



## Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery, North Dakota *Restoring America's Fisheries*

*"The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."*

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Located on the banks of the Missouri River just below Lake Sakakawea, **Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery** is the source of millions of fish swimming in North Dakota waters.

Early spring marks the beginning of the cycle of life for many of our native fishes. Eggs spawned from wild fish are brought to the hatchery to be incubated and grown. Visitors are encouraged to come and watch the life cycle of a fish. If you're in the area, northern pike spawning begins in mid-April, followed by walleye and sturgeon. Coldwater species, trout and salmon, are at the station year around, however if you visit the station in October, you will be able to witness the annual migration of chinook salmon up the hatchery's salmon creek and watch as eggs are collected from these awesome fish.

If you have a taste for the prehistoric, stop by the hatchery in early June. Wild adult pallid sturgeon, an endangered species, are held at the hatchery for spawning. These fish are undoubtedly the strangest looking of the North Dakota fish. The fish has a 'sucker' mouth, beady eyes, whiskers, and a body covered with 'scutes', a scale like plate that gives the appearance of being covered with a coat of armor. The fish are a long lived fish, probably 50 years, and reach lengths of six feet and 90 pounds. The sturgeon have changed little since the early Triassic times. During the reign of the dinosaurs 200 million years ago, their ancestors were the dominant freshwater fish.

Jurassic Park is alive and well at the fish hatchery!

If you enjoy the outdoors and are up for a walk, the hatchery has just what you are looking for. The Lewis and Clark and Wetlands Trails provide an excellent opportunity for wildlife observation or simply enjoying the out-of-doors. Birders will find the trail a productive one as many of the feathered species found in this state may be observed along the route. Come often as the experience changes with the seasons. The length is about a mile and a half. You won't be disappointed.

A visitor center at the hatchery complete with five 400 gallon aquariums will give you the pleasure of viewing the fishes of North Dakota in their environment. The visitor center is open Labor Day through Memorial Day from 8:00 - 3:30. The hatchery is open year around. Admission is free. Group tours are available with prior reservations and we are handicapped accessible. Check us out on the web @[www.fws.gov/garrisondam/](http://www.fws.gov/garrisondam/)

The Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery is located in mid-central North Dakota, an hour's drive north of Bismarck on Highway 83, then west on Highway 200.

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