

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF A MULTISTATE, CODED-WIRE TAG PADDLEFISH DATABASE

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Paddlefish *Polyodon spathula* have been an important fisheries resource in North America since the late 1800's. With increasing demands for paddlefish, improved capture efficiencies, and alterations of critical spawning habitats, paddlefish populations have declined in many locales and been extirpated in several areas. In response to this, a large-scale, multistate, cooperative paddlefish resource study was initiated in 1995 by the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Agency (MICRA). The 22 cooperating states are involved in a large-scale coded-wire tag (CWT) tag-and-release study. Since 1995, over 400,000 juvenile hatchery paddlefish have been tagged with CWT's and released into the wild, and over 4,200 adult paddlefish have been tagged and released with unique sequential CWT codes. Ongoing sampling efforts by MICRA cooperators have yielded over 440 recaptures of tagged paddlefish containing CWT's.

With the ongoing tag-release-recapture efforts, establishment and maintenance of a large-scale database was essential. The MICRA paddlefish study represents one of the largest CWT studies of its kind and presented unique problems in release-recapture data linking. The establishment of the unique cost-effective database management system developed in this study and presented herein resolved some of these problems and provides a foundation for future management of the paddlefish resource.