

1 Title: Mapping Lake Sturgeon *Acipenser fulvescens* spawning habitat in the Upper
2 Tennessee River using side scan sonar

3

4 Authors: Daniel J. Walker^{1*} and J. Brian Alford¹

5

6 ¹ University of Tennessee, Department of Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington
7 Plant Sciences Building, 2431 Joe Johnson Drive, Knoxville, TN 37996

8

9 *Corresponding author email: dwalke44@vols.utk.edu

10

11 Short title: Mapping Lake Sturgeon spawning habitat with side scan sonar

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24 Abstract

25 The Lake Sturgeon *Acipenser fulvescens* is a fish species that was once
26 dispersed widely throughout the Mississippi River drainage but was largely extirpated
27 from the southern portions of its range by overfishing and habitat degradation. There is
28 an ongoing restoration effort to reestablish the Lake Sturgeon to rivers of the
29 Southeastern United States. Reintroduced juvenile Lake Sturgeon now occupy several
30 reservoirs along the Upper Tennessee River that are separated from each other by
31 hydroelectric dams. To complete their life history, Lake Sturgeon will migrate upriver
32 from reservoir habitats to more lotic habitats and spawn over coarse rocky substrate,
33 even in the tailwaters of impassable dams. We mapped the substrate of four tailwaters
34 that may be future Lake Sturgeon spawning locations using low-cost, consumer-grade
35 side scan sonar and a GIS. We used video imagery collected from random locations
36 within the mapped areas to validate our digitization of sonar imagery. We calculated the
37 area of four substrate classes displayed in the maps to assess the suitability of each of
38 the tailwaters for Lake Sturgeon spawning. The best spawning substrate (unembedded,
39 coarse, rocky substrate 6 – 25 cm in diameter) comprised 17.0 – 30.5% of the total area
40 mapped at each dam, while the least suitable substrate class (fine sediment <0.2 cm in
41 diameter) comprised 6.2 – 30.7% of the mapped areas. Our results suggest any future
42 spawning events by Lake Sturgeon below each of these dams are likely to encounter
43 some suitable spawning substrate patches, while management opportunities exist to
44 supplement other tailwater areas with suitable spawning substrate.

45

46

47 Introduction

48 In North America, there are ten extant species of Acipenseriforme fishes (Cech
49 and Doroshov 2004). Seven of the ten species are considered vulnerable, threatened,
50 or endangered by the IUCN (2015) and most have been afforded state or federal
51 protections in the U.S. (Birstein 1993; Jelks et al. 2008). Factors contributing to their
52 widespread decline include degradation of habitat by pollution, loss of connectivity to
53 spawning grounds, and overexploitation (Billard and Leconte 2001). The Lake
54 Sturgeon *Acipenser fulvescens* historically occurred in large rivers and lakes of the
55 Mississippi River, Great Lakes, and Hudson Bay drainages (USA) (Harkness and
56 Dymond 1961; Scott and Crossman 1973; Becker 1983; Etnier and Starnes 1993). This
57 species is potamodromous and only inhabits freshwater (Boreman 1997). The Lake
58 Sturgeon is believed to be largely extirpated from the southern reaches of the
59 Mississippi River, where numbers may have been low prior to anthropogenic alterations
60 to the populations (Etnier and Starnes 1993; Williamson 2003). Over 150,000 juvenile
61 Lake Sturgeon have been released in rivers across the Southeast since 2000, and
62 ongoing monitoring efforts are tracking Lake Sturgeon movement and growth (M.
63 Cantrell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, unpublished data). One of the major objectives
64 of this reintroduction effort is to facilitate the resurgence of successful natural spawning
65 and recruitment of Lake Sturgeon in the Tennessee River.

66 Lake Sturgeon spawning migrations appear to be largely triggered by rising
67 springtime water temperatures (Bruch and Binkowski 2002). In many river systems
68 occupied by Lake Sturgeon, the river is fractured by dams that are likely to be
69 impassable by migrating Lake Sturgeon (Auer 1996). However, Lake Sturgeon have

70 been found to successfully spawn in the tailwaters immediately downstream of dams
71 that they cannot surmount (LaHaye et al. 1992; McKinley et al. 1998; Caswell et al.
72 2004). The fertilized eggs are adhesive, so it is advantageous for Lake Sturgeon to
73 spawn over coarse rocky substrate (Auer and Baker 2002). The open interstitial spaces
74 between rocks provide cover for developing embryos, and larger particles are less likely
75 to be dislodged by high water flows which may reduce exposure of the embryos to
76 predation and physicochemical stressors (Threader et al. 1998).

77 When the reintroduced Tennessee River Lake Sturgeon reach sexual maturity,
78 they will attempt spawning migrations. When this occurs, many of the fish will encounter
79 one of four large hydroelectric dams on the Upper Tennessee River (Fort Loudoun,
80 Watts Bar, Chickamauga, and Nickajack dams) and some may attempt to spawn in the
81 tailwaters below those dams. To assess the suitability of these four tailwaters for future
82 Lake Sturgeon spawning events, we collected and processed side scan sonar imagery
83 of the riverbed in the tailwaters using consumer-grade fish finder units (Kaeser and Litts
84 2010). We used the sonar imagery and reference video imagery to create predictive
85 maps of the substrate in the tailwaters. Our objectives were to 1) classify the substrate
86 found in the tailwaters and score the substrate using the Lake Sturgeon HSM, and 2) to
87 estimate the total area of each class at each dam. Using those estimations, we then
88 assessed the suitability of each tailwater for future Lake Sturgeon spawning events.

89

90

91

92

93 <A>Methods

94 *Study sites.*—We conducted sonar surveys of the tailwaters immediately downstream of
95 the four upstream-most dams on the mainstem Tennessee River, listed here in order
96 from upstream to downstream: Fort Loudoun dam, Watts Bar dam, Chickamauga dam,
97 and Nickajack dam (Figure 1). For the purposes of this study, we refer to the tailwater
98 sites by the name of the dam immediately upstream, although the site is actually a part
99 of the next reservoir downstream (e.g., what we refer to as the Fort Loudoun tailwater is
100 a part of Watts Bar reservoir, etc.). Fort Loudoun dam is located on the Tennessee
101 River in Loudoun County, Tennessee (35.791 °N, 84.243 °W). The dam was closed in
102 1943, and contains four hydroelectric generating units with a combined capacity of 162
103 MW. The dam measures 37.19 m tall by 1277.11 m wide. Watts Bar dam is located at
104 the boundary between Meigs and Rhea Counties, Tennessee (35.621 °N, 84.782 °W).
105 Watts Bar dam was completed in 1943, and contains 5 hydroelectric generating units
106 with a combined capacity of 182 MW. Watts Bar dam is 34.14 m tall and 902.21 m wide.
107 Chickamauga dam is located in Hamilton County, Tennessee (35.105 °N, 85.229 °W).
108 Chickamauga dam was closed in 1940, and houses four hydroelectric generating units
109 with a combined capacity of 199 MW. The dam is 39.32 m tall by 1767.84 m wide. The
110 descriptive information for each of the dams was accessed at the Tennessee Valley
111 Authority's website (available online at [https://www.tva.gov/Energy/Our-Power-](https://www.tva.gov/Energy/Our-Power-System/Hydroelectric/)
112 [System/Hydroelectric/](https://www.tva.gov/Energy/Our-Power-System/Hydroelectric/)).

113 Each survey consisted of parallel transects using a total sonar beam width of
114 76.2 m. Each transect began as close to the dam as conditions allowed, and continued
115 downstream for approximately two river kilometers (RKM). Our sonar surveys of each

116 tailwater were completed between 10 May 2015 and 26 May 2015, when flows had
117 subsided from the higher spring releases.

118

119 *Sonar imagery collection.*—We utilized the sonar imagery collection and geoprocessing
120 procedure developed by Kaeser and Litts (2008; 2010) and Kaeser et al. (2013) with
121 some modification for sonar imagery collection and processing. We collected the sonar
122 imagery of the substrate in each tailwater from approximately 25 m from the base of
123 each dam to approximately 2 RKM downstream in parallel, longitudinal transects. We
124 utilized both the side scan sonar and global positioning system (GPS) capabilities of a
125 Humminbird® 1199ci HD SI fishfinder unit (Johnson Outdoors Marine Electronics,
126 Racine, WI). We made the decision to utilize the GPS data from the Humminbird unit
127 after preliminary tests had demonstrated the accuracy of the Humminbird unit when
128 compared to GPS data collected at the same test locations with a Garmin® GPSmap
129 76CS handheld GPS unit (Garmin International, Inc., Olathe, KS). All of the surveys
130 were conducted in a 4.62 m aluminum johnboat with a 60 hp Yamaha® outboard jet
131 motor (Yamaha Corporation, Hamamatsu, Japan). We used a custom-built, adjustable
132 aluminum arm to mount the sonar transducer in the bow of the boat, where the sonar
133 imagery would not be affected by propeller wash (Figure 2). As the GPS data is
134 collected from the Humminbird® unit and not the sonar transducer, all of the final sonar
135 imagery products are displayed approximately 4 m upstream of their true physical
136 location.

137 To collect the sonar imagery, we set the side scan sonar to a beam width of 38.1
138 m to each side. We set the sonar frequency to 455 kHz. We used the default screen

139 scroll speed. We programmed an interval timer alarm to sound when small overlaps in
140 the scrolling imagery occurred before we began image collection at each site. We used
141 intervals of 18 – 27 s, which were determined by environmental conditions at the
142 tailwater at the time of survey (e.g., the current flow conditions at each dam and the
143 number of personnel and equipment in the boat). We also ensured that the unit was
144 continuously collecting trackpoints, which are waypoints collected at 3-s intervals. Once
145 the settings were finalized, we began the first downstream transect to collect the sonar
146 imagery. We began the first transect at each tailwater positioned so that one of the
147 banks of the river was evident in the sonar imagery. We would position the boat as
148 close as conditions safely allowed to the dam, then turn downstream and allow the
149 sonar imagery collected during the turn to clear. After the image was aligned with the
150 direction of the boat, we began capturing sequential, overlapping sonar images of
151 the transect and saved them to a removable 32 GB memory card. We proceeded
152 downstream for each transect, maneuvering the boat along the contours of the river and
153 avoiding obstacles when necessary. We referenced the waypoints marked on the map
154 screen of the Humminbird® unit periodically when the transects were in open water in
155 an attempt to maintain equal width between transects and ensure the most even sonar
156 cover of the width of the river. Once the entire width of the tailwater had been covered
157 by a series of parallel transects, we exported all of the waypoint and trackpoint GPS
158 data to the memory card for processing into sonar image mosaics.

159

160 *Sonar data processing.*—To process the individual sonar images into mosaics for each
161 transect, we first batch-clipped the sonar imagery using the program IrfanView (Irfan

162 Skilijan 2015) to remove the extraneous collar saved with the sonar imagery when
163 captured. We then uploaded the waypoints associated with each of the image captures
164 to ArcMap 10.0 (ESRI, Redlands, CA). The waypoints were converted to Universal
165 Transverse Mercator (UTM) projection and displayed for inspection. We next uploaded
166 the trackpoints collected during the surveys and transformed them to UTM as well. We
167 deleted the trackpoints collected during the positioning of the boat between each
168 transect, so that we had a series of waypoints associated with the sonar images and the
169 trackpoints that defined the path of the boat as it collected the sonar imagery for each
170 transect. We then created a trackline from the trackpoints using the B-spline function in
171 the ET GeoWizards add-on (ET SpatialTechniques, Pretoria, South Africa) in ArcMap.

172 We used the 'sonar tools' toolbox in ArcGIS 10.0 (available for download online
173 at <http://www.fws.gov/panamacity/sonartools.html>) to process the raw sonar images into
174 georeferenced sonar image mosaics. We processed each transect individually. First, we
175 used the sonar tools to batch identify the overlap points in each sequential image, and
176 then stitched the images together at the overlap points to generate an image mosaic.
177 Next, we generated a control point network with the associated trackline and waypoint
178 information for that transect, which we applied to the raw sonar image mosaic to
179 georeference the imagery. We saved the spatially-explicit georeferenced sonar image
180 mosaics for each transect as individual raster layers for display adjusting for improved
181 clarity and the digitization process.

182

183 *Ground data collection and processing.*—Once we had created the georeferenced
184 sonar image mosaics for each of the transects completed at each tailwater, we loaded

185 all of the raster layers into ArcMap over a National Agriculture Imagery Program (USDA
186 2014) orthoimage of the tailwater (natural color, 1 m ground sample distance, 6 m
187 horizontal accuracy). We then digitized by hand a polygon that encircled all of the area
188 mapped by the sonar survey transects bounded by the river bank displayed in the NAIP
189 image, to create a single polygon encompassing the entire area mapped by the sonar
190 surveys at each tailwater. With this polygon, we used the random point generator tool in
191 ArcMap to randomly generate 50 points within the polygon outlining the area mapped.
192 We set a buffer of 20 m radius around each point to reduce overlap of the points and
193 ensure we could collect reference data at each point from a boat that was likely to be
194 moving continuously during ground data collection. We converted the location data of
195 each point at each tailwater from UTM to GPS coordinates, and revisited each tailwater
196 to collect reference ground data of the substrate (Congalton and Plourde 2002).

197 We went to each of the 50 randomized points located in each tailwater and
198 deployed a SplashCam® Deep Blue Pro underwater camera system (Ocean Systems,
199 Inc., Everett, WA) to record video imagery of the substrate at each point. We saved all
200 of the imagery recorded at each point with a Sony® DCR-DVD203 HandyCam (Sony
201 Corporation, Tokyo, Japan). We reviewed the images captured at each of the locations
202 on a computer in a laboratory setting, so that we could slow down and rewind the
203 images to ensure accurate classification of the substrate at each location. We utilized a
204 classification scheme that we developed from a combination of our observations of
205 tailwaters at Douglas and Cherokee dams, made prior to our sonar surveys when the
206 releases from the dams were minimal and exposed much of the substrate immediately
207 below the dams, and including classes of substrate we expected to encounter (Table 1).

208 *Substrate classification and assessment.*—We began with an initial classification
209 scheme that contained 10 classes of substrate (Table 1). Additionally, we attempted to
210 define the classes such that if we were unable to generate sonar image maps of
211 sufficient resolution to accurately interpret the various classes from the sonar imagery,
212 we could collapse the original substrate classes into fewer more broadly defined
213 classifications. We conducted analog image interpretation and digitization of the various
214 substrate classes listed in Table 1 (Narumalani et al. 2002). We conducted all of the
215 digitization at the raster resolution scale (1:939). We made decisions about classifying
216 the substrate patches based on the intensity of the sonar reflection (brighter images
217 indicating harder substrate) and texture of nearby sonar imagery. We used different
218 colors corresponding to each of the classes listed in Table 1, and digitized all patches
219 as separate polygon shapefile layers.

220 We assigned the original ten substrate classes used in the digitization and video
221 image classification scores of 1 – 4 based on the scoring in the Lake Sturgeon HSM, to
222 assign biological relevance to the substrate classes and simplify validation. Once we
223 had completed digitizing patches of substrate following the classification scheme in
224 Table 1, we overlaid the waypoint data and associated substrate classifications of the
225 ground data reference points. We calculated an accuracy assessment of the first
226 substrate maps by generating an error matrix. Given the low accuracy values found in
227 our error matrix, we created second editions of the substrate maps using four more
228 broadly defined substrate classes and scores from (Table 2). We reclassified the
229 substrate observed in the ground data video imagery into the four classes of substrate
230 from the HSM and then overlaid the ground data on the georeferenced sonar image

231 mosaics. We then completed a second analog digitization of the substrate, using the
232 four substrate classes displayed in the sonar imagery and in the video imagery. We
233 used the sonar imagery as a guide to identify boundaries among the four substrate
234 patches. As we used both the reference ground data and the sonar imagery in creating
235 the second edition maps, we did not calculate a second error matrix. All of the ground
236 data points were contained in polygons of their respective substrate type.

237

238 <A>Results

239 First edition substrate maps

240 We generated georeferenced sonar image mosaics for each transect conducted
241 at each of the four dams. We used between 6 and 9 transects to cover the width of the
242 river at each dam, and while the coverage was imperfect, the gaps in the sonar imagery
243 from either gaps in the coverage of the transects or errors in the image processing
244 procedures were of a small enough area to not interfere with the digitization process
245 (Figure 3). We digitized the substrate patches we observed in the sonar imagery using
246 polygons corresponding to the substrate classifications listed in Table 1 (Figure 4). We
247 digitized substrate patches across transects where needed, and used underlying
248 transects to interpret substrate present in the data gaps of some transects, particularly
249 when the overlaying image had lost resolution at the edges of the transect. Our first
250 interpretations of the sonar maps suggested that fine substrate particles (< 0.2 mm
251 diameter; indicated on each map in beige) were the predominant substrate at each of
252 the dams. We observed that bedrock was present immediately below each of the dams

253 After we digitized the complete mapped area at each of the four dams, we
254 overlaid the ground reference data over the collected polygons of substrate patches to
255 assess the accuracy of our digitization. We compared the data in the attribute table for
256 the reference points to the digitized patch underneath the point, and recorded both our
257 classifications of the substrate type from the sonar imagery and our classifications of the
258 substrate in the video imagery. We input this information into an error matrix to calculate
259 our accuracy as overall accuracy, producer's accuracy, and user's accuracy (Congalton
260 and Plourde 2002). Our overall accuracy ranged from 29% for the first digitization of the
261 substrate at Watts Bar tailwater to 38% for the first digitization of the substrate at Fort
262 Loudoun (Table 3). The accuracy results trended upward in the order of maps digitized,
263 with the lowest accuracy in the map we digitized first and the highest accuracy in the
264 map we digitized last. These low accuracy measurements led us to attempt a second
265 edition of the maps which incorporated both the ground reference data and the sonar
266 imagery in the digitization process.

267

268 Second edition substrate maps

269 When we developed substrate maps the second time, we overlaid the
270 groundtruthing data points on the georeferenced but unclassified sonar image mosaics.
271 We then digitized new polygons using the underlying sonar imagery to inform our
272 delineation of the boundaries among the patches of the four substrate classes found in
273 the video imagery. The second edition of the substrate maps showed similar patterns to
274 what we observed in the first edition maps: at the base of the dam, there was an area of

275 bedrock, and towards the downstream end of the mapped areas there appeared to be
276 an increase in the finer sediment classes (Figure 5).

277 Once we had generated the second edition substrate maps, we used the area
278 calculator function in ArcMap to assess the total area (in square meters) of each of the
279 four substrate classes at each of the four dams (Figure 6a). As the river width increased
280 at the more downstream tailwaters, we adjusted for total area mapped in the 2 RKM
281 survey locations by calculating the area of each substrate patch as a percentage of the
282 total area mapped at that dam (Figure 6b). We visually assessed the charts for trends in
283 the areas of the substrate classes. There is an upstream-to-downstream increasing
284 trend in the total area of the best spawning substrate (cobble-boulder) across the
285 tailwaters even when total width of the river is taken into consideration.

286

287 <A>Discussion

288 We utilized a process of collecting side scan sonar imagery and GPS data that
289 has been recently developed to take advantage of the falling costs of consumer grade
290 sonar equipment marketed towards recreational anglers. This low-cost option allowed
291 us to overcome several hurdles typical of sonar projects to map underwater habitat.
292 While sonar mapping of aquatic habitat is not a brand new methodology, many side
293 scan sonar units were developed to conduct benthic habitat mapping of marine
294 environments, and the equipment and software required to process the imagery can be
295 prohibitively expensive or developed for use in deeper environments than those we
296 encountered in the tailwaters we surveyed (Cochrane and Lafferty 2002; Lathrop et al.
297 2006; Brown and Collier 2008; Venteris and May 2014). Additionally, the use of

298 underwater camera systems to collect reference data (e.g., Kaeser et al. 2012)
299 significantly improves on the time required for data collection over the use of
300 SCUBA/snorkel surveys (e.g. Powers et al. 2015) or sediment dredging (e.g., Lathrop et
301 al. 2006; Venteris and May 2014), at a cost of physical examination of the substrate for
302 classification. The complete procedure detailed here was relatively quick, requiring
303 approximately one day in the field to collect the sonar and reference imagery for each
304 dam, and approximately three days to process and interpret the sonar and reference
305 imagery for each tailwater. We anticipate the processing time to reduce considerably as
306 we continue to utilize this procedure for substrate mapping, and the tradeoff between
307 resolution in imagery classification and speed of data collection and processing makes
308 the procedure we used a valuable exploratory tool for classifying benthic habitat.

309 The overall goal of this project was to assess at some scale the substrate in the
310 dam tailwaters we mapped so that we could judge how appropriate the tailwaters were
311 for future Lake Sturgeon spawning events. After our first attempt at interpreting the
312 sonar imagery, our initial accuracy estimates were inadequate (29-38%). We attribute
313 this to differences between the resolution of the imagery we collected and the resolution
314 necessary to utilize our initial, fine scale classification scheme. As our initial accuracy
315 measurements were unacceptable, we revised our techniques by including video
316 imagery to increase our confidence in our substrate interpretation and digitization
317 results. Subsequently, by collapsing our original, uninformative substrate classification
318 scheme into the final coarse scale version, and using a hybrid approach to creating the
319 substrate maps presented in Figure 5, we improved our ability to describe the available

320 substrates in Tennessee River tailwater environments, while simultaneously
321 streamlining our assessment of suitable spawning habitat for Lake Sturgeon.

322 As we have generated a census of the available substrate at these dams, we did
323 not require statistical testing to interpolate results. We noted that cobble-boulder
324 substrate area was greater in the tailwaters of the two most downstream dams,
325 Chickamauga and Nickajack. Annual resampling efforts have found that larger, older
326 Lake Sturgeon appear to inhabit the reservoirs below Chickamauga and Nickajack
327 dams relative to the reservoirs downstream of Watts Bar and Fort Loudoun dams (M.
328 Cantrell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, unpublished data). This is likely an artifact of
329 the reintroduction process, as the majority of Lake Sturgeon have been reintroduced
330 into Fort Loudoun reservoir near Knoxville, TN, upstream of Fort Loudoun dam. We
331 believe that the Lake Sturgeon have slowly moved downstream from the reintroduction
332 location, so that the fish that have made it the farthest from the reintroduction point (i.e.,
333 to Nickajack and Guntersville reservoirs, downstream of Chickamauga and Nickajack
334 dams, respectively) are likely to be the oldest fish. As older fish are typically larger,
335 these Lake Sturgeon are also the ones likely to reach reproductive maturity and attempt
336 spawning first (Becker 1984). Our results suggest that if that scenario became reality,
337 the Lake Sturgeon that aggregated in the tailwaters below Chickamauga and Nickajack
338 dams would encounter the greatest areas of high quality spawning substrate. The
339 conditions we have presented in our maps here suggest that those first early spawning
340 attempts by Lake Sturgeon in the Tennessee River would be bolstered by the
341 availability of suitable spawning substrate in the tailwaters of those two dams.

342 Once aggregations of reproductively mature Lake Sturgeon have been found,
343 management actions can be taken to further augment successful reproduction. The
344 construction of artificial spawning reefs, a management tool that has been used with
345 success to augment Lake Sturgeon spawning and recruitment in other systems, may be
346 useful in the continued support of natural Lake Sturgeon recruitment to the Tennessee
347 River (LaHaye et al. 1992; Johnson et al. 2006; Roseman et al. 2011; Bouckaert et al.
348 2014; McLean et al. 2015). Artificial reefs can be developed in areas where
349 reproductively mature Lake Sturgeon aggregate and the relevant water conditions are
350 suitable for spawning. As we did not find significant differences at a coarse scale in the
351 overall area of optimal spawning substrate among the dam tailwaters we surveyed, we
352 recommend continued monitoring of these tailwaters and other potential migration
353 barriers in the Tennessee River system for the presence of Lake Sturgeon when water
354 conditions are suitable for spawning. Once an area has been found to support spawning
355 Lake Sturgeon, further management actions, such mapping of the substrate at finer
356 resolutions and the construction of artificial reefs can then be taken. The data we have
357 provided here represent a baseline assessment of the substrate across these tailwaters
358 where future Lake Sturgeon spawning events may occur. This information should be
359 incorporated into the planning of any artificial spawning reef construction efforts.

360

361

362

363

364

365 <A>Acknowledgements

366 Acknowledgement:

367 The information, data, or work presented herein was funded in part by the Office of
368 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), U.S. Department of Energy, under
369 Award Number DE-EE0002668 and the Hydro Research Foundation.

370

371 Disclaimer:

372 The information, data or work presented herein was funded in part by an agency of the
373 United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor any agency
374 thereof, nor any of their employees, makes and warranty, express or implied, or
375 assumes and legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or
376 usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents
377 that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific
378 commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or
379 otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation or
380 favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and
381 opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the
382 United States Government or any agency thereof.

383

384 We would like to acknowledge the valuable technical assistance we received from Dr.
385 Adam Kaeser, and we deeply appreciate his free publication of training materials
386 pertaining to the procedures we used. We would also like to acknowledge the
387 constructive input we received on this project from the Southeastern Lake Sturgeon

388 Working Group. Financial support for this project came from the Hydro Research
389 Foundation graduate student fellowship and the Organization of Fish and Wildlife
390 Information Managers student scholarship awarded to D.J. Walker. We greatly
391 appreciate the members of the Fisheries Research Laboratory at the University of
392 Tennessee Institute of Agriculture for their assistance in collection of the data,
393 especially Todd Amacker, Kenneth McMahan, Hayley Gotwald, Keith Garner, and
394 Justin Wolbert.

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

408

409

410 <A>References

- 411 Auer, N. and E. Baker. 2002. Duration and drift of larval lake sturgeon in the Sturgeon
412 River, Michigan. *Journal of Applied Ichthyology* 18(4-6):557-564.
- 413 Auer, N. A. 1996. Importance of habitat and migration to sturgeons with emphasis on
414 lake sturgeon. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 53(1):152-
415 160.
- 416 Becker, G. C. 1983. Lake Sturgeon. Pages 221-226 *in* The Fishes of Wisconsin.
417 University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- 418 Billard, R. and G. Lecointre. 2001. Biology and conservation of sturgeon and paddlefish.
419 *Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries* 10(4):355-392.
- 420 Birstein, V. J. 1993. Sturgeons and paddlefishes: threatened fishes in need of
421 conservation. *Conservation Biology* 7(4):773-787.
- 422 Boreman, J. 1997. Sensitivity of North American sturgeons and paddlefish to fishing
423 mortality. *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 48(4):399-405.
- 424 Bouckaert, E. K., N. A. Auer, E. F. Roseman and J. Boase. 2014. Verifying success of
425 artificial spawning reefs in the St. Clair–Detroit River System for lake sturgeon
426 (*Acipenser fulvescens* Rafinesque, 1817). *Journal of Applied Ichthyology*
427 30(6):1393-1401.
- 428 Bruch, R., and F. Binkowski. 2002. Spawning behavior of Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser*
429 *fulvescens*). *Journal of Applied Ichthyology* 18(6):570-579.
- 430 Brown, C. J. and J. S. Collier. 2008. Mapping benthic habitat in regions of gradational
431 substrata: an automated approach utilising geophysical, geological, and
432 biological relationships. *Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science* 78(1):203-214.

433 Caswell, N. M., D. L. Peterson, B. A. Manny and G. W. Kennedy. 2004. Spawning by
434 lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) in the Detroit River. *Journal of Applied*
435 *Ichthyology* 20(1):1-6.

436 Cech, J. J. and S. I. Doroshov. 2004. Environmental requirements, preferences, and
437 tolerance limits of North American sturgeons. Pages 73-86 *in* LeBreton, G. T. O.,
438 Beamish, F. W. H. & McKinley, R. S. editors. *Sturgeon and Paddlefish of North*
439 *America*. Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht, Netherlands.

440 Cochrane, G. R. and K. D. Lafferty. 2002. Use of acoustic classification of sidescan
441 sonar data for mapping benthic habitat in the Northern Channel Islands,
442 California. *Continental Shelf Research* 22(5):683-690.

443 Congalton, R. G., and L. C. Plourde. Quality assurance and accuracy assessment of
444 information derived from remotely sensed data. Pages 349-363 *in* J.D. Bossler,
445 J.R. Jensen, R.B. McMaster and C. Rizos, editors. *Manual of Geospatial Science*
446 *and Technology*. Taylor and Francis, Inc., New York, New York.

447 Etnier, D. E. and W. C. Starnes. 1993. Lake Sturgeon. Pages 99-101 *in* *The Fishes of*
448 *Tennessee*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tennessee.

449 Harkness, W. J. K. and J. R. Dymond. 1961. *The Lake Sturgeon*. Ontario Department of
450 *Lands and Forests, Fish and Wildlife Branch*, Toronto, Canada.

451 IUCN. 2015. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. Version 2015-5.
452 <http://www.iucnredlist.org>.

453 Jelks, H. L., S. J. Walsh, N. M. Burkhead, S. Contreras-Balderas, E. Diaz-Pardo, D. A.
454 Hendrickson, J. Lyons, N. E. Mandrak, F. McCormick, J. S. Nelson, S. P.
455 Platania, B. A. Porter, C. B. Renaud, J. J. Schmitter-Soto, E. B. Taylor and M. L.

456 Warren. 2008. Conservation status of imperiled North American freshwater and
457 diadromous fishes. *Fisheries* 33(8):372-407.

458 Johnson, J. H., S. R. LaPan, R. M. Klindt and A. Schiavone. 2006. Lake sturgeon
459 spawning on artificial habitat in the St. Lawrence River. *Journal of Applied*
460 *Ichthyology* 22(6):465-470.

461 Kaeser, A. J. and T. L. Litts. 2008. An assessment of deadhead logs and large woody
462 debris using side scan sonar and field surveys in streams of southwest Georgia.
463 *Fisheries* 33(12):589-597.

464 Kaeser, A. J. and T. L. Litts. 2010. A novel technique for mapping habitat in navigable
465 streams using low-cost side scan sonar. *Fisheries* 35(4):163-174.

466 Kaeser, A. J., T. L. Litts and T. W. Tracy. 2013. Using low-cost side-scan sonar for
467 benthic mapping throughout the lower Flint River, Georgia, USA. *River Research*
468 *and Applications* 29(5):634-644.

469 LaHaye, M., A. Branchaud, M. Gendron, R. Verdon and R. Fortin. 1992. Reproduction,
470 early life history, and characteristics of the spawning grounds of the lake
471 sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) in Des Prairies and L'Assomption rivers, near
472 Montreal, Quebec. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 70(9):1681-1689.

473 Lathrop, R. G., M. Cole, N. Senyk and B. Butman. 2006. Seafloor habitat mapping of
474 the New York Bight incorporating sidescan sonar data. *Estuarine, Coastal and*
475 *Shelf Science* 68(1-2):221-230.

476 McKinley, S., G. Van Der Kraak and G. Power. 1998. Seasonal migrations and
477 reproductive patterns in the lake sturgeon, *Acipenser fulvescens*, in the vicinity of

478 hydroelectric stations in northern Ontario. *Environmental Biology of Fishes*
479 51(3):245-256.

480 McLean, M., E. F. Roseman, J. J. Pritt, G. Kennedy and B. A. Manny. 2015. Artificial
481 reefs and reef restoration in the Laurentian Great Lakes. *Journal of Great Lakes*
482 *Research* 41(1):1-8.

483 Narumalani, S., J.T. Hlday, and J.R. Jensen. Information extraction from remotely
484 sensed data. Pages 298-324 *in* D. Bossler, J.R. Jensen, R.B. McMaster and C.
485 Rizos, editors. *Manual of Geospatial Science and Technology*. Talor and Francis,
486 Inc., New York, New York.

487 Powers, J., S.K. Brewer, J.M. Long, and T. Campbell. 2015. Evaluating the use of side-
488 scan sonar for detecting freshwater mussel beds in turbid river environments.
489 *Hydrobiologia* 743: 127-137.

490 Roseman, E. F., B. Manny, J. Boase, M. Child, G. Kennedy, J. Craig, K. Soper and R.
491 Drouin. 2011. Lake sturgeon response to a spawning reef constructed in the
492 Detroit river. *Journal of Applied Ichthyology* 27:66-76.

493 Scott, W. B. and E. J. Crossman. 1973. Lake sturgeon. Pages 82-89 *in* *Freshwater*
494 *Fishes of Canada*. Fisheries Research Board of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

495 Threader, R.W., R.J. Pope, and P.R.H. Shaap. 1998. Development of a habitat
496 suitability index model for Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*). Report number
497 H-07015.01—0012. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

498 USDA. 2014. National Agriculture Imagery Program. USDA Farm Service Agency Aerial
499 Photography Field Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

500 Venteris, E. R. and C. J. May. 2014. Cost-effective mapping of benthic habitats in inland
501 reservoirs through split-beam sonar, indicator kriging, and historical geologic
502 data. PLoS One 9(4):e95940. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0095940.

503 Williamson, D. F. 2003. Caviar and conservation: status, management, and trade of
504 North American sturgeon and paddlefish. TRAFFIC North America, World
505 Wildlife Fund. Washington, D.C.

506

507

508

509

510

511

512

513

514

515

516

517

518

519

520

521

522 Tables

523 *Table 1.* Initial classification scheme used when digitizing substrate patches in the first
524 edition substrate maps and video reference imagery.

Substrate	Characterization	Spawning Habitat Score
Bedrock	> 75% exposed bedrock	2
Mixed Rocky	≤ 50% coarse + fine matrix	3
Rocky Coarse	Discernible individual particles > 25 cm diameter	4
Rocky Fine	Particles 25 > x > 1 cm diameter	4
Riprap	Artificially placed bank stabilizing rock	4
Fine	> 75% sand, silt, clay particles ≤ 2 mm	1
Biological	Algae, aquatic macrophytes, zebra mussel reefs	1
Anthropogenic	Anthropogenic substrate, not riprap (e.g. concrete)	1
No Data/Sonar Shadow	No sonar image data	
No Data - Dam	No image at beginning of transect	

525

526

527

528

529

530

531

532 *Table 2.* Final substrate classification scheme.

Particle	Size (cm diameter)	Score
Cobble-Boulder	6 – 25	Highest
Gravel	0.2 – 6	
Bedrock	>25	
Fine	<0.2	Lowest

533

534

535

536

537

538

539

540

541

542

543

544

545

546

547

548 *Table 3.* Error matrices comparing the agreement between the first edition substrate maps and the ground reference
 549 imagery. The classifications (1-4) correspond to the scores assigned the various substrate types in Table 1.

Fort Loudoun	1	2	3	4	Row Total
1	5	2	0	0	7
2	5	5	6	0	16
3	1	0	2	0	3
4	1	5	4	0	10
Column Total	12	12	12	0	36

Watts Bar	1	2	3	4	Row Total
1	1	2	1	0	4
2	1	2	0	0	3
3	1	1	2	0	4
4	1	9	0	0	10
Column Total	4	14	3	0	21

Chickamauga	1	2	3	4	Row Total
1	4	6	3	4	17
2	4	0	0	0	4
3	3	0	2	1	6
4	1	9	0	9	19
Column Total	12	15	5	14	46

Fort Loudoun	Producer's Accuracy	User's Accuracy	Overall Accuracy
1	0.42	0.71	0.33
2	0.42	0.31	
3	0.17	0.67	
4	1	0	

Watts Bar	Producer's Accuracy	User's Accuracy	Overall Accuracy
1	0.25	0.5	0.24
2	0.14	0.67	
3	0.67	0.5	
4	0	0	

Chickamauga	Producer's Accuracy	User's Accuracy	Overall Accuracy
1	0.33	0.24	0.33
2	0	0	
3	0.40	0.33	
4	0.64	0.47	

Nickajack	1	2	3	4	Row Total
1	4	3	0	0	7
2	0	0	0	1	1
3	3	1	2	0	6
4	9	14	1	10	34
Column Total	16	18	3	11	48

Nickajack	Producer's Accuracy	User's Accuracy	Overall Accuracy
1	0.25	0.57	0.33
2	0	0	
3	0.67	0.33	
4	0.91	0.29	

550 Figure Captions.

551 *Figure 1.* Map showing location of TVA hydroelectric dams on the Upper Tennessee,
552 French Broad, and Holston Rivers. The four dams where we conducted sonar surveys
553 are Fort Loudoun, Watts Bar, Chickamauga, and Nickajack dams.

554

555 *Figure 2.* The sonar transducer arm we fabricated. The arm allowed us to place the
556 sonar transducer in the bow of the boat, which reduced the interference of the propeller
557 wash on the final sonar imagery. The transducer is removable, and the arm is
558 adjustable for depth as well as raised out of the water for travel at speed in the boat.

559 Photo credit: Todd Amacker.

560

561 *Figure 3.* The sonar image mosaics for each transect conducted at each dam. We
562 conducted multiple parallel downstream transects at each dam to cover the width of the
563 river with 78.2 m sonar width passes. Dams are shown clockwise from top left: Fort
564 Loudoun dam, Watts Bar dam, Chickamauga dam, Nickajack dam. All four maps
565 displayed at 1:17000 scale, and the direction has been adjusted to orient the upstream
566 portion of the image at the top.

567

568 *Figure 4.* First edition substrate maps. Each map was digitized by hand at the raster
569 resolution using the classification scheme outlined in Table 1. Dams are shown
570 clockwise from top left: Fort Loudoun dam, Watts Bar dam, Chickamauga dam,
571 Nickajack dam. All four maps displayed at 1:17000 scale, and the direction has been
572 adjusted to orient the upstream portion of the image at the top.

573 *Figure 5.* Second edition of substrate maps. These maps were digitized using the
574 classification scheme in Table 2. Dams are shown clockwise from top left: Fort Loudoun
575 dam, Watts Bar dam, Chickamauga dam, Nickajack dam. All four maps displayed at
576 1:17000 scale, and the direction has been adjusted to orient the upstream portion of the
577 image at the top.

578

579 *Figure 6.* Areal measurements of the various substrate classes identified in the second
580 edition maps developed using both the sonar and ground reference imagery at each
581 tailwater. A) the total area of each class at each tailwater; B) the area of each substrate
582 class as a percentage of the total area mapped at each tailwater.

583

584

585

586

587

588

589

590

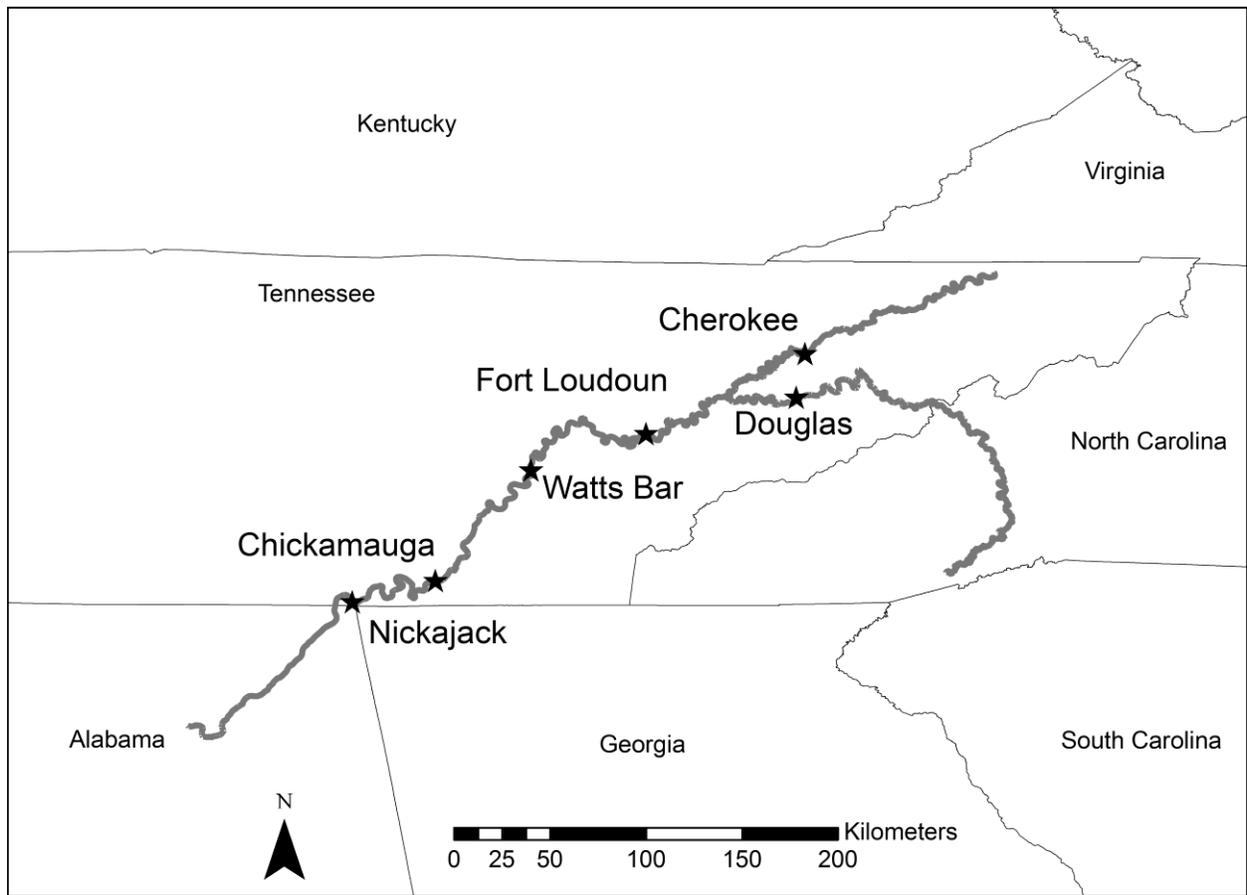
591

592

593

594

595



596

597 Figure 1.

598

599

600

601

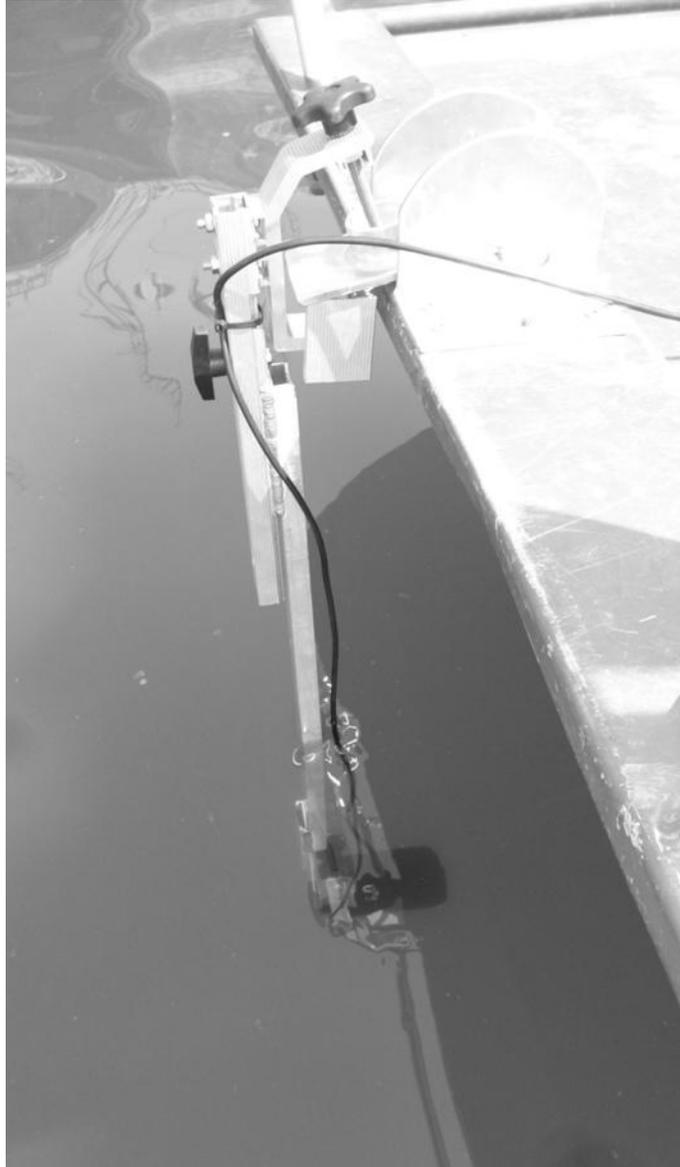
602

603

604

605

606



607

608 Figure 2.

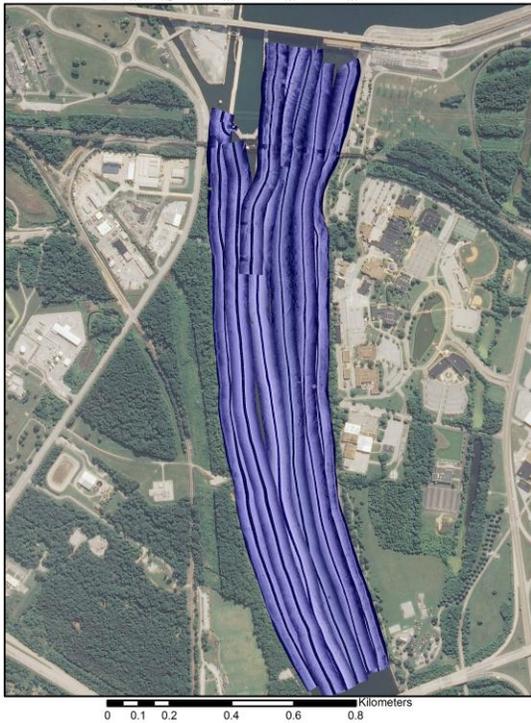
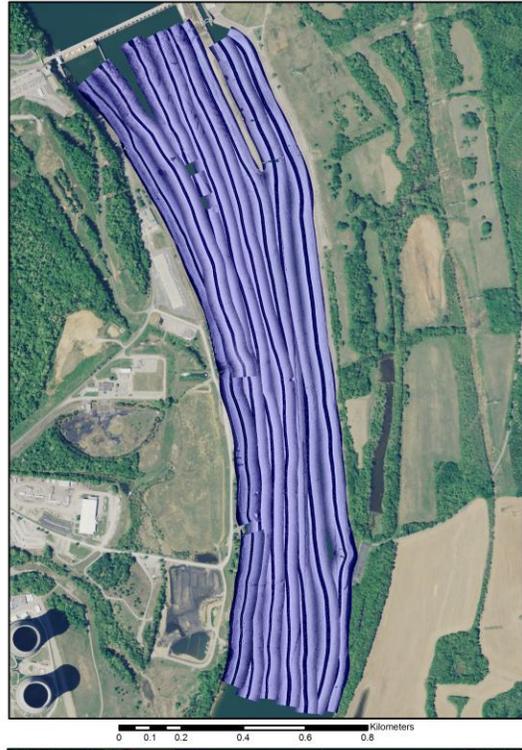
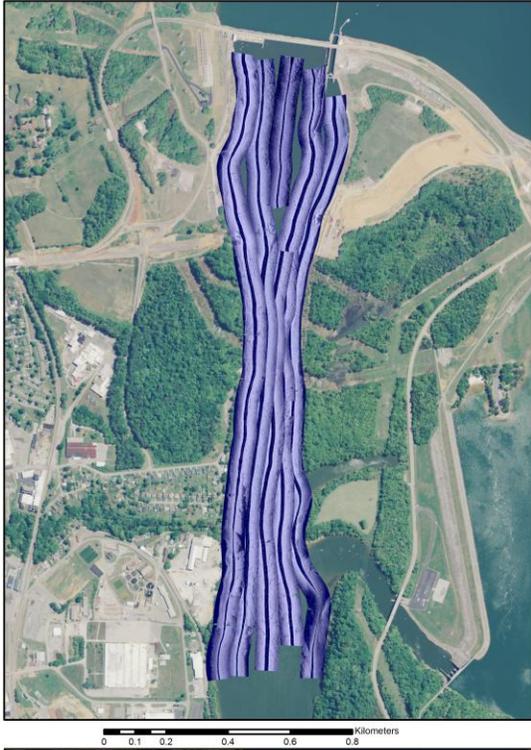
609

610

611

612

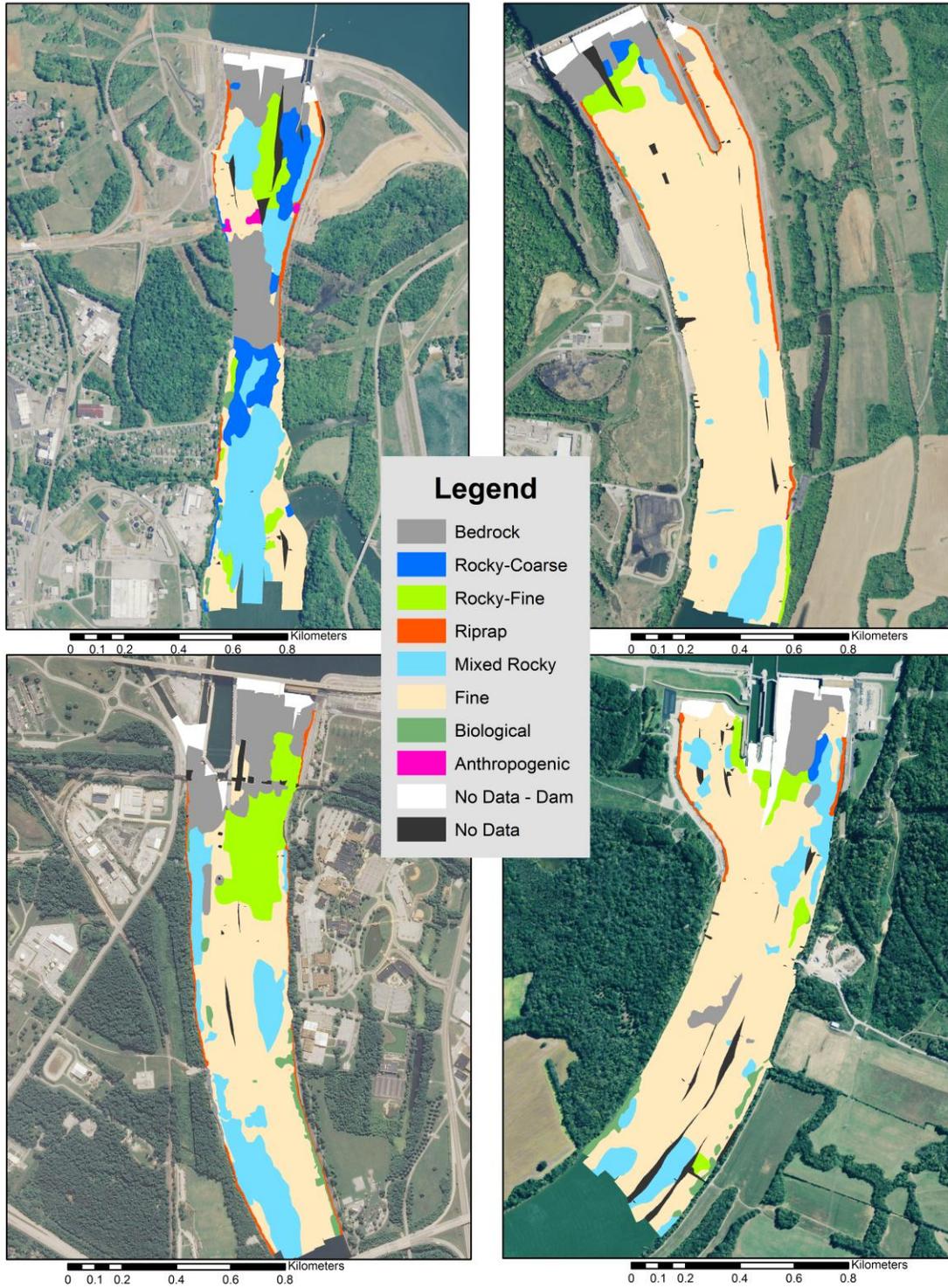
613



614

615 Figure 3.

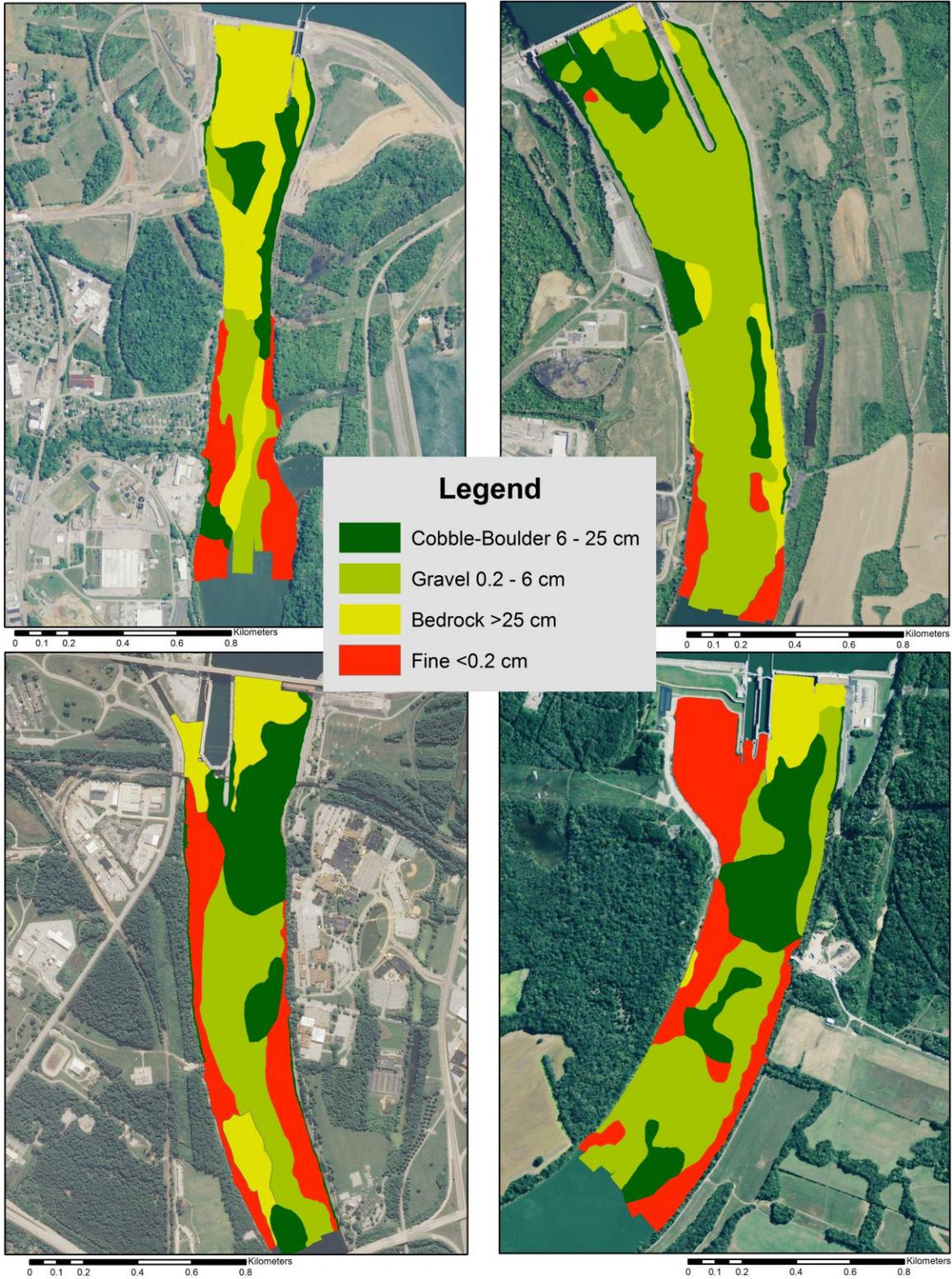
616



617

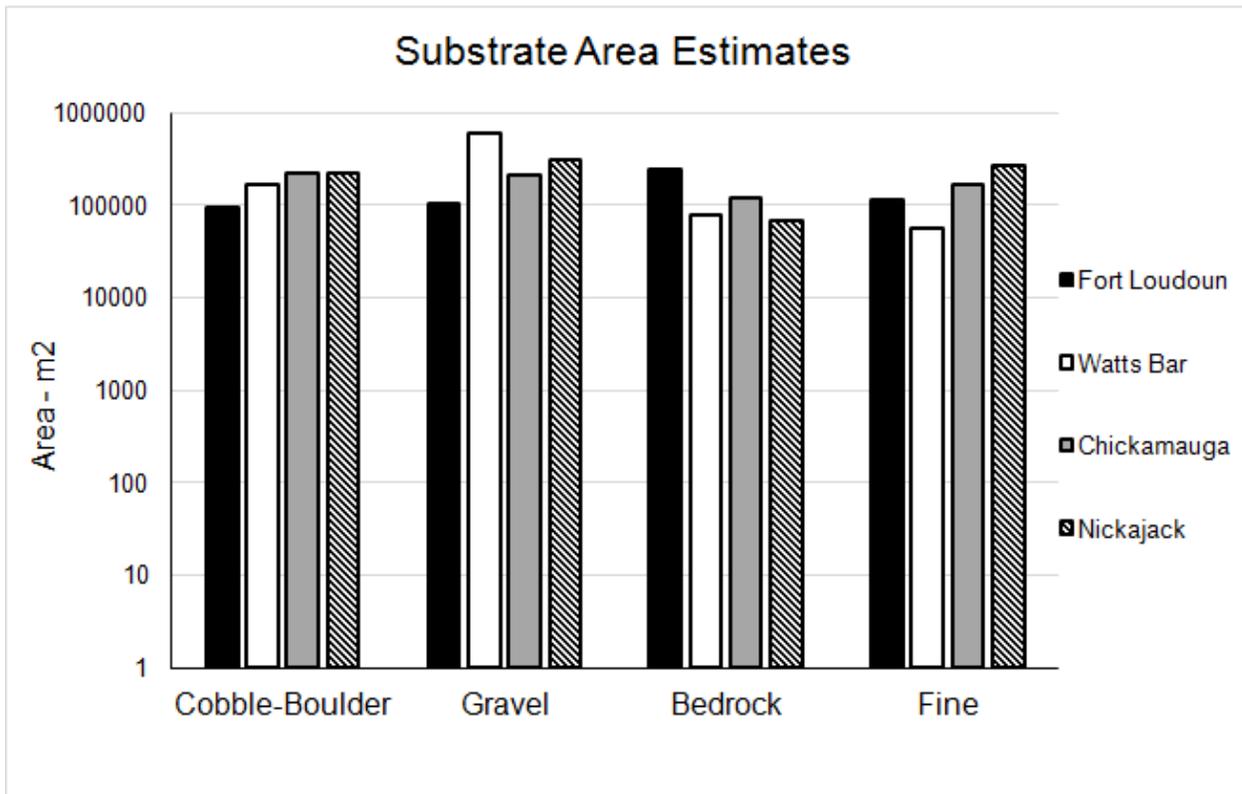
618 Figure 4.

619



620

621 Figure 5.



622

623 Figure 6A.

624

625

626

627

628

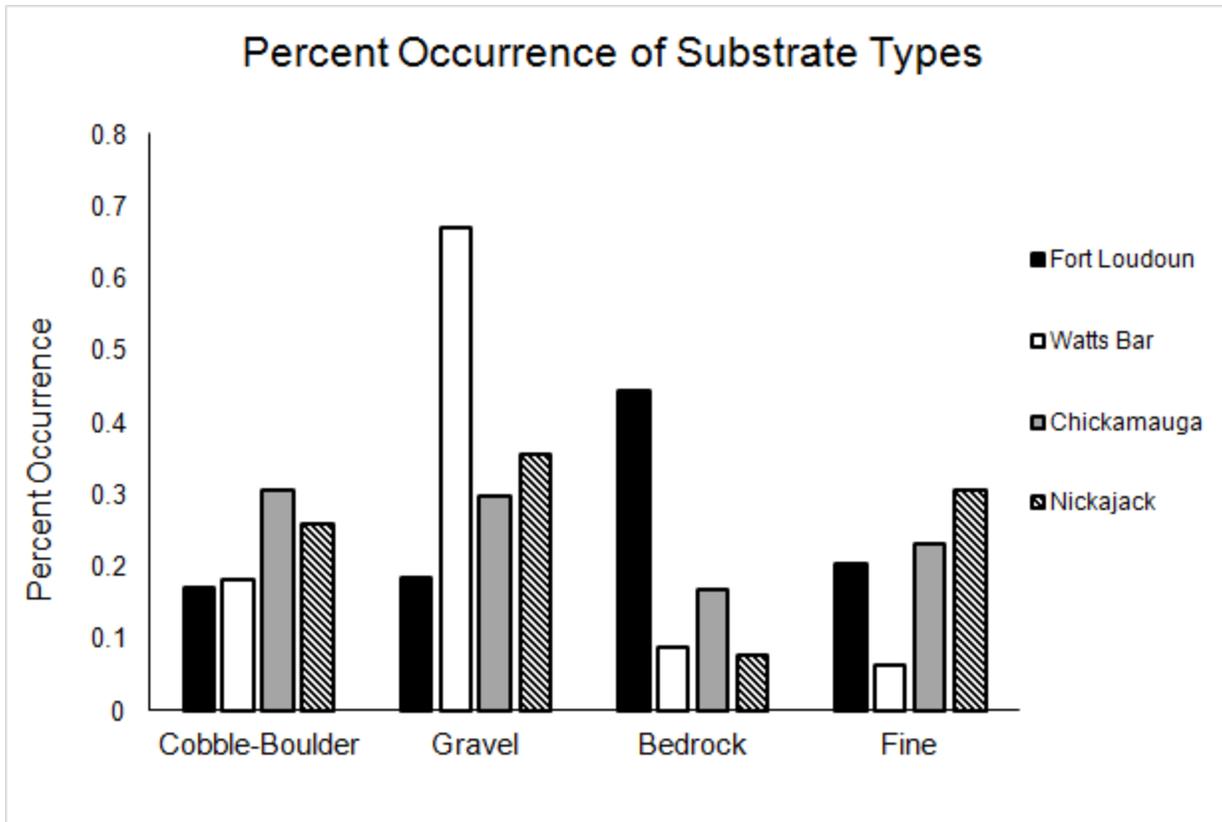
629

630

631

632

633



634

635 Figure 6B.