Monthly Report

MAY 2020

Gavins Point NFH

Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus)*

Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery—Yankton, SD

Pallid Sturgeon Spawning

The final 2 wild pallid sturgeon females were spawned in May. One female produced a record breaking number of eggs for a middle basin female at 54,750 eggs. The first captive spawns were completed with 115,975 neurulated embryos being shipped to Neosho NFH and Bozeman FTC for fin curl and diet studies.

Paddlefish Spawn

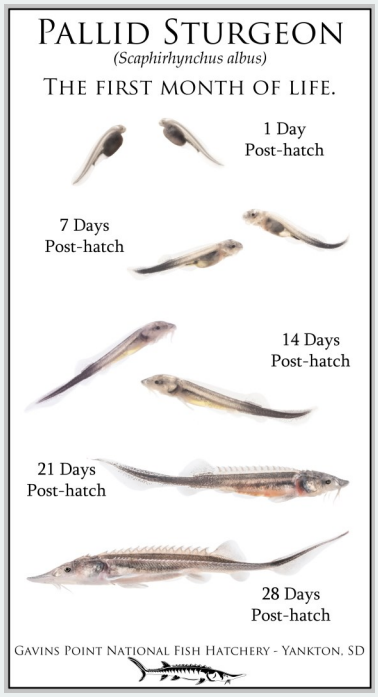
The 2020 paddlefish spawn was an excellent success. The collection of paddlefish adults was questionable right up to the last minute because help from the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks crew out of Chamberlain was uncertain (due to Covid-19). Ultimately, they were able to go out with only 2 people in their boat. After receiving 6 females and 10 males on May 18th, the hatchery staff was able to inject, spawn and incubate 1M paddlefish eggs.

KWS Dace Spawning

We were able to make some progress in developing alternative spawning methods on the Kendall Warm Springs dace this month. Individual fish spawning readiness was closely monitored. We found that it was possible to hand strip the eggs from the females and milt from the males resulting in effective 1x1 crosses which eliminate parental unknowns.

Implanting transmitters

Jennifer and Jason intensively tracked acoustically tagged pallid sturgeon and implanted this adult male with a transmitter. They also assisted the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission field crew with tracking in their stretch of the Missouri River near Sioux City, IA.



Pallid Sturgeon Fry Stocking

In May 88,651 Day-1 and Day-5 pallid sturgeon fry were stocked into the Missouri River. This years effort resulted in a 151,312 fry that were stock into the Missouri River and an additional 8,000 fry are being help for yearling production.

Shovelnose Sturgeon Tagging

All 135 wild shovelnose were fin clipped and PIT tagged. Fin clips will be sent to Southern Illinois University for genetic analysis. We are searching for a specific genetic marker that only 2% of shovelnose possess, so a small number of these fish will be used in a surrogacy study in 2021.

Looking Ahead

- ***Walleye pond harvest***
- ***Perch pond harvest***
- ***Paddlefish pond culture***
- ***Intensive tracking and recapture of acoustically tagged pallid sturgeon to evaluate spawning success***

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 and Jason have spent over 70 hours tracking pallid sturgeon and follow 7 individual fish.
- Sam appeared on live on NCTC Conservation Connect broadcast about paddlefish.
- Sam worked with a contractor to help provide content for the Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership website and designed a banner flag for outreach events.
- Paddlefish eggs were shipped to two Kansas state fish hatcheries to learn and hopefully develop their own paddlefish culture techniques.
- Maintaining adequate dissolved oxygen levels in earthen ponds is a seasonal challenge. A tractor driven paddlewheel aerator is used almost every morning on trouble ponds to alleviate fish kills.