



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Neosho National Fish Hatchery Newsletter

DECEMBER 2012

FISH CULTURE

STAFF VISITS SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS STATE FISH HATCHERY

Hatchery staff members traveled to Lake Taneycomo, just outside of Branson, MO, to tour Shepherd of the Hills State Fish Hatchery. The visit was to explore the hatchery's Hellbender propagation program. Currently there are only two facilities in the world producing the endangered hellbenders, St. Louis Zoo and Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery. Neosho National Fish Hatchery hopes to become the third.



Shepherd of the Hills State Hatchery Manager Clint Hale (far right) provided a tour of the facility and the requirements necessary for a successful hellbender production program as Neosho staff looks on.



Neosho National Fish Hatchery provides one-third of Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery Rainbow Trout production. This partnership is estimated to generate \$15 million dollars for the state of Missouri.

HOPEFUL FOR HELLBENDERS

Hellbenders are the largest salamander in North America and are harmless aquatic creatures that are an important part of the Ozark stream ecosystem. In Missouri, Arkansas, and throughout their geographic range, hellbenders are suffering from an alarming population decline and need help if they are to survive.



So ugly they are cute, hellbenders are classified as amphibians and adults range in length from 11 to more than 20 inches. They have a wide, flat head with tiny eyes and a broad and vertically compressed tail. Their body and legs are covered with prominent folds of grayish and yellowish browns and sometimes reddish browns. The hellbenders in North America are the eastern hellbenders, ranging from southern New York State south to northern Georgia and west to Missouri. The Ozark hellbender, a subspecies of the eastern, is found only in south central Missouri and a few rivers in extreme north central Arkansas. Missouri is the only state that has both types of hellbenders.

Hellbenders cannot live out of water but seldom swim; instead they walk slowly along the stream bottom. Most of their time is spent hiding under large, flat rocks. And coming out at night to search for food. They are rarely seen. They are known to eat a variety of aquatic prey, such as small fish, aquatic insects and crayfish and typically live 30 to 35 years. Hellbenders have been in North America for more than 6 million years and if there is something in the water that is causing their decline, it can affect us as well. Hellbenders need to be protected and their survival needs to be ensured because they are a part of the overall health of the natural aquatic environment. As a protected species in Missouri and Arkansas, they are not allowed to be taken from the wild for any reason. The Neosho National Fish Hatchery is hoping to help turn the tide for these long-lived, unusual amphibians.



FISH CULTURE



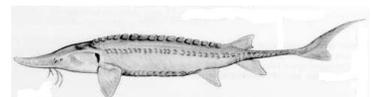
Biologists Jeff Messens and Justin Perkins moving fish as part of winter fishery maintenance.



Rainbow trout hatch count high in numbers and quality for the New Year.



Fish Health inspectors Ken and Rebecca arrived from Onalaska, WI, for bi-annual aquaculture inspections.





OUTREACH



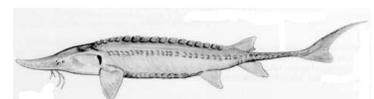
Area Wal-Mart Store Managers held an all-day planning meeting in the Rainbow Room December 14th.



Staff members Heather Thorne and Janice Eaton adorned the Visitor Center with a decorated tree and wreaths for the season.



Manager David Hendrix and staff presented a certificate of appreciation and a T-shirt to volunteer Koua Lee. Koua lived in an assisted care facility when his care giver brought him to the fish hatchery. Koua enjoyed his visit so much, that he asked if he could work here as a volunteer. For seven months, his caregiver brought him once a week. And for three hours, Koua landscaped the grounds around the Visitor Center and smiled an infectious smile. The assisted care program funding was discontinued and Koua was unable to continue the visits. His hard work and dedication was very much appreciated.





FRIENDS OF THE NEOSHO NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY



“Friends” members (left to right) Hondo “Angel” Rosario, Santa Dick Keizer, and Lucy Christian spread joy and good cheer throughout the Visitor Center.



Educational Outreach Specialist, Bruce Hallman must have been a very good boy this year as he received a personal visit from Santa.

2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 9th – Veteran’s Derby

April 21st – Annual Open House

May 18th – Scouting for Rainbows Fishing Derby

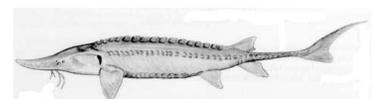
June 7th – Kid’s Derby

June 14th – Senior Citizen and And Handicapped Derby



Northern Shoveler sharing pond space with the rainbows

ARTICLES WRITTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED AND ASSEMBLED BY HATCHERY STAFF MEMBER, JANICE EATON UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
Contact information: Neosho National Fish Hatchery, 520 E Park St., Neosho, MO 64850 417-451-0554





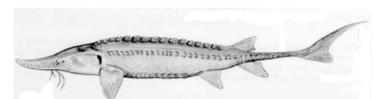
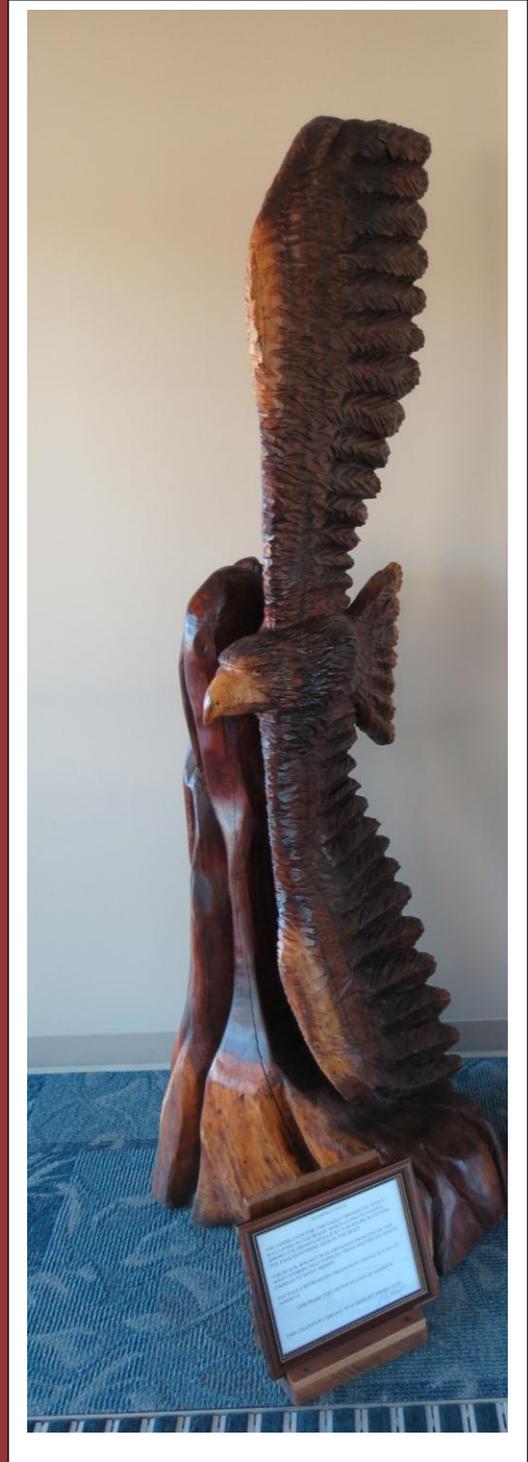
VISITOR CENTER

“Soaring Eagle” Sculpture

This handsome, hand crafted, chainsaw carved sculpture was donated for display at the hatchery by artist Joseph Leal of Joplin. At 7 ft. tall, the sculpture named “Soaring Eagle” makes a magnificent presence. Mr. Leal states . . .

“The inspiration for this eagle originated while I was living in Pagosa Spring, Colorado. I would sit for hours watching the eagles soaring high in the skies. The eagle represents freedom in the United States of America. God bless the United States of America.”

The black walnut wood was obtained from one of the trees toppled during the catastrophic Joplin tornado in May 2011. The tornado was the deadliest in America since 1947, killing 158 people and injuring 1,100. Estimates put the damage at 3 billion dollars. Joplin, Missouri is 23 miles from Neosho.





NATIONAL NEWS



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HATCHERY INTERNATIONAL

ENVIRONMENT

Missouri hatchery wins top award for energy conservation

The US Fish and Wildlife Service's Neosho National Fish Hatchery at Neosho, Missouri, is the oldest federally-run fish hatchery in the US, but it is setting the pace for energy conservation and overall efficiency.

After a sweeping upgrade completed in 2010, which brought it the top ranking in the US's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program, the hatchery, under manager Dave Hendrix, continues to add new, cutting-edge facilities.

Most recent is the addition, still in progress, of arrays of large solar panels to heat new raceways in two buildings where endangered pallid-sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) are grown. These new facilities, one for yearlings and one for broodstock, are due to be completed before the end of the year.

Under Hendrix, the hatchery is constantly improving its systems, which is why it is so frequently recognized as among the most efficient, most cost-effective and most environmentally-friendly hatchery programs in the nation.

The hatchery's new LEED gold-rated visitor centre, part of the FY2011 upgrade, yields energy performance at least 34% better than a standard building and the 9,800 square-foot building employs several energy efficiency strategies including a cool roof, energy-efficient lighting, low-e glazed windows, and a 31-ton geothermal heat pump.

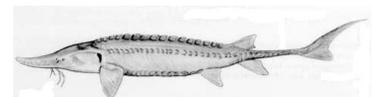
The 3.36 kilowatt net-metered solar array produces 16 million BTU (British Thermal Units) of energy per year, reducing greenhouse gases by the equivalent of 42 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Low-VOC carpets, paints, and adhesives provide a healthy indoor work environment. Many building elements including insulation, acoustical ceiling tiles, ceramic tile, restroom partitions, and the exterior deck are composed of recycled materials. Low-flow plumbing conserves more than 28,200 gallons of water annually. Water-efficient landscaping eliminates the need for irrigation, and storm-water containment and drainage swales also help to maximize water conservation.

— Quentin Dodd



The revitalized hatchery (above) now features arrays of large solar panels (below right) to heat water for inside raceways where endangered pallid-sturgeon are being reared.





STAFF



NEOSHO NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY STAFF, Left to right, David Hendrix, Manager; Ray Villa, Maintenance Engineer; Heather Thorne, Administrative Assistant; Janice Eaton, Automation Clerk; Jeff Messens, Biologist; Bruce Hallman, Educational Outreach; Roderick May, Assistant Manager; Jaime Pacheco, Lead Biologist and Justin Perkins, biologist.

*Happy New Year
From Management and Staff of
The Neosho National Fish Hatchery*

