



For Immediate Release
May 1, 2015

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COMMISSIONS LAUNCH NEW ONLINE MAPPING TOOL FOCUSING ON DAMS AND THE INVASIVE SEA LAMPREY

Application allows internet users to visualize the impact of dams and dam removal on sea lamprey populations in Great Lakes tributaries

ANN ARBOR, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the Great Lakes Commission today launched a new online mapping application that offers the ability to trace upstream and downstream effects of dams and dam removal on sea lamprey populations in the Great Lakes. Sea lampreys, which are invasive in the Great Lakes and destroy fish with a voracious appetite, require certain stream types for spawning. Unfortunately, the Great Lakes basin is abundant with sea lamprey streams. Dams and barriers, which inhibit fish passage, do serve a sea lamprey control function and, thus, protect millions of Great Lakes fish from sea lamprey predation. This online tool helps researchers, policy-makers, and the public visualize Great Lakes barriers and dams and better understand the benefits and drawbacks of dam removal.

The tool is available online at <http://data.glfc.org/>

“Sea lampreys destroyed the Great Lakes fishery after they invaded through shipping canals in the early part of the twentieth century,” said Robert Lambe, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s executive secretary. “The lampreys found nearly unlimited food in the lakes, benefitted from abundant spawning habitat, and flourished because nothing preyed upon them—a perfect recipe for invasion and destruction.”

Lambe added: “Sea lampreys are controlled effectively through a combination of lampricides, traps, and barriers. Regarding barriers, tens of thousands exist in the Great Lakes basin, and many protect upstream reaches from sea lamprey invasion and spawning. As dams age and crumble, and as society pivots in favor of dam removal, the lakes benefit from improved fish passage but are harmed by an expansion of the sea lamprey’s range. We need to balance dam removal and invasive species spread.”

“The tool our two commissions launch today helps to visualize the impact of the removal or addition of sea lamprey barriers in the Great Lakes basin,” said Tim Eder, executive director of the Great Lakes Commission. “We are pleased to partner with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission on building this new platform for decision-making regarding sea lamprey control investments and broader natural resources management.”

The online mapping tool includes historical sea lamprey control data in addition to basic stream attribute data that allows web users to experiment for themselves on the placement or removal of dams and then to see, instantly, the effect of that management action. Additional enhancements are planned in 2015 including metrics that are considered in sea lamprey treatment planning, trapping locations and results, and more historical attributes.

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The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The commission has the responsibility to control sea lampreys and promote measures that protect and improve the multi-billion-dollar Great Lakes fishery. www.glfc.org

The Great Lakes Commission is an interstate compact that promotes the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water and related natural resources of the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River. The Great Lakes Commission has considerable expertise in the development of visual tools for the internet, such as the sea lamprey barrier platform. www.glc.org