

Identifying Research Priorities for Cisco in Lake Ontario

Cisco (*Coregonus artedii*) once supported important commercial fisheries in New York State and represented a primary prey fish in Lake Ontario. Today, however, their stocks are dramatically depleted and there is need to better understand and potentially restore their populations.

Communities around Lake Ontario rely heavily on the lake's fisheries resources for their economic, recreational, and cultural value. For example, anglers attracted to Lake Ontario and its tributaries have contributed more than \$114 million dollars to the New York economy (*Connelly and Brown, 2009*). Native Cisco (if more abundant) have the potential to provide a fishery and a more diverse, resilient, and sustainable forage base for predators such as King Salmon that draw anglers to Lake Ontario from around the world.

Multiple ongoing efforts are focused on Cisco, however, it became apparent that increased communication between research, management, and conservation groups could be beneficial to all. On May 31, 2018, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) co-organized a workshop to exchange ideas, provide updates, and contribute to breakout groups focused on Cisco in Lake Ontario.

More than 30 experts — representing Cornell University, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries, Queen's University, SUNY Brockport, University of Buffalo, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey — met at the Cornell University Biological Field Station in Bridgeport, NY, as part of a Cisco workshop project funded in part by NYSG and The Nature Conservancy.

Participant-ranked research priorities and considerations for future work and collaboration were identified and included in a workshop summary completed by the organizers for use by all participants in 2019.

NYSG is participating in addressing the need to connect disparate groups focused on Cisco research, monitoring, conservation, and management. The



*Cornell University Ph.D. candidate Ellen George shares a Cisco research update at the May 2018 Cisco workshop.
Photo: NYSG/Jesse Lepak*

2018 workshop generated synergy among key stakeholders and should facilitate improved understanding and management of Cisco into the future.

Partners:

- Cornell University
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries
- Queen's University
- State University of New York Brockport
- University of Buffalo
- U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U. S. Geological Survey

Funding:

- New York Sea Grant
- The Nature Conservancy

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Sustainable New York Fishes

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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1/2019