



Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery's Open House and Kids Fishing Derby Helps Families Make Memories

By: Tony Brady

Country Music Artist, Trace Atkins' current hit song on the radio is called "Just Fishing". In the song, Atkins sings about taking his young daughter fishing, and while in her mind they are just fishing, Atkins knows that what they are really doing is making memories that will last a life time. I can relate to this song because as we celebrate Father's Day in June, I think back to the wonderful times my dad and I spent on the creek bank or in the boat "Just Fishing".



The derby is the main draw with 225 kids fishing this year

On June 4th, Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH) along with the Friends In Support of the Hatchery (F.I.S.H.), Provencal BASS Club (PBC), Cane River Water

Way Commission, Walter B. Jacobs Nature Park, the Alexandria Zoo, Honda Village, and a wonderful team of volunteers helped a record number of families make those life long memories at our annual Open House and Kid's Fishing Derby. A total

of 464 people registered at the event with 225 kids signed up to fish. During the event 168 pounds of catfish were caught from two of the hatchery ponds. For those who are wondering about the left over catfish, they were harvested a couple of days after the Open House and delivered to Anderson Pond in Kisatchie National Forest for their Kid's Fishing Event held the following weekend.

For the kids making memories, prizes were awarded in four age classes (2-5, 6-8, 9-12, 13-15). Each age group was



Two nice stringers of catfish



This contestant tries her skills at the Flip, Pitch, and Cast contest.

awarded prizes for biggest fish, smallest fish, and 1st/2nd/3rd places for total weight. Prizes were also awarded to those participating in the Flip, Pitch, and Cast contest hosted by the Provençal Bass Club.

The NNFH Open House is held every year on the first Saturday in June in conjunction with the National Fishing and Boating Safety Week and the Louisiana Free Fishing Weekend. In addition to the fishing and casting contest, there were other activities for folks to enjoy such as face painting, Gyo-taku fish prints, inflatable jumpers, a boating safety education area, and plenty of games.



Face painting is a crowd favorite at the open house. This young lady gets a flower on her face to match her shirt.

Rusty Scarborough from the Walter B. Jacobs Nature Park had Birds of Prey on hand for folks to get a close up look at these wonderful birds. Other unique animals such as a bearded dragon, an American alligator, and a ball python, were displayed by the Alexandria Zoo.

Despite temperatures that approached triple digits, everyone had a great time. This event would not be possible if it were not for our partners and the 50 volunteers that helped make this year's event a huge success. Thank you all.

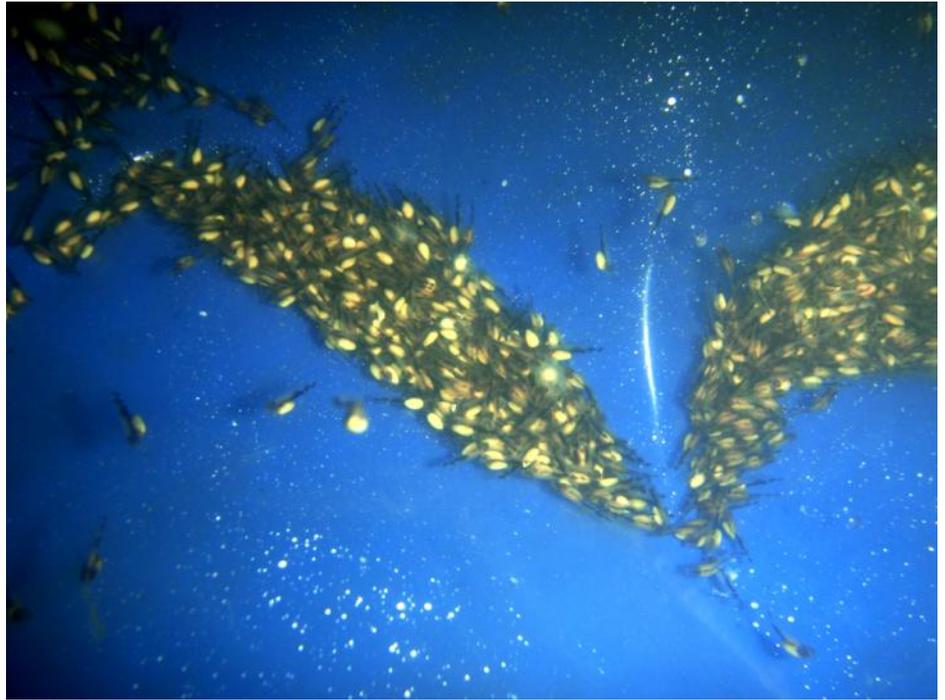


An Alexandria Zoo employee shows off an American Alligator.

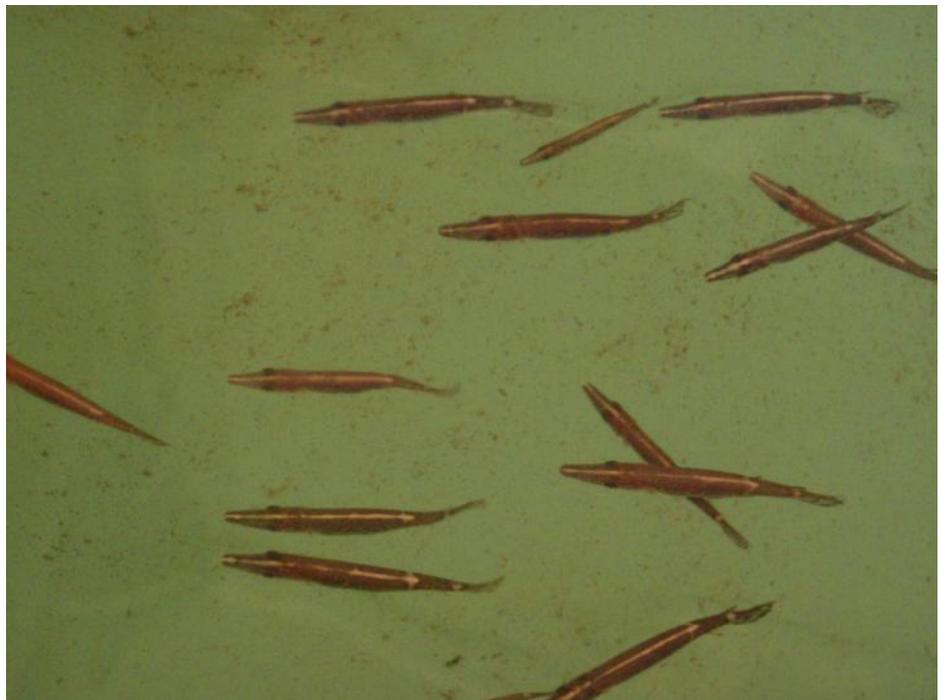
Natchitoches NFH Provides Northwestern State University with Alligator Gar for Research

By: Tony Brady

Last month you got to read about the exciting Alligator gar program that Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH) is participating in with Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery (PJANFH). In the words of Paul Harvey, “Now the rest of the story”. In addition to rearing Alligator gar for restoration efforts in Tennessee, NNFH has been providing gar to Northwestern State University’s Aquaculture Research Center near Marco, LA. Dr. Julie Delabbio is the Director of NSU’s Aquaculture Research Center, and has been conducting feeding trials on the Alligator Gar for the past few years. On 10 May the hatchery provided Dr. Delabbio with 320 fry. These gar were used to conduct research that focused on the effects of photoperiod on the feeding behavior of Alligator gar. Photoperiod is simply the number of hours that light is provided to the fish versus the number of hours the fish are kept in the dark. Dr. Delabbio wants to see if increasing the amount of light will increase the amount of food the gar will eat, thus growing larger in a shorter amount of time. As the study concludes in July, we will wait to see the results Dr. Delabbio gets from her research.



Alligator gar fry that were hatched at Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery



Just a few weeks later the Alligator gar have grown several inches.



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



*Hatchery Mussel Biologist Tony Brady
with his daughter Stasi at the Open House*

<http://www.fws.gov/natchitoches>

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Manager's Corner

By: Karen Kilpatrick

June is usually a month of closure and slowing down at the hatchery... the annual Open House comes and goes, we finish up the spring crop and stock out the summer crop. But this June brought a whole new meaning to the word closure! Some tough decisions had to be made about water usage and summer/fall fish crops. Due to a 50-year drought, our water supply, Cane River Lake, is extremely low (close to 3.5 feet below full pool stage). We had to have our intake dredged to clean out years of sediment and that seemed to help, but the continued drought caused us to look forward through the next six months and decide if we would have enough water. And then, on the heels of the drought situation, came the final budget allocations and a 4% across-the-board cut. The devastation is that we got the final figures with 75% of the

year gone! One of our major expenses is electricity used to pump water out of Cane River Lake to fill ponds and to keep aerators running because of consistently 95-100+ degree water temperatures. The combination of drought conditions and budget cuts resulted in making a decision to ship all hatchery fish immediately. The process should be done by mid-July, saving an estimated \$15 thousand in electrical costs. The fish will be transferred to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Booker Fowler State Fish Hatchery for grow out or use as forage. Tough decisions in tough times. If you need more information on the budget or the drought situation, feel free to call the hatchery at 318.352.5324.



Hatchery personnel Dennis Scarborough
over see the dredging operation