



Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel (GSARP) Update for Georgia



REPORTING PERIOD:
November 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022

Report Submitted By:

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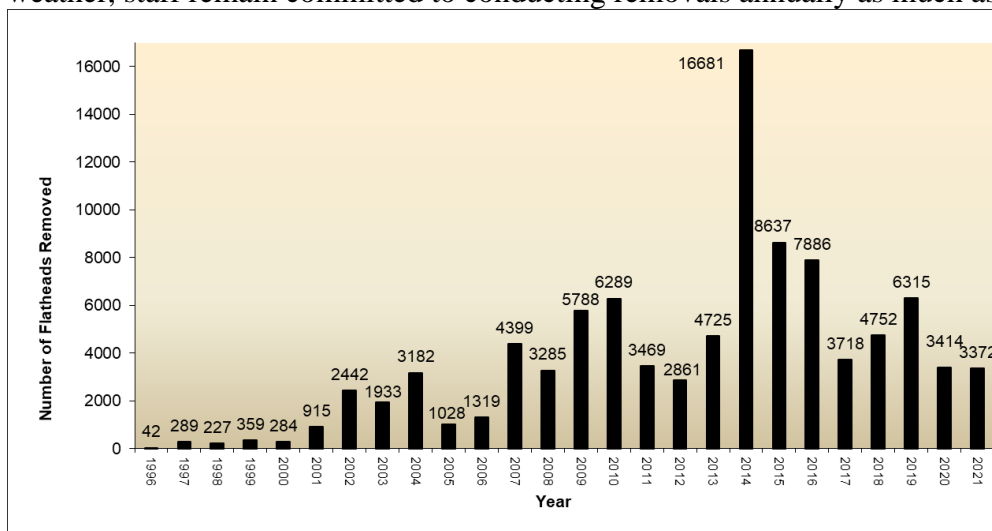
FRESHWATER SPECIES

FISH

Flathead Catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*):

The Satilla River is one of the premier sunfish fisheries in the state of Georgia and redbreast sunfish (*Lepomis auritus*) are a highly sought-after species. Flathead catfish were likely introduced through unauthorized stocking and first observed in the Satilla River in 1996. During the mid-2000's, standardized sampling and creel surveys revealed declines in abundances of redbreast sunfish and bullhead catfishes (*Ameiurus* spp.) coincided with significant increases in the abundance of flathead catfish. In 1996, the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) – Fisheries Management Section (FM) began removing flathead catfish from the Satilla River as time permitted and in 2006, instituted the Flathead Catfish Removal Project to control the population.

Staff initiated the 2021 removal efforts in May and early on removal efforts were consistent and effective. However, the persistent rains that occurred throughout much of the July, August, and September periods resulted in river levels being way above normal, thus minimizing the effectiveness of our gear and negatively impacting our removal efforts. Nonetheless, staff spent 155.53 hours of shocking time, removing 3372 flatheads. We firmly believe that, had water levels been lower, our efficiency and effectiveness would have been significantly better. Despite the setbacks of the wet weather, staff remain committed to conducting removals annually as much as is feasible.



Blue Catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*)

In addition to removing flathead catfish in the Satilla River, GADNR staff continue to remove blue catfish from the river. Removal of this second non-native species occurs simultaneously during flathead removals. During the 2021 removal season, a total of 80 blue catfish were removed from the Satilla River. Sizes of these fish ranged from 92mm to 696mm, averaging 240.3mm.

Other Freshwater ANS Species

GADNR staff continue to receive reports of ANS species being captured in our state. Below are captures reported during this reporting period.

Mystery Snail (*Cipangopaludina* spp.)

- Capture Location: Lake Oconee-Sugar Creek (Putnam County)
- Reports provided by private citizen in April 2022.
- Positive ID verified by GADNR staff.



Blue Catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*)

- Capture Location: Lake Lanier (Hall County)
- Report provided by GADNR biologist Hunter Roop.
- Fish kept.
- Positive ID verified by GADNR staff.



Asian Swamp Eel (*Monopterus albus*)

- Capture Location: Olley Creek (Cobb County)
- Reports provided by private citizen.
- Fish kept and placed in personal aquarium.
- Positive ID verified by GADNR staff.



Achtheres (Gill lice)

- Capture Location: Flint River
- Report provided by GADNR staff.
- Observed in mouth of 1 Gulf Striper.
- Positive ID verified by GADNR staff.



PLANTS

Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)

- No reports of Giant Salvinia were received during this report period.

Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*)

- Water hyacinth continues to be observed in several waterbodies within the state.

MARINE SPECIES

CRUSTACEANS

Asian Tiger Shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*)

Commercial fishermen continue to periodically report catches of Asian tiger shrimp in Georgia waters, though such incidences remain low. Reports of tiger shrimp continue to be provided through the new reporting tool on the GADNR-WRD website. Two different reports of a single tiger shrimp captured in bait trawls in September 2021 and October 2021 were given to GADNR staff, with both instances occurring in Maiden Creek (St. Andrews estuary). GADNR will continue to monitor tiger shrimp occurrence.

In addition to potential catches of tiger shrimp by commercial fishermen, GADNR staff may potentially intercept tiger shrimp during fishery-independent standardized sampling (a.k.a. Ecological Monitoring Trawl Survey) conducted monthly at 36+ sites coastwide by the GADNR, Coastal Resources Division. These monthly monitoring events utilize a 40' trawl net and are designed to assess Penaeid shrimp and blue crab populations but can capture tiger shrimp as well. No tiger shrimp were captured in these surveys during the reporting period. Results of these surveys also suggest abundance of tiger shrimp in Georgia's sampled waters are low.

Standardized Sampling Results – Ecological Trawl Survey

1976 – 2012: No Tiger Shrimp observed

2013: 3 tiger shrimp

2014: 1 tiger shrimp

2015 - 2018: 0 tiger shrimp

2019: 1 tiger shrimp

2020 - 2022: No Tiger Shrimp observed



- Capture Location: Maiden Creek and St. Andrew Island (Glynn County)
- Two different tiger shrimp were reported by private citizens (both in Oct 2021).
- Positive ID verified by GADNR

Education and Outreach Efforts

General

- Staff have continued to make additional updates to the GADNR Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) web page on our website. The new website can be accessed at: <https://georgiawildlife.com/ans>
- Staff have developed and begun installing 2 new ANS signs at boat ramps/public access sites around Georgia to inform the public about how they can help prevent ANS introductions.



Trainings

- Staff with the USFWS, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and other groups joined the GADNR to host 2 ANS trainings during the reporting period. The first was a Watercraft Inspection/Decontamination Training (WIT) held at Red Top Mountain State Park (RTMSP) in May. Participants learned how to identify non-native species and inspect/decontaminate vessels. Participants included marina owners, federal and state employees, and private citizens.



A second training conducted at RTMSP in May was a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) training. Cindy Williams with USFWS joined National Park Service staff and other leaders to teach participants, comprised mostly of researchers, about how to develop plans to minimize the potential of introducing invasives during research activities.



Speaking Presentations

Conducting visits to schools and other educational outlets continues to be one of our utmost priorities, as we feel our best opportunity to impact future changes for ANS introductions is to invest our time in helping inform and guide today's youth. We spoke to over 4,700 students and adults across 18 schools/civic groups during the reporting period. Sixteen of these included talks utilizing the Travelling Trunk, which continues to be a valuable tool provided by GSARP.

