



Leadville National Fish Hatchery

July 2020

July is a time for young fish, toads and wildlife to start their new lives, and tourists to overpopulate the hatchery grounds. Our cutthroat eggs have eyed up and started to hatch. The Wyoming toad tadpoles received from Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in June have now all sprouted legs and turned into little toads. Every day at any given time starting from mid-morning to evening there are anywhere from 15 to 30+ vehicles of tourists visiting the hatchery and trails. Tourism is up during these COVID-19 times, with this being one of our busiest years since I came here in 2003.

Stocking continued in July with fish being released in Twin Lakes, Turquoise, Hayden Meadows, Mt. Elbert Forebay and Clear Creek Reservoirs, along with Crystal and Emerald Lakes.



Bio Tech Ryan Maxwell picking through eyed greenback cutthroat trout future broodstock eggs.



Colorado Parks and Wildlife Salida Hatchery Manager Bryan Johnson (above) delivering some 2019 greenback cutthroat to add to our future broodstock (below). Several of our broodstock classes each year are raised in the Salida Isolation Unit for the first year. Most of these lots were developed from some or both of the parents came from the wild, either Bear Creek or Zimmerman Lake.





In only a few days our Wyoming toad tadpoles popped legs and crawled out as toads. The bottom picture is a little toad on window screening showing how small these toads start out.





Bio Tech Alyssa Capriotti sweep netting for insects (above). For the first few months of their life as toads we try to have one of the two feedings per day be wild caught insects. Below are the toadlets gathered for the insect feast.





Each summer we conduct two bat counts. A nursery colony of mainly little brown bats lives in the attic of the hatchery building during the summer. Working with the US Forest Service Wildlife Biologist the hatchery crew conducts a bat count as the bats emerge for the evening from the gable end vents of the hatchery building. This year around 769 bats were counted flying out for their nightly hunt. Pictured above are Bio Techs Michael Heckman (front) and Ryan Maxwell (back) counting bats.



The gable end vents of the hatchery building are the entry and exit point for the bats.



The hatchery building window replacement project has started! In the early 1960's the original hatchery building windows were replaced with glass block. The Friends of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery is funding the project (approximately \$90,000) to replace the glass blocks with replica windows and faux French doors to further restore the look of this historic building. The project is expected to be completed in August.





Young red squirrels venturing forth for the first time from the nest box. From squirrels to birds, many young animals left the nest in July around the hatchery.



The summer monsoon afternoon rainstorms produce many rainbows, this one over Evergreen Lake #3.

July Hatchery Staff

Project Leader - Ed Stege

Fish Biologist - Paige Moran

Facility Operations Specialist – Vacant

Temp Biological Technicians:

Alyssa Capriotti

Michael Heckman

Ryan Maxwell

Summer volunteers: Jim and Linda Williams, Diane Larrabee