

Monthly Report

APRIL 2020

# GAVINS POINT NFH



Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*)

Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery—Yankton, SD

## Pallid Sturgeon Spawning

Due to COVID-19 hatchery staff had to be creative for safely spawning pallid sturgeon. Spawning bowl holders were developed to minimize the number of people required to spawn the fish. PPE, social distancing, and strategic methods for holding the fish provided a safe and effective way for spawning. A total of 6 wild pallid sturgeon were spawned in April.



## Assisting our State Partners

South Dakota renovated their most popular fishing lake (urban fishery) but COVID-19 prevented them from stocking it. Gavins Point had to cancel their fishing derby so 756 surplus rainbow trout 12" were utilized for stocking the lake. We also provided an extra 1.1 million yellow perch to help with their stocking goals since their entire trap and transfer program was canceled.

## Pallid Sturgeon Fry Stocking

In April 64,600 larval pallid sturgeon were stocked into the Missouri River. This marks the first time that middle basin pallid sturgeon larvae have been stocked into the basin. These stockings will help solve the uncertainties surrounding age-0 pallid sturgeon.



## Broodstock Collection

Jennifer and Jason completed their mark-recapture sampling. They caught a total of 30 pallid sturgeon and 2 potential wild broodstock. They traveled to the boat ramp in separate vehicles and maintained social distancing throughout the sampling.



## Early Life Stage Mortality

Evaluations on pallid sturgeon early life stage mortality are underway. Initial survival has been excellent on pond and reconstituted Missouri River water.

## Pond fertilization

Ponds were fertilized weekly throughout the month of April. Soybean meal cast into the pond is great for providing the needed nutrients to the water. This promotes a healthy zooplankton population for newly stocked fry to eat once they are stocked into the pond. A blue dye is also added to limit the light exposure to unwanted algae and macrophytes.



## *Looking Ahead*

- *Pallid Sturgeon Spawning and Stocking*
- *Paddlefish Capture and Spawning*
- *Warm Water Broodstock Management*
- *Drum-filter Maintenance*
- *Yellow Perch Stocking*
- *Filling paddlefish ponds*

## Hatchery Staff

Jeff Powell—Project Leader

Nick Starzl—Assistant Project Leader

Diane Von Eschen—Admin. Officer

Tim Schroeder—Maint. Mechanic

Chris Hooley—Fish Biologist

Sam Stukel—Fish Biologist

Terry Hall—Bio Tech (Term)

Cole Moderegger— Bio Tech (Seasonal)

Ron Grande Bio Tech (Seasonal)

Jennifer Johnson—Fish Biologist (River)

Jason Kral—Fish Biologist (River)

## In Brief

- Jennifer completed proposals for internal FWS Asian carp funding.
- Sam contributed to the discussion about photo meta-data for the National Digital Library and assisted NCTC with developing a lesson plan based on pallid sturgeon.
- Roughly 500 yearling pallid sturgeon were tagged and stocked into the Missouri Rivers. The remaining yearlings will be stocked later this summer as travel restrictions lift.
- 50 wild broodstock shovelnose were transferred to the hatchery.
- Staff participated in various conference calls and online training events.
- Pond 22 broodstock pond was harvested. Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Black Crappie brooders were each placed into their own pond to produce a new year class.