

# Hatchery Highlights

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Warm Springs NFH News and Updates



Summer 2008

### REGIONAL FISHERIES CENTER HOSTS HEAVY EQUIPMENT SAFETY TRAINING



The Warm Springs Regional Fish Center hosted a two-day heavy equipment safety training session in April. Instructors Ray Woods of Overflow National Wildlife Refuge, Mike Yelverton of Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge, and Instructor-in-Training Jason Coates of Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge instructed five fisheries employees and one volunteer from the Lower Suwannee Wildlife Refuge in the safe use of a forklift and an agricultural tractor. The six students learned the proper uses of both pieces of equipment through a combination of classroom time and hands-on experience. Each student had to demonstrate their ability to drive a tractor and a forklift and properly attach other equipment and/or lift different types of loads. At all times, safety was the main focus of the course. The instructors also toured the Center and gained a new perspective of the fisheries program.

### HATCHERY PARTNERS WITH ALABAMA DNR FORTAGGING AND STOCKING OF ALLIGATOR GAR



Alabama DNR personnel anaesthetize alligator gar before injecting a PIT tag.

Personnel from the Alabama DNR came over to the hatchery to help PIT tag 159 alligator gar in July. These fish were intensively raised in circular tanks inside our holding house and then moved into a 20-foot raceway. The fish averaged over 12" in length after only 90 days of culture. The fish were hauled by DNR personnel and stocked into the Mobile River. The hatchery is developing appropriate culture techniques for rearing early life stages to assist Alabama DNR's program for alligator gar restoration in the Mobile River, AL. This event was the first stocking ever of alligator gar in Alabama.

Supplies needed for tagging alligator gar including tags, vials, and measuring boards.



### GETTING KIDS OUTSIDE: HATCHERY HOSTS BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS!!

On Saturday, April 12, 2008, the hatchery hosted a group from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta for a day of fishing and environmental education. The event was held during Children and Nature Month, as part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Let's Go Outside initiative to connect children and families with nature. The Atlanta Chapter traveled down from Atlanta to take part in the hatchery's Biologist-in-Training program to learn about fish and their habitats, and learned techniques of catch and release in one of the hatchery's catfish ponds.

The Service partnered with Bass Pro Shops to provide each child with her or his own fishing rod combo to keep, a discount store coupon for each adult mentor, and store gift cards as special prizes. WenMarr Management of Fairburn, Georgia, donated lunches for all participants and volunteers, as well as providing frosty treats for all participants for their return trip home to Atlanta. Additional support for the event was provided by the Friends of Warm Springs Hatchery, and staff from the Regional Fisheries Center.



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## HATCHERY HOSTS ANNUAL KIDS FISHING DAY

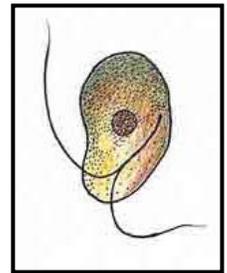


Over 280 kids participated in our annual Kids Fish For Fun Day Event on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The event was a great success and many families came to enjoy the day. About 30 employees, volunteers, and interns were on hand to assist the participants in a fun-filled day. Even though the temperature soared, the kids caught approximately 740 fish!! This event presents a unique opportunity for families to spend quality time together and to connect children with nature. Several Boy Scout groups also used the event to work on badges. This event is co-sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of Warm Springs Hatchery, and WenMarr Mgmt Corporation. Donations were given by local businesses including: GA LP Gas, West Point Coca Cola, Columbus Chapter Ducks Unlimited, Manchester Farm & Garden, Edward Jones Financial Services, and Taylor Foster.

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## HOW DO WE TREAT SICK FISH??...HATCHERY BIOLOGIST ATTENDS FISH HEALTH TRAINING

Jaci Zelko, Fish Biologist, recently returned from a fun-filled week of learning about fish viruses, bacteria, and gross parasites. Jaci took the training to increase her knowledge of fish culture and to help diagnose fish health issues at the hatchery before they become a huge problem. "Even though we have a Fish Health Center directly across the street, every fish biologist should have the knowledge and skill set to at least be able to recognize any fish health problems and that is why I took the training" said Jaci. The Introduction to Fish Health training course was held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV from August 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>. The training covered several classroom lectures and plenty of time in the lab looking for and diagnosing fish health issues.



One potential fish parasite, *Costia* spp.

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## NEW (AND OLD) VISITORS RETURN TO THE HATCHERY



It had been a couple of rainy days in late August thanks to Tropical Storm Fay. "We didn't get any damage from the storm, but it did seem to bring some of our old friends back to the hatchery" said Haile Macurdy, Assistant Manager. It was remarkable to see several wood storks hanging around our ponds. Wood storks are large, white, bald-headed wading birds, and is the only stork breeding in the US. Jaci Zelko, Fish Biologist, was quite surprised. "I have never seen a wood stork, since I didn't grow up in the Southeast, so it was interesting." Warm Springs has on occasion assisted with producing forage for several partner's wood stork management and recovery programs.



Several wood storks that landed at the hatchery for a few days in late August, 2008.

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## OH NO!!...HIGH WINDS BRING TREE DOWN ONTO QUARANTINE BUILDING!!



A small storm that quickly moved through the area in late July had a huge impact on the roof of the mussel quarantine building. A large sweet gum tree fell directly onto the building. The tree punched holes in the roof and shattered one window. The building is used to quarantine mussels and fish brought in from field locations. It was imperative to fix the roof and window quickly so Chad Shirey, electrician, stepped up to the task. It only took a half a day to make all the repairs and cut up and remove the tree.

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## GREENVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS USE SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE HATCHERY

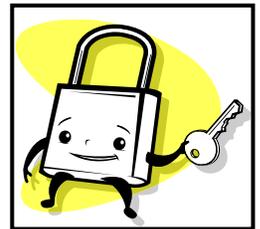
Four students from Greenville High School used skills learned in their construction class to refurbish five picnic tables for the hatchery. These tables sit in the public use area for use by the public. The tables were purchased by our Friends Group from the Greenville Lions Club. The tables were previously used in a camp ground and were in bad condition. The students, Jeremy Maynard, Saul Hernandez, Samuel Logo, and Chris Horton were led by teacher Wendell Morgan. The students were provided with a picnic lunch provided by the Friends Group for all their hard work.



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## REGIONAL OFFICE CONDUCTS PHYSICAL SECURITY INSPECTION

Jeff Pitts, Physical Security Assistant with the Regional Office, conducted a Physical Security Survey in August. Mr. Pitts surveyed the Hatchery, Regional Fisheries Center, Fish Technology, and Fish Health Centers. The survey lasted three days and was designed to inspect the physical security of the workplace. Mr. Pitts looked at building occupant information, external and internal security, response to incidents/offenses, access controls, parking, storage of classified documents, and survey documentation. Several recommendations were made by Mr. Pitts to update our Occupant Emergency Plan and Threat Check List.



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