

Underappreciated Fishes Technical Committee

Mission

The Underappreciated Fishes Technical Committee is to facilitate the proper management of all underappreciated fish species (game and non-game) in the Midwest and Canadian Provinces. This committee will organize and distribute information while using research and data to facilitate sustainable harvest regulations.

Background

Underappreciated fishes within nearly all their native ranges are treated as “rough” fish or on par with non-native/invasive species (Silver Carp, Bighead Carp, etc.). Bowfishers often can shoot as many fish as they want (i.e. there are no take limits for many species), and subsequently have to discard huge numbers of full-bodied carcasses after their outing. This treatment is rather wasteful, especially as many of these species are understudied, and harvest data is essentially non-existent for this is new sport. Thus, it is impossible to know if these new harvest methods are sustainable, and a precautionary management approach is necessary. State regulations from Illinois (page 6), Indiana (page 9), and Minnesota (page 37) make clear that the activities described above could be described as wanton waste in some cases, “The intentional waste and destruction of fish...”

These fishes, have evolved alongside other sport-fish which have regulations in place to allow for sustainable removal by public anglers. By not having such regulations for other species, misconceptions arise. Take for example the Gar species, and Bowfin, which many anglers blame (without evidence) for bass and panfish population decline. Bowfishers misidentify other fishes (catostomid species) for being Common Carp. Buffalofish species can be a major commercial fishery in some states (e.g., Iowa), but may lose the opportunity when these fish are removed without limit by bowfishers. Other catostomids can provide necessary information about our waterways and their health, yet the public can remove them year-round. Sturgeon and Paddlefish within the Midwest have historically been commercially and illegally harvested for caviar. These caviar fisheries have nearly been permanently shut down, but some public anglers still remove them (illegally in some states) for the same goal. Each of these species serves a crucial, native role in their respective ecosystem(s), and the unregulated removal of them could have detrimental effects, including extirpation.

The purpose of this committee is to work together towards gaining proper management practices and regulations for our underappreciated native fish species. These species are underrepresented and need the scientific community to start continually supporting them.

Goal 1. Develop a system for NCD members to provide efficient information related to underappreciated fishes.

Objectives

- A. Meet twice a year to stay current on projects, ideas, and results
- B. Act as a hub for information that will become available to the NCD and public
- C. Sponsor and/or support workshops/symposia that are geared towards management and research regarding the underappreciated fishes
- D. Make public the Underappreciated Fishes Committee at both the national and state level.

Goal 2. Compile current research and management issues for these species in the NCD.

Objectives

- A. Survey biologists and workers in the management agencies of the NCD for research priority
- B. Develop and distribute a list of research/management problems to the Underappreciated Fishes Technical Committee members to promote in their agencies
- C. Work towards designing and coordinating projects to be conducted similarly across the NCD.

Goal 3. Attempt to work with various agencies within the NCD to get their state regulations changed in favor of the underappreciated fishes.

Goal 4. Reevaluate these goals and objectives of the ASF NCD Underappreciated Fishes Technical Committee.

Goal 5. Grow and develop into a long-lived and viable committee.

List of species to be included under the committee

Acipenseridae

- Acipenser fluvescens* – Lake Sturgeon
- Scaphirhynchus albus* – Pallid Sturgeon
- Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus* – Shovelnose Sturgeon

Amiidae

- Amia calva* - Bowfin

Catostomidae

- Carpiodes carpio* – River Carpsucker
- Carpiodes cyprinus* – Quillback Carpsucker
- Carpiodes velifer* – Highfin Carpsucker
- Catostomus commersonii* – White Sucker
- Cycleptus elongatus* – Blue Sucker
- Erimyzon claviformis* – Creek Chubsucker
- Erimyzon sucetta* – Lake Chubsucker
- Hypentelium nigricans* – Northern Hogsucker
- Ictiobus bubalus* – Smallmouth Buffalo
- Ictiobus cyprinellus* – Bigmouth Buffalo
- Ictiobus niger* – Black Buffalo
- Minytrema melanops* – Spotted Sucker
- Moxostoma anisurum* – Silver Redhorse
- Moxostoma breviceps* – Smallmouth Redhorse
- Moxostoma carinatum* – River Redhorse
- Moxostoma duquesnei* – Black Redhorse
- Moxostoma erythrurum* – Golden Redhorse
- Moxostoma macrolepidotum* – Shorthead Redhorse
- Moxostoma valenciennesi* – Greater Redhorse

Lepisosteidae

- Lepisosteus oculatus* – Spotted Gar
- Lepisosteus osseus* – Longnose Gar
- Lepisosteus platostomus* – Shortnose Gar

Petromyzontidae

- Ichthyomyzon bdellium* – Ohio Lamprey
- Ichthyomyzon castaneus* – Chestnut Lamprey
- Ichthyomyzon fossor* – Northern Brook Lamprey
- Ichthyomyzon greeleyi* – Mountain Brook Lamprey
- Ichthyomyzon unicuspis* – Silver Brook Lamprey
- Lampetra aepyptera* – Least Brook Lamprey
- Lethenteron appendix* – American Brook Lamprey

Polyodontidae

- Polyodon spathula* – Paddlefish

Sciaenidae

- Aplodinotus grunniens* – Freshwater Drum