

ENVIRONMENT

ROB KANTER: ENVIRONMENTAL ALMANAC

Students write songs about aquatic threats



Today's Environmental Almanac comes to you courtesy of students from Whitney Stewart's class at Franklin Middle School in

Champaign.

This fall, some of Stewart's eighth-graders have been working with University of Illinois students enrolled in a service learning program called Community Stewardship through Environmental Education, which is offered cooperatively by the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Program, the UI Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Through this program, the university students have taught the middle school students about some of the invasive species that are disrupting aquatic ecosystems in Illinois and collaborated with them on stewardship projects designed to create public awareness about these creatures.

Some of the students from Franklin chose to communicate their messages in songs, the lyrics of which are printed below. These songs were also recorded for radio thanks to WILL audio producer Jason Croft, and you can hear them at environmentalalmanac.blogspot.com.

"Zebra Mussel Rap"

*Clogging up my drain,
nothing up my brain,
they keep reproducing,
they all look the same.
They clogging up the shower,
reproducing to the tenth
power.*

*Killing all the natives, this is
an invasion, they're unstoppable
like terminator salvation*

*Black and white stripes look-
ing like a clam,*

*Can we get rid of them? Like
Obama, "yes we can."*

*Sitting on the beach, razor
sharp and thin, Step on me and
imma cut yo skin.*

*Make sure to clean your boat,
Hose them down make them
drown in the moat.*

"Zebra Mussels"

(to the tune of "Single
Ladies," with apologies to
Beyonce)

All the Zebra Mussels (all the

Sea Lamprey

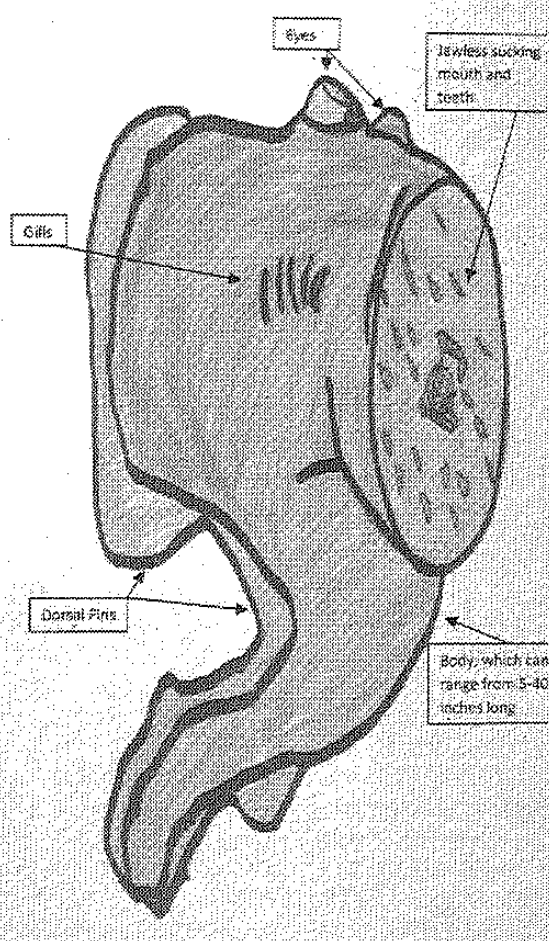
-Came from the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea

-Started causing problems within the 1800's

-Suck off fish's skin and scales; eating them alive

-Main food sources: Trout, Burbot and White Fish

-Biologists have found a chemical to kill them, but it can hurt other fish as well



The illustration of a sea lamprey.

Photo exhibit

Have the cold, gray days got you looking for indoor activities? Check out "The Song Birds of Urbana-Champaign," an exhibit of gorgeous photographs by local resident Ivan Petrov. The show will be on display during regular hours at the Urbana Park District's Anita Purves Nature Center until Dec. 23.

Zebra Mussels

All the Zebra Mussels (all the Zebra Mussels)

All the Zebra Mussels (all the Zebra Mussels)

All the Zebra Mussels (Now put your clams up!)

*Verse 1: Jump on the boat,
clog up them pipes then
turn off them lights. Acting
up, salt in my cup,*

*something that I like. Even
though we small,
we can clog them all, and you
can't get rid of us*

*Chorus: We came from East-
ern Europe, and now we're in
America!*

*And you can't even STOP us
& if you don't like us wash your
boat.*

*HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
(Wash your boat)*

*Verse 2: So how do you stop
us? You may ask. For there are*

many ways.

*Wash your boat with hot
water, 104 degrees and let it dry
five days and nights,
it will kill us all.*

Chorus -

Other Franklin students involved in the Community Stewardship program crafted visual messages to raise awareness about aquatic invasive species, including the four-panel cartoon and the illustration of a sea lamprey reprinted with today's column.

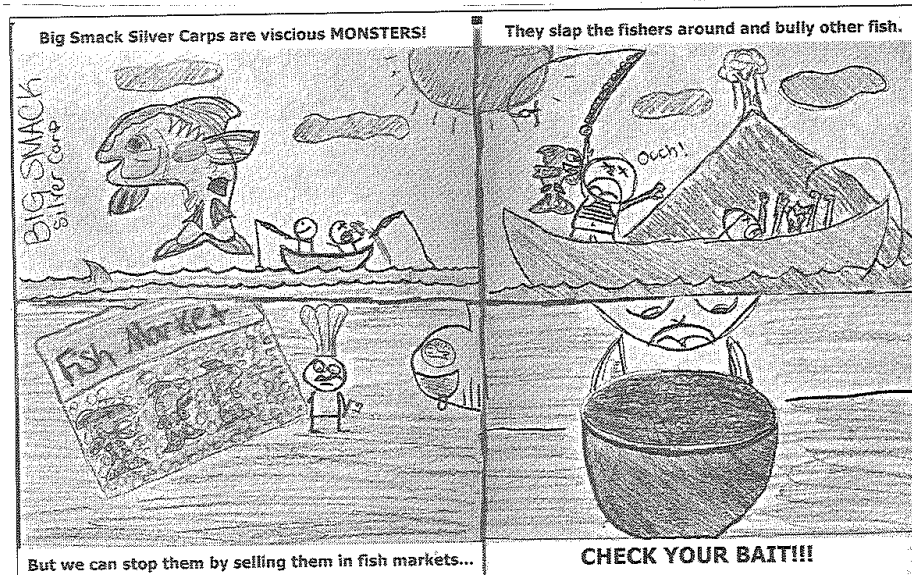
Pat Weatherhead, the lead instructor for the course in which the UI students are enrolled, has been pleased with the results of the partnership with local schools. "I'm delighted that the kids incorporated the science content they learned from the UI students and developed such creative and innovative approaches to educate the public about this important issue."

Rob Kanter is a senior writer with the Environmental Change Institute. Environmental Almanac is supported in part by the University of Illinois Office of Sustainability and can be heard on WILL-AM 580 at 4:45 and 6:45 p.m. Thursdays. The Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant contributed to this column.



Eighth-graders at Franklin Middle School in Champaign sing 'Zebra Mussels' to the tune of 'Single Ladies.'

Rob Kanter



A cartoon to raise awareness about aquatic invasive species.