Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery Complex

Restoring America's Fisheries

"We work with our partners and engage the public, using a science-based approach, to conserve, restore and enhance fish and other aquatic resources for the continuing benefit of the American people."

September 2020

Fish Culture

Shovelnose sturgeon stocking on the Bighorn River, Wyoming occurred on the 22nd of September. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department truck from Speas SFH hauled the nearly 5,000 6.6 inch fish to the stocking location near Basin, WY. The Wyoming biologists were tagging the fish on location prior to stocking.

Loading shovelnose sturgeon for stocking

Tiger Musky fishing on Lake Audubon, ND (Photo credit Kim Fundingsland)

Tiger muskies arrived from Speas State Fish Hatchery, WY and will be transitioned from trout pellets to live trout over the next month and a half prior to stocking in October. The tiger muskellunge provide for a trophy fishery in select waters across the state. These fish are spawned from wild caught brooders in Nebraska, grown to an advanced fingerling size intensively in Wyoming and finished at Garrison Dam NFH in North Dakota before stocking. A lot of effort for the few thousand fish that make it to the final stocking location but for those anglers lucky enough to land one - it is worth it!

Upcoming Activities

Chinook salmon spawning will begin the first of October. Chinook salmon broodstock are collected by the ND Game and Fish Department biologists by electrofishing in Lake Sakakawea or the tailwaters. Salmon also ascend the creek to the hatchery and are captured in the hatchery's pond kettle. The activity draws several visitors to watch the spawning process or simply see the fish coming up the creek.

Partnerships

The Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery Complex is fortunate to have a well established relationship with the state fisheries crews. In addition to the financial support provided by the ND Game and Fish Department, an often overlooked arrangement made with the agency decades ago was for fish transport. The state biologists haul nearly all of the fish production at the federal hatcheries in North Dakota. This year in the first seven days of walleye production the fisheries crew put on 8,200 miles and stocked over 150 lakes with 7.6 million fingerlings. Over the course of the year, over 55,000 pounds of trout and salmon were stocked as well as 2.4 million pike, 12.6 million walleye and 278,000 advanced walleye fingerlings. That is a lot of road time and equipment wear and tear that the hatchery staff is fortunate not to have to endure.

Public Use

The hatchery remains closed to visitors due to the ongoing pandemic and increased occurrence in the state. The hatchery's hiking trails remain open and are seeing increased use.

Maintenance

Maintenance on the East Unit pond liners at Garrison Dam NFH gave the biologists a good opportunity to test their tire repairing skills as deer hooves punctured over a hundred holes in the liner material. The NDGF opted to install Firestone liners over the polyethylene liners in place on the West Unit. Lesson learned on the application of rubber liners in deer country without using a batting. Sediments built up in the West Unit ponds was also removed during the month via a power sweeper and UTV. Thankfully the polyethylene liners on the west unit are tough enough to allow for UTV access.

Grounds maintenance is an ongoing process at Valley City NFH. Numerous sink holes have developed throughout the yards surrounding the office and residences over the years. Staff has been repairing the yards by filling holes and reseeding them. Eight stumps were ground out throughout the hatchery that were in the way and often struck by mowers. Two rotten and hollow boxelder trees were removed, one right next to the white house and one next to the holding house. These trees were in poor condition and posed a threat of falling into the buildings they stood next too. Trees left on station to be removed are hanging over the river intake structure. These trees drop copious amounts of litter and branches that build up in the intake box. Removing these trees should clean up the intake and keep it free of so much litter that ends up in pond socks.

The fiberglass garage door on the YCC building was replaced with a new insulated garage door. The old door on the building had holes in it and was broke and had to be forced open.

Ponds 4 & 5 at Valley City had poor grades causing low spots that held water and did not allow the ponds to drain during harvest. Each of these ponds had dirt hauled into them to fill low areas and were re-graded to improve draining and harvest. Following fill, the ponds

were disked, dragged, and packed to level out pond bottoms and return them to smooth bottoms.

Road maintenance was performed at Baldhill in September. Grass and weeds were over taking the gravel roads around ponds. Roads were sprayed to eliminate plants growing in them and then disked and dragged to turn up the gravel underneath and lay it out flat. Holes were repaired from previous digs and packed with crushed rock and gravel to bring low spots up to level.

The holding house siding was installed in September closing that building up before winter. Previous steel siding was removed and new insulation and vertical steel siding was installed. The old steel siding was hauled to the recycling yard in Jamestown where it was put on credit and used to purchase new aluminum for tank stands to be installed in the Baldhill culture building. Doors have been ordered to replace the existing rusty doors.

Staff has been winterizing the hatchery at Valley City in preparation for colder weather. This process involves numerous steps and manipulation of valves located in various buildings and throughout the grounds of the hatchery. Staff this year took pictures of the involved steps and are writing them into SOP's for the hatchery staff to use going forward.

The culture building at Baldhill was fired up for the first time this year in absence of Lake Sturgeon propagation due to COVID preempting spawning in Canada. This was a trial run to see if all the plumbing that was done earlier in the year held and that the new filter functions properly. One leak was found and repaired and the system is now operational and ready for Lake Sturgeon production in 2021.

Paul checking out his plumbing skills at Baldhill Dam NFH

Salmonid Production Summary

Station:	Garrison Dam NFH	Period Covered:	October 1, 2019	Through	August 31, 2020	

	Fish on Hand the Last Day of the Period					To Date This Fiscal Year						
Lot Number	Number	Weight (Lbs)	Length (in)	Density Index	Flow Index	Weight Gain	Feed Expended		Fish Shipped		% Survival	Feed Conversion
							Pounds	Cost	Number	Weight		
RBT-SSD-19-ENN	1,743	2,051	15.0	0.1	0.46	15,372	24,728	$14,727	55,323	26,933	100	1.61
RBT-SSD-20-ENN	68,455	11,332	7.8	0.2	0.51	11,508	9,917	$7,010			100	0.86
BNT-PRD-18-SAR			10.4			1,066	6,250	$6,023	11,602	5,157	61	5.86
BNT-PRD-19-SAR	18,405	3,347	7.8	0.25	0.67	3,447	3,346	$2,294			97	0.97
RBT-HCD-18-WY			11.0			2,911	6,000	$3,566	14,422	6,868	92	2.06
FCS-LSW-19-FR			5.0			16,252	14,092	$13,341	424,945	16,400	97	0.87
Totals/Averages	88,593	16,830				50,556	64,333	$47,160	506,292	55,358		1.27

Hatchery Complex Personnel		
Employee	*Functional Title*	*Grade*
Robert Holm	*Project Leader*	*GS-13*
Jerry Tishmack	*Fishery Biologist*	*GS-11*
Sean Henderson	*Fishery Biologist*	*GS-11*
Shawn Cole	*Fishery Biologist*	*GS-7*
Toni Ganje	*Administrative Support*	*GS-7*
Ben Oldenburg	*Fisheries Technician*	*NDGF*
Aaron Von Eschen	*Assistant Project Leader*	*GS-12*
Tyler Sexton	*Biological Technician*	*GS-5*
Paul Drabus	*Maintenance Worker*	*GS-7*

New Bio-Science Tech Tyler Sexton started at the hatchery in September. Originally from South Dakota, Tyler returns to the upper Midwest from his previous position with the USFWS Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. Tyler brings fisheries experience from private, state, and federal hatcheries, as well as research experience working in state universities and state agencies. Tyler has experience working with 35 different fish species as well as experience with 7 federally listed threatened or endangered species. Growing up with a family owned construction business, he also brings a wealth of building and maintenance experience that will be extremely beneficial to the hatchery. Valley City NFH is happy to have Tyler on board and looks forward to the accomplishments and insights he will bring to the propagation programs. Additionally it's comforting to have a fellow Jackrabbit in the Bison state.