

1) Paying directly to the Chapter through our website or indirectly while paying Parent Society dues, or 2) paying when you receive your conference materials during registration. If an attendee is unable to pay at the time of registration (and has not already paid) they will be asked to pay at a later date.

Please be diligent in renewing your membership with the Chapter.

Join or Renew Membership

Individual	Corporate
Regular Membership: \$15	Affiliate: \$100
Student Membership: \$10	Sponsor: \$250
Retired Membership: \$10	Sustainer: \$500
	Benefactor: \$1000

IDNR Barrier Defense: Seine Hauls, *Blake Bushman, IDNR*

The IDNR's Barrier Defense project uses controlled commercial fishing to reduce the number of Asian carp in the upper Illinois and lower Des Plaines Rivers downstream of the electric dispersal barriers. By decreasing Asian carp numbers, we anticipate decreased migration pressure towards the electric dispersal barriers and reduced chances of carp gaining access to upstream waters in the CAWS and Lake Michigan. Trends in harvest data over time may also contribute to our understanding of Asian carp abundance and movement between pools of the upper Illinois Waterway. The removal project was initiated in 2010 and is ongoing, utilizing ten contracted commercial fishing crews to remove Asian carp primarily with large mesh (3.0 - 5.0 inch) gill nets and trammel nets, as well as modified hoop nets and commercial seines.

The seines used during the Barrier Defense project are 200 – 800 yards long, 30ft deep, with 2" bar mesh netting. Crews consist of at least two boats, one to set out the seine and the other to haul it in with a winch. As the first boat is setting out the seine the other boat will "drive" fish into the bag that is being created, hopefully increasing final catch totals. Once the seine has been hooked back to shore the winching can begin. The winch line is tied to the seine's float line while the lead line is pulled by hand.

As the seine's slack is taken in, the pulling becomes more and more difficult as the captured fish, logs, tires, and other "river treasures" fight against the crews efforts.

Once the seine is landed, crews can begin unloading the fish into waiting boats. This is done both by hand as well as with a loading boat that has been outfitted with booms and quick release baskets.



As the seine is unloaded into boats, by-catch is released back into the river. All of the carp are sent to be processed into liquid fertilizer.

The commercial seine is one of the tools available that has the potential for the most dramatic results. Over the course of this program, 11 seines have been pulled in the Starved Rock and Marseilles Pools of the Illinois River. Individual seines have had varying results from 46 – 21,772 Asian carp, with a total yield of 38,263 of the 373,405 Asian carp that have been removed for the entire project. For more information on the Asian Carp program see <http://www.asiancarp.us/>

Illinois Report for the Summer Meeting of the Walleye Technical Committee, Jason DeBoer and Mike Garthaus, Walleye Technical Committee Chairmen

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Projects:

Our current statewide walleye management plan is over 15 years old, although revisions and updates are currently underway.

Current Fishing Regulations

Illinois has a statewide regulation for walleye, sauger, and saugeye. The statewide regulation is a 14" minimum length limit with a 6 per day harvest limit. Some water bodies have site specific regulations for walleye, sauger, and saugeye (e.g., larger minimum size, smaller/larger daily bag limit, protected slot).

Proposed 2015 Stocking

Illinois stocks walleye, saugeye, and sauger in a variety of large and small lakes, reservoirs, and rivers. All of our stocked walleye, saugeye, and sauger come from local broodstock and in-state hatcheries.

	Fry (< 2")	Fingerling (2-4")	Sub-adult (4-8")
Walleye	11,989,070	1,479,612	
Saugeye		171,845	3,450
Sauger	1,000,000	394,364	
total	12,989,070	2,045,821	3,450

Northern Illinois Rivers Stocking Evaluation – Steve Pescitelli IDNR

We have been stocking walleye on the Kankakee and Fox Rivers since 2000. We also started a sauger stocking program on the Des Plaines River in 2001. These programs have been successful based on electro-fishing surveys and angler reports (no creel studies); the target CPUE range for walleye in Illinois is 15-20/hr.

For the Kankakee River, prior to stocking, catch rates were in 1-3/hour range. Since then the catch rates have averaged 30/hour in spring sampling. For 10 years the stocked walleye fingerlings were marked with OTC, and fish of all sizes were harvested for otolith analysis. Based on that study, about 70% of the walleye were of hatchery origin. For this program, brood stock have always been obtained from native Kankakee River walleye. We release about 90,000 2" fingerlings into the Kankakee and Iroquois Rivers. Anglers have also reported increased catch rates since the program began.

For the Fox River, 50,000 2" walleye fingerlings are stocked per year in the area between Montgomery Dam and Silver Springs State Park. Catch rates are a bit lower for the Fox River, generally between 5-10/hour. In fall 2014, 79 walleye were collected below the Montgomery Dam including many YOY. The upper Fox River appears to get walleye "overflow" from the Chain-O-Lakes stocking program, with catch rates in selected areas exceeding 20/hour.

Prior to stocking, sauger did not occur in the 'upper' Des Plaines River (upstream of Brandon Road Dam), at least in recent history. As part of the Illinois River system, they were endemic to the upper Des Plaines prior to dams and historic water quality limitations. Brood stock for this program is obtained from the Illinois River. On average about 20,000 2" sauger fingerlings are released per year. At prime habitat locations, catch rates were as high as 40 per hour (average 10-15) and anglers reported good catch as well. Sauger move throughout the system and many appear to over winter in the deep tailwaters below the Lockport lock.

Illinois Natural History Survey Projects:

Lake Shelbyville – Matt Diana INHS

Project underway to determine the status of the walleye and sauger fishery as well as evaluate sampling protocols.

Illinois Report for the Summer Meeting of the Walleye Technical Committee, Jason DeBoer and Mike Garthaus, Walleye Technical Committee Chairmen

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Lake Michigan – Josh Dub, Charlie Roswell INHS

In terms of yellow perch, we have several long-term datasets: our spring spawning assessment (started in the early 90's with fyke nets and occurs now with 600' multi-panel gill nets), our juvenile, small-mesh gillnet assessment (started in 2005), and our fall bottom trawl survey for YOY yellow perch (started in 1987). We also survey perch prey items, zooplankton, benthic invertebrates, and fishes. Our creel survey also has a long-term dataset on yellow perch harvest, catch rate, and perch directed effort in Illinois waters of Lake Michigan going back to 1986.

In addition to these multi-year datasets I am working on a few new projects:

- 1) I examined the relationship between cleithra length and fish total length for several Lake Michigan prey species; I am using these relationships to re-create the size of juvenile yellow perch prey items in an effort to better understand when and why yellow perch become piscivorous. **Results suggest that round goby are allowing yellow perch to transition to piscivory earlier than previously described in Lake Michigan;** we are hoping to evaluate what this means for growth and survival.
- 2) Charlie and I are working on a project that uses external characteristics (shape, size and color) of the urogenital papilla (UGP) to determine the gender of yellow perch. We collect spines from angler-harvested fish for age estimation and are hoping to apply our UGP method to photos of angler-harvested fish to get a better idea of the sex ratio of angler harvest.
- 3) It is generally believed that Illinois waters of Lake Michigan have substantial rocky substrate suitable for yellow perch spawning; a relatively new project I am working on is mapping historical yellow perch spawning grounds in Lake Michigan using side scan sonar in an effort to quantify and qualify the suitability of near-shore spawning habitat.
- 4) Lastly, while not targeted specifically at yellow perch, our creel survey is working on an economic project this year to evaluate the spending habits of anglers which could be used to identify differences in perch fishing relative to other (e.g., salmon) fisheries.

Announcements:

Student Travel Award Opportunity

2016 Illinois Chapter of the AFS Annual Conference

The Illinois Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (IL AFS) will be awarding up to **4 travel grants** for students to attend this year's Annual Meeting. The grants will be **\$100 each** to help students to attend the Annual Meeting to be held at the Hilton Hotel in Springfield from **February 29-March 2, 2016**.

Criteria for this selection will be based upon financial need and/or reason(s) for attending the meeting (e.g., paper presentation, pertinent paper session, IL AFS committee meeting). Students should include the above information and also state their class standing (i.e. junior, B.S. candidate), fisheries related interests, participation in IL AFS activities, and AFS membership status when applying. A letter from each applicant's advisor confirming the need for travel money is also required.

Grant recipients are asked to attend the Business Meeting at the conference to receive their awards.

ALL STUDENTS ARE URGED TO APPLY, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE PRESENTING A PAPER!!!

Submit electronic (preferred) or paper applications

by: January 29, 2016

to: Nerissa McClelland
IL AFS Student Concerns Committee
IDNR-Havana Field Headquarters
700 S. 10th Street
Havana, Illinois 62644
Phone: (309) 543-3316 (ext. 228)
E-mail: nerissa.mcclelland@illinois.gov

Announcements:

Professional Travel Award Opportunity

2016 Illinois Chapter of the AFS Annual Conference

The Illinois Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (IL AFS) will award one travel grant of up to \$200 for a professional attending the Annual Meeting to be held at the Hilton Hotel in Springfield from **February 29-March 2, 2016**.

Selection criteria for this award include AFS membership status, level of participation in the annual conference and financial need. Applicants should submit a letter to the Awards Committee (see below) with their contact information, IL Chapter and National AFS membership status, and a justification statement (e.g., financial need, participation in the conference).

Grant recipients are asked to attend the Business Meeting at the conference to receive their awards. Submit electronic (preferred) or paper applications

by: January 29, 2016

to: Nerissa McClelland
Awards Committee
IDNR-Havana Field Headquarters
700 S. 10th Street
Havana, Illinois 62644
Phone: (309) 543-3316 (ext. 228)
E-mail: nerissa.mcclelland@illinois.gov

Executive Committee Now Accepting:

Meritorious Service and Stephen A. Forbes Excellence in Fisheries Awards

The Meritorious Service award is intended for individuals who have made significant contributions to the Chapter through long-standing service on committees, serving on the Ex. Comm., organizing conferences, fund raising, etc.

As the name implies, the Stephen A. Forbes award is for professionals who have demonstrated excellence in fisheries science by way of publishing papers, contribution of oral or poster presentations, mentoring students, participating in fisheries education to the public, excellence in long-term management, organizing symposia or workshops and displaying leadership.

If you would like to nominate an individual for either of these awards, please send a letter of support

by: February 12, 2016

to: Nerissa McClelland
Awards Committee (See contact information above)

Announcements:

2016 Illinois Chapter AFS Annual Conference

Joint meeting with the Illinois Lake Management Association

Where: Wyndham Hotel, Springfield

When: Monday, February 29 - Wednesday, March 2

Registration: Registration is open and can be found at <http://ilma-lakes.org/ilma-annual-conference>. Registration covers Monday dinner and social, Tuesday lunch and evening banquet and Wednesday lunch. Early registration closes **February 8**, after which an additional fee will be charged to registrants.

Abstract: If you interested in providing either a poster or being a presenter, please submit abstracts by **January 22**. Abstract submission can be found at <http://ilma-lakes.org/call-for-presenters>

