



## *Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery*

*Monthly Report for June 2016*

### **Aquatic Species Conservation and Management**

Alligator snapping turtles from three different year classes were shipped to both Illinois and Louisiana for the third year of a multi-state wildlife grant. Each turtle was individually marked with PIT tags and measured before they left the station. Turtles were shipped in divided containers with water to prevent injury and dehydration. Once turtles arrived at their destination, they were equipped with radio tags and temperature loggers, allowing graduate students to track them for approximately one year. This information should give researchers a better idea of habitat selection, migration, growth, and survival.



*Alligator snapping turtles loaded for transport.*

### **Fish Health Inspection**

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, members of the Southwestern Fish Health Unit, located in Dexter, New Mexico, visited the Tishomingo NFH. The team conducted the annual fish health inspection to test for pathogens which could result in fish loss either on station or in the stocking sites if left undetected.

## ***Fish Distribution***



*Wayne Walker stocks Muleshoe Lake with catfish.*

🐟 Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery (TNFH) stocked Muleshoe Lake in Texas for their annual fishing derby with 381 channel catfish (CCF).

🐟 Fort Sill Army base stocked multiple ponds with 2,336 CCF which were delivered by TNFH staff during the month of June. Soldiers and their families are allowed to fish all of the stocked ponds on Fort Sill Army Base with the exception of one pond that is reserved for children only.

🐟 TNFH staff delivered 254 CCF to The Regional Park Kids' Only Fishing Pond, Ardmore, OK, during the month of June. The pond, which is managed by the city of

Ardmore, only permits angling by children under the age of 16, allowing the next generation to foster an appreciation for fishing.

🐟 Neosho National Fish Hatchery received 100 CCF from TNFH to stock the Spring Valley Park Pond, Kansas City, MO, to support a kids' fishing derby. The 2016 Urban Kids' Fishing Derby event was created by Urban American Outdoors TV, and was aligned with the President's "Every Kid in a Park" initiative. Around 350 attendees, partners, and volunteers participated in the event for kids aged sixteen and under.



*Ardmore "Kids' Only" Fishing Pond.*

## WORK FORCE

*Regan Hefner, YCC, and Brian Fillmore, biologist, measure paddlefish.*



Two Youth Conservation Corps employees began work June 1 at Tishomingo NFH. Regan Hefner is a senior at Tishomingo High School and Allison Pitmon is a junior at Mill Creek High School. They will be working here through the first week in August. Regan is pursuing a career as a Game Warden, and Allison is pursuing a career in veterinary medicine. Both young ladies are gaining experience in monitoring water quality, data collection, and

assisting with all aspects of captive rearing of aquatic species. Additionally, the YCC employees assist with station tours and public events. Both bring excellent work ethics to the hatchery.



*Allison Pitmon, YCC, measuring alligator snapping turtle.*

## Visitors and Outreach

On June 22<sup>nd</sup> Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, visited the Tishomingo NFH with members of the Regional Directorate Team (RDT). The visiting group helped hatchery staff and volunteers return adult alligator snapping turtles to their respective ponds after annual maintenance to their transmitters and data loggers. Tishomingo NFH staff conducted a comprehensive tour of the facility, providing detailed information of each species being reared, followed by an informal luncheon with the RDT and volunteers while

watching never-before-seen underwater video shot from the carapace of a large alligator snapping turtle.



*Dr. Benjamin Tuggle holds alligator snapping turtle during visit.*

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kids' Fishing Derby was held on the first Saturday in June, signifying the start of National Fishing and Boating Week across the country. With the weather cooperating after many days of rain, 300 children between the ages of 6 to 12 registered to fish. Each child was given a goody bag at the entrance with pencil, tattoo sticker, FWS activity book, and fish poster. Chicken livers were provided to the fishermen as bait. The Chickasaw Nation's "Get Fresh!" nutritional program provided water bottles, fresh fruit, granola bars, and



*Family fun at Fishing Derby.*



*22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kids' Fishing Derby.*

string cheese for the fishermen and their families. The fishing began at 9:00 a.m., with limits of five catfish being caught quickly. The prize board was posted showing the winners drawn from registration cards. Prizes were provided by the John Bruno Memorial Fund through two local merchants who purchased the prizes and brought to the

Tishomingo NFH. Fifty-five prizes were awarded from sleeping bags, rod and reel combos, life vests, and tackle boxes. There were eleven volunteers comprised mostly of family members of the hatchery staff, along with Bonnie Farris our long-term volunteer, and Terry Dupree of the Tulsa Ecological Services Office. This event provided a morning full of family activity enjoying the outdoors, encouraging healthy snacks, and appreciating good stewardship of our aquatic resources for the approximately 550 people in attendance.



*Fishing concentration at the Derby.*

The Tishomingo NFH was asked again this summer to provide special tours to the Boy Scouts in attendance at the Kerr Scout Ranch at Slippery Falls located near the hatchery. Six weekly tours brought over six hundred Scouts and their leaders to learn about a federal facility and thus qualify for their "Citizenship in the Nation" badge. The Scouts got to view 6 to 8-inch-long paddlefish, observing their unusual eating technique. They were shown lingual lures in an adult alligator snapping turtle and a hatchling from the 2015 year class. Then the feeding frenzy of the channel catfish brood stock was the favorite since it involved large fish and splashing. The Scouts were instructed on federal hierarchy, funding, and employment with the federal government.



*Boy Scouts tour.*

### ***Scheduled Tours Given in June:***

- Two tours were given as part of the Summer Enrichment Program for children at a large local daycare. The first group was ages 6 – 12; these children were taught about the species raised at the hatchery in addition to seeing the turtles, catfish, and alligator gar. The second

group, ages 4 to 5, were shown younger turtles and the channel catfish feeding frenzy to hold their interest.



*Day Care views alligator snapping turtle.*

- About forty 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders attending the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Camp from Murray State College visited the hatchery. They were shown the species raised at the hatchery and were encouraged to plan for a job with the Fish & Wildlife Service by building good resumes', volunteering, and learning all they can in school.



*STEM Academy tour.*

*RDT Team observes alligator snapping turtle as it returns to pond.*



---

**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/tishomingo/index.html>  
**Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation**  
**Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery**  
**5501 OK Highway 7W**  
**Tishomingo, OK 73460**  
**Phone: 580-384-5463**  
**Manager: Kerry G. Graves**

*June 2016*

