

Monthly Report

October/November 2020

GAVINS POINT NFH



Rainbow Trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss*

Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery—Yankton, SD

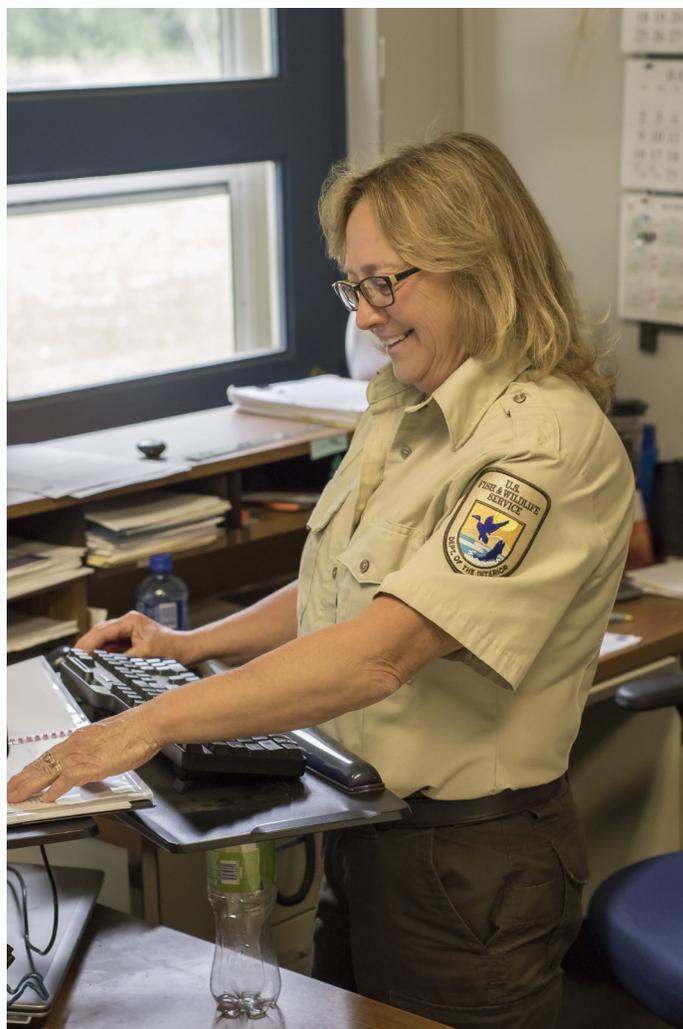
Diane Von Eschen is retiring at the end of the year

After 34 years of federal service, Diane is calling it quits this December. She began her federal career in January of 1986 with the Corp of Engineers as a Clerk typist, then Fiscal Assistant, and then later as a Purchasing Agent. In 1993, she transferred to the Lake Andes NWR as their Administrative Asst. and worked there for the next 13 years.

It was then in 2006 however that her [dream] job as Administrative Officer at the Gavins Point NFH opened up. She had filled in for the hatchery several times in the past, and the staff knew she would be an outstanding individual with experience to do the job.

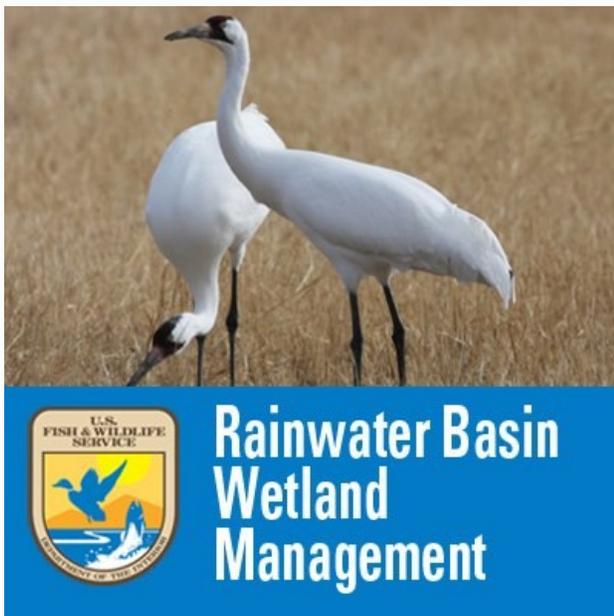
In the beginning, Diane's primary duties revolved around just Gavins Point. However, through the years her role expanded to eventually assisting with many other stations including Garrison NFH, Valley City NFH, Hotchkiss NFH, and Leadville NFH.

Diane's presence and skill will be greatly missed not only here at the hatchery but from the Region as well.



Pallid Sturgeon Broodstock Collection

Nebraska Game and Parks and the Missouri Department of Conservation spent several weeks on the river as part of their mark/recapture study, and in the process collected pallid sturgeon broodstock which were transferred to Gavins Point NFH by hatchery staff. 17 wild fish were brought to the hatchery averaging about 900mm in length.



Interview, Interviews, Interviews!

Nick Starzl assisted on a hiring panel for the Rainwater Basin Complex. The coordinated hire interviewed 30 applicants for 7 wildlife refuge specialist positions. The positions were located in MT, WY, ND and NE.

Freshwater mussel scouting

Chris Hooley and Jason Kral spent half a day scouting potential freshwater mussel beds for species of interest. Knowing the locations of various species will help in future culture projects with Nebraska and South Dakota.



Pipeline treatment

In mid October, we treated our lake water pipeline with a copper sulfate solution to eradicate any potential zebra mussels veligers that made it past the 30 micron drum filters . This preventative treatment is performed annually and lasts for one week. Careful methods are required to ensure the copper sulfate is never allowed to come in contact with the fish on station.



Winterizing

Once the pond production season is completed, most of the water lines to the 36 ponds must be shut off and drained to prevent cracking. The process involves opening and shutting several of our underground valves to each series of ponds. It is also a good time to note any deficiencies that need to be corrected prior to next years pond cycle.

Pond Mowing and Grounds Maintenance

Tim Schroeder spent several days mowing the pond bottoms which helps in weed prevention. Due to the dry fall we had here in SD, we were able to get into all the needed ponds to make sure they will be ready to go next spring.



Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery 's Rainbow Trout Program

The Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery (NFH) received 265,000 (and more to come this winter) rainbow trout eggs during Oct and Nov from the Ennis NFH. The resulting fry will be reared to two inches. At which time they will be used as forage to feed aquarium specimens, and broodstock which includes pallid sturgeon, blue catfish, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and black crappie.

Many of the broodstock are held in an icy 1 acre pond throughout the winter and do not need to be fed, but by the end of the cold winter the



broodstock are extremely hungry. One problem that biologists face is the possibility of compromising the health of the broodstock by introducing diseases or parasites from other fish such as baitfish.

Fortunately, this risk can be reduced by feeding a rainbow trout. This is

possible due to the fact that the rainbow trout eggs are received from the Ennis NFH which has a disease free classification, and that rating is maintained throughout the rearing process at Gavins Point NFH. Thus, the rainbow trout forage ensures healthy and well fed fish. Some of the remaining rainbow trout that are leftover from the feeding program, are grown to a size of 11 inches over 12 months for recreational fishing or for the fishing derby.



Looking Ahead

- *KWS dace Spawning and experimental rearing*
- *Determining wild pallid sturgeon reproductive status*
- *Fish Culture Equipment repairs*
- *Annual Reporting*

Hatchery Staff

Nick Starzl—Acting Project Leader

Diane Von Eschen—Admin. Officer

Tim Schroeder—Maint. Mechanic

Chris Hooley—Lead Fish Biologist

Sam Stukel—Fish Biologist

Terry Hall—Biological Science Tech

Cole Modereggor— Seasonal/volunteer

Ron Grandi— Seasonal

In Brief

- Diane Von Eschen retirement coming up in Dec.
- 17 wild pallid sturgeon were caught by Nebraska Game and MDC, then Gavins staff transported the fish back to the hatchery for recovery actions.
- Hiring panel assignments
- Jason and Chris went scouting mussels on the James River
- Lake water copper sulfate treatment for preventative eradication of zebra mussel veligers
- Hatchery winterization activities took place: water lines were freeze-drained, sprinklers systems blown-out, fish culture equipment winterized, leaf removal and a whole host of fall clean-up activities.
- Rearing of 2" rainbow trout as forage for pallid sturgeon broodstock.

