

Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program

Semiannual Progress Report

April 1, 2018 – September 30, 2018

Prepared for:

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INTRODUCTION

Monitoring the biota of Great Lakes coastal wetlands began as a project funded under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative on 10 September 2010. The project had the primary objective of implementing a standardized basin-wide coastal wetland monitoring program. Our first five years of sampling (2011-2015) set the baseline for future sampling years and showed the power of the datasets that can be used to inform decision-makers on coastal wetland conservation and restoration priorities throughout the Great Lakes basin. During round one, we 1) developed a database management system; 2) developed a standardized sample design with rotating panels of wetland sites to be sampled across years, accompanied by sampling protocols, QAPPs, and other methods documents; and 3) developed background documents on the indicators.

We have now entered the second phase of this work. The status of the work has been changed from a project to a sampling program, and we are working on the second complete round of coastal wetland sampling. During this second round (2016-2020), we will be adjusting our indicators as necessary so that they remain robust to water level fluctuations and we will continue to support wetland restoration projects by providing data and information.

Summary of Round 1 of sampling:

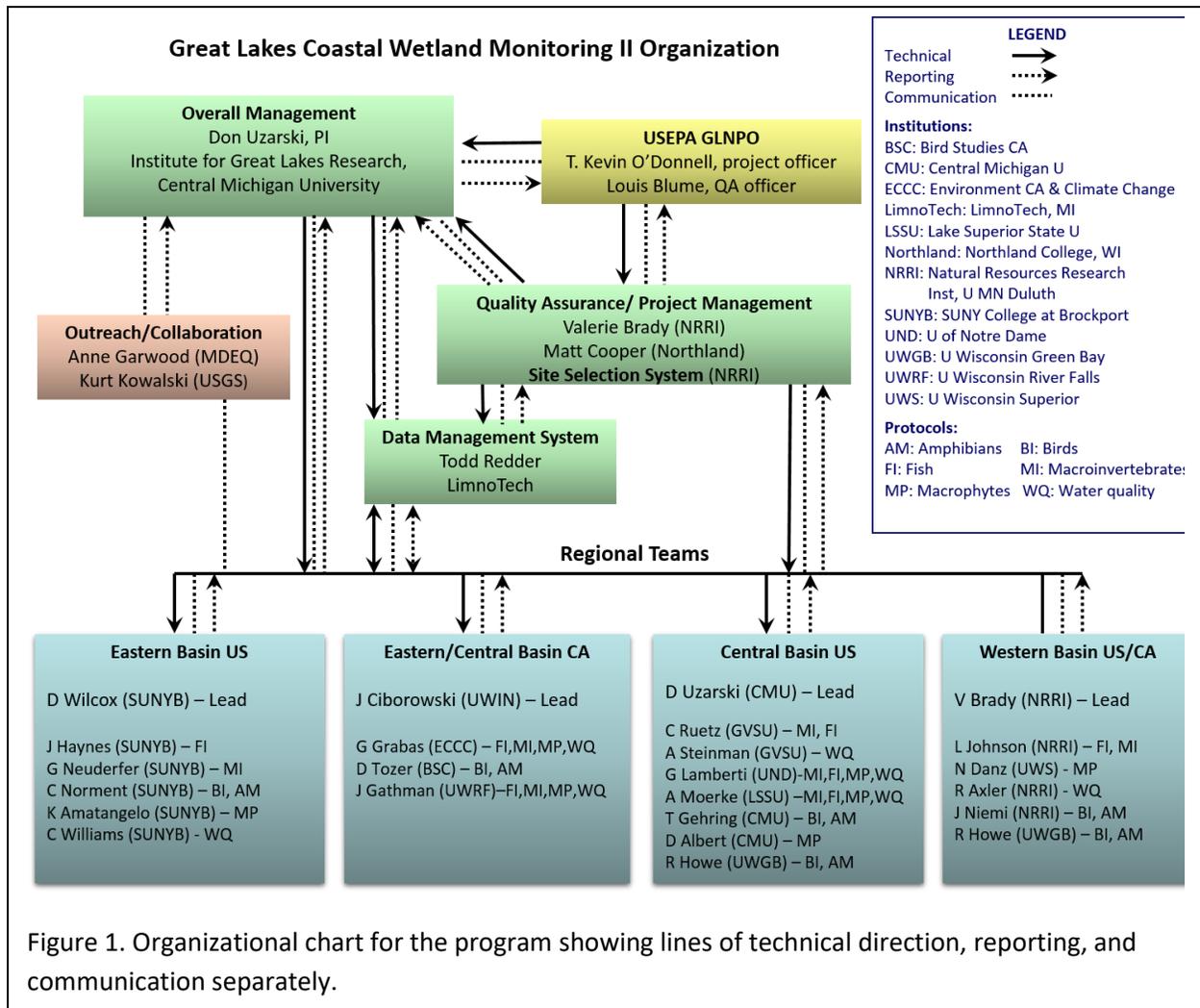
Our first round of sampling, in the project phase, began with the development of our Quality Assurance Project Plan, developing the site selection mechanism, selecting our sites, extensively training all field crew members, and finally beginning wetland sampling. After a few methods adjustments, we updated our QAPP and have kept it updated although relatively minor changes have been necessary since that first year. Crews sampled 176 sites that first year and roughly 200 sites per year each of the next 4 years. Data were entered into an on-line web-interfaced data management system specifically designed to hold those data.

Our yearly sampling schedule proceeds in this manner: During the winter, PIs and crew chiefs meet to discuss issues, update each other on progress, and ensure that everyone is staying on track for QA/QC. Sites are selected using the site selection system by March, and field crew training happens in March – June, depending on biotic type. Amphibian sampling typically begins in late March/early April with bird sampling beginning in April or May, and finally vegetation, fish, macroinvertebrate, and water quality begin in June. Phenology is followed across the basin, so that most southerly sites are sampled earlier than more northerly sites. In the fall and early winter, data are entered into the database, unknown fish and plants are identified, and macroinvertebrates are identified. The goal is to have all data entered and QC'd by February or March. Metrics and IBIs are calculated in late March in preparation for the spring report to US EPA GLNPO.

A full summary of round 1 of sampling was submitted to US EPA and is available at <http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Reports-Publications.vbhtml>.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Figure 1 shows our organization for the 2016-2020 period. Our project management team has not changed.



PROGRAM TIMELINE

The program timeline remains unchanged and we are on-schedule (Table 1). During the next project period we will process all remaining samples collected, identify the macroinvertebrates and remaining macrophytes, enter all data and QC it, and generate the metrics and indicators for each taxonomic group and water quality.

Table 1. Timeline of tasks and deliverables for the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program.

Tasks	'15	2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				
	F	W	Sp	Su	F	W	Sp	Su	F	W	Sp	Su	F	W	Sp	Su	F	W	Sp	Su	F	
Funding received	X																					
PI meeting		X				X				X				X				X				X
Site selection system updated		X				X				X				X				X				
Site selection for summer			X			X				X				X				X				
Sampling permits acquired			X				X				X				X				X			
Data entry system updated		X	X	X	X																	
Field crew training			X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X		
Wetland sampling			X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X		
Mid-season QA/QC evaluations				X				X				X				X					X	
Sample processing & QC					X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X				X
Data QC & upload to GLNPO						X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X			X
Report to GLNPO			X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X			X

Work on this project will exceed the project period if the wetlands sampled during the summer of 2020 are to have their data completely entered and QC'd and metrics and indicators generated to indicate condition of the sampled biotic groups and water quality. This process takes until the spring of the next year (e.g., 2021). We will request an amendment in 2020 in consultation with our project officer.

GLRI Action Plan II of Measure of Progress

GLRI Action Plan II of Measure of Progress		Reporting Period (April 1, 2018 – September 30, 2018)	Project Status (Not Started; Started; Paused; 25% Completed; 50% Completed; 75% Completed; 95% Completed; and 100% Completed)
4.1.3	Number of Great Lakes coastal wetlands assessed for biotic condition	192*	50%

* Number assessed during this reporting period. See Table 5 for total wetlands assessed in this project period.

SITE SELECTION

Year eight site selection was completed in March 2018. Because we completed the original Coastal Wetland Monitoring site list in 2015 (year 5), we are now going through that list again. In 2016, we sampled the same site list as was generated for 2011. This summer we sampled the sites sampled in 2013. Differences in the site list between successive sampling rounds (e.g., 2011 vs. 2016) are most often associated with special benchmark sites. Benchmark sites (sites of special interest for restoration or protection) can be sampled more than once in the five year sampling rotation, and may be sites that were not on the original sampling list.

Original data on Great Lakes coastal wetland locations

The GIS coverage used was a product of the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium (GLCWC) and was downloaded from http://www.glc.org/wetlands/data/inventory/glcwc_cwi_polygon.zip on December 6, 2010. See <http://www.glc.org/wetlands/inventory.html> for details.

Site Selection Tool, completed in 2011, minor updates in 2012, 2013, and 2016

Background

In 2011, a web-based database application was developed to facilitate site identification, stratified random selection, and field crew coordination for the project. This database is housed at NRRI and backed up routinely. It is also password-protected. Using this database, potential wetland polygons were reviewed by PIs and those that were greater than four ha., had herbaceous vegetation, and had (or appeared to have) a lake connection were placed into the site selection random sampling rotation (Table 2). See the QAPP for a thorough description of site selection criteria. Note that the actual number of sampleable wetlands will fluctuate year-

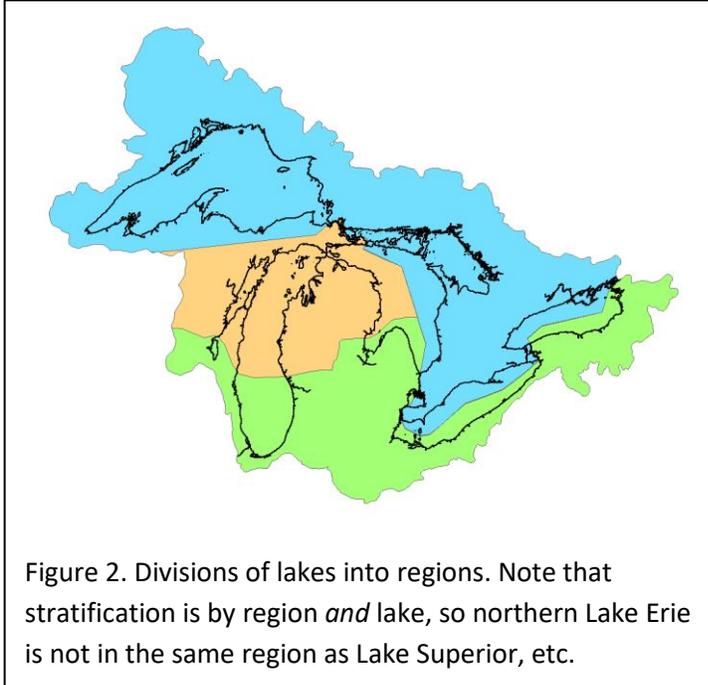
to-year with lake level and continued human activity. Based on the number of wetlands that proved to be sampleable thus far, we expect that the total number of sampleable wetlands will be between 900 and 1000 in any given year.

Table 2. Counts, areas, and proportions of the 1014 Great Lakes coastal wetlands deemed sampleable following Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Consortium protocols based on review of aerial photography. Area in hectares.

Country	Site count	Site percent	Site area	Area percent
Canada	386	38%	35,126	25%
US	628	62%	105,250	75%
Totals	1014		140,376	

The wetland coverage we are using shows quite a few more wetlands in the US than in Canada, with an even greater percent of US wetland area (Table 2). We speculate that this is partly due to Georgian Bay (Lake Huron) losing wetlands rapidly due to a combination of glacial rebound and topography that limits the potential for coastal wetlands to migrate downslope with falling water levels and to recover with rising water levels. Another component of this US/CA discrepancy is the lack of coastal wetlands along the Canadian shoreline of Lake Superior due to the rugged topography and geology. A final possibility is unequal loss of wetlands between the two countries, but this has not been investigated.

Strata



Geomorphic classes

Geomorphic classes (riverine, barrier-protected, and lacustrine) were determined for each site in the original coastal wetland GIS coverage. Many wetlands inevitably combine aspects of multiple classes, with an exposed coastal region transitioning into protected backwaters bisected by riverine elements. Wetlands were classified according to their predominant geomorphology.

Regions

Existing ecoregions (Omernik 1987, Bailey and Cushwa 1981, CEC 1997) were examined for stratification of sites. None were found which

stratified the Great Lakes' shoreline in a manner that captured a useful cross section of the physiographic gradients in the basin. To achieve the intended stratification of physiographic conditions, a simple regionalization dividing each lake into northern and southern components, with Lake Huron being split into three parts and Lake Superior being treated as a single region, was adopted (Figure 2). The north-south splitting of Lake Michigan is common to all major ecoregion systems (Omernik / Bailey / CEC).

Panelization

Randomization

The first step in randomization was the assignment of selected sites from each of the project's 30 strata (10 regions x 3 geomorphic classes) to a random year or panel in the five-year rotating panel. Because the number of sites in some strata was quite low (in a few cases less than 5, more in the 5-20 range), simple random assignment would not produce the desired even distribution of sites within each strata over time. Instead it was necessary to assign the first fifth of the sites within a stratum, defined by their pre-defined random ordering, to one year, and the next fifth to another year, etc.

In 2012, sites previously assigned to panels for sampling were assigned to sub-panels for re-sampling. The project design's five year rotation with a 10% re-sampling rate requires five panels, *A-E*, and ten sub-panels, *a-j*. If 10% of each panel's sites were simply randomly assigned to sub-panels in order *a-j*, sub-panel *j* would have a low count relative to other sub-panels. To avoid this, the order of sub-panels was randomized for each panel during site-to-sub-panel assignment, as can be seen in the random distribution of the '20' and '21' values in Table 3.

For the first five-year cycle, sub-panel *a* will be re-sampled in each following year, so the 20 sites in sub-panel *a* of panel *A* were candidates for re-sampling in 2012. The 20 sites in sub-panel *a* of panel *B* were candidates for re-sampling in 2013, and so on. In 2016, panel *A* was sampled for the second time, so the 21 sites in sub-panel *a* of panel *E* became the re-sample sites. In 2018, when panel *C* was sampled for the second time, the 21 sites in sub-panel *b* of panel *A* were candidates for re-sampling. The total panel and sub-panel rotation covers 50 years.

Table 3. Sub-panel re-sampling, showing year of re-sampling for sub-panels a-c.

Panel	Subpanel												TOTAL
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j			
A: 2011 2016 2021	20/2012	21/2017	21/2022	20	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	207
B: 2012 2017 2022	20/2013	20/2018	20/2023	21	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	205
C: 2013 2018 2023	21/2014	21/2019	21/2024	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	209
D: 2014 2019 2024	22/2015	21/2020	21/2025	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	211
E: 2015 2020 2025	21/2016	20/2021	21/2026	21	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	208

Workflow states

Each site is assigned a particular 'workflow' status. During the field season, sites selected for sampling in the current year move through a series of sampling states in a logical order, as shown in Table 4. The *data_level* field is used for checking that all data have been received and their QC status. Users set the workflow state for sites in the web tool, although some states can also be updated by querying the various data entry databases.

Team assignment

With sites assigned to years and randomly ordered within years, specific sites were then assigned to specific teams. Sites were assigned to teams initially based on expected zones of logistic practicality, and the interface described in the 'Site Status' section was used to exchange sites between teams for efficiency and to better assure that distribution of effort matches each team's sampling capacity.

Field maps

Three-page PDF maps are generated for each site for field crews each year. The first page depicts the site using aerial imagery and a road overlay with the wetland site polygon boundary (using the polygons from the original GLCWC file, as modified by PIs in a few cases). The image also shows the location of the waypoint provided for navigation to the site via GPS. The second page indicates the site location on a road map at local and regional scales. The third page lists information from the database for the site, including site tags, team assignments, and the history of comments made on the site, including information from previous field crew visits.

Table 4. Workflow states for sites listed in the Site Status table within the web-based site selection system housed at NRRI. This system tracks site status for all taxonomic groups and teams for all sites to be sampled in any given year. Values have the following meanings: -1: site will not generate data, 0: site may or may not generate data, 1: site should generate data, 2: data received, 3: data QC'd.

Name	Description	Data_level
too many	Too far down randomly-ordered list, beyond sampling capacity for crews.	-1
Not sampling BM listed	Benchmark site that will not be sampled by a particular crew.	-1
web reject	Rejected based on regional knowledge or aerial imagery in web tool.	-1
will visit	Will visit with intent to sample.	0
could not reach	Proved impossible to access.	-1
visit reject	Visited in field, and rejected (no lake influence, etc.).	-1
will sample	Interim status indicating field visit confirmed sampleability, but sampling has not yet occurred.	1
sampled	Sampled, field work done.	1
entered	Data entered into database system.	2
checked	Data in database system QC-checked.	3

Browse map

The *browse map* feature allows the user to see sites in context with other sites, overlaid on either Google Maps or Bing Maps road or aerial imagery. Boat ramp locations are also shown when available. The *browse map* provides tools for measuring linear distance and area. When a site is clicked, the tool displays information about the site, the tags and comments applied to it, the original GLCWC data, links for the next and previous site (see *Shoreline ordering* and *Filter sites*), and a link to edit the site in the site editor.

2018 Site Selection

For 2018, 234 sites were selected for sampling. Of these, 23 are benchmark sites. Another 19 sites are resample sites and 21 are pre-sample sites, which will be resample sites next year (2019). Benchmark, resample, and pre-sample sites are sorted to the top of the sampling list because they are the highest priority sites to be sampled. By sorting next year's resample sites to the top of the list, this helps ensure that most crews sample them, allowing more complete comparison of year-year variation when the sites are sampled again the next year.

Wetlands have a "clustered" distribution around the Great Lakes due to geological and topographic differences along the Great Lakes coastline. As has happened each sampling season so far, several teams ended up with fewer sites than they had the capacity to sample, while other teams' assigned sites exceeded their sampling capacity. Within reason, teams with excess sampling capacity expanded their sampling boundaries to assist neighboring over-

capacity teams in order to maximize the number of wetlands sampled. The site selection and site status tools are used to make these changes.

TRAINING

All personnel responsible for sampling invertebrates, fish, macrophytes, birds, amphibians, and water quality received training and were certified prior to sampling in 2011. During that first year, teams of experienced trainers held training workshops at several locations across the Great Lakes basin to ensure that all PIs and crews were trained in Coastal Wetland Monitoring methods. Now that PIs and crew chiefs are experienced, field crew training is being handled by each PI at each regional location, with more experienced trainers providing assistance, including in-person training by the management team, as necessary when field crew chief changes take place. As is true every field season, all crew members still had to pass all training tests, and PIs still conducted mid-season QC. As has become standard protocol, the trainers were always available via phone and email to answer any questions that arose during training sessions or during the field season.

The following is a synopsis of the training conducted by PIs in the spring (2018): Each PI or field crew chief trained all field personnel on meeting the data quality objectives for each element of the project; this included reviewing the most current version of the QAPP, covering site verification procedures, providing hands-on training for each sampling protocol, and reviewing record-keeping and archiving requirements, data auditing procedures, and certification exams for each sampling protocol. All field crew members had to pass all training certifications before they were allowed to work unsupervised. Those who did not pass all training aspects were only allowed to work under the supervision of a crew leader who had passed all training certifications.

Training for bird and amphibian field crews includes tests on amphibian calls, bird vocalizations, and bird visual identification. These tests are based on an on-line system established at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay – see <http://www.birdercertification.org/GreatLakesCoastal>. In addition, individuals were tested for proficiency in completing field sheets, and audio testing was done to ensure their hearing is within the normal ranges. Field training was also completed to ensure guidelines in the QAPP are followed: rules for site verification, safety issues including caution regarding insects (e.g., Lyme's disease), GPS and compass use, and record keeping.

Fish, macroinvertebrate, and water quality crews were trained on field and laboratory protocols. Field training included selecting appropriate sampling locations within sites, setting fyke nets, identifying fish, sampling and sorting invertebrates, and collecting water quality and habitat covariate data. Laboratory training included preparing water samples, titrating for alkalinity, and filtering for chlorophyll. Other training included GPS use, safety and boating

issues, field sheet completion, and GPS and records uploading. All crew members were required to be certified in each respective protocol prior to working independently.

Vegetation crew training also included both field and laboratory components. Crews were trained in field sheet completion, transect and point location and sampling, GPS use, and plant curation. Plant identification was tested following phenology through the first part of the field season. All crew members were certified in all required aspects of sampling before starting in the field unless supervised.

Additional training on data entry and data QC was provided by Valerie Brady and Terry Brown through a series of conference calls/webinars during the late summer, fall, and winter of 2011. All co-PIs and crew leaders responsible for data entry participated in these training sessions and each regional laboratory has successfully uploaded data. Additional training on data entry, data uploading, and data QC was provided in 2016 with the implementation of the updated version of the data entry/data archiving system by Todd Redder at LimnoTech. Training on data entry and QC continues via webinar as needed for new program staff and was done in both 2017 and 2018 as new staff joined the program.

Certification

To be certified in a given protocol, individuals must pass a practical exam. Certification exams were conducted in the field in most cases, either during training workshops or during site visits early in the season. When necessary, exams were supplemented with photographs (for fish and vegetation) or audio recordings (for bird and amphibian calls). Passing a given exam certifies the individual to perform the respective sampling protocol(s). Since not every individual is responsible for conducting every sampling protocol, crew members were only tested on the protocols for which they are responsible. Personnel who were not certified (e.g., part-time technicians, new students, volunteers) were not allowed to work independently nor to do any taxonomic identification except under the direct supervision of certified staff members. Certification criteria are listed in the project QAPP. For some criteria, demonstrated proficiency during field training workshops or during site visits is considered adequate for certification. Training and certification records for all participants are collected by regional team leaders and copied to Drs. Brady and Cooper (QC managers) and Uzarski (lead PI). Note that the training and certification procedures explained here are separate from the QA/QC evaluations explained in the following section. However, failure to meet project QA/QC standards requires participants to be re-trained and re-certified.

Documentation and Record

All site selection and sampling decisions and comments are archived in the site selection system (see “site selection”). These include comments and revisions made during the QC oversight process.

Regional team leaders archive copies of the testing and certification records of all field crew members. Summaries of these records are also archived with the lead PI (Uzarski), and the QA managers (Brady and Cooper).

Web-based Data Entry System

The CWMP has been using a web-based data management system (DMS) that was originally developed by NRRRI in 2011 to collect field and laboratory data, and then redeveloped by LimnoTech during 2015-16. The new web-based system, which was brought online on April 26, 2016, uses Microsoft’s Active Server Pages .NET (ASP.NET) web application framework running on Windows 2012 Server and hosted on a virtual machine at Central Michigan University (CMU). The open source PostgreSQL Relational Database Management System (RDMS) with PostGIS spatial extensions is used to provide storage for all CWMP data on the same Windows 2012 server that hosts the web application.

The CWMP database includes collections of related tables for each major taxonomic grouping, including vegetation, fish/invertebrates, amphibians, and birds. Separate data entry/editing forms are created for data entry based on database table schema information that is stored in a separate Microsoft Access database. Data entry/editing forms are password-protected and can only be accessed by users that have “Level 4” or “Admin” credentials associated with their CWMP user account.

Specific features of note for the CWMP data management system include:

- Automated processes for individual users to request and confirm accounts;
- An account management page where a limited group of users with administrative privileges can approve and delete user accounts and change account settings as needed;
- Numerous validation rules employed to prevent incorrect or duplicate data entry on the various data entry/editing forms;
- Custom form elements to mirror field sheets (e.g. the vegetation transects data grid), which makes data entry more efficient and minimizes data entry errors;

- Domain-specific “helper” utilities, such as generation of fish length records based on fish count records;
- Dual-entry inconsistency highlighting for amphibian and bird groups using dual-entry for quality assurance; and
- Tools for adding new taxa records or editing existing taxa records for the various taxonomic groups.

The CWMP data management system also provides separate webpages that allow researchers to download “raw” data for the various taxonomic groups as well as execute and download custom queries that are useful for supporting dataset review and QA/QC evaluations as data entry proceeds during and following each field season. Users with a minimum “Level 3” credential are able to access the separate download pages for raw data and custom queries. Organizations that currently have been granted “Level 3” access include GLNPO and its subcontractors and MDEQ. Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) metrics are currently included as a download option based on static scores that reflect data collection through the 2017 field season. Beginning in 2017, the DMS was upgraded to begin automated yearly calculation of IBI metric scores for vegetation, invertebrates and fish at the instigation of the management team or request of USEPA.

Raw data downloads are available in both Microsoft (MS) Excel spreadsheet and MS Access database formats, while custom query results are available in spreadsheet format only. All available data/query export and download options are automatically regenerated every night, and users have the option of either downloading the last automated export or generating a new export that provides a snapshot of the database at the time the request is made (the former option is much faster). Currently, datasets for the major taxonomic groups must be downloaded individually; however, a comprehensive export of all pertinent data tables will be generated in a single MS Access database file and provided to GLNPO on a bi-annual schedule, planned to occur in fall and spring of each program year.

In addition to providing CWMP researchers with data entry and download access, the CWMP data management team is providing ongoing technical support and guidance to GLNPO to support its internal management and application of the QA/QC’ed monitoring datasets. GLNPO, with support from subcontractors, maintains a separate, offline version of the CWMP monitoring database within the Microsoft Access relational database framework. In addition to serving as an offline version of the database, this version provides additional querying and reporting options to support GLNPO’s specific objectives and needs under the GLRI. CWMP data management support staff generate and provide to GLNPO and CSRA a “snapshot” of the master CWMP PostgreSQL database as a Microsoft Access database twice per year, corresponding to a spring and fall release schedule. This database release is then used by GLNPO and its subcontractors to update the master version of the Microsoft Access database used to support custom querying and reporting of the monitoring datasets.

A full backup of the CWMP PostgreSQL database is created each night at 3:00 AM Eastern time using a scheduled backup with the PostgreSQL Backup software application. The server that houses the DMS has been configured to use CMU's Veeam Backup Solution. This backup solution provides end-to-end encryption including data at rest. Incremental backups will be performed nightly and stored at secure locations (on premise and offsite). Nightly backup email reports are generated and sent to appropriate CMU IT staff for monitoring purposes. Incremental backups are kept indefinitely and restores can be performed for whole systems, volumes, folders and individual files upon request.

RESULTS-TO-DATE (2011-2017, with exceptions noted)

A total of 176 wetlands were sampled in 2011, with 206 sampled in 2012, 201 in 2013, 216 in 2014, and 211 in 2015 our 5th and final summer of sampling for the first project round. Overall, 1010 Great Lakes coastal wetland sampling events were conducted in the first round of sampling (2011-2015; Table 5), and we have now started sampling these wetlands a second time for the second complete round of coastal wetland assessment, 2016-2020. Note that this total number is not the same as the number of unique wetlands sampled because of temporal re-sampling events and benchmark sites that are sampled in more than one year. For the second round of sampling, we sampled 192 wetlands in 2016, 209 wetlands in 2017, and 192 wetlands in 2018.

As in previous years, more wetlands were sampled on the US side, due to the uneven distribution of wetlands between the two countries. The wetlands on the US side also tend to be larger (see area percentages, Table 5).

Table 5. Counts, areas, and proportions of Great Lakes coastal wetlands sampled in Round 1 (2011 – 2015) and Round 2 (2016 – 2020) sampling by the Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program. Percentages are of overall total sampled each year. Area in hectares.

Country	Site count	Site %	Site area	Area %
Canada				
Round 1: 2011 - 2015				
2011	50	28%	3,303	13%
2012	82	40%	7,917	27%
2013	71	35%	7,125	27%
2014	72	33%	6,781	20%
2015	77	36%	10,011	27%
CA total Round 1	352	35%	35,137	23%
Round 2: 2016 - 2020				
2016	63	33%	4,336	15%
2017	70	33%	7,801	20%
2018	67	35%	3,356	18%
CA total Round 2	200	34%	15,693	18%
United States				
Round 1 (2011 – 2015)				
2011	126	72%	22,008	87%
2012	124	60%	21,845	73%
2013	130	65%	18,939	73%
2014	144	67%	26,836	80%
2015	134	64%	26,681	73%
US total Round 1	658	65%	116,309	77%
Round 2: 2016 – 2020				
2016	129	67%	24,446	85%
2017	139	67%	30,703	80%
2018	125	65%	17,715	82%
US total Round 2	393	66%	73,257	82%
Overall Totals Round 1	1010		151,446	
Overall Totals Round 2	593		88,950	

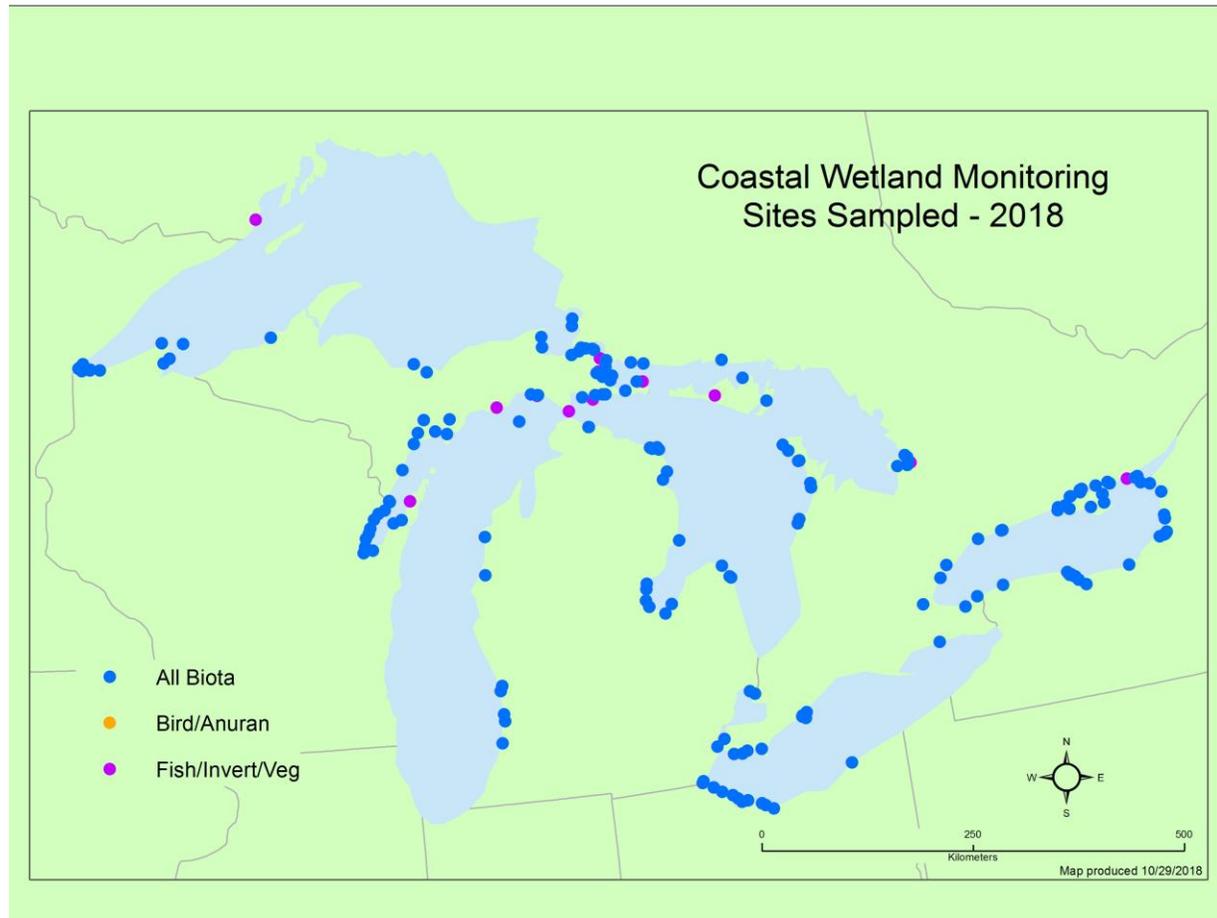
When compared to the total number of wetlands targeted to be sampled by this project (Table 2), we are achieving our goals of sampling 20% of US wetlands per year, both by count and by area. However, each year 60-65% of total sites sampled are US coastal wetlands, with 75-80% of the wetland area sampled on the US side. Overall, not yet correcting for sites that have been sampled more than once, we have sampled nearly all of the large, surface-connected Great

Lakes emergent coastal wetlands by count and by area. A few wetlands cannot currently be sampled due to safe access or access permission issues.

Teams were able to sample more sites in 2014 due to higher lake levels on Lakes Michigan and Huron, which allowed crews to access sites and areas that have been dry or inaccessible in previous years. By 2015 water depths in some coastal wetlands had become so deep that crews had difficulty finding areas shallow enough to set fish nets in zones typically sampled for fish (cattail, bulrush, SAV, floating leaf, etc.). In 2017 Lake Ontario levels reached highs not seen in many decades. While the water remained high in 2018, it was not quite as high as 2017 in the lower lakes. However, crews reported sampling challenges due to the high water, with coastal wetlands flooded out and only beginning to migrate upslope into areas that remain covered by terrestrial vegetation (shrubs, trees, etc.) or being blocked in this upslope migration by human land use or coastal hardening. This highlights the difficulty of precisely determining the number of sampleable Great Lakes coastal wetlands in any given year, and the challenges crews face with rising and falling water levels.

The sites sampled in 2018 are shown in Figures 3 and 4 and are color coded by which taxonomic groups were sampled at the sites and by wetland types, respectively. Many sites were sampled for all taxonomic groups. Sites not sampled for birds and amphibians typically were sites that were impossible to access safely, and often related to private property access issues. Most bird and amphibian crews do not operate from boats since they need to arrive at sites in the dark or stay until well after dark. There are also a number of sites sampled only by bird and amphibian crews because these crews can complete their site sampling more quickly and thus have the capacity to sample more sites than do the fish, macroinvertebrate, and vegetation crews.

Figure 3. Locations of the 192 Great Lakes coastal wetlands sampled in 2018, color-coded by taxonomic groups. Sites assigned only to bird and amphibian crews (due to their greater sampling capacity) are shown with a gold triangle.



Wetland types are not distributed evenly across the Great Lakes due to fetch, topography, and geology (Figure 4). Lacustrine wetlands occur in more sheltered areas of the Great Lakes within large bays or adjacent to islands. Barrier-protected wetlands occur along harsher stretches of coastline, particularly in sandy areas, although this is not always the case. Riverine wetlands are somewhat more evenly distributed around the Great Lakes. Low water levels in 2011-2013 and much higher water levels since 2014 require that indicators be relatively robust to Great Lakes water level variations.

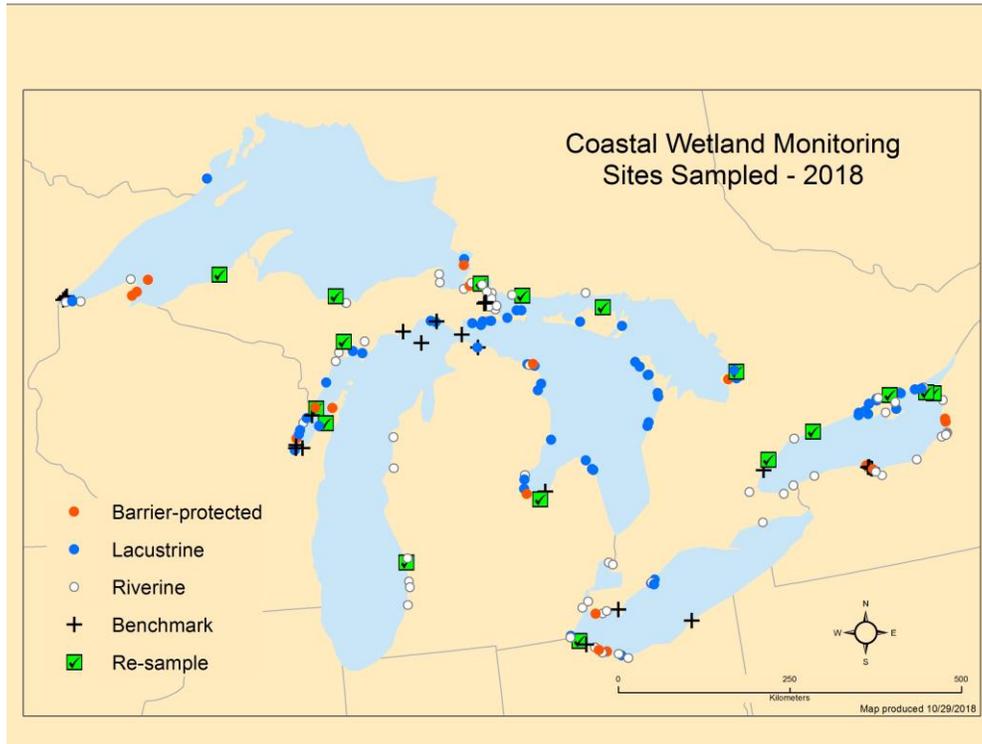
Benchmark sites are sites that are either added to the overall site list and would not have been sampled as part of the random selection process, or are sites that are considered a reference of some type and are being sampled more frequently. Sites that would not have been sampled typically were too small, disconnected from lake influence, or are not a wetland at this time, and thus did not fit the protocol. These sites are added back to the sampling list by request of

researchers, agencies, or others who have specific interest in the sites. Many of these sites are scheduled for restoration, and the groups who will be restoring them need baseline data against which to determine restoration success. Each year, Coastal Wetland Monitoring (CWM) researchers are getting many requests to provide baseline data for restoration work; this is occurring at a frequency great enough for us to have difficulty accommodating the extra effort.

We now have 85 sites that are or have been sampled as a “benchmark.” Of these, 37 are to evaluate restoration efforts and 11 serve as reference sites for their area or for nearby restoration sites. Almost all benchmark sites are in the US. The rest are more intensive monitoring sites at which the extra data will help provide long-term context and better ecological understanding of coastal wetlands.

Determining whether Benchmark sites would have been sampled at some point as part of the random site selection process is somewhat difficult because some of the exclusion conditions are not easy to assess without site visits. Our best estimate is that approximately 60% of the 17 benchmark sites from 2011 would have been sampled at some point, but they were marked “benchmark” to either sample them sooner (to get ahead of restoration work for baseline sampling) or so that they could be sampled more frequently. Thus, about 40% of 2011 benchmark sites were either added new because they are not (yet) wetlands, are small, or were missed in the wetland coverage, or would have been excluded for lack of connectivity. This percentage decreased in 2012, with only 20% of benchmark sites being sites that were not already in the list of wetlands scheduled to be sampled. In 2013, 30% of benchmark sites were not on the list of random sites to be sampled by CWM researchers in any year, and most were not on the list for the year 2013. For 2014, 26% of benchmark sites were not on the list of sampleable sites, and only 20% of these benchmark sites would have been sampled in 2014. There are a number of benchmark sites that are being sampled every year or every other year to collect extra data on these locations. Thus, we are adding relatively few new sites as benchmarks each year. These tend to be sites that are very degraded former wetlands that no longer appear on any wetland coverage, but for which restoration is a goal.

Figure 4. Locations of the 192 Great Lakes coastal wetlands sampled in 2018, color-coded by site type. Wetland types exhibit a clumped distribution across lakes due to geology and topography.



We can now compile good statistics on Great Lakes coastal wetlands because we have sampled nearly 100% of the medium and large coastal wetlands that have a surface water connection to the Great Lakes and are hydrologically-influenced by lake levels. The following indicators and information have not yet been updated for 2016 and 2017 because we are still implementing some of the metric and indicator calculations in our new database system.

Wetlands contained approximately 25 bird species on average; some sampled benchmark sites had as few as 1 species, but richness at high quality sites was as great as 60 bird species (Table 6). There are many fewer calling amphibian species (anurans) in the Great Lakes (10 total), and coastal wetlands averaged about 4 species per wetland, with some benchmark wetlands containing no anurans (Table 6). However, there were wetlands where 8 anuran species were heard over the three sampling dates.

Table 6. Bird and calling amphibian species (anurans) in wetlands; summary statistics by country. Data from 2011 through 2015.

Country	Site count	Mean	Max	Min	St. Dev.
<i>Birds</i>					
Can.	309	28.5	58	8	10.0
U.S.	573	22.1	60	1	11.5
<i>Anurans</i>					
Can.	310	4.5	8	0	1.8
U.S.	543	3.7	8	0	1.5

Bird and anuran data in Great Lakes coastal wetlands by lake (Table 7) shows that wetlands on most lakes averaged around 25 bird species, with Lake Ontario coastal wetlands averaging the fewest species. The greatest number of bird species at a wetland occurred on Lake Michigan, with Lake Huron a close second, followed by Erie and Superior. Lake Ontario had the fewest maximum species at a wetland. These data include the benchmark sites, many of which are in need of restoration, so the minimum number of species is quite low (as few as a single species) for some of these wetlands.

Anuran species counts show less variability among lakes simply because fewer of these species occur in the Great Lakes. Wetlands averaged three to nearly five anuran species regardless of lake (Table 7). Similarly, there was little variability by lake in maximum or minimum numbers of species. At some benchmark sites and cold springs no anurans were detected.

Table 7. Bird and anuran species found in Great Lakes coastal wetlands by lake. Mean, maximum, and minimum number of species per wetland for wetlands sampled from 2011 through 2015.

Lake	Sites	Birds			Anurans			
		Mean	Max	Min	Sites	Mean	Max	Min
Erie	116	24.8	54	4	103	3.4	7	0
Huron	271	25.0	58	2	268	4.0	8	0
Michigan	146	23.8	60	1	135	3.6	7	0
Ontario	230	22.3	47	8	231	4.7	8	1
Superior	119	27.1	52	11	116	3.6	7	0

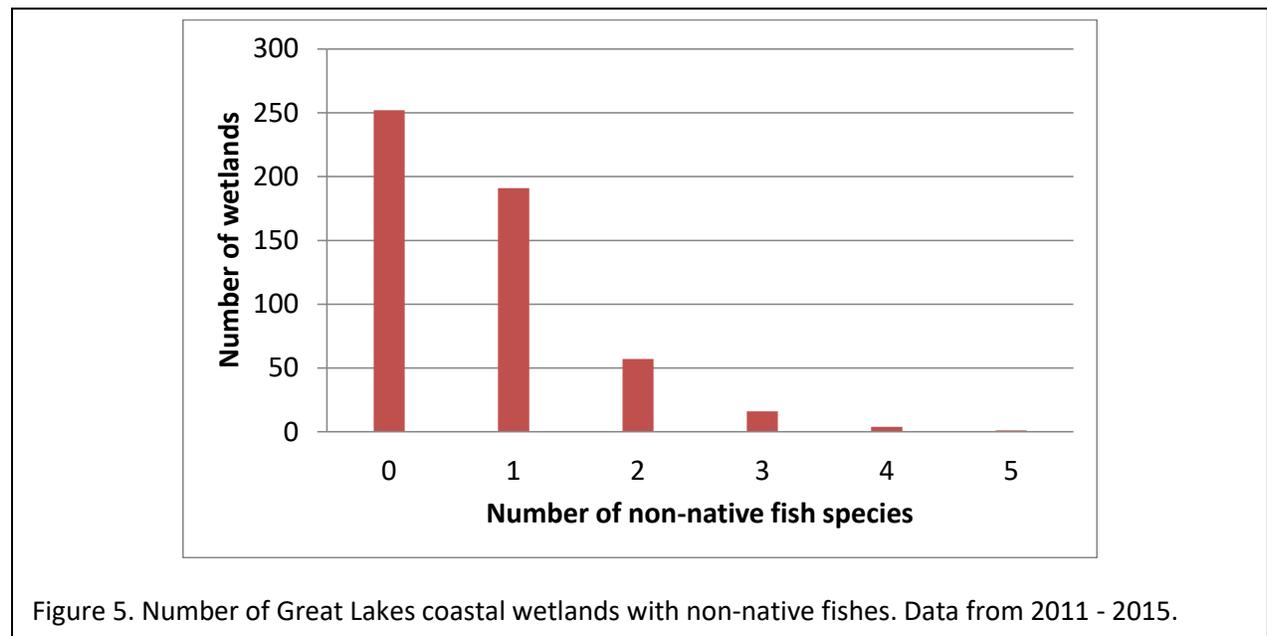
An average of 10 to about 13 fish species were collected in Canadian and US Great Lakes coastal wetlands, respectively (Table 8). Again, these data include sites in need of restoration, and some had very few species. On the other hand, the wetlands with the highest richness had as many as 23 (CA) or 28 (US) fish species. The average number of non-native fish species per wetland was approximately one, though some wetlands had as many as 5 (US). An encouraging

sign is that there are wetlands in which no non-native fish species were caught in fyke nets, although some non-native fish are adept at net avoidance (e.g., common carp).

Table 8. Total fish species in wetlands, and non-native species; summary statistics by country for sites sampled from 2011 through 2015.

Country	Sites	Mean	Max	Min	St. Dev.
<i>Overall</i>					
Can.	156	10.0	23	2	3.9
U.S.	365	13.3	28	2	5.2
<i>Non-natives</i>					
Can.	156	0.7	3	0	0.7
U.S.	365	0.7	5	0	0.9

Combining 2011 through 2015 data, there were no non-native fish species caught at 48% of the Great Lakes coastal wetlands sampled, but 37% had one non-native species (Figure 5). More than one non-native species was captured at many fewer sites. It is important to note that the sampling effort at sites was limited to one night using passive capture nets, so these numbers are likely quite conservative, and wetlands where we did not catch non-native fish may actually harbor them.



Total fish species did not differ greatly by lake, averaging 12-14 species per wetland (Table 9). Lake Ontario wetlands had the lowest maximum number of species, with the other lakes all

having similar maximums of 27-28 species. Since sites in need of restoration are included, some of these sites had very few fish species, as low as two. Lake Huron wetlands averaged the lowest mean number of non-native fish taxa. All other lakes had a similar average number of non-native fish species per wetland, about 1. Having very few or no non-native fish is a positive, however, and all lakes had some wetlands in which we caught no non-native fish. This result does not necessarily mean that these wetlands are free of non-natives, unfortunately. Our single-night net sets do not catch all fish species in wetlands, and some species are quite adept at avoiding passive capture gear. For example, common carp are known to avoid fyke nets. When interpreting fish data it is important to keep in mind the well-documented biases associated with each type of sampling gear. For example, active sampling gears (e.g., electrofishing) are better at capturing large active fish, but perform poorly at capturing smaller fish, forage fish, and young fish that are sampled well by our passive gear.

Table 9. Fish total species and non-native species found in Great Lakes coastal wetlands by lake. Mean, maximum, and minimum number of species per wetland. Data from 2011 through 2015.

Lake	Sites	Fish (Total)			Non-native		
		Mean	Max	Min	Mean	Max	Min
Erie	66	12.2	27	2	1.1	4	0
Huron	180	11.5	27	2	0.4	2	0
Michigan	75	13.1	28	5	0.8	4	0
Ontario	135	12.3	23	4	0.8	3	0
Superior	65	14.1	28	3	0.9	5	0

The average number of macroinvertebrate taxa (taxa richness) per site was about 40 (Table 10), but some wetlands had more than twice this number. Sites scheduled for restoration and other taxonomically poor wetlands had fewer taxa, as low as 13 in Canada, but we now have restoration sites in the US in which no wetland taxa were found using our sampling techniques (Tables 10 and 11). On a more positive note, the average number of non-native invertebrate taxa in coastal wetlands was less than 1, with a maximum of no more than 5 taxa (Table 10). Note that our one-time sampling may not be capturing all of the non-native taxa at wetland sites. In addition, some non-native macroinvertebrates are quite cryptic, resembling native taxa, and may not yet be recognized as invading the Great Lakes.

Table 10. Total macroinvertebrate taxa in Great Lakes coastal wetlands, and non-native species; summary statistics by country. Data from 2011 through 2015.

Country	Sites	Mean	Max	Min	St. Dev.
<i>Overall</i>					
Can.	189	40.0	76	13	12.5
U.S.	413	39.3	85	0	15.6
<i>Non-natives</i>					
Can.	189	0.9	3	0	0.9
U.S.	413	0.7	5	0	1.0

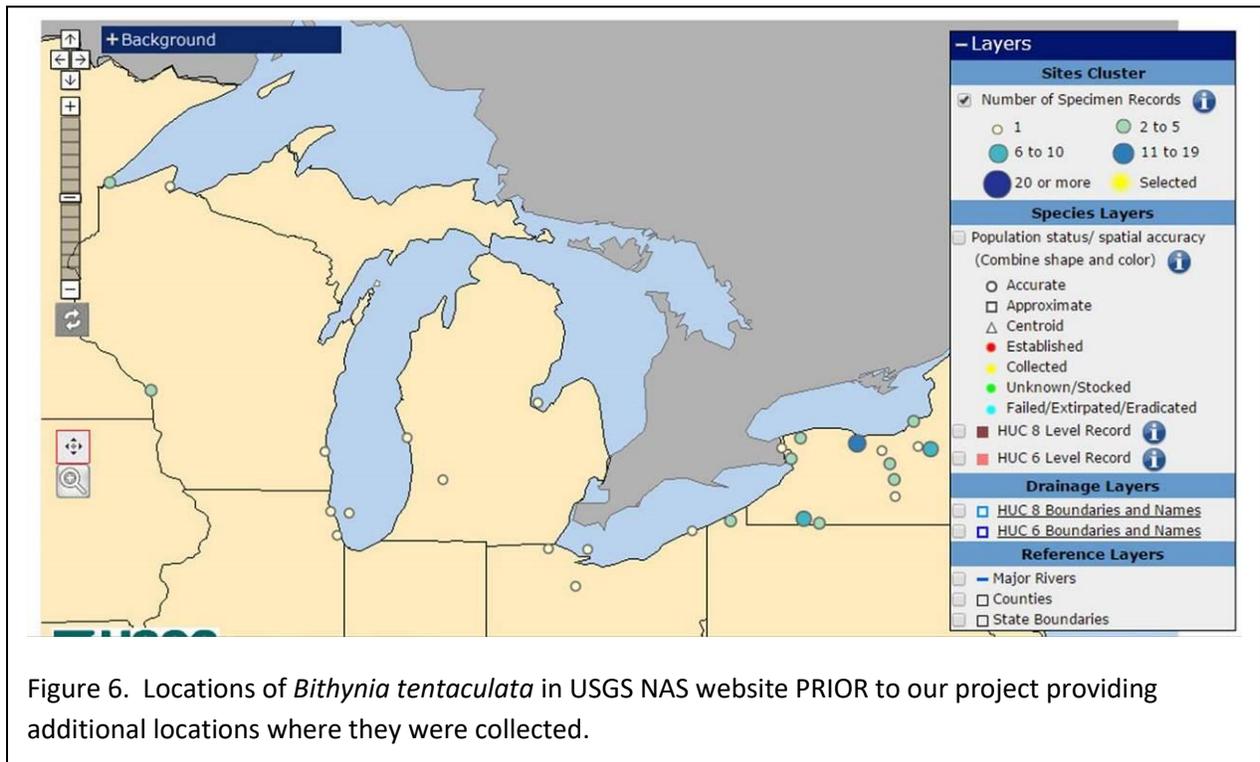
There is some variability among lakes in the mean number of macroinvertebrate taxa per wetland. We are also noticing an effect of the benchmark sites in these summaries. We are finding an average of about 35-45 macroinvertebrate taxa in wetlands, with lakes Ontario, Michigan, and Erie having lower averages than lakes Huron and Superior (Table 11). The maximum number of invertebrate taxa was higher in lakes Huron and Michigan wetlands (>80) than for the most invertebrate-rich wetlands in the other lakes, which have a maximum of 60-70 taxa. Wetlands with the fewest taxa are sites in need of restoration and some have no taxa found at all. Patterns are likely being driven by differences in habitat complexity, which may in part be due to the loss of wetland habitats on lakes Erie and Ontario from diking (Erie) and water level control (Ontario). This has been documented in numerous peer-reviewed publications. There is little variability among lakes in non-native taxa occurrence, although Erie and Huron had wetlands with 4-5 non-native taxa. In each lake there were some wetlands in which we found no non-native macroinvertebrates. As noted above, however, this does not necessarily mean that these sites do not contain non-native macroinvertebrates.

Table 11. Macroinvertebrate total taxa and non-native species found in Great Lakes coastal wetlands by lake. Mean, maximum, and minimum number of taxa per wetland. Data from wetlands sampled in 2011 through 2015.

Lake	Sites	Macroinvertebrates (Total)			Non-native		
		Mean	Max	Min	Mean	Max	Min
Erie	72	36.3	70	12	1.2	4	0
Huron	220	43.5	81	13	0.8	5	0
Michigan	86	37.0	85	0	0.7	3	0
Ontario	141	34.6	63	12	0.9	3	0
Superior	79	42.9	69	0	0.1	2	0

In 2014 we realized that we are finding some non-native, invasive species in significantly more locations around the Great Lakes than are being reported on nonindigenous species tracking

websites such as the USGS's Nonindigenous Aquatic Species (NAS) website (<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/>). Locations of aquatic macroinvertebrates are particularly under-reported. The best example of the difference is shown in Figures 6 and 7 for the faucet snail, *Bithynia tentaculata*. Figure 6 shows the range portrayed on the USGS website for this snail before we reported our findings. Figure 7 shows the locations where our crew found this snail. Finally, Figure 8 shows the USGS website map after it was updated with our crews' reported findings.

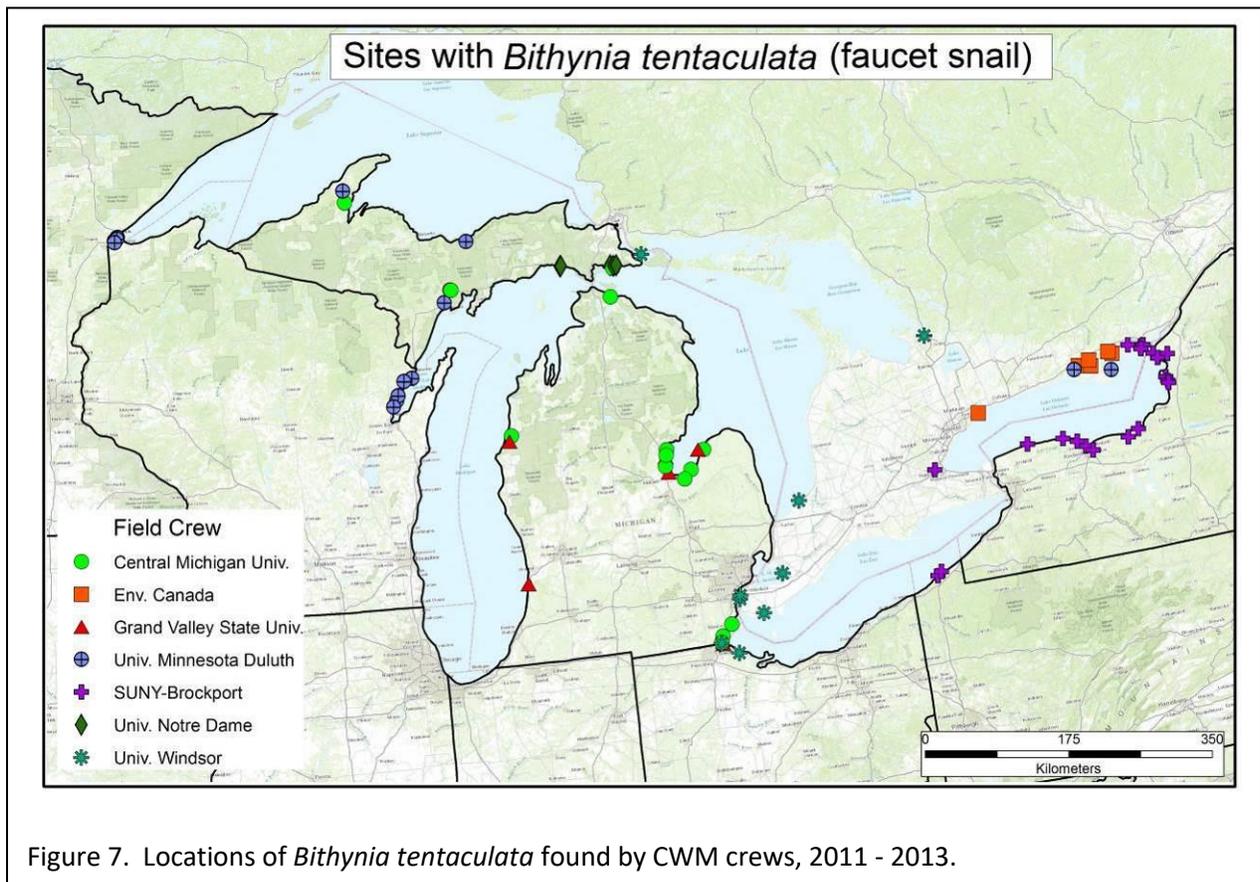


The faucet snail is of particular interest to USFWS and others because it carries parasites that can cause disease and die-offs of waterfowl. Because of this, we produced numerous press releases reporting our findings (collaborating universities produced their own press releases). The Associated Press ran the story and about 40 articles were generated in the news that we are aware of. See Appendix for a mock-up of our press release and a list of articles that ran based on this press release.

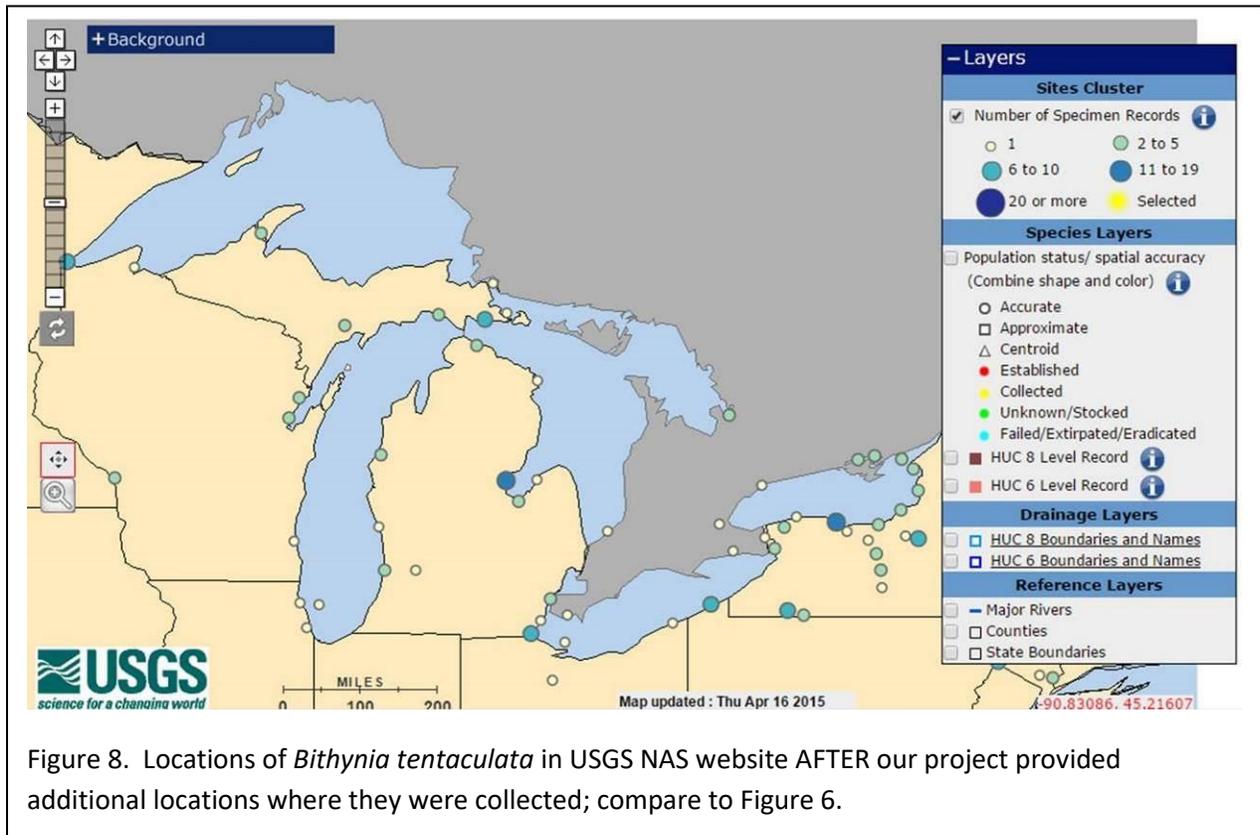
One reason that we were able to increase the geographic range and total number of known locations occupied by faucet snails is the limited number of ecological surveys occurring in the Great Lakes coastal zone. Furthermore, those surveys that do exist tend to be at a much

smaller scale than ours and sample wetlands using methods that do not detect invasive species with the precision of our program.

In collaboration with the Great Lakes Environmental Indicators project and researchers at the USEPA Mid-Continent Ecology Division in Duluth and at the University of Wisconsin Superior, a note was published in the Journal of Great Lakes Research about the spread of *Bithynia* in Lake Superior (Trebitz et al. 2015).



We also provided USGS with locations of other non-native macroinvertebrates and fish. The invasive macrophyte information had previously been provided to websites that track these locations, and reported to groups working on early detection and eradication.



On average, there were approximately 45 wetland plant (macrophyte) species per wetland (Table 12), but the maximum number has risen to 100 species at a very diverse site. Some sites were quite depauperate in plant taxa (some having almost none), particularly in highly impacted areas that were no longer wetlands but were sampled because they are designated for restoration.

Invasive vegetation is commonly found in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Those that we sampled averaged 3-4 invasive species (Table 12). Note that species classified as “invasives” are often non-native as well, but do not have to be to receive that designation. For example, some cattail (*Typha*) species are considered invasive although they are native taxa. Some wetlands contained as many as 9 invasive macrophyte species, but there were wetlands in which no invasive plant species were found. It is unlikely that our sampling strategy would miss significant invasive macrophytes in a wetland. However, small patches of cryptic or small-stature non-natives could be missed. Invasive species are a particularly important issue for restoration work. Restoration groups often struggle to restore wetland sites without having invasive species become dominant.

Table 12. Total macrophyte species in Great Lakes coastal wetlands, invasive species and US at-risk species; summary statistics by country. Data from 2011 through 2015.

Country	Site count	Mean	Max	Min	St. Dev.
<i>Overall</i>					
Can.	206	45.3	87	7	16.0
U.S.	453	44.0	100	1	17.4
<i>Invasives</i>					
Can.	206	3.7	8	0	2.0
U.S.	453	3.3	9	0	2.1
<i>At risk</i>					
U.S.	453	0.1	2	0	0.32

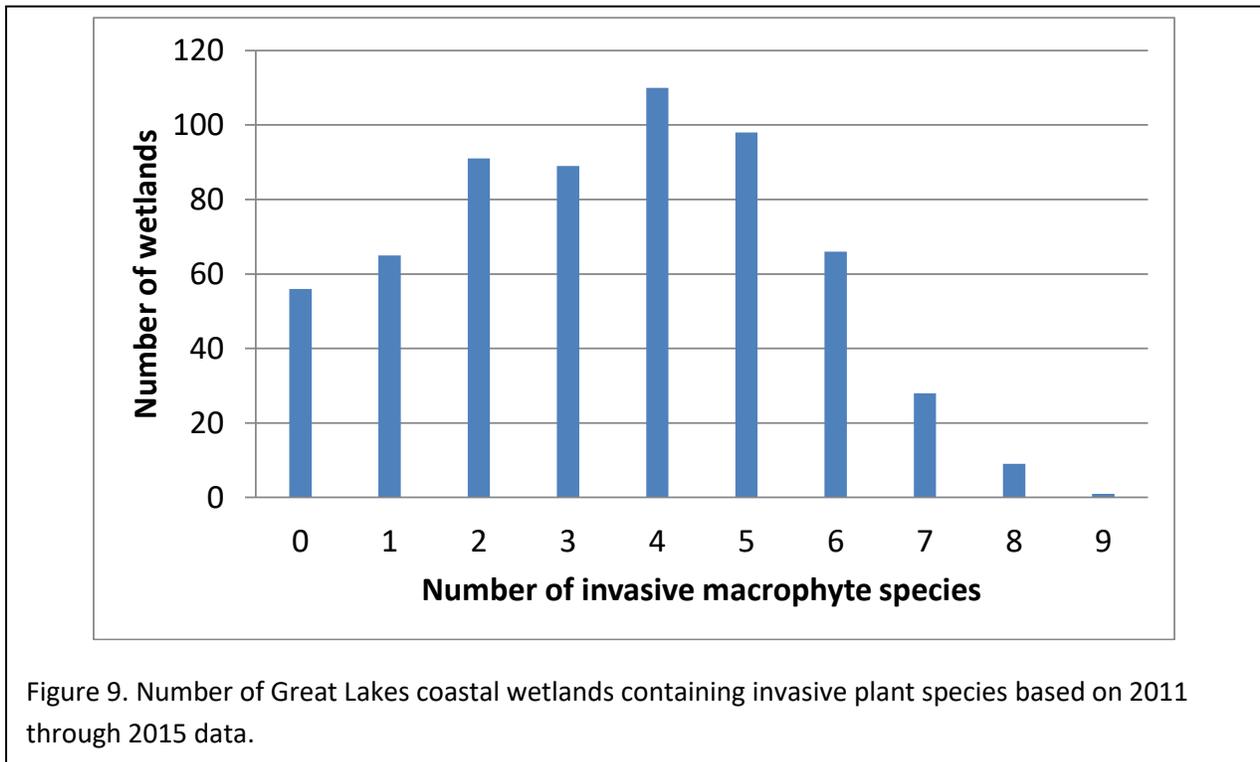
We currently have trustworthy information about at-risk wetland vegetation for only the US side of the Great Lakes. At-risk species (federal and state-designated) were not commonly encountered during sampling, as can be seen in Table 12. The average number of at-risk species per site was nearly zero, with most sites having no at-risk species; the maximum found at a site was only two species. This may be partly due to the sampling methods, which do not include a random walk through all habitats to search for at-risk species.

Lake Huron wetlands had the greatest mean number of macrophyte species, with Lake Erie wetlands having much lower mean numbers of species than wetlands on the other Great Lakes (Table 13). Maximum species richness in Lake Erie wetlands was lower than wetlands on the other Great Lakes, and even Lake Erie restoration sites had fewer minimum species. Average numbers of invasive species were highest in lakes Erie and Ontario and lowest in Lake Superior wetlands. Lake Superior had the lowest maximum number of invasive macrophytes in a wetland, with all the other lakes having about the same maximum number (7-9 species). Lake Ontario is the only lake with no sampled wetlands being free of non-native species.

Table 13. Macrophyte total species and invasive species found in Great Lakes coastal wetlands by lake. Mean, maximum, and minimum number of species per wetland. Data from 2011 through 2015.

Lake	Sites	Macrophytes (Total)			Invasives		
		Mean	Max	Min	Mean	Max	Min
Erie	80	29.0	69	1	4.5	8	0
Huron	245	53.0	100	8	2.6	8	0
Michigan	97	45.4	83	4	3.3	7	0
Ontario	152	40.7	87	8	5.1	9	1
Superior	81	40.6	78	2	1.7	5	0

Our macrophyte data have reinforced our understanding of the numbers of coastal wetlands that contain invasive plant species (Figure 9). Only 9% of 631 sampled wetlands lacked invasive species, leaving 91% with at least one. Sites were most commonly invaded by 2 – 5 invasive plant species and 6% of sites contained 7 or more invasive species. Detection of invasive species is more likely for plants than for organisms that are difficult to collect such as fish and other mobile fauna, but we may still be missing small patches of invasives in some wetlands.



As an example for the state of Michigan, we also looked at wetlands with both invasive plants and plant species considered “at risk” (Figure 10). We found that there were a few wetlands at all levels of invasion that also had at-risk plant populations. This information will be useful to groups working to protect at-risk populations by identifying wetlands where invasive species threaten sensitive native species.

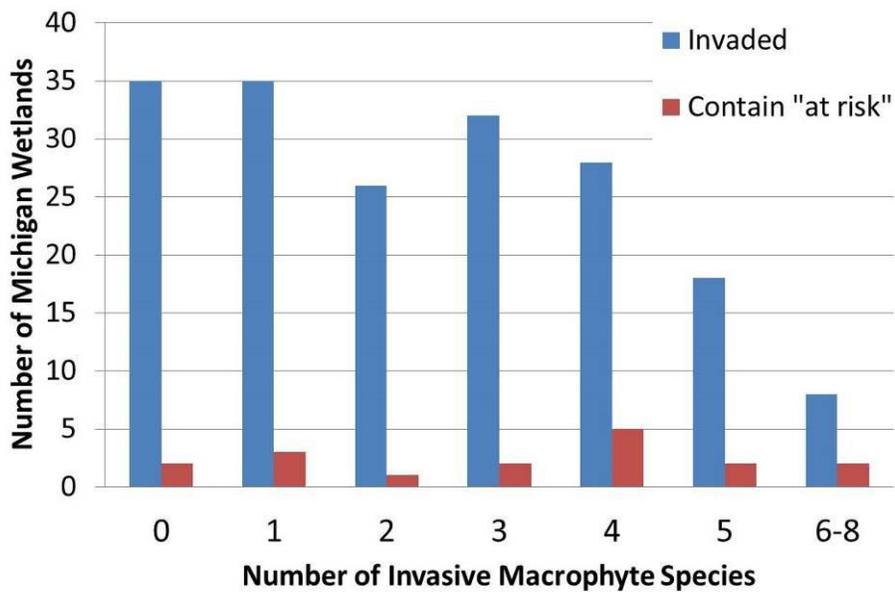


Figure 10. Number of state of Michigan Great Lakes coastal wetlands containing both invasive plant species and “at risk” plant species, based on 2011 through 2014 data.

We created a map of invasion status of Great Lakes coastal wetlands using all invasive species data we have collected so far for all taxonomic groups combined (Figure 11). Unfortunately, this shows that most sites have some level of invasion, even on Isle Royale. However, the more remote areas clearly have fewer invasives than the more populated areas and areas with relatively intense human use.

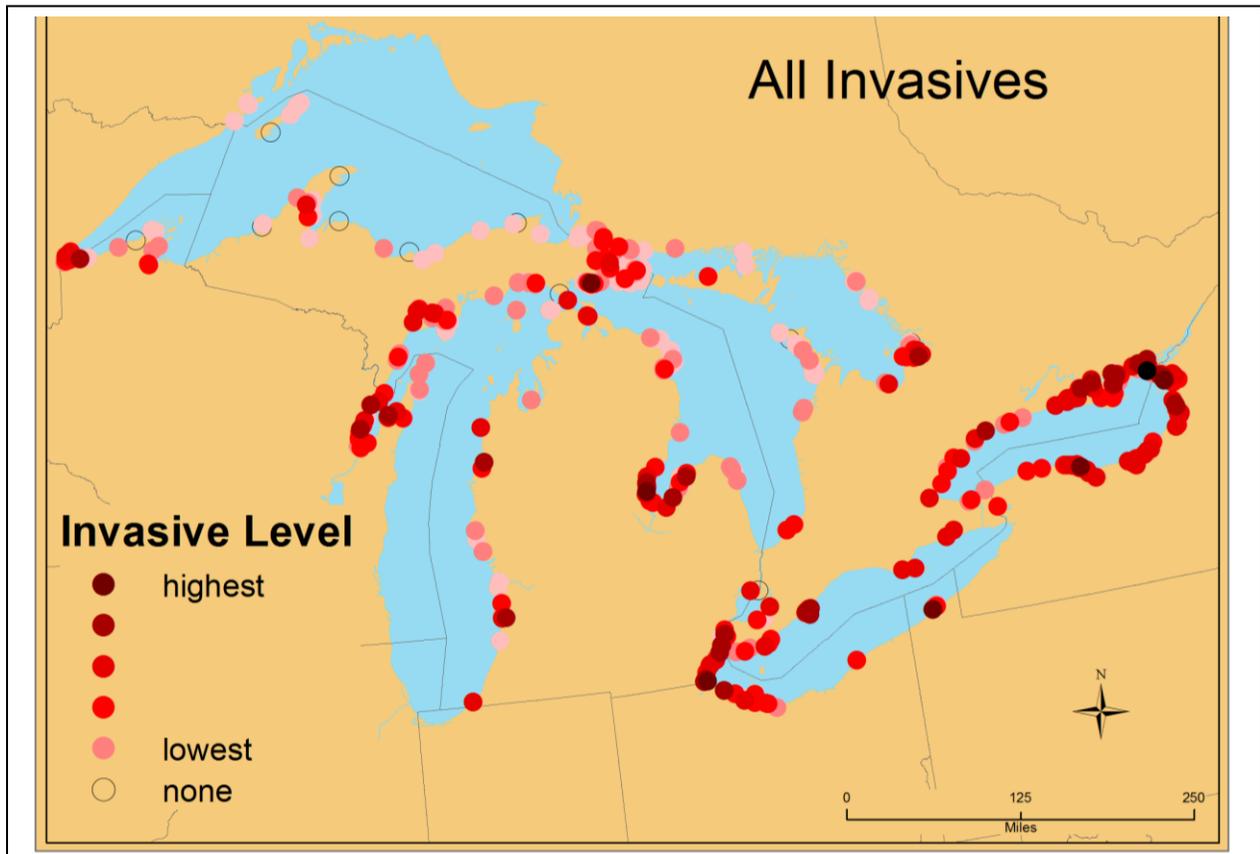


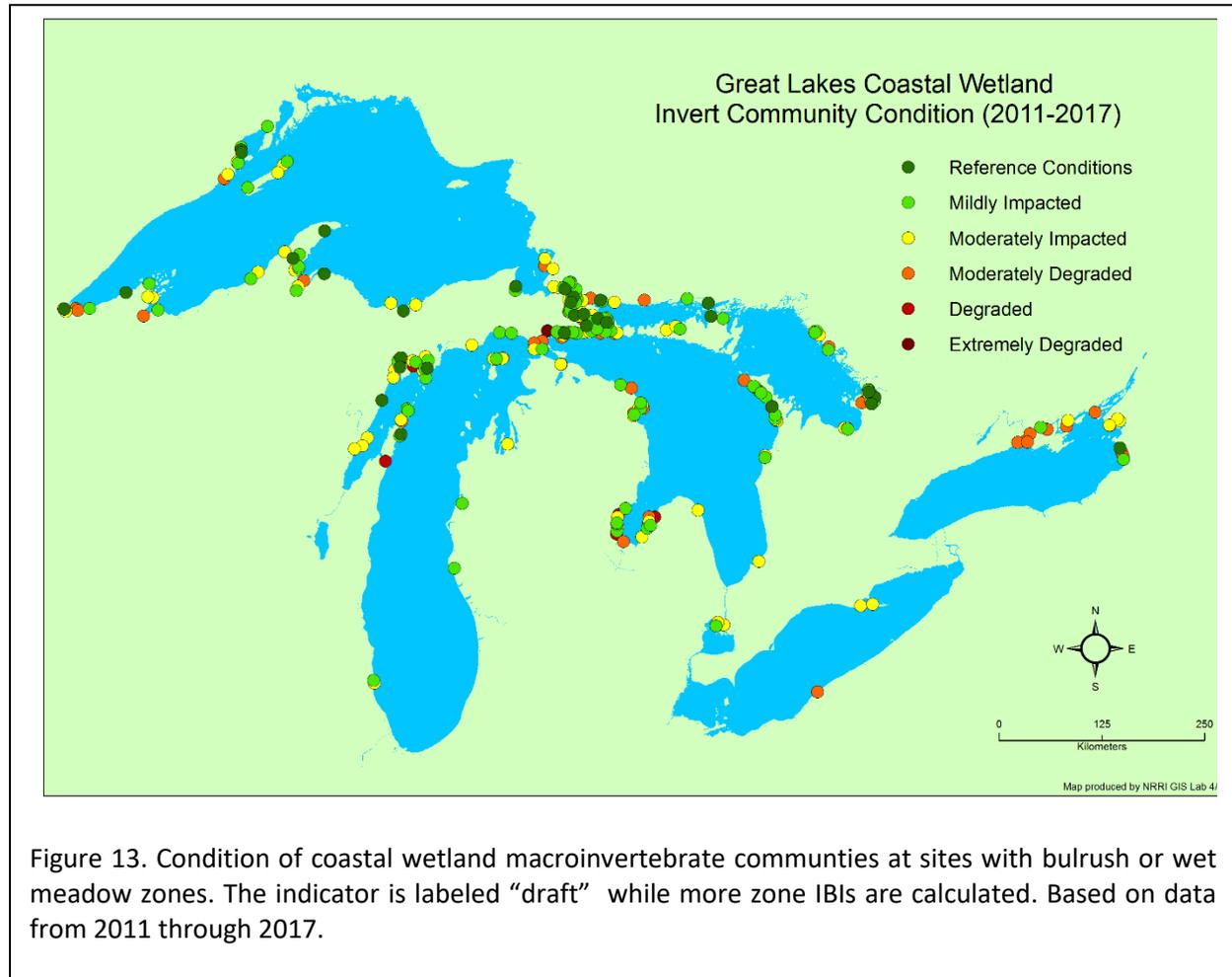
Figure 11. Level of “invadedness” of Great Lakes coastal wetlands for all non-native taxa combined across all taxonomic groups, based on data from 2011-2014.

Wetland Condition

In the fall of 2012 we began calculating metrics and IBIs for various taxa. We are evaluating coastal wetland condition using a variety of biota (wetland vegetation, aquatic macroinvertebrates, fish, birds, and amphibians).

Macrophytic vegetation has been used for many years as an indicator of wetland condition. One very common and well-recognized indicator is the Floristic Quality Index (FQI); this evaluates the quality of a plant community using all of the plants at a site. Each species is given a Coefficient of Conservatism (C) score based on the level of disturbance that characterizes each plant species' habitat. A species found in only undisturbed, high quality sites will have a high C score (maximum 10), while a weedy species will have a low C score (minimum 0). These C scores have been determined for various areas of the country by plant experts; we used the published C values for the midwest. The FQI is an average of all of the C scores of the species growing at a site, divided by the square root of the number of species. The CWM wetland vegetation index is based largely on C scores for wetland species.

Another of the IBIs that was developed by the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium uses the aquatic macroinvertebrates found in several of the most common vegetation types in Great Lakes coastal wetlands: sparse bulrush (*Schoenoplectus*), dense bulrush (*Schoenoplectus*), and wet meadow (multi-species) zones. We have calculated these IBIs for 2011 through 2015 sites that contain these habitat zones (Figure 13). Minor adjustment of metrics is continuing, so maps are not directly comparable across reports.



The lack of sites on lakes Erie and Ontario and southern Lake Michigan is due to either a lack of wetlands (southern Lake Michigan) or because these areas do not contain any of the three specific vegetation zones that GLCWC used to develop and test the invertebrate IBI. Many areas contain dense cattail stands (e.g., southern Green Bay, much of Lake Ontario), for which we do not yet have a published macroinvertebrate IBI. We are developing IBIs for additional

vegetation zones to cover these sites, but these IBIs have not yet been validated so they are not included here.

We are currently able to report draft fish IBI scores for wetland sites containing bulrush, cattail, water lily, and submerged aquatic vegetation zones (Figure 14). This map reflects new IBIs developed for water lily and SAV zones, as well as improved IBIs for bulrush and cattail zones. Thus, this map is not comparable to those in previous reports. However, all sites reporting fish data from zones with new fish IBIs are shown here, no matter the year they were sampled. Because of the prevalence of cattail zones in Erie and Ontario wetlands, this indicator provides more site scores than the macroinvertebrate indicator.

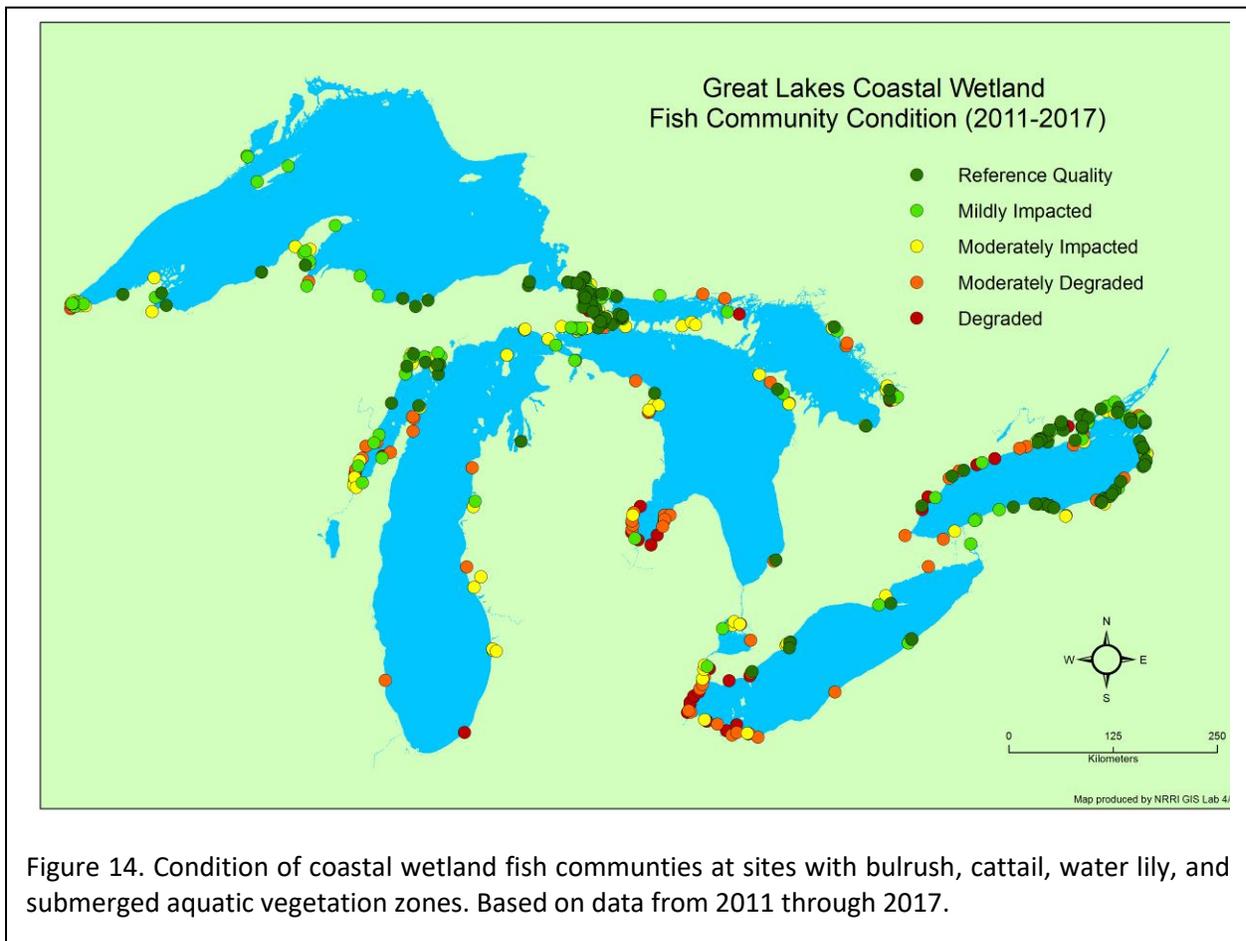


Figure 14. Condition of coastal wetland fish communities at sites with bulrush, cattail, water lily, and submerged aquatic vegetation zones. Based on data from 2011 through 2017.

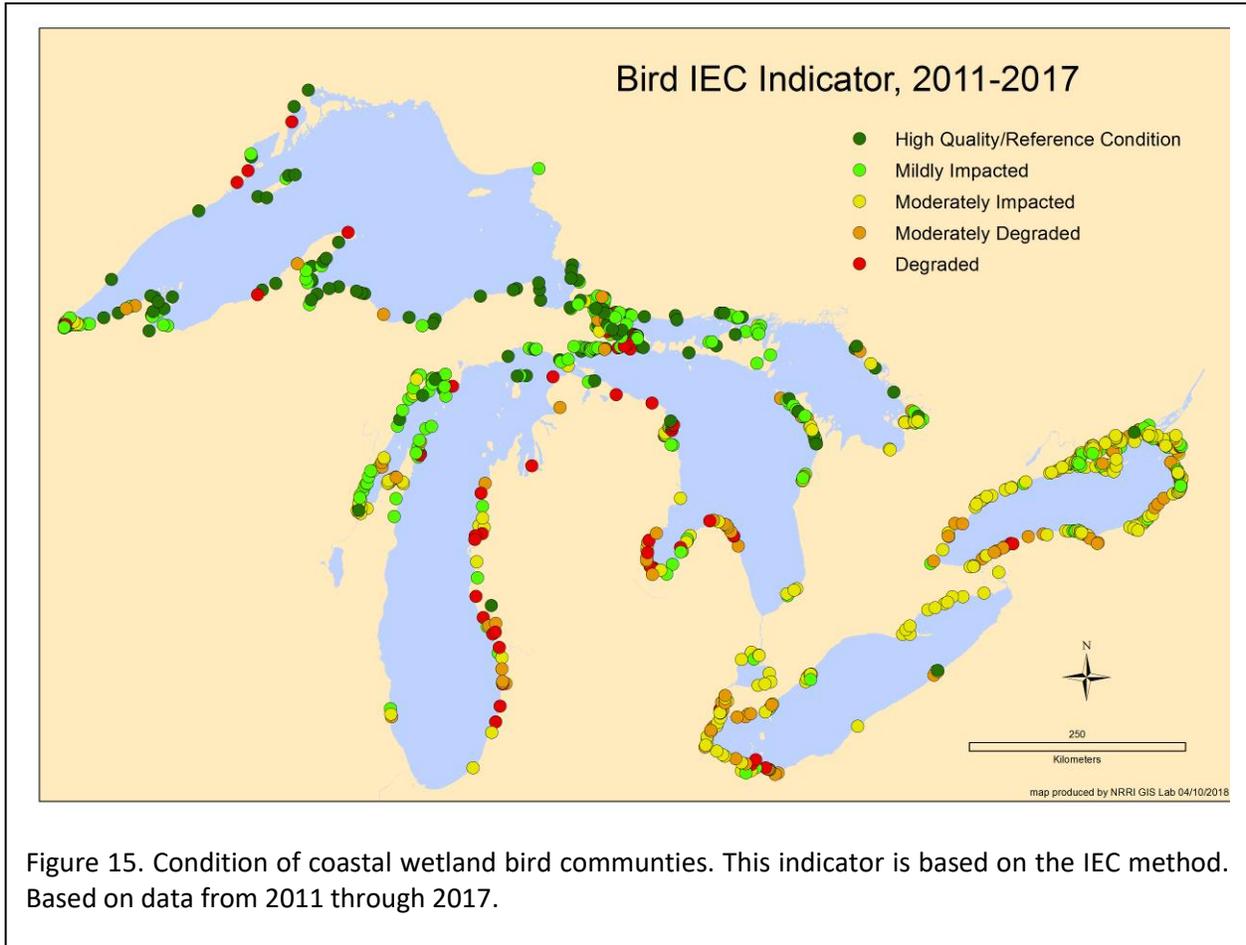
Fish PIs have been in the process of updating and expanding the fish-based IBIs of Uzarski *et al.* (2005). Fish data collected from 2011-2013 at 254 wetlands were used to develop and test the IBIs. Metrics were evaluated against numerous indices of anthropogenic disturbance derived from measurements of water quality and surrounding land cover. Disturbance indices included

individual land cover and water quality variables, principal components combining land cover and water quality variables, a previously published landscape-based index (SumRel; Danz *et al.* 2005), and a rank-based index combining land cover and water quality variables (RankSum; Uzarski *et al.* 2005). Multiple disturbance indices were used to ensure that IBI metrics captured various dimensions of human disturbances.

We divided fish, water quality, and land cover data into separate “development” and “testing” sets for metric identification/calibration and final IBI testing, respectively. Metric identification and IBI development generally followed previously established methods (e.g., Karr *et al.* 1981, USEPA 2002, Lyons 2012) in which 1) a large set of candidate metrics was calculated; 2) metrics were tested for response to anthropogenic disturbance or habitat quality; 3) metrics were screened for responses to anomalous catches of certain taxa, for adequate range of responses, and for highly redundant metrics; 4) scoring schemes were devised for each of the final metrics; 5) the final set of metrics was optimized to improve the fit of the IBI to anthropogenic disturbance gradients; and 6) the final IBI was validated against an independent data set.

Final IBIs were composed of 10-15 metrics for each of four vegetation types (bulrush [*Schoenoplectus* spp.], cattail [*Typha* spp.], water lily [*Brassenia*, *Nuphar*, *Nymphaea* spp.], and submersed aquatic vegetation [SAV, primarily *Myriophyllum* or *Ceratophyllum* spp.]). Scores of all IBIs correlated well with values of anthropogenic disturbance indices using the development and testing data sets. Correlations of IBIs to disturbance scores were also consistent among each of the three years.

Avian and amphibian responses to landscape stressors can be used to inform land managers about the health of coastal wetlands and the landscape stressors that affect these systems (Howe *et al.* 2007). A bird index based on the Index of Ecological Condition (IEC) method developed by Dr. Robert Howe has now been calculated for Great Lakes coasts (Figure 15). The IEC is a biotic indicator of ecological health first described by Howe *et al.* (2007a,b) and modified by Gnass-Giese *et al.* (2014). Calculation of an IEC involves two steps: 1) modeling responses of species to a measured reference or stressor gradient (typically completed by prior research), and 2) calculating IEC values for new sites based occurrences (e.g., presence/absence, abundance, frequency) of multiple species or taxonomic groups at the site. The method applies an iterative maximum likelihood approach for calculating both species-response functions and IEC values. Functions for calculating the biotic responses to environmental stressors (BR models) are useful as stand-alone applications of environmental gradient analysis.



As noted above, there is low diversity in anurans across Great Lakes wetlands. However, the IEC method has allowed development of a trial calling anuran indicator (Figure 16).

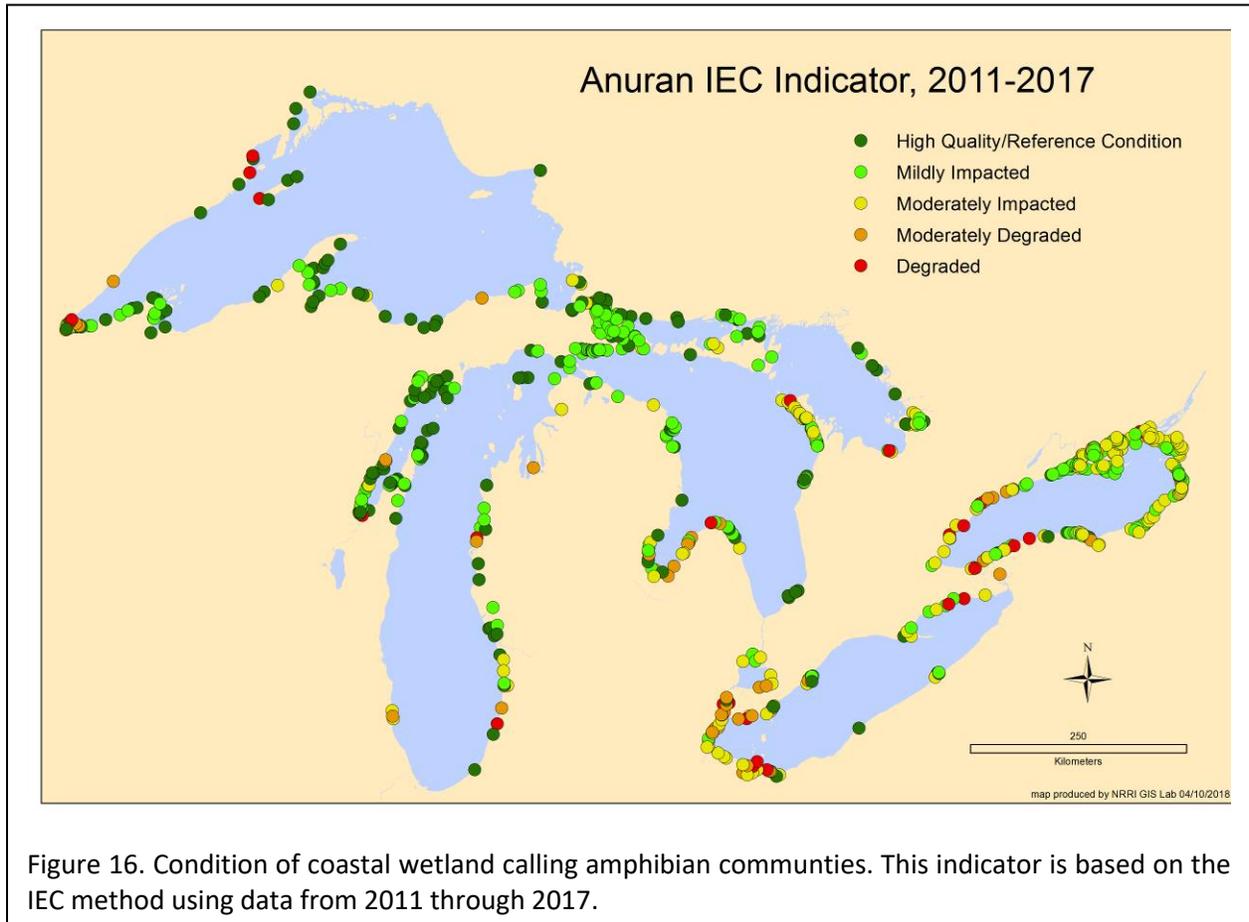


Figure 16. Condition of coastal wetland calling amphibian communities. This indicator is based on the IEC method using data from 2011 through 2017.

Finally, we have developed a draft disturbance gradient (SumRank) indicator. This indicator is based on landscape stressor data, local stressor data seen at the site itself, and water quality data collected from each aquatic macrophyte plant morphotype (Figure 17). This example is based on data from 2014. Wetlands can have different scores for each plant morphotype within them because of the difference in water chemistry in different plant morphotype zones (inset a). In addition, the indicator may change over time, as indicated in Figure 17 inset b. A publication is in draft for submission this winter on this disturbance indicator.

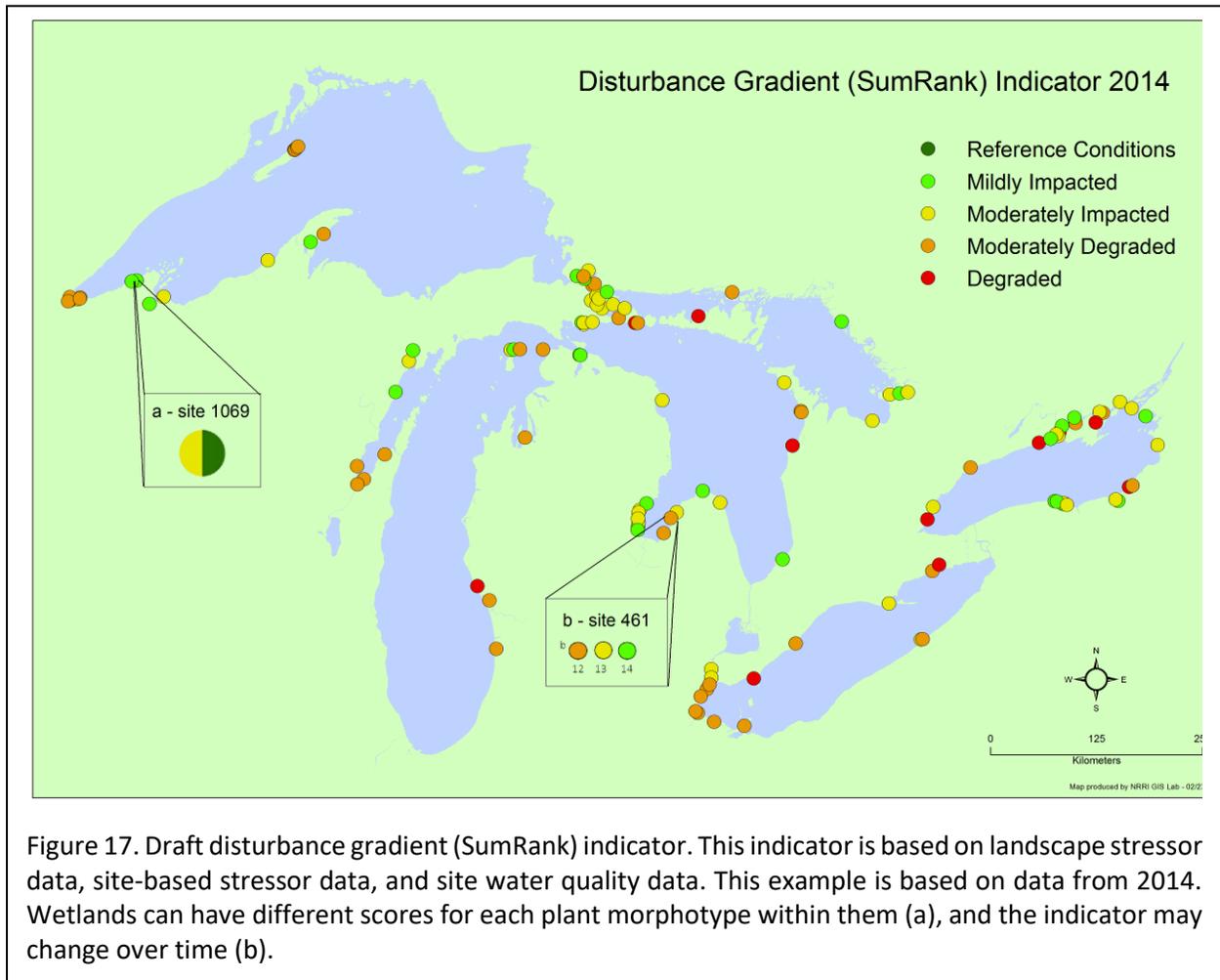


Figure 17. Draft disturbance gradient (SumRank) indicator. This indicator is based on landscape stressor data, site-based stressor data, and site water quality data. This example is based on data from 2014. Wetlands can have different scores for each plant morphotype within them (a), and the indicator may change over time (b).

PUBLIC ACCESS WEBSITE

The Coastal Wetlands Monitoring Program (CWMP) website provides efficient access to program information and summary results for coastal managers, agency personnel, and the interested public (Figure 18). As previously noted, the CWMP website has been redeveloped and upgraded by LimnoTech and transitioned from an NRRI server to a permanent web hosting environment at Central Michigan University. The official launch of the new CWMP website occurred on April 26, 2016, including the public components of the website and data management tools for CWMP principal investigators and collaborators. Since that time, coastal managers and agency personnel have used the new website's account management system to request and obtain accounts that provide access to the wetland site mapping tool, which includes reporting of Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) scores. CWMP researchers have also obtained new user accounts that provide access to data upload, entry, editing, download, and mapping

tools. LimnoTech is providing ongoing maintenance and support for the website over the next program year, and will modify and enhance the site as required to meet CWMP needs, as well as other end user needs.

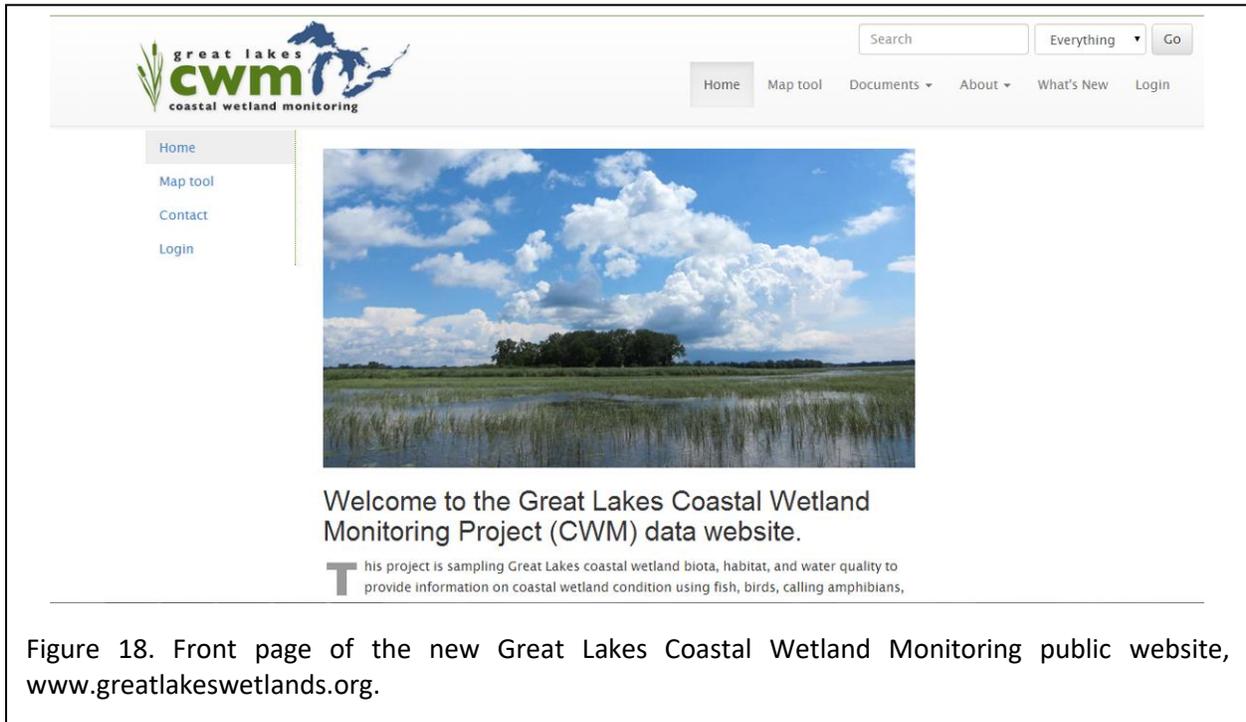


Figure 18. Front page of the new Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring public website, www.greatlakeswetlands.org.

The CWMP website provides a suite of interrelated webpages and associated tools that allow varying levels of access to results generated by the CWMP, depending on the user's data needs and affiliation. Webpages available on the site allow potential users to request an account and for site administrators to approve and manage access levels for individual accounts. Specific levels of access for the website are as follows:

- **Public** – this level of access does not require a user account and includes access to a basic version of the wetland mapping tool, as well as links to CWMP documents and contact information;
- **Level 1** – provides access to index of biological integrity (IBI) scores by wetland site via the coastal wetland mapping tool;
- **Level 2** - access to IBI scores and full species lists by wetland site via mapping tool;
- **Level 3** - access to export tools for raw datasets (+ Level 2 capabilities);
- **Level 4** - access to data entry/editing tools (+ Level 3 capabilities); and
- **Admin** - access to all information and data included on the website plus administrative tools. A small team of CWMP principal investigators have been given "Admin" access and will handle approval of account requests and assignment of an access level (1-4).

The following sub-sections briefly describe the general site pages that are made available to all users (“Public” level) and the coastal wetland mapping tool features available to “Level 1” and “Level 2” users. Additional pages and tools available to “Level 3”, “Level 4”, and “Admin” users for exporting raw monitoring data, entering and editing raw data, and performing administrative tasks are not documented in detail in this report.

General Site Pages

The CWMP website provides open “Public” access (i.e., without requiring a user account) to the following site content:

- Mapping tool – basic version (<http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Map>);
- CWMP reports & publications (Figure 19; <http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Reports-Publications>);
- CWMP sampling protocols (<http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Sampling-protocols>);
- Program contact information (<http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Contact>);
- Program collaborators (<http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Collaborators>); and
- User account request form (<http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Account/Request>).

The screenshot shows the 'Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program (CWMP) Reports/Publications' page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: cmich.edu, Home, Mapping Tools, Documents, Contact, Log In, and Request Account. The main heading is 'Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program (CWMP) Reports/Publications'. Below this, a text block says 'Please click the link(s) provided below to download a specific document(s):'. To the right, there is a logo for CMU (Central Michigan University) Institute for Great Lakes Research. The main content is divided into two sections: 'Progress Reports to USEPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO):' and 'Prior Research Reports and Publications:'. The progress reports section lists 13 reports from March 2011 to March 2016. The prior research section includes a note and a list of three publications. On the right side, there is a sidebar with 'CWMP Site Links' (Home Page, Site Mapping Tool, Reports / Publications, Sampling Protocols, Contact Information, Collaborating Institutions) and 'Other Relevant Links' (CMU IGLR Home Page, GLRI Home Page). At the bottom, there is a grid of logos for various partner organizations including DEQ, Environment Canada, University of Windsor, Green Bay, Brockport, Superior, USGS, Lake Superior, LinnoTech, and Grand Valley State University. The footer contains a disclaimer: 'CMU is an AA/EQ institution, providing equal opportunity to all persons, including minorities, females, veterans and individuals with disabilities. | CentralLink Copyright: Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Mich. 48859 | Phone 989-774-4000 | Privacy Policy | Website Feedback | Desktop View'.

Figure 19. CWMP Reports and Publications Page.

The “Reports & Publication” page provides links to PDF and Microsoft Word documents for program reports and publications, and the “Sampling Protocols” page provides access to the current version of the quality assurance project plan (QAPP), quality assurance forms, standard operating procedure (SOP) documents, and presentation templates. The “Contact” page provides contact information for Dr. Uzarski, Dr. Brady, Dr. Cooper, and Dr. T. Kevin O’Donnell of the Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO).

Coastal Wetland Mapping Tool

The enhanced CWMP website provides a new and updated version of the coastal wetland mapping tool described in previous reports (<http://www.greatlakeswetlands.org/Map>). The basic version of the mapping tool, which is available at the “Public” access level, provides the following features and capabilities (Figure 20):

- Map navigation tools (panning, general zooming, zooming to a specific site, etc.);
- Basemap layer control (selection of aerial vs. “ocean” basemaps);
- Display of centroids and polygons representing coastal wetlands that have been monitored thus far under the CWMP;

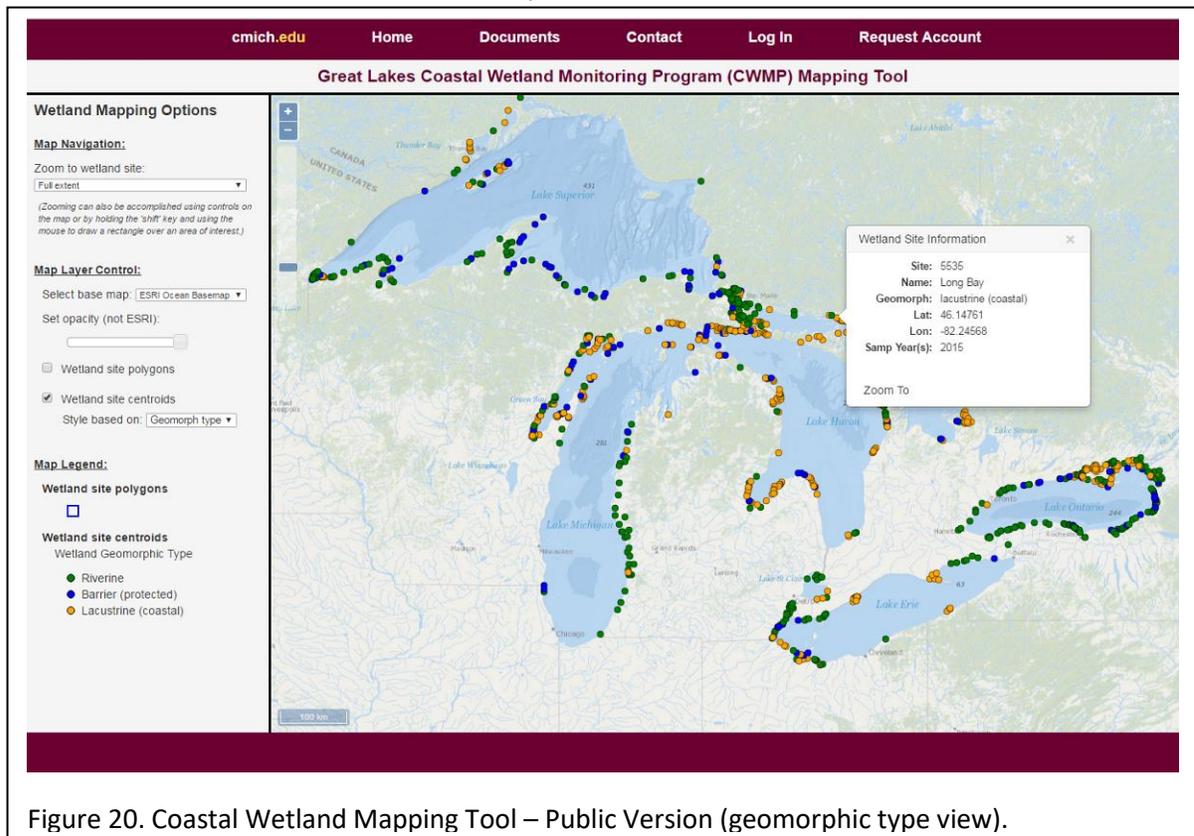


Figure 20. Coastal Wetland Mapping Tool – Public Version (geomorphic type view).

- Capability to style/symbolize wetland centroids based on: 1) geomorphic type (default view; Figure 20), or 2) year sampled (Figure 21); and
- Reporting of basic site attributes (site name, geomorphic type, latitude, longitude, and sampling years).

In addition to the features made available at the “Public” access level, users with “Level 1” access to the website can currently obtain information regarding IBI scores for vegetation, invertebrates, and fish. (IBI scores for amphibians and birds will be incorporated into the site once available).

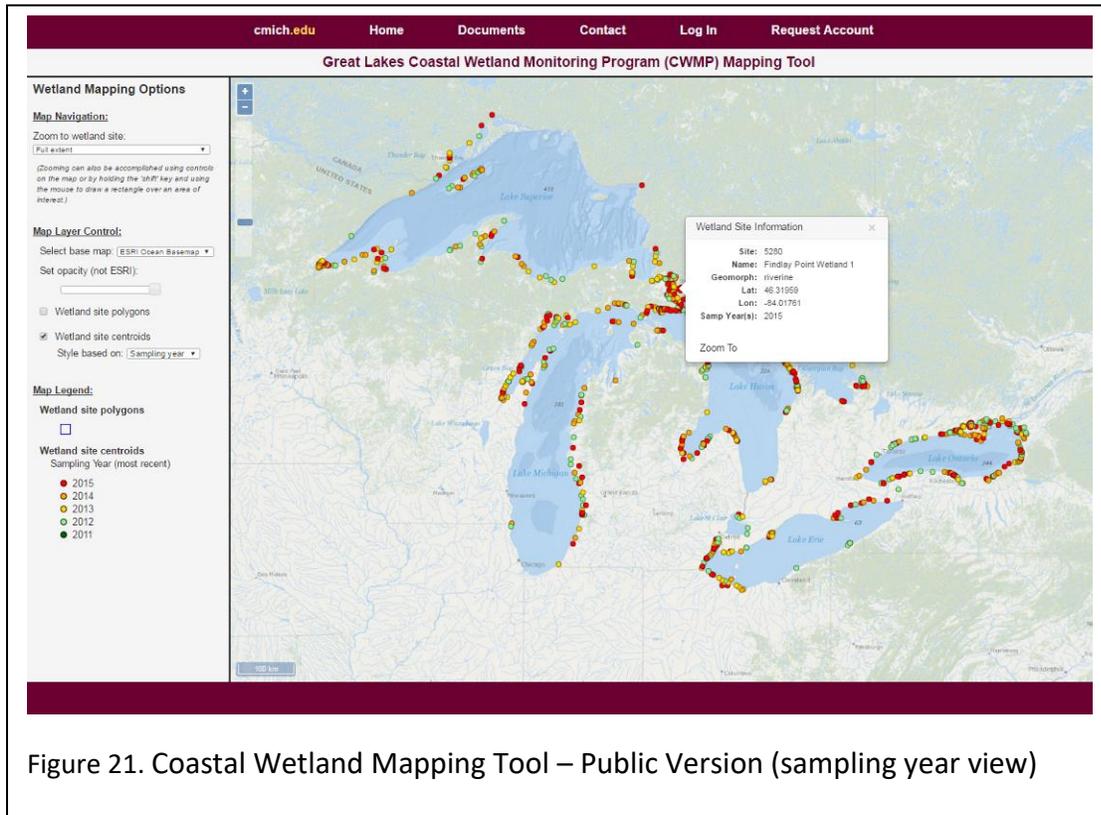


Figure 21. Coastal Wetland Mapping Tool – Public Version (sampling year view)

Wetland centroids can be symbolized based on IBI scores for a specific biological community, as well as based on geomorphic type and year sampled. For example, vegetation IBI scores calculated for individual sites can be displayed by selecting the “Vegetation IBI” option available in the “Style based on:” pull-down menu (Figure 22). In addition, the actual IBI scores can be viewed by clicking on an individual wetland centroid.

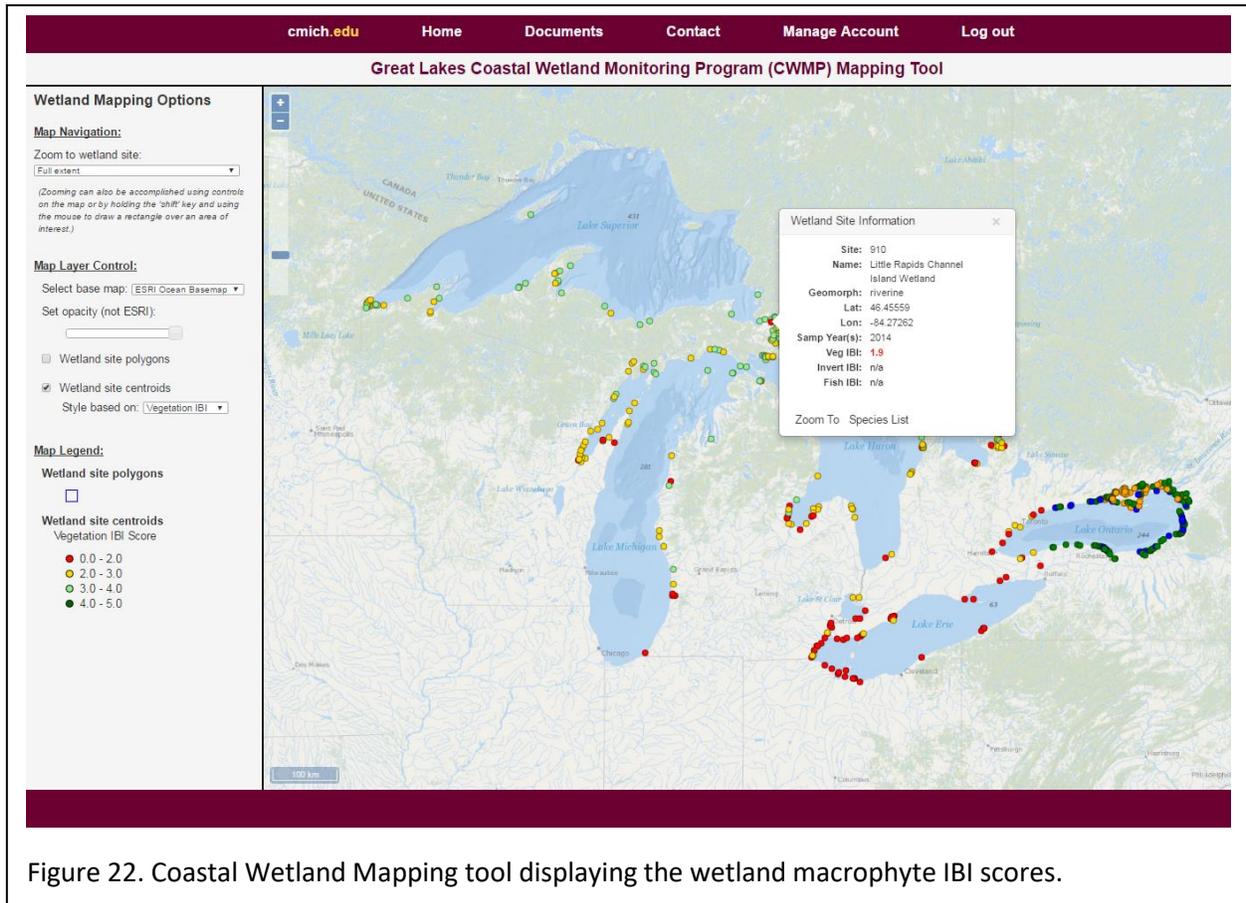


Figure 22. Coastal Wetland Mapping tool displaying the wetland macrophyte IBI scores.

Users with “Level 2” access to the website are provided with the same visualization options described above for the “Public” and “Level 1” access levels, but also have the capability of viewing a complete listing of species observed at individual wetland sites. Species lists can be generated by clicking on the “Species List” link provided at the bottom of the “pop-up” summary of site attributes (Figure 23), and the information can then be viewed and copied and pasted to another document, if desired.

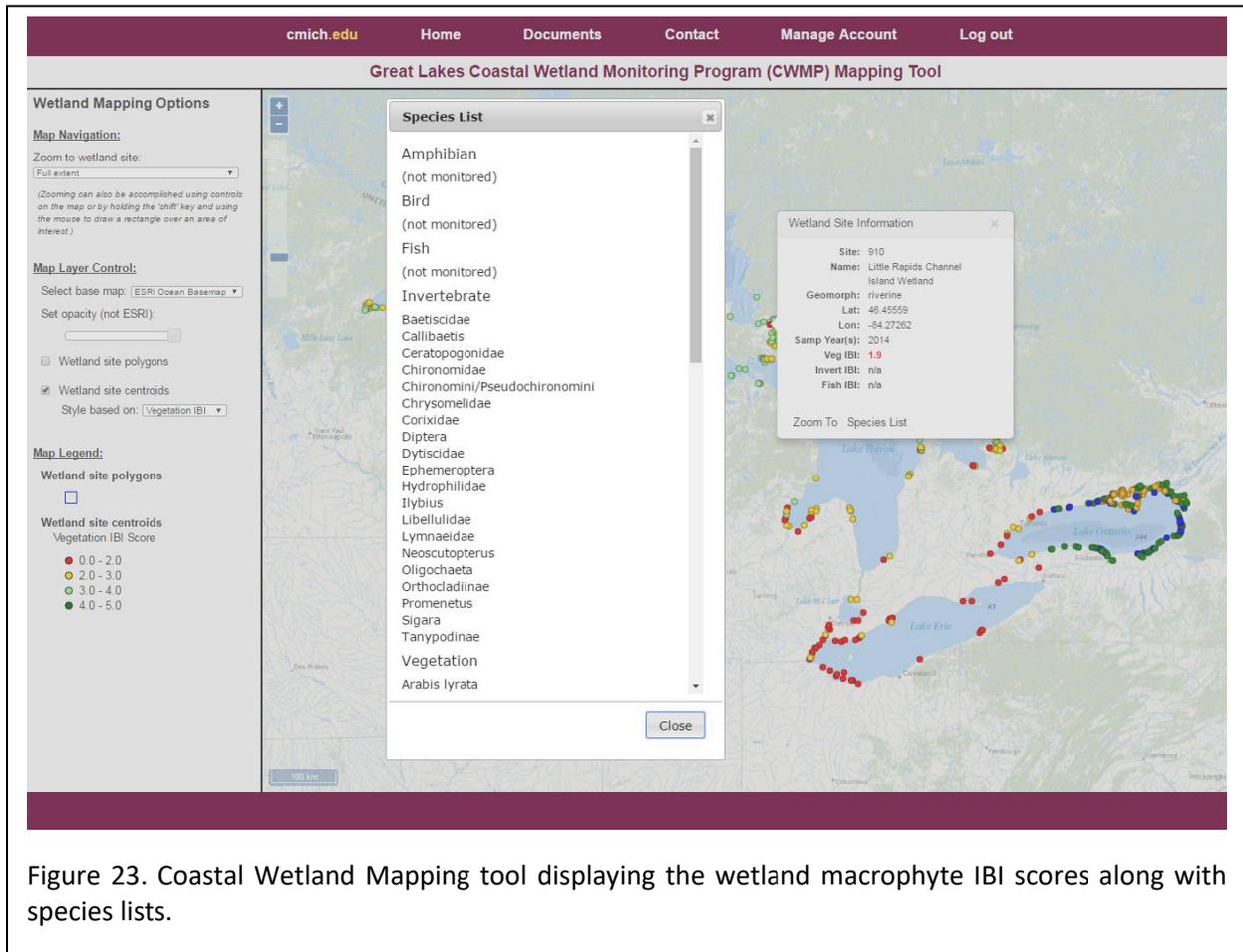


Figure 23. Coastal Wetland Mapping tool displaying the wetland macrophyte IBI scores along with species lists.

Outreach to Managers

In late summer 2016 the Michigan DEQ hosted two full-day information and outreach meetings in Traverse City, MI and Bay City, MI, in order to introduce and promote use of the GLCWM project results through the new GIS-based website and database. The Traverse City meeting was held on August 29, 2016 and was attended by approximately 17 target users from conservation organizations, watershed groups, CISMAs, local government, and state agencies. The Bay City meeting was held on August 31, 2016 and was attended in person by approximately 25 target users primarily from state agencies, CISMAs, and conservation organizations, and had three attendees via webinar from state and federal agencies.

Overall we received very positive responses to these meetings, and the survey responses highlighted some different perspectives. The two meetings were very different, with different backgrounds in the participants, which was reflected in the survey responses. Some of the main comments, both in the survey responses and at the meetings, revolved around interpretation of the information by users accessing the website who are not involved in the

project. In particular, many people commented that after seeing the presentations about the monitoring techniques, as well as some of the presentation discussion of how things like water levels or local issues can affect the samples, they had a better understanding of how to interpret the results and of the limitations of this information. Many people were supportive of website improvements to provide more of this information to users online, and they were excited to hear about the decision support tool, currently under development.

Since these meetings we have had many of the participants and their colleagues register for access accounts on the website, at appropriate access levels. We have also had some interest in additional future meetings or webinars on the project, results, and how to access the information through the website.

We are continuing to work on improvements to the website which will assist external users with accessing and understanding the results. We are also planning future meetings and webinars to facilitate outreach and communication to other target user groups throughout the Great Lakes basin, and to encourage use of the website in wetland management and restoration planning and monitoring.

TEAM REPORTS

WESTERN REGIONAL TEAM: Jerry Niemi and Alexis Grinde (birds and anurans), Valerie Brady (fish and macroinvertebrates), Nicholas Danz (aquatic vegetation), and Rich Axler (water quality)

Field Training

Birds and Anurans

Training for calling anuran surveys was held on 28 March 2018 and bird crew training took place on 25 May 2018. Training involved instructing crews on how to conduct standardized field surveys, on basic travel procedures, and on appropriate field safety measures. Individuals are trained to proficiently complete field sheets and audio testing is also completed to insure that their hearing is within the normal range. Rules for site verification, safety issues including caution regarding insects (e.g., Lyme's disease), GPS and compass use, and record keeping are also included in field training to insure that the guidelines in the QAPP are being followed. All individuals involved in conducting the surveys have taken and passed each of the following tests on 1) anuran calls, 2) bird vocalization, and 3) bird visual identification that are based on an online system established at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay – see <http://www.birdercertification.org/GreatLakesCoastal> - prior to conducting surveys.

Fish, Macroinvertebrates, Vegetation, and Water Quality

Fish, macroinvertebrate, and water quality sampling training was in Green Bay, Wisconsin at the end of June/early July. The primary crew was comprised of two long-time crew leaders and two new crew members, each working under an experienced crew leader. As has been true the past couple of years, the vegetation crew included a contract botanist who helped sample sites in the UP and northern Lake Michigan. All field technicians were trained in and tested on all standard procedures, including a field-based fish or vegetation identification exam (depending on the crew). Training for all crews included how to determine if a site meets project criteria, all aspects of sampling the site, proper recording of data on datasheets, GPS use and uploading, water quality sample collection and meter calibration (fish/invert crew only), as well as sample processing. Much of the training took place in the field at a typical coastal site to ensure field members learned (or reviewed) appropriate techniques. Safety training covered aspects of field safety including safe boating; protection against the elements, animals, insects, and plants; and corrective actions taken when things go wrong.

Sampling permits were obtained from state fisheries management agencies, parks, and various other entities (the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, the National Park Service, and various state parks). The US Forest Service has determined that no special permits are necessary for any sampling on their lands across the Great Lakes states. We have renewed our University of Minnesota Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee permit for fish sampling.

Site selection

Birds and Anurans

In 2018, a total of 47 sites were initially selected to be surveyed for birds and amphibians by the NRRRI bird team. Although all of these sites had been surveyed at least once during the 2011-2015 study period by at least one taxonomic group, we still needed to determine accessibility and site conditions which may have changed during this time period (e.g., property ownership, water levels). Of these 47 sites, 17 sites were rejected for bird surveys and 22 sites were rejected for amphibian surveys either prior to visiting the wetland (web reject), following reconnaissance visits to each remaining site (visit reject), or because road access did not permit the team to get close enough to the coastal wetland to accurately survey the site (could not access site). All of the rejected sites for birds and amphibians were due to accessibility issues. Most of these sites had been previously rejected in 2013 by bird and amphibian crews for the same reason. The taxonomic groups that did survey these sites used boats, which was not possible or in the sampling protocol for both early morning (bird) and late evening (anuran) surveys for safety reasons. Anuran crews were able to sample sites in northern Lake Huron beginning 7 May and bird surveys began 25 May. Sampling was completed by 03 July 2018 for birds and 05 July 2018 for anurans.

The 30 sites that were sampled by bird and anuran field crews stretched from the Duluth-Superior harbor area both northeast along the shore of Lake Superior into Ontario and

eastward along the south shore of Lake Superior to the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and into northeast Lake Huron. In 2018, we were able to sample a number of island sites for birds and anurans, including sites in the Apostle Islands and in Canada. We also surveyed eight island sites in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. All but one of benchmark sites our team surveyed in 2018 was located in the St. Louis River estuary.

Fish, Macroinvertebrates, Vegetation and Water Quality

Fish/macroinvertebrate and vegetation crews visited 23 sites after accounting for over-capacity sites, special request benchmarks, and taking on sites for neighboring teams to help them out. Of the 23, 12 were on Lake Superior and 11 were on Lake Michigan. Five sites were designated as benchmark sites, four were re-sample sites and two were pre-sample sites for 2019.

Water levels were still high in Lake Michigan compared to 5 years ago, and datasheet notes often referred to many zone types (e.g. SAV) as being too deep to sample. On the other hand, zones that in previous years were too shallow to fish were possible to sample with fyke nets again this year (e.g. wet meadow). The NRRI crew sampled 20 of the sites. The Northland College crew sampled an additional three sites on the Bayfield Peninsula of WI. Overall, 41 vegetation zones were sampled for invertebrates, and 31 vegetation zones were sampled for fish.

Field sampling and preliminary interesting findings

Birds and Anurans

The sites sampled in 2018 were visited up to four times between 7 May and 5 July. At each site, three surveys were conducted for anurans and two surveys were completed for birds, one of which was conducted on the same evening as one of the anuran surveys. Sites surveyed for both anurans and birds were visited a total of four times, while sites surveyed only for birds were visited twice.

Anurans

In 2018, a total of nine species were recorded throughout our study sites, with 788 individuals and 102 full choruses counted (Table 14). The average number of individuals recorded per site visit was 9.5. The average number of species detected per wetland was 4.2 with a minimum of one and a maximum of seven. There was only one site with seven species recorded, site 5137, Bullhead Bay, a lacustrine wetland on the north shore of Lake Huron.

Spring peepers (*Pseudoacris crucifer*) were the most abundant species observed in all wetlands sampled, accounting for over 37% of the anuran observations and the majority of full chorus observations (Table 14). Bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*), which are regarded as an invasive species in the Great Lakes region, were not observed this year.

Table 14. List of amphibians recorded during 2018 surveys. The number of individuals counted and the number of full choruses observed (# of individuals cannot be estimated) are provided for each species.

Species	Number of Individuals	Number of Observations (Full Chorus)
American toad (<i>Anaxyrus americanus</i>)	76	2
Blanchard's cricket frog (<i>Acris blanchardi</i>)	0	0
Bullfrog (<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>)	0	0
Chorus frog (western/ boreal – <i>Pseudoacris triseriata</i> & <i>P. maculatas</i>)	3	0
Green frog (<i>Lithobates clamitans</i>)	176	2
Gray treefrog (<i>Hyla versicolor</i>)	111	4
Mink frog (<i>Lithobates septentrionalis</i>)	12	2
Northern leopard frog (<i>Lithobates pipiens</i>)	63	1
Spring peeper (<i>Pseudoacris crucifer</i>)	289	91
Wood frog (<i>Lithobates sylvatica</i>)	57	0
Total	788	102

Birds

Birds were surveyed twice at each site between 25 May and 03 July. Surveys occurred once in the morning and once in the evening. There were a total of 84 identifiable species observations and 3,908 individual birds recorded. The five most abundant species observed accounted for approximately 47% of all observations. These species, in order of decreasing abundance, were Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*), Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), and American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*).

In the Western Great Lakes region there have been many observations of birds of special concern in the vicinity of the wetlands or using the wetland complexes in 2017 (Table 15). The most noteworthy observations included secretive marsh birds such as American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), and Sora Rail (*Porzana carolina*). American Bittern were observed in eight wetlands including three sites in Lake Superior and five sites in northern Lake Huron. Least Bittern was observed at one site on Madeline Island, WI. There were four sites where Virginia Rails were observed, two of which were in Lake Superior and two in northern Lake Huron. Sora rails were observed in seven wetlands: four sites in Lake Superior, one of which was a benchmark site in the Duluth-Superior harbor, and three sites in northern Lake Huron.

Eight Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were observed at 6 sites. Additional species of interest include: Common Loon (*Gavia immer*), which were observed in 2 wetlands; Sandhill

Crane (*Grus canadensis*) observed in 6 wetlands; Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) observed at four wetland locations, 3 each on Lake Superior and Lake Huron; and Forster’s Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) observed at one wetland location in northern Lake Huron.

Table 15. List of birds of special interest recorded during 2018 surveys. The number of individuals observed is listed for each species.

Species	Number of Individuals
Sandhill Crane (<i>Grus canadensis</i>)	18
Wilson’s Snipe (<i>Gallinago delicata</i>)	0
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)	0
American Bittern (<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>)	14
Least Bittern (<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>)	1
Virginia Rail (<i>Rallus limicola</i>)	8
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	8
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	3
Sora Rail (<i>Porzana carolina</i>)	13
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)	9
Belted Kingfisher (<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>)	10
Forster’s Tern (<i>Sterna forsteri</i>)	12
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)	0
Black Tern (<i>Chlidonias niger</i>)	0
Caspian Tern (<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>)	6

Birds of special concern were observed in 23 of the 30 wetland sites surveyed in 2018 (Table 15). The lack of observations of Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) and Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and the single observation of Forster’s Tern, (all species of concern throughout the Great Lakes) is of particular interest and concern.

As in 2016 and 2017, the bird and amphibian teams included additional vegetation sampling at each of the point count locations. We used the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program’s sampling protocol to collect these additional point-level vegetation data within a 100-m circle of each point-count location. Data were collected once at each location during the breeding season. We collected these samples later in the breeding season (during the second round of bird sampling) to insure growth was sufficient to properly estimate vegetation (type and abundance). Details regarding collection of this information can be found in the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program’s habitat guidance booklet (Meyer et al. 2006).

Fish and Macroinvertebrates

Two sites were sampled to provide pre-restoration data for habitat improvement work, both in the Green Bay area. One of these sites (1444) was clearly degraded, containing a lot of public litter and fish species adapted to low oxygen conditions such as bullheads, common carp, central mudminnow, and bowfin (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Field technician Matt Santo of NRRI holds a Bowfin displaying green breeding colors. Photo taken at site 1444 on 6/30/18.

Benchmark sites 7048 and 7049, located in the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC), were not sampled during the 2018 field season because construction activities are still in progress. Several game species were present as young-of-year (YOY), which indicates adults had used nearby wetland habitats to reproduce. Game fish observed as YOY were Walleye, Northern Pike, Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Yellow Perch, and Black Crappie. Walleye YOY were only captured at sites 1465 and 1475, which are both Lake Michigan wetlands in the greater Green Bay area. We also continue our data collection of gar species distribution. For several years we have collected only Longnose Gar in the northern half of Green Bay and only Longnose x Shortnose Gar hybrids in the southern half of Green Bay, even though there is no physical barrier separating the two populations (Figure 25).



Figure 25. Field teams from NRRI continue to find a range segregation of gar species in the Green Bay, Lake Michigan region. Longnose Gar have only been observed in the northern extent of Green Bay (TOP; from site 1494), while Longnose x Shortnose Gar hybrids populate the southern extent of Green Bay (BOTTOM; from site 1465).

Painted turtles were common by-catch, but we did not encounter any Common Snapping Turtles in 2018 (which is atypical). We did not encounter any fish of threatened, endangered, or special concern status during our 2018 field sampling. However, we did observe several invasive species. Invasive fish were present at 14 of the 19 fished sites. Round Goby and Common Carp were the most frequently detected, although their prevalence was greater in Lake Michigan wetlands than Lake Superior wetlands. Other invasive fish observed were Alewife, Ruffe, Rainbow Smelt, and Tubenose Goby. Non-native Three-spine Stickleback were observed at one Canadian site (5963: Sturgeon Bay Wetland 1). The NRRI crew collected rusty crayfish within one Lake Superior wetland (1074) and two Lake Michigan wetlands (1441 and 1687).

Some interesting observations occurred at site 1043 (La Pointe Wetland). The fish community in this lagoon on Stockton Island in the Apostle Islands appears very productive, as we caught hundreds of brown bullheads as well as many cyprinids and a few centrarchids. However, this is the second time we've experienced very low macroinvertebrate abundance in this wetland. We suspect some top-down control of the macroinvertebrate food web or some other interesting mechanism driving this pattern. This wetland is considered a "poor fen", and has a well-developed floating peat mat throughout. Coastal Wetland Monitoring data are being used to place Apostle Island wetlands into a broader Great Lakes context.

Other Activities: The Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program led to a spin-off functional assessment project funded by USGS, which started in the fall of 2016 and field work will end in 2018. Ten GLCWMP wetlands received, or will receive, additional surveys in 2018 (sites 7064, 1090, 1074, 1042, 1027, 1516, 1494, 1465, 1444, and 1687). Fish, invertebrate, and water quality survey methods for the USGS functional assessment project are similar to GLCWMP standard surveys, but other surveys were omitted (i.e. no bird, amphibian, or macrophyte sampling). Up to 10 juvenile fish of each species encountered from each fished vegetation zone were preserved and sent to USGS for diet analysis. Staff at USGS re-identified the fish species sent to them and found a high rate of agreement with NRRRI fish identifications. Matt Cooper is working with Dr. Sarah Johnson at Northland College on a separate grant from the National Park Service to better understand the response of Apostle Island (Lake Superior) wetlands to future climate and water levels.

Data Requests: We continue to provide fish, macroinvertebrate, aquatic vegetation, and water quality data and IBI scores to state agencies working to restore the St. Louis River Area of Concern.

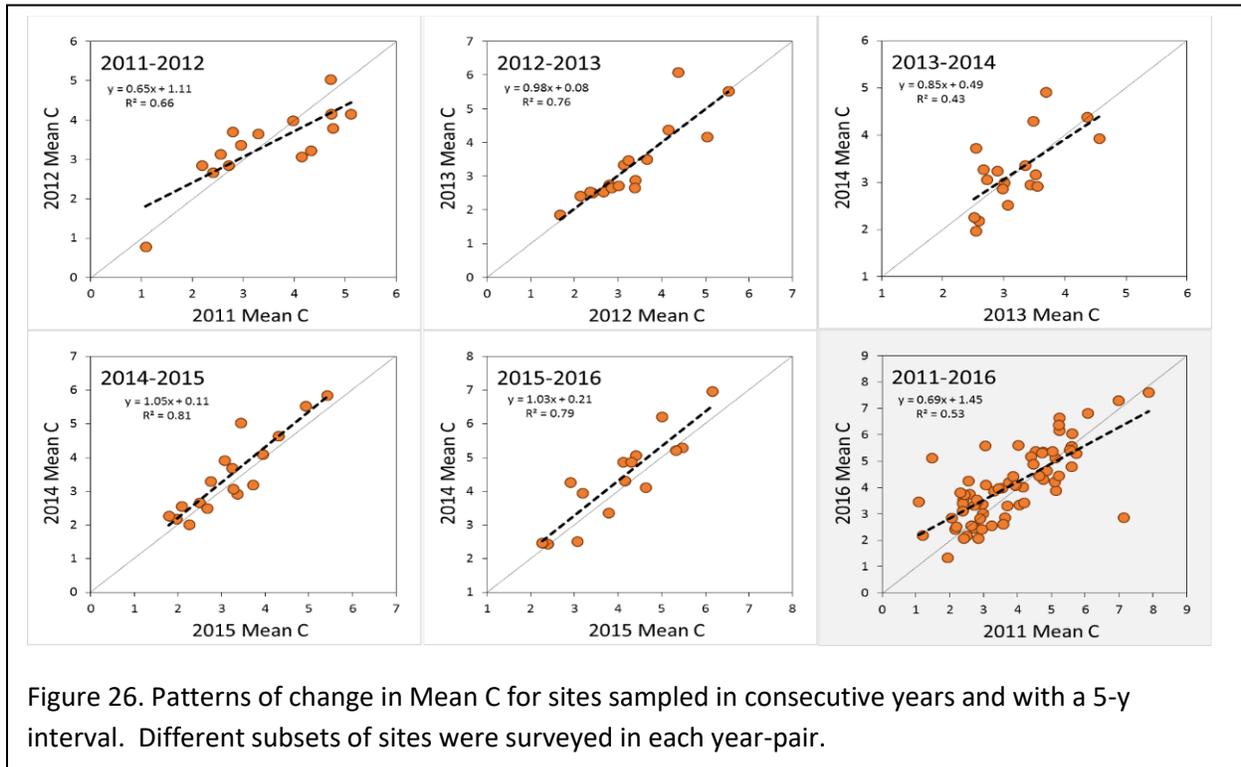
2018 Sample Processing, Data Entry, and QC

The PIs conducted mid-season checks by visiting a few sites and verifying that proper protocol was being implemented. All data entry and QC for birds and amphibians was completed (100%) during August-September 2018. Data entry and QC for fish, field habitat and water quality will be done over the winter. In addition, macroinvertebrate ID and data entry will be completed over the winter. Field data for aquatic macrophytes were entered into the project database by early-September and have been subjected to QA/QC procedures; difficult-to-identify macrophytes will be identified this fall and winter. Macrophyte PIs are working to remove duplicates in the database table with taxonomic listings. This effort also includes conversion to one scientific name for each species that reflects current taxonomy. Macrophyte PIs also contributed to the wetland vegetation plant indicator status and trends for SOLEC.

Metrics and Indicator Calculations

In Spring 2017, PI Danz used data 2011-2016 to evaluate temporal variability in one indicator of wetland plant quality, Mean C. Based on analysis of 708 surveys on 547 unique sites, Mean C

was found to be relatively stable from year to year at both sites (Figure 26) and across entire lakes (Figure 27). Sites typically had highly correlated Mean C scores in consecutive years. On average, the absolute difference in Mean C for sites surveyed in consecutive years was 0.48, which translated to a 15% average change. For sites surveyed with a 5-year interval, the average difference in Mean C was 0.78, or a 28% change. For individual sites, statistical power analysis showed there would be a required year-wise difference in Mean C of about 1.0 to translate to a statistically significant change.



Averaging across entire lakes, the highest annual average change in Mean C ranged from 0.16 (Lake Michigan) to 0.34 (Lake Ontario). Aquatic vegetation PIs will be working in the future to determine statistical power analysis for these intermediate-term trends in Mean C seen in individual lakes.

Throughout summer and fall 2017, Danz used data from this CWM project to help prioritize wetland sites for restoration in the Lake Superior basin. This work, in collaboration with Cherie Hagen (WIDNR) and others, is ongoing. Currently, we are researching historic records of vegetation composition throughout the St. Louis River estuary and other WI coastal wetlands to determine if current wetland quality, as judged by our surveys, has experienced substantial recent declines. PIs on the vegetation project have been working to analyze temporal patterns in floristic quality metrics (e.g. mean Coefficient of Conservatism, FQI). We are asking how

much these metrics change from year to year in typical situations and in other cases where water level changes or human influences have been substantial through time, as we are now seeing. Moreover, several hundred CWM point vegetation surveys from the St. Louis River estuary have been combined with data from a variety of other studies to develop a database with >5000 vegetation surveys. These data are being used to characterize plant condition throughout the estuary, identify reference sites, and measure the success of restoration activities.

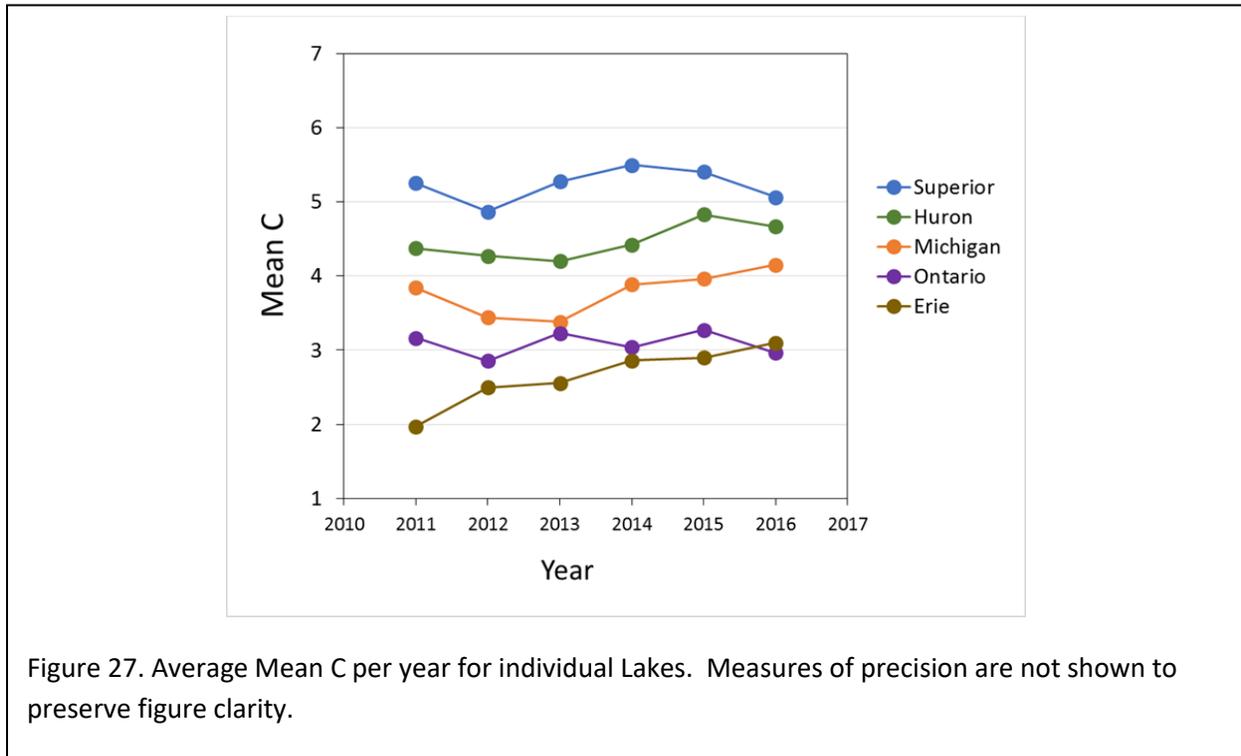


Figure 27. Average Mean C per year for individual Lakes. Measures of precision are not shown to preserve figure clarity.

Other Leveraged Benefits

Coordination and Potential Partnership with National Audubon: The CWM bird PIs continue to work with the National Audubon science team. The science team has continued to work with CWM bird data for the Great Lakes. As a result of their preliminary analyses, Nathaniel Miller of National Audubon Great Lakes and Kristin Hall of Audubon Minnesota have identified the St. Louis River Estuary as a critical area in which they would like to begin a more focused collaboration. A meeting and field site review was held in late May, 2018 in Duluth. This meeting involved the Executive Director of Audubon Great Lakes and the Vice-President of the Upper Mississippi Flyway as well as representatives of the Minnesota Land Trust. National Audubon and the Minnesota Land Trust interests focus on the identification of key areas for conservation in the St. Louis River system as well as developing a way for volunteer, citizen scientists to participate in monitoring, research, and conservation.

Modeling of Bird Species of Conservation Concern in the Great Lakes Coastal Region: Lisa Elliott is continuing modeling efforts as part of her dissertation in the Conservation Sciences Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Niemi is co-advising Elliott along with Dr. Douglas Johnson, a wildlife statistician. Her goal is to model the distribution and abundance of several bird species that are of conservation concern in the Great Lakes and nationally. She presented preliminary results of this project at the American Ornithological Society annual meeting in August 2017. She presented results at the International Association for Great Lakes Research (IAGLR) in June 2018 and at the International Ornithological Congress in August 2018.

Here is a summary of her findings thus far:

Secretive marsh birds are notoriously difficult to census because they are both uncommon and cryptic. Thus it is a challenge to identify regionally specific habitat associations, distributions, and population trends for them. To better understand the habitat associations of rare and declining wetland birds in the Great Lakes basin, we are developing six single-species, single season occupancy models using seven years (2011-2017) of bird survey data from the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program and remotely sensed landscape data. These hierarchical models account for separate processes of occurrence and, given occurrence, detection. Preliminary results indicate that the probability of detection for Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) and American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) are influenced by time of day, whereas detection of Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), Sora (*Porzana carolina*), and Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*) is unaffected by the time of surveys. Human development is a primary landscape variable negatively influencing the probability of occurrence of American Bittern whereas human population size negatively influences the probability of occurrence of Least Bittern. Resulting models quantify species-specific habitat associations and will provide basin-wide predictive models on the distribution of rare, obligate coastal wetland birds to prioritize areas for conservation or potential restoration.

Comprehensive estuary aquatic vegetation database: Vegetation data from surveys in the St. Louis River Estuary have been incorporated with other datasets from the region to more fully characterize floristic condition throughout the estuary and AOC. This work is assisting the evaluation of restoration efforts.

Central Basin Regional Team: Don Uzarski (water quality and macroinvertebrates), Thomas Gehring and Robert Howe (birds and amphibians), Carl Ruetz and Ashley Moerke (fish), Gary Lamberti (water quality and macroinvertebrates)

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Fish/Invertebrate/Water Quality Crew

The Central Basin training event led by CMU was held at a wetland in Saginaw Bay, Lake Huron (Figure 28). Crews from LSSU, UND and GVSU attended. Training covered protocol for fish, invertebrate and water quality sampling. Proper zone identification, as well as restrictions upon fish or invertebrate sampling were covered in depth.



Figure 28. Members from the LSSU, UND and GVSU crews attended the Fish/Invertebrate/Water Quality training event led by CMU at site 517 on June 12/13th, 2018.

Field sampling began June 12th, 2018, and was completed on August 3rd, 2018. Central Michigan University was assigned 18 sites. Site 1598 was not originally part of the sampling design for 2018, but was made a benchmark and sampled this year because of concerns around the recent coolant leak in the Straits of Mackinaw. Of the 18 sites assigned to be sampled, four were rejected during site visits due to lack of wetland presence or lack of sample-able vegetation. In total, 25 zones were sampled for water quality, 21 zones were sampled for invertebrates and 17 zones were sampled for fish community at the 14 sites sampled. Water quality, macroinvertebrate, fish data and samples (along with other associated measurements) were collected for all vegetation zones identified and that were within the sampleable water depths. Some sites were not fished due to rocky substrate that wouldn't

allow for setting of a fyke net, but were sampled for macroinvertebrates and water quality (Figure 29). Water was sampled in several zones that were too deep for fish and macroinvertebrate sampling.

Water samples from UND and LSSU have been received and are being processed alongside CMU water samples. Chlorophyll samples have been shipped to UND for analysis. Fish unknowns were confirmed in the laboratory. Macroinvertebrate identification is well under way with approximately 60% of ID's completed. Identification to appropriate levels and quality checks will be completed in early 2019.



Figure 29. Sites that were too shallow for fyke nets or had rocky substrates were sampled for macroinvertebrates and water quality.

Vegetation Crew

PI Dennis Albert trained the three returning crew leaders as well as three new field assistants in both plant identification and sampling protocol on June 25th through 27th at the U of M

Biological Station and coastal wetlands around northern Michigan. All crew leaders passed the identification and fieldwork exams.

Of the 48 sites originally assigned to the Central Basin vegetation sampling crew six were rejected based on aerial photography or prior site knowledge mostly due to crew safety issues or lack of access or permission to access the sites. The remaining 42 sites were sampled in July, August and the first week of September.

Dennis Albert is currently identifying the remaining pressed specimens from the field season. Crew leaders will be entering the data on to the CWMP database in the fall and winter of 2018 and datasheets will be QCed by Dennis Albert.

An interesting observation, in 2015, the invasive plant European frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) was not present at site 521 in Linwood, MI. In 2018, there were large mats of thick monodominant European frogbit in one transect (Figure 30). There was remnant dead cattail (*Typha* spp.) among the frogbit, but it is unclear if the cattail was controlled or was replaced.



Figure 30. European frogbit forming a thick mat in Linwood, MI (site 521).

Bird/Anuran Crew

Anuran and bird training was completed by 6 March 2018 at CMU. Online testing was used for identification of anurans and birds by sight and sound and all data collectors reached proficiency before sampling. Field crews consisted of undergraduate student technicians and graduate student field crew leaders. We sampled anurans and birds in coastal wetlands on lakes bordering the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and sites in western Lake Erie, Ohio during summer 2018. Three teams, each with two members, were used throughout the sampling season.

We surveyed 43 wetland sites, of which 6 were benchmark sites. Of the original number of wetlands, we were assigned to sample ($n = 50$), we web-rejected 2 sites using aerial photography, and 5 sites were not sampled because they could not be accessed. We sampled anurans during 04 May to 08 July 2018 and birds during 22 May to 09 July 2018. Wetlands were sampled three separate times for anurans and two separate times for birds. All 2018 anuran and bird survey data were uploaded and QC'd by double-entry of the data into the database.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Fish/Invertebrate/Water Quality Crew

In March 2018, the University of Notre Dame (UND) was assigned 8 wetland sites to assess for 2018. The UND crew retained one field leader while another experienced team member advised, coordinated logistics, and secured permitting. New team members included one new graduate student and two new undergraduate summer technicians. The undergraduates continue to work in the laboratory as undergraduate researchers during the academic year, providing personnel continuity for the foreseeable future. Field personnel attended the CWMP training session hosted by CMU on June 12-13, 2018. After training, we confirmed adequate supplies, tested and calibrated equipment, and began work by sampling our most southerly sites. Gary Lamberti (UND PI) was able to aid in sampling one site and verified our fidelity to CWMP sampling protocols.

Starting in mid-June through mid-July, the UND crew visited the 8 sites located at Lake Erie's North Maumee Bay, Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay, and the east shore of Lake Michigan. Generally, sampling required multiple days on-site. Overall, we sampled 13 vegetation zones for macroinvertebrates and water quality while 5 zones had suitable habitat for fish community sampling. Fish sampling was primarily limited by water depth (often >1 m).

Half of our sites were riverine in nature. We sampled these sites as far downstream as feasible following program protocol. All had clear hydrologic connections to one of the lakes. We sampled for water quality, fish, and invertebrates in zones that met protocol criteria and processed water samples as soon as possible. UND's crew experienced the higher water levels

seen by many collaborators, which altered vegetation distributions and limited fishable zones in some large sites.

Some ecosystem stressors we found this year included high amounts of macroplastics, dock debris (co-occurring with wader-puncturing screws), and invasive plants. We saw all three of these up close at site 1896, where we sampled a tall stand of *Phragmites* that also had European frog's-bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) and considerable anthropomorphic debris hidden in the interstices. The only site we saw obvious physical disturbances at was site 521 (Figure 31), where a homeowner sculpted their beach for several hours while we worked.



On the plus side, we observed many healthy raptor and heron populations across the 3 basins, diverse invertebrate and macrophyte communities, and even a black racer snake (*Coluber constrictor*) that gave us a quick glance. In summarizing our fyke-net catches this year, two Lake Huron sites accounted for 94% of the fish and turtles we caught in just two zones, with nearly 4000 individuals, while the other three sites fished only caught 192 individuals in total.

Conversations with local community members gave insight about vegetation zone changes with increased water levels, observations on the challenges of recreational navigation (hidden

sandbars or low-lying islands) and, in the case of site 1313 (part of the Palomita Nature Reserve), the Little Pigeon Creek wetland's importance in mitigating the area's neighbors from flooding. Likely as with other crews, recreational fishers (men, women, and children) were interested in our fyke-net hauls and loved hearing about what our crew captured and where.

Along with the normal site measurements, one of our undergraduate technicians took unfiltered, 1-L water samples in each vegetation zone we sampled to look for microplastics (<5 mm in size); this work was done using a microscope. We are following methodologies used in both oceanic and riverine systems to quantify microplastic abundance and type. Considering the multiple pathways available (wind, storm-water, base-flow, recreation) for this detritus to enter Great Lakes coastal wetlands, it was deemed a research question worthy of investigation.

Iced and chilled water samples have been shipped to CMU for nutrient analysis, and chlorophyll-a samples have been received from most Central Basin partners for UND to analyze within the next month. The estimated 5,250 macroinvertebrates picked during field sampling have been sorted to major groups and further identification to appropriate levels will be completed in early 2019. Fish unknowns were confirmed in the laboratory and sediment loss on ignition was completed for wadeable zones. All field, water quality, and fish data have been entered into the CWMP database and QC'd by a second person.

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Fish/Invertebrate/Water Quality Crew

Two new crew members and one returning crew member received hands-on training on the field sampling protocols on 12-13 June 2018 at the training led by CMU in Bay City, MI. Further training on field sampling protocols was led by the crew leader on 2-3 July 2018 in Pottawattomie Bayou (Ottawa County, MI). On 31 July 2018, Dr. Carl Ruetz performed a mid-year check of the field sampling protocols in Cheboygan Area Wetland (Cheboygan County, MI).

We were able to sample all 8 wetland sites that were assigned to us. All sampling was conducted during July-August 2018. We sampled 17 plant zones at eight wetland sites for macroinvertebrates and water quality; however, we only were able to sample fish at a subset of those plant zones (10 plants zones at five sites) due to difficulty of site access or inappropriate water levels. Our main challenges were extended travel to many of our sites, high water levels making it difficult to wade in certain wetlands, and long boat rides in open water Lake Michigan. GVSU AWRI acquired a new larger jon boat in fall 2018, and this boat should greatly improve our ability to safely sample wetland sites that require long boat rides in open water Lake Michigan.

All field work for 2018 has been completed. Data entry has been completed for all field site data, water quality data, and fish data. We are in the process of completing data entry and QC checks for macroinvertebrate and lab water quality samples. Macroinvertebrate identification

in the lab will begin in October, and we plan to have all macroinvertebrate data entered and checked by early spring 2019. Measurements of SRP, TP, NH₃, NO₃, Cl and chl-a have been sent out for processing, and the observations will be entered and checked once completed.

In addition to field work, the Ruetz lab continued to work on a manuscript summarizing the results of an investigation to evaluate morphological/meristic and genetic (DNA barcoding and microsatellites) techniques for the identification of brown and black bullheads. Ruetz and a GVSU graduate student have worked extensively with Josh Dumke of NRRI to finalize the manuscript. The manuscript was rejected by Copeia, but we have begun revising it and are targeting submission to American Midland Naturalist by the end of 2018.

LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

Fish/Invertebrate/Water Quality Crew

Crew members were trained and certified in sampling protocols in June by Ashley Moerke (LSSU PI), and then the crew along with the PI attended the training session offered by CMU in Saginaw Bay in June. From late June to August, the LSSU crew visited 11 sites, 8 in US waters and 3 in Canadian water, to determine if they met the sampling criteria and if there were access issues. All sites were sampled for at least water quality, macroinvertebrates, and other associated measurements for all vegetation zones identified and that were within the sampleable water depths. Water samples were shipped to Central Michigan University for dissolved nutrient analyses and filters will be sent to the University of Notre Dame for chlorophyll a analyses. Unknown fish identifications were verified in the laboratory and corrected on the datasheets. All 2018 data, except for lab data and macroinvertebrate identification data, have been entered into the on-line database, and were checked by a second reader. Macroinvertebrate data identification will begin in November and will likely be completed by March 2018.

Water levels were extremely high again this year across all sites, making it difficult to find vegetation zones that could be sampled with our protocols. Many zones were 1 m deep or deeper and therefore a number of zones were only sampled for macroinvertebrates and not fish.

Eastern U.S. Regional Team: Douglas Wilcox and Katie Amatangelo (Vegetation), Chris Norment (Birds and Anurans), James Haynes (Fish), Courtney McDaniel (Macroinvertebrates), and Michael Chislock (Water Quality)

Site selection

The College at Brockport worked with Environment Canada and Bird Studies Canada to redistribute site assignments to match crew capacities relative to the spatial distribution of

sites. Nine Environment Canada sites from the north shore of Lake Ontario were reassigned to Brockport for fish, aquatic macroinvertebrates, water quality, vegetation, and bird and amphibian sampling. Four wetlands, all located in the Rochester Embayment Area of Concern, received benchmark tags for Brockport to collect data for ongoing restoration projects. In all, The College at Brockport was assigned 24 sites to perform fish, aquatic macroinvertebrate, water quality, and vegetation sampling, and 37 to perform bird and amphibian sampling.

Training

Three of Brockport's 2018 crew members were returning members from the 2017 field season, with these returning members' areas of expertise spread out across the various sampling groups. The new crew members received new crew-member training by crew chief John Bateman, PIs Dr. Douglas A. Wilcox and Dr. Christopher Norment from The College at Brockport, and QA manager Dr. Valerie Brady from University of Minnesota Duluth with assistance from Dr. Joe Gathman, University of Wisconsin River Falls. The new crew members all passed training requirements. Additionally, all crew-members passed mid-season QA checks performed by Dr. Douglas Wilcox and Dr. Christopher Norment.

Sampling

The College at Brockport bird and amphibian sampling crew successfully sampled 32 of the 37 sites assigned to them between 1 May and 8 July 2018. Three sites were not sampled due to lack of access on private property. One site was not sampled due to lack of connection to the lake. A fourth site was not sampled due to lack of safe access to an island in Lake Ontario.

The summer fish, aquatic macroinvertebrate, water quality, and vegetation crews were assigned 24 sites. In total, the fish crew sampled 16 of 24 sites, the invertebrate and water quality crew sampled 18 of 24 sites, and the plant crew sampled 20 of 24 sites. Two sites were not sampled due to lack of access on private property, and a third site was not sampled due to lack of safe access to an island in Lake Ontario.



Figure 32. Drone photo of fish crew checking fyke nets at Braddock Bay, site 7052.

Three sites were only sampled for vegetation due to lack of boat access. Two sites were only sampled by the invertebrate/water quality and vegetation crews due to lack of access to appropriate zones for the fish crew. The vegetation crew did not sample one site due to unsafe access in the canoe.

Laboratory work

Laboratory analyses of water samples at The College at Brockport are finished, while aquatic macroinvertebrate identification has just begun and is approximately 15% complete and will be complete by the end of December.

Data entry and QC

Bird and amphibian data are 100% entered and all bird and amphibian data have received quality control checks. Vegetation data entry is 100% complete. 50% of data entry for fish, field-level water quality, and field-level aquatic macroinvertebrates has been completed. All quality control checks for field-level data should be finished by early winter. Data entry for aquatic macroinvertebrate laboratory identifications has not started because identification has just begun.

Collaborations with partner agencies and organizations

The College at Brockport continued to work closely with restoration partners to collect more pre- and post-restoration data at a few wetlands near Rochester, NY. Long Pond, Salmon Creek, and Buck Pond received a benchmark tag to collect post-restoration monitoring data for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service restoration projects.

Buck Pond was also surveyed as a benchmark site in 2018 to collect more data for the Ducks Unlimited restoration project that was performed in 2014. All data collected will be considered post-restoration data, with a focus on sharing bird, amphibian, vegetation, and fish data, as those are the data that interest Ducks Unlimited.

Braddock Bay was designated a benchmark site in 2018, as data will be used to supplement post-restoration monitoring at the site following a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restoration project completed there in summer 2018.

Finally, The College at Brockport continued to communicate invasive species presence to local authorities during the 2018 Coastal Wetland Monitoring Project season. The main invasive species reported during the summer continued to be water chestnut (*Trapa natans*). The College at Brockport notified the Finger Lakes office of the New York State Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FL-PRISM) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation about infestations the crew found in Braddock Bay and Long Pond. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation, the agency that manages these wetlands, worked with FL-PRISM and Genesee Valley Audubon Society during the summer to document and eradicate the infestations reported by the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Monitoring Project crew.

Flora and fauna highlights and other notes

This was another good year for focal bird species with Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), a threatened species in New York State, detected at one site; American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), a species of special concern in New York State, detected at five sites; Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), a threatened species in New York State, detected at three sites; and Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) detected at seven sites. Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*) was detected at five sites and continues to become more prevalent in coastal wetlands in this region. Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*), an endangered species in New York State, and Sora (*Porzana carolina*) were not detected at any site this year. Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), a threatened species in New York State, was observed at one site. Invasive Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) were detected at seven sites, and large flocks were noted at Buck Pond.

The vegetation crew found some interesting plants including sweetflag (*Acorus americanus*). Mermaid weed (*Proserpinaca palustris*) is not common in the coastal wetlands in this region, but was found in one of the coastal fens the crew sampled this year. Despite a well-documented decline in sedge meadow area in Lake Ontario coastal wetlands, the crew sampled

a nice sedge-grass meadow at Mud Bay (199), where they noted some uncommon sedges, such as blister sedge (*Carex vesicaria*), amongst the more abundant lake sedge (*Carex lacustris*).

Chorus frogs were only detected at one site this year, Mill Point (5635) on Wolfe Island in Ontario. Young-of-year northern pike (*Esox lucius*) were detected at Braddock Bay (7052), where they were a target species for restoration efforts. Crews found an invasive tubenose goby (*Proterorhinus semilunaris*) at Waupoos Creek (6025) in Canada, reported it to wildlife agencies there, and learned that there is a well-documented population in that part of Lake Ontario.



Figure 33. Young-of-year northern pike at Braddock Bay, site 7052.

Lake Ontario water levels were much lower than last year's well-publicized high lake levels. Crews had no lake-level related access issues this year. Crews noted that the shorelines of some sites were under construction to repair damage to shoreline and roads caused by 2017 high lake levels.

Canadian and US Western Lake Erie Regional Team: Jan Ciborowski, Joseph Gathman (fish, macroinvertebrates and water quality), Stephanie Johnson, Carla Huebert (vegetation), Doug Tozer (birds and amphibians), and Jennifer Jung and Greg Grabas (north shore of Lake Ontario – water quality, fish, macroinvertebrates, vegetation)

Field Training

Birds and Amphibians

Training for birds and amphibians was delivered by PI Doug Tozer on April 29, 2018 at Bird Studies Canada National Headquarters in Port Rowan, Ontario. Field personnel were instructed in the project's objectives and methodology, and site selection procedures and station placement guidelines within selected wetlands. The amphibian and bird survey field protocols were covered in detail. Field personnel were also instructed in methods of reporting, safety, data entry, and assessed for their ability to use GPS instruments with adequate precision and accuracy as per the quality assurance project plan. Comprehension of the topics was evaluated with a written and practical test. All people collecting data also successfully completed the online amphibian and bird identification tests. A mid-field-season check was made by Doug Tozer. No problems were identified.

Fishes, Macroinvertebrates, and Water Quality

Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) field crew members who worked with fishes, macro-invertebrates, and water quality sampling were trained by Jennifer Jung and Ian Smith in the Toronto Region during June and July field visits. A number of crew members returned from previous years and all members participated in training on project protocols. The sampling protocol, technical equipment use, occupational health and safety, and field-based decision-making were covered in detail over multiple days. Crew members were assessed in the field and lab for proper sample collection, data recording, GPS use, field lab water processing, equipment calibration, and lab sample preparation and storage. An experienced staff member was paired with new personnel to reinforce project protocols and ensure high data quality. A mid field-season check was conducted in July. No problems were identified.

The CWS crew leaders in 2018 were Jennifer Jung and Ian Smith. Returning crew members assisted with training, logistics and field sampling. New crew members were worked with returning crew. In June, Jennifer Jung gave refresher training to the water quality and invertebrate sampling crew. Ian Smith trained the fish sampling crew. Jennifer Jung, Ian Smith, and Joe Fiorino attended the training session June 11-13 given in Brockport by Valerie Brady and Joseph Gathman.

Continuing University of Windsor field crew members who worked with fishes, macro-invertebrates, and water quality sampling had worked on the project in 2017, and so only a review and refresher of protocols was needed for those individuals. They were also engaged in training new field crew members. The training and review included instruction in GPS use,

assessment of whether sites met project criteria (open water connection to lake, presence of a wetland, safe access for crew), identification of vegetation zones to be sampled, water quality sample collection, preprocessing and shipping to water quality labs, calibrating and reading field instruments and meters, setting, removing, cleaning and transporting fyke nets, and protocols for collecting and preserving macroinvertebrates. Crews received additional training and testing in field data and lab entry. All field personnel were given refreshers in basic fish identification training.

University of Windsor crew leaders in 2017 were Stephanie Johnson (with two prior years of experience on the project), and co-PI Joseph Gathman. Previous crew members assisted with training and logistics, as well as field sampling. New crew members worked with returning crew members. All field team members were given field and lab safety training, and were required to re-read the Standard Operating Procedures for the project. New members were trained in all project procedures, and were certified by crew leader Joseph Gathman in late June. Mid-season checks were performed in early August. All field sampling was directly supervised by Joseph Gathman or Stephanie Johnson.

In June, Joseph Gathman traveled to Brockport, NY, to assist project coordinator Valerie Brady in a training/refresher session with the crews from CWS and The College at Brockport. This allowed crews to ensure that all, including University of Windsor, were implementing sampling protocols in the same way.

Vegetation

Vegetation surveys were conducted by expert botanist Carla Huebert (returning each year since 2013). She was provided with update e-mails from the project coordinators regarding the spread of existing invasive species, and the possibility of new invasive species appearing in Great Lakes wetlands. For the CWS crew, Jennifer Jung led the vegetation sampling and identification. Various summer students and Canadian Wildlife Service personnel assisted in data collection and acted as data recorders. In August, Carla Huebert and the CWS vegetation crew collaborated at a northern Lake Huron wetland to share advice and identification tips for northern plant species.

Water Quality Samples

Water quality sampling followed the protocols dictated by the QAPP as developed by the GLWMP water quality team (PI Dr. Rich Axler). Metered measurements were made and water samples were collected at the time that fyke nets were placed in the water. Water samples were stored refrigerated on ice in darkness until the evening, at which time they were processed and prepared for shipment to the analytical laboratory. With the exception of Chlorophyll *a* samples (which were shipped and analyzed by colleagues at University of Notre Dame University), all laboratory analysis was conducted by Environment Canada's National Laboratory for Environmental Testing (NLET) in Burlington, ON. The lab received samples by overnight express courier to ensure that they complied with QAPP specified holding times. All

analyses have been completed. Field-based measurements have been entered into the water quality database. Analytical laboratory data have been entered into the database, and are receiving final QA review.

Site selection and field sampling, and results

Bird and amphibian field crews evaluated 62 sites that had been selected and ordered for potential sampling in 2018 (29 on Lake Ontario, 22 on Lake Huron, and 11 on Lake Erie). Of these, 15 were not surveyed because landowner or boat access was unobtainable. Forty-seven sites were visited (each on 5 occasions) and sampled for amphibians and birds.

Fishes, Macroinvertebrates, Water Quality, and Wetland Vegetation

The CWS crew visited and evaluated 10 locations along the north shore of Lake Ontario. Two sites were not sampled for fishes.

The University of Windsor crew was initially assigned 34 sites on lakes Erie and Huron or the connecting channels. Of these, five were not visited by crews, one could not be accessed safely because of hazardous marine conditions, two were inaccessible because the crew was unable to obtain permission from individual landowners, and two were on native/First Nations land, and the crew was unable to obtain permission to access them. Thus, 27 sites were visited by fish/invertebrate crews, and two of these were not sampled; one was rejected because it was not connected to Lake Erie, and another was found to be lacking wetland habitat altogether. Therefore, the combined efforts of CWS and Windsor crews resulted in a total of 37 sites sampled; 10 on Lake Ontario, 13 on Lake Erie (6 of which were in Ohio and 7 in Ontario), and 14 on the Ontario shore of Lake Huron.

Vegetation was surveyed at 38 sites, one more than were sampled for fish/invertebrates, because the University of Windsor's vegetation sampler was able to access one site that the fish/invertebrate crew did not obtain permission to access. Also, two sites were not fished, but were sampled for invertebrates, water quality, and vegetation. One of these was only accessible via a hiking trail, so it was not feasible to carry fishing gear in to the site. The other site was not fished because water at all of the plant zones was too deep for fishing. Thus, for both crews combined, 38 sites were sampled for vegetation, 37 of these were also sampled for invertebrates and water quality, and 33 of them were sampled for fishes.

Benchmark sites

Three benchmark sites were identified for sampling in 2018: Crane Creek, in the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, OH; Mentor Marsh in Ohio, in cooperation with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History; and one wetland on Wiikwemikoong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island, in collaboration with the CWS and the Wiikwemikoong First Nation.

The Crane Creek site continues to be a study area of interest to the USGS, who wished to see how the findings of their GLRI-funded work compared with the results of surveys using the standardized Coastal Wetland Monitoring methodology (K. Kowalski, USGS, Ann Arbor, MI, *pers. Comm.*). This site had been sampled annually beginning in 2012. We expect to continue our collaboration with the USGS team to compare our among-year estimates of variation with their repeated-sampling-within-year design. This will provide important information on the degree to which a single, synoptic visit represents the community as assessed by repeated sampling over the course of a field season. Mentor Marsh has been a site of active wetland restoration and giant reed grass (*Phragmites*) control efforts for several years. We have sampled there twice in the past, and intend to sample there periodically in the future to track the ongoing changes at the marsh. The Wiikwemikoong site is a target site for the CWS wetland-resiliency study, and we are likely to visit there again in the future to track changes that may occur over time.

Data Entry and Quality Assurance

Most bird and amphibian data have been entered and quality assured; some data entry remains and will be completed later this autumn. All fish, vegetation, and field-collected water quality data have been compiled, entered into the database, and quality assured. Most macroinvertebrate samples collected by the Windsor team have been examined, identified to the family level, entered into the database, and the identifications quality checked according to QAPP protocols. Identification of invertebrate samples from the Lake Ontario sites sampled by CWS will begin shortly. We have received, entered and Quality Assured laboratory analyses of water quality data from all but 2 sites.

Significant Observations:

Birds and Amphibians:

Of note were 74 point occurrences of 10 Ontario bird species at risk, based on information currently in the database; totals for some of the species will increase after remaining bird and amphibian data entry is completed later this autumn.

<u>Species</u>	<u>ON-ESA/SARA Status*</u>	<u>No. Occurrences</u>	
		<u>2017</u>	<u>2018**</u>
Bald Eagle	special concern	2	5
Bank Swallow	threatened	26	19
Barn Swallow	threatened	59	34
Black Tern	special concern	1	0
Chimney Swift	threatened	7	4
Common Nighthawk	threatened	3	0
Eastern Meadowlark	threatened	1	0
Least Bittern	threatened	22	11
Peregrine Falcon	special concern	0	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	threatened	1	16
Total		122	74

Status is the assessment of greatest concern based on Ontario's Endangered Species Act (ON-ESA) or Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA).

** Totals for 2018 are preliminary due to incomplete data entry; occurrences for some species will increase once data entry is complete.

Also of note were 11 occurrences of Chorus Frog, which is listed as threatened in Canada (vs. 14 occurrences in 2017). As with the bird occurrences reported above, this total may increase once amphibian data entry is complete.

Fishes and Invertebrates:

No non-native Round Gobies were found by the CWS team Lake Ontario wetlands. Round Gobies were collected at 4 locations in Lake Huron (Green Island and Penetang Marsh in Severn Sound, Whiskey Harbour on Manitoulin Island and Bullhead Bay in the North Channel). Significantly, Tubenose Gobies were caught at two new locations in Lake Huron, indicating that this species is still expanding its range in the lake.

Relatively few other species of note were observed during the 2018 field season. Two Warmouth were caught at Rondeau Bay Wetland 3 and three Spotted Gar were captured at Rondeau Provincial Park Wetland 1. Additionally, a Spotted Sucker was caught at Canard River Marshes. The invasive Chinese Mystery Snail was observed at Honey Harbour (Severn Sound) and Fox Creek (Lake Erie).

Water levels in lakes Erie and Huron remained high in 2018. Vegetation zones are continuing their multi-year trend of shifting their distributions up-slope in response to the higher levels, though less conspicuously than in previous years. As noted last year, some sites are exhibiting a reduction in the extent of monospecific stands, and a greater prevalence of species interspersions, including many open areas where little or no emergent vegetation is present. This appears to be a consequence of high water thinning out the wet-meadow vegetation, while dense stands of cattail and other emergent vegetation persist further down-slope, in

deeper water, and seem to be slow to expand up-slope into the previous meadow areas. The high water once again has resulted in a) all sites having enough water to be fished, and b) most sites being limited to one or two fishable zones because most vegetation zones were too deep to fish.

Unlike 2017, Lake Ontario water levels were not an issue for the CWS crew in 2018. Nets were successfully set at all sites that had suitable vegetation zones. Fish abundances were generally higher than 2017, as net resets were required in 2018.

Sampling for fishes in Canada requires permits for Scientific Collection of Aquatic Species (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources), compliance with the Province of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources), and Species At Risk (Fisheries & Oceans Canada). All permits had been approved both by CWS and by the University of Windsor at the start of the sampling season. Reports to the permit granting agencies have been completed in draft form and will be sent to both regional administrators. Records of fishes caught will also be sent to local conservation groups in Ontario where appropriate.

In 2018, we began a pilot study to assess day-night variability in wetland dissolved oxygen, temperature and water levels to determine the influence that these variables may be having on samples of aquatic invertebrates and catches of fishes in fyke nets. We deployed one or more Onset Hobo dissolved oxygen (DO) loggers and light temperature recorders at the location of each fyke net in each wetland. In addition, we used Onset Hobo water level loggers at a single site within each wetland. Data were recorded every 15 minutes over a period of 18-24 h, depending on the duration of the fyke net sets. We anticipate that these loggers will provide us with information on daily DO maxima and minima, which will help define the environmental suitability of areas for mobile fishes and the likelihood of capturing them. Similarly, water level data will help us record seiche effects, which may influence both the abundance and composition of fish species in wetlands (e.g. Trebitz 2006). Data were collected by our team at over 20 wetlands. Colleagues from other CWM teams have also been contributing data from late season sampling efforts. We anticipate that all CWM teams will implement these measurements in 2019.

Also as a complement to assessing possible biological condition implications of within-wetland variation in dissolved oxygen, we sampled zooplankton at each of 16 wetlands. We collected twelve 1-L aliquots of water, poured them through a plankton net (63 µm mesh) and preserved the composite sample in ethanol for later investigation in the laboratory. In each wetland, we collected such composite samples at 3 water depths – one in a dense emergent vegetation zone where DO concentrations were <1.0 mg/L, one in deeper water at the approximate emergent-submergent vegetation zone boundary, and one in even deeper water where vegetation was sparse or absent.

Reptiles

In Ontario, six turtle species occurring in the Great Lakes are listed at risk under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA): Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*) [Endangered]; Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) Great Lakes/St. Lawrence population, and Spiny Softshell Turtle (*Apalone spinifera*) [Threatened]; and Eastern Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*), Northern Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*) and Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) [Special Concern]. Under SARA, the Canadian Wildlife Service is responsible for developing a recovery strategy for endangered or threatened turtle species and a management plan for special concern turtle species. Critical habitat is a component of recovery strategies and under SARA critical habitat is defined as “the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and that is identified as the species’ critical habitat in the recovery strategy or in an action plan for the species”. The critical habitat may be based on the suitable habitat where turtles have been observed, including wetlands and watercourses (e.g., marshes, rivers, some lakes). Incidental observations from the Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring project of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), as well as other sources of turtle observations were used to identify many suitable habitat locations in Ontario as critical habitat. The data provided from GLRI were invaluable for critical habitat identification and continue to provide key information contributing to knowledge on abundance and distribution of all at risk turtle species.

Eastern Snapping Turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*) were recorded at 5 of 10 Lake Ontario wetlands sampled. One was collected from a Lake Erie site (Toussaint River Wetland) and one from the Bruce Peninsula (Tobies Bay Wetland). This will help identify additional coastal wetlands of conservation significance for this species of special concern. Eastern Musk Turtles (*Sternotherus odoratus*) were quite common at two Lake Huron sites. One Northern Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*) was caught at Canard River Marshes. Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) were the most widespread species, with specimens caught at 9 locations. A Massasauga Rattlesnake was observed at a site on the Bruce Peninsula of Lake Huron.

Vegetation

Both the 2016 and the prior (2015) season represented years in which lake levels have risen significantly after a prolonged period of low water. This has produced some interesting new data patterns in that to some extent the water levels have changed more rapidly than has the distribution of the aquatic plants normally characteristic of particular depth zones. Furthermore, the sampling designs of macrophytes, invertebrates and fishes are all tied to the locations of zones and classes of emergent vegetation. In 2016, delineating between vegetation zones was sometimes a challenge, as the species that normally are found in monoculture were often found mixed with other species. Also, because many of the meadows were flooded, plants that one usually finds growing in the emergent and submergent zones were present deep in the meadow zone, and sedges and other meadow species could be found growing far out into what should be the emergent zone. Consequently, we anticipated that the data summaries for 2016 would show greater species richness and diversity within submergent, emergent and wet meadow zones that was observed in the initial years of the CWM program.

With sustained high lake levels again in 2018, we observed further thinning of some types of emergent vegetation. The gaps between meadow species and more flood-tolerant emergent species (cattails, bulrushes) were beginning to fill in with those other types of vegetation. However, high water continued to preclude fish sampling in many stands of bulrush, and even cattail in many locations. However, at other sites, we noted that cattail stands that had previously been too dense for us to penetrate now had large gaps, which allowed us to get far enough into the zone to find water that was shallow enough to set fish nets.

Certainly, in lower water level years it was much easier to distinguish the boundaries between vegetation zones. This year, we undertook additional sampling along transects of increasing depth to determine whether the invertebrate and fish assemblages more closely reflect former associations with plant zones or with the current water depths at which the plant zones were previously found. This project is forming the basis of an M.Sc. thesis.

With new knowledge of the presence of Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*) in the Lower Great Lakes, surveyors made extra effort to look for and positively identify this non-native macroalga during wetland surveys. In total, 3 of 11 Lake Ontario wetlands sampled contained *Nitellopsis*, which was identified during vegetation sampling. All wetlands with positive records were located in eastern Lake Ontario, which has been shown to have both a greater areal extent of wetland habitat and higher IBI scores than western portions of Lake Ontario.

Canadian Wildlife Service has previously identified *Nitellopsis* in Canadian portions of Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River. In 2018, it was observed to be abundant and widespread by University of Windsor vegetation crews who monitored a number of wetlands on behalf of CWS. It continues to be a dominant submergent plant at several wetlands in Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River, occupying the entire water column at some. It has not been found yet in any of our sampled Lake Erie wetlands, nor in our sampled Lake Huron sites. We observed several small fishes swimming in the midst of the dense Starry Stonewort stands during our surveys, so some species seem to be able to use such areas, likely for cover/shelter/camouflage from larger predatory fish and/or birds.

The associations between *Nitellopsis* and other biota (invertebrates, fishes) area is starting to be qualitatively investigated, but it may be several years before its impact on habitat use is understood. However, *Nitellopsis* can occupy the entire water column in areas that are 2 m deep or more. Consequently, it has potential to influence organisms both directly and indirectly by influencing water flow.

We have also continued to monitor expansion of the distribution of invasive *Phragmites* in wetlands of southeastern Lake Huron. During the period of successive low water years, many wetlands in this area, up to the Bruce Peninsula, were left stranded, or perched, above a rocky shoreline that was exposed by the low water. The bedrock shelves prevented wetland expansion into the lower-elevation rocky substrates. However, *Phragmites* colonized these

areas though outgrowth of horizontal rhizomes. This had led to the establishment of *Phragmites* beds at a lower elevation than these wet meadows, and lower even than some of the more hydrophilic marsh plants (e.g., bulrush), now that the water has risen. It would be informative to establish a standard protocol for monitoring these *Phragmites* patches relative to water levels to see how these new monoculture areas develop. This could represent a significant new mode of expansion of this aggressively invasive species. We are considering designating some of these locations as special benchmark sites for a sub-project on *Phragmites* patch development.

Invasive *Phragmites australis* has also begun to gain ground on Manitoulin Island, where it had previously remained absent in the majority of the sampled wetlands there. A dense stand, approximately 18 m x 16 m was found while sampling at the Lake Wolsley wetland in 2018. It will be informative to revisit to this site in a few years to monitor the stand's rate of expansion and to see if it begins to appear in other wetlands on the western side of the island.

In general, there is less *Phragmites* present in Lake Ontario than Lake Erie. The regulation of Lake Ontario water levels likely contributes to this observation as regulation result in relatively stable water levels, which expose shorelines less frequently than a naturally fluctuating system. *Phragmites* was found by the CWS crew at two Lake Ontario wetlands, both in the Greater Toronto Area (Humber River Marshes – 5441 and Four Mile Pond -5313 This is consistent with other surveys that have found greater amounts of *Phragmites* in more developed areas.

With the recent arrival of another aquatic invasive plant (water chestnut, *Trapa natans*) to wetlands located at the inflow of the St. Lawrence River, eastern Lake Ontario wetlands could become increasingly affected by aquatic invasive species in the near future. Ongoing efforts such as the CWM project are critical to identifying sites for management and restoration, in addition to providing important information to better understand the potential impacts and provide surveillance of these species.

Another invasive plant that has been observed within most of the Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair wetlands is *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* (European Frogbit). This small floating plant appears to be most plentiful and potentially problematic within high nutrient sites. Wetlands located in agriculturally dominated watersheds tend to experience the highest populations and in some locations the biomass was of sufficient density to prevent access by fish and other aquatic wildlife. In many of the wetlands in which this species is present it is not mono-dominant. European Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) was observed to have expanded into another Lake Erie wetland since last year. In 2017, Frogbit was found for the first time in the Old Woman Creek Estuary in Huron, Ohio. Although volunteers and staff have been undertaken several removal efforts the plant was still found in small pockets all over the wetland when the site was sampled in June 2018. It was found primarily in the hard to reach areas of the wetland, such as the interior of the cattail stands, shallow areas near the forested edge but behind the dense emergent vegetation, and in amongst the standing dead stems of previous years'

Phragmites and cattail. Because such areas are difficult to reach by foot or by vessel (boat or canoe), they likely had not been searched when the removal efforts were taking place. Our vegetation scientist removed any plants that were observed while sampling (over 200 individual plants during the two day sampling period).

Mentor Marsh wetland (Mentor Ohio; located east of Old Woman Estuary wetland) has been sampled for vegetation as a benchmark site for three years including 2018. So far, Frogbit has not been found there. It will be informative to see if and when Frogbit is observed in Mentor Marsh.

Project Leverage Examples

The Canadian Wildlife Service – Ontario Region continues to study the range of natural variability in coastal wetland Indices of Biotic Integrity values. This information will allow agencies to assess the precision of the index and ultimately determine the minimum change in an index score that represents a measurable change in biotic metrics or chemical parameters. This type of information is of special value to resource management agencies and partners who require guidance in interpreting trends in the scores of biotic indices through time, especially the differences observed before and after undertaking restoration projects. The CWM project has allowed CWS staff to collect information at additional sites to supplement its current study.

Bird Studies Canada in collaboration with all other bird and frog PIs combined CWM bird and frog data with data from two other broad-scale marsh bird and frog monitoring programs—the Great Lakes Environmental Indicator project (GLEI) and the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program (GLMMP)—to produce a comprehensive marsh bird and frog dataset for coastal and inland Great Lakes wetlands. The dataset is simply massive (!), with ~37,000 bird point counts and ~53,000 frog point counts. The project team led by Bird Studies Canada used the dataset to write and successfully submit drafts of the *Coastal Wetland Birds* and *Coastal Wetland Amphibians* chapters for the upcoming 2019 *State of the Great Lakes Report*. The chapters include first-ever info-graphics showing the state of the bird and frog communities in each lake, as well as first-ever Great Lakes-wide maps showing smoothed estimates of the overall health of the bird and frog communities in each lake.

In 2018 we continued efforts to develop and foster good stakeholder relationships and to continue existing collaborations with local groups around the Great Lakes. We engaged in discussion and/or site visits with the following individuals or groups during the 2018 field season:

Greg Mayne (Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Co-chair, Lake Huron Binational Partnership): We collaborated with Greg to obtain permission to sample Whiskey Harbour, on Wiikwemikoong First Nations land on Manitoulin Island. Both the tribe and Environment and Climate Change Canada have targeted this wetland as part of their coastal-wetland resiliency study.

We were advised of a new wetland restoration initiative to decommission a local marina and restore a wetland at the mouth of Sturgeon Creek in western Lake Erie by the Region Conservation Authority and the Caldwell First Nation. The restoration activity was undertaken in spring 2018. We designated this site as a benchmark, and were able to sample vegetation upstream of the area. Because of communication and logistic difficulties we were unable to arrange collaborative sampling for fishes, invertebrates and water quality. Efforts will continue next year.

In July, Point Pelee National Park hosted a Bioblitz event in celebration of their 100th year as a National Park. Although parts of the Park hosted residents and farms up until the 1980s it has been subject to a restoration and conservation plan since then. Members of our CWM team sampled aquatic invertebrates from several wetlands. Permits couldn't be acquired in time to conduct fish surveys in 2018. However, we have been invited to collaborate and conduct surveys in the park in 2019 in concert with development of a new plan to control aquatic invasive species.

Kurt Kowalski (USGS; work at Crane Creek marsh, Ottawa National Wildlife Reserve) - comparing methods and presumably results of USGS vs. CWM initiatives. We have continued to sample Crane Creek Marsh as a Benchmark site to continue our ongoing collaboration with the USGS lab. We will apply both CWM metrics and GLEI-derived indicators of fish and plant condition to our annual data and will compare these with scores calculated from the biweekly sampling program that USGS conducted in 2013. This will allow us to compare among-year with within-year variability both on sampling effectiveness and on the precision of multimetric and multivariate indicator scores calculated from the data.

Mentor Marsh, on the shore of Lake Erie, near Mentor, OH, administered by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, is a wetland of particular regional interest, and aggressive attempts to control *Phragmites* and restore the natural condition of the marsh have been underway for several years. We are collaborating to provide monitoring data periodically.

ASSESSMENT AND OVERSIGHT

The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for this program was originally written, signed by all co-PIs, and approved by USEPA in the spring of 2011, prior to beginning any fieldwork. Throughout the first round of the project (2011-2015) 5 revisions were made to the QAPP. These revisions were necessary to improve methodology, better clarify protocols, and ensure the safety of all personnel. After each revision, all co-PIs and US EPA reviewed and signed the updated document prior to commencing fieldwork. The final QAPP revision for round 1 of the project was signed in March 2015. This 2015 revision (QAPP_r5) served as the basis for the second round of monitoring (2016-2020).

For the second 5-year sampling rotation, no substantial methodological or quality assurance/quality control changes were necessary. The QAPP_r5 document was reviewed by project PIs prior to our February 19, 2016 project meeting. The only changes that were required to QAPP_r5 related to the data management system. Specifically, an update was added noting how the data management system developed by LimnoTech and housed at Central Michigan University will be backed up. Project PIs signed the updated QAPP (QAPP_CWMII_v1) at the February 19, 2016 meeting. This QAPP was reviewed and approved by all project co-PIs at our February 10, 2017 meeting and at our February 22, 2018 meeting. In thoroughly reviewing the QAPP and SOPs in early 2018, crews found inconsistencies between the QAPP and SOPs and another handful of minor corrections and clarifications. PIs signed off on these changes at the 2018 PI meeting in Michigan in February. These fixes are being incorporated and an updated QAPP and SOPs will be submitted to EPA before the fourth field season

Major QA/QC elements that are on-going for this work:

- Training of all new laboratory staff responsible for macroinvertebrate sample processing: This training was conducted by experienced technicians at each regional lab and was overseen by the respective co-PI or resident macroinvertebrate expert. Those labs without such an expert sent their new staff to the closest collaborating lab for training. Those labs without such an expert sent their new staff to the closest collaborating lab for training (e.g., LSSU sent a lead technician to NRRI for training). Macroinvertebrate IDers communicate with each other via their own email list and assist each other with difficult identifications and other questions that arise.
- Training of all fish, macroinvertebrate, vegetation, bird, amphibian, and water quality field crew members following the QAPP and SOPs. This included passing tests for procedural competence, as well as identification tests for fish, vegetation, birds, and amphibians. Training certification documents were archived with the lead PI and QA managers.
- GPS testing: Every GPS unit used during the 2015 field season was tested for accuracy and its ability to upload data to a computer. Field staff collected a series of points at locations that could be recognized on a Google Earth image (e.g., sidewalk intersections) then uploaded the points to Google Earth and viewed the points for accuracy. Precision was calculated by using the measurement tool in Google Earth. Results of these tests have been archived and referenced to each GPS receiver by serial number.
- Review of sites rejected after initial site visits: In cases where a site was rejected during a site visit, the reason for rejection was documented by the field crew in the site selection database. The project QA managers (Brady and Cooper) then reviewed these

records to ensure consistency among crews. Occasionally, field crew leaders contacted Uzarski, Brady, or Cooper by cell phone when deciding whether to reject a site. However, given that most crew leaders have been with the project for over 5 years, they are able to make these decisions more independently than in previous years.

- Collection and archiving of all training/certification documents and mid-season QA/QC forms from regional labs: These documents have all been PDF'd and will be retained as a permanent record for the project.
- Maintenance, calibration, and documentation for all field meters: All field meters were calibrated and maintained according to manufacturer recommendations. Calibration/maintenance records are being archived at each institution.
- Collection of duplicate field samples: Precision and accuracy of many field-collected variables is being evaluated with duplicate samples. Duplicate water quality samples were collected at approximately every 10th vegetation zone sampled. A summary of these results is included below.
- QC checks for all data entered into the data management system (DMS): Every data point that is entered into the DMS is being checked to verify consistency between the primary record (e.g., field data sheet) and the database. This has been completed for 2011-2016 data and is partially complete for 2017 data. QC should be complete for 2017 data in the spring.
- Linking of GPS points with field database: Inevitably, some errors occur when crew members type in GPS waypoint names and numbers. Even a space or capitalization in the wrong place can break the link between the GPS database file and the field data database. All non-linking points between these two databases were assessed and corrected in 2014, which took a hundred or more person-hours. Database managers are implementing a way to increase the matching between uploaded GPS points and the field database to reduce these mis-matches and the time it takes to fix them.
- Mid-season QC checks: These were completed by PIs for each of the field crews to ensure that there were no sampling issues that developed after training and while crews were sampling on their own.
- Creation/maintenance of specimen reference collections: Reference collections for macroinvertebrates, fish, and plants have either been created or are being maintained and updated by each regional team. Macroinvertebrate reference collections, in particular, were developed or expanded as these samples were processed. Labs that have uncommon invasive specimens (e.g., faucet snail, New Zealand mud snail, etc.),

have shared specimens with other labs to assist them with identification. Vegetation reference collections are often being kept in collaboration with local herbaria.

- Data Quality Objectives (DQO) for laboratory analyses: Participating water quality laboratories have generated estimates of precision, bias, accuracy, representativeness, completeness, comparability, and sensitivity for all water quality analyses. These metrics will be linked to the primary data that is being generated (see example report below).

Example Water Quality QC Information

Laboratory Quality Assurances:

Water quality analyses from 2017 have been completed by the NRRI Central Analytical Laboratory, Central Michigan University’s Wetland Ecology Laboratory, Grand Valley State University’s Annis Water Resources Institute, Brockport’s water quality lab, and Environment Canada’s National Laboratory for Environmental Testing. Laboratory results from 2017 have passed the criteria shown below (Table 16).

Table 16. Data acceptance criteria for water quality analyses.

QA Component	Acceptance Criteria
External Standards (QCCS)	± 10%
Standard curve	$r^2 \geq 0.99$
Blanks	± 10%
Blank spikes	± 20%
Mid-point check standards	± 10%
Lab Duplicates	± 15% RPD* for samples above the LOQ**
Matrix spikes	± 20%

**Relative Percent Difference (RPD):* While our standard laboratory convention is to analyze 10% of the samples in duplicate and use %RSD ($100 * CV$) of the duplicates as a guide for accepting or rejecting the data, another measure of the variation of duplicates is RPD: $RPD = (|x_1 - x_2|) / \text{mean} * 100$.

*** LOQ = Limit of Quantification:* The LOQ is defined as the value for an analyte great enough to produce <15% RSD for its replication. $LOQ = 10(S.D.)$ where $10(S.D.)$ is 10 times the standard deviation of the gross blank signal and the standard deviation is measured for a set of two replicates (in most cases).

Variability in Field Replicates:

An analysis of field duplicate variability for the two most recent project years is shown in Table 17. It is important to note that for many constituents, the variability within sample sets is related to the mean concentration, and as concentrations approach the method detection limit (MDL), the variability increases dramatically. A calculation of field replicate variability with values at or near the level of detection will often result in high RPDs. For example, if the chlorophyll measurements on a set of field duplicates are 0.8 µg/L and 0.3 µg/L, mean = 0.6, resulting in a RPD of 91% ($RPD = [abs(rep\ a - rep\ b) / (rep\ a + rep\ b) / 2] * 100$), but since the MDL is $\pm 0.5\ \mu\text{g/L}$, this can be misleading.

The same can occur with analyte lab duplicates, and in these instances the QA officer will determine whether data are acceptable. It is also important to note that RPD on field duplicates incorporates environmental (e.g., spatial) variability, since duplicate samples are collected from adjacent locations, as well as analytical variability (e.g., instrument drift). Therefore, RPD of field duplicates is generally higher than RPD of laboratory duplicates. Table 19 below lists average RPD values for the two most recent years of the project (2016-2017). Higher than expected average RPD values were associated with a preponderance of near detection limit values for ammonium, nitrate, and soluble reactive phosphorus (SRP), and high spatial variability for chlorophyll and turbidity. Other variables, such Total N, had values that were well above detection limit and low spatial variability; therefore, these values had much lower average RPD. Acceptance of data associated with higher-than-expected RPD was determined by the QA officers. The maximum expected RPD values are based on the MN Pollution Control Agency quality assurance project plan provided for the Event Based Sampling Program (<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/surface-water/surface-water-financial-assistance/event-based-sampling-grants.html#for-grantees>).

Table 17. Field duplicate sample variability for round two of CWM sampling (2016-2017) in relative percent difference for water quality parameters with the acceptance criteria. Results < MDL were reported as ½ the MDL. The maximum expected RPD values are based on the MN Pollution Control Agency quality monitoring requirements for integrated assessments (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-s1-15n.pdf>). Average %RPD (n) min-max.

Analyte	MDL	Maximum expected RPD	2016	2017
*Chlorophyll-a	--	30	31 (11) 0-105	47 (14) 0-130
Total phosphorus mg/L	0.002 NRRRI, C-NLET; 0.005 CMU	30	27 (10) 0-163	26 (14) 0-91
**Ortho-phosphorus mg/L	0.002 NRRRI, C-NLET,CMU	10	26 (11) 0-80	35 (14) 0-100
Total nitrogen mg/L	0.010 mg/L	30	13 (11) 2-33	5 (14) 0.2-14
**NH4-N mg/L	0.01 mg/L	10	45 (11) 0-131	43 (14) 0-137
**NO2/NO3-N mg/L	0.004 mg/L	10	51 (11) 0-200	18 (14) 0-150
True color	--	10	6 (6) 0.4-18	5 (10) 0-20
chloride	1 mg/L	20	14 (8) 0-101	10 (12) 0.4-39

*Many of the chlorophyll field replicates were < 2 µg/L or 4 times the MDL. **The variability between ortho-phosphorus, ammonium-N and nitrate/nitrite-N field replicates also often exceeded the criteria however many values for each were < 10 X the MDL (i.e. < 0.02 mg/L).

Notes:
Field duplicates are a second sample taken immediately after an initial sample in the exact same location to assess the site, sampling and possible temporal variability. Duplicate samples are collected in the exactly the same manner as the first sample, including the normal sampling equipment cleaning procedures. The relative percent difference (RPD) between the duplicate samples is calculated with the following equation:

$$RPD = (|Result 1 - Result 2|) / ((Result 1 + Result 2)/2) \times 100$$

Communication among Personnel

Regional team leaders and co-PIs continue to maintain close communication as the project is in its eighth year (third field season of round 2 sampling). The lead PI, all co-PIs, and many technicians attended an organizational meeting in Midland, Michigan on February 22-23, 2018. During this meeting, the group discussed issues pertaining to manuscript topics and report products. Dr. Kevin O'Donnell (EPA) discussed ongoing and potential future coastal wetland restoration projects and how our group could contribute by monitoring the success of these efforts. Personnel from USGS presented an update on a collaborating project to better understand the functions that wetlands provide to nearshore areas. For example, how wetlands

support Great Lakes fish communities by providing spawning and nursery habitats. This spin-off project began fall 2016 with US crews from NRRI, Northland, CMU, and Brockport.

Regional team leaders and co-PIs have held conference calls and e-mail discussions regarding site selection, field work preparation, and taxonomic changes throughout the duration of the project. Most PIs spend the first week of field season in the field with their crew to ensure that all protocols are being followed according to the standards set forth in the QAPP and SOPs and to certify or re-certify crew members. Most crews had returning and experienced personal. PIs keep in close contact with crews via cell phone, text, and email, and the leadership team is also always available via cell phone and text to answer the most difficult crew questions.

Overall

The quality management system developed for this project has been fully implemented and co-PIs and their respective staff members continue to follow established protocols very closely, relying on the QAPP and SOPs as guiding documents. QA managers were also encouraged by each crew's continued willingness to contact their supervisors or, in many cases, the project management team when questions arise.

Despite the somewhat dangerous nature of this work, injury rates continue to be very low. The entire CWM team is relieved that crews continue to maintain an exemplary safety record. This is due to the leadership and safety consciousness of PIs, field crew chiefs, and field team leaders. PIs are trying not to be complacent about the lack of injuries and the willingness of their crews to work long hours day after day, to successfully sample under often adverse conditions, and to conduct that sampling in accordance with strict QA procedures. Despite challenges such as high water levels, each field season has been very successful.

LEVERAGED BENEFITS OF PROJECT (2010 – 2018)

This project has generated a number of spin-off projects and serves as a platform for many graduate and undergraduate thesis topics. In addition, project PIs are collaborating with many other groups to assist them in getting data for areas that are or will be restored or that are under consideration for protection. Finally, the project supports or partially supports many jobs (jobs created/retained). All of these are detailed below.

Spin-off Projects (cumulative since 2010)

Genetic Barcodes for Wetland Macroinvertebrates: Surveillance of aquatic macroinvertebrates in the Great Lakes is of utmost importance. However, many organisms, particularly aquatic macroinvertebrates, lack information that can assist in their identification, whether through molecular barcodes or morphological characteristics. We are using previously collected aquatic

macroinvertebrate samples from throughout the Great Lakes basins to generate genetic barcodes that will assist in identification of species (MOTUs) and expand the currently available molecular genetic databases. Our work is targeting specific groups to improve morphological identification to lowest taxonomic levels. Finally, we are going to be able to utilize these data to test the usefulness of metabarcoding for Great Lakes surveillance to provide groups with valuable monitoring information.

Assessing Climate Vulnerability in Apostle Islands Coastal Wetlands: Funded by the National Park Service and GLRI, a team from Northland College sampled fish, macroinvertebrates, vegetation, and hydrologic variables in lagoon wetlands throughout the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore to identify species and communities that may be particularly vulnerable to climate change. This work represents an intensification of sampling effort within a sensitive and relatively pristine area of the Great Lakes. Data from this project will be analyzed in relation to CWMP data to put Apostle Islands wetlands into a broader Great Lakes context.

Functional Indicators of Coastal Wetland Condition: Funded by the USGS through a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU), this pilot project began in fall 2016 to better determine functional indicators of Great Lakes coastal wetland usage by Great Lakes fish species. Sampling is done during the spring and fall at about 15 US wetlands already being assessed for CWM indicators during the summer. Data collected focus on fish usage of wetlands and the forage base for those fish, evaluated using macroinvertebrate sampling and examination of fish gut contents. Special emphasis is placed on determining usage of wetlands by young or spawning fish.

Conservation Assessment for Amphibians and Birds of the Great Lakes: Several members of the CWM project team have initiated an effort to examine the role that Great Lakes wetlands play in the conservation of amphibians and birds in North America. The Great Lakes have many large, intact freshwater wetlands in the interior portion of the North American continent. Their unique character, size, and plant composition supports populations of many species of amphibians and birds, many of which have been identified as endangered, threatened, or of special concern in North America. CWM PIs will use the extensive data that have been gathered by USEPA, such as the Great Lakes Environmental Indicators project and the Great Lakes Wetlands Consortium, as well as Bird Studies Canada, as critical input to this assessment. The initial stages in the development of the conservation assessment will be to analyze habitat and landscape characteristics associated with Great Lakes coastal wetlands that are important to wetland-obligate bird species occupying these habitats. By combining breeding bird data from the sources above and incorporating landscape variables, classification trees can be developed to predict presence and relative abundance of these species across the Great Lakes Basin. These methods, outlined in Hannah Panci's thesis; 'Habitat and landscape characteristics that influence Sedge Wren (*Cisthorus platensis*) and Marsh Wren (*C. palustris*) distribution and abundance in Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands' (University of Minnesota Duluth). She compiled data for over 800

wetlands in her analysis, which will provide a basis for analyzing additional wetland-obligate species.

Bird and Amphibian Metrics and Indicator Calculations: Avian and amphibian responses to landscape stressors can be used to inform land managers about the health of coastal wetlands and the landscape stressors that affect these systems (Howe et. al. 2007). Data that has been entered into the data management system and QC'd to date (2011-2015) are being used to calculate some of the metrics and indicators for these wetlands.

Influence of broadcast timing and survey duration on marsh breeding bird point count results: Several members of the project team, with D. Tozer as lead, examined the importance of survey duration and timing of broadcast playbacks on occurrence and counts of wetland breeding birds. The results of this analysis suggest that 10-min point counts are superior to 15-min counts which have important implications for future monitoring and cost-effectiveness. These findings have been submitted for publication to the journal of Avian Conservation and Ecology in October 2016.

North Maumee Bay Survey of Diked Wetland vs. Un-Diked Wetland: Erie Marsh Preserve is being studied as a benchmark site for the CWM project. As a benchmark site, Erie Marsh Preserve will serve as a comparison against randomly-selected project sites, and will be surveyed each year of the CWM project. Benchmark sampling began prior to Phase 1 of a planned restoration by The Nature Conservancy, allowing for pre- and post-restoration comparisons. In addition, biota and habitat within the diked wetlands area will be compared to conditions outside of the dike, but still within the preserve. These data will also be used for post-construction comparisons to determine what biotic and abiotic changes will occur once restoration efforts have reconnected the dike to the shallow waters of Lake Erie.

Cattails-to-Methane Biofuels Research: CWM crews collected samples of invasive plants (hybrid cattail) which are being analyzed by Kettering University and their Swedish Biogas partner to determine the amount of methane that can be generated from this invasive. These samples will be compared to their data set of agricultural crops, sewage sludge, and livestock waste that are currently used to commercially generate methane. The cattails-to-methane biofuels project is also funded (separately) by GLRI.

Plant IBI Evaluation: A presentation at the 2014 Joint Aquatic Science meeting in Portland, Oregon evaluated Floristic Quality Index and Mean Conservatism score changes over time utilized data collected during the first three years of the GLRI study. Mean C scores showed little change between years from 2011 through 2013 due to stable water levels.

Correlation between Wetland Macrophytes and Wetland Soil Nutrients: CWM vegetation crews collected wetland soil samples and provided corresponding macrophyte data to substantially increase the number of sites and samples available to the USEPA Mid-Continent

Ecology Division. USEPA MED researchers studied wetland macrophyte and wetland soil nutrient correlations. The MED laboratory ran the sediment nutrient analyses and shared the data with CWM PIs.

Comparative study of bulrush growth between Great Lakes coastal wetlands and Pacific Northwest estuaries. This study includes investigation of water level effects on bulrush growth rates in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. With leveraged funding from NSF for the primary project on bulrush ability to withstand wave energy.

Braddock Bay, Lake Ontario, Sedge Meadow and Barrier Beach Restoration: Braddock Bay is being studied as a benchmark site in conjunction with the US Army Corps of Engineers to assess the current extent of, and potential restoration of, sedge meadow and the potential of restoring the eroded barrier beach to reduce wetland loss. CWM crews collected pre-restoration data to help plan and implement restoration activities and will collect post-restoration data to help plan and implement restoration activities and assess results. The results will help build a model for future sedge meadow restoration in Lake Ontario to mitigate the harmful impacts of invasive cattails and provide habitat for fish and wildlife species. Additionally, this project will be expanded, in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited, to four nearby wetlands, pending funding from NOAA.

Thunder Bay AOC, Lake Superior, Wetland Restoration: Nine wetlands around Thunder Bay were sampled for macroinvertebrates, water quality, and aquatic vegetation by CWM crews in 2013 using methods closely related to CWM methods. These data will provide pre-restoration baseline data as part of the AOC delisting process. Wetlands sampled included both wetlands in need of restoration and wetlands being used as a regional reference. All of this sampling was in addition to normal CWM sampling, and was done with funding from Environment Canada.

Common Tern Geolocator Project: In early June 2013, the NRRI CWM bird team volunteered to assist the Wisconsin DNR in deploying geolocator units on Common Terns nesting on Interstate Island. In 2013, 15 birds between the ages of 4-9 yrs old were outfitted with geolocators. Body measurements and blood samples were also taken to determine the sex of each individual. In June of 2014, geolocators were removed from seven birds that returned to nest on the island. Of the seven retrieved geolocators, four were from female birds and three from males. The data collected during the year will be used to better understand the migratory routes of Common Terns nesting on Interstate Island. This is the first time that geolocators have been placed on Common Terns nesting in the Midwest, which is important because this species is listed as threatened in Minnesota and endangered in Wisconsin. Tracking Common Terns throughout their annual cycle will help identify locations that are important during the non-breeding portion of their life cycle. Data are currently being analyzed by researchers at the Natural Resources Research Institute in Duluth MN.

Using Monitoring Results to Improve Management of Michigan's State-Owned Coastal Wetlands: One year project, 2016-2017, awarded to Central Michigan University by the

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The project will focus on the prioritization of high-quality and important state-owned coastal wetlands that have been monitored as part of the Great Lakes CWM program, and development of site-specific management plans for these wetlands which address diverse management goals and objectives with a broad focus including biodiversity, ecological services, habitat for fish and wildlife, climate change adaptation, and rare species.

Developing a Decision Support System for Prioritizing Protection and Restoration of Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands: While a number of large coastal wetland restoration projects have been initiated in the Great Lakes, there remains little regional or basin-scale prioritization of restoration efforts. Until recently we lacked the data necessary for making systematic prioritization decisions for wetland protection and restoration. However, now that basin-wide coastal wetland monitoring data is available, development of a robust prioritization tool is possible and we propose to develop a new Decision Support System (DSS) to prioritize protection and restoration investments. This project, funded by the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative, has developed a DSS for wetlands from Saginaw Bay to Western Lake Erie and is now expanding into other areas of the Great Lakes.

A Decision Support System for Restoration and Protection of Michigan's Coastal Wetlands: This 1.5 year project funded by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and Office of the Great Lakes to Central Michigan University expands upon the project funded by the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperatives by including all sites sampled as part of the CWM throughout the Great Lakes basin.

Quantifying Coastal Wetland – Nearshore Linkages in Lake Michigan for Sustaining Sport Fishes: With support from Sea Grant (Illinois-Indiana and Wisconsin programs), personnel from UND and CWM are comparing food webs from coastal wetlands and nearshore areas of Lake Michigan to determine the importance of coastal wetlands in sustaining the Lake Michigan food web. The project emphasis is on identifying sport fish-mediated linkages between wetland and nearshore habitats. Specifically, we are (1) constructing cross-habitat food webs using stable C and N isotope mixing models, (2) estimating coastal wetland habitat use by sport fishes using otolith microchemistry, and (3) building predictive models of both linkage types that account for the major drivers of fish-mediated linkages in multiple Lake Michigan wetland types, including some wetlands sampled by the coastal wetland monitoring project. Collaborators are the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay and Loyola University Chicago.

Clough Island (Duluth/Superior) Preservation and Restoration: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requested (and funded) a special report on sites sampled using CWM protocols around Clough Island within the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC). Their interests were to see if CWM data indicated any differences in habitat or species composition/abundances among Clough Island and other St. Louis River sites, and also how Clough Island compared to other nearby Lake Superior coastal wetlands. The 46 page report

was submitted to Cherie Hagan of the WDNR in May of 2014. Clough Island was recently acquired by the Nature Conservancy and they are using the data in the report for their development of conservation plans for the area.

Floodwood Pond and Buck Pond South, Lake Ontario, Wetland Pothole Restoration: Open water potholes were established in these two wetlands by The Nature Conservancy to replace openings that had filled with cattail following lake-level regulation. CWM crews collected pre- and post-restoration data as benchmark sites in both wetlands to allow TNC to assess changes.

Buck Pond West and Buttonwood Creek, Lake Ontario, Sedge Meadow Restoration: These two wetlands in the Rochester Embayment AOC are actively being restored by a consortium involving Ducks Unlimited, The College at Brockport, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Town of Greece. CWM crews collected pre-restoration data as a benchmark site to help plan and implement restoration activities. Post-restoration data collection is underway under CWM to help assess results and help build a model for future sedge meadow restoration in Lake Ontario to mitigate the harmful impacts of invasive cattails and provide habitat for fish and wildlife species.

Salmon/West Creek, Long Pond, and Buck Pond East, Lake Ontario, Emergent Marsh Restoration: These three wetlands in the Rochester Embayment AOC are being studied as benchmark sites by CWM crews to provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with pre-restoration data for projects currently in the design phase. Future CWM data collection has been requested to assist in post-restoration assessment.

Lower Green Bay and Fox River AOC: Results from the Coastal Wetland Monitoring (CWM) Project and the Great Lakes Environmental Indicators (GLEI) Project are playing a central role in a \$471,000 effort to establish de-listing targets for the Lower Green Bay and Fox River AOC. 1) Protocols for intensive sampling of bird and amphibians in the project area have followed the exact methods used in the CWM project so that results will be directly comparable with sites elsewhere in the Great Lakes. 2) Data from GLEI on diatoms, plants, invertebrates, fish, birds, and amphibians and from CWM on birds and amphibians have been used to identify sensitive species that are known to occur in the AOC and have shown to be sensitive to environmental stressors elsewhere in the Great Lakes. These species have been compiled into a database of priority conservation targets. 3) Methods of quantifying environmental condition developed and refined in the GLEI and CWM projects are being used to assess current condition of the AOC (as well as specific sites within the AOC) and to set specific targets for de-listing of two important beneficial use impairments (fish and wildlife populations and fish and wildlife habitats).

SOLEC Indicators: CWM project PIs have developed a draft set of indicator metrics for submission to the State of the Lake Indicator Conference (SOLEC) in October 2015. These metrics will fill a much-needed gap in quantifying responses of biotic communities to

environmental stress throughout the Great Lakes. Sites for all coastal wetlands sampled by the GLEI, CWM, and March Monitoring projects have been scored according to several complementary indices that provide information about local and regional condition of existing wetlands.

Roxana Marsh Restoration (Lake Michigan): The University of Notre Dame (UND) team, led by graduate student Katherine O'Reilly and undergraduate Amelia McReynolds under the direction of project co-PI Gary Lamberti, leveraged the GLCWM monitoring project to do an assessment of recently-restored Roxana Marsh along the south shore of Lake Michigan. Roxana Marsh is a 10-ha coastal wetland located along the Grand Calumet River in northwestern Indiana. An EPA-led cleanup of the west branch of the Grand Calumet River AOC including the marsh was completed in 2012 and involved removing approximately 235,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and the reestablishment of native plants. Ms. McReynolds obtained a summer 2015 fellowship from the College of Science at UND to study the biological recovery of Roxana Marsh, during which several protocols from the GLCWM project were employed.

During summer 2015 sampling of Roxana Marsh, an unexpected inhabitant of the Roxana Marsh was discovered -- the invasive oriental weatherfish (*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*). Oriental weatherfish are native to southeast Asia and believed to have been introduced to the U.S. via the aquarium trade. Although there have been previous observations of *M. anguillicaudatus* in the river dating back to 2002, it had not been previously recorded in Roxana Marsh, and little information is available on its biological impacts there or elsewhere. We are currently using stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes, along with diet analysis, to determine the role of *M. anguillicaudatus* in the wetland food web and its potential for competition with native fauna for food or habitat resources. This discovery received media attention from Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program.

Green Bay Area Wetlands: Data from the benchmark site Suamico River Area Wetland was requested by and shared with personnel from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy, who are involved in the restoration activities to re-connect a diked area with Green Bay. In 2011 NRRI sampled outside the diked area following CWM methods, and in 2013 we sampled within the diked area as a special request. The data were summarized for fish, invertebrates, water quality, birds, and vegetation and shared with David Halfmann (WDNR) and Nicole Van Helden (TNC).

Hybridizing fish: One interesting phenomenon around the Green Bay area of Lake Michigan is the regular occurrence of gar that are likely hybrids between shortnose and longnose species. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently documented a number of hybrid individuals in the Fox River watershed, but not within Green Bay proper. In 2013 the NRRI field crew encountered gar exhibiting mixed traits which suggested hybridization, and in 2014 we developed a plan project-wide to collect fin-clip tissue samples to genetically test for hybridization. Results of this DNA analysis have been written up for publication.

Support for Un-affiliated Projects

CWM PIs and data managers continue to provide data and support to other research projects around the Great Lakes even though CWM PIs are not collaborators on these projects. Dr. Laura Bourgeau-Chavez at Michigan Tech University mapped the spatial extent of Great Lakes coastal wetlands using GIS and satellite information to help in tracking wetland gains and losses over time (Implementation of the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium Mapping Protocol, funded by GLRI). We provided her with vegetation data and sampling locations each year to assist with this effort. Dr. Bourgeau-Chavez was also given funding to assess herbicide effectiveness against *Phragmites* in Green Bay and Saginaw Bay. CWM data are being used to find the best locations, provide baseline data, and provide pointers on site access (from field crew notes) in support of this project.

Reports on new locations of non-native and invasive species: Vegetation sampling crews and PIs have been pro-active over the years in reporting new locations of invasive vegetation. Fish and macroinvertebrate PIs and crews have also realized that they may be discovering new locations of invasive species, particularly invasive macroinvertebrates. To ensure that all new sightings get recorded, we are pulling all records of non-native fish and macroinvertebrates out of the database once per year and sending these records to the Nonindigenous Aquatic Species tracking website maintained by USGS (<http://nas2.er.usgs.gov/>). Wetland vegetation PIs contributed new SOLEC indicator guidelines and reports and continue to participate in the indicator review process.

Wetland Floristic Quality in the St. Louis River Estuary: With support from WI Sea Grant 2014-2017, vegetation PI N. Danz has integrated vegetation surveys from the CWM project with data from 14 other recent projects in the estuary. A new relational database was created that is being used to assess spatial and temporal patterns in floristic quality and to develop materials to inform and monitor wetland restorations in this AOC.

Targeting Invasive Plant Species in Wisconsin Coastal Wetlands: In collaboration with WI Department of Natural Resources and Lake Superior Research Institute, vegetation PIs have summarized patterns of invasive plant occurrence in Wisconsin coastal wetlands. These summaries are being used to develop a more comprehensive invasive plant monitoring strategy throughout the Wisconsin basin.

Requests for Assistance Collecting Monitoring Data

Project PIs provided monitoring data and interpretation of data for many wetlands where restoration activities were being proposed by applicants for “Sustain Our Great Lakes” funding. This program is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and includes GLRI funding. Proposal writers made data/information requests via NFWF, who communicated

the requests to us. Lead PI Don Uzarski, with assistance from co-PIs, then pulled relevant project data and provided interpretations of IBI scores and water quality data. This information was then communicated to NFWF, who communicated with the applicants. This information sharing reflects the value of having coastal wetland monitoring data to inform restoration and protection decisions. We anticipate similar information sharing in the coming years as additional restoration and protection opportunities arise.

In addition to the NFWF program, CWM PIs have received many requests to sample particular wetlands of interest to various agencies and groups. In some instances the wetlands are scheduled for restoration and it is hoped that our project can provide pre-restoration data, and perhaps also provide post-restoration data to show the beginnings of site condition improvement, depending on the timing. Such requests have come from the St. Louis River (Lake Superior), Maumee Bay (Lake Erie), and Rochester (Lake Ontario) Area of Concern delisting groups, the Great Lakes National Park Service, the Nature Conservancy (sites across lakes Michigan and Huron for both groups), as well as state natural resource departments. Several requests involve restorations specifically targeted to create habitat for biota that are being sampled by CWM. Examples include: a NOAA-led restoration of wetlands bordering the Little Rapids of the St. Marys River to restore critical spawning habitat for many native freshwater fishes and provide important nursery and rearing habitat in backwater areas; TNC-led restoration of pike spawning habitats on Lake Ontario and in Green Bay; a US Army Corps of Engineers project in Green Bay to create protective barrier islands and restore many acres of aquatic and wetland vegetation; a USACE project to improve wetland fish and vegetation habitat in Braddock Bay, Lake Ontario; a New York state project to increase nesting habitat for state-endangered black tern; and projects in Wisconsin to restore degraded coastal wetlands on the Lake Superior shore. Many of these restoration activities are being funded through GLRI, so through collaboration we increase efficiency and effectiveness of restoration efforts across the Great Lakes basin.

At some sites, restoration is still in the planning stages and restoration committees are interested in the data CWM can provide to help them create a restoration plan. This is happening in the St. Louis River AOC, in Sodus Bay, Lake Ontario, for the Rochester NY AOC, wetlands along Wisconsin's Lake Superior shoreline, and for the St. Marys River restoration in 2015 by tribal biologists at Sault Ste Marie.

Other groups have requested help sampling sites that are believed to be in very good condition (at least for their geographic location), or are among the last examples of their kind, and are on lists to be protected. These requests have come from The Nature Conservancy for Green Bay sites (they are developing a regional conservation strategy and attempting to protect the best remaining sites); the St. Louis River AOC delisting committee to provide target data for restoration work (i.e., what should a restored site "look" like); and the Wisconsin DNR Natural Heritage Inventory has requested assistance in looking for rare, endangered, and threatened species and habitats in all of the coastal wetlands along Wisconsin's Lake Superior coastline.

Southern Lake Michigan wetlands have mostly been lost, and only three remain that are truly coastal wetlands. CWM PIs are working with Illinois agencies and conservation groups to collaboratively and thoroughly sample one of these sites, and the results will be used to help manage all 3 sites.

Other managers have also requested data to help them better manage wetland areas. For example, the Michigan Clean Water Corps requested CWM data to better understand and manage Stony Lake, Michigan. Staff of a coal-fired power plant abutting a CWM site requested our fish data to help them better understand and manage the effects of their outfalls on the resident fish community. The Michigan Natural Features Inventory is requesting our data as part of a GLRI-funded invasive species mapping project. The US Fish and Wildlife Service requested all data possible from wetlands located within the Rochester, NY, Area of Concern as they assess trends in the wetlands and compare data to designated delisting criteria. The NERR on Lake Erie (Old Woman Creek) has requested our monitoring data to add to their own. The University of Wisconsin Green Bay will use our data to monitor control of *Phragmites* in one of their wetlands, and hope to show habitat restoration. Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (Lake Huron) has requested our data to facilitate protection and management of coastal resources within the Sanctuary. The Wisconsin DNR has requested data for the Fish Creek Wetland as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment related to a proposed Confined Animal Feeding Operation upstream of the wetland.

We have received a request from the USFWS for data to support development of a black tern distribution/habitat model for the Great Lakes region. The initial effort will focus on Lakes Huron, Erie and their connecting channels. Various FWS programs (e.g., Migratory Bird, Joint Venture, and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives) are interested in this model as an input to conservation planning for Great Lakes wetlands.

The College at Brockport has been notifying an invasive species rapid-response team led by The Nature Conservancy after each new sighting of water chestnut. Coupling the monitoring efforts of this project with a rapid-response team helped to eradicate small infestations of this new invasive before it became a more established infestation.

We are also now receiving requests to do methods comparison studies. For example, USGS and Five Fathom National Marine Park have both requested data and sampling to compare with their own sampling data.

Overall, CWM PIs have had many requests to sample specific wetlands. It has been challenging to accommodate all requests within our statistical sampling design and our sampling capacities.

Student Research Support

Graduate Research with Leveraged Funding:

- Updating Dr. Gerald Mackie's key to Sphaeriidae (fingernail clams) of the Great lakes as informed by DNA analyses (University of Minnesota Duluth in collaboration with GLRI-funded work at Central Michigan University, the laboratory of Dr. Andrew Mahon).
- Importance of coastal wetlands to offshore fishes of the Great Lakes: Dietary support and habitat utilization (Central Michigan University; with additional funding from several small University grants and the US Fish and Wildlife Service).
- Spatial variation in macroinvertebrate communities within two emergent plant zones in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University; with additional funding from CMU).
- Invertebrate co-occurrence patterns in coastal wetlands of the Great Lakes: Community assembly rules (Central Michigan University; additional funding from CMU)
- Functional indicators of Great Lakes coastal wetland health (University of Notre Dame; additional funding by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant).
- Evaluating environmental DNA detection alongside standard fish sampling in Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring (University of Notre Dame; additional funding by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant).
- Nutrient-limitation in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (University of Notre Dame; additional funding by the UND College of Science).
- A summary of snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) by-catch records in Lake Ontario coastal wetlands (with additional funding by University of Toronto).
- Evaluating a zoobenthic indicator of Great Lakes wetland condition (with additional funding from University of Windsor).
- Testing and comparing the diagnostic value of three fish community indicators of Great Lakes wetland condition (with additional funding from GLRI GLIC: GLEI II and University of Windsor).
- Quantifying Aquatic Invasion Patterns Through Space and Time: A Relational Analysis of the Laurentian Great Lakes (University of Minnesota Duluth; with additional funding and data from USEPA)
- Novel Diagnostics for Biotransport of Aquatic Environmental Contaminants (University of Notre Dame, with additional funding from Advanced Diagnostics & Therapeutics program)
- Conservation of Common Terns in the Great Lakes Region (University of Minnesota; with additional funding from USFWS, MNDNR, and multiple smaller internal and external grants).

Undergraduate Research with Leveraged Funding:

- Production of a short documentary film on Great Lakes coastal wetlands (University of Notre Dame; additional funding by the UND College of Arts and Letters).
- Heavy metal loads in freshwater turtle species inhabiting coastal wetlands of Lake Michigan (University of Notre Dame; additional funding by the UND College of Science, and ECI – Environmental Change Institute). [Online coverage found here](#), [TV](#) and [radio](#) here.
- Nitrogen-limitation in Lake Superior coastal wetlands (Northland College; additional funding from the Wisconsin DNR and Northland College).
- Patterns in chlorophyll-*a* concentrations in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Northland College; additional funding provided by the college).
- *Phragmites australis* effects on coastal wetland nearshore fish communities of the Great Lakes basin (University of Windsor; with additional funding from GLRI GLIC: GLEI II).
- Sonar-derived estimates of macrophyte density and biomass in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (University of Windsor; with additional funding from GLRI GLIC: GLEI II).
- Effects of disturbance frequency on the structure of coastal wetland macroinvertebrate communities (Lake Superior State University; with additional funding from LSSU's Undergraduate Research Committee).
- Resistance and resilience of macroinvertebrate communities in disturbed and undisturbed coastal wetlands (Lake Superior State University; with additional funding from LSSU's Undergraduate Research Committee).
- Structure and function of restored Roxana Marsh in southern Lake Michigan (University of Notre Dame, with additional funding from the UND College of Science)
- Nutrient limitation in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University, CMU Biological Station on Beaver Island)
- Effects of wetland size and adjacent land use on taxonomic richness (University of Minnesota Duluth, with additional funding from UMD's UROP program)
- Water depth optima and tolerances for St. Louis River estuary wetland plants (University of Wisconsin-Superior, with additional funding from WI Sea Grant)
- Mapping Wetland Areal Change in the St. Louis River Estuary Using GIS (University of Wisconsin-Superior, with additional funding from WI Sea Grant)
- An analysis of Microcystin concentrations in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University; additional funding by CMU College of Science and Engineering).

Graduate Research without Leveraged Funding:

- Impacts of drainage outlets on Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University).
- Effects of anthropogenic disturbance affecting coastal wetland vegetation (Central Michigan University).
- Great Lakes coastal wetland seed banks: what drives compositional change? (Central Michigan University).
- Spatial scale variation in patterns and mechanisms driving fish diversity in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University).
- Building a model of macroinvertebrate functional feeding group community through zone succession: Does the River Continuum Concept apply to Great Lakes coastal wetlands? (Central Michigan University).
- Chemical and physical habitat variation within Great Lakes coastal wetlands; the importance of hydrology and dominant plant zonation (Central Michigan University)
- Macroinvertebrate-based Index of Biotic Integrity for Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University)
- Habitat conditions and invertebrate communities of Great Lakes coastal habitats dominated by Wet Meadow, and *Phragmites australis*: implications of macrophyte structure changes (Central Michigan University)
- The establishment of *Bithynia tentaculata* in coastal wetlands of the Great Lakes (Central Michigan University)
- Environmental covariates as predictors of anuran distribution in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University)
- Impacts of muskrat herbivory in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University).
- Mute swan interactions with native waterfowl in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University).
- Effects of turbidity regimes on fish and macroinvertebrate community structure in coastal wetlands (Lake Superior State University and Oakland University).
- Scale dependence of dispersal limitation and environmental species sorting in Great Lakes wetland invertebrate meta-communities (University of Notre Dame).
- Spatial and temporal trends in invertebrate communities of Great Lakes coastal wetlands, with emphasis on Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron (University of Notre Dame).
- Model building and a comparison of the factors influencing sedge and marsh wren populations in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (University of Minnesota Duluth).
- The effect of urbanization on the stopover ecology of Neotropical migrant songbirds on the western shore of Lake Michigan (University of Minnesota Duluth).

- Assessing the role of nutrients and watershed features in cattail invasion (*Typha angustifolia* and *Typha x glauca*) in Lake Ontario wetlands (The College at Brockport).
- Developing captive breeding methods for bowfin (*Amia calva*) (The College at Brockport).
- Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) growth and management in Lake Ontario coastal wetlands (The College at Brockport).
- Functional diversity and temporal variation of migratory land bird assemblages in lower Green Bay (University of Wisconsin Green Bay).
- Effects of invasive *Phragmites* on stopover habitat for migratory shorebirds in lower Green Bay, Lake Michigan (University of Wisconsin Green Bay).
- Plant species associations and assemblages for the whole Great Lakes, developed through unconstrained ordination analyses (Oregon State University).
- Genetic barcoding to identify black and brown bullheads (Grand Valley State University).
- Coastal wetland – nearshore linkages in Lake Michigan for sustaining sport fishes (University of Notre Dame)
- Anthropogenic disturbance effects on bird and amphibian communities in Lake Ontario coastal wetlands (The College at Brockport)
- A fish-based index of biotic integrity for Lake Ontario coastal wetlands (The College at Brockport)
- Modeling potential nutria habitat in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University)
- Modeling of Eurasian ruffe (*Gymnocephalus cernua*) habitat preferences to predict future invasions (University of Minnesota Duluth in collaboration with USEPA MED)
- Modeling species-specific habitat associations of Great Lakes coastal wetland birds (University of Minnesota)
- The effect of urbanization on the stopover ecology of Neotropical migrant songbirds on the western shore of Lake Michigan (University of Minnesota Duluth).
- Nutrient limitation in Great Lakes coastal wetlands: gradients and their influence (Central Michigan University; with additional funding from the CMU College of Science and Engineering)
- Invasive *Phragmites australis* management (Central Michigan University; with additional funding from the CMU College of Science and Technology)

- The relationship between vegetation and ice formation in Great Lakes coastal wetlands (Central Michigan University; with additional funding from CMU College of Science and Engineering)

Undergraduate Research without Leveraged Funding:

- Sensitivity of fish community metrics to net set locations: a comparison between Coastal Wetland Monitoring and GLEI methods (University of Minnesota Duluth).
- Larval fish usage and assemblage composition between different wetland types (Central Michigan University).
- Determining wetland health for selected Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands and incorporating management recommendations (Central Michigan University).
- Invertebrate co-occurrence trends in the wetlands of the Upper Peninsula and Western Michigan and the role of habitat disturbance levels (Central Michigan University).
- Is macroinvertebrate richness and community composition determined by habitat complexity or variation in complexity? (University of Windsor, complete).
- Modeling American coot habitat relative to faucet snail invasion potential (Central Michigan University)

Jobs Created/Retained (per year, except grad students are cumulative):

- Principal Investigators (partial support): 15
- Post-doctoral researchers (partial support): 2 (0.25 – 0.5 FTE)
- Total graduate students supported on project (summer and/or part-time): 40
- Paid undergraduate internship (summer): 1
- Unpaid undergraduate internship (summer): 1
- Undergraduate students (summer and/or part-time): 53
- Technicians (summer and/or partial support): 25 (~12 FTE)
- Volunteers: 25

Total jobs at least partially supported: 123 (plus 25 volunteers trained).

Presentations about the Coastal Wetland Monitoring Project (inception through 2015)

- Albert, Dennis. 2013. Use of Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring data in restoration projects in the Great Lakes region. 5th Annual Conference on Ecosystem Restoration, Schaumburg, IL. July 30, 2013. 20 attendees, mostly managers and agency personnel.
- Albert, Dennis. 2013. Data collection and use of Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring data by Great Lakes restorationists. Midwestern State Wetland Managers Meeting, Kellogg Biological Station, Gull Lake, MI, October 31, 2013. 40 attendees; Great Lakes state wetland managers.
- Albert, Dennis, N. Danz, D. Wilcox, and J. Gathman. 2014. Evaluating Temporal Variability of Floristic Quality Indices in Laurentian Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands. Society of Wetland Scientists, Portland, OR. June.
- Albert, Dennis, et al. 2015. Restoration of wetlands through the harvest of invasive plants, including hybrid cattail and *Phragmites australis*. Presented to Midwestern and Canadian biologists. June.
- Albert, Dennis, et al. 2015. Great-Lakes wide distribution of bulrushes and invasive species. Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference in Portland, Oregon. November.
- Bozimowski, S. and D.G. Uzarski. 2016. The Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring program. 2016 Wetlands Science Summit, Richfield, OH. September, Oral Presentation.
- Bozimowski, A.A., B.A. Murry, and D.G. Uzarski. 2012 Invertebrate co-occurrence patterns in the wetlands of northern and eastern Lake Michigan: the interaction of the harsh-benign hypothesis and community assembly rules. 55th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Cornwall, Ontario.
- Bozimowski, A. A., B. A. Murry, P. S. Kourtev, and D. G. Uzarski. 2014. Aquatic macroinvertebrate co-occurrence patterns in the coastal wetlands of the Great Lakes: the interaction of the harsh-benign hypothesis and community assembly rules. Great Lakes Science in Action Symposium, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI. April.
- Bozimowski, A.A., B.A. Murry, P.S. Kourtev, and D.G. Uzarski. 2015. Aquatic macroinvertebrate co-occurrence patterns in the coastal wetlands of the Great Lakes. 58th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Burlington, VT.
- Bracey, A. M., R. W. Howe, N.G. Walton, E. E. G. Giese, and G. J. Niemi. Avian responses to landscape stressors in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. 5th International Partners in Flight Conference and Conservation Workshop. Snowbird, UT, August 25-28, 2013.

Brady, V., D. Uzarski, and M. Cooper. 2013. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring: Assessment of High-variability Ecosystems. USEPA Mid-Continent Ecology Division Seminar Series, May 2013. 50 attendees, mostly scientists (INVITED).

Brady, V., G. Host, T. Brown, L. Johnson, G. Niemi. 2013. Ecological Restoration Efforts in the St. Louis River Estuary: Application of Great Lakes Monitoring Data. 5th Annual Conference on Ecosystem Restoration, Schaumburg, IL. July 30, 2013. 20 attendees, mostly managers and agency personnel.

Brady, V. and D. Uzarski. 2013. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Fish and Invertebrate Condition. Midwestern State Wetland Managers Meeting, Kellogg Biological Station, Gull Lake, MI, October 31, 2013. 40 attendees; Great Lakes state wetland managers.

Brady, V., D. Uzarski, T. Brown, G. Niemi, M. Cooper, R. Howe, N. Danz, D. Wilcox, D. Albert, D. Tozer, G. Grabas, C. Ruetz, L. Johnson, J. Ciborowski, J. Haynes, G. Neuderfer, T. Gehring, J. Gathman, A. Moerke, G. Lamberti, C. Normant. 2013. A Biotic Monitoring Program for Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands. Society of Wetland Scientists annual meeting, Duluth, MN, June 2013. 25 attendees, mostly scientists, some agency personnel.

Brady, V., D. Uzarski, T. Brown, G. Niemi, M. Cooper, R. Howe, N. Danz, D. Wilcox, D. Albert, D. Tozer, G. Grabas, C. Ruetz, L. Johnson, J. Ciborowski, J. Haynes, G. Neuderfer, T. Gehring, J. Gathman, A. Moerke, G. Lamberti, C. Normant. 2013. Habitat Values Provided by Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands: based on the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Project. Society of Wetland Scientists annual meeting, Duluth, MN, June 2013. 20 attendees, mostly scientists.

Chorak, G.M., C.R. Ruetz III, R.A. Thum, J. Wesolek, and J. Dumke. 2015. Identification of brown and black bullheads: evaluating DNA barcoding. Poster presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Michigan Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, Bay City, Michigan. January 20-21.

Cooper, M.J. Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring: chemical and physical parameters as covariates and indicators of wetland health. Biennial State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference, Erie, PA, October 26-27, 2011. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J. Coastal wetland monitoring: methodology and quality control. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Workshop, Traverse City, MI, August 30, 2011. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J., D.G. Uzarski, and G.L. Lamberti. GLRI: coastal wetland monitoring. Michigan Wetlands Association Annual Conference, Traverse City, MI, August 30-September 2, 2011. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J. Monitoring the status and trends of Great Lakes coastal wetland health: a basin-wide effort. Annual Great Lakes Conference, Institute of Water Research, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, March 8, 2011. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J., G.A. Lamberti, and D.G. Uzarski. Monitoring ecosystem health in Great Lakes coastal wetlands: a basin-wide effort at the intersection of ecology and management. Entomological Society of America, Reno, NV, November 13-16, 2011. Oral presentation

Cooper, M.J., and G.A. Lamberti. Taking the pulse of Great Lakes coastal wetlands: scientists tackle an epic monitoring challenge. Poster session at the annual meeting of the National Science Foundation Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship Program, Washington, D.C., May 2012. Poster presentation.

Cooper, M.J., J.M. Kosiara, D.G. Uzarski, and G.A. Lamberti. Nitrogen and phosphorus conditions and nutrient limitation in coastal wetlands of Lakes Michigan and Huron. Annual meeting of the International Association for Great Lakes Research. Cornwall, Ontario. May 2012. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J., G.A. Lamberti, and D.G. Uzarski. Abiotic drivers and temporal variability of Saginaw Bay wetland invertebrate communities. International Association for Great Lakes Research, 56th annual meeting, West Lafayette, IN. June 2013. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J., D.G. Uzarski, J. Sherman, and D.A. Wilcox. Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring program: support of restoration activities across the basin. National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration, Chicago, IL. July 2013. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J. and J. Kosiara. Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring: Chemical and physical parameters as co-variates and indicators of wetland health. US EPA Region 5 Annual Wetlands Program Coordinating Meeting and Michigan Wetlands Association Annual Meeting. Kellogg Biological Station, Hickory Corners, MI. October 2013. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J. Implementing coastal wetland monitoring. Inter-agency Task Force on Data Quality for GLRI-Funded Habitat Projects. CSC Inc., Las Vegas, NV. November 2013. Web presentation, approximately 40 participants.

Cooper, M.J. Community structure and ecological significance of invertebrates in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. SUNY-Brockport, Brockport, NY. December 2013. Invited seminar.

Cooper, M.J. Great Lakes coastal wetlands: ecological monitoring and nutrient-limitation. Limno-Tech Inc., Ann Arbor, MI. December 2013. Invited seminar.

Cooper, M.J., D.G. Uzarski, and V.J. Brady. A basin-wide Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring program: Measures of ecosystem health for conservation and management. Great Lakes Wetlands Day, Toronto, Ont. Canada, February 4, 2014. Oral presentation.

Cooper, M.J., G.A. Lamberti, and D.G. Uzarski. Supporting Great Lakes coastal wetland restoration with basin-wide monitoring. Great Lakes Science in Action Symposium. Central Michigan University. April 4, 2014.

Cooper, M.J. Expanding fish-based monitoring in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Michigan Wetlands Association Annual Meeting. Grand Rapids, MI. August 27-29, 2014.

Cooper, M.J. Structure and function of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Public seminar of Ph.D. dissertation research. University of Notre Dame. August 6, 2014.

Cooper, M.J., D.G. Uzarski, and T.N. Brown. Developing a decision support system for protection and restoration of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Biodiversity without Borders Conference, NatureServe. Traverse City, MI. April 27, 2015.

Cooper, M.J. and D.G. Uzarski. Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring for protection and restoration. Lake Superior Monitoring Symposium. Michigan Technological University. March 19, 2015.

Cooper, M.J. Where worlds collide: ecosystem structure and function at the land-water interface of the Laurentian Great Lakes. Central Michigan University Department of Biology. Public Seminar. February 5, 2015.

Cooper, M.J. Where worlds collide: ecosystem structure and function at the land-water interface of the Laurentian Great Lakes. Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, Northland College. Public Seminar. May 4, 2015.

Cooper, M.J., and D.G. Uzarski. Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring for protection and restoration. Lake Huron Restoration Meeting. Alpena, MI. May 14, 2015.

Cooper, M.J., D.G. Uzarski, and V.J. Brady. Developing a decision support system for restoration and protection of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Wisconsin Wetlands Association Annual Meeting. February 24-25, 2016. Green Bay, WI.

Cooper, M.J., Stirratt, H., B. Krumwiede, and K. Kowalski. Great Lakes Resilient Lands and

Waters Initiative, Deep Dive. Remote presentation to the White House Council on Environmental Quality and partner agencies, January 28, 2016.

Cooper, M., Redder, T., Brady, V. and D. Uzarski. 2016. Developing a decision support tool to guide restoration and protection of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Stevens Point, WI. February. Presentation.

Cooper, M.J., D.G. Uzarski and V.J. Brady. 2016. Developing a decision support system for restoration and protection of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Wisconsin Wetlands Association Annual Meeting, Green Bay, WI. February 24-25. Oral Presentation.

Dahlberg, N., N.P. Danz, and S. Schooler. 2015. Integrating prior vegetation surveys from the St. Louis River estuary. Poster presentation at the 2015 Annual St. Louis River Summit, Superior, WI.

Dahlberg, N., N.P. Danz, and S. Schooler. 2017. 2012 Flood Impacts on St. Louis River Plant Communities. Poster presentation at St. Louis River Summit, Superior, WI.

Danz, N.P. 2014. Floristic quality of Wisconsin coastal wetlands. Oral presentation at the Wisconsin Wetlands Association 19th Annual Wetlands Conference, LaCrosse, WI. Audience mostly scientists.

Danz, N.P. Floristic Quality of Coastal and Inland Wetlands of the Great Lakes Region. Invited presentation at the University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, MN.

Danz, N.P., S. Schooler, and N. Dahlberg. 2015. Floristic quality of St. Louis River estuary wetlands. Oral presentation at the 2015 Annual St. Louis River Summit, Superior, WI.

Danz, N.P. 2016. Floristic quality of St. Louis River estuary wetlands. Invited presentation at the Center for Water and the Environment, Natural Resources Research Institute, Duluth, MN.

Danz, N.P. 2017. Connections Between Human Stress, Wetland Setting, and Vegetation in the St. Louis River Estuary. Oral presentation at the Wetland Science Conference, Stevens Point, WI.

Danz, N.P. 2017. 10 Things We Learned from Your Vegetation Data. Oral presentation at the St. Louis River Summit, Superior, WI.

Des Jardin, K. and D.A. Wilcox. 2014. Water chestnut: germination, competition, seed viability, and competition in Lake Ontario. New York State Wetlands Forum, Rochester, NY.

- Dumke, J.D., V.J. Brady, J. Ciborowski, J. Gathman, J. Buckley, D. Uzarski, A. Moerke, C. Ruetz III. 2013. Fish communities of the upper Great Lakes: Lake Huron's Georgian Bay is an outlier. Society for Wetland Scientists, Duluth, Minnesota. 30 attendees, scientists and managers.
- Dumke, J.D., V.J. Brady, R. Hell, A. Moerke, C. Ruetz III, D. Uzarski, J. Gathman, J. Ciborowski. 2013. A comparison of St. Louis River estuary and the upper Great Lakes fish communities (poster). Minnesota American Fisheries Society, St. Cloud, Minnesota. Attendees scientists, managers, and agency personnel.
- Dumke, J.D., V.J. Brady, R. Hell, A. Moerke, C. Ruetz III, D. Uzarski, J. Gathman, J. Ciborowski. 2013. A comparison of wetland fish communities in the St. Louis River estuary and the upper Great Lakes. St. Louis River Estuary Summit, Superior, Wisconsin. 150 attendees, including scientists, managers, agency personnel, and others.
- Dumke, J.D., V.J. Brady, J. Erickson, A. Bracey, N. Danz. 2014. Using non-degraded areas in the St. Louis River estuary to set biotic delisting/restoration targets. St. Louis River Estuary Summit, Superior, Wisconsin. 150 attendees, including scientists, managers, agency personnel, and others.
- Dumke, J., C.R. Ruetz III, G.M. Chorak, R.A. Thum, and J. Wesolek. 2015. New information regarding identification of young brown and black bullheads. Oral presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. February 24-26. 150 attendees, including scientists, managers, agency personnel, and others.
- Fraley, E.F. and D.G. Uzarski 2017. The relationship between vegetation and ice formation in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. 60th Annual Meeting of the International Association of Great Lakes Research. Detroit, MI. Poster.
- Fraley, E.F. and D.G. Uzarski. 2016. The Impacts of Ice on Plant Communities in Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands. 7th Annual Meeting of the Michigan Consortium of Botanists, Grand Rapids, MI. October. Poster.
- Gathman, J.P. 2013. How healthy are Great Lakes wetlands? Using plant and animal indicators of ecological condition across the Great Lakes basin. Presentation to Minnesota Native Plant Society. November 7, 2013.
- Gilbert, J.M., N. Vidler, P. Cloud Sr., D. Jacobs, E. Slavik, F. Letourneau, K. Alexander. 2014. *Phragmites australis* at the crossroads: Why we cannot afford to ignore this invasion. Great Lakes Wetlands Day Conference, Toronto, ON, February 4, 2014.

Gilbert, J.M. 2013. Phragmites Management in Ontario. Can we manage without herbicide? Webinar, Great Lakes *Phragmites* Collaborative, April 5, 2013.

Gilbert, J.M. 2012. *Phragmites australis*: a significant threat to Laurentian Great Lakes Wetlands, Oral Presentation, International Association of Great Lakes Wetlands, Cornwall, ON, May 2012

Gilbert, J.M. 2012. *Phragmites australis*: a significant threat to Laurentian Great Lakes Wetlands, Oral Presentation to Waterfowl and Wetlands Research, Management and Conservation in the Lower Great Lakes. Partners' Forum, St. Williams, ON, May 2012.

Gil de LaMadrid, D., and N.P. Danz. 2015. Water depth optima and tolerances for St. Louis River estuary wetland plants. Poster presentation at the 2015 Annual St. Louis River Summit, Superior, WI.

Gnass Giese, E.E. 2015. Great Lakes Wetland Frog Monitoring. Annual Lower Fox River Watershed Monitoring Program Symposium at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisconsin. April 14, 2015. Oral Presentation.

Gnass Giese, E.E. 2015. Wetland Birds and Amphibians: Great Lakes Monitoring. Northeastern Wisconsin Audubon Society meeting at the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary, Green Bay, Wisconsin. February 19, 2015. Oral Presentation.

Gnass Giese, E.E., R.W. Howe, N.G. Walton, G.J. Niemi, D.C. Tozer, W.B. Gaul, A. Bracey, J. Shrovnal, C.J. Norment, and T.M. Gehring. 2016. Assessing wetland health using breeding birds as indicators. Wisconsin Wetlands Association Conference, Radisson Hotel & Convention Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin. February 24, 2016. Poster Presentation.

Gnass Giese, E.E., R.W. Howe, A.T. Wolf, N.A. Miller, and N.G. Walton. An ecological index of forest health based on breeding birds. 2013. Webpage:
<http://www.uwgb.edu/biodiversity/forest-index/>

Gnass Giese, E.E. 2013. Monitoring forest condition using breeding birds in the western Great Lakes region, USA. Editors: N. Miller, R. Howe, C. Hall, and D. Ewert. Internal Report. Madison, WI and Lansing, MI: The Nature Conservancy. 44 pp.

Gurholt, C.G. and D.G. Uzarski. 2013. Into the future: Great Lakes coastal wetland seed banks. IGLR Graduate Symposium, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI. March.

Gurholt, C.G. and D.G. Uzarski. 2013. Seed Bank Purgatory: What Drives Compositional Change of Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands. 56th International Association for Great Lakes Research Conference, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. June.

Houghton, C.J., C.C. Moratz, P.S. Forsythe, G.A. Lamberti, D.G. Uzarski, and M.B. Berg. 2016. Relative use of wetland and nearshore habitats by sportfishes of Green Bay. 59th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Guelph, Ontario Canada. May. Oral Presentation.

Howe, R.W., R.P. Axler, V.J. Brady, T.N. Brown, J.J.H. Ciborowski, N.P. Danz, J.P. Gathman, G.E. Host, L.B. Johnson, K.E. Kovalenko, G.J. Niemi, and E.D. Reavie. 2012. Multi-species indicators of ecological condition in the coastal zone of the Laurentian Great Lakes. 97th Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America. Portland, OR.

Howe, R.W., G.J. Niemi, N.G. Walton, E.E.G. Giese, A.M. Bracey, V.J. Brady, T.N. Brown, J.J.H. Ciborowski, N.P. Danz, J.P. Gathman, G.E. Host, L.B. Johnson, K.E. Kovalenko, and E.D. Reavie. 2014. Measurable Responses of Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Biota to Environmental Stressors. International Association for Great Lakes Research Annual Conference, Hamilton, Ontario (Canada). May 26-30, 2014. Oral Presentation.

Howe, R.W., A.T. Wolf, and E.E. Gness Giese. 2016. What's so special about Green Bay wetlands? Wisconsin Wetlands Association Conference, Radisson Hotel & Convention Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin. February 23-25, 2016. Oral Presentation.

Howe, R.W., N.G. Walton, E.G. Giese, G.J. Niemi, and A.M. Bracey. 2013. Avian responses to landscape stressors in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Society of Wetland Scientists, Duluth, Minnesota. June 2-6, 2013. Poster Presentation.

Howe, R.W., N.G. Walton, E.E.G. Giese, G.J. Niemi, N.P. Danz, V.J. Brady, T.N. Brown, J.J.H. Ciborowski, J.P. Gathman, G.E. Host, L.B. Johnson, E.D. Reavie. 2013. How do different taxa respond to landscape stressors in Great Lakes coastal wetlands? Ecological Society of America, Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 4-9, 2013. Poster Presentation.

Howe, R.W., A.T. Wolf, J. Noordyk, and J. Stoll. 2017. Benefits and outcomes of Green Bay restoration: ecosystem and economic perspectives. Presented at the Summit on the Ecological and Socio-Economic Tradeoffs of Restoration in the Green Bay, Lake Michigan, Ecosystem (July 18-20, 2017).

Howe, R.W., A.T. Wolf, and E.E. Giese. 2016. Proposed AOC de-listing process. Presentation to Lower Green Bay and Fox River AOC stakeholders. 16 December 2016.

Howe, R.W., A.T. Wolf, and E.E. Giese. 2017. Lower Green Bay & Fox River Area of Concern: A Plan for Delisting Fish and Wildlife Habitat & Populations Beneficial Use Impairments. A paper presented to AOC Technical Advisory Group. 3 August 2017.

- Johnson, L., M. Cai, D. Allan, N. Danz, D. Uzarski. 2015. Use and interpretation of human disturbance gradients for condition assessment in Great Lakes coastal ecosystems. International Association for Great Lakes Research Conference, Burlington, VT.
- Kneisel, A.N., M.J. Cooper, and D.G. Uzarski. 2016. The impact of *Phragmites australis* invasion on macroinvertebrate communities in the coastal wetlands of Thunder Bay, MI. Institute for Great Lakes Research, 4th Annual Student Research Symposium, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI. February. Oral Presentation.
- Kneisel, A.N., M.J. Cooper, and D.G. Uzarski. 2016. Impact of *Phragmites* invasion on macroinvertebrate communities in wetlands of Thunder Bay, MI. 59th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Guelph, Ontario Canada. May. Oral Presentation.
- Kosiara, J.M., M.J. Cooper, D.G. Uzarski, and G.A. Lamberti. 2013. Relationships between community metabolism and fish production in Great Lakes coastal wetlands. International Association for Great Lakes Research, 56th annual meeting. June 2-6, 2013. West Lafayette, IN. Poster presentation.
- Kosiara, J.K., J.J. Student, and D.G. Uzarski. 2017. Exploring coastal habitat-use patterns of Great Lakes yellow perch with otolith microchemistry. 60th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Detroit, MI. May. Presentation.
- Kosiara, J.M., J. Student and D.G. Uzarski. 2016. Assessment of yellow perch movement between coastal wetland and nearshore waters of the Great Lakes. 59th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Guelph, Ontario Canada. May. Oral Presentation.
- Lamberti, G.A., D.G. Uzarski, V.J. Brady, M.J. Cooper, T.N. Brown, L.B. Johnson, J.J. Ciborowski, G.P. Grabas, D.A. Wilcox, R.W. Howe, and D. C. Tozer. An integrated monitoring program for Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Society for Freshwater Science Annual Meeting. Jacksonville, FL. May 2013. Poster presentation.
- Lamberti, G.A. Pacific Salmon in Natal Alaska and Introduced Great Lakes Ecosystems: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Department of Biology, Brigham Young University. Dec 5, 2013. Invited seminar.
- Lamberti, G. A. The Global Freshwater Crisis. The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and South Jersey Notre Dame Club. November 18, 2014.
- Lamberti, G. A. The Global Freshwater Crisis. Smithsonian Journey Group and several University Alumni Groups. March 1, 2015.

- Lamberti, G.A. The Global Freshwater Crisis. Newman University and Notre Dame Alumni Club of Wichita. September 28, 2016.
- Lamberti, G.A. The Global Freshwater Crisis. Air and Wastewater Management Association and Notre Dame Alumni Club of Northeastern New York. December 2, 2016.
- Lamberti, G. A. Pacific Salmon in Natal Alaska and Introduced Great Lakes Ecosystems: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Annis Water Resources Institute, Grand Valley State University. December 12, 2014.
- Lamberti, G.A., M.A. Brueseke, W.M. Conard, K.E. O'Reilly, D.G. Uzarski, V.J. Brady, M.J. Cooper, T.M. Redder, L.B. Johnson, J.H. Ciborowski, G.P. Grabas, D.A. Wilcox, R.W. Howe, D.C. Tozer, and T.K. O'Donnell. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program: Vital resources for scientists, agencies and the public. Society for Freshwater Science Annual Meeting. Raleigh, NC. June 4-9, 2017. Poster.
- Langer, T.A., K. Pangle, B.A. Murray, and D.G. Uzarski. 2014. Beta Diversity of Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Communities: Spatiotemporal Structuring of Fish and Macroinvertebrate Assemblages. American Fisheries Society, Holland, MI. February.
- Langer, T., K. Pangle, B. Murray, D. Uzarski. 2013. Spatiotemporal influences, diversity patterns and mechanisms structuring Great Lakes coastal wetland fish assemblages. Poster. Institute for Great Lakes Research 1st Symposium, MI. March.
- Lemein, T.J., D.A. Albert, D.A. Wilcox, B.M. Mudrzynski, J. Gathman, N.P. Danz, D. Rokitnicki-Wojcik, and G.P. Grabas. 2014. Correlation of physical factors to coastal wetland vegetation community distribution in the Laurentian Great Lakes. Society of Wetland Scientists/Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting, Portland, OR.
- MacDonald, J.L., L.S. Schoen, J.J. Student, and D.G. Uzarski. 2016. Variation in yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) growth rate in the Great Lakes. 59th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Guelph, Ontario Canada. May. Oral Presentation.
- McReynolds, A.T., K.E. O'Reilly, and G.A. Lamberti. 2016. Food web structure of a recently restored Indiana wetland. University of Notre Dame College of Science Joint Annual Meeting, Notre Dame, IN.
- Mudrzynski, B.M., D.A. Wilcox, and A. Heminway. 2012. Habitats invaded by European frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) in Lake Ontario coastal wetlands. INTECOL/Society of Wetland Scientists, Orlando, FL.

- Mudrzynski, B.M., D.A. Wilcox, and A.W. Heminway. 2013. European frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*): current distribution and predicted expansion in the Great Lakes using niche-modeling. Society of Wetland Scientists, Duluth, MN.
- Mudrzynski, B.M. and D.A. Wilcox. 2014. Effect of coefficient of conservatism list choice and hydrogeographic type on floristic quality assessment of Lake Ontario wetlands. Society of Wetland Scientists/Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting, Portland, OR.
- Mudrzynski, B.M., K. Des Jardin, and D.A. Wilcox. 2015. Predicting seed bank emergence within flooded zones of Lake Ontario wetlands under novel hydrologic conditions. Society of Wetlands Scientists. Providence, RI.
- O'Donnell, T.K., Winter, C., Uzarski, D.G., Brady, V.J., and Cooper, M.J. 2017. Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring: moving from assessment to action. Ecological Society of America Annual Conference. Portland, OR. August 6-11. Presentation.
- O'Donnell, T.K., D.G. Uzarski, V.J. Brady, and M.J. Cooper. 2016. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring: Moving from Assessment to Action. 10th National Monitoring Conference; Working Together for Clean Water, Tampa, Florida. May. Oral Presentation.
- O'Reilly, K.E., A. McReynolds, and G.A. Lamberti. Quantifying Lake Michigan coastal wetland-nearshore linkages for sustaining sport fishes using stable isotope mixing models. Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America. Baltimore, MD. August 9-14, 2015.
- O'Reilly, K.E., A. McReynolds, C. Stricker, and G.A. Lamberti. Quantifying Lake Michigan coastal wetland-nearshore linkages for sustaining sport fishes. State of Lake Michigan Conference. Traverse City, MI. October 28-30, 2015.
- O'Reilly, K.E., A. McReynolds, C. Stricker, and G.A. Lamberti. 2016. Quantifying Lake Michigan coastal wetland-nearshore linkages for sustaining sport fishes. Society for Freshwater Science, Sacramento, CA.
- O'Reilly, K.E., A. McReynolds, C. Stricker, and G.A. Lamberti. 2016. Quantifying Lake Michigan coastal wetland-nearshore linkages for sustaining sport fishes. International Association for Great Lakes Research, Guelph, ON.
- Otto, M., J. Marty, E.G. Gnass Giese, R. Howe, and A. Wolf. Anuran habitat use in the Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern (Wisconsin). University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Academic Excellence Symposium, Green Bay, Wisconsin. April 6, 2017. Poster Presentation.

- Otto, M., J. Marty, E.G. Gnass Giese, R. Howe, and A. Wolf. Anuran habitat use in the Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern (Wisconsin). Green Bay Conservation Partners Spring Roundtable Meeting, Green Bay, Wisconsin. April 25, 2017. Poster Presentation.
- Reisinger, L. S., Pangle, K. L., Cooper, M. J., Learman, D. R., Uzarski, D. G., Woolnough, D. A., Bugaj, M. R., Burck, E. K., Dollard, R. E., Goetz, A., Goss, M., Gu, S., Karl, K., Rose, V. A., Scheunemann, A. E., Webster, R., Weldon, C. R., and J., Yan. 2017. The influence of water currents on community and ecosystem dynamics in coastal Lake Michigan. 60th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Detroit, MI. May. Presentation.
- Reisinger, A. J., and D. G., Uzarski. 2017. Natural and anthropogenic disturbances affect water quality of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. 60th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Detroit, MI. May. Presentation.
- Schmidt, N. C., Schock, N., and D. G. Uzarski. 2013. Modeling macroinvertebrate functional feeding group assemblages in vegetation zones of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. International Association for Great Lakes Research Conference, West Lafayette, IN. June.
- Schmidt, N.C., N.T. Schock, and D.G. Uzarski. 2014. Influences of metabolism on macroinvertebrate community structure across Great Lakes coastal wetland vegetation zones. Great Lakes Science in Action Symposium, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI. April.
- Schock, N.T. and D.G. Uzarski. Stream/Drainage Ditch Impacts on Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Macroinvertebrate Community Composition. 55th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Cornwall, Ontario.
- Schock N.T., Uzarski D.G., 2013. Habitat conditions and macroinvertebrate communities of Great Lakes coastal habitats dominated by wet meadow, *Typha* spp. and *Phragmites australis*: implications of macrophyte structure changes. International Association for Great Lakes Research Conference, West Lafayette, IN. June.
- Schock, N.T., B.A. Murry, D.G. Uzarski 2014. Impacts of agricultural drainage outlets on Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Great Lakes Science in Action Symposium, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI. April.
- Schock, N.T., Schuberg, D.H., and Uzarski, D.G. 2015. Chemical and physical habitat gradients within Great Lakes coastal wetlands. 58th International Association for Great Lakes Research Conference, Burlington, VT. May.
- Schoen, L.S., J.J. Student, and D.G. Uzarski. 2014. Reconstruction of fish movements between Great Lakes coastal wetlands. American Fisheries Society, Holland, MI. February.

- Sherman, J.S., T.A. Clement, N.T. Schock, and D.G. Uzarski. 2012. A comparison of abiotic and biotic parameters of diked and adjacent open wetland complexes of the Erie Marsh Preserve. 55th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Cornwall, Ontario.
- Sherman, J.J., and D.G. Uzarski. 2013. A Comparison of Abiotic and Biotic Parameters of Diked and Adjacent Open Wetland Complexes of the Erie Marsh Preserve. 56th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, West Lafayette, IN. June.
- Sierszen, M., Schoen, L., Hoffman, J., Kosiara, J., and D. Uzarski. 2017. Support of coastal fishes by nearshore and coastal wetland habitats. 60th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Detroit, MI. May. Presentation.
- Smith, D.L., M.J. Cooper, J.M. Kosiara, and G.A. Lamberti. 2013. Heavy metal contamination in Lake Michigan wetland turtles. International Association for Great Lakes Research, 56th annual meeting. June 2-6, 2013. West Lafayette, IN. Poster presentation.
- Thoennes, J., and N.P. Danz. 2017. Mapping Wetland Areal Change in the St. Louis River Estuary Using GIS. Poster presentation at the St. Louis River Summit, Superior, WI.
- Trebitz, A., J. Hoffman, G. Peterson, G. Shepard, A. Frankiewicz, B. Gilbertson, V. Brady, R. Hell, H. Wellard Kelly, and K. Schmude. 2015. The faucet snail (*Bithynia tentaculata*) invades the St. Louis River Estuary. St. Louis River Estuary Summit, Superior, Wisconsin. Mar. 30 – Apr. 1.
- Tuttle, E., T.N. Brown, D.A. Albert, and *T.J. Lemein. 2013. Comparison of two plant indices: Floristic Quality Index (FQI) and an index based on non-native and invasive species. Annual Society of Wetland Scientists Conference, Duluth, MN. June 4, 2013.
- Unitis, M.J., B.A. Murry and D.G. Uzarski. 2012. Use of coastal wetland types by juvenile fishes. Ecology and Evolutionary Ecology of Fishes, Windsor, Ontario. June 17-21.
- Uzarski, D.G. 2011. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring for Restoration and Protection: A Basin-Wide Effort. State Of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC). Erie, Pennsylvania. October 26.
- Uzarski, D.G. 2011. Coastal Wetland Monitoring: Background and Design. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Meeting. MDEQ; ASWM. Acme, Michigan. August 29.
- Uzarski, D.G., N.T. Schock, T.A. Clement, J.J. Sherman, M.J. Cooper, and B.A. Murry. 2012. Changes in Lake Huron Coastal Wetland Health Measured Over a Ten Year Period During

Exotic Species Invasion. 55th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, Cornwall, Ontario.

Uzarski, D.G., M.J. Cooper, V.J. Brady, J. Sherman, and D.A. Wilcox. 2013. Use of a basin-wide Great Lakes coastal wetland monitoring program to inform and evaluate protection and restoration efforts. International Association for Great Lakes Research, West Lafayette, IN. (INVITED)

Uzarski, D.G. 2013. A Basin Wide Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Plan. Region 5 State and Tribal Wetlands Meeting: Focusing on Wetland Monitoring and Assessment around the Great Lakes. October 31. Kellogg Biological Station, Hickory Corners, MI.

Uzarski, D.G. 2013. Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Assessments. Lake Superior Cooperative Science and Monitoring Workshop. September 24-25. EPA Mid-Continent Ecology Division Lab, Duluth, MN.

Uzarski, D.G. 2013. A Basin-Wide Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program. 5th National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration. July 29-August 2. Schaumburg, IL.

Uzarski, D.G., Cooper, M.J., Brady, V., Sherman, J.J., and D.A. Wilcox. 2013. Use of a Basin Wide Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program to inform and Evaluate Protection and Restoration Efforts. 56th International Conference on Great Lakes Research, West Lafayette, IN.

Uzarski, D., M. Cooper and V. Brady. 2014. Implementing a Basin-wide Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program. Webinar for Sustain Our Great Lakes, Jan. 29, 2014. On-line webinar for Great Lakes researchers, managers, agency personnel, and environmental groups. Attendance approximately 400.

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Appendix

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2. <http://www.wvmt.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/Snail-harmful-to-ducks-spreading-in-Great-Lakes-63666.shtml>
3. <http://fox17online.com/2014/12/16/gvsu-researchers-find-more-of-invasive-snail-species-in-lake-michigan/>
4. http://www.ourmidland.com/news/cmu-scientists-identify-spread-of-invasive-species/article_e9dc5876-00f4-59ff-8bcd-412007e079e8.html
5. <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/4cde108b10b84af7b9d0cfcba603cf7a/MI--Invasive-Snails>
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10. <http://whitehallmontague.wzzm13.com/news/environment/327493-my-town-waterfowl-killer-spreads-great-lakes-basin>
11. <http://www.timesunion.com/news/science/article/Snail-harmful-to-ducks-spreading-in-Great-Lakes-5959538.php>
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14. <http://usnew.net/invasive-snail-in-the-great-lakes-region.html>
15. http://www.cadillacnews.com/ap_story/?story_id=298696&issue=20141216&ap_cat=2
16. <http://theoryoflife.com/connect/researchers-track-invasive-9251724/>
17. <http://snewsi.com/id/1449258811>
18. <http://www.newswalk.info/muskegon-mich-new-scientists-say-742887.html>
19. http://www.petoskeynews.com/sports/outdoors/snail-harmful-to-ducks-spreading-in-great-lakes/article_b94f1110-9572-5d18-a5c7-66e9394a9b24.html
20. <http://www.chron.com/news/science/article/Snail-harmful-to-ducks-spreading-in-Great-Lakes-5959538.php>
21. <http://usa24.mobi/news/snail-harmful-to-ducks-spreading-in-great-lakes>
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24. http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2014/12/hard_to_kill_invasive_fauctet_s.htm
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25. <http://wkar.org/post/researchers-eye-spread-invasive-faucet-snails>
26. <http://www.greenfieldreporter.com/view/story/4cde108b10b84af7b9d0cfcba603cf7a/MI--Invasive-Snails>
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40. <http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20150119/NEWS03/150118434>
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Mock-up of press release produced by collaborating universities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 9, 2014

CONTACT: June Kallestad, NRRI Public Relations Manager, 218-720-4300

USEPA-sponsored project greatly expands known locations of invasive snail

DULUTH, Minn. – Several federal agencies carefully track the spread of non-native species. This week scientists funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in partnership with USEPA’s Great Lakes National Program Office greatly added to the list of known locations of faucet snails (*Bithynia tentaculata*) in the Great Lakes. The new locations show that the snails have invaded many more areas along the Great Lakes coastline than anyone realized.

The spread of these small European snails is bad news for water fowl: They are known to carry intestinal flukes that kill ducks and coots.

“We’ve been noting the presence of faucet snails since 2011 but didn’t realize that they hadn’t been officially reported from our study sites,” explained Valerie Brady, NRRI aquatic ecologist who is collaborating with a team of researchers in collecting plant and animal data from Great Lakes coastal wetlands.

Research teams from 10 universities and Environment Canada have been sampling coastal wetlands all along the Great Lakes coast since 2011 and have found snails at up to a dozen sites per year [See map 1]. This compares to the current known locations shown on the [USGS website](#) [see map 2].

“Our project design will, over 5 years, take us to every major coastal wetland in the Great Lakes. These locations are shallow, mucky and full of plants, so we’re slogging around, getting dirty, in places other people don’t go. That could be why we found the snails in so many new locations,” explained Bob Hell, NRRI’s lead macroinvertebrate taxonomist. “Luckily, they’re not hard to identify.”

The small snail, 12 – 15 mm in height at full size, is brown to black in color with a distinctive whorl of concentric circles on the shell opening cover that looks like tree rings. The tiny size of young snails means they are easily transported and spread, and they are difficult to kill.

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the faucet snail carries three intestinal trematodes that cause mortality in ducks and coots. When waterfowl consume the infected snails, the adult trematodes attack the internal organs, causing lesions and hemorrhage. Infected birds appear lethargic and have difficulty diving and flying before eventually dying.

Although the primary purpose of the project is to assess how Great Lakes coastal wetlands are faring, detecting invasives and their spread is one of the secondary benefits. The scientific team expects to

report soon on the spread of non-native fish, and has helped to locate and combat invasive aquatic plants.

“Humans are a global species that moves plants and animals around, even when we don’t mean to. We’re basically homogenizing the world, to the detriment of native species,” Brady added, underscoring the importance of knowing how to keep from spreading invasive species. Hell noted, “We have to make sure we all clean everything thoroughly before we move to another location.”

For more information on how to clean gear and boats to prevent invasive species spread, go to www.protectyourwaters.net.