

# Genoa National Fish Hatchery News and Notes



September 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](http://fws.gov/midwest/genoa)

And on Facebook at:  
[facebook.com/GenoaNFH](https://www.facebook.com/GenoaNFH)



## New Program brings new Biologist to Genoa National Fish Hatchery

Things have gotten a little buggy this summer at Genoa, albeit in a very good way. Due to a cooperative funding grant being awarded to the hatchery, the federally Endangered Hines

Emerald Dragonfly is being experimentally reared at the Genoa hatchery. Through a cooperative effort including the Chicago Endangered Species Field Office, the University of South Dakota, and the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, efforts to bolster the last remaining populations of Hine's Emerald Dragonfly through extensive rearing in the hatchery's wetland and ponds was initiated. Cue Erin Johnson, a biologist previously employed as an Asian Carp Control biologist at the La Crosse (WI) Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. Erin applied for and was hired as our dragonfly biologist position. She currently holds a Master's degree with a concentration on conservation and water quality management. This is a very handy concentration to have as the dragonfly spends the first 3-5 years of its life in the aquatic environment, before transforming to the terrestrial insect that most people are familiar seeing in the summer months. Erin has already been working with the population of dragonflies brought to Genoa this summer, and has also been cooperating with the University of South Dakota, who researched and worked out culture techniques in laboratory settings. We hope to apply what was learned at the University, with a goal to expand propagation efforts on a production scale in our rearing ponds. Although Erin did her studies abroad at the University of Melbourne Australia, she is a local product right here from La Crosse, Wi. Welcome aboard Erin!

By: Doug Aloisi



## Another Group of Students Learns Mussel Propagation for Restoration



The 2015 Freshwater Mussel Propagation for Restoration Class

The second Freshwater Mussel Propagation for Restoration Course was held in September at the Bozeman Fish Technology Center in Bozeman, Montana. The course is offered by the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, but can be held at remote locations. Twenty-four students from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, multiple state conservation agencies and private industry attended the course to learn freshwater mussel propagation and culture from Service mussel propagation biologists. The course was designed to complement the Conservation Biology of Freshwater Mussels introductory course offered at NCTC. The course aimed to take students through all phases of freshwater mussel propagation and culture; starting with answering the question, “why propagate freshwater mussels?” Lectures then focused specifically on animal collection, propagation, culture, release and ultimately monitoring. Lab activities centered on mussel identification, host fish inoculation, juvenile mussel recovery and mussel culture systems. One field trip was held at a nearby river where students were able to practice collecting freshwater mussels and determine whether the individuals were gravid or not. Techniques for population monitoring were demonstrated during the field trip as well. Back in class, the students were given a scenario with target species and goals to plan restoration activities. The student groups presented their plans to accomplish restoration goals on the final day of the course and received feedback from the instructors. Course instructors Matthew Patterson, Nathan Eckert, Tony Brady, Rachel Mair and Jess Jones felt the course went well. The students were enthusiastic and passionate about the material. If you are interested in attending the next offering of Freshwater Mussel Propagation for Restoration watch the NCTC course catalogue, the plan is for the course to be held at NCTC in September of 2016.

By: Nathan Eckert

**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



## Lake Sturgeon Return to New York

A cooperative effort among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – New York Field Office, Genoa National Fish Hatchery (GNFH), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the New York Power Authority and the U.S. Geological Survey is leading to the restoration of lake sturgeon to the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries. Sturgeon were historically common in the St. Lawrence, Niagara, and Genesee Rivers, as well as throughout the Great Lakes but overharvest, pollution, habitat destruction and barriers to spawning grounds caused



Scott Schlueter stocks lake sturgeon

large population declines by the early 20th century. Lake sturgeon are on New York's state Endangered Species list and are a species of concern for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Since 2012 GNFH has been assisting with the collection of lake sturgeon eggs from wild caught spawning fish below the New York Power Authority dam in Massena, New York. After fertilization eggs are transported to Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Genoa, Wisconsin and New York Department of Environmental Conservation's Oneida Hatchery for grow out. This fall GNFH reared 20,330 lake sturgeon for stocking into the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries. In August Genoa staff members stocked 10,000 (4 in.) sturgeon and later in October stocked an additional 10,330 (7.5 in.) lake sturgeon. Since October 2012 GNFH has stocked 45,621 lake sturgeon in New York waterbodies in support of restoration efforts. This multi-agency cooperative effort is leading to successful stocking and management of St. Lawrence River strain lake sturgeon. In addition to these partnerships, supportive funding is provided through the Fish Enhancement, Mitigation and Research Outreach fund, a mitigation funding avenue of the Eisenhower Locks of Massena. By: Orey Eckes

## Genoa National Fish Hatchery Lake Sturgeon Production 2015

In fiscal year 2015 partnerships among federal, state, and tribal entities led to the stocking of 126,510 lake sturgeon. Hatchery volunteers and staff coded wire tagged 95,600 of these prior to stocking. Juvenile lake sturgeon reared at Genoa are stocked at lengths of 5-8 inches to many locations from Northern Minnesota to Southern Tennessee and west to South Dakota and east as far as New York. Genoa currently collects eggs in the spring each year from adult lake sturgeon from four river systems (Wisconsin-Yellow River, Rainy River, Wolf River and St. Lawrence River) to rear for fall stocking. Advances in lake sturgeon culture techniques, expansion of larval and juvenile tank rearing space and addition of new partnerships has led to increases in production from previous years. With continued partnerships and the help of volunteers Genoa is hopeful for another successful year in 2016 toward the reestablishment of lake sturgeon populations



Some of our sturgeon in between meals.

By: Orey Eckes

### Rekindling a Partnership

Genoa National Fish Hatchery has numerous partnerships with many tribal, state, and federal agencies through which thousands of fish and mussels are given or traded. Many of the partnerships that the hatchery has are yearly commitments while others are less frequent. In many cases it is nice to rekindle a partnership that has not occurred in recent years.

This year the hatchery rekindled a partnership with Iowa Ammunition Plant, part of the Department of Defense in southern Iowa.

The Iowa Ammunition Plant was established in 1939, and is housed on over 19,000 acres. The plant's primary mission is to produce and deliver small and medium sized caliber items to the United States military. The plant has over 5,000 of tillable farm land and 7,000 acres of woods, along with many enclosed water bodies through the base. In recent years tough winters have caused winter-kills on many of the water bodies on base leaving few if any fish to be caught by employees and residents.

This is where Genoa National Fish Hatchery comes in. In the past fish were provided to the base to ensure that the lakes had something to offer, however due to the difficult recent winters more fish were needed. Genoa NFH was contacted by the Iowa Ammunition Plant with requests for various fish and Genoa NFH delivered! Largemouth bass, bluegill, and black crappie were given to the base to replenish a total of four of their water bodies with over 40,000 fish. The staff at the hatchery hopes to maintain this and many other partnerships and are happy to assist whenever help is needed! By: Aaron Von Eschen



Black Crappie



Bluegill

Upcoming calendar of events

**November 2015**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Water Reuse for intensive fish culture	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> course, Shepherdstown, WV	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
		United States Fish & Wildlife Service Sturgeon Team to China				
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>					