



Great Lakes Science Center

# The R/V Sturgeon — Lake Huron and Lake Michigan

**T**he *R/V Sturgeon* was acquired by the USGS Great Lakes Science Center from the Smithsonian Institution under a property transfer. It was used by the Institute to support Caribbean studies for over a decade.

In early 1994 the vessel was transferred from the Naval Shipyard in Washington DC to the Center's vessel base in Cheboygan, Michigan. For several years Center staff worked on the vessel during the winter months preparing it for major overhaul. In April 2002 Basic Marine of Escanaba, Michigan was awarded the construction contract and began the complete overhaul of the vessel. The commissioning was in August, 2004. The primary mission of the *R/V Sturgeon* is to support fisheries related science in Lake Michigan using state-of-the-art electronic technology and traditional sampling gear such as bottom and midwater trawls and gillnets. Its design characteristics include

all of the necessary features to support a wide variety of aquatic science projects in the open waters of the Great Lakes.

#### Specifications:

The *Sturgeon* is designed to operate with a crew of three: a captain, mate and engineer. With berthing for ten people, the vessel is capable of comfortably supporting a crew of three and a scientific staff of seven for up to a 15-day mission. Accommodations include four 2-person state rooms each with a small sink and vanity, a fully equipped laundry room, and a galley and conference center with seating for ten.

**Length:** 101 feet  
**Beam:** 24 feet 9 inches  
**Draft:** 10 feet 2 inches  
**Propulsion:** Twin Detroit diesels  
**Cruising speed:** 10.4 knots (12 mph)

#### On-board equipment:

The *Sturgeon* is designed to function as an offshore work platform during the ice-free season in the Great Lakes. To meet the mission requirements of the USGS and our basin-wide partners the vessel is equipped



with sophisticated electronic navigational and scientific gear. Clean electrical power available from two Cummins 99KW generators is capable of meeting all of the electrical demands of hydro-acoustic data acquisition and side scan sonar bottom profiling. Gear deployment can easily be accomplished using paired trawl winches, high capacity deck crane, net reels or the outboard davit. The 50 hp Wesmar dual propeller bow thruster ensures accurate control of the vessel at all times so docking and holding station is done with relative ease. The back deck work area is designed to eliminate obstructions and facilitate sample processing. Interior laboratory space is divided into wet and dry areas. The wet laboratory is equipped with sorting tables, a gill net lifter, computer ports, freezer space and a live well. The dry laboratory is designed to function as the electronics control room. Here the scientist is able to observe operations on the back deck and monitor all of the electronic gear including pilothouse navigational data.

