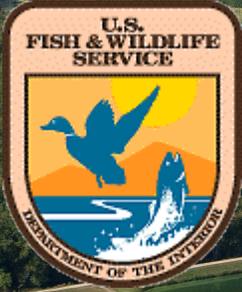


Genoa National Fish Hatchery News and Notes



July 2015



About Genoa NFH

Genoa NFH was established over 80 years ago by the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Act. The mission of the hatchery has changed from providing sport fish for area waters to a conservation hatchery concerned with the recovery of endangered aquatic species.

The hatchery is open for tours during business hours. For large groups, please call for an appointment. You can reach the hatchery at 608-689-2605 from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. You can also find us online at:

fws.gov/midwest/genoa

And on Facebook at:
facebook.com/GenoaNFH



The Great Sturgeon Migration Begins

Lake sturgeon fingerlings reared for 2 months at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery were returned to their native land of upper New York state this past month. The Genoa hatchery has participated in a cooperative restoration effort with the New York Field Office (FWS), and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation restoring sturgeon since 2012. Restoration efforts have been refined and modest efforts of the first year increased from 900 fall fingerlings returned in 2012 to an estimated 20,000 lake sturgeon planning on returning home in 2015. The summer shipment of 10,000 4 inch lake sturgeon fingerlings returned this past week was the first installment of fish to waters in the St. Lawrence River basin and Lake Ontario. Lake sturgeon are currently estimated to be at less than 5% of their historic numbers in the Great Lakes basin, and with its unique life history sturgeon populations are very slow to recover. Stocking for restoration reduces the amount of time when egg and fry predation is high, allowing for maximum juvenile recruitment. Sturgeon fry grow fast in their first year of life in order to avoid predation. In one growing season, an average lake sturgeon can approach 8 to 10 inches in length. Sturgeon restoration is a long term proposition, in order to not only ensure there is enough genetic contribution in the stocked population to sustain itself, and to create many strong new year classes to ensure mating success. A healthy lake sturgeon population may consist of 20 separate year classes with adults ranging from 20 to 75 years of age. Even though we are in the beginning stages of the project, it is encouraging to be able to see the fruits of another successful year class swimming back into the wild. The hatchery owes many thanks to Scott Schlueter of the New York Field Office, for his assistance in stocking this summer's lot of fish.

By: Doug Aloisi

Scott Schlueter offloads fingerling lake sturgeon from Genoa's stocking truck



Photo Credit: Eric Maxwell

Genoa Expands Juvenile Lake Sturgeon Capacity

As lake sturgeon continue to grow over the summer, the need to increase juvenile rearing capacity and demand for adequate oxygen supply is essential for growth and survival. Increasing larval tank rearing space and supplementing incoming rearing water with oxygen allows the hatchery to maximize feed conversions and propagate healthier and larger fish for fall stocking. The hatchery water source for sturgeon production is recirculating pond water. Pond water allows the hatchery to maintain and utilize warmer water temperatures over the summer months, which are ideal for maximizing sturgeon growth. As summer temperatures creep up dissolved oxygen levels of the incoming water tend to decrease. In the past few years problems have been encountered maintaining dissolved oxygen levels suitable for optimal fish growth and survival. As a result, this spring Genoa maintenance mechanics (Jeff Lockington and Zach Kumlin) installed oxygen supply lines to our incoming pond water. By supplementing the pond water with oxygen this summer the hatchery has been able to hold dissolved oxygen levels around 8-12ppm, which is optimal for growth and survival of lake sturgeon.

This season due to increased survival of lake sturgeon eggs, there is demand at Genoa for increasing juvenile lake sturgeon rearing space. In past years, to account for rearing constraints, lake sturgeon were transferred to a concrete raceway in the sturgeon building. Fish in the raceway were difficult to feed due to the depth and size of the raceway. As a result sturgeon in the raceway were not consuming enough feed to support optimal growth. After some brainstorming, this summer Jeff Lockington and Zach Kumlin constructed a



platform over the existing raceway to support additional 9 cattle tanks (8ft. x 2ft.). This new constructing makes it easier for the fish to find food and increased holding capacity by 4,000 sturgeon. As a result we are expecting sturgeon this year to be larger and healthier for stocking in the fall. If all goes according to planned, in fiscal year 2015, Genoa will stock approximately 105,000 lake sturgeon in support of lake sturgeon restoration.

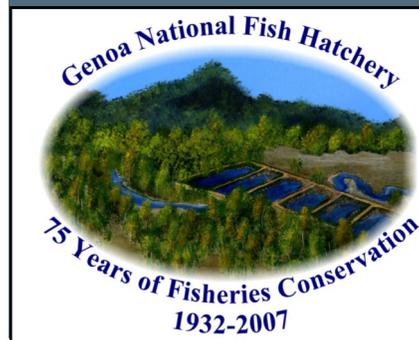
By: Orey Eckes

New flooring and plumbing for increased sturgeon rearing capacity



New liquid oxygen system

Genoa National Fish Hatchery's mission is to recover, restore, maintain and enhance fish and aquatic resources on a basin-wide and national level by producing over 35 aquatic species of varying life stages, participating in active conservation efforts with our partners, and becoming a positive force in the community by educating future generations on the benefits of conservation stewardship



USSA Summerfest

July has arrived and brought the opportunity for staff at Genoa National Fish Hatchery to participate in the United Special Sportsman Alliance (USSA) annual Summerfest event held in Pittsville, WI.

USSA is an all-volunteer non-profit “dream-wish” granting charity that specializes in sending children and veterans with life threatening illnesses and disabilities on the outdoor adventure of their dreams.

The annual Summerfest event offers family’s an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, meet new friends and families, and enjoy multiple days with fun fill activities. Some of the events that take place at Summerfest include fishing, archery and rifle ranges, a hunter safety course, horseback riding, tubing, boating, water-skiing, jet skiing, volleyball,

arts and crafts, music and entertainment, and camping. This year at the event a medivac helicopter visited on Saturday and kids and adults were allowed to get close up views and look inside to check it out. Two whitetail fawns were also at the event for people to view and pet and a crane was available again to lift kids over the water for a chance to make a big splash. Overall the event was once again a great success even though mother nature threw a curveball in the form of a pretty good thunderstorm. Items supplied by the USSA for the event included all food and drinks, sporting equipment including all fishing gear, guns and archery equipment for the shooting ranges, life jackets, and tents for camping. Genoa NFH set up an aquarium display with numerous fish and freshwater mussels for event goers to view. Attendees were educated about native fish and mussels and the missions of the hatchery were explained to identify how the hatchery helps in the world of conservation. Fish mounts and native mussels shells were also set out so people could take up close looks to help them better identify some of the native species in the area. Summerfest is an event that directly correlates to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service mission of protecting and enhancing our aquatic resources and connecting children with nature initiative that Genoa National Fish Hatchery proudly supports and is looking forward to participating in for many years to come.



The hatchery display at USSA Summerfest



By: Aaron Von Eschen

The display aquarium with largemouth bass, rainbow trout and lake sturgeon

Necedah With the Assist

The nature trail at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery was in need of a little loving following the winter snowfall and spring rains. Overall it was not as bad as it has been in the past couple years following spring floods but some touch up was much needed. Grasses, brush, and trees had begun to overtake many areas of the trail, but with some trimming, and spraying much of it was restored. After preparation was completed it was time to spread two truckloads of new mulch across the trail. Following last summer's cooperation in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program at Necedah, the refuge lent another helping hand to the hatchery this summer by allowing three of their YCC's summer employees to come down and assist with the trail. The two YCC's at the hatchery teamed up with the refuge to tackle the trail in one day! Student employees from Necedah were welcomed with a tour of the hatchery and an experience in lake sturgeon feeding before the work began. As mulch was delivered via utility vehicle the YCC crew quickly spread the new trail covering at a pace that the utility vehicles could not match. The work was greatly appreciated by the staff at Genoa NFH and they could not give enough thanks for the hard work that was provided. This trail serves as an essential outdoor education tool for the hatchery's outdoor classrooms and school groups alike. It provides the opportunity for staff and local schools to teach and learn about various habitats, the importance of diverse habitats and the effects that invasive species can have. In addition the trail provides an excellent recreation opportunity for the public to enjoy.

Partnering with the refuge gives these students an opportunity to experience both career fields in fisheries and refuges. The YCC program gives students hands-on experience related to fish and wildlife management and the opportunity to explore future career options. As the summer draws to an end and school begins, the staff at Genoa thanks the YCC's at the hatchery and the refuge alike for their hard work and dedication.

By: Aaron Von Eschen



Combined YCC crew after a hard days work

Ding Darling Day a Big Hit at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium

Each year Genoa NFH places mussel culture cages in floating racks in the Dubuque Ice Harbor, at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. This effort has been very successful, producing several thousand sub-adult mussels each fall. On July 18th Genoa NFH participated in Ding Darling Day at the Museum to help support environmental education at the museum and promote the stations freshwater mussel recovery program. The Ding Darling Day is an annual event at the museum that is free to the public. The event brings together federal, state and local conservation organizations to provide environmental education and activities for children. Mussel biologist Nathan Eckert was on hand for the event with a freshwater mussel shell collection and live mussel display. While most people know them as clams, most do not know that native mussels are filter feeders that improve water quality as they eat and breath. Many people, both young and old, stopped by to talk about the interesting sizes shapes and colors of our native freshwater mussels. The live tank was also a big draw as attendees could see how the mussels made an improvement in water quality over the course of their visit to the museum. Over 1,900 individuals visited the museum that Saturday, a good time was had by all despite a brief afternoon delay caused by severe weather in the area. Events like this allow Service biologists to connect people with nature and in doing so accomplish a portion of the mission of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. By: Nathan Eckert



Nathan with the shell collection and live mussel tank

Upcoming calendar of events

September 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 winged mapleleaf diving starts	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 MCT Recovery Champion Presenta- tion, St. Paul, MN	12
13	14 Pond Harvest starts at Genoa	15 FWS Fisheries Sturgeon Delegation to China	16	17	18	19
20	21 FWS Fisheries	22 Sturgeon Delegation to China	23	24	25 winged mapleleaf diving ends	26
27	28 Freshwater Mussel	29 Propagation for Restoration Course, Bozeman, MT	30			