

GAVINS POINT NFH



Distribution trucks in preparation for loading paddlefish in early September morning



Black Sandshell Mussel *Ligumia recta*

Black Sandshell Cage Culture a Success!

Gavins Point NFH staff were able to produce their first juvenile mussels during the summer of 2020! In June, the Genoa NFH sent black sandshell transformers, measuring less than a mm, for us to test culture methods at Gavins Point NFH. One cage method showed great promise resulting in 347 juvenile mussels out of 500 transformers stocked into it. Excellent growth averaging 7.2 mussels per gram (.75") resulted after 2 months. The mussels were transferred to North Platte State Fish Hatchery, NE where they will be used for stream restoration projects next year.

We are hoping to expand on these efforts next year by building more cages and working with NE and Genoa NFH to produce needed mussel species. In an effort to be prepared for next year, we produced several thousand advanced 5" largemouth bass, flathead chubs, and walleye to be used as host fish to aid in this effort next summer.



Paddlefish Stocking

The hatchery staff stocked paddlefish in cooperation with the SDGFP crew from Pierre, SD. Over 53,000 12" paddlefish weighing nearly 10,000 lbs were harvested and distributed to Lake Francis Case and Lake Sharpe of the Missouri River.



Pond Broodstock Moved

The adult largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, black crappie, and bluegills were moved from their summer pond to pond 3 where they will overwinter until next spring.

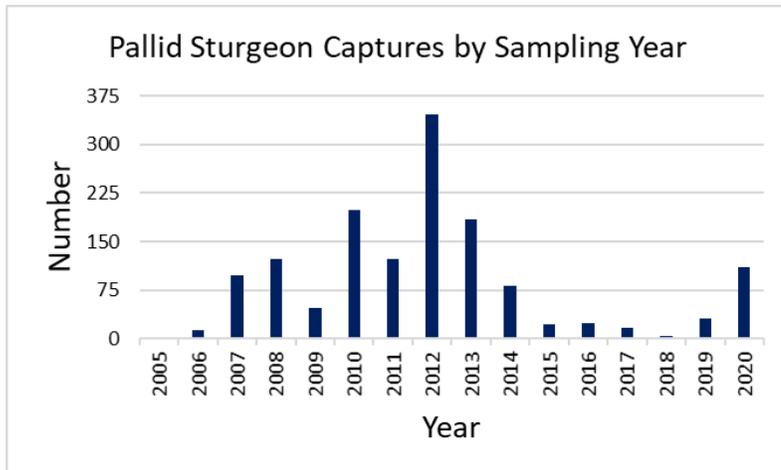
Dace room updates

Chris Hooley and Terry Hall worked together to provide more rearing and holding operations for the wild Kendall Warm Springs dace broodstock. Dace needs and methods have changed over the last few years since we first brought them on station. Making the changes will hopefully facilitate dace culture and genetic conservation.



Pallid Sturgeon

We completed our FY20 pallid sturgeon population assessment field work. During the 2020 field season we captured a total of 110 pallid sturgeon, more than the last five years combined. Notable events include the capture of 51 pallid sturgeon in the James River over seven days in September, the capture of a 10 pound lake sturgeon, and the capture of six pallid sturgeon on a single trotline. In addition we also conducted acoustic tracking of tagged pallid sturgeon between Gavins Point Dam and Ponca State Park. We made contact with 15 pallid sturgeon and one lake sturgeon during the 2020 field season.



Other Activities

Jason, with assistance from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, collected and transported blue catfish to the hatchery.

Jason provided Tanner Carlson, University of South Dakota graduate student, with in the field experience using telemetry equipment to conduct active tracking. Tanner is working on a blue sucker project in the James River.

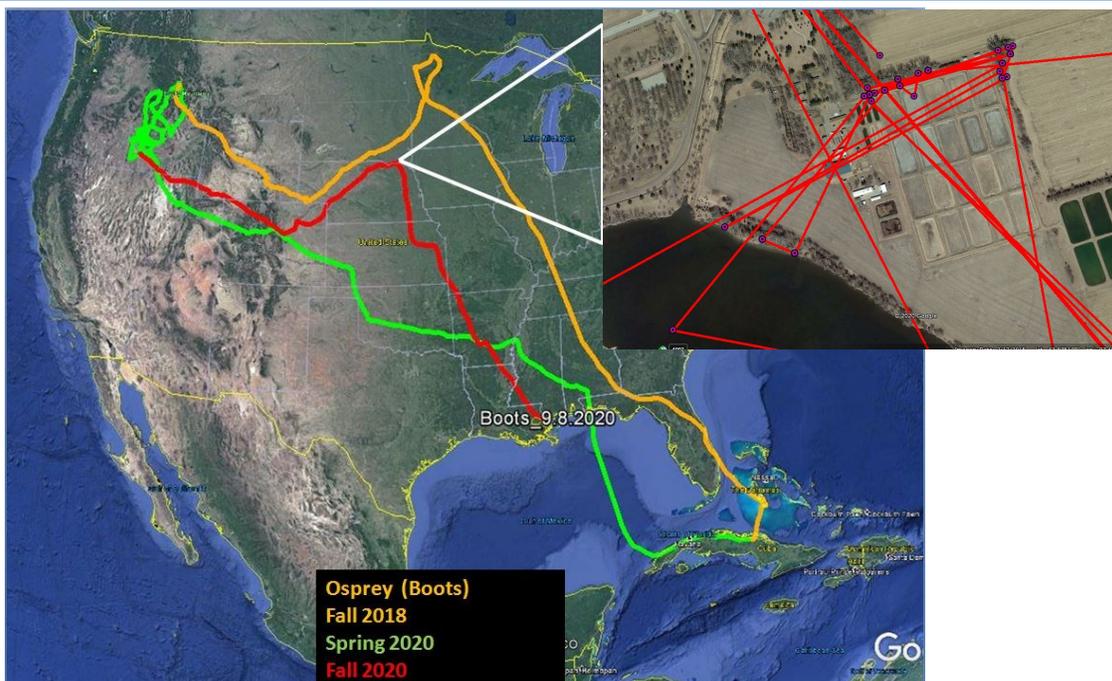
Jennifer attended the online webinar “Tagging and monitoring freshwater mussels: Insights gained during four conservation projects”.

Other interesting tidbits...

Powered by Paddlefish

Local birder Greg Pavelka snapped a photo of a paddlefish-stealing osprey at our rearing ponds a few weeks ago and noticed that the bird was banded and wearing a small antenna. He tracked down the bander (Raptor View Research) and learned that this 2-yr old bird named "Boots" summers in MT/ID and winters in Cuba.

The bird spent five days at the hatchery this fall, likely getting its fill of paddlefish. Check out the map below to see its migration paths.



Looking Ahead

- *Pipeline disinfection and winterization*
- *EPAPs*
- *Equipment surplus activities*
- *Work Plans*
- *Fall pallid sturgeon collection*

Hatchery Staff

Nick Starzl—Acting Project Leader

Diane Von Eschen—Admin. Officer

Tim Schroeder—Maint. Mechanic

Chris Hooley—Fish Biologist

Sam Stukel—Fish Biologist

Terry Hall—Bio Tech

Cole Moderegger— Bio Tech (Seasonal)

Ron Grande Bio Tech (Seasonal)

Jennifer Johnson—Fish Biologist (River)

Jason Kral—Fish Biologist (River)

In Brief

- Black sandshell cage culture showed promise and production.
- Over 53,000 12” paddlefish were stocked into the Missouri River.
- Pond broodstock were moved
- Wild dace tanks were changed to facilitate more separation.
- Advanced fingerling large-mouth bass, and walleye were produced and harvested then moved to overwinter pond to use as host fish next summer.
- We completed our FY20 pallid sturgeon population assessment field work.
- More blue catfish were collected for hatchery broodstock.