

The Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery hosted a meeting to discuss current and future research needs and management objectives for recovering alligator snapping turtle populations in Oklahoma. Meeting attendees included the hatchery biologists, personnel from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Diversity Program, the Wildlife Diversity Coordinator with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, and researchers from Oklahoma State University and Missouri State University.

Thirty hatchling alligator snapping turtles from the Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery were transported to the Nashville Zoo via a Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency airplane. These turtles will be used to initiate a head-start program at the Nashville Zoo. The turtles will be head-started for approximately three years before they are reintroduced into Tennessee waters.



Alligator snapping turtles headed to Nashville Zoo.

Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery staff provided 2,112 paddlefish averaging sixteen inches in total length to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) for release into Grand Lake O' the Cherokees. These known-age paddlefish will be monitored by ODWC personnel to extrapolate age and growth data for this species.



Paddlefish for Grand Lake.

RECREATIONAL AND SPORTFISH CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery stocked 10,000 eight-inch channel catfish in Quannah Parker and Crater Lakes on the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge. These fish will provide recreational fishing in the near future for visiting park guests.



Channel catfish stocked on Wichita Mountains NWR.

WATER ISSUES

Kerry Graves attended a meeting hosted by the Chickasaw Nation and USFWS Water Resources personnel for a briefing on the Chickasaws' recent settlement agreement with the state of Oklahoma concerning water use from Sardis Lake and the Kiamichi River, and to discuss future partnerships with the Chickasaw Nation to protect water resources.

WORK FORCE



Volunteer Justin Alexander holds alligator snapping turtle.

Ralph Simmons, Assistant Hatchery Manager, attended "Freshwater Mussel Propagation for Restoration" training at NCTC.

Tishomingo NFH has a new volunteer. Justin Alexander, a research assistant for Dr. Shannon Brewer of Oklahoma State University, began volunteer work here in August.

VISITORS AND OUTREACH

Tishomingo NFH participated in the 11th Annual Wildlife Expo in September, hosted by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. About forty-five thousand visitors attended the three-day event. The hatchery displayed alligator snapping turtles and alligator gar, along with photos showing all of the varied fish culture activities at Tishomingo NFH. Other activities at this free event included fishing in a stocked pond, learning how to build a birdhouse, watching birds of prey close up, archery, and fishing fly tying.



Students visiting Tishomingo NFH display at 2016 Wildlife Expo.

Tours during September at the Tishomingo NFH included a group of seventh graders from a private school located in Durant and several unscheduled tours of families passing through Tishomingo on their way back home from end of summer trips.



Seventh grade students prepare to tour hatchery.

Other Outreach events included the displaying alligator snapping turtles and alligator gar for visitors at a nearby celebration held to honor area volunteer fire fighters. About two hundred were in attendance.

The University of Oklahoma Biological Station hosted a two-day "Bio-Blitz" event for all ages. The Station was opened to the public on a Friday and visitors were welcomed to spend the night there to view and hear nocturnal wildlife. On Saturday the Blitz continued with displays and hikes designed to showcase the wildlife near Lake Texoma. The featured animal was the alligator snapping turtle, so the Tishomingo NFH provided a hatchling, juvenile, and adult turtle for visitors to view and compare. About three hundred people attended the two-day event.



Comparison of alligator snapping turtle hatchling, (left), and juvenile (right) for visitors to view.

Chad Love, a writer for *Oklahoma Today*, interviewed Ralph Simmons about alligator gar. Mr. Love is preparing an article on culture techniques used to study these ancient fish.

FACILITIES

Mobilization and preparation to begin the deferred maintenance project of canal and pond liner replacement began in September.

Middle structure of water supply canal.



The replacement of the HVAC system in Quarters #4 was completed in September. The old system had a heating component that used propane. The conversion was made to an all-electric unit.



*Adult alligator gar in pond at
Tishomingo NFH.*

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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September 2016

