



2019 Annual Meeting Minutes
Ictalurid Technical Committee
North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society
Superior Ballroom A, Hilton Cleveland Downtown Hotel, Cleveland, OH
5:00-6:00 pm, 29 January 2019

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Ernesto Flores	Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
Rebecca Krogman	Iowa DNR
Greg Pitchford	Allstate Consultants, LLC
Craig Jansen	Indiana DNR
Chris Brooke	Missouri Department of Conservation
Jeremy Tiemann	Illinois Natural History Survey
Mark Porath	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
BJ Schall	South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
Nick Kramer	Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
Ben Neely	Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
Connor Ossowski	Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism

Welcome and call to order by Ben Neely, Chair at 5:05.

No additions suggested to the agenda.

Motion to accept January 2018 minutes by Jeremy Tiemann, seconded by Nick Kramer.
Unanimous.

Treasurer's report: The ITC account began 2018 with a balance of \$5,586.79. A deposit of book proceeds occurred on August 15 of \$165.00 and a single expense of \$50.00 occurred on January 1, 2019 for plaques and certificates to recognize Rebecca Krogman, former secretary/treasurer, and Tony Barada, former ITC chair. The ITC Investment Portfolio began the year at \$17,946 and the year-to-date balance is \$18,149.

Chair report: The committee had a discussion on Catfish 2020. Finances were discussed to be given to the symposium. The initial consensus was that we will provide 10,000 out of the investment portfolio for Catfish 2020, which will be held February 18-20, 2020 in Little Rock, Arkansas. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Southern Division of AFS. A call for abstracts will be distributed next week and will be due on September 27, 2019. The first draft of the manuscript with the intention to being published in the Catfish 2020 proceedings will be due by the first day of the meeting. Website will be periodically updated and Jeremy Tiemann suggested for any updates for website to get in contact with him. A digital copy of the proceedings and papers from the meeting will be provided in an online journal format, rather than a book being published. The international section may provide accommodations for two

individuals and \$500 allocated for those attendees to attend the meeting. Options for those international biologists who can't attend were discussed with proposals of allowing a PDF of a poster being sent and slated at the symposium with contact information.

Tony Barada and Rebecca Krogman were recognized for their efforts and leadership for serving as the Chair and Treasurer/Secretary, respectively. Plaques and certificates will be sent out the week of February 4th to further send our appreciation for serving on the committee.

State Report Summaries

Dakotas – BJ Schall reporting for Dave Lucchesi

- Black Bullhead age and growth information was collected in western South Dakota reservoirs. Hanchin et al (2002) looked at age and growth of black bullheads in 35 different South Dakota waters and rarely found fish over 6 years old. Aging is still ongoing, but aged Black Bullheads suggest multiple populations with fish over 6 years old. – *Gene Galinat*
- Recent surveys indicate that Channel Catfish are present in low densities in Northeastern South Dakota Lakes. Specifically, Lake Poinsett and Lake Kampeska are the primary natural lakes having fishable populations, and Elm lake, Mina Lake and Richmond Lake are reservoirs that contain fishable numbers. – *Brian Blackwell*
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks designed and implemented a research study to evaluate the population dynamics and angling harvest of the Flathead and Channel Catfish populations in the lower James River in eastern South Dakota. Sampling occurred in mid-May to late July in 2018 with additional sampling occurring in the last week of August and first week of September. Five sampling reaches, ranging from 8-13 Rkm, were utilized to collect fish in the lower 105 Rkm stretch of the James River from Olivet, SD to the confluence with the Missouri River. Low-frequency electrofishing with a chase boat was the primary capture method for Flathead Catfish, although trotlines baited with live Black Bullheads were also used in an effort to collect larger individuals. Tandem hoop nets with 0.8 and 0.6m openings, baited with either waste cheese or soybean cake, were used to catch Channel Catfish, and some smaller individuals were collected during low-frequency electrofishing for growth analysis. Individual catfish were tagged in an effort to estimate exploitation, abundance, and to assess movement. Reward tags were utilized with tags valued at \$100 (10% of the overall number of tags returned), \$10 (60% of all tags), and no reward (30% of all tags). A total of 1,148 Flathead Catfish and 852 Channel Catfish were sampled during this effort. Pectoral spines were removed from 382 and 392 Channel and Flathead Catfish, respectively, for age determination. Aging is ongoing. All catfish greater than 305 mm were tagged using a Carlin dangler disc. A total of 567 Flathead Catfish and 388 Channel Catfish were tagged. Tag returns have been limited with anglers reporting only 11 Flathead Catfish and 2 Channel Catfish tags to date. Flathead Catfish recapture data from the 2018 sampling events and angler tag returns and observed that approximately 96% of all recaptured individuals were encountered within the same stretch of river where they were originally tagged. Estimates of tag loss after the final two week sampling period in August-September

were approximately 11% on the Flathead Catfish population. Field sampling for this project will continue in 2019 on the same stretches of the lower James River. Evaluations of tag returns will continue through 2020. – *BJ Schall*

Illinois – Jeremy Tiemann reporting

- Illinois Natural History Survey's Great Rivers Field Station has been accumulating spines from catfish collected during their Long Term Survey and Assessment of Large River Fishes in Illinois monitoring project for Sabina Berry, graduate student at Western Illinois who is doing a catfish and drum demographic project. – *Ben J. Lubinski*
- Floy tagging of all catfish species for the catfish mark and recapture program in Illinois. – *Eastern Illinois University*
- Fin clips from all catfish species for genetics project. – *Eastern Illinois University*

Indiana – Craig Jansen reporting

- Catfish survey was conducted on the Wabash River with effort consisting of 160 overnight hoop net lifts (20 per site) and 8 hours of electrofishing (1 hour per site; split between low and high pulse DC) across 8 sites. In total, 445 catfish were collected, including 255 Flathead Catfish, 165 Channel Catfish, and 25 Blue Catfish. Eight trophy size (>35 in) blue catfish were collected in the sample. The largest catfish collected were two blues measuring 41 in and weighing over 30 lbs.
- A supplemental catfish survey was completed on the Patoka River in 2018. A total of 150 catfish (103 Channel Catfish, 47 Flathead Catfish) were collected from 60 overnight hoop net lifts. Preliminary results indicate slower growth than the Wabash River populations.
- J.T. Myers Pool of the Ohio River were sampled with trotlines. Trotlines were baited with fresh cut silver carp instead of frozen gizzard shad, which had been used in prior years. In addition, dropper lines were changed from braided nylon twine to 100 lb Spiderwire braided fishing line. A total of 305 catfish were collected, including 195 Blue Catfish, 106 Channel Catfish, and 4 Flathead Catfish. Eight trophy size (>35 in) blue catfish were collected in the sample. The largest catfish collected were two blues measuring 41 in and weighing over 30 lbs.
- Monroe Lake fall Walleye and Hybrid Striped Bass sampling produced 135 Channel Catfish. Experimental mesh gill nets were used, the catch rate was 9 Channel Catfish/lift. Channel catfish length range was 8.0 to 29.3 inches. PSD-Q was 83, PSD-P was 19 and PSD- M was 4. Total weight was 335.67 lbs.
- Installed catfish nest boxes in Springs Valley Lake, making it the fourth lake in the state where nest boxes were installed. Due to successful spawning in nest boxes at Saddle Lake in 2016, plans are to survey Saddle this year to evaluate if there was successful recruitment. Use and recruitment in other lakes are being monitored as well.
- Conducted a catfish survey on Patoka Lake to evaluate population dynamics. Preliminary results indicate Patoka has a healthy Channel Catfish population made up of fast growing individual fish.
- Had reports of Walking Catfish in northern Indiana that turned out to be mudpuppies. Based on a series of weekly reader-submitted photos published in the Fort Wayne

Journal-Gazette. From July to November, Channel Catfish accounted for 13% of the photos of fish caught in private ponds around the area.

- Over 97,000 catchable size (8-12") channel catfish were stocked at 148 locations around the state. Many urban parks are stocked multiple times throughout the summer months.

Iowa – Rebecca Krogmann reporting

- 35,390 Blue Catfish fingerlings (avg. length 3.3 inch) and 23,521 advanced Blue Catfish fingerlings (avg. length 7.6 inch) were stocked in Three-Mile Lake from 2016-2018. These fish were received from either the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission or Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as feed-trained fry or fingerlings and raised at the Mount Ayr Fish Hatchery until they reached the desired length. Mount Ayr Fisheries staff have tried a variety of fish sampling techniques (eg. gillnets, hoop nets, fyke nets, low-pulse electrofishing, and jug lines) to evaluate the developing Blue Catfish population in Three-Mile Lake. However, so far only one Blue Catfish has been captured via sampling and we have only received one report of a Blue Catfish harvested by an angler. Staff will continue to try multiple fish sampling techniques to evaluate the population.
- During 2018, approximately 142,285 8-inch Channel Catfish were produced at Rathbun Fish Hatchery for stocking into public lakes, urban ponds, and reservoirs of Iowa. Channel Catfish were harvested from 9/11 to 10/18 with the last 161 fish stocked on 10/28 and 11/2. Channel Catfish stocking consisted of 57 trips, which included 194 lakes. The total stocking requests were met and a few waters received extra fish and more lakes were added. Overall survival of 94.6% was attained, which is the highest survival in the past seven years. The average survival from 2008 to 2017 ranged from 79-95%. The goal of 75% of fish being greater than 7.5 inches was met. At harvest, fish averaged 8.5 inches and 5.0 fish/lb.

Kansas – Ben Neely reporting

- Approximately 144,000 harvestable-sized channel catfish (12 to 18 in) were stocked in urban areas in 2018. – *Luke Kowalewski*
- Floatlines were used to collect Blue Catfish at Glen Elder, Melvern, Milford, Perry, and Wilson Reservoirs from June-August 2018. – *Bryan Sowards*
- Age and growth information was collected at Wilson and Lovewell Reservoirs. – *Ernesto Flores*
- A protected slot-length limit of 25-40 in with a five-fish daily limit and one over 40 in was instituted January 1, 2018 at Milford Reservoir. A mark-recapture project was initiated to collect pre-data and was completed in 2018. Additionally, marked fish were tagged with a reward tag and contact information to evaluate angler exploitation. A total of 2,295 blue catfish was captured and tagged in June-August, 2018. The recapture event occurred in September and 2,369 fish were captured. Of those, 7 were recaptures. We estimate total population size of approximately 723,000 fish, but only 2,650 above the 25-in minimum slot length. Between July 1 and December 31, 2018, 22 tagged fish were caught by anglers; 14 under the slot, 7 in the slot, and 1 over the slot. Six fish under the slot were harvested, and all other fish were released. This study will

be complemented by a robust age sample in 2019 and angler exploitation data will continue to be collected until June 30, 2019. – *Ben Neely*

Michigan - Jay Wesley submitted report via email

- Recent study suggests that Flathead Catfish are not native to the Great Lakes Basin, Fuller et al. (2018).
- Michigan DNR continues to monitor the state endangered Northern Madtom in the St. Clair River system.

Minnesota –Steve Shroyer submitted report via email

- The Catfish Work Group, a combination of agency representatives and catfish anglers, continued to convene during 2018. The biggest issue in 2018 was that the anglers formally proposed allowing use of two lines for fishing inland rivers and streams during the open water season statewide, excluding designated trout streams. The consensus among DNR catfish biologists is that this would not have any negative biological impact on catfish populations, given robust populations and already conservative bag and size limits. However, the proposal will be controversial because Minnesota has a long tradition of only allowing one line on inland waters during the open water season, and there are concerns about potential impacts on other popular species (e.g., Walleye, Muskellunge). The two-line proposal is currently under review, and its future is uncertain.
- Channel catfish and flathead catfish populations in the Minnesota River continue to be monitored. A telemetry study was initiated in 2018 and 15 Flathead Catfish were implanted with acoustic transmitters. Large-scale movements are being detected with stationary receivers in the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. – *Tony Sindt*
- We are going forward with our joint effort to change regulation on the Mississippi River portion of the border waters between MN and WI from (MN – combined (flathead and channel) daily bag of 10 WI – Combined Daily bag of 25) to a uniform between states combined Daily bag of 10, with no more than one catfish over 30". The proposal still has to pass spring conservation congress hearings in WI and go through rulemaking in both states. Earliest implementation would be spring 2020. – *Nick Schlessner*
- A trotline and hoop net survey of the Channel Catfish population on the Mississippi River from Brainerd to Grand Rapids occurred in 2018. – *Greg Berg*
- The Waterville hatchery produced 11,000 Channel Catfish fingerlings in 2018. The US Fish and Wildlife Service at Genoa, Wisconsin received 7,500 fingerlings for their mussel restoration program; 2,000 fingerlings were transferred to the West Metro (Minneapolis) area and 500 fish to the Lanesboro area for stocking. Waterville area staff stocked the remaining 1,000 fingerlings in a 21-acre fishing pond in the town of Alden. – *Andrew Scholten*

Missouri – Chris Brooke reporting

- Vital rates (i.e., exploitation, size structure, age and growth, total annual mortality) were assessed to evaluate the current harvest regulations for Blue Catfish and Flathead Catfish in the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Fish were tagged with \$25 and \$150 reward tags and pectoral spines were collected for aging. A final report for Blue Catfish

will be completed in 2019 and a final report for Flathead Catfish will be completed in 2020. Plans to present this research at Catfish 2020. – *Kyle Winders*

- Missouri Department of Conservation warm-water hatcheries produced 377,000 Channel Catfish (8-12") and stocked in over 300 public lakes. – *James Civiello*
- Documented commercial fish harvest for 2017 and summarized harvest trends since 1945. Blue Catfish harvest increased from 48,436 lbs. in 2016 to 75,890 lbs. in 2017. Harvest was focused on the lower Mississippi River near the Missouri-Arkansas border and the middle Mississippi River near St. Louis, MO. Flathead Catfish harvested increased from 20,581 lbs. in 2016, which is the lowest recorded harvest since 1966, to 22,830 lbs. in 2017 with harvest occurring on the upper Mississippi River – Pools 25 and 20. Channel Catfish harvest increased from 6,137 lbs. in 2016 (the lowest harvest ever recorded) to 9,277 lbs. in 2017. – *Joe McMullen*
- The 5 year (2015-2020) project to determine electrofishing response thresholds of Blue Catfish and Flathead Catfish continued with Zach Morris completing work and defending his M.S. thesis in late 2018. Mike Thomas will be the second M.S. student and will be conducting field work in 2018-2019 to evaluate the output goals in the field and develop power output tables for each species for field staff to standardize electrofishing output across water temperatures and water conductivity levels. Estimates of Cf were 94 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ for Blue Catfish and 69 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ for Flathead Catfish, both of which are lower than the recommended value of 115 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and the estimate for Flathead Catfish fell below the range. These results suggest that using an average value of approximately 81 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ to standardize power goals may produce more consistent catch rates when sampling Blue Catfish and Flathead Catfish together, especially near the extremes of water conductivity, when the error from incorrect standardization is maximized. They suggest using a catfish conductivity value of 81 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ to generate power goals. Experimental trials will be conducted in Spring/Summer 2019 to determine catchability using two pulsed-DC waveforms (15Hz; 30% duty cycle and 8Hz; 10% duty cycle) at the recommended power goal. – *Zach Ford*
- Population Assessment and Angler Exploitation of Blue Catfish in Mark Twain Lake continued. – *Paul Michaletz*
- Hybrid striped bass and flathead catfish were stocked in four small impoundments to reduce gizzard shad and common carp abundance. Hybrid striped bass were also stocked in another five impoundments. Small fingerling (50 mm total length, TL) hybrid striped bass have been stocked annually at 250 fish/ha since 2014 and flathead catfish (200-380 mm TL) were stocked at 40 fish/ha in 2014 and 2015. Nine treatment lakes were each paired with a reference lake where no stocking occurred. The goal of these predator stockings is to improve growth and size structure of panfish populations. So far, there have been some slight improvements in bluegill growth in most of the treatment lakes. The study continues for one more year. –*Paul Michaletz*
- A 16-inch minimum length limit on channel catfish was implemented in five small impoundments in southeastern Missouri. Four additional impoundments are being used as reference impoundments where there is no length limit. Sampling began in 2013 and will continue into 2020. The length limit began on March 1, 2017. Growth of Channel

Catfish is very slow in some of these impoundments and stocking rates were reduced in seven impoundments to increase growth rates. – *Paul Michaletz*

Ohio – Ethan Simmons submitted report via email

- Standardized sampling of Channel Catfish continued on inland reservoirs utilizing baited tandem hoop nets.
- Standardized sampling of Blue Catfish continued on inland reservoirs stocked with Blue Catfish. Stocking initiated in 2011 and has recently expanded. Standardized sampling protocols have been developed using low frequency electrofishing. Evaluations on the need for annual fingerling stocking are being discussed as well.
- A research project in collaboration with Ohio State University and ODNR Division of Wildlife occurred with Cory Belcher, PhD candidate, assessing catfish ecology and stocking regimes in inland reservoirs. Stocking yearling catfish at 25 fish/acre under 700 acres in size and predation on stocked catfish from Largemouth Bass is an example of what is being evaluated.
- Three inland reservoirs were assessed for catchability and seasonal catch rates across ranges of densities of catfish. The goal is to inform managers the best time period for standardized baited hoop net deployment as well as effort.
- In conjunction with the Ohio State research, the necessity for semi-annual yearling Channel Catfish stockings is being discussed in many smaller inland reservoirs.

Wisconsin – Alan Niebur reporting

- In 2017, the Wisconsin legislature passed a law allowing catfish to be taken with a bow and arrow, crossbow or by hand. Prior to this legislation, catfish could not be taken by these methods, so the Department of Natural Resources did not have adequate rules regulating these specific methods of take. The department recently implemented an emergency rule establishing bag limits, size limits, gear restrictions and season dates with the goal of protecting catfish (especially flathead catfish) from overharvest with these new methods. The department is currently working on a permanent rule containing these regulations, which is slated to go out for public hearings in February.
- Wisconsin has recently implemented standardized sampling protocols (combination of baited hoop net and low pulse electrofishing) to assess and monitor catfish populations. Surveys were conducted on the following waters: Wisconsin River (multiple locations), Wolf and Fox Rivers (Winnebago System), and Fox River (southern Wisconsin). Future hoop net surveys are being planned for the St. Croix River.
- Mississippi River staff has recently produced a comparative Channel Catfish aging structure analysis through the use of otoliths, pectoral fin bases, and pectoral spines. This report should be available in the near future.
- Pressed soy cake was a standard bait used for most baited hoop net surveys, however it has been difficult to find this source of bait in recent years. Staff on the Wisconsin River have conducted baited hoop net surveys using experimental pelleted goat feed, which was not successful. The upcoming year they intent to try cottonseed meal.

Old Business: Rebecca Krogmann, Iowa DNR, would like input on trophy catfish regulation evaluations and related studies. Discussion from Craig Jansen, Indiana DNR, about pay lakes and fishing guides and tournament anglers hesitations about the effect of pay lakes on the fishery. Chris Brooke, MDC, gave his input on the slot limit that went into effect on Truman Lake in 2014. He had stated that they have three years of pre-regulation sampling via floatlines and will be evaluated with additional sampling in 2022.

New Business: Catfish 2020 sponsorship was discussed. During the Southern Division meeting, workshop ideas were discussed. One proposal was to learn more about creel survey methods for catfish anglers due to the information gap. Jeremy Tiemann relayed that if one has an idea for workshop for Catfish 2020 to get in contact with him. Rebecca Krogmann had stated that NCD is developing communication methods and conducting changes on NCD website. Input for technical committees is welcomed.

Motion to adjourn at 5:35 by BJ Schall, seconded by Rebecca Krogman. Unanimous.

NCD Ictalurid Technical Committee State Chapter Representatives

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Submitted by Connor Ossowski, ITC secretary/treasurer
February 6, 2019