

Warm Springs Fish Health Center

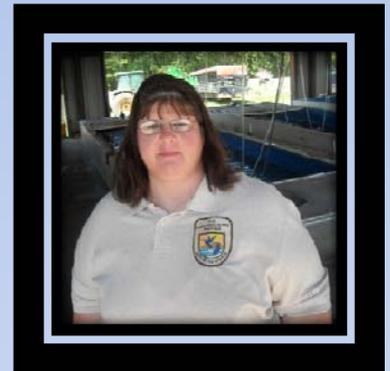
June – August 2011 Activity Report



Norm Heil, Project Leader
Brian Hickson, Fish Biologist
Devin Chappell, 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.



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



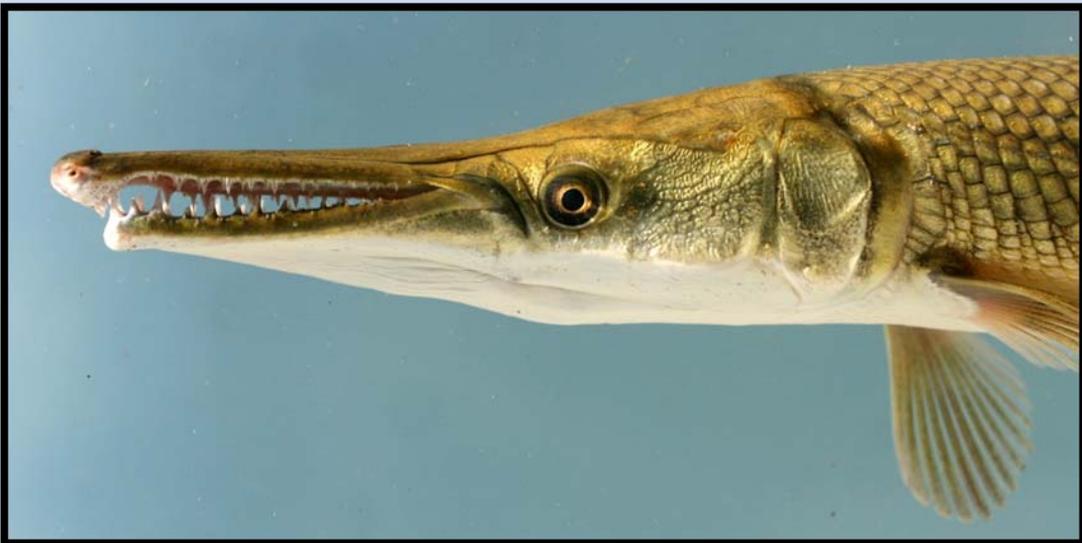
Norm went to Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery in Tennessee in late July to conduct an inspection. Often times, volunteer staff will assist with the inspection process by learning how to work up the fish.



Fish Health Diagnostics



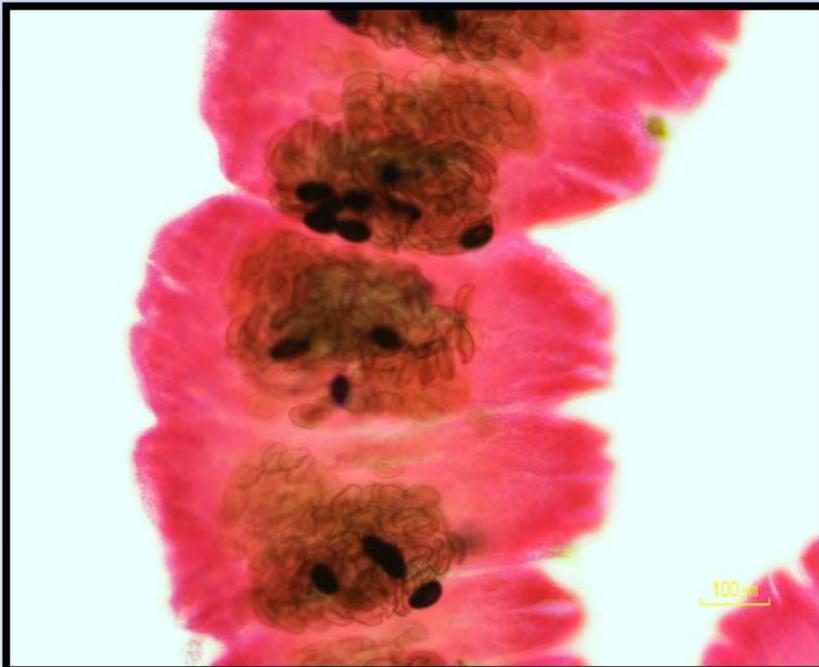
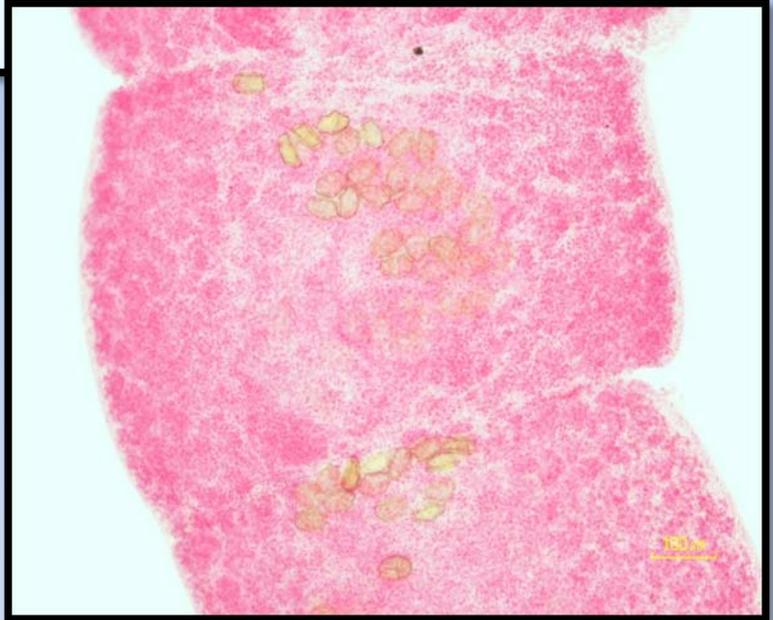
The Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery are raising Alligator gar. There was a chronic mortality in a small percentage of the population, all of which displayed similar symptoms. Following an inspection by the Fish Health Center, it was found that they were anemic, but the cause of the anemia is still being investigated. Probable cause could be mineral deficiency in the food. Above: Alligator gar fry. Below: Juvenile alligator gar.



Fish Health Diagnostics



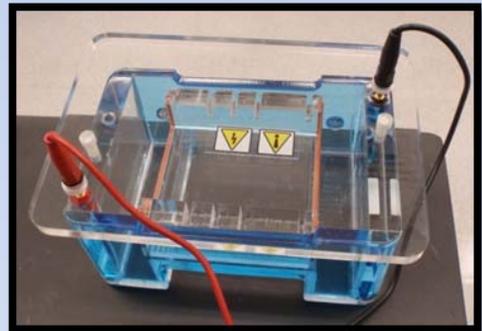
A parasitic tapeworm, identified as *Bothriocephalus cuspidatus*, was found during an inspection. A microscope image of the scolex (head part that attaches to the host) can be seen above and the gonads to the right and below.



Fish Health Diagnostics



Brian and Devin isolated samples of Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV) and ran PCR analysis on them for confirmation.





Triploid Grass Carp Program



Allison, Brian and Norm began preliminary observations for a future project looking at diploid versus triploid grass carp spatial preferences in tanks.



Triploid Grass Carp Program



Brian and Norm went to South Carolina in August to introduce the Triploid Grass Carp Program to a potential new producer.



Wild Fish Health Survey



As part of the Wild Fish Health Survey coolers are sent out to various states, this quarter to NC, to have collaborating agencies send back collections of fish. Devin is charged with coordinating the transfer of coolers and, subsequently, assuring the return of fish to the laboratory to arrive as fresh as possible for inspection.

Other FHC Activities



Devin and Brian got the new river boat jet-drive motor mounted and gave it a test run out on the Flint River in early July. It will be used in the future for electroshocking collections.



Other FHC Activities



Allison and Devin provided outreach for WSRFC at the Bassmaster Elite tournament held at West Point Lake in LaGrange (late May 2011).



The 5-day family event held by the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce included the Dixie Dock Dogs jump competition, giant sand sculpture competition, hamster water balls, and live music in addition to the bass fishing competition.

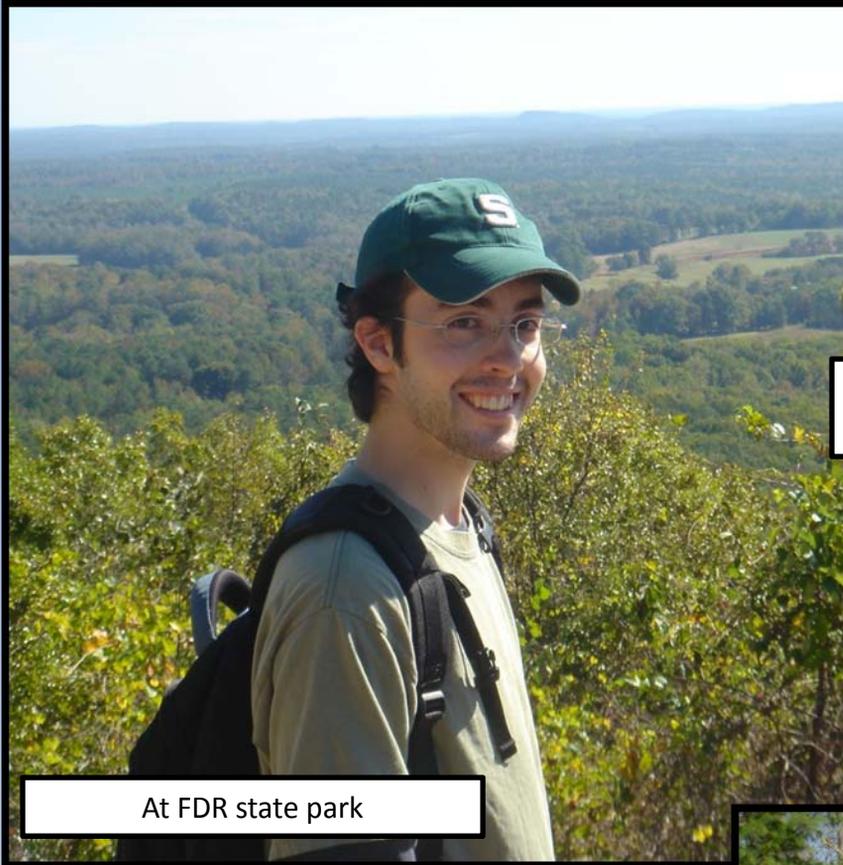
Other FHC Activities



Warm Springs Fish Health Center proudly continues their recycling efforts. Recycling runs are usually coordinated to combine trips with the Fish Technology Center to make regular deposits at the Warm Springs recycling center, conveniently located less than a mile from the office.



Special Mention- Mike Hassett



At FDR state park



Above: touch tank at Open house 2011
Below: Volunteer appreciation dinner



Boy Scout Event in LaGrange



After hours fun



Performing fish health necropsies

Mike Hassett was a SCA volunteer for over a year with the Regional Fisheries Center. He participated with all entities of the Center, mostly at the Fish Technology Center but also involved with numerous outreach activities and Fish Health tasks. He was highly capable in all assignments, identified new ideas, was well-liked and was very beneficial in helping out the Health Center team. Upon his departure in June, Mike is planning on returning to school for his Masters of Science in Biology. We will miss you, Mike!! Thank you for all of your hard work and GOOD LUCK!!

Special Mention- Cody Meshes



Volunteer appreciation dinner



Counting Striped Bass eggs for Fish Technology Center



Performing fish health necropsies



Dressed as a sturgeon for the Warm Springs Holiday Candlelight Parade.

Cody Meshes was the high school student designated to work with the Fish Technology Center under his mentor, Nicole Rankin, as a part of the Youth Ambassador Program. He learned very quickly about all aspects of the Regional Fisheries Center. During his time in Warm Springs, he created interesting video and written blogs to post on social networking sites. Upon his departure in July, Cody is planning on going to college and has shown an interest in health science. Thank you, Cody, for all of your hard work and we wish you the best!!