SAULT STE: MARIE — Our own Mark Ebener, fishery assessment biologist who oversees ITFAP assessment activities, has been honored with the Great Lakes Commission’s 2002 Buzz Besadny award for fostering Great Lakes partnerships.

Ebener was selected because of his “exceptional contributions to Great Lakes fisheries management and the Joint Strategic Plan,” said presenter Roy Stein at an award ceremony.

“Mark has extended the partnerships he has developed within the fisheries management community to work with those involved in Great Lakes environmental management...Mark has a special ability to forge consensus among biologists from all jurisdictions.” Stein said. “His clear thinking and objective approach has continued to bring people together to come up with solutions to issues that benefit every one whom shares the resources. The Joint Strategic Plan depends on a commitment to the resource. No one is more committed to the fishery resources of the Great Lakes than Mark.”

Ebener has been a leader in Lake Technical Committees and the Lake Committee process for almost 20 years. He has served on the technical committees on Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan. He has chaired the Lake Huron Technical Committee and is presently chair of the Lake Superior Technical Committee.

Ebener has contributed to all the major products of the Lake Committees including the Fish Community Objectives, the State of the Lake reports, and species rehabilitation plans. He has been a major contributor to the March Lake Committee meetings and is also a member of the Sea Lamprey Integration Committee.

“He has always pushed the technical committees to produce independent and objective science,” Stein said. “This objective science is critical to the successful fishery management decisions. Mark has always understood that the success of the lake committees and the success of the Joint Strategic Plan begins with this critical, independent science.”

Stein said that Ebener advanced fishery management in the upper lakes by introducing consistent quantitative approaches to assessment and analysis. “In his role as ‘Captain Crunch’ on the technical committees, Mark developed or participated in most of the quantitative analyses that managers in the upper lakes take for granted today. These efforts have provided a rational and objective basis for fishery management decisions.”

Stein also lauded Ebener’s work in sea lamprey control. “Mark has been an active participant in the sea lamprey control effort, carrying out assessment work, leading much of the synthesis of wounding assessments, and most recently participating on the Sea Lamprey Integration Committee.”

Mark Ebener, left, receives a hit plaque of the 2002 Buzz Besadny award from Commissioner Roy Stein, who made the presentation.

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**CORA Walleye Program 2002 Update**

**From Nunns Creek Fisheries Enhancement**

Just under 400,000 fish were harvested from the South and East Ponds and stocked during this reporting period. Approximately 236,335 walleye were stocked in the treaty-ceded waters. Waishkey River-Bay Mills Indian Community area received approximately 100,450, the St. Mary’s River this fall. The Nunns Creek Fisheries Enhancement Facility collected approximately 70,285 and 70,298 walleye were stocked in the treaty-ceded waters.

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**Walleye Stocking Summary, Summer 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>pounds</th>
<th>Number/pound</th>
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*Potaganishing Bay (estimated 600,000 eggs) from adult walleye captured in impoundment gear on April 23-25, 2002, from Munuscong Lake in the St. Mary’s River (SMR). Eyed eggs were first observed on day 19 (May 14). On May 6, 2002, approximately 15 liters of eyed eggs (1.2 million eggs) from Big Bay DeNoe (BBD) were transferred from the MDNR Thompson Creek Hatchery to NCFEF. Beginning on day 20, hatchery water was warmed to 56° F and held at that temperature through hatching.

Hatching of healthy fry began on day 24. Hatching was completed on day 33 (May 17), with approximately 90 percent of the fry hatching on days 29-31.

Total production of walleye fry in 2002 was approximately 1.25 million. All fry were treated with oxytetracycline prior to stocking this year. Approximately 100,000 BBD strain walleye fry were transferred to a private pond on Drummond Island, the South pond received approximately 500,000 BBD strain and 450,000 SMR strain, with an additional 200,000 BBD strain fry being stocked into the east pond.*
Alls well that ends well: joint patrol picks up nonswimmer teen adrift in toy raft

PRESQUE ISLE — Out on a joint patrol in the Hammond Bay area, tribal and DNR officers rescued a boy who had drifted away from shore on his raft. On July 2, the Presque Isle Central Dispatch received a call that a 15-year-old boy who could not swim had drifted away on a raft caught by the wind. Step-grandmother, Carol Kelley, had made the call. Visiting her was her daughter and son-in-law Bob Walker with his son, Griffin Walker, the youth who became adrift. Michigan DNR Conservation Officer Luis Perez and Bay Mills Officer Bill Schofield were just headed out of Hammond Bay on a joint patrol. Perez heard the dispatch and radioed that they would head for the boy. By the time they found him, he was already .55 miles out from shore and moving fast, said Perez.

“It was a case of us being at the right place at the right time,” Perez said, adding that the boy said he could not swim and did not have a life jacket.

According to dispatch records, they could not bring the boy back to his residence due to the depth of the water, so they planned to meet the boy’s father at Hammond Bay. The dispatcher realized that his stepmother had swum out after the boy, and as she was “quite a ways from shore,” they headed over to pick her up, too.

The youth was dropped off to his father in about 3 feet of water, and, the report said, “the stepmom is okay, too.”
HAMMOND BAY, Lake Huron — This summer at the USGS Hammond Bay Biological Station, scientists are studying Sea Lamprey predation and gath- 
ering other important data using new technology — miniaturized tags implan- 
ted in fish. And, any fisher who lands a tagged lake trout can receive a $100 reward. They also receive $1 per pound for tagged whitefish.

According to lead scientist USGS Research Fishery Biologist Roger Bergstehdt, the project is part of a broader study working with five species of fish — it’s a “quite a leap forward,” said Bergstehdt. They expanded the project, adding that although fishers don’t do much harm to lake trout, its “indebted to the fishers for their help, trap net- 
ters particularly.”

Bergstehdt led his staff, Dave Keffer, Sean Sisler, Erik Larson and Dave Portyka, out on the water to release the tagged lake trout. Keffer hand- 
dealed the boat while Portyka handled the fish. “It’s very clean fishery,” said

The scientist, who has been at it for a decade, so he knows what he’s looking at.

**New tags yield new, unexpected data on lake trout**

The released fish indulge in a bit of relaxation before heading homeward. Spaghetti tags can be seen on the backs. The whitefish on the operating table receives a tag the size of a pinky tip, as can be seen to the right, where the tag is compared to an average ballpoint pen.
Two big exotics have brought the dangers of aquatic invaders into the spotlight. These new exotics are several species of snakehead fish and Asian carp. These huge fish have the capability of wreaking more havoc, say scientists, than previous invaders. National papers such as USA Today are finally focusing on a problem that fishermen have been dealing with for decades.

Snakeheads are native to parts of tropical Africa and Asia occurring in China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and India, according to Shafton. Although the snakehead is yet to be found in the Great Lakes, it lives in fresh water and is spreading. Three species of the fish have been found in open waters in California, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and at least two have been established as reproducing species.

Thirteen States currently prohibit possession of live snakeheads; nevertheless, there is continuing evidence of illegal activity involving these fish even in states where they are prohibited. On July 23, Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced a proposal to ban importation and interstate transportation of live snakeheads, voracious invaders to Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Africa.

Norton's proposal would add the family of snakeheads, comprised of 28 species, to the federal list of “injurious wildlife” under the Lacey Act, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to place on the federal list of “injurious wildlife” species of exotic, or potentially injurious, to the health of people as well as to the welfare or survival of indigenous, or potentially injurious, to the health of people as well as to the welfare or survival of indigenous species.

Scientists say the Asian carp is working its way up the Mississippi River toward Lake Michigan. “Recent evidence indicates that Asian carp, a prolific nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species, may now be within 25 miles of Lake Michigan putting the entire Great Lakes basin at risk,” reported USA Today.

Asian carp have moved up through the Mississippi River system, and now found in the Illinois River and the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal connection to the Great Lakes near Chicago. It is believed that, based upon their current rate of dispersal, Asian carp could reach Lake Michigan this year,” said a July 11 IJC press release. “The IJC is a binational organization established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to help Canada and the United States prevent and resolve disputes over use of waters along their common boundary.

This fish can “grow to 110 pounds and 4 feet in length ... It’s so effective at sucking up plankton and vegetation that it could virtually eliminate other fish species from the Great Lakes before they have the opportunity to feed on their food supply,” reported USA Today. If the carp reaches the Great Lakes, it could be the worse invasion yet.

“Scientists caution that failure to prevent the invasion of Asian carp may result in damage to the Great Lakes ecosystem far exceeding those brought about by the previous invasions of the sea lamprey and zebra mussel,” said the release.

The IJC has recommended that the U.S. and Canadian governments continue operation of the current electrical barrier in the Chicago River; and install a second, more permanent barrier.

The IJC also called on the U.S. and Canadian governments to:

— educate the public about the threat of Asian carp to the Great Lakes ecosystem.
— investigate other chemical and physical environmentally sound alternatives to prevent the movement of aquatic nuisance species to and from the Great Lakes; and— consider implementing regulatory controls to prevent transfer of aquatic nuisance species via other pathways such as the food and bait industries and aquaculture, according to the statement.

An article written by Pam Thiem, LaCrosse FRO, Gary Czyzinski, Ashland FRO and Jerry L. Rasmussen, Rock Island FFO in a July USA Today newsletter, “Inside Region 3,” seems to agree with the IJC’s conclusions. “Asian carp upstream movement could be slowed by this electrical dispersal barrier. With the fate of the Great Lakes fishery at risk, there are elevated incentives to add additional components to the barrier to make it even more effective, since Asian carp have yet to be collected above the barrier. The Illinois Natural History Survey will be evaluating the effectiveness of the barrier this fall and conducting laboratory experiments on how to best tweak the electric barrier to repel Asian carp moving upstream. This proto-barrier is a short-term only, but other feasible, long-term alternatives need to be explored,” the article said.

What can we do about exotics?

— Some of these fish have escaped from fish farms or have been deliberately released. Anyone who finds what they think might be an Asian carp or a snakehead should keep it and show it to their local fish and wildlife department. Note the place and date of your find.
— Document your encounters with exotic species. Take a camera if you can, write down in your log when you encounter the exotics and what you observe.
— We can all write to our representatives in Congress and in the Michigan legislature to support efforts to stave off these two dangerous exotics, and let them know what is already happening in other parts of the country.

Michigan’s First Congressional District

U.S. Representative Bart Stupak MARQUETTE
1229 W. Washington St. Marquette, MI 49855 TRAVERSE CITY
1210 E. Front St., Suite D Traverse City, MI 49686
WASHINGTON DC
2348 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

CONGRESS — U.S. SENATE
Senator Carl Levin
(Chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force)
WASHINGTON
SR-269, Russell Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510
TRAVERSE CITY
207 Grandview Pkwy, Suite 104 Traverse City, MI 49684

Senator Debbie Stabenow
UPPER PENINSULA OFFICE
1901 W. Ridge
Marquette, MI 49855
NORTHERN MICHIGAN OFFICE
109 South Union Street, Suite 305 Traverse City, MI 49684

Researchers studying habits of lake sturgeon

ST. JOSEPH, Mich. (AP) — A 10-man team is working to gather information on the sturgeon population in Lake Michigan for future restoration efforts of the threatened species. Sturgeon used to be so plentiful in the Great Lakes during the 1800s that they were considered trash fish, and were burned instead of eaten when captured. Logging, dam building and overfishing devastated their population, and now close to 200 pounds. The species is on the endangered list of life span of a sturgeon is 50 years.

The two-year, $800,000 project is being funded by the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Program and the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation for Advanced Scientific Research. The researchers eventually will develop a management plan for the sturgeon that will best support efforts to increase the number of fish. The Herald-Palladium reported in a recent story.

The Great Sutton, a Coloma native and Purdue University researcher, is part of the research team responsible for studying sturgeon in the St. Joseph and Kalamazoo rivers. Sutton said the St. Joseph River historically has held lake sturgeon populations, “probably one of the largest populations.”

But a series of dams at Berrien Springs, Buchanan and Niles prevented the fish from running upstream, cutting off access to some of the best spawning habitat.

Last spring, Sutton said he was unable to find any sturgeon in the St. Joseph River, though that did not mean there weren’t any present. High water levels may have interfered with the sturgeon’s spawning run.

The fish start reproducing at about age 25. The males spawn only every two to three years and the females every four to six years. Sutton netted a 122-pound sturgeon this spring near the mouth of the Kalamazoo River at Saugatuck. “There were reports of several others caught out there this spring,” he said.

Researchers took a 200-pound sturgeon from the Peshtigo River area of Green Bay this spring. Sturgeon spawn in the Fox, Oconto, Peshtigo and Menominee rivers in Green Bay, and the Manistique, Manistee, Muskegon, St. Joseph and Kalamazoo rivers in Michigan.

Researchers and graduate student Dan Daugherty are working to identify the types of habitat in the St. Joseph and Kalamazoo rivers, as well as the sources of food. Sutton said sturgeon feed on insects primarily, but we have no idea what those insects are,” Sutton said.

The researchers studying the river plan to compare their findings during a meeting in December. They will return next spring for more field work.