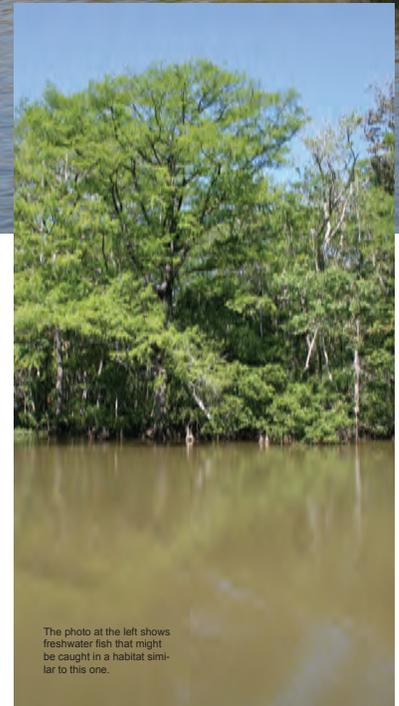




Photo at bottom left shows saltwater fish associated with the habitat shown in this photo.



The photo at the left shows freshwater fish that might be caught in a habitat similar to this one.



Fish assemblages of the Lower Apalachicola River Basin

Introduction:

While substantial research has been conducted to describe fish populations of Apalachicola Bay and the upper river, relatively little is known about populations of the tidal reaches of the river. This region covers a broad range of habitats from floodplain forest to salt marsh. Flow rate and location along the river determines whether saltwater or freshwater species will be present. In addition, river flow may play a role in recovery of the threatened Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), which relies on habitats in this river.

Objectives:

1. To describe the fish assemblage of the lower Apalachicola River Basin.
2. To determine the habitat usage and seasonality of juvenile Gulf sturgeon in the lower river.

Approach:

Sampling will take place year round on a monthly schedule from river mile 20, downstream to the mouth of the Apalachicola River. Small mesh seines, trawls and gill nets will be used to capture the fishes. All fish will be counted, measured, and released. Juvenile sturgeon will be tagged to help determine movement patterns.

Benefits:

The fish assemblage information will be useful to describe this understudied habitat and to determine minimum flows and levels

in the Apalachicola River. Without life history and habitat data on juvenile sturgeon in the river, managers are missing important information needed to help monitoring and recovery efforts.

Location:

Apalachicola River, Florida Panhandle

Contact:

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Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

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