

# Warm Springs Fish Health Center

July to September 2012 Activity Report



Norm Heil, Project Leader  
Devin Chappell, Fish Biologist  
Brian Hickson, Fish Biologist  
Allison Hernandez, Fish Biologist  
Nikki Persons, Fish Biologist (below)



The Fish Health Center (FHC) is a component of the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center (RFC) and was developed to improve and enhance fisheries management. More specifically, the FHC provides a wide range of services from disease diagnostics to ploidy inspections.



Images are all courtesy of the US Fish and Wildlife Service unless noted otherwise.

## Goals:

- Provide service, expertise and information that contributes to the health, survival, enhancement, restoration, and recovery of fish and other aquatic species in support of national and regional priorities.
- Supports hatchery operations to provide quality fish that contribute to ecosystem objectives.
- Assists in the development of management strategies through assessment and applied research to support the protection of wild stocks and recovery of threatened and endangered species.
- Educates key audiences about the elements of comprehensive fish health and its critical significance to healthy aquatic ecosystems.



5308 Spring Street, Warm Springs, GA 31830, Phone: 706-655-3382

<http://www.fws.gov/warmsprings/FishHealth/index.html>

## Fish Health Diagnostics



In July, Devin travelled to Tellico Trout Hatchery in Tennessee to look at some of their fish that were having problems. He provided advice for improvement of potential areas likely to be the source of the problems. Notice the necrotic (discolored) tissue on the gills below.



# Fish Health Diagnostics



Brian and Allison went to Chattahoochee NFH in North Georgia for an annual fish health inspection in August.



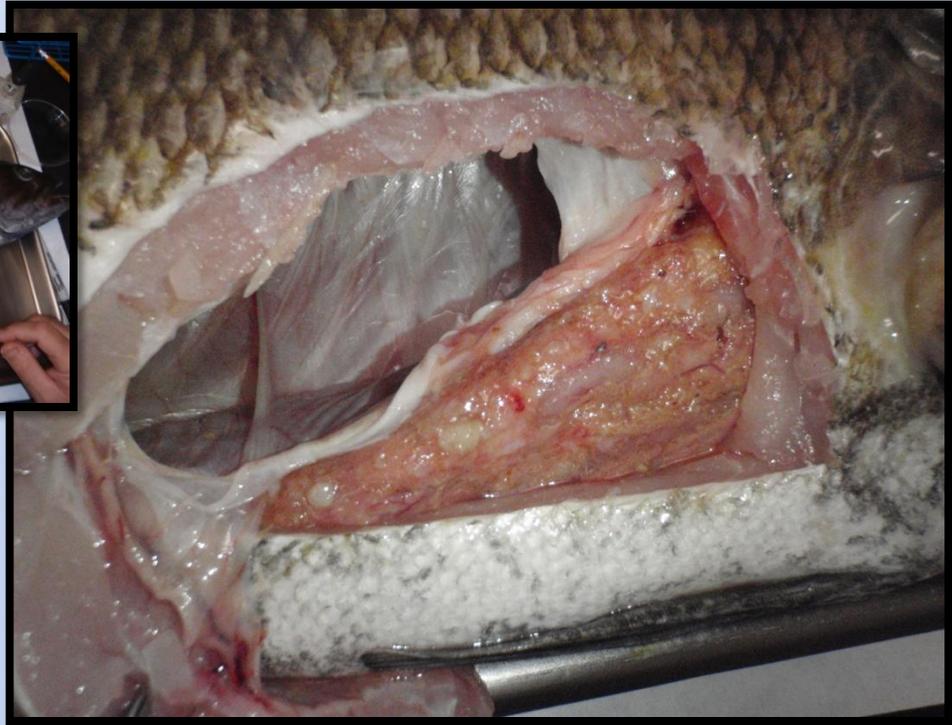
## Fish Health Diagnostics



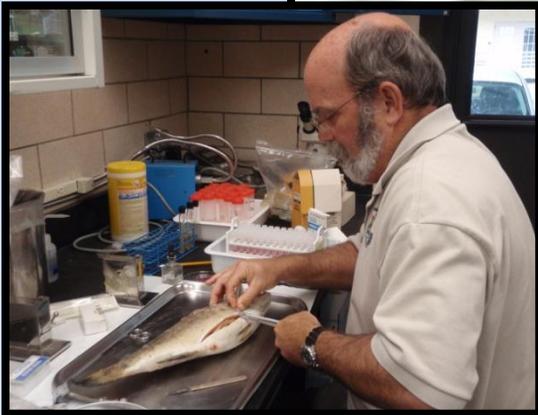
In August, Devin went to Greers Ferry National Fish Hatchery in Arkansas to conduct an annual inspection. On his way there, he stopped off at Norfolk NFH to provide them with assistance on some issues they were having. Nikki met Devin at Greers Ferry NFH to assist with necropsies and sample collection.



## Fish Health Diagnostics



Brian necropsied several bass that came out of the Dale Hollow Reservoir. Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV) was suspected as cause of mortality due to the cheesy appearance of the swim bladder tissue, however virological assay results came up negative.



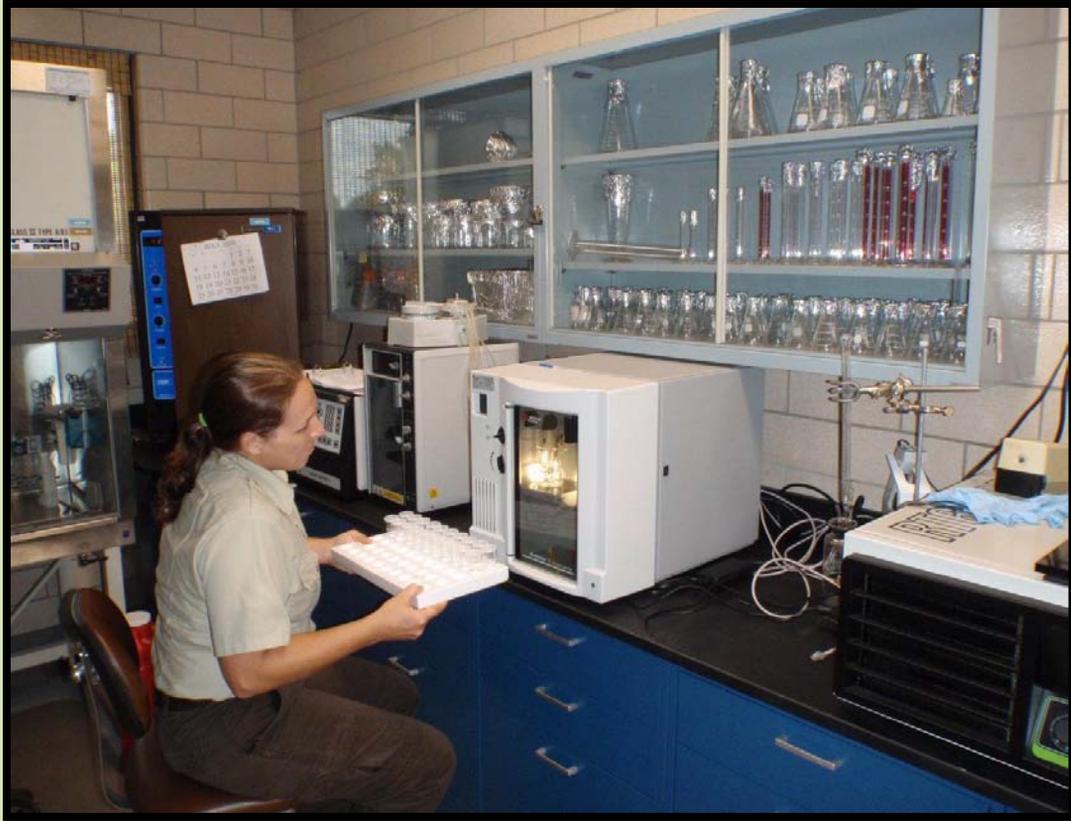
## Fish Health Unique information page



This machine, custom-built and used by the Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery, is a fish pump and grater. It makes sorting and moving fish more efficient and less labor intensive than previous methods used. Fish are pumped into the top and funneled through grates that sort them according to size and then routed into the appropriate raceway. This particular grater measures three sizes of fish.



## Triploid Grass Carp Program



Brian and Allison assisted with testing grass carp blood from shipments going into Virginia for quality control/assurance. Samples were standardized to compare flow cytometry to Coulter counter particle sizer results.

National Triploid Grass Carp Inspection and Certification Program Purpose: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers a triploid grass carp inspection service for natural resource agencies in the United States and in other countries, to help States and others protect their aquatic habitats. The inspection program is to provide assurance to these agencies, and others concerned about protecting aquatic resources, that shipments of grass carp alleged to be all triploid, do not, within the confidence limits of the inspection program, contain diploids.

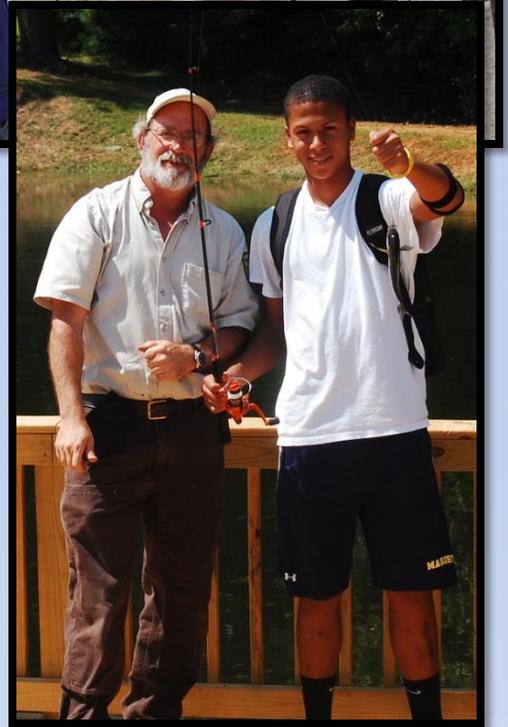
## Wild Fish Health Survey



In August, Devin sampled rivers in Tennessee on Sycamore Creek, a tributary of the Tellico River, with partners from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

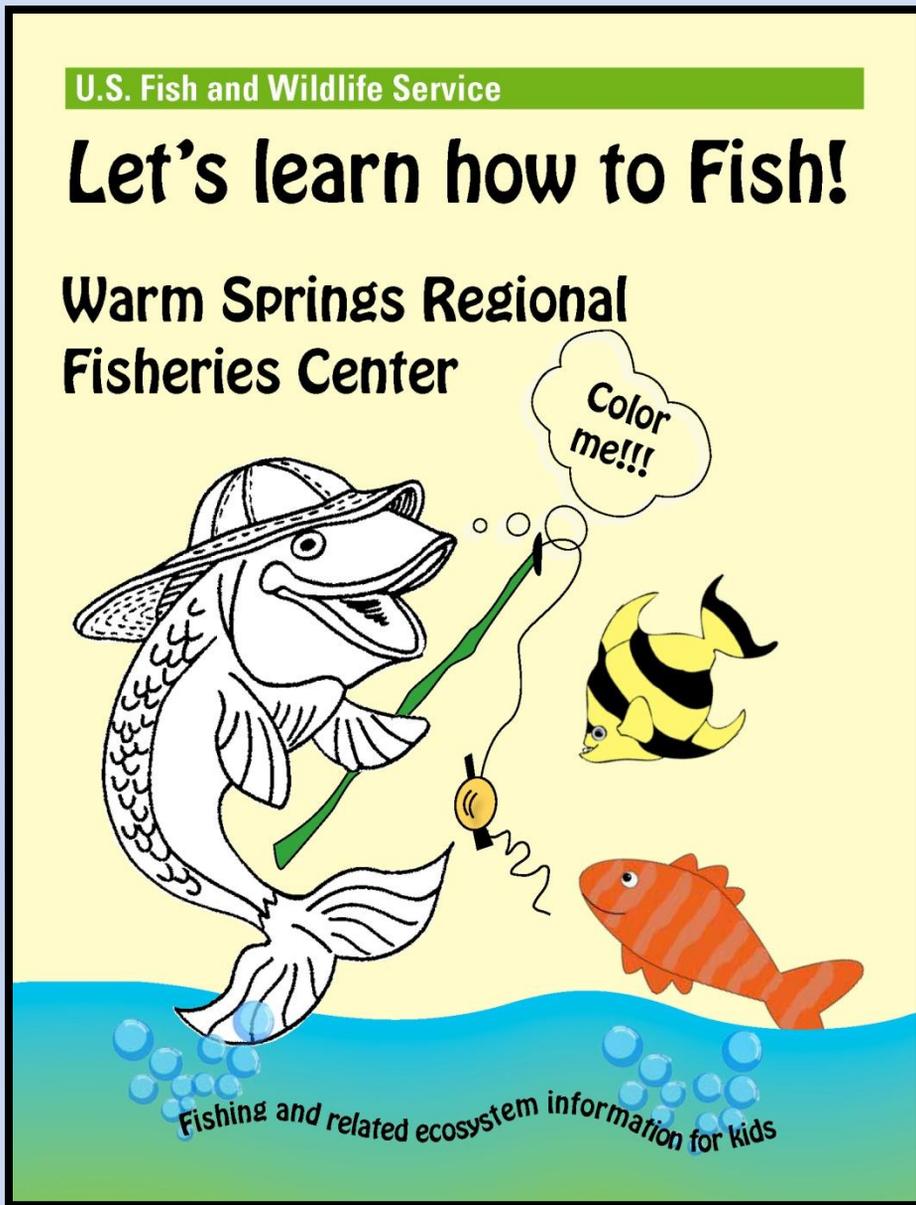


## Other FHC Activities



### **2012 Steve Harvey Mentoring Program for Young Men (Atlanta Chapter) Fishing Day**

The Warm Springs RFC hosted a fishing day in September. This fun-filled day was full of different events representing each of the entities that make up the Regional Fisheries Center. Allison was one of four team leaders that took groups to each of the “learning stations”. Devin taught fishing for catfish in one of the hatchery ponds using hot dogs for bait. Norm provided a scientific overview of the fish health center research and regular activities and, as always, was the event photographer. Brian was charged with teaching children to fish for bluegill in another of the hatchery ponds using live bait. Other events included casting practice using hula-hoop targets and casting lures, lessons in knot tying, fish handling, fish cleaning and baiting, an aquarium tour, and food was provided for all of the participants. The young men were also provided the opportunity to taste a few of the fish that they caught that were cooked on site. The event was fun, educational and successful overall.



Allison completed the composition of the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center Junior Ranger Camp Fishing Booklet. The front cover is shown above.

This booklet incorporates and teaches the junior rangers to:

- Identify Georgia native fish, wildlife, aquatic animals, and their habitats
- Discover the importance of aquatic ecosystems
- Become conservation and environmental stewards
- Learn fishing basics and angling safety
- Understand the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

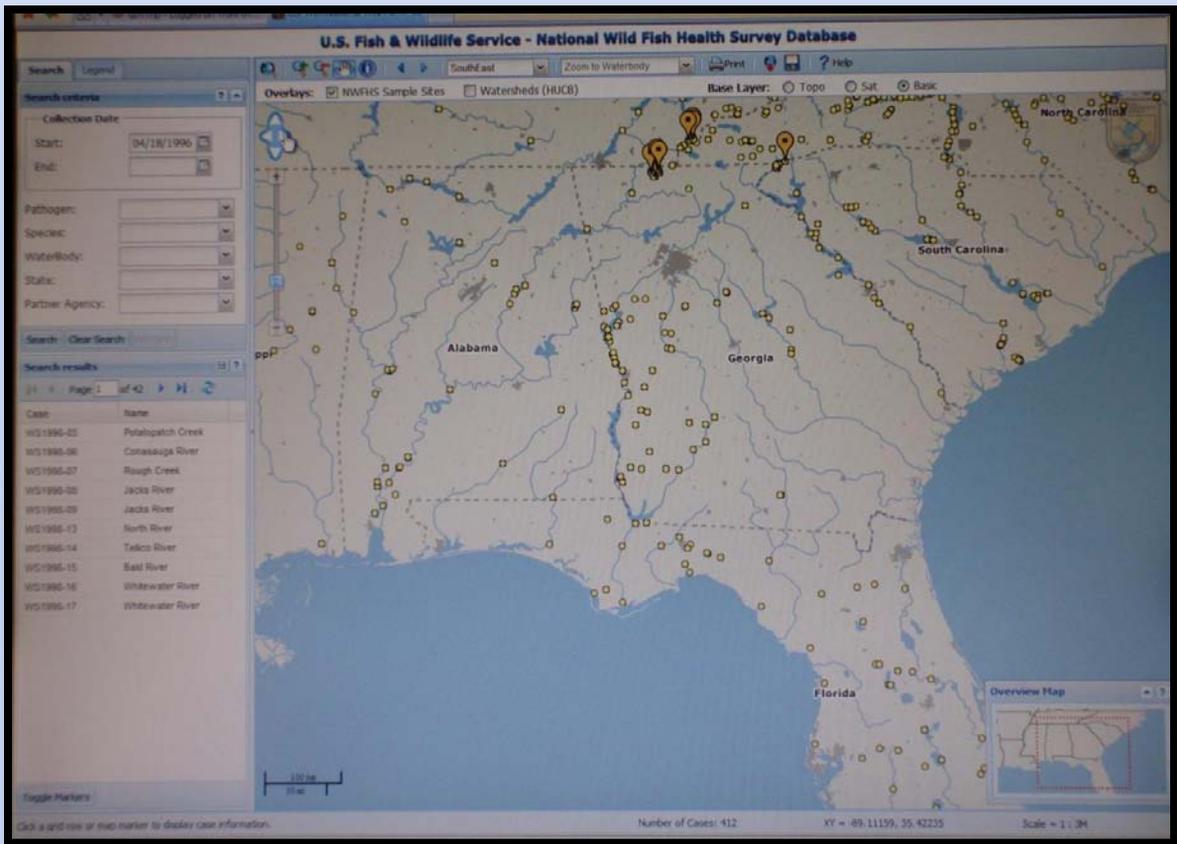
Allison along with the Regional Designers, Liz Chebib and Ellen Marcus, laid out the design for the booklet, which is currently out for printing and will be used for outreach activities including future Junior Ranger Camp sessions.

## FHC volunteer work



Our youngest and highly competent volunteer, Hunter Shirey, helped out in July with preparing lab supplies for use. An extra set of hands can be very useful in certain parts of fish health work and beneficial for the volunteer learning new skills.

# Other FHC Activities



## User Acceptance Team (UAT)

Norm travelled to Denver to be part of the UAT meeting with the ECOS group to discuss and develop the requirements for the AQUIS lab management database system. When completed, this database will incorporate Wild Fish Health Survey data, disease inspection information and diagnostic case data. In addition to the meeting in Denver, Norm, Brian and Devin represented Warm Spring Fish Health on several UAT conference calls throughout this quarter.