

Hatchery Highlights

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery News and Updates



Fall 2010

Striped Bass Are On Their Way!

Staff and volunteers harvested five striped bass ponds October 25 - 27th. These Phase II stripers were stocked at sites on the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River System (ACF). Phase II refers to the number of times the fish has been harvested. In this case, these fish were reared from fry received in April 2010 from Marion State Fish Hatchery, Alabama. The striped bass were harvested, graded and trained to eat pelleted feed in May and June, then restocked into ponds for further development. The fish were again harvested this October and averaged seven inches in length.

Following a marking process with oxytetracycline (OTC), all Phase II striped bass were transported to West Point reservoir and stocked at Yellow Jacket Landing near LaGrange, GA. The OTC marking is used to distinguish hatchery reared fish from those naturally produced. A total of 7,964 fish, weighing 783 pounds, were released in three separate stocking trips this year.

Following the fall pond harvest operations, equipment, pond kettles, and aeration systems were cleaned. Ponds were refilled to prevent soil erosion until phase I culture operations begins anew in Spring of 2011.



Haile Macurdy, Assistant Hatchery Manager, is measuring water chemistry and tempering the striped bass before release.

Banner year for Lake Sturgeon production

We wrapped up our final distribution of 2010 year-class lake sturgeon this October. The hatchery annually hatches, rears and distributes lake sturgeon for recovery work for this species at the southern end of their historical range. Often, this involves stocking and monitoring work near the confluence of the Lower French Broad River and Holston River in Tennessee.

Throughout FY 2010, lake sturgeon were continually graded and distributed they reached desired sizes. This last batch of lake sturgeon were marked via scute removal and released into the Holston River, northeast of Knoxville, TN at the Nances Ferry access, on October 28th by Chad Shirey. A total of 1,617 fish 2010 year-class lake sturgeon, weighing 118.5 lbs and averaging 8.25 inches in length, were released.



Hatchery Manager, Carlos Echevarria submitted to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Statewide Fish Propagation Coordinator the Annual 2011 Fish/Egg/Tissue Request form along with the annual lake sturgeon production and distribution report for four federal hatcheries including: Pvt. John Allen NFH, Orangeburg NFH, Mammoth Springs NFH, Warm Springs NFH, and the Cohutta Fish Hatchery – Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute (TNRI). The eggs collected in Spring 2011 in Wisconsin will fill the needs for lake sturgeon reintroduction and restoration efforts along the Upper Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers in TN, the Coosa River in Georgia, and the Cumberland River in Kentucky.

Final Draft of the Lake Sturgeon Propagation Manual prepared by Jaci Zelko and Carlos Echevarria was sent for peer review to lake sturgeon cooperators and FWS personnel.



Sicklefin Redhorse, A New Species At Warm Springs

This December marked the arrival of 57 yearling North Carolina threatened sicklefin redhorse. This batch of yearling sicklefin was transferred from Conservation Fisheries, Inc. in Knoxville, TN. The goal of this new program is to provide aquaculture facilities for holding, rearing, and further research of sicklefin redhorse.

Our work this fish represents a cooperative effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.



The fish were acclimated to the system and are now actively feeding on Rangen and bloodworms.

Freshwater Mussels



Andy Hertzog, graduate student at Columbus State University, worked weekends through the quarter caring for our freshwater mussels and developing a draft plan of all work he accomplished through FY 2010 at Warm Springs. Andy presented a power point presentation of his work to date involving host fish trials and life history with the threatened southeastern mussel species purple bankclimber. He presented his findings at our annual staff meeting held Dec. 16-17th.

Andy is shown conducting field work associated with his research.

Administrative

Warm Springs NFH currently has three full time FTE's at the beginning of the current fiscal year. Arrival of the new fiscal year requires a significant effort at submitting information, reviewing program goals and accomplishments. During this time, SAMMS database entries were finalized. RPI asset information was updated to include changes in energy use and new construction during the past year. Fish and egg distribution reports and Volunteer Services Report for the Regional Fisheries Center were submitted through ECOS. EMS team meetings were held to review and summarize accomplishments and to update the service manual for 2011. Safety programs were also reviewed and are currently in the process of being updated. A fire management plan is currently being updated to take into account new FWS requirements. The annual report for 2010 was completed and submitted. Energy and Vehicle Utilization reports were submitted. Additionally, in preparation for an upcoming energy audit, site information was submitted to the review team.

Maintenance and Operations

Chad Shirey assisted Piedmont NWR staff over a two week period in November. He operated heavy equipment to re-slope the bottoms and sides of Piedmont's Allison Lake.



Chad using the bulldozer re-slope the bottom of the pond

Chad also assisted Fish Technology Center staff with adding a bathroom in the genetics building.

Haile and Chad winterized the station and conducted routine maintenance on equipment and assets including: calibration of metering equipment in the pump house and operation of the new alkalinity enhancement equipment. Below, Chad is monitoring levels of calcium chloride slurry in one of the towers.



Meetings

Hatchery Manager Carlos Echevarria participated in the annual Project Leaders meeting during the first week of November. Discussions covered budgets, outreach efforts, and working within the SHC framework.

Haile Macurdy participated in Saint Mary's River Sturgeon Restoration (SMFRC) team meeting in Palatka, FL December 1- 3rd. Discussions included the setup and operation of new Hydrolab water

quality monitoring equipment. Haile also received training in the use of side scan sonar available on some models of Hummingbird brand fish finders.

Work continues year-round to develop program summaries of lake sturgeon, striped bass, alligator gar culture and for study plan reviews.



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