

Genoa National Fish Hatchery News and Notes



May 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.

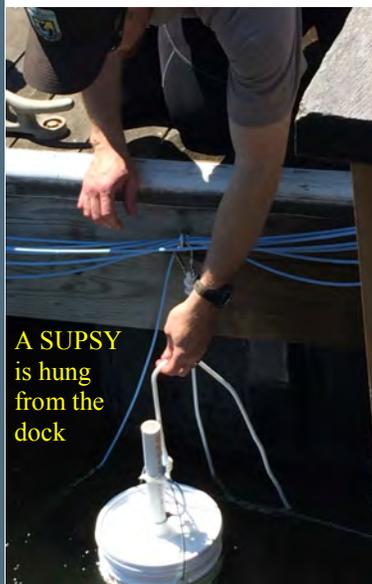
The hatchery is open for tours during business hours. For large groups, please call for an appointment. You can reach the hatchery at 608-689-2605 from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. You can also find us online at: fws.gov/midwest/genoa And on Facebook at: facebook.com/GenoaNFH



What's SUPSY?

SUPSY isn't a slang term, or text lingo, it's an acronym standing for suspended upwelling system. The SUPSY is a chamber made from small buckets which is suspended in a pond and used for the culture of freshwater mussels. The SUPSY was developed by mussel culture biologists with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Air from a compressor is bubbled into the chamber creating a flow of water through the chamber which brings the freshwater mussels oxygen and food. Biologists in Alabama have been quite successful raising freshwater mussels up to a size large enough to tag and release using this method. This summer Genoa NFH is partnering with the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium to test the SUPSY method in the Dubuque, IA Ice Harbor just off the Mississippi River. Our hope is that this technique will lead to increased mussel growth and improved production capacity over culture methods currently being used at the hatchery. The initial test includes 8 SUPSY buckets, and each is stocked with 250 yearling mussels.



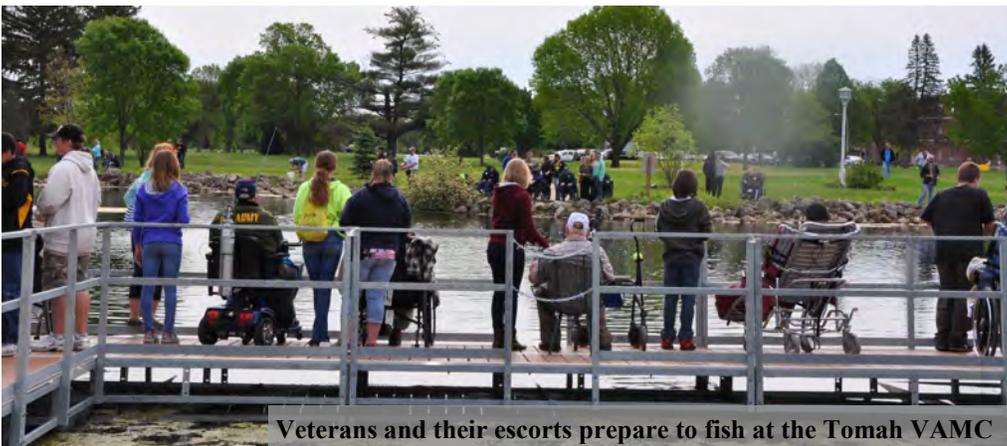
A SUPSY is hung from the dock

SUPSY juveniles in the bucket



The mussels were measured and placed on May 21st. The plan is to take measurements and pictures on a monthly basis to observe mussel growth and to check for mortality. Currently Genoa NFH has more yearling mussels on hand than are feasible to culture on-station. This partnership will allow us to spread out the load. In addition to helping the hatchery, staff at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium plan to incorporate local students into the SUPSY cleaning and data collection. This project will benefit both the hatchery and the museum all while providing an opportunity for some students to participate in freshwater mussel conservation. By: Nathan Eckert

Opening Day of Fishing at the Tomah VA pond



Veterans and their escorts prepare to fish at the Tomah VAMC

On Wednesday, May 21st, staff from the Genoa National Fish Hatchery headed east to the Tomah Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Central Wisconsin to help co-sponsor the hospital's annual fishing tournament. Since 1991 Genoa National Fish Hatchery staff members have teamed up with the staff from the La Crosse Area Fisheries Offices, the Tomah VAMC, the Tomah American Legion, Rosco's Bait Shop, and seventh grade students from the local Tomah Middle schools to provide the veterans with a day of fishing, food, and fun. Armed with a fishing pole and a desire to catch a bigger fish than last year, more than 50 veterans and their 95 student escorts cast a line in the fishing pond to catch one or more of the 1,000 eleven inch rainbow trout that were stocked from the Hatchery the month prior. Successful anglers were able to register their fish and register for prizes that were awarded by the Tomah American Legion. The popularity of this annual event, complete with a lunchtime fish-fry prepared and served by Genoa staff and volunteers, has grown into a highly anticipated and rewarding event. The fish fry was sponsored this year by the Vernon County American Legion. Fishing is a very popular activity on the Tomah facility that provides VA clients with many hours of outdoor recreational opportunities.

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



The Tomah VAMC is located on a 173 acre campus that encompasses a 271 bed facility focusing on primary care, mental health services and nursing home care for veterans from mid-western Wisconsin and the bordering counties of Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan. In addition to the favorite fishing pond with 2 handicapped assessable fishing piers, the VAMC offers the veterans a canteen, library, golf course and a bowling alley. All of these activities provide the veterans with therapeutic social and recreational opportunities to augment their long term care.



Jeff and Volunteer Dan prepare the fish fry

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Genoa National Fish Hatchery has had a long and storied tradition of supporting recreational fishing at the Tomah Site by supporting this fishing event and by stocking the fishing pond with various species of game fish.

By: Darla Wenger

Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Arrive on Station!

On June 2, 2015, staff from University of South Dakota arrived at Genoa with the dragonfly larvae. This marks the beginning of the collaborative effort among the Genoa NFH, Chicago ES Office, Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and University of South Dakota (USD) funded through the Cooperative Recovery Initiative. USD has been working with the dragonfly for several years and has studied their growth, tracked their genetics and has developed the first captive rearing techniques for the species. The techniques developed work well for small groups in a lab setting but there is now the need for larger scale production. Genoa will take the methods and work with USD to adapt them to larger scale production and to tailor them to the site specific variables.

The 147 larvae were first weighed (those big enough to weigh!) and a picture was taken of each to measure their head width so their growth over the summer at the hatchery can be calculated. Last minute adjustments to their cages were also made that Tuesday to prepare for stocking them out on Wednesday. The first year on station, conditions will mimic those at the other summer sites for the larvae so a more accurate assessment of survival and growth can be determined for Genoa National Fish Hatchery. The larvae

Weighing a HED



Dragonfly cages placed in the wetland



were placed in their cages on Wednesday, with half going into the wetland and half into a pond they will share with the mussels. Over the summer, temperatures, dissolved oxygen and water quality will be monitored weekly, the cages also being checked for debris and troubleshooting any issues. The larvae will also be removed each month to be weighed and measured, keeping an eye on their progress and allowing for course correcting along the way. By: Angela Baran

Hatchery Teams Up with District Lions Clubs to Host Fishability Day

The Genoa National Fish Hatchery partnered with the Southwest Wisconsin Lions Club District 27 to provide a fishing day for families of children with limited access to the outdoors. The event was open to families with area children with special needs and families of critically ill children. Twenty eight children were pre-registered for the event and they and their families had great time fishing for rainbow trout that had been recently stocked in the hatchery's accessible fishing pond. The pond is also equipped with a fishing dock with 4 accessible fishing stations provided by local power company Dairyland Power. Children and their parents along with hatchery staff, volunteers from Lions Clubs, Friends of Pool 9 and Friends of the Upper Miss assisted the young anglers cast, gave them fishing tips, and helped take the fish off the hook and get the fish to the cleaning stations staffed by Lions volunteers. A light lunch was served by the Lions and kids were sent home with a fishing pole and tackle box to use in their future fishing ventures. Many thanks to the Lions Club, Friends of the Upper Miss and Friends of Pool 9 for making the day a great success. This is the third year that Fishability Days has been held at the hatchery, and judging by the smiles on the faces of the parents and kids, won't be the last. By: Doug Aloisi

A youngster enjoys her catch



LaCrosse Garden Club and Summit Environmental School Celebrate Earth Day

The LaCrosse(WI) Garden Club and Summit Environmental School of LaCrosse Wisconsin commemorated Earth Day this April 22nd by renovating the Genoa (WI) National Fish Hatchery's pollinator garden for the coming season. For the last several years the Garden Club has been the driving force to ensure that the station has had not only an attractive garden display located by our entry sign, but also plants and species present that will attract and benefit pollinator species. This has become doubly important with the crash of Monarch butterfly populations nationwide.

Another positive aspect of this project is including local Summit Environmental School children in the project as part of their Outdoor Classroom Curriculum at the hatchery, and to celebrate Earth Day by performing environmental volunteerism. The project hopes to lay a foundation for the children by demonstrating that people of all ages can make a positive impact in our daily lives, and we that all have a responsibility to be good conservation stewards. The project also fulfills the schools mission statement of providing students with a solid educational foundation in the core academic areas with an environmental focus integrated throughout the curriculum. Staff biologist Jorge Buening coordinated the project with the Garden Club and teachers from the school to make this a meaningful and significant Earth Day 2015. The hatchery hopes to include more cooperative conservation projects in the future whether it be in the field of fish and mussel conservation, or involving prairie and pollinator restoration on some of the hatchery's acreage that was once considered borderline pastureland. By: Doug Aloisi



Summit students and garden club members work on the pollinator garden

Kids Fishing Day a Great Community Event for Southwest Wisconsin

Kids from all over the tri-state area of Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota gathered at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery for our 12th annual Kids Fishing Day on May 9th this spring. The event, which is sponsored by the Friends Group of 3 Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries field stations in the LaCrosse area, was attended by over 350 people this year. 159 children first walked through a set of 4 learning stations. One was on boating safety taught by the Corps of Engineers, a station on wetland conservation run by the hatchery biologist Orey Eckes, a station on fish health run by LaCrosse Fish Health Center biologist Jenny Bailey, and a station on fish identification and behavior led by LaCrosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office biologist Nick Bloomfield.

After an hour of learning more about fish and conservation, the kids were allowed to put their newfound knowledge to practical use with a 2 hour open fishing event on a stocked hatchery pond. Most of the children went home with their four fish limit. A light lunch was provided by our Friends group, and many door prizes were then distributed thanks to local area vendors supporting the event. Many thanks to the staff of the three LaCrosse area FWS fisheries offices, sponsors, volunteers and Friends of the Upper Mississippi for making this event possible. Making memories outdoors will reinforce the value of our natural resources to the future generation. It is also hoped that events such as these will build a sense of ownership into the outdoors, and plant the seeds of conservation stewardship to ensure that their children can enjoy all the outdoors has to offer. By: Doug Aloisi



The biggest fish of the day

Learning on the Fly!

“Thanks to our instructors and to the hatchery for the outstanding fly fishing class! That was a great day! And, it was exactly what I need to get started back into a hobby that I left 50 some years ago. I’m pretty excited!” friends group member Lloyd Lorenez stated following the fly fishing clinic that was held in concordance with the 12th annual kids fishing day on May 9th. Members of the Friends of the Upper Mississippi (FUMS) participated in the event and were taught by instructors and fly fishing aficionados from within the group. The clinic taught fly tying, which flies were best to use in different situations and locations, how to properly land fish with fly fishing equipment, and most importantly how to properly cast a fly fishing rod. Each member was given a tutorial and overview and allowed to practice their newly found knowledge on the Genoa National Fish Hatchery’s trout pond. Rainbow trout were available for catch and release and each member had success and caught and released multiple fish. The staff at the Genoa NFH is thrilled to be a part of such events and take pride in assisting people continue their passion for the outdoors and reestablish their kinship for the sport of fishing and the outdoors! By: Aaron Von Eschen

A trout on the line



Attracting Purple Martins at Genoa Fish Hatchery.....

Recently populations of Purple Martins have been in decline due to competition from European Starlings and House Sparrows competing for nesting sites. Purple Martins in Wisconsin were once abundant and now are a rare site to see. Purple Martins are primarily dependent on humans to provide nesting in artificial hollow gourds. Volunteer of the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (Ken Damro) has taken on the role of providing gourds for Purple Martins housing in hopes of establishing a population on hatchery grounds. Purple Martins reach Wisconsin around April to late May to return to breeding grounds. Once a colony is started they and their offspring will return each year. The difficult part is attracting young males and females to start their own colony. This is where Ken’s expertise comes in to play. Ken is a Eco Property Manager and an avid bird lover and member of the ornithological society. During Purple Martin breeding season, Ken provides gourd housing on hatchery grounds and monitors activity on a weekly basis. The hatchery is an ideal habitat for nesting and provides an abundance of food, since their diet is comprised of flying insects. Because starlings and sparrows compete for these nest sites on going maintenance by humans is required to establish a successful colony. The main goal is to attract a young male which will establish its territory and court a female. Once an ideal nest site is established the female will lay between 2-7 eggs and establish their own colony. With the help of Ken for the past few years the hatchery has been encountering many male Purple Martins, but has not been able to attract any females to form a colony. With Kens help, we are hopeful in the future the hatchery will be home to an abundance of Purple Martins. The hatchery would like to thank Ken for all the hard work. The Genoa National Fish Hatchery could not do such great work with out the help of many volunteers. By: Orey Eckes

Male Purple Martin establishing its territory in hatchery gourds.



Upcoming calendar of events

July 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Youth Outdoorfest
12	13	14 Pool 9 Mississippi River Adventure Day	15	16	17 United Special Sportsmen Alliance Pittsville, WI	18 Ding Darling Day , Dubuque
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	