

For a Healthy Great Lakes Ecosystem *Share What You See*

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - Wildlife Health Event Reporter

An online tool for the general public & volunteer groups to record environmental and wildlife health events around the Great Lakes

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative—Wildlife Health Event Reporter (GLRI - WHER)

With the input of members from the Great Lakes Botulism Coordination Network (GLBCN) organized by the US Environmental Protection Agency, this new citizen science application, GLRI-WHER, was launched and made available online at <http://glri.wher.org>.

It was designed for the everyday citizen to report individual events as well as for volunteer groups doing periodic monitoring and surveillance on the Great Lakes shorelines looking for evidence of avian botulism or algal bloom outbreaks.

Who Developed GLRI-WHER?

With support from a grant from the GLRI at EPA, the Wildlife Disease Information Node (WDIN), a partnership between the USGS Na-

tional Wildlife Health Center and the UW Madison Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, developed this user-friendly system.

Why Collect this Information?

Injured or dead wildlife, as well as evidence of algal blooms, can be an indication that an area is being affected by a Botulism outbreak. Over the years, incidences of botulism in the Great Lakes has increased steadily, and in the 1998-2001 period was responsible for the deaths of thousands of birds in Lakes Huron and Erie.

After being recorded, these observations of dead/sick wildlife and algae can be joined and viewed with other event sightings, enabling people to see where similar events are happening.

Who Wants this Information?

Scientists working in state, federal and non-profit agencies are looking for your help to identify events that could be important in research on Avian Botulism and protecting waterfowl from this disease.

This information is being used to promote a healthy Great Lakes ecosystem by:

- Assisting in detection of avian botulism, algal blooms outbreaks and other risks to human and animal health
- Aiding in timely communications to the public about beach health and water conditions
- Helping to design and coordinate disease control and prevention strategies



Figure 1: Points on the GLRI-WHER map depict reports of dead or sick wildlife.

Great Lakes Beachcombing Citizens

The ordinary Great Lakes beachcomber can help to improve this important ecosystem by reporting their sightings of sick/dead wild animals to GLRI-WHER. After creating an account, users can enter their observations (e.g. date, location, species of animal(s) involved) using a simple step-by-step form.

Furthermore, they can see their individual reporting history separately or joined with reports made by other users.

Great Lakes Volunteer Group Coordinators

In addition to offering a place for public individuals to enter animal and algal blooms observations, GLRI-WHER was also designed as an online solution for data collection for volunteer groups doing periodic monitoring and surveillance on Great Lakes shorelines.

Incorporating recommendations provided by GLBCN members, GLRI-WHER's online form was designed to specifically meet the data collection needs of any organized Great Lakes volunteer group. To begin using GLRI-WHER, volunteer coordinators need only request that their organization name be added to the established list within the application.

If your volunteer network already has a system or data management solution in place, get in touch and we will work on a process to get your data included. Your group will benefit from seeing your data joined with data contributed by the public and other Great Lakes volunteer groups.

The figure displays three screenshots of the GLRI-WHER application interface. The top screenshot shows the 'Add Animals Involved' form, which includes a 'Species*' dropdown, a search box for animal names, and a table for 'Event Reports'. The middle screenshot shows the 'Event Reports' table with columns for 'Event Date', 'Description', 'Reported By', 'Submitted Date', and 'Actions'. The bottom screenshot shows the 'Search Parameters' form, which includes filters for 'Select Events', 'Find events between' (with start and end dates), 'Select Species', 'Event Reports Types', and 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons.

| Event Date | Description | Reported By | Submitted Date | Actions |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 06/03/2010 | Inland Harbor | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:45:23 | View |
| 06/03/2010 | Seiners Point | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:44:31 | View |
| 06/03/2010 | Birch Point | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:41:59 | View |
| 06/03/2010 | Gulliver Creek | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:33:47 | View |
| 06/03/2010 | McDonald Lake | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:40:20 | View |
| 06/03/2010 | Seul Choix Bay | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:41:11 | View |
| 06/04/2010 | Fox Point | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:32:48 | View |
| 06/04/2010 | Rock River East | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:48:57 | View |
| 06/04/2010 | Rock River West | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:47:55 | View |
| 06/04/2010 | Big Knob | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:46:15 | View |
| 06/10/2010 | Seiners Point | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 10:01:20 | View |
| 06/10/2010 | Birch Point | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 10:08:41 | View |
| 06/10/2010 | Seul Choix Bay | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:52:28 | View |
| 06/10/2010 | McDonald Lake | Common CoastUser | 07/19/2011 09:50:36 | View |
| 07/19/2011 | | | 09:51:25 | View |
| 07/19/2011 | | | 09:58:15 | View |
| 07/19/2011 | | | 10:19:27 | View |
| 07/19/2011 | | | 10:18:39 | View |
| 07/19/2011 | | | 10:16:46 | View |
| 07/19/2011 | | | 10:10:35 | View |

Figure 2: Screenshots of GLRI-WHER features. From top to bottom: data entry form, reports, and search tool.

GLRI-WHER Features: Maps, Reports, Email Alerts and More

Once data are entered, they are available to registered users for review in reports, maps and querying tools.

Anyone can sign up to receive daily email alerts from the site or grab the URL for a GeoRSS feed to plug into their own feed readers to stay up to date as reports are made.

Getting Started – It is Easy

Beachcombing enthusiasts can start reporting as soon as they sign up at <http://glri.wher.org/>

Volunteer coordinators get in touch with us at botnet@wdin.org to set up your group account and learn how to manage it. Training assistance is available as needed.

This application is a beta version. If you encounter any problems let us know! You can also share your feedback with us at botnet@wdin.org.

For More Information

Visit the WHER web site at <http://glriwher.blogspot.com/p/about.html> or contact us:

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