



Lake Erie Biological Station

The USGS Great Lakes Science Center is dedicated to providing scientific information for restoring, enhancing, managing, and protecting living resources and their habitats in the Great Lakes Region.

The Center is headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and has biological stations and research vessels located throughout the Great Lakes Basin.



Background

The Lake Erie Biological Station (LEBS) is a field station of the U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Center is headquarters for a broad and complex program of research on fish and other living resources of the Great Lakes region. The research of the LEBS focuses on changes in the populations and food web dynamics of important Lake Erie fish, including exotic species, using the R/V Musky II for offshore waters and the R/V Pike for nearshore work.



The R/V Musky II.

Staff

Personnel currently assigned to the LEBS include one fishery research biologist, one research ecologist, two biological technicians and one administrative assistant.

Partners

The Station currently conducts fish stock assessment cruises to the west-central basin in cooperation with the Ohio Division of Wildlife. LEBS has cooperated in lake trout monitoring with New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources since the early 1990s. The station has assisted the U.S. EPA in conducting long term environmental surveys in the central basin since the late 1980s, and also cooperates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, universities, and international Lake Erie task groups under the auspices of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

Recent Accomplishments

Current research includes long-term diet and population studies of nearshore and offshore fish communities; influence of habitat structure as refuges for small fish; factors influencing bird species diversity in wetlands and offshore habitats; influence of

exotic species on food web dynamics; and effects of exotic mussels on the nutrient turnover rate in Lake Erie.

LEBS has also helped document the reduced survival of hatchery-reared lake trout and the recruitment decline of adult white bass in Lake Erie.

With the rapid population increase of double-crested cormorants, the station has completed several studies to determine their diet and foraging behavior. Young gizzard shad, emerald shiners, and freshwater drum were identified as the principal prey fish in their diets. Cormorants prefer to forage in shallow waters and near islands or reefs.

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