

Anti-flooding efforts stalled by endangered fish species

By RYAN HENNESSY
News-Press NOW

The pallid sturgeon eats by swimming on its belly along the Missouri and lower Mississippi Rivers. It has been doing this since the dinosaurs walked the Earth.

Part of the fish's northern territory was taken to create dams and lakes, which better control runoff so people can live along the Missouri River. The management benefits farmers — fast and narrow, but that's contrary to what the fish has preferred since prehistoric times — slow and wide.

Joe Bonneau is chief of the Threatened and Endangered Species Section for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"It's a big river, and it's muddy and the fish are hard to find," Bonneau said. "We really need to know how many pallid sturgeon are out there, which requires you to monitor a little differently — requires you to catch fish, mark them, put them back in the river, and then re-catch them. And you just keep doing that."

A female will reach maturity between 10 and 15 years of age. That's when she swims up the Missouri River to lay her eggs, which depending on her size can be between 15,000

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Buchanan County Sheriff's Deputy Scott Vanover observes the high waters Sunday afternoon that cover H Kansas. Vanover is part of the department's flood patrol duties, assisting motorists with detours around cl

Sheriff flood patrols ensure mo

By RAY SCHERER
News-Press NOW

RUSHVILLE, Mo. — Sunday proved to be time for yet another vital mission of helping motorists safely maneuver around Buchanan County's flood zones.

Deputies with the Buchanan County Sheriff's Department remain on around-the-clock patrols in the Rush-

ville, Missouri, and Winthrop, Missouri, areas. Their job is to prevent drivers from entering flooded highways and pass along information on the best detours toward reaching their destinations.

Deputy Scott Vanover is among those assigned on flood patrol duty, and was stationed part of Sunday at the intersection of Highways 59 and 45 just south of Rushville. Floodwa-

ters several Earle Atch It's round been acco

Longtime waitress a favorite at Fredrick Inn

By ALONZO WESTON
News-Press NOW

Anyone who has eaten at the Fredrick Inn has probably met Julia Barnes. The 79-year-old St. Joseph woman is a ball of energy, flitting from table to table as a customer favorite.

Barnes has been a waitress since she was 16 years old. She's met famous people in her career, like crooner Frank Sinatra and the world's tallest man, Robert Wardlow, when she worked at the Robidoux Hotel.

She said what keeps her going is the people.

"I like being around people and

seeing different people come in here," Barnes said between her duties filling condiment cups and waiting on a few early diners Thursday afternoon.

Barnes began her serving career at Lupe's restaurant on Sixth

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The slower the current of the Missouri River, the better a baby pallid sturgeon can swim and find areas to grow over the course of 5 to 15 years.

Species

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and 170,000. A male then fertilizes the eggs, and they hatch a week or two later. The larvae float down the river and may take their first swim when the river gets fat between Kansas City and St. Louis.

"The problem is we don't find little guys," Kasey Whiteman said. "We've found 11 of them in (the past) five years."

Whiteman is with the Missouri Department of Conservation, and he will be looking for baby pallid sturgeon this summer. He's the supervisor for the Missouri River field station,

which works in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a number of other state agencies to grow the pallid sturgeon population.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added the fish to the endangered species list in 1990, which means if you catch a pallid sturgeon you can take a picture with it to show your friends, but you have to throw it back in the river. (Whiteman would also appreciate seeing it; Kasey.Whiteman@mdc.mo.gov). The fish can live between 50 and 100 years, growing to over 6 feet and weighing up to 80 pounds.

The loss and change of habitat are a couple of the reasons to the decline in numbers, but pollu-

tion could also be a cause.

Wayne Nelson-Stastny is the pallid sturgeon recovery coordinator for U.S. Fish and Wildlife. He spoke to News-Press NOW about the parameters of the endangered species list.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle is a self-sustaining, genetically diverse population of 5,000 adult pallid sturgeon being realized for two generations (20-30 years).

Two birds; the least tern and piping plover are also endangered. However, their recovery may be easier to chart, because eggs can be counted on dry land.

Politicians in Washington D.C. have been critical of the pallid sturgeon's recovery, because it's difficult to chart whether the efforts made will result in it

coming off the endangered species list. However, when it was placed on the list in 1990, the available research was limited.

U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO) co-sponsored a bill in May to remove fish and wildlife from the authorized purposes of the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System. The bill was introduced by U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO), and companion legislation was introduced in the house by U.S. Representative Sam Graves (R-MO).

In a press release Blunt said, "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers need to get its priorities straight, and that means putting flood control and navigation first."

Flood management of the Mis-

souri River is the top priority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a year of flooding, like the one we are currently experiencing.

The Corps has seven priorities along the river; (in no particular order) navigation, irrigation, water quality, hydroelectric power, water supply, recreation, and fish and wildlife.

Missouri Basin River Hydrologist Kevin Low forecasted in April that the Missouri River would be "vulnerable" to flooding well into the summer.

› For video coverage of Anti-flooding efforts stalled by endangered fish species, visit newspressnow.com.

Inn

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Street as a teenager. From there, she went to the Hotel Robidoux, first as an elevator operator.

"When they discontinued the elevator, one of the bosses asked me if I wanted to be a waitress in the coffee shop and I said 'No I don't think so.' I didn't think I could do it and he said, 'Oh yeah, you can do it' and I said 'OK,'" Barnes said.

It wasn't the job of waiting tables that intimidated her but the fancy crowd at the hotel. But it was there where she got used to be-

ing around lots of people.

"After so many years in the coffee shop, I worked there for 12 years, then I got used to more people and I went into the Black Angus Room," Barnes said.

Barnes was used to work. One of 17 children of parents Augustino and Josefeina, all the kids had chores before and after school. Even the girls chopped wood for the stove, she said.

"Before we went to school we always either had to put the beans on or sweep the floors, help with laundry and cut wood. That's how we were brought up — working," Barnes said.

Dara Alsbury, a co-worker of Barnes for 21

years at Fredrick Inn, said she still works hard and fast and gets upset if someone tells her to slow down.

"She's feisty, she hard to keep up with. If I had that much energy when I'm her age, it'll be a miracle," Alsbury said. "Everybody loves her, loves her to death."

She's a staple at the restaurant, Alsbury added. Customers ask for her to wait on them. Waitressing is not an easy job, she added.

"You know, you don't have to have schooling for it, but not just everybody can do it and do it that long and be successful at it," Alsbury said.

Barnes a 1959 Lafayette High School graduate has

a large family of her own, including three sons, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

As a waitress, Barnes may not know everyone's name, but she knows what they eat. It's another skill of the job, knowing your customers.

"If I never seen them before I'll ask them have they been here before, and I'll ask them where they're from, and they tell me Wisconsin, Florida or California and I tease them and ask them if they come from Wisconsin just to eat supper?" Barnes laughs.

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