TRIBAL FISHING AUGUST 2002 🛥

VOLUME 5

Newsletter of the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, 'Conserving for Juture Generations'

Great Lakes Commission Ebener recognized by

SAULT STE: MARIE — Our own Mark Ebener, fishery assessment biologist who oversees ITFAP assessment activities, has been honored with the Great Lakes Commission's 2002 Buzz Besadny award for fostering Great Lakes partnerships. Ebener was selected because of his "exceptional contribution to Great Lakes fisheries management and the Joint Strategic Plan," said presenter Roy Stein at an award ceremonv.

"Mark has extended the partnerships he has developed within the fishery management community to work with those involved in Great Lakes environmental management ... Mark has a special ability to forge consensus among biologists from all jurisdictions," Stein said. "His clear thinking and objective approach has continued to bring people together to come up with

solutions to issues that benefit every one whom shares the resources. The Joint Strategic Plan depends on a commitment to the resource. No one is more committed to the fishery resources of the Great Lakes than Mark."

Ebener has been a leader in Lake Technical Committees and the Lake Committee process for almost 20 years. He has served on the technical committees on Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan. He has chaired the Lake Huron Technical Committee and is presently chair of the Lake Superior Technical Committee.

Ebener has contributed to all the major products of the Lake Committees including the Fish Community Objectives, the State of the Lake reports, and species rehabilitation plans. He has been a major contributor to the March Lake Committee

meetings and is also a member of the Sea Lamprey Integration Committee.

"He has always pushed the technical committees to produce independent and objective science," Stein said. " This objective science is critical to the successful fishery management decisions. Mark has always understood that the success of the lake committees and the success of the Joint Strategic Plan begins with this critical, independent science."

Stein said that Ebener advanced fishery management in the upper lakes by introducing consistent quantitative approaches to assessment and analysis. "In his role as 'Captain Crunch' on the technical committees, Mark developed or participated in most of the quantitative analyses that managers in the upper lakes take for granted today. These efforts have pro-



Photo Courtesy Great Lakes Commission

NO. 4

Mark Ebener, left, receives a his plague of the 2002 Buzz Besadny award from Commissioner Roy Stein, who made the presentation.

vided a rational and objective basis for fishery management decisions."

Stein also lauded Ebener's work in sea lamprey control. "Mark has been an active participant in the sea lamprey

control effort, carrying out assessment work, leading much of the synthesis of wounding assessments, and most recently participating on the Sea Lamprey Integration Committee."

CORA WALLEYE PROGRAM 2002 UPDATE

From Nunns Creek Fisheries Enhancement

Just under 400,000 fish were harvested from the South and East Ponds and stocked during this reporting period. Approximately 236,335 wall-

eye were stocked in the treatyceded waters. Waishkey **River-Bay Mills Indian** Community area received approximately 100,450, the St. Mary's River received approximately 70,285 and

Grand Traverse Bay received 65,600 (See table below). In addition to these Great Lakes stocking, approximately 148,350 were transferred to the north culture pond for extended growth. These fish

Running total

8,000

South Pond 202,175

182,523

East Pond

in the north pond are scheduled to be stocked in the St. Mary's River this fall.

The Nunns Creek Fisheries Enhancement Facility collected only approximately 7.5 liters of green walleye eggs

Walleye Stocking Summary, Summer 2002

Date	pounds	Number/	Number	Stocking site
6/27	269.75	210	56.648	Potaganissing B
6/28	65.00	210	13.650	Potaganissing B
6/29	13.50	210	2,835	North Pond
6/29	25.00	800	20,000	Suttons Bay
6/29	7.00	800	5,600	Northport Bay
6/30	24.70	200	4,940	North Pond
6/30	10.00	00	8,000	Waishkey River/
				BMIC
6/30	27.75	500	13,875	Back Bay BMIC
7/1	60.00	200	12,000	North Pond
7/1	67.75	200	13,550	Back Bay BMIC
7/1	47.00	500	23,500	Back Bay BMIC
7/1	62.75	500	31,375	Back Bay BMIC
7/2	50.75	200	10,150	Back Bay BMIC
7/2	50.00	800	40,000	Northport Bay
7/2	17.00	800	13,600	North Pond
7/3	164.25	700	114,975	North Pond
Potaganissing Bay			70,285	
North Pond			148,350	So
Suttons Bay			20,000	Ea
Northport Bay			45,600	
Waishkey River BMIC			<u>100,450</u>	
Grand	d Total		384,685	

anissing Bay anissing Bay Pond ns Bay port Bay Pond key River/

56,648 South Pond 70,298 2,835 20,000 5,600 7,775

South Pond South Pond East Pond East Pond South Pond East Pond

Culture Pond

(estimated 600,000 eggs) from adult walleye captured in impoundment gear on April 23-25, 2002, from Munuscong Lake in the St. Mary's River (SMR). Eyed eggs were first observed on day 19 (May 14). On May 6, 2002, approximately 15 liters of eyed eggs (1.2 million eggs) from Big Bay DeNoc (BBD) were transferred from the MDNR Thompson Creek Hatchery to NCFEF. Beginning on day 20, hatchery water was warmed to 56° F and held at that temperature through hatching.

Hatching of healthy fry began on day 24. Hatching was completed on day 33 (May 17), with approximately 90 percent of the fry hatching on days 29-31.

21,875	South Pond
19,775	South Pond
35,425	South Pond
58,925	South Pond
90,300	South Pond
100,450	South Pond
45,600	East Pond
33,375	East Pond
148,350	East Pond

Total production of walleye fry in 2002 was approximately 1.25 million. All fry were treated with oxytetracycline prior to stocking this year. Approximately 100,000 BBD strain walleye fry were transferred to a private pond on Drummond Island, the south pond received approximately 500,000 BBD strain and 450,000 SMR strain, with an additional 200,000 BBD strain fry being stocked into the east pond.

Alls well that ends well: joint patrol picks up nonswimmer teen adrift in toy raft

PRESQUE ISLE — Out on a joint patrol in the Hammond Bay area, tribal and DNR officers rescued a boy who had drifted away from shore on his raft.

On July 2, the Presque Isle Central Dispatch received a call that a 15-year-old boy who could not swim had drifted away on a raft caught by the wind. Step-grandmother, Carol Kelley, had made the call. Visiting her was her daughter and son-in-law Bob Walker with his son, Griffin Walker, the youth who became adrift.

Michigan DNR Conservation Officer Luis Perez and Bay Mills Officer Bill Schofield were just headed out of Hammond Bay on a joint patrol. Perez heard the dispatch and radioed that they would head for the boy. By the time they found him, he was already .55 miles out from shore and moving fast, said Perez.

"It was a case of us being at the right place at the right time," Perez said, adding that the boy said he could not swim and did not have a life jacket.

According to dispatch records, they could not bring the boy back to his residence due to the depth of the water, so they planned to meet the boy's father at Hammond Bay. The dispatcher realized that his stepmother had swum out after the boy, and as she was "quite a ways from shore," they headed over to pick her up, too.

The youth was dropped off to his father in about 3 feet of water, and, the report said, "the stepmom is okay, too."



Photo Courtesy Luis Perez, MDNR

On joint patrol with MDNR Officer Luis Perez, Bay Mills Conservation Officer Bill Schofield hands up Griffin Walker from a raft that had drifted more than a half mile from shore.

CORA Public Education to conduct annual salmon net safety campaign

Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority CORA Board, Officers and Committee officers

Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC or Bay Mills) L. John Lufkins, tribal chairman, CORA chairman Dave Menominee, Conservation Committee chairman

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB) Robert Kewaygoshkum, tribal chairman John Concannon, Natural Resource Committee chairman

Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRB) Johnny Sams, tribal chairman John Koon, Natural Resource Commission chairman

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) Gerry Chingwa, tribal chairman, GLRC* vice chairman George Anthony, Natural Resource Commission chairman

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (Sault Tribe or SSMTCI) Bernard Bouschor, tribal chairman; Alternate: Fred Paquin, Tribal Unit 3 director, Chief of Police, Law

Enforcement Committee, and CORA vice chairman.

Beginning this week, the CORA Public Education and Information program, in conjunction with the Natural Resource Departments of the CORA tribes, will conduct the annual salmon net safety campaign to educate recreational boaters on how to spot a salmon net, and to steer clear of them.

Using the familiar annual poster and press release, the campaign

alerts media, boaters at access sites and fish licensing vendors, and asks the US Coast Guard to alert the public on its recreational boater radio channel. The information is also posted on the CORA website.

Tribal members or employees, call CORA Public Information Officer Jennifer Dale at 906-248-2258 for more information, or with questions or concerns.

Tribal-USFWS Joint whitefish survey conducted in Lake Huron

By Aaron Woldt, Alpena FRO

From June 17 through June 27, staff from the Alpena Fisheries Resource Office and Bay Mills Indian Community in Brimley, Mich., conducted a lake whitefish survey in 1836 Treaty waters of northern Lake Huron. The goal of the survey was to collect fishery independent population abundance and biological data of whitefish stocks. This data will be used in statistical-catch-at-age population models that are updated annually to determine harvest regulation guidelines for tribal commercial fishers in 1836 Treaty waters. Good data collection and model development is essential to sound and sustainable management of the lake whitefish resources in northern Lake Huron. The biological data collected will also improve our understanding of the relative health of whitefish stocks in northern Lake Huron. As dictated in the 2000 Consent Decree — a 20-year fishery allocation agreement for 1836 Treaty waters signed by Michigan, the United States Government, Bay Mills Indian Community, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians -

the Modeling Subcommittee of the Technical Fisheries Committee annually collects data and conducts models to determine whitefish harvest regulations for five management units in northern Lake Huron. Lake whitefish is the central component to the Native American commercial fisheries in 1836 Treaty waters.

Using both Service and Bay Mills research vessels and staff, 22 overnight gill net sets were conducted at randomly selected sites in whitefish management unit 4 (Alpena to Presque Isle) and whitefish management unit 5 (Presque Isle to Hammond Bay). All whitefish collected were measured, weighed, checked for lamprey wounds, sexed and assessed for maturity and visceral fat content. Scale samples were taken from each fish for age determination and stomach contents will be identified and counted by staff the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Vic Matson Sr., Conservation Committee chairman, GLRC chairman

* "Great Lakes Resource Committee," which serves as the inter-tribal management body for the treaty fishery in 1836 treaty waters.

Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority Albert "Big Abe" LeBlanc Building 179 W. Three Mile Rd. Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783 Ph: 906-632-0043 Fax: 906-632-1141 e-mail: cora@up.net website: www.1836cora.org

CORA staff

Jeff Parker, executive director Jane TenEyck, assistant executive director Dwight "Bucko" Teeple, resource developer Bev Aikens, executive secretary Deanna Bowen, secretary This study will continue annually and be the data collected will be maintained at Alpena FRO and adapted to meet future data collection needs.

Reprinted with permission from Volume 4, No. 10, July 24, 2002, Inside Region 3 USFWS newsletter.



New tags yield new, unexpected data on lake trout

HAMMOND BAY, Lake Huron — This summer at the USGS Hammond Bay Biological Station, scientists are studying Sea Lamprey predation and gathering other important data using new technology — miniaturized tags implanted in fish. And, any fisher who lands a tagged lake trout can receive a \$100 reward. They also receive \$1 per pound for tagged whitefish.

According to lead scientist USGS Research Fishery Biologist Roger Bergstehdt, the project is part of a broader study working with five species.

"It's exciting work," said Bergstehdt, who is also field station supervisor at Hammond Bay Biological Station. "We're finding out things that were only approximately known in the past. The new tags open up a whole new window."

"This project advances our understanding and knowledge on the ecology of species tremendously. We already know they prefer colder temperatures than we thought, and have huge vertical migration in the water column during the day. We thought otherwise," ITFAP Fisheries Assessment Biologist Mark Ebener said.

So far, they have three years worth of information. The study began looking at metabolic rate of lamprey and hosts by recording temperature. In Fall 1998, 318 lake trout were tagged to record temperature. The scientists recovered 49 of those fish — quite a return, said Bergstehdt. The tags recorded hourly temperatures for 14 months, so that the scientists were able to successfully described seasonal temperature occurrences in two genetic groups of Lake Huron lake trout — the upper Great Lakes strain, found primarily in Lake Superior, and the Seneca strain. Recordings showed that the Seneca strain were 2°C cooler than the Lake Superior strain. This means the two strains were in different in depth distributions. Bergstehdt said that the Senecas do better in presence of sea lamprey and seem more resistant to attack, and perhaps now they know why.

Bergstehdt was encouraged the tags described temperatures in ways that using nets to collect fish could not. "Nets only provide a snapshot," said Bergstehdt. Huron with the help of Sault Tribe trap netters Jim Prizzo and Jamie Massey fishing out of the Sault Tribe Trap Net Zone.

Fish were obtained by dipping fish from a net under the boat, said Ebener. The biologists brought their boat up, took the fish they wanted and put them in a floating holding cage. They continued the process, following the fishers until the cage was full. The fish were taken back to shore and moved to an aerated truck tank ready to be transported to Hammond Bay Biological Station.

The fish are kept at the station for at least a day so that biologists can make sure they are healthy, said Ebener, who went on to describe the operation.

To insert the tag, biologists put a fish into a cooler of water with a little clove oil, which knocks them out. The operating table provides water flow through the gills while the biologists make a .75 inch incision and insert the tag, then close the incision with two stitches.

They also put spaghetti tags in the fish's back so fishers can easily spot them as tagged fish.

Ebener said they tagged 75 whitefish, 20 lake trout, some chinook and sea lamprey. At Lake St. Clair, lake sturgeon were tagged.

Then the fish are put in the recovery tank. The procedure went easily for the lake trout, but whitefish proved to be a little more sensitive, said Ebener. And, that's another benefit of the project — the chance to further information about whitefish. "We saw just by operation they don't handle stress well," said Ebener.

The USGS at Hammond Bay Biological Station had the help of the USFWS, the University of Guelph, and ITFAP. Ebener said USGS internal funds, USFWS Great Lakes Restoration Act monies and ITFAP manpower and coordinating with fishers all contributed.

Bergstehdt said tribes would be interested the depth distribution of lake whitefish versus the seasonal depth distribution of lake trout to further efforts to target whitefish with trap nets. It's a good thing for the fishers, said Bergstehdt, adding that although fishers don't do much harm to lake trout, its good public relations.

In this study, they found only 300 lake trout and implanted 160

years.

Another unexpected bit of data recovered from a tagged fish was that the fish moved from the surface to a depth of 220 feet a number of times during the day. "We wouldn't have suspected that, said Bergstehdt. "They are more active in the water than we might have thought, coming to surface in even deep water, probably to feed."

Out of the 160 fish tagged and released, five have so far been recovered, which Bergstehdt sad is encouraging in terms of recovering data.

The \$100 reward is a good incentive to return tagged fish. Most commercial fishers know this is going on, said Bergstehdt. "It's not big money but worth a phone call," he said. His staff will even come collect the fish.

Ebener added that \$1 per pound is paid for a tagged whitefish.

Bergstehdt said he "very much appreciates the partici-

pation" and he is "indebted to the fishers for their help, trap netters particularly."

Bergstehdt said that collecting the fish for tagging been an interesting experience. "It's remarkable. In 30 lifts, I've seen exactly two species of fish — it's a very clean fishery," said the scientist, who has been at it for a decade, so he knows what he's looking at.



Roger Bergsteht led his staff, Dave Keffer, Sean Sisler, Erik Larson and Dave Portyka, out on the water to release the tagged lake trout. Keffer handled the boat while Portkya handled the fish.



Photo by Jason A. LeBlanc

The released fish indulge in a bit of relaxation before heading homeward. Spaghetti tags can be seen on the backs.





Photos by Jason A. LeBlanc

Portkya gently lifts the tagged fish from its holding tank and releases it into the water.



"Instead, with tags, we got overall patterns."

They expanded the project, studying five species with new miniaturized tags that record more data. The species implanted are lake trout, sea lamprey, chinook salmon, and lake sturgeon.

The old tags .75 inches in diameter and 3- 4 inches in length. They provided hourly temperature readings for 14 months. The new tags are about the size the "pinky tip to the first knuckle," described Bergstehdt. They provide hourly temperature and depth data for up to three years. "That's quite a leap forward," said Bergstehdt.

Fish tagged this year were collected off 40 Mile Point on Lake

tags. "I don't believe I've lost five fish," he said.

Thanks to the new tags, they have already found out things they did not expect. A GLIFWC staffer recovered a fish that had only been in the water for 41 days. It was released from Keweenaw and found about 1.5 hours west of the Sault in Pancake River. The tag had data recorded every two to three minutes.

The tags work by starting out recording every 15 seconds. Then the data is overwritten in every third alternate location. so they always have a complete series. the can get records every 20 minutes in one year, every 40 minutes in two years, and every hour in three

The whitefish on the operating table receives a tag the size of a pinky tip, as can be seen to the right, where the tag is compared to an average ballpoint pen.

BIG EXOTICS IN THE WATER DRAW ATTENTION TO HAVOC WREAKED BY AQUATIC INVADERS

Two big exotics have brought the dangers of aquatic invaders s into the spotlight. These new exotics are several species of snakehead fish and Asian carp. These huge fish have the capability of wreaking more havoc, say scientists, than previous invaders. National papers such as USA Today are finally focusing on a problem that fishermen have been dealing with for decades.

Snakeheads are native to parts of tropical Africa and Asia occurring in China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and India, according to Shafland. Although the snakehead is yet to be found in the Great Lakes, it lives in fresh water and is spreading. Three species of the fish have been found in open waters in California, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and at least two have been established as reproducing populations.

Thirteen States currently prohibit possession of live snakeheads; nevertheless, there is continuing evidence of illegal activity involving these fish even in states where they are prohibited. On July 23, Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced a proposal to ban importation and interstate transportation of live snakeheads, voracious fish indigenous to Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Africa.

Norton's proposal would add the family of snakeheads, comprised of 28 species, to the federal list of "injurious wildlife" under the Lacey Act, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to list non-indigenous wild animals deemed to be "injurious, or potentially injurious, to the health and welfare of people as well as to the interests of agriculture, forestry, and horticulture, or to the welfare or survival of wildlife or wildlife resources of the United States."

Last December the Associated Press reported that the bighead carp has been found more than once in Lake Erie.

"Authorities said bighead carp have been found in the lake three times since June (2001) — although they're not sure how the fish got there or what, if any, threat they may pose to other species."

Scientists say the Asian carp is working its way up the Mississippi River toward Lake Michigan. "Recent evidence indicates that Asian carp, a prolific nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species, may now be within 25 miles of Lake Michigan - putting the entire Great Lakes basin ecosystem at near-term risk of invasion. Asian carp have moved up through the Mississippi River system, and now found in the Illinois River and the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal connected to the Great Lakes near Chicago. It is believed that, based upon their current rate of dispersal, Asian carp could reach Lake Michigan this year," said a July 11 IJC press release.

(The IJC is a binational organization established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to help Canada and the United States prevent and resolve disputes over use of waters along their common boundary.)

This fish can "grow to 110 pounds and 4 feet in length ... It's so effective at sucking up plankton and vegetation that it could virtually eliminate other fish species from the Great Lakes by destroying their food supply," reported USA Today.

If the carp reaches the Great Lakes, it could be the worse invasion yet.

"Scientists caution that failure to prevent the invasion of Asian carp may result in damage to the Great Lakes ecosystem far exceeding those brought about by the previous invasions of the sea lamprey and the zebra mussel," said the release.

The IJC has recommended that the U.S. and Canadian governments continue operation of the current electrical barrier in the Chicago River; and install a second, more permanent barrier.

The IJC also called on the U.S. and Canadian governments to:

— educate the public about the threat of Asian carp to the Great Lakes ecosystem;

— investigate other chemical and physical environmentally sound alternatives to prevent the movement of aquatic nuisance species to and from the Great Lakes; and

 — consider implementing regulatory controls to prevent transfer of aquatic nuisance species via other pathways such as the food and bait fish industries and aquaculture, according to the statement.

An article written by Pam Thiel, LaCrosse FRO, Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO and Jerry L. Rasmussen, Rock Island FO in a July USFWS newsletter, "Inside Region 3," seems to agree with the IJC's conclusions. "Asian carp upstream movement could be slowed by this electrical dispersal barrier. With the fate of the Great Lakes fishery at risk, there are elevated incentives to add additional components to the barrier to make it even more effective, since Asian carp have yet to be collected above the barrier. The Illinois Natural History Survey will be evaluating the effectiveness of the barrier this fall and conducting laboratory experiments on how to best tweak the electric barrier to repel Asian carp moving upstream. This prototype barrier is a short-term remedy, but other feasible, long-term alternatives need to be explored," the article said.

What can we do about exotics?

— Some of these fish have escaped from fish farms or have been deliberately released. Anyone who finds what they think might be an Asian carp or a snakehead should keep it and show it to their natural resource department. Note the place and date of your find.

— Document your encounters with exotic species. Take a camera if you can, write down in your log when you encounter the exotics and what you observe.

— We can all write to our representatives in Congress and in the Michigan legislature to support efforts to stave off these two dangerous exotics, and let them know what is already happening in the Great Lakes thanks to the sea lamprey, round goby, the ruffe, the zebra mussels, the spiny water flea and myriad others. Tell them your story in your own words.

Our representatives

Districts are changing because of reapportionment after the 2000 Census, plus this is an election year. But these are good until the end of the year:

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRE-

SENTATIVES District 107 — Luce, Mackinac, Chippewa, Schoolcraft, Emmet Representative Scott Shackleton P.O. Box 30014 Lansing, MI 48909-7514

District 104 — Counties Leelanau

and Grand Traverse

Representative Jason Allen P.O. Box 30014 Lansing, MI 48909-7514

MICHIGAN SENATE 36th District: Charlevoix and north Senator George McManus P.O. Box 30036

Lansing, MI 48909-7536 37th District: Antrim and south Senator Walter North P.O. Box 30036 Lansing, MI 48909-7536 **CONGRESS** — HOUSE OF REPRE-**SENTATIVES** Michigan's First Congressional District **U.S. Representative Bart Stupak** MARQUETTE: 1229 W. Washington St. Marquette, MI 49855 TRAVERSE CITY: 1120 E. Front St., Suite D Traverse City, MI 49686 Washington 2348 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 CONGRESS — U.S. SENATE **Senator Carl Levin** (Co-Chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force) WASHINGTON SR-269, Russell Senate Office Building U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510 TRAVERSE CITY 207 Grandview Pkwy, Suite 104 Traverse City, MI 49684 **Senator Debbie Stabenow** UPPER PENINSULA OFFICE 1901 W. Ridge Marquette, MI 49855 NORTHERN MICHIGAN OFFICE 109 South Union Street, Suite 305

Researchers studying habits of lake sturgeon

ST. JOSEPH, Mich. (AP) — A 10-man team is working to gather information on the sturgeon population in Lake Michigan for future restoration efforts of the threatened species.

Sturgeon used to be so plentiful in the Great Lakes during the 1800s that they were considered trash fish, and were burned instead of eaten when captured. Logging, dam building and overfishing devastated their population by the early 20th century. in the St. Joseph and Kalamazoo rivers.

Sutton said the St. Joseph River historically has held lake sturgeon populations, "probably one of the largest populations." Saugatuck. "There were reports of several others caught out there this spring," he said.

Traverse City, MI 49684

Researchers took a 200-pound sturgeon from the Peshtigo River area of Green Bay this spring.

BOOKMARK OUR NEW WEBSITE!

www.1836cora.org

"Tribal Fishing" is published by the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA) Public Information program. The program is administrated by the Bay Mills Indian Community Newspaper Department.

Please direct all inquiries to Jennifer Dale, 12140 W. Lakeshore Dr., Brimley, MI 49715, 906-248-2258, newspaper@bmic.net. CORA Executive Director Jeff Parker may be reached at 906-632-0043 or cora@up.net. See www.1836cora.org for more information.

Permission must be obtained to reprint any matter in this newsletter. Submissions and letters welcome at the above address. Please use your full name & address. Sturgeon can live to be more than 100 years old and can weigh close to 200 pounds. The average life span of a sturgeon is 50 years. The two-year, \$800,000 project is being funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation for Advanced Scientific Research.

The researchers eventually will decide which rivers and types of habitat will best support efforts to increase the number of fish, The Herald-Palladium reported in a recent story.

Trent Sutton, a Coloma native and Purdue University researcher, is part of the research team responsible for studying sturgeon But a series of dams at Berrien Springs, Buchanan and Niles prevented the fish from running upstream, cutting off access to some of the best spawning habitat.

Last spring, Sutton said he was unable to find any sturgeon in the St. Joseph River, though that did not mean there weren't any present. High water levels may have interfered, he said.

The fish start reproducing at about age 25. The males spawn only every two to three years and the females every four to six years.

Sutton netted a 122-pound sturgeon this spring near the mouth of the Kalamazoo River at Sturgeon spawn in the Fox, Oconto, Peshtigo and Menominee rivers of Green Bay, and the Manistique, Manistee, Muskegon, St. Joseph and Kalamazoo rivers in Michigan.

Sutton and graduate student Dan Daugherty are working to identify the types of habitat in the St. Joseph and Kalamazoo rivers, as well as the sources of food.

"Lake sturgeon feed on insects primarily, but we have no idea what those insects are," Sutton said.

The researchers studying the rivers plan to compare their findings during a meeting in December. They will return next spring for more field work.