

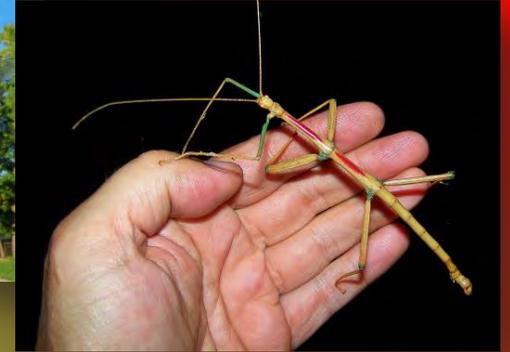


Neosho National Fish Hatchery

NEWSLETTER

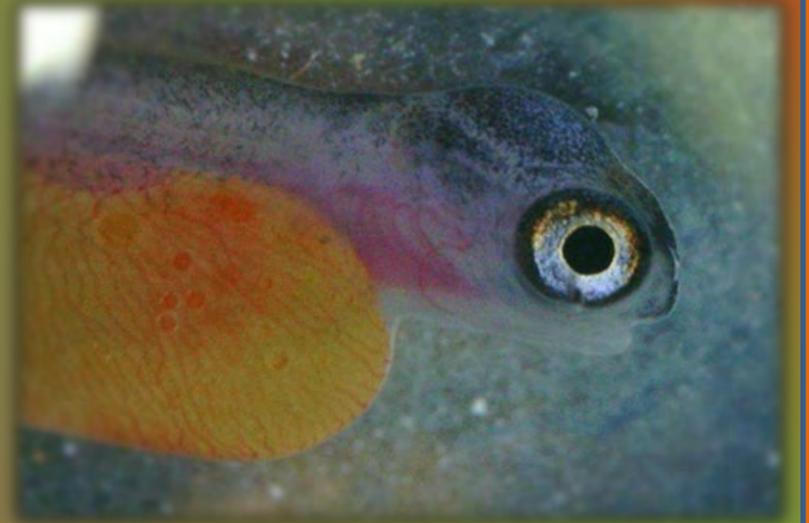
September and October 2014

Autumn is a beautiful time of year here in Neosho. As of mid-October, the maples are in full color as are some other vibrant species. It is a time of crisp mornings that produce stunning scenes of foggy mist from our ponds. And with the summer heat behind us, the sunny afternoons are a delight to enjoy and take in the outdoor sights.



Dragonflies and stick insects

This is the time of year when we are beginning a new cycle for our rainbow trout program. We get eggs in five times a year, mostly from Ennis National Fish Hatchery in Montana, and the first batch arrived in August. A second lot came in late September, and our next is scheduled for November. Just last week our summer pond maintenance came to an end as the empty basins were filled with spring water. It won't be long before some 7-inch trout move into those ponds as they continue to grow to our targeted size.





Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

Because we are surrounded by a community, everything we do is closely examined by the public. Visitors always ask what is wrong when they see the emptied ponds, or when they don't see fish in the water. While explaining the normal activity we do throughout the year is useful, it is always better to be able to show them the fish and let them feed them for us. Kids smile from ear to ear to see the fish flop and splash as they fight for the floating food pellets. Young parents frequently tell us how they remember coming as a child and how they want to share that with their own children.



Our mussel pond has been showing the most promise lately for that program. Having received some juvenile non-endangered fatmucket mussels, this summer and fall have produced the greatest growth we've ever seen. Our flopsy system is pumping water through the mollusk enclosure and the pond's water has been had a thriving zooplankton population to feed them well. We are currently looking for bigger and better opportunities to take this to the next level with restoring and repopulating endangered mussels, perhaps the Neosho mucket, and their host fish, the freshwater drum.





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Visitation to the hatchery has always been a big priority for us. Another way to support the community is to have display booths at other area attractions' special events. Our good friends at the George Washington Carver National Monument invited us to join them for their annual Prairie Days celebration with a table of goodies. We are pleased to represent whenever and wherever we can!



A few more of our hatchery's interesting residents:





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September was a busy month for us for our other big program – working with the federally endangered pallid sturgeon. May is the month for spawning these majestic creatures, and even though our female sturgeon released no eggs this year, our state partners at the Blind Pony state hatchery had great success. We ended up receiving half of their egg production – roughly 15,000 – and so this turned out to be the bumper crop of tiny pallids we’ve been waiting for. As a result, the two hatcheries had too many little fish to keep for the normal 12 or more months – but this was a problem we could live with! The ES team decided to stock out a majority of the 4-5 month old larval sturgeon, and keep about 3500 here for our traditional yearlong holding period. What made September so busy was having to tag approximately 20,000 sturgeon fry so they could be released into the Missouri River. Because of their small size, each one had a particular scute removed with a scalpel and was also injected with a colored elastomer mark on their snout. This process took a team of state and federal helpers most of a week’s time, and another week to deliver the young fish to their new homes.



Scute removal



Successful elastomer tag



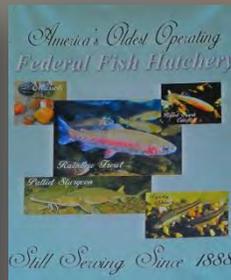
Great teamwork!





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This fall also has a brand new project developing. We are in process of getting raceways ready to house our latest endangered fish species – the Topeka shiner. Officially called *Notropis topeka*, it appears as a small minnow with an olive-yellow back, dark-edged scales and silvery-white sides and belly. A dark stripe runs along their sides and extends on to their heads – with a total fish length of just a few inches. Another state hatchery has been working to breed and reintroduce these minnows, and they are now passing this baton on to us. We had two raceway series that have been unused for about a dozen years. They were previously used to house brown trout brood stock, but now will be home to these endangered minnows. To prepare for their imminent coming, any leaks have been patched and all screens repaired. We also enclosed the raceway with a fine mesh fencing to help protect them from birds, humans and other would-be predators. Other workers have already learned that these fish like to share nests with the orange-spotted sunfish, letting them tend to the nesting site for them. Part of our ongoing learning curve will include these other fish and giving them a variety of nesting sites to choose from. We have constructed nesting boxes for the fish to use that sit at a different depths of water. After a successful spawn or two, we can evaluate which site was most utilized, or determine that depth was not critical for them to accomplish their mating.





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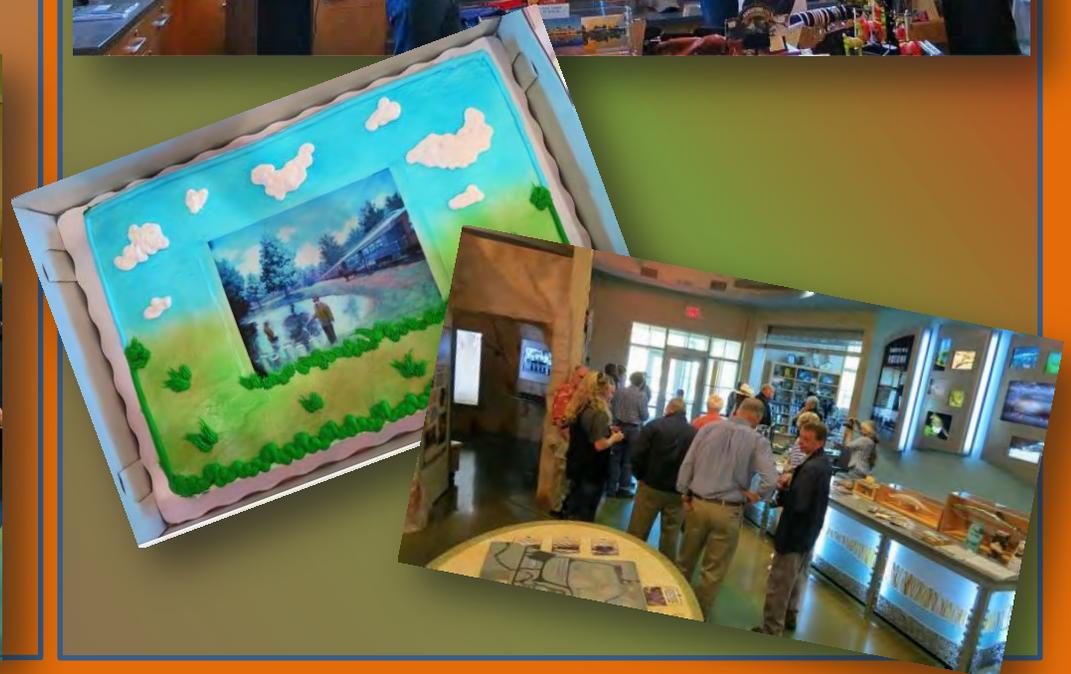
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Even though routine seems to be the usual word of the day, there is still some pretty exciting and innovative work going on here. We are proud of our history – being the oldest operating federal fish hatchery in the country – but we are also pushing forward to break new ground and help our agency to fulfill its mission of conserving, protecting and enhancing fish and other aquatic life for the benefit of everyone.

Here are shots of our annual volunteer appreciation dinner – we are so proud of our Friends group and all those that give of their time and resources to help the hatchery!



We were also pleased to host an open house to unveil the latest offering from local artist Jeffrey Jones – a large mural in four panels for our gift shop wall.





Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

More fall scenes and Halloween spiders:



The Final Word, from hatchery manager David Hendrix.



Hi Everyone☺,

Our young people are our future and the Neosho NFH continues to utilize every opportunity to educate them about the wonderful field of fisheries conservation. We try to participate in as many programs possible to reach out and educate this precious asset. By utilizing programs like the school shadow program, YCC program, and pathway programs, such wonderful goals are truly achievable. Please stop by when the opportunity present itself and visit our nation's oldest operating federal fish hatchery – young or old!

Until Next Time, Take Care☺!!!!!!!

*Newsletter and photos by Bruce Hallman,
Environmental Education Specialist*

