

PROJECT SUMMARY—

ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING OF MINNESOTA RIVER AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM

ACTIVITY 3: INVENTORY MINNESOTA RIVER BACKWATER FISH COMMUNITIES

Evaluate fish communities that utilize the diversity of backwater habitats found throughout the Minnesota River floodplain.

Sample methods—

We sampled the diversity of fish species present in backwater habitats using a suite of sampling gears including fyke nets, gill nets, seines, and boat electrofishing. We found the combination of boat electrofishing and seining is most efficient for sampling the greatest number of species from backwaters.



Important functions—

Fish utilize backwater habitats for multiple reasons including spawning, foraging, and refuge from high flows.



Bluegill and other sunfishes typically utilize backwater habitats out of the current to build their nests for spawning



Planktivores such as Paddlefish and Bigmouth Buffalo utilize plankton rich backwater habitats for feeding



Other species, such as Bowfin and Central Mudminnow, almost exclusively live in backwater habitats rather than the river channel



©MNDNR C. Iverson

Important outcome— Captured 51 fish species highlighting the importance of backwater habitats for Minnesota River fishes.



Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 03ib

July 2019 • Hutchinson.Fisheries@state.mn.us

