

# Natchitoches News

U . S . F I S H & W I L D L I F E S E R V I C E

## MANAGER'S CORNER

BY: KAREN KILPATRICK

Well folks...this is the last message I will pen as the manager of the hatchery! My retirement is just a few short working days away and I am fastidiously trying to cross off detail after detail so I can walk away feeling I have given my all. I want to say that the Fish and Wildlife Service has been an anchor in my life... coming into my life before marriage, children, divorce, cancer, caring for my mom, and so many more things ... and it is still here after many of those things have gone. The one thing, besides God, that I knew was rock solid was that at 615 South Drive there was a job to do. Sometimes it felt like a purposeful job, sometimes it was just pure hell to deal with. But through it all, the resources have been served, relationships have been built, and a feeling of peaceful success now overwhelms me as I get ready to depart. I would like to say "goodbye" to everyone and let you know that people are more precious than the resources we protect and that it is for people that we

protect the resources. I appreciate every one of the "people" I have come across during my 33+ years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and I speak blessings to you and yours. If you are ever in the Natchitoches area, please don't hesitate to come see me. As my precious mom used to say in every conversation closing, "Love you and bye!"



## FISH HATCHERY RECEIVES LDWF ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLES

BY: JAN DEAN

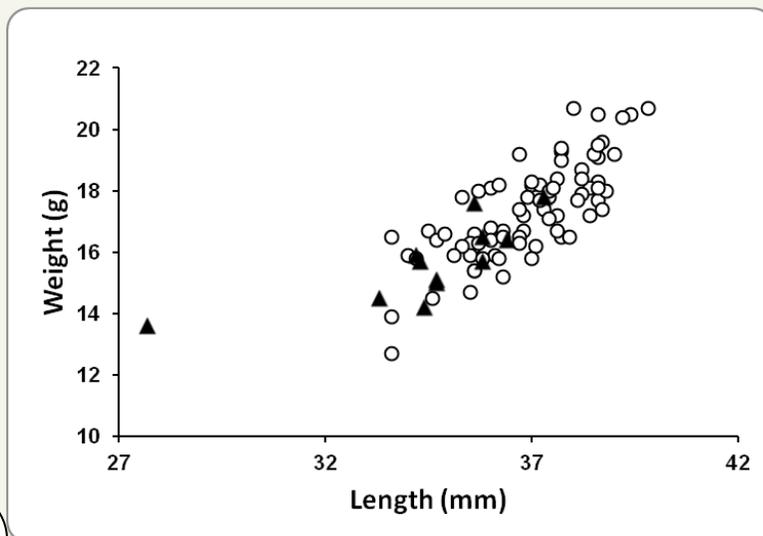
Randy Wiggins of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) delivered 92 hatchling alligator snapping turtles to Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery October 17, 2011. This marks the first of a joint effort by Natchitoches NFH and the LDWF Natural Heritage Program to rear snapping turtles. The hatchlings are a donation from the Concordia Parish Turtle Farm, and the parents were wild caught in Louisiana. Natchitoches will rear them over winter and return them to the LDWF in about April to make room in the culture building for alligator gar fry in May. The LDWF will continue to rear the turtles indoors until 2013 either in Baton Rouge (Waddill) or at the Monroe Fish Hatchery. The State will contract surveys of alligator snapping turtles through universities and trappers to assess where populations have been depleted. In 2013, the LDWF will receive the second donation of hatchlings from the turtle, will con-



LDWF hatchling alligator snapping turtles in their new home at the Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery.

tinue with population assessments and will move the 2011 turtles to outdoor ponds. In 2014, the headstarted turtles will be released into areas that have been deemed depleted, and these turtles will be studied to determine their survival and movements.

The hatchlings were individually weighed and measured October 19. Except for "tiny," the averages were 17 grams and 37 mm carapace length. Tiny was just under 14 grams and 28 mm long.



## Natchitoches NFH Begins Recovery Work on A New Endangered Species

By: Tony Brady

In October, Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH) started a new recovery program for the federally endangered Winged mapleleaf mussel (WML). Working in conjunction with the Arkansas Ecological Services Field Office (AESFO), Cookeville Ecological Services Field Office, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), and the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, NNFH will be attempting to propagate and culture WML for reintroduction into the Duck River in Tennessee. On 6 October, staff at NNFH received 600 channel catfish from Joe Hogan State Fish Hatchery in Lonoke, AR to be used as host fish for the WML larva called glochidia. The catfish were held in one of the hatchery's in-pond raceways until gravid female WML could be collected. Biologists from NNFH, AESFO, and AGFC snorkeled a mussel bed in the Saline River, AR, known to have WML, and in about 20 minutes had collected 13 gravid females. Six of these females were taken to Missouri State University for propagation efforts. The remaining seven were added to two female WML collected the week before during population surveys of other mussel beds in the Saline River, and taken to NNFH and held in an aquarium so they could be monitored for glochidial release. The WML started releasing glochidia on 23 October. The glochidia were collected and then used to inoculate 400 of the Channel catfish. Due to the drought conditions in Louisiana causing a shortage of useable water at NNFH, the staff at NNFH asked Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery

(PJANFH) if they would over winter the inoculated catfish for this program. Private John Allen NFH was pleased to assist in this program, so on 31 October the NNFH staff transported the inoculated catfish to PJANFH. These fish will remain at PJANFH until this coming spring when they will be taken back to Arkansas and placed in cages in the Saline River following the successful mussel propagation programs used at Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin in which the author spent seven years before joining the staff at NNFH. The cages will be harvested in the Fall of 2012 to determine the success of our efforts. Mussels recovered from the cages will be measured and if they have reach an acceptable size then they will be stocked out in the Duck River, and if they are not large enough then they will be held until the fall of 2013 giving them an additional year to grow before being taken to the Duck River.



Winged Mapleleaf Mussel from the Saline River in Arkansas.

WE'RE ON THE WEB

[WWW.FWS.GOV/NATCHITOCHE](http://WWW.FWS.GOV/NATCHITOCHE)

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NATCHITOCHESNFH](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NATCHITOCHESNFH)



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**Saving the world. One species at a time.**



**Karen Kilpatrick is Retiring!**

**After 33 years of federal service, Karen has finally decided to jump from one bowl to another and see what retirement is all about!**

**Retiring: December 3, 2011**

**SAVE THE DATE: Retirement Party - January 12, 2012**

**6:00-8:00 pm @ the NSU Recreation Complex  
(Menu TBA – we'll send more info in December)**

**If you would like to send cards, notes, pictures, videos, or donations toward a retirement gift, please send them to:**

**Lana Litton ([lane\\_litton@fws.gov](mailto:lane_litton@fws.gov))  
615 South Drive, Natchitoches, LA 71457  
Call 318.352.5324 for more information**