



ILLINOIS

Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

NEWSLETTER

The End of Another Season: Now What?

Inside this issue:

VLMP End of Season Wrap-Up	1
Upcoming ILMA Conference	1
Notes From the Coordinator	2
Focus on Exotics: VHS	3
ILMA Scholarship Opportunity	4
IEPA LEAP Grant Opportunity	4
Online Boat Safety Course	5
Freshwater Jellyfish	6
Lake Notes	7
VLMP Contact Information	7

It's hard to believe that another VLMP season has ended. It seems like just yesterday we met during those cold, rainy days in May for training. As you take shelter from the cold this winter from your VLMP monitoring activities, please give your monitoring equipment the same courtesy.

Here are a few tips for storing your monitoring equipment for the winter:

- Please take a few minutes to make sure all of your monitoring equipment is clean, dry and stored in a proper location until it's time to bring it out of hibernation for next season's monitoring. Please **DO NOT USE CLEANSERS** on any of the equip-

ment. A quick rinse with tap water will do the job!

- **Secchi Disk:** Rinse your Secchi disk to remove as much lake gunk as possible. Dry carefully. If you are using a measuring tape, make sure the line is dry and wound back in its reel without folds and moisture. If you are using a rope or surveyor line, make sure the line is dry and untangled before winding back on its reel.
- **Chlorophyll Equipment:** Make sure your weighted bottle sampler is clear of mud and is fully dry before putting into storage. Recycle old 1/2 gallon jugs used for sample collec-

tion. You will receive new 1/2 gallon jugs for next year's sampling. Give your filtering equipment (magnetic funnel, filter base, graduated cylinder and collection flask) one final rinse and let sit out to dry completely before storing.

Storage Tote: Make sure the tote is clean and dry throughout before storing equipment. Sample bottles may have leaked acid preservative during their time in storage, so it is important to rinse the storage tote carefully and thoroughly with tap water to remove the sticky residue. If you do not have a storage tote, please contact your VLMP coordinator.

Cont'd on Page 2

ILMA Conference 2009

Please join us at the 24th annual Illinois Lake Management Association (ILMA) conference **February 18 – 20, 2009 at Hotel Pere Marquette in Peoria, Illinois**. Everyone is welcome! This is a great opportunity for homeowners, water operators, state agency staff, lake professionals, students and teachers to network with other lake enthusiasts and learn about all things lakes. If you have a question about your lake, this is an excellent

resource for tracking down the right lake professional to help with your lake needs. If you have an interesting story to tell about your lake or you've implemented lake restoration or protection measures, this is your chance to share your experiences with others. You may even consider giving a presentation. For more information or to check for conference updates, please go to the ILMA website at: www.ilmalakes.org.

Notes from the Statewide Coordinator

Welcome to the Fall/Winter edition of the VLMP newsletter. We have sailed through yet another monitoring season and now it's time to wrap up the year. As we wind down our 28th year, we have a little housekeeping to do.

If you have any remaining Secchi Monitoring Forms, please check them over and send them to your coordinator as soon as possible. Please pay special attention to the next few sentences: **If you have any leftover lab sheets or shipping labels, please recycle them or throw them away.** The use of old lab sheets and shipping labels has created many problems and often has resulted in lost samples, so please purge your storage areas, desks and totes of **ALL** old paperwork and labels. If you have any questions as to what needs to be thrown away, please give me a call or email. In addition, please read the front page article which describes in more detail how to clean and store your equipment for the off season.

Just because the VLMP monitoring season has ended, it does not mean that your chance to be involved with lakes has too. All of you are welcome and cordially invited to join us at the Illinois Lake Management Association's (ILMA) 24th annual conference in Peoria this February. The conference will be held at the Pere Marquette from February 18 – 20, 2009.

This is a great opportunity to network with other lake enthusiasts as well as to attend the

annual special session dedicated to the Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. Come meet other volunteer monitors from all over the state and mingle with lake technicians and professionals as well! Hope to see you there! If you decide to join us, please let me or your local coordinator know so that we can anticipate your arrival.

If you have any college-age children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbors or friends interested in studying lake-related majors, you will not want to miss out on the two (2) scholarship opportunities offered through ILMA. See related article on page 4.

Likewise, if you are a teacher or know a teacher interested in grant opportunities for lake-related educational activities for their class, IEPA offers funding through their Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP). This article is also on page 4. Spread the word!

And finally, but most importantly, thank you all for your continued efforts to not only ensure the success of the VLMP, but to serve as devoted guardians of Illinois lakes and ponds.

Have a great winter and I'll see you in Spring!



End of Season Cont'd

- **Unused Bottles:** If you have any unused bottles that contain acid preservative, you may rinse them in your sink, being sure to flush with plenty of water and being careful not to splash or spill acid on your skin or clothing. The bottles can then be thrown away. If you prefer to save your bottles for your coordinator to collect next season, please be sure that there are no signs of leakage (e.g., sticky residue on the bottles or tote or moisture around cap or bottle) and store upright and secure so the bottles will not be knocked over on their sides, making them prone to leaking. Bottles without preservative can be kept until next year.

Now that all of the equipment and the storage tote are clean and dry, place all equipment neatly and upright in the tote and store in your basement, garage or other location that is safe from the weather. Please be sure to recycle or throw away as appropriate any unused laboratory analysis paperwork and shipping labels from this year and all previous years. You will receive all new lab sheets

and shipping labels next season. This is very important because we have had problems with volunteers using old shipping labels and lab sheets, which in turn causes problems with shipping, lab analysis, lab reporting and data analysis. Your efforts in taking the time to close out the season help make next year's efforts more efficient and that is much appreciated!

See you next year!



Focus on Exotics: VHS

What's Lurking in Your Lake?

This edition's "Focus on Exotics" highlights a very serious fish-killing disease known as Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia or VHS. When you think about the term "invasive species," you may think of plants, such as Eurasian Watermilfoil, or animals, such as the Asian Carp. What we may not be quick to identify as an invasive species are viruses. Yes, that's right – viruses! Being true to its name, Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia, is indeed a virus – and an invasive species.

One property of a virus is that it needs a host to replicate. This particular virus uses fish as their host organism to perpetuate its existence. Although VHS does not pose a threat to human health, it is deadly to fish and easily transferable between many fish species of all ages.

VHS has been dated back to the 1930's to European trout farms, where it continues to pose a threat to fish populations. This disease was first reported in the U.S. in 1988 where it appeared on the West coast. Identified in the Great Lakes region in 2005, VHS has been found in fish in both Wisconsin and Illinois as recently as June of 2008 and continues to spread throughout the region.

In July 2008, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) issued a statement for emergency regulations to stop the spread of this fish virus. You can read this press release which includes a list of fish species that are susceptible to the virus, as well as, how these regulations affect aquaculture or you as an angler or recreational boater at: <http://dnr.state.il.us/pubaffairs/2008/July/vhsvirus.html>. These emergency regulations include:

- Eliminating natural water from all equipment when leaving a body of water.
- Emptying and draining all bait buckets, livewells, baitwells, bilges, etc. or any other compartment capable of holding natural waters when leaving a body of water.
- Do not remove live VHS-susceptible species (see website) from any waters. Anglers may catch and keep VHS-susceptible species, but may not transport those fish live from the waters where caught.
- Use of wild-trapped fishes from within the state as bait will be restricted to the waters where legally captured.

How can you identify a fish infected by VHS? The symptoms exhibited by fish with VHS can be very similar to other fish diseases. Therefore, it is important that VHS

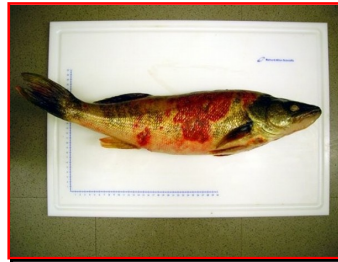


Photo courtesy of Aquatic Animal Health Program, Cornell University

be confirmed through laboratory tests. It is also important to know that some fish do not exhibit any symptoms of having the disease and are carriers of the disease. These fish may be unknowingly transported to other waters which will spread the disease. Some external signs

of VHS are bulging eyes, hemorrhaging, abnormal behavior, bloated abdomens or rapid onset of death. If you catch a diseased fish or witness a fish kill, contact IDNR immediately. For a fish kill, note the waterbody, date, fish species and approximate number of fish killed. If



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Photo courtesy of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

you catch a diseased fish, do not throw it back. Place the fish in a plastic bag and store in a cooler on ice.

How is VHS transmitted? Fish infected with the disease can shed the virus through their urine and reproductive fluids. The virus can survive in the water for at least 14 days and is thought to enter the body through gills or an open wound. The gill tissue will be infected first followed by internal organs and blood vessels. The blood vessels become weak, which causes hemorrhaging of the internal organs, muscle and skin, resulting in the fish bleeding to death. The virus can also be transferred when fish eat infected fish or through the use of infected bait fish.

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia is a highly contagious aquatic disease. Because Great Lakes waters enter the Illinois River through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship canal, your cooperation as an angler, boater or aquaculture professional is essential to help slow the spread of this disease to other Illinois waters and states downstream. To help prevent the spread of this disease, follow all regulations associated with VHS and remember to thoroughly clean your boat, trailer, nets and equipment used when traveling between different lakes and streams. This is a good practice to help prevent the spread of all aquatic invasive species.

ILMA Scholarship Announcement



The Illinois Lake Management Association announces two scholarship opportunities: The Illinois Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarship and the Robert Esser Student Achievement Scholarship. Application Deadline is December 31.

The Illinois Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarship is for full time undergraduate or graduate students who have a college or university cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 on an undergraduate 4.0 scale and 3.0 on a graduate 4.0 scale, enrolled in a natural resource discipline related to lake and/or lake watershed management. Eligible applicants include Illinois residents enrolled in accredited colleges and universities within Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. Emphasis will be placed on scholarship money going towards work- or project-related expenses in a lake/watershed area. This scholarship is for \$1,000 and is made possible through a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

The Robert Esser Student Achievement Scholarship is for Illinois residents attending an Illinois accredited college or university. A full time junior or senior undergraduate student or graduate student is preferred. Attendance at the Annual meeting of the Illinois Lake Management Association is strongly encouraged. The applicant must be enrolled in a lake-related curriculum with clearly articulated personal goals and objectives geared

toward Illinois lakes. Emphasis will be placed on volunteer experiences. This scholarship is for \$500 and is made possible through the generous contributions of longtime member of ILMA and volunteer lake monitor, Robert Esser.

The ILMA Scholarship Committee will consider academic achievement, major field of study, statement of career goals and student special interests. Most awards are given on the basis of academic achievement combined with a course of study consistent with ILMA's mission: "To promote understanding and comprehensive management of lake and watershed ecosystems."

Applicants must submit the scholarship application form (s) by **December 31**. Application forms are available on the ILMA website: www.ilmalakes.org or by contacting the Illinois Lake Management Association at 1-800-338-6976 (Access Code 01).

The ILMA Scholarship Committee meets in January of each year to review the applications and determine the awards. All applicants will be notified by February 1st with the committee's final decision.

Scholarship funds are provided to the recipient to offset the tuition and fee expenses for the appropriate semester(s) and/or approved research project expenses.

Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP) Steve Kolsto, LEAP Coordinator



The Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP) is the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's grant program available to teachers, schools and not-for-profit organizations for the study of lakes, ponds and their watersheds. This grant of up to \$500 is available twice a year and can be used to purchase equipment, transportation, educational materials and registration to lake-related conferences and workshops.

LEAP has awarded nearly \$500,000 to over 1,000 applicants across Illinois since it began in 1995. In addition to teachers and students, many groups have benefited from LEAP grants to teach and learn about lakes, including scout troops, cities and environmental organizations. Projects have ranged from studying small farm ponds to Lake Michigan.

Some examples of projects that have been funded by LEAP include:

- Pond installation.
- A class in Williamsville, Illinois conducted studies on their city pond and presented their findings and recommendations for how to restore and protect the pond to the city council.
- A high school in Bunker Hill, Illinois had the rare

opportunity to study a lake since its "birth." When the city dug the new lake in their local park in 2003, Clarine Dobos and her high school science classes began to monitor and keep recorded observations of the lake and have done so every year since.

- In 2001, Christine Geiselhart and her fourth grade students from Butterfield Elementary began a study of Lake Michigan. Around the same time, students from Siberia were conducting studies on Lake Baikal. In 2002 (the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act), Christine and others from her school took a trip to share the results of their lake studies with their counterparts in Russia. The entire Lake Michigan/Lake Baikal story is in the 2002 Summer/Fall issue of Environmental Progress which can be found on our website at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/environmental-progress/index.html>.

If you have any questions or want to find out more about LEAP, please contact Steve Kolsto of the Illinois EPA Lakes Unit at 217-782-3362.

The deadline for LEAP applications is September 30 and January 31 of each year.

Online Boat Safety Course and Official Certification



Attention all boaters: Whether you navigate rivers or lakes; if you are an avid sportfisherman or if you jet ski, water ski, tube or enjoy any number of recreational activities on your waterbody; if you frequently go boating

because you love the thrill of gliding across the open water or if you just take weekend pleasure cruises to take in nature's beauty, wildlife and fresh air, it is absolutely imperative that you take the voluntary, yet indispensable steps to properly and safely operate your personal watercraft.

In Illinois, in order to legally drive on our roads, we must have a driver's license. In order to earn this license, we must first take a driver's education course, pass a written exam, as well as a driving exam. All of these steps are precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the driver and others on the roads. The boating world does not have an equivalent requirement. Although you must be at least 10 years old to operate a personal watercraft with adult supervision, adults are not subject to the same licensing procedures as driving a car. We are not required to take a class. More importantly, we are not required to pass an exam. In being given this complete freedom from licensure, we must put it upon ourselves to accept the responsibility for ensuring the safety of those individuals on our boats and others using the waterway.

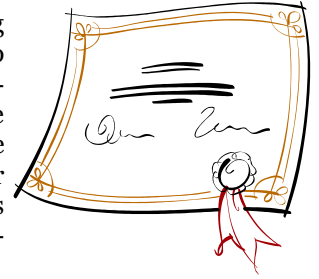
Too often, people are seriously injured or killed while trying to enjoy a day out on the water. We all know someone or have heard in the news awful, tragic events that may have been preventable if we all knew the proper boating rules and regulations. Like driving a car, not every boater follows all the rules and regulations for safe boating. But as a responsible boater, there are boat safety and education courses available for you to take.

Some boating classes are offered as one-day or one-weekend courses or in some cases a more detailed course may be offered that spans over several weeks. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has taken this one step further and has made it even easier for someone to learn the "Rules of the Waterway."

IDNR offers an "Online Illinois Boating Safety Course and Exam." This free, self-paced course allows you to navigate many different topics on boating at your leisure. There are no time constraints or set schedules. When you're ready, you can



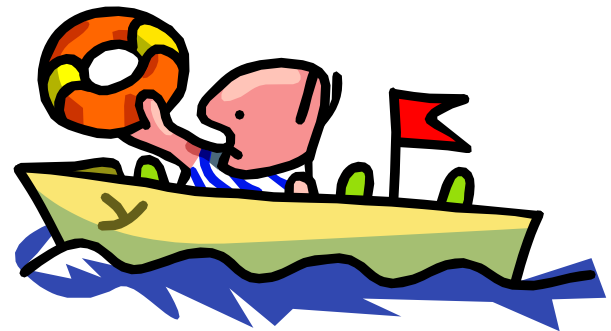
take the official Illinois Boating Safety Certification Exam to comply with Illinois boater education law. Not only will you be a safer, more knowledgeable boater, you may also qualify for lower insurance rates with this certificate. Check with your insurer for details.



As we come to the end of our VLMP monitoring season and put our boats away for the winter, what a perfect opportunity to occupy our time indoors by spending some time online learning about boat operation and safety. If you've already taken a course in boat safety, this is a great chance for a stress-free refresher!

Go to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Boating Safety website to learn about boater safety and to take the certification exam:

<http://www.boat-ed.com/il/index.htm>



Like driving a car, driving a boat is a privilege. While enjoying this privilege, we should all take on the responsibility of becoming an informed and safe navigator to ensure every precaution to avoid senseless tragedy on the water.

If you'd like more information, please consult the IDNR website or contact them at:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271
217-782-6302



Is Your Lake “Jellin?”



Photo taken by Holly Hudson

On a beautiful fall day in late September, volunteer monitor, Phyllis Trostrud, at Harrowgate Lake in Cook County noticed something unusual in her lake. While out on a routine monitoring trip for the VLMP, Phyllis encountered

what appeared to be a bunch of little jellyfish on the north end of her lake. She quickly called on the help of Northern Illinois Volunteer Coordinator, Holly Hudson, of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to investigate.

Holly headed out the door with camera in hand for a closer look at the situation. The embedded pictures show what she found. Indeed, Holly encountered what appeared to be “jellyfish.” Upon further inspection, she noted that they were not “true” jellyfish, but were actually part of the class Hydrozoa (scientific name: *Craspedacusta sowerbii*).

C. sowerbii jellyfish are about the size of a quarter and are shaped like an open umbrella. They are mostly translucent and may have white or green shading and can be seen easily by the naked eye. These little creatures get their nutrition from feeding on a buffet of even smaller, microscopic animals called zooplankton that can be found throughout the waterbody.

These jellyfish are mostly found in calm, freshwater lakes and reservoirs, as well as, quarries. Because the jellyfish prefer to inhabit calm bodies of water, they are not likely to be seen in waterbodies with fast flowing currents like streams and rivers. However, they have been spotted in such large rivers as the Allegheny River, the Ohio River and the Tennessee River.

The best time to spot the jellyfish is usually in late summer (around August and September) when lake water is warm and food is abundant. They tend to float just below the water’s surface and can be seen in “blooms.” Sunny days especially illuminate these majestic creatures.

C. sowerbii jellyfish have been seen throughout most of the United States and have a wide distribution throughout Illinois. If you have the opportunity to view these jellyfish in your lake, I encourage you to report your sighting to your local VLMP coordinator and to the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) via their website at www.jellyfish.iup.edu.



Photo taken by Holly Hudson



Photo taken by Holly Hudson

“Lake Notes” Fact Sheets

“Lake Notes” is a series of publications produced by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency about issues affecting Illinois’ inland lakes. These fact sheets are intended to provide information on various topics concerning lakes, their watersheds and actions that can be taken to protect these valuable resources. Twenty-six fact sheets have been completed to date. They are available on the Agency’s website at www.epa.state.il.us/water/conservation-2000/lake-notes/index.html or in hard copy, free of charge, by contacting Steve Kolsto at 217-782-3362. Available Lake Notes include:

- Aquatic Exotics
- Aquatic Plant Management Options
- Artificial Structures For Fish Cover
- Beavers and Muskrats
- Canada Geese and Your Lake
- Common Lake Water Quality Parameters
- Determining Your Lake’s Watershed
- Fertilizers and Pesticides
- Home and Yard
- Illinois Clean Lakes Program (ICLP)
- Illinois Lakeshore Birds
- Illinois Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP)
- Lake Aeration and Circulation
- Lake Dredging
- Lake Education Assistance Program (LEAP)
- Lake Stratification and Mixing
- The Milfoil Weevil
- Monitoring Lake Quality
- Pressure Treated Wood
- Septic Systems
- Shoreline Buffer Strips
- Shoreline Stabilization
- Stormwater Detention Ponds
- Waterborne Pathogens
- Where to Go For Lake Information
- Zebra Mussels

Fishing for Lake Resources?...



Important VLMP Contacts to Know

Regional Coordinators:

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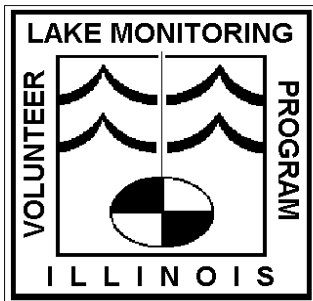
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