

# Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Report  
May 2015



## Aquatic Species Conservation and Management



*Alligator snapping turtle  
eggs.*

Alligator snapping turtles began nesting May 10<sup>th</sup>, early in comparison with other years despite cooler than normal temperatures. Thirty-seven eggs were deposited by the female into this first nest. By the end of May, eighteen nests had been found averaging thirty-one eggs per nest.



Tishomingo NFH received two alligator snapping turtles from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. These turtles were confiscated from Chicago, IL, and St. Louis, MO, by law enforcement officials there. The Tulsa Zoo and Living Museum provided a health inspection before releasing to the hatchery.

110 pound  
alligator  
snapping turtle.



Six alligator gar were moved into a circular tank for spawning, with the assistance of staff from Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC). Weather conditions and mis-identification of the sexes made for an unsuccessful attempt at spawning with no viable eggs produced. Secondary techniques for sexing the alligator gar were learned during this experience, however. The attempt continued to cement the partnership between Tishomingo NFH and ODWC. Barry Boltin, chief of Fisheries for ODWC, Rhonda Hurst, EXPO Coordinator, and several of their co-workers were on site to view our staff and ODWC staff moving these 40 – 70 pound gar into a circular tank.



Moving alligator gar from  
pond to tank.



Rhonda Hurst, ODWC, and  
alligator gar.

### ***Fish Distribution***

- 2,000 Derby-sized channel catfish to Fort Sill Military Base as per reimbursable agreement with Department of Defense.



*Harvesting  
channel catfish.*

- Two large adult male alligator gar were returned to Lake Texoma after use in spawning.



*Returning  
alligator gar to  
Lake Texoma.*

## Leadership in Science and Technology

Volunteers at Tishomingo NFH, Dr. Day Ligon from Missouri State University, and Denise Thompson from Oklahoma State University, are researching the effect of stress on the alligator snapping turtles after being caught in a hoop-net. Blood samples are taken from the turtle before and after handling. The samples are placed in a micro-centrifuge to separate out the plasma. The increase in cortisol should indicate how much stress the turtle is under while being handled.



*Drawing blood from alligator snapping turtle and resulting plasma.*

## FACILITIES



*Pennington Creek at Highway 7 bridge.*

The month of May brought history-making rainfall with a total of 28 inches for the month. The flooding that resulted caused our county to be included in a state-of-emergency condition by the governor. Tishomingo NFH experienced a breach in the water supply canal, which caused flooding in the Feed Building. Feed stored on the bottom layer of pallets was wet, but fortunately feed on the second layer and higher was safe. There was damage to the Historic Water Wheel; at least one of its buckets washed away. The Nature Trail along Pennington Creek was washed away in areas and silt covers most of it. Minor leaks in Quarters 3 roof due to winds and hard rain have been patched. Numerous power and phone outages occurred throughout the month due to storms, and moving into the new Office Building has been postponed since the telephone and data company have a backlog of storm-related repairs for customers throughout Oklahoma.

## Volunteers

Due to the cancellation of outreach programs due to extreme flooding at Hagerman NWR, their SCA resource assistant, Courtney Anderson, volunteered at Tishomingo NFH. She assisted in harvesting channel catfish for Fort Sill Military Base, and volunteered to accompany our staff to Fort Sill.

*Volunteers help with stocking catfish at Fort Sill's Lake George.*



## Visitors and Outreach

In May, the Tishomingo NFH gave an outreach presentation for Natural Resources Day in Ada, OK. Alligator gar and alligator snapping turtles were shown to the youngsters in attendance. Five groups of fourth graders were given the opportunity to ask questions and listen to a presentation on the activities at a national fish hatchery.

Tours were given to the University of Oklahoma Biological Station Herpetology Class, and to the Oklahoma City Zoo Aquatic Animal Staff.

## Work Force

Tishomingo NFH welcomed Stephen Tentinger in May. Mr. Tentinger is our Pathways Intern and comes to us from Buffalo, New York, where he is a graduate student at Buffalo State University.



*Flood waters turn  
Tishomingo NFH Nature Trail  
into creek.*

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**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/tishomingo/index.html>

**Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation**

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