

Fishes Tech Committee Minutes

Date: February 21, 2014

Location: PFBC Pleasant Gap Facility.

Attendees: Criswell, Fisher, Stauffer, Spear, Porter, Horwitz, Argent

Time: 10 am to 12 noon

The primary topic of discussion at this meeting was a review of the S-ranks of Pennsylvania's fishes. Rob Criswell, utilizing NatureServe's Rank Calculator, presented an extensive spreadsheet to the committee for review.

Committee member reports and happenings

- Two PA range extensions have been documented in Conneaut Creek, Erie Co. for *Ammocrypta pellucida* (E. Sand Darter) and *Minytrema melanops* (Spotted Sucker).
- Surveys this year have indicated that the *Nocomis biguttatus* (Hornyhead Chub) population in Conneaut Creek is restricted to a 5.5km section in northern Crawford Co.
- During permit negotiations with the USFWS, it was agreed to attempt Sea Lamprey removal from upper Conneaut Creek using electrofishing gear instead of TFM to greatly reduce the potential impacts on the highly restricted and vulnerable Hornyhead Chub population there. The electrofishing removal operation is scheduled to occur in mid-August 2014. TFM application in the middle and lower course will likely continue in the future.
- *Lepomis humilis* (Orange Spotted Sunfish) specimens from the Wheeling Creek drainage, Greene Co. were found in both PFBC and PSU museum lots from the late 1970s. The status of this species is currently unknown.
- The process of designating fish Species of Greatest Conservation Need for the State Wildlife Action Plan is nearly complete.
- New populations of Hornyhead Chub were found in the Beaver River drainage.
- New locations were documented for the Southern Redbelly Dace in Beaver and Westmoreland counties.
- A new location was documented for the endangered Northern Brook Lamprey in the Lake Erie drainage.
- 21 Paddlefish were collected below Kinzua dam by gill netting and boat electrofishing. This plus a well documented angler report indicated that fish stocked by NY DEC are successfully making their way through the sluice gates of the dam and traveling downstream (as far south as Tionesta – a distance of approximately 45 river miles).
- One Asian Carp (grass carp) collected around Meade Island on the Allegheny in early June was determined to be triploid. This is the second incidence of grass carp in this area in six months.
- The aquatic invasive spiny water flea continues to maintain populations in the free-flowing reach of the upper Allegheny River.
- Recent collections of Eastern Brook Trout along Chestnut Ridge and Laurel Hill indicate a strong year class, with the presence of significant YOY fishes in many streams. This is good news considering harsh winter Pennsylvania experienced.

- Fin clips are being kept for all Brook Trout collected by CalU in hopes that samples can be processed to determine genetic diversity within and among isolated populations along Laurel Hill.

Follow-up. On March 17, 2014, Rob provided the committee with a final list of fishes for conservation consideration which incorporated the committee's recommendations for adoption by the PFBC. Key recommendations including the delisting of several state threatened species: gilt, bluebreast, sotted, and Tippecanoe darters.