Electronic Licensing and Tagging

Todd Schaller

Chief Conservation Warden
Wisconsin Department of Natural
Resources







TOPICS

- 1. History
- 2. Current Process and System
- 3. Challenges
- 4. Opportunities
- 5. Questions







Forms of Proof

- Original hard copy or reprint
- Authenticated WI driver's license
 - Validated through the sales process
- GoWild Conservation Card
- Digital PDF file saved to electronic device.
 - Photos/screenshot are not valid









Challenges

- Loss of accountability
- Response by Public change
- Response by Staff change
- Rule/Regulation Changes
- "Easier to violate"
- Border States, LE Partners

Opportunities

- Rule simplification
- Immediate access to electronic data
- Real-time data
- Administrative vs. Resource
- Customer Trends (Inc online activity)
- Customer Profile All Aspects

QUESTIONS





The American Fisheries Society...

- Who and what is AFS?
- Quick update on what AFS does
- How we add value to state agencies
- Discussion on next steps



AFS Basics

AFS is organized in:

- 4 geographic divisions
- 55 chapters in virtually every state and province
- 84 student subunits at colleges and universities

AFS maintains sections for those with specialized interests including:

Bioengineering

Fisheries Management

Fisheries Info and Tech

Water Quality

Equal Opportunity

12 others

Fish Health

Genetics

Education

Marine Fisheries

Introduced fish





State/Provincial* 27%

Federal 18%

Consultant8%

Industry5%

• Tribal 3%

Self employed 3%



^{*} Many state biologists are involved at chapter level



- lowa
- Minnesota
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Ohio
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin

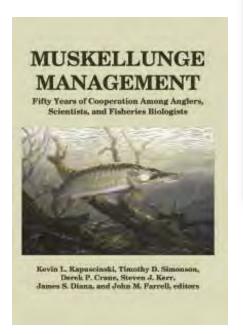


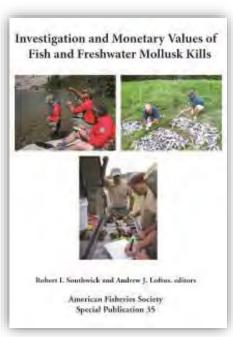
AFS Publications as Foundation of Fisheries Science and Management

- AFS publishes
 - six scientific journals
 - 184 book and software titles
- Publications used worldwide
- Members get eversions of all journals free with membership

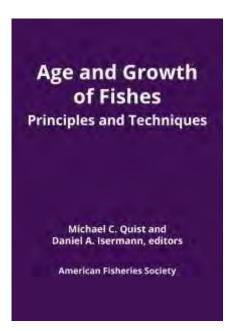


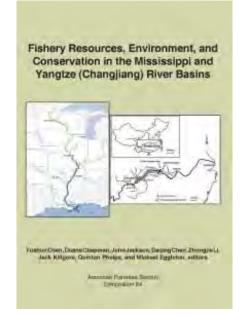
Advance your Science with AFS Publications!





AFS members receive 30% discount of purchase of books





Meet hundreds of other fisheries professionals at AFS conferences!

- AFS hosts over 50 meetings each year throughout North America
 - Meetings attract ~7,000 attendees, including ~2,000 students
 - Approximately 3,000
 technical presentations and
 ~900 research posters
 presented each year
 - Members can compete for ~\$120,000 in travel awards and academic scholarships







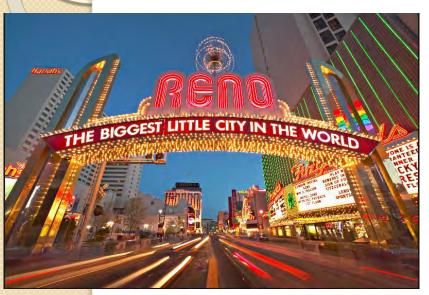
COMMUNICATING THE SCIENCE OF FISHERIES CONSERVATION TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES AUGUST 19-23, 2018





Joint AFS-TWS Annual Meeting September 29 – October 3, 2019

Reno, NV









The Value-Added of AFS

- Help develop industry standards
- Support science-based fisheries policy initiatives
- Increase professional and society diversity
- Professional development







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- Support science-based fisheries policy initiatives
- Increase professional and society diversity
- Professional development







Fish and Mussel Kill Economic Valuation



AFS Special Publication 35

Monetary Evaluation of Fish and Mussel Kills

SP35 has become the legal precedence, often codified in law and upheld by numerous court challenges, for assigning restitution in many states

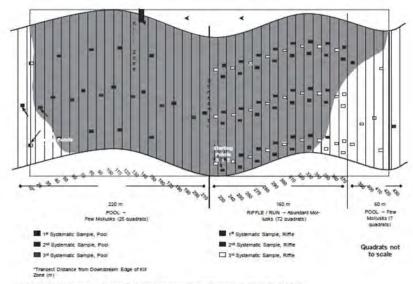


FIGURE 5.4. Example of stratified random sampling with strata defined by habitat

Standardization: Collect fish data using the same gear types fished in the same manner in different waterbodies or in the same waterbody over time.





Why new edition?

STANDARD METHODS

Sampling North American Freshwater Fishes



Scott A. Bonar Wayne A. Hubert David W. Willis, editors

American Fisheries Society

- Update existing methods as needed.
- Add new methods if needed (e.g., eDNA)
- Build upon averages/standards chapter to incorporate new fish/region data.
- Include new ideas from additional authors.
- Include new ecosystems (e.g., springs, ceynotes) if needed.
- Continue momentum on standardization

www.fisheriesstandardsampling.org



Grey Literature Clearinghouse

Fish and Wildlife Reference Service Newsletter Number 136 Spring 2003

PLEASE CIRCULATE

Suite 110 5430 Grosvenor Lane Bethesda, MD 20814-2142 800-582-3421 Maryland 301-492-6403 FAX (301) 564-4059 In reference service a fws.gov http://fa.ry.fws.gov/r9fwrs/

The National Shooting Sports Foundation's SCHOLASTIC CLAY TARGET PROGRAM: A Program to Aid Recruitment and Retention Efforts

The National Shooting Spons Foundation's (NSSF) Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) will introduce more shooters to state hunter education programs, state youth hunting programs, Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) programs and NSSF's Step Outside Program. This youth development program, co-sponsored by the NSSF, the Amateur Trapshooting Association, the National Skeet Shooting Association, and the National Sporting Clays Association, focuses on providing young people with a positive experience in sports. It is designed to emphasize the values of sportsmanship, responsibility, self-discipline, and commitment.

- Program Goals: * SAFE and Responsible Handling and Use of Firearms
 - Character and Citizenship Development through Teamwork
 - . Introduction to a Lifetime Sport that Families can Enjoy Together

In addition to learning safe and responsible handling of firearms, SCTP participants discover the lov of contributing to a shared team goal and the commitment that goes along with it. Youth from the elementary grades through high school are eligible to participate in these safe, sanctioned, and nationally recognized clay target sports (trap, skeet and sporting clays) which provide competitive opportunities for SCTP teams.

Participation in the SCTP is team-oriented, and requires that one be a member of a team. Each team, lead by an adult coach, must register with the SCTP National Program Office. The Basic Competitive Unit is the SQUAD. For Trap and Skeet the minimum squad size is five; for Sporting Clays it is four Teams must have at least one full squad to become an officially recognized SCTP team. There is no upper limit to the number of members on a team or to the number of squads a team may field.

Competitive Divisions are Rookie Division (5" graders and below), and Novice and Experienced Categories in the Junior (6", 7" and 8" graders) and Senior (9" - 12" graders) Divisions. Awards are presented to the starting members of the top three squads in each Division and Category at the SCTP State and National Championships. A total of \$69,000 in scholarships will be awarded at the National Championships.

A limited number of Program Support Packages are available to help qualifying new teams get started. These packages include ammunition, targets, eye and ear protection, and shell pouches

Contact Information: Complete information on eligibility, registration procedures, awards and more can be found in the Scholastic Clay Target Program's OFFICIAL HANDBOOK -2003.

Michigan Department of **Natural Resources**

DNR Home Contact DNR DNR Online Services Key Topics

About the DNR

Camping & Recreation

Commissions Boards and Committees

Doing Business

Education & Outreach

Fishing in Michigan

Fishing Licenses, Seasons, Regulations

Managing Michigan's Fisheries

Basins and Management Units

Best Management Practices

DNR | FISHING | MANAGING MICHIGAN'S FISHERIES | LIBRARY AND PUBLICATIONS

Fisheries Reports

17, Lansing (PDF)

Fisheries Reports support science-based management of Michigan's fishery resources by communicating the scientific information, models and management recommendations of division staff. They also document the division's activities, preserve data and fulfill federal contractual obligations. You will need Adobe Reader to read

Report Number	Fisheries Report	Abstract
19	Hanchin, P. A. 2017. The fish community and fishery of Elk and Skegemog lakes, Antrim, Kalkaska, and Grand Traverse counties, Michigan in 2008-09. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Report 19, Lansing. (19 Introduction
18	Johnson, J. E., D. G. Fielder, M. Hughes, and R. Espinoza. 2017. Pilot Cisco egg take and culture study. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Report 18, Lansing. (PDF)	18 Summary
17	Johnson, J. E. 2017. Review of attributes of landlocked Atlantic Salmon in relation to their management in Lake Huron. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Report	17 Introduction

Question:

What other Industry standards or other methods/protocol/guidance efforts are needed?

How can AFS work with your staff to identify their needs or challenges?

The Value-Added of AFS

- Help develop industry standards
- Support science-based fisheries policy initiatives
- Increase professional and society diversity
- Professional development









- 1. Policy Development, Briefings and Deployment
- 2. Fisheries Leadership Dialogue
- 3. Partnership Development with Fisheries and Aquatic NGO's
- 4. Enhanced Agency Partnerships



Working With Partners







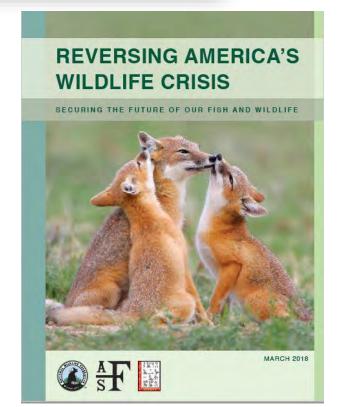
Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies

AFS and Fisheries Science-Policy

- RAWA
- Waters of U.S.
- MSA
- Coop Units







Breakdown of RAWA Co-sponsors by State

(33 Republicans and 39 Democrats)

```
California [11]
                          North Carolina [2]
                          Ohio [2]
Pennsylvania [5]
                          Oklahoma [2]
Texas [5]
                          Washington [2]
New York [4]
                          American Samoa [1]
Oregon [4]
                          Arizona [1]
Florida [3]
                          Idaho [1]
Georgia [3]
                          Kansas [1]
Michigan [3]
                          Massachusetts [1]
Missouri [3]
                          Minnesota [1]
New Jersey [3]
                          Nebraska [1]
Arkansas [2]
                          Nevada [1]
Colorado [2]
                          South Carolina [1]
Illinois [2]
                          Tennessee [1]
New Hampshire [2]
                          Wisconsin [1]
```

Question:

What other policy issues should AFS be engaged with that addresses state fisheries science or conservation needs?

What is the next legislative challenge that we need to be engaged in?

The Value-Added of AFS

- Help develop industry standards
- Support science-based fisheries policy initiatives
- Increase professional and society diversity
- Professional development





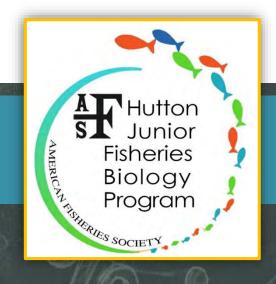


Diversity in the Profession

Ethnic, gender, generational, geographic, and other types of diversity make for a more powerful, capable workforce

	Interns	Hired Staff in past 3 years	Leadership	Board Slots
NGOs	AMANTO AMANTO AMANTO AMANTO AM	######################################	ANNE ANNE ANNE ANNE ANNE ANNE ANNE ANNE	TYPRKTPRK TYPRKTPRK TPRKTPRK TPTRTTTR 4.6% are people of color
Government Agencies	MANTO MANTO ANKILANKIN MANTO MANTO ANKILANKIN ANKILANKI	TINANTINA ANARANARA TINANTINAR ANARANAR TINANTINAR 11.7% are people of color	ANNI ANNI ANNI ANNI ANNI ANNI ANNI ANNI	ANTITUTE TO ANTITU
Foundations	MANNA MANNA	TYPAK TYPAK ANALATAHR TYPAK TYPAK APARATAHR APARATAHR 17.1% are people of color	AMARTAMATE AMARTAMATE AMARTAMATE 12.4% are people of color	THE PARTY OF THE P

HUTTON JUNIOR FISHERIES BIOLOGY PROGRAM



The Value-Added of AFS

- Help develop industry standards
- Support science-based fisheries policy initiatives
- Increase professional and society diversity
- Professional development







Build Strong Credentials with AFS!

- AFS offers over 100 continuing education courses annually
- These include subjects such as:
 - Rotenone Application
 - Electrofishing Methods
 - R Statistical Methods for Biologists
 - GIS and modeling
 - Fish Passage
 - Effective Communication
- Professional Certification



Value of Certification

- Bring cohesion and definition to the profession
- Assurance of a standard level of competency
- Provide credibility for employers and the public
- Provide clear guidance and direction to educators and organizations creating courses and academic programs, training programs and ongoing professional development opportunities

Question:

What can AFS do with states to increase engagement by your staff?

- Services provided
- Membership options
- Training









The good old days of fishing...

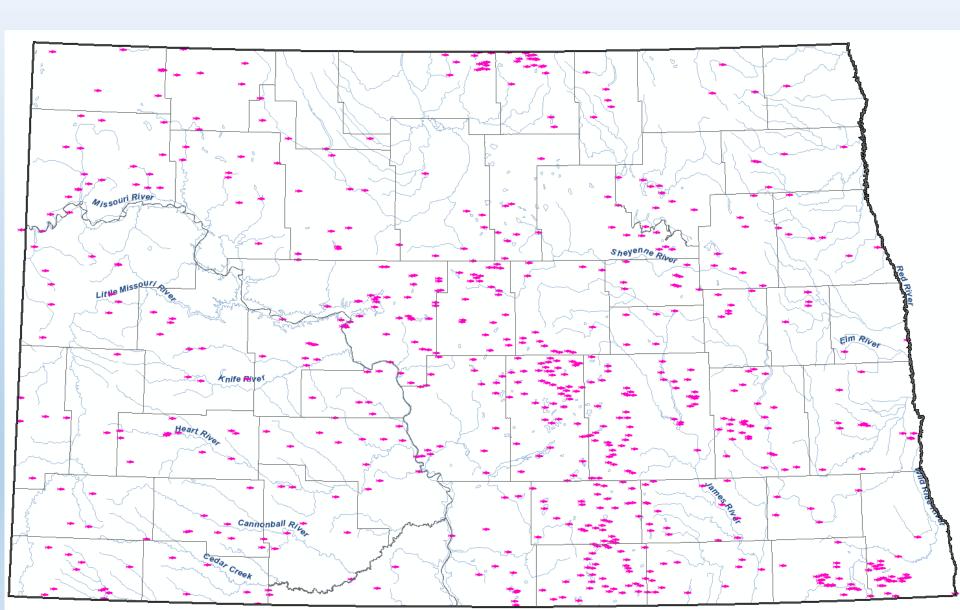






...are now!

North Dakota Fishing Water Bodies 449 Waters

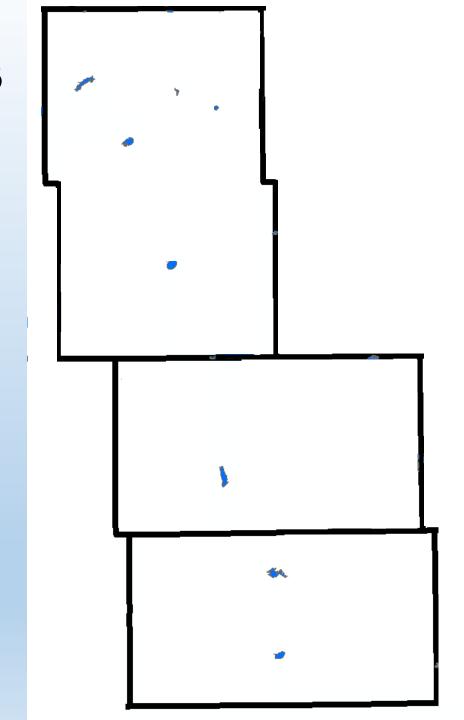


1992: 8 Fisheries

Kidder County
5 Fisheries

Logan County
1 Fishery

McIntosh County
2 Fisheries

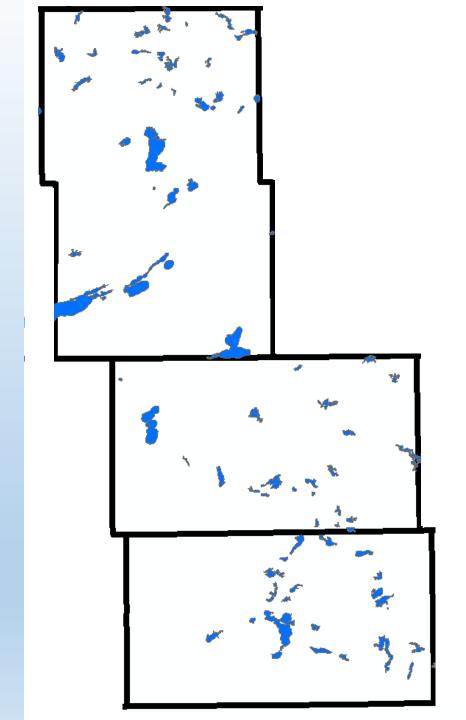


2018: 85 Fisheries

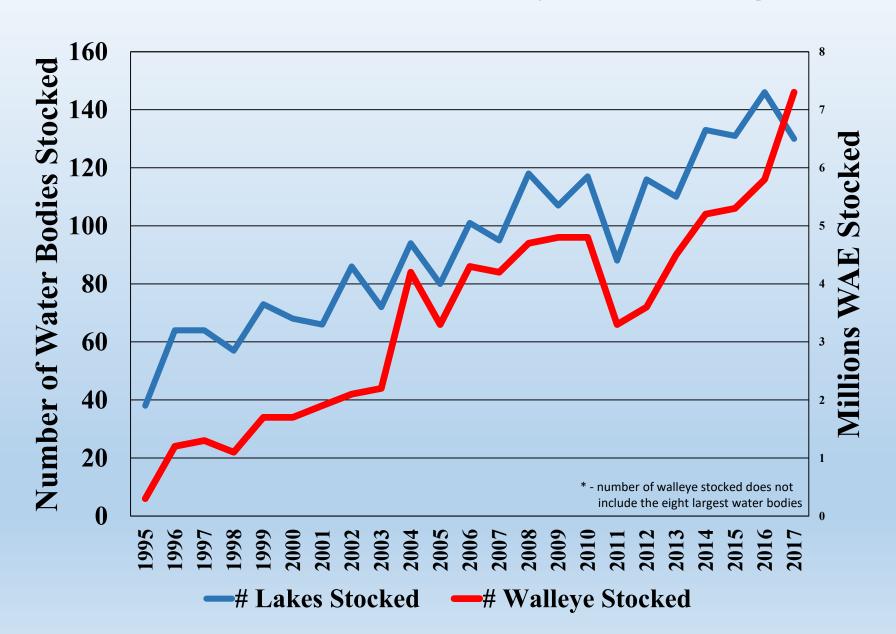
Kidder County
36 Fisheries

Logan County
26 Fisheries

McIntosh County
23 Fisheries



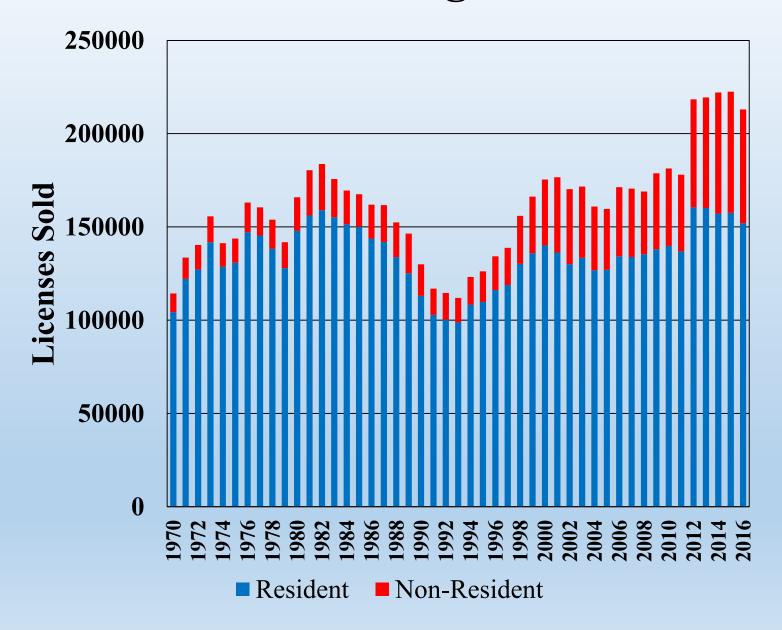
North Dakota Walleye Stocking



Boat Ramps



North Dakota Fishing License Sales











Missouri River Fisheries Research

- North Dakota Game and Fish Department
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
- South Dakota State University

Walleye Tagging Study

- Walleye Movements
- Mortality Rates
- Angler Harvest



Walleye Tagging Totals

- 34,378 walleye tagged 2013-2016
- 8,000+ tag returns from anglers

Regional Walleye Populations

- Riverine Garrison Dam to Double Ditch
- Transition Double Ditch to Locke Creek
- Middle Oahe Locke Creek to Whitlock Bay
- Lower Oahe Whitlock Bay to Oahe Dam

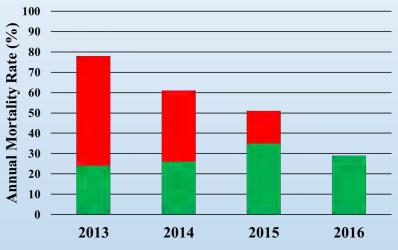
Movement Within Regions

Spawning Site Fidelity

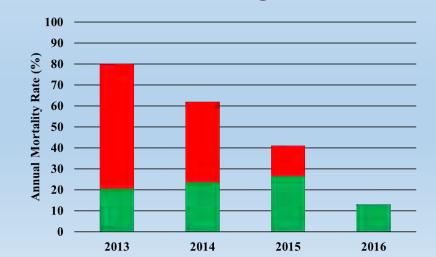


Walleye Mortality Rates

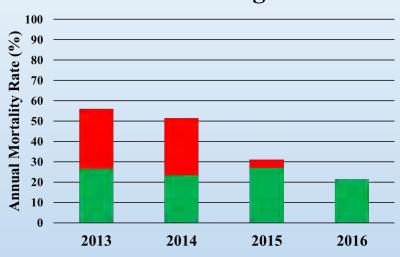




Middle Region



Transition Region



Lower Region



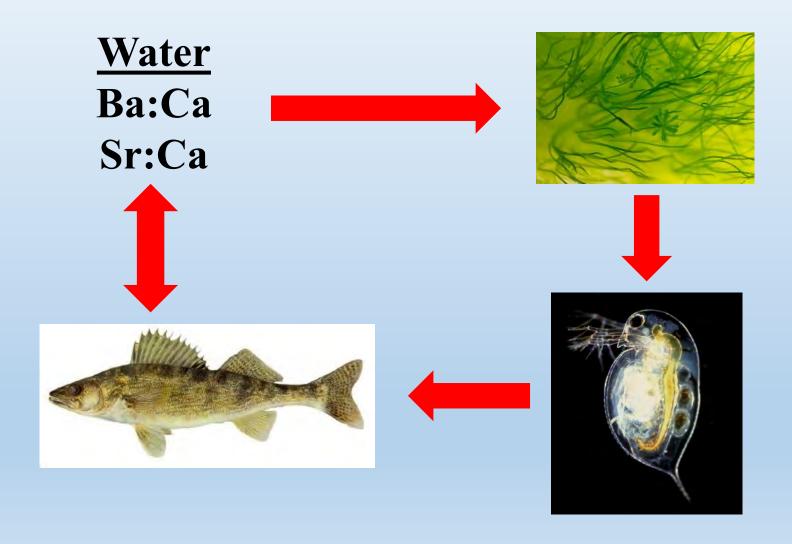
Mortality rates were very high following the 2011 Flood but have declined recently.

Angler harvest is acceptably low and is not having a negative impact on this fishery.

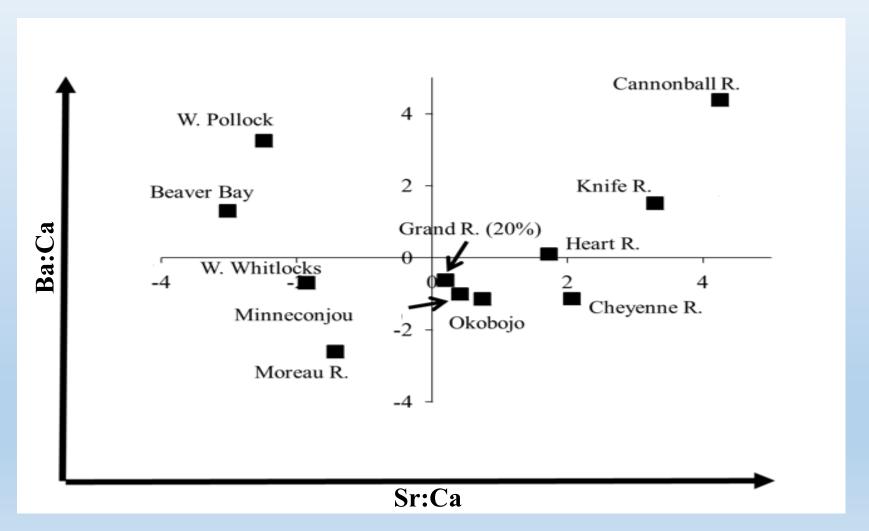




Trace Metal Analysis



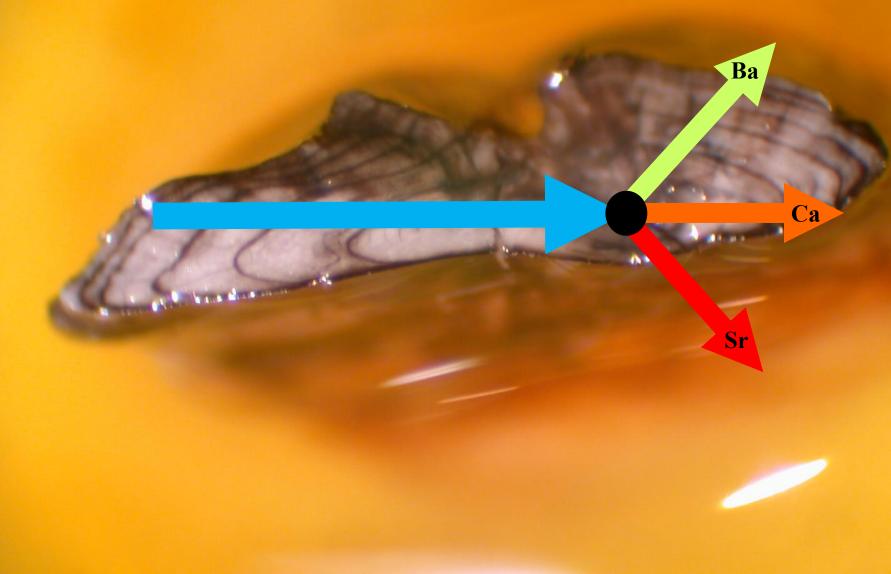
Tributaries and Embayments Have Unique Trace Metal Signatures







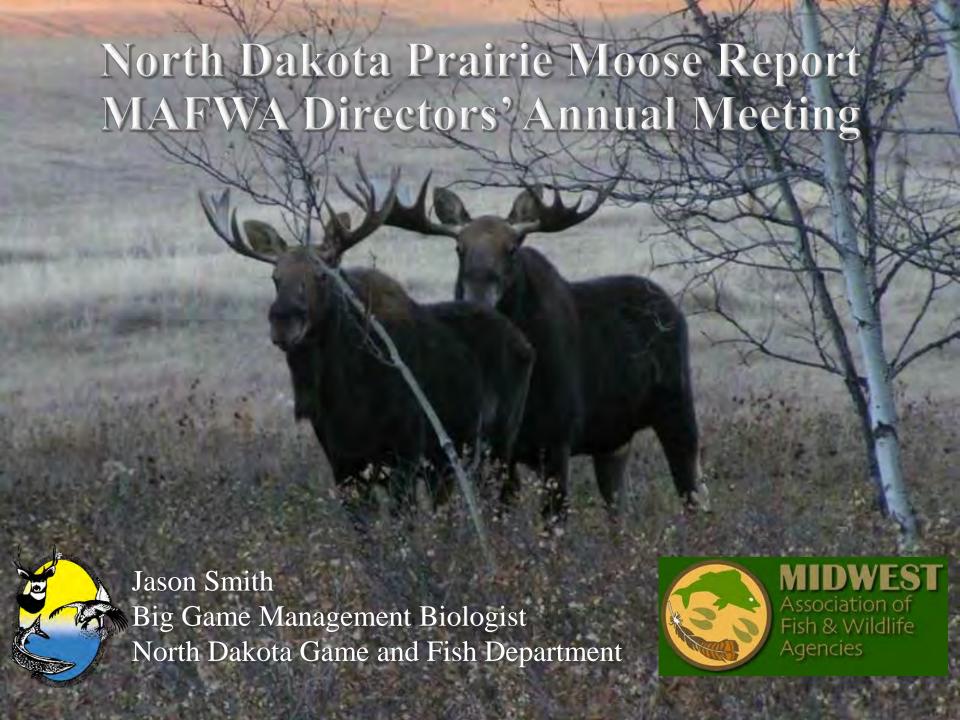
High-Resolution Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry



Results:

Moreau River:	40.1%
Beaver Bay:	18.2%
Cannonball River:	17.1%
W. Pollock Bay:	10.2%
Knife River:	4.3%
W. Whitlocks Bay:	3.7%
Heart River:	3.2%
Grand River:	2.7%
Minneconjou Bay:	0.5%





Status of Moose in North Dakota

- Moose native to state but historically rare
- Limited to small area of natural woodlands in the Turtle Mountains and Pembina Hills
- In past several decades moose have expanded considerably beyond their native range in the state



Status of Moose in North Dakota

- Result of landscape alteration after European settlement
 - Conversion of prairie to cropland
 - Planting of tree rows
 - Fire-suppression
 - Damming of Missouri River
- While historic habitat change aided in moose expansion, recent changes with loss of CRP, removal of tree rows, draining of wetlands with drain tiling and maturation of aspen forest may be contributing to declines in NE ND



Historical and current status and distribution of moose in ND



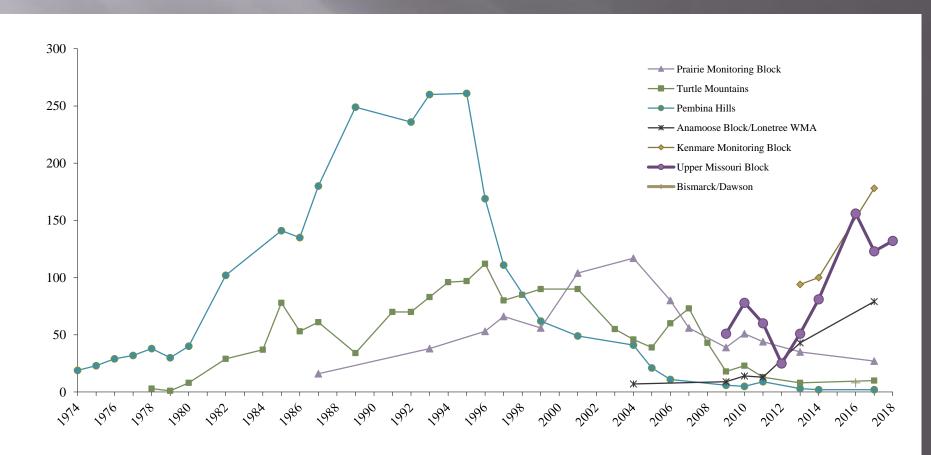
Winter Aerial Surveys

- Moose observations from survey work started with the winter whitetailed deer surveys
- The first population survey area specifically for moose began in 1974 on the Pembina Hill's Triangle Area
 - 19 moose, high count of 261 in 1995, 2 moose observed in 2017
 - The Turtle Mountains
 - 3 moose observed in 1978, high count of 112 in 1996, 10 moose observed in 2017
 - More recent survey blocks, Cando (M8), Anamoose and LTWMA (M9) and Upper Missouri River and Kenmare Blocks (M10 & M11)



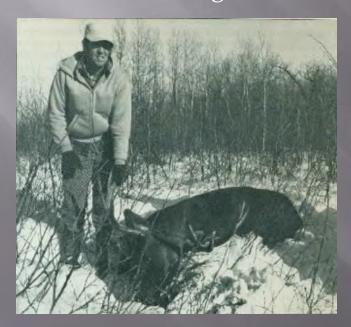
Population trends in North Dakota 1974 to Present

 Trends from winter aerial surveys counts indicate declines in traditional areas but increases in nontraditional areas



First season in ND since 1901 was held in 1977

- Permits were issued for 10 bulls
- Special big game, ND resident, once in a lifetime draw
- Over time shift from traditional to nontraditional habitats (prairie)
- Change in number and types of licenses as well as size and distribution of hunting units



Lloyd Gardner – one of ND's first modern day moose hunters, 1977.

THE FIRST ANNUAL

1977 North Dakota



MOOSE HUNTING PROCLAMATION AND GUIDE

North Dakota

Game and Fish Department
2121 Lovett Avenue
Bismarck, N. Dak. 58505

Russell W. Stuart, Game and Fish Commissioner

Traditional Habitat



Shifts In Range Over Time

- Over last 12 years, moose numbers have declined in traditional areas and began increasing in nontraditional areas
- Primary shift/increase in the NW portion of the state

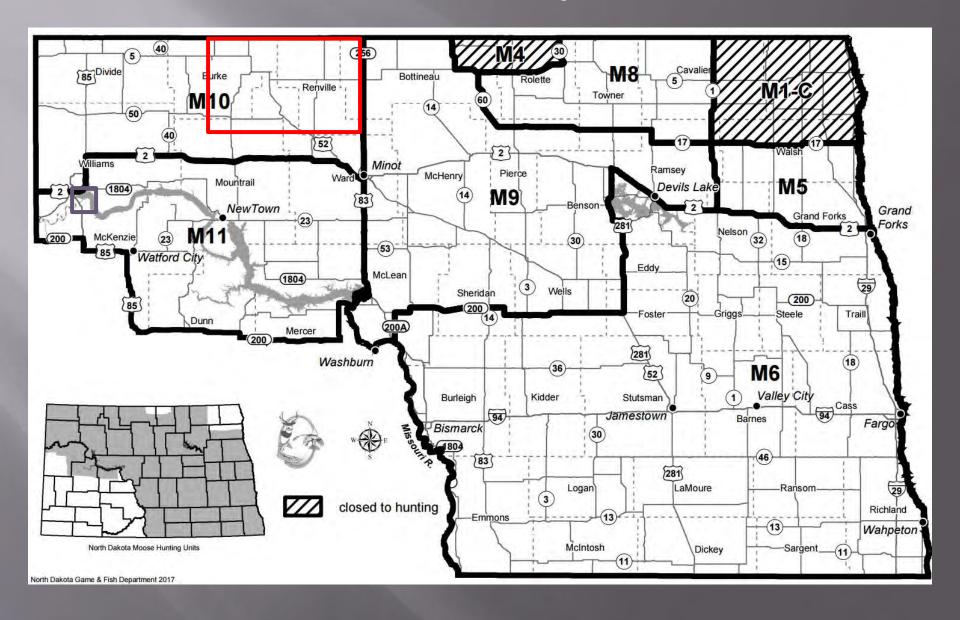


Moose in NW North Dakota

- Greatest numbers currently found in northwest (Unit M10 & M11)
- Much of area considered nontraditional habitat for this species
- Little was known about the mortality rate, reproduction, and seasonal movements of moose in this area.
 - Open to hunting since 2000
- Knowledge important in context of moose trends throughout southern edge of range
- Research conducted March 2014 to May 2016



Location of Study Areas



Objectives

- 1. Estimate annual survival of adult female moose.
- 2. Cause-specific mortality of adult female moose.
- 3. Moose reproduction rates.
- 4. Annual and seasonal movements and home ranges of moose in northwest North Dakota
- 5. Measure climate conditions in study area that potentially impact moose activity and habitat use



Study Methods

- 40 adult cow moose fitted w/GPS collars in March 2014, 20 in each study area
- Location every 4 hours, mortality after 12 hours
- Collected blood samples to determine pregnancy and disease screening
- Aerial surveys to detect calves at side Spring and Winter
- Data loggers placed in different habitat types to collect microclimate data





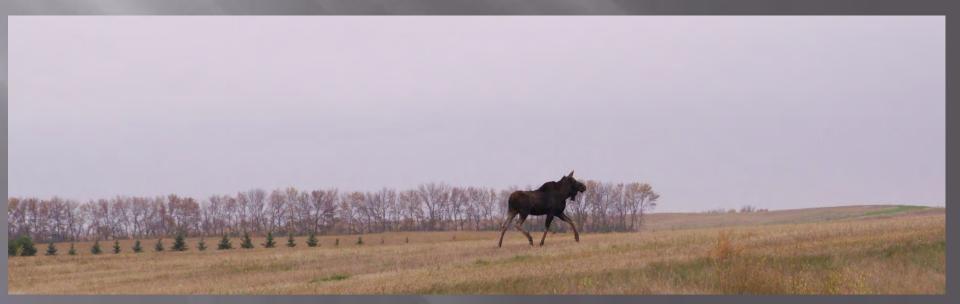
Results Summary

- High adult survival
 - Annual survival averaged 97.5%
- Good reproduction
 - Pregnancy rates 95%
 - Calf production 36% twinning rate, 80% recruitment
- Moose in NW ND faring better than other populations in the lower 48
 - Lack of predators
 - Minimal disease
- Most moose not migratory
- Home ranges likely reflect habitat distribution



Potential effects of climate

- Results demonstrate that temperatures in ND are very similar to those reported from NE MN (McGraw et al. 2012), where heat stress had been implicated as a factor in moose population declines
- Moose in NW North Dakota likely experience conditions capable of causing heat stress
- We found no direct relationship between warming climate and moose population trends in North Dakota



Moose move West

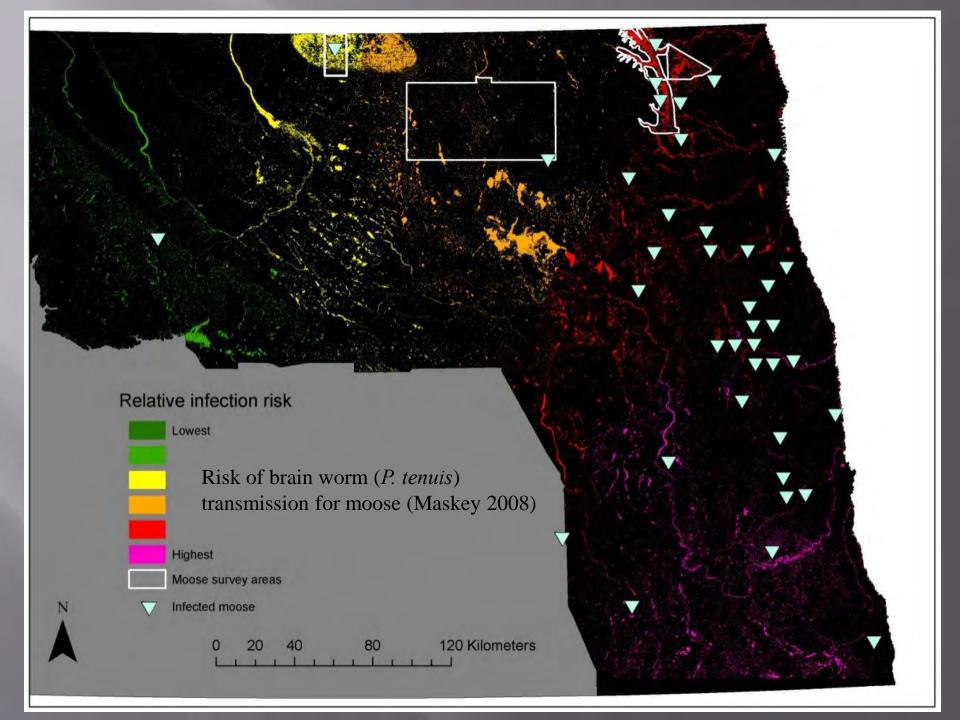
- We know the moose population in NW ND is doing well
- So why the westward shift?



Moose on the Loose

- Reasons for increases in nontraditional habitat is same as reasons for decreases in traditional habitat
- Research conducted 2002-2006 examined ecology of moose, including potential effects of parasitic disease (Maskey 2008)





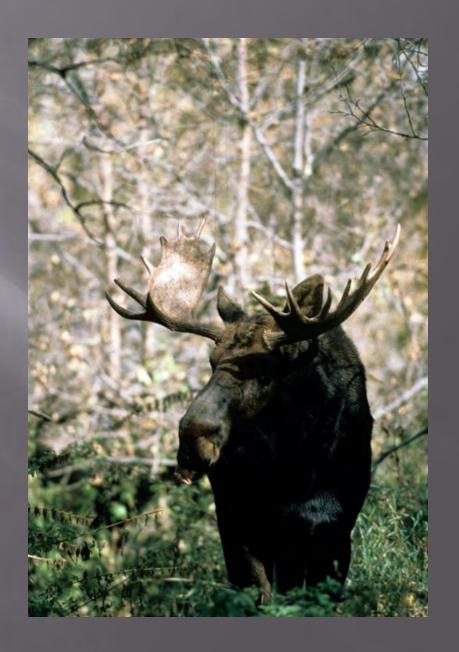
Brain worm range limit in ND

- At southern edge of range moose overlap with white-tailed deer population, experience increased exposure to pathogens such as brain worm
- Prevalence and risk of transmission higher in eastern ND than western ND
- Parasite limited by habitat and climate conditions; more arid as you move westward across the state and the continent



Center for Biological Diversity Petition

- The USFWS was petitioned on July 9th 2015 to list northwestern moose in ND, MN, WI and MI as threatened
- Found a 90 day substantial on June 3rd 2016
- 60 day commenting period
- □ 12-month "status review"
- Developing 5 7 year
 work plan with 500
 petitioned species awaiting
 12 month findings
- Revisit in 2020



NDGF Response to Petition

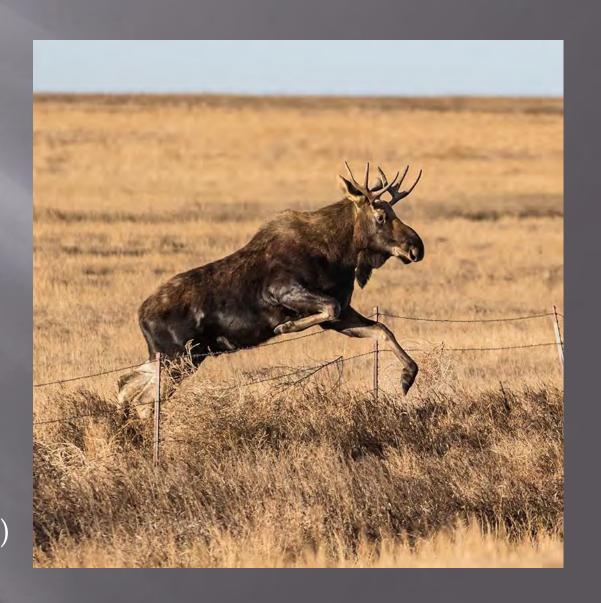
- Moose in ND have largely benefited from human induced habitat change
- Increasing in NW
- Declines in traditional habitat appear to be related to brain worm
- Climate does not have an affect
- ND has adequate regulatory mechanisms and scientific data collection which allows us to properly manage a healthy moose population
- Harvest is not negatively impacting moose numbers at current levels





Moving Forward

- Balance of landowner tolerance limits with expectations of hunters
- Record number of moose licenses for 2018 (330)
- Continue to monitor
 moose population
 trends and potential
 impacts of
 parasites/diseases
 (winter ticks, brain
 worm, liver fluke, etc.)



The AFWA Strategist

Update for Members and Partners of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

June 2018

AFWA Government Affairs

Farm Bill Passes Senate Ag Committee-On June 14, the Senate Committee on Agriculture marked-up and passed with bipartisan support the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. AFWA priorities included in the bill are 10% of EQIP funds for wildlife practices and a contract length of up to 10 years for wildlife practices, continuation of the Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentives Program at \$40 million over 5 years as well as policy improvements to the easements program and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The Senate committee leadership continues to work with Senator Thune (SD) on revisions to the Conservation Reserve Program including his proposal to cap payments at a percent of cash rental rates, modifying having and grazing provisions, and limiting contract reenrollments. We expect a floor amendment to be brought forward for consideration once they reach agreement. Speaker McConnell intends to bring the bill to the floor for a vote before the July 4th Congressional recess, and the House is supposed to bring its farm bill back to the floor after the debate on immigration reform and before the July 4th recess.



JOIN US IN FLORIDA FOR THE
2018 ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES ANNUAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9-12 • TAMPA MARRIOTT WATERSIDE
HOTEL TAMPA, FL

Registration is now OPEN for
AFWA's 2018 Annual Meeting in Tampa, Florida at
www.AFWAAnnualMeeting.org

Request for Senate Hearing on PR Modernization-The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus leadership and the sponsors of S. 1613, the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act, sent a letter to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) requesting a hearing and moving the bill through legislative process. We will keep you informed as we learn more.

Bills Proposing to Change the Migratory Bird Framework Generate Concern --Senator Hyde-Smith (R-MS) and House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) introduced identical legislation (S. 2942/H.R. 6013) that would establish January 31 as the end of waterfowl, merganser and coot hunting seasons; hold seasons and bag limits at the 2017-2018 levels in perpetuity; and create a special season during the first week of February for youth, veterans, active duty military and members of the national guard. All four flyways and many state fish and wildlife agencies have expressed concern about the text of the bills and the intervention of Congress in a successful, science-based process that is comanaged by state fish and wildlife agencies and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We are working with NGO colleagues and the bill sponsors to make improvements to the language. H.R. 6013 is expected to be marked-up and moved out of committee in July.

Chronic Wasting Disease Gaining Attention—Rep. G.T. Thompson's (R-PA) floor amendment to make Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) a priority research issue for the agriculture extension service was adopted and became part of the House farm bill before final passage on the bill failed a couple of weeks ago. Senator Hyde-Smith (R-MS), who succeeded recently retired Senator Thad Cochran, had a similar CWD amendment focusing on free-ranging deer that was accepted as part of the en block manager's amendment to the Senate farm bill. The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus held a breakfast briefing on CWD which highlighted H.R. 4454 and S. 2252, the Kind-Sensenbrenner and Tester bills, respectively, that provide more funding for CWD surveillance, monitoring and applied research. Stand by – a new Congressional champion for combating CWD is emerging.

A New Spin on VIDA: the Vessel Discharge Reform Act—AFWA staff received a new draft bill that is under the jurisdiction of the Senate EPW Committee, instead of Commerce as with VIDA, that seeks to address some of the concerns raised by states about the restriction, control, management and prevention of aquatic invasive species in ballast water and other introduction pathways. Once a bill analysis is complete, we will share more details.

The AFWA Strategist June 2018



Annual Awards Call for Nominations

Please take a minute and think of a team or individual within your agency as well as private stakeholders who are deserving of national recognition for their outstanding work to advance fish and wildlife conservation.

Nominations are due June 30, 2018

For awards criteria and nomination details, go to: www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-acts/annual-awards



New Employee!

We are pleased to announce that Maggie Ernest Johnson has joined. the AFWA family as our new Adaptation Program Manager

We're Hiring!!

AFWA is accepting applications for the position of Agriculture Policy Program Manager. This person will work with state fish and wildlife agencies and other Association members to enhance fish and wildlife habitat and encourage sustainably-managed fish and wildlife resources through the reauthorization and implementation of conservation, forestry, bioenergy, and other provisions of the current and future Farm Bills. Visit www.fishwildlife.org/careers

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies 1100 First Street, NE Suite 825 Washington DC 20002 info@fishwildlife.org

202-838-3474

Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

The campaign to advance the Recovering America's Wildlife Act continues to gain momentum in the House, and we look forward to working with you all to build support for the pending introduction of the companion Senate bill. We are working closely with our lead Senate offices to look for the earliest opportunity to introduce the legislation in the Senate. The House bill (HR4647) continues to gain bi-partisan support with 66 co-sponsors now signed on. We continue to meet regularly with our champions in the House and the House Natural Resources Committee Chairman and staff to work toward advancing the bill through the Committee in that chamber. We would like to thank you all for your continued support and strategic outreach to partners and congressional offices where appropriate, it is all helping. We now have supportive resolutions from all of the regional fish and wildlife associations and well over half of the states individually as well. Once the Senate bill is introduced we will reach out immediately with news and further guidance on legislative strategy to involve participation by the state agencies, Alliance partners and other stakeholders. We will be circulating a sign-on letter in support of the Senate legislation as soon as it is introduced.

There are new campaign resources available for download on the new Alliance page on our <u>AFWA website</u>, and a <u>new online sign-up form</u> available for organizations and businesses wanting to show support for the campaign by joining the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife. Please reach out with any questions on the campaign to Sean Saville, Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife Campaign Manager, <u>ssaville@fishwildlife.org</u> or (202) 838-2561.

Landscape and Conservation Working Group

AFWA's Landscape Conservation Working Group, under the leadership of Jim Douglas is working on implementing the recommendations of the white paper that was presented at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March. The working group is 1) working with FWS Regional Directors on processes to codevelop priorities for at-risk species and landscape conservation; 2) revising and expanding best practices for landscape conservation; 3) is drafting a resolution on landscape conservation for consideration at the AFWA Annual meeting; and 4) will be hosting a meeting with the Network for Landscape Conservation in Nebraska in August. An addendum to the white paper will be presented to Directors at the AFWA Annual Meeting in Tampa.

Senate Appropriations Committee Update

Several conservation grant programs received increases for FY2019 in the Senate Appropriations Committee spending bill. The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program received a \$2M increase to \$65.5M and The North American Wetlands Conservation Fund a \$3M levels increase to \$43M.

Program	FY19 President's Request	FY19 House Appropriations Committee	FY19 Senate Appropriations Committee	F18 Enacted
State & Tribal Wildlife Grants	\$31.29 M (-50.0%)	\$63.571M	\$65.571M (+3.1%)	\$63.871M
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	\$33.60M (-11.9%)	\$42.0M (+5%)	\$43.0M (+7.5%)	\$40.0M
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund 1	\$ 0.0M (-100.0%)	\$53.495M	\$49.495M (-7.5%)	\$53.495M
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund	\$3.9M (-0.26%)	\$3.91M	\$3.91M	\$3.91M
Multinational Species Conservation Fund	\$6.0M (45.7%)	\$11.061M	\$12.061M (+9.0%)	\$11.061M
Forest Legacy Program ¹	\$0.0M (-100%) -\$4M in cancellations	\$48.455M (-27.7%)	\$65.490M (-2.3%)	\$67.025M ²
Total Land & Water Conservation Fund	\$25.0M new funding -\$37M in cancellations	\$360.0M (-15.3%)	\$425.0M	\$425.0M

¹ All or part included under Land & Water Conservation Fund

² Does not include \$5.938M rescission

The Administration proposed 50% and 12% cuts respectively for the two programs. The Senate bill included \$49.5 M for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund which is \$4M below FY18 and \$3.91M for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and \$425.0 M for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the same amount as last year for both programs. AFWA sent a letter to the Senate Interior Committee Chair and Ranking Member in June requesting increased funding levels.

Founded in 1902, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to advance science-based management and conservation of species and their habitats for the public's long-term benefit and use.





The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

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June 26, 2018

Public Comments Processing
Attn: FWS-HQ-NWRS-2018-0020
Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: BPHC
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

To Whom It May Concern:

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association), whose government members include the fish and wildlife agencies of all 50 states, is pleased to submit comments on Docket No. FWS-HQ-NWRS-2018-0020, published on May 29, 2018, in the Federal Register at 83 FR 24598, pages 24598 – 24649. Founded at Yellowstone in 1902, the Association has been for 116 years a key instrumentality in coordinating the efforts of public administrative agencies responsible for the conservation and management of the fish and wildlife of North America. Congress authorized conservation and management of fish and wildlife in our national refuges listing hunting and fishing as a priority use realizing that our national refuges provide much needed access for public hunting and fishing. The mission of the Refuge System relates to the mission of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as set forth in National Policy Issuance 99-01, is to work "with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."

This rule opens 30 National Wildlife Refuges to hunting and one to sport fishing plus increasing these recreational opportunities on other refuges. This proposed rule also adds refuge-specific regulations to refuges pertaining to migratory bird, big game hunting, and sport fishing for the 2018-2019 season. The Association strongly supports the FWS providing opportunities for public hunting and fishing on our national refuges. We are pleased that the FWS is creating opportunity to use our public lands for recreation, including hunting and fishing which provides a food source for many Americans. We are pleased that the proposed rule recognizes that management of fish and wildlife populations within the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) is best served by the state agency in accordance with the Act. 16 U.S.C. 668dd(b)(4)), and 43 C.F.R. 24.4(e). The Act provides that regulations permitting hunting or fishing of fish and resident wildlife within the [NWRS] shall be, to the extent practicable, consistent with State fish and wildlife laws, regulations, and management plans" 16 U.S.C. § 668dd(m)). The proposed rule carries forward this statutory obligation.

The proposed rule is also in keeping with the spirit of Executive Order 13132 and with Secretarial Order 3356 (Sept. 15, 2017) which called for the Department of the Interior to, "consistent with relevant state laws, identify whether hunting, fishing, and/or recreational opportunities on Department lands could be expanded". Sec. 4(b)(4). In furtherance of Executive Order 13443 (Aug. 16, 2007), directing Federal agencies to "facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the

management of game species and their habitat", Secretarial Order 3356, too, calls for the Department of the Interior to "identify full-time employees...responsible for access to hunting, fishing, recreational shooting...on Department lands...and work in close collaboration with state and local partners on these efforts" for "increased access" and to "attain or sustain wildlife population goals" with an eye toward "includ[ing] or delegat[ing] to states habitat management work on Federal lands". Sec. 4(d) (1) -(3). We believe the proposed rule is consistent with these mandates and applaud the Service for their continued effort to provide the public with hunting and fishing opportunities and for their cooperation with the state fish and wildlife agencies. Further, we strongly recommend that the Service extend the practice of only "opening" the process of federal rule-making of refuge hunting and fishing regulations from only once per year to at least twice a year, and preferably quarterly. This will reduce creation of an administrative bottle neck and sets the Service up for greater success in fully meeting the intent of the recent orders from the Secretary of the Interior to expand hunting and fishing on federal lands under Department of the Interior jurisdiction.

The Association appreciates the Service's recognition in the current Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP) assessments that hunting and fishing opportunities on the refuges are compatible with refuge purposes. We would encourage the Service to examine examples when some refuge CCP assessments have resulted in fishing and hunting opportunities being incompatible because of liberal inclusion of secondary or tertiary refuge purposes in the compatibility assessment. We strongly encourage the Service to include a review of current CCP compatibility findings to ensure that those assessments are representative of the primary purpose of the individual refuge and secondary and tertiary refuge missions are appropriately not barriers to full achievement of fishing and hunting opportunities. The Association would welcome the opportunity to share with the Service examples and to work together to overcome these barriers.

Finally, the license fees hunters and anglers pay and the excise taxes charged on the purchase of their equipment principally fund the work of each state fish and wildlife agency. Hunting licenses have declined in the recent years. The USFWS, the Association, state fish and wildlife agencies and hunting and fishing nongovernmental organizations have been increasingly concerned with the decreased hunter number trends. Recently the FWS, Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service, the Association, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Archery Trade Association and the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the purpose of "developing and expanding a framework of cooperation among the parties at the national, regional, and local levels for planning and implementing mutually beneficial projects and activities to support the recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters and recreational target shooters (R3) and promote hunting and shooting sports conducted on publicly owned lands." The Association was pleased to be a signatory to this MOU joining with the FWS and others in the national effort to reverse the declining numbers of hunters. The proposed rule furthers this objective by increasing hunting opportunity on an additional 248,000 acres of public land.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and support this proposed rule.

Sincerely,

Virgil Moore President

Cc: R. Regan, Executive Director