



## **BUREAU OF FRESHWATER FISHERIES MONTHLY REPORT**



**April 16, 2022 – May 15, 2024**

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## **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

**2024 Spring Trout Stocking** - The spring 2024 trout season is underway, with only 1 week to go. A considerable amount of biologists' time goes into managing the program, including but not limited to providing information to anglers and trouble-shooting on the ground issues. Staff also assisted in stocking. Research and Management staff ran the Musconetcong River transfer truck all season and organized Round Valley Trout Association float stocking of 6,540 Rainbow Trout at Round Valley Reservoir on April 10. For more information, see update under "Pequest Trout Hatchery" below.

**Bennetts Pond (Ocean)-** Bennetts Pond is a 21-acre impoundment of the South Branch Metedeconk River located in Jackson Township. A small boat ramp located at the upper end of the pond provides angler access. The remaining shoreline consists of private homes with no public access. A daytime boat electrofishing survey was conducted on 4/18/2024 to gather baseline data on the Largemouth Bass population. Total electrofishing time was 0.83 hours with 17 Largemouth Bass collected. The fish ranged in size from 6.8 to 17.7 inches with the largest weighing 3.29lbs. Chain Pickerel, Yellow Perch, Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Brown Bullhead, White Sucker, Creekchub Sucker, Golden Shiner, and American Eel were also observed. Overall, the pond is quite shallow due to sedimentation, and combined with a history of winter lowerings, appears to have negatively impacted bass abundance. The current fishery will be sustained with natural reproduction. However, poor public access and limited habitat do not support supplemental stocking efforts. (Boehm, F-48-R)

**Monksville Reservoir (Passaic) -** Monksville Reservoir is a 505-acre impoundment located in West Milford Township. Both Muskellunge and Walleye are stocked annually here to provide quality angling opportunities for these species. From April 22-26, 2024, sixteen South Dakota trap nets were set throughout the reservoir to specifically evaluate the Muskellunge fishery. A total of 6 Muskellunge were captured, with a catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) of 0.37, which is higher than Pennsylvania's standard for a quality Muskellunge fishery (0.25). Additional data analysis is ongoing. (Rozema, F-48-R)

**Mountain Lake (Warren) -** Mountain Lake is a 122-acre lake found in Liberty Township. Muskellunge and trout are stocked here annually to provide recreational opportunities for anglers. In a previous assessment of the Muskellunge fishery here, it was determined that the population of Muskellunge was over-abundant, with a smaller-than-average size distribution. Stocking rates were reduced in 2018, and with the help of Muskies, Inc., a number of fish cribs were installed with hopes to enhance the prey base. From April 15-19, 2024, twelve trap nets were set to assess the Muskellunge fishery here. 3 Muskellunge were captured, all of which were relatively small in size at 731-830mm (29"-33"). Catch-per-unit-effort was calculated at 0.25, which is equal to Pennsylvania's standard for a quality Muskellunge fishery. While this is notably lower than the CPUE of 1 noted in 2016, issues with setting the nets in 2024 currently make it difficult to confirm if management efforts have effectively reduced the abundance of Muskellunge here. Additional data analysis is ongoing. (Rozema, F-48-R)

**Round Valley Reservoir (Hunterdon) –** On May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, two nights of boat electrofishing were conducted to target Largemouth Bass as a follow up to an inventory that was conducted in

2016 and work that was done in 2023. The objective of this sampling was to collect data related to the abundance and size structure of the Largemouth Bass population to assist in future decisions on regulation changes. It will provide an interesting baseline to the fishery as the water level in the reservoir has returned to a normal level from the drawdown related to dam repairs started in 2017. Much of the vegetation and brush that grew up in that 7-8 year period is now submerged and will provide much needed littoral habitat. (Collenburg, F-48-R)

**Union Lake (Cumberland)** – Two boat electrofishing surveys were conducted at Union Lake, during the day on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, to assess the bass population. A total of 24 Largemouth Bass were collected at Union Lake on 4/17/24 from 1.11-hours of electrofishing, resulting in a CPUE of 21 bass/hour. The sampled population was represented primarily by larger adult fish with a 73% of fish >12” and 47% > 15”. Most fish appeared to be in the pre-spawn stage.

The second survey completed on 4/23/24 produced a larger sample size with a total of 49 Largemouth Bass and three Smallmouth Bass collected during 1.83-hours of electrofishing. The CPUE was slightly higher than the previous week at 26 bass/hour for Largemouth Bass and 28 bass/hour for all bass. The size distribution was very similar with 69% >12” and 45% >15”.

Smallmouth Bass were not well represented with only three collected. The fish ranged in size from 195 – 415 mm. The two smaller fish which measure 195 and 210 could potentially have been from a recent stocking in 2022. Further electrofishing surveys should be conducted to better assess the Smallmouth Bass population. (Smith, F-48-R)

**eDNA/Genetic work for potential Allegheny Pearl Dace** – Worked towards developing objectives to identify the strain of Pearl Dace that was discovered in Sussex County. New York DEC has been working on identifying strains of Allegheny Pearl Dace, Northern Pearl Dace, and their hybrids and potential collaboration with NY may shed light onto the origins and species that was documented this past spring in NJ. On December 12<sup>th</sup>, collection of fin clips was attempted but no Allegheny Pearl Dace were encountered. Additional work to capture individuals was conducted in April of 2024 and 5 individuals were captured and fin clips were collected to perform DNA sequencing at a later time. On April 12<sup>th</sup>, samples of previously collected Pearl Dace (n=5) were brought to the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia for confirmation of identification. Fisheries Biologist, David Keller, and Ichthyologist, Mark Sabaj Perez, with the academy both confirmed that the species collected was a Pearl Dace. Confirmation was also received from Native Fisheries Biologist, Douglas Fischer, with the PA Fish and Boat Commission, that samples previously sent out to him (n=5) were Pearl Dace. Discussions and next steps in management of this population are ongoing. (Collenburg)

## **INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

The New Jersey Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan was approved by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force at their meeting, on May 9, 2024. Heather Desko gave a presentation, providing an overview of the plan's development. The plan was reported to have been well received and approved without any hesitation or discussion.

With the approval of the NJ Plan, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is now an eligible applicant for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's State and Interstate ANS Management Plan (SIANSMP) Grant program and can apply for funding starting in FY 2025. (Smith, F-48-R)

### **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

**Freshwater Fisheries Forums** - Participated in two public virtual Freshwater Fisheries Forums from 7-8:30pm on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>. Attendance totaled 49 anglers for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Agenda topics included a Fish & Wildlife Update delivered by AC Barno, Bass Sampling from 2023, a demonstration of our Freshwater Fishing Explorer app, an overview of Walleye broodstock collection and spawning, and a Skillful Angler Program update, followed by a Q&A period.

The second Freshwater Fisheries Forum was held on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Attendance totaled 84 anglers for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The agenda included Fish & Wildlife Update delivered by AC Barno, a review of the Coolwater Species sampling results from 2023, along with Lake Trout and Landlocked Salmon updates, along with a review of Freshwater Fishing Education Programs, and considerations for the Trout Stocking Program, followed with a Q&A period.

Staff put a significant amount of work into these meetings, including technical assistance and planning by staff from the Bureau of Information and Education. Unfortunately, the turnout for these meetings was relatively low turnout as compared to recent virtual meetings, but is greater than previous encountered when meetings were held in-person prior to the pandemic. Meetings were recorded and will be made available on our website. (staff, F-48-R)

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**FISHAir Quest** – Met with Princeton University on May 9<sup>th</sup> to learn about a program named QUEST which helps guide teachers in giving students the tools to ask the right scientific questions about a problem. The program combines the use of data science with collection of morphological measurements of fish to understand distribution of species. Assistance from NJDEP Fish & Wildlife will be provided through a presentation during lecture and guidance in fish collection and measurement in the field. (Collenburg)

**FishTrack Database** – The current Access database that holds data for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries has become a major issue creating inefficiencies in time spent entering, managing, analyzing, and procuring data. This is likely caused by the transfer or querying of large amounts of information from the Garden State Network, Zscaler, and to the offices in Lebanon. Issues continue and one potential upgrade (migration to a Microsoft SQL backend) may help enhance speed and minimize impact to continuous use amongst users. (Collenburg)

**Ironcolor Workgroup Meeting** – Related to a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant awarded to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (ANS) multiple meetings were held with the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries to review the results of eDNA sampling in historical locations of Ironcolor Shiners and determine on site sampling locations for 2024 to identify relationships between Ironcolor Shiners presence/absence, land use, and habitat. The

work ultimately aims to understand their distribution and habitat and implement or suggest management actions to conserve the species soon to be listed as Endangered in New Jersey. (Collenburg/Crouse)

**Landscape Project** – Time was spent discussing fish species models that will be adopted and created by the Bureau of GIS for use within the Landscape Project to identify and protect valued habitat of species of fish that are soon to be listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern. Met with staff from the Endangered and Nongame Species Program on the potential use of the fish models being implemented for the Landscape Project for mussels on May 7<sup>th</sup>. This is still in discussion with ENSP. Weekly meetings are also being held. (Collenburg and Crouse)

**NAACC Assessments** – Led the implementation of NAACC assessments on behalf of the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries with priorities to assess crossings related to native Brook Trout, other wild trout populations, and fish species soon to be listed as Endangered or Threatened (Bridle Shiner, Ironcolor Shiner, and Slimy Sculpin). This will put the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries in a position to guide and prioritize management of road/stream crossings that may be barriers to aquatic organism movement. (Collenburg)

**Northeast Regional Taxonomic Team** – Submitted review of species for the 2023 Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (RSGCN) list. (Collenburg)

**Silver Lake (Camden)** – A water lowering and scientific collecting permit was issued for Silver Lake in Gibbsboro, Camden County for the replacement of a water control structure. The location is part of a larger EPA superfund clean up project at the former Sherwin Williams paint factory. A dredging project will commence later this year or early next year. The pond is also the only known location of the invasive Asian Swamp Eel in New Jersey. The pond will be lowered and a fish salvage will be completed to remove all fish. All fish will be dispatched due to contaminant concerns and transport of invasive species. The private pond does not allow public fish and there are currently no immediate plans for restocking. The location will continue to be monitored. (Smith)

**Spruce Run / Round Valley Reservoir Coordination Meeting** – On April 19<sup>th</sup>, partners in stewardship met to discuss the management of the waters and surrounding property for Spruce Run and Round Valley Reservoir. NJ Water Supply Authority, State Park Service, and NJ Fish & Wildlife were represented. Monitoring for Harmful Algal Blooms will continue on Spruce Run Reservoir. The Boat Steward program will continue as well in hopes to educate recreational users in aquatic invasive species on Spruce Run Reservoir, Manasquan Reservoir, and Round Valley Reservoir. (Collenburg)

**East Jersey Trout Unlimited Meeting on Bear Swamp Brook Dam** - BFF staff attended a meeting with members of East Jersey Trout Unlimited (EJTU) relating to Bear Swamp Brook Dam. Members of the TU Chapter have been meeting with State Parks and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) relating to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant. EJTU is planning to submit a grant application to the RCPP program and were seeking advice and support from BFF staff to strengthen their application. (Collenburg and Rozema)

**Statewide Dam Removal Partnership (SDRP)** - Attended “Understanding the Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) Analysis for Dam Removals” information session on 4/30/2024. This session provided an introductory overview of what goes into hydrologic and hydraulic analysis for dam removal. Touched on the information needed to build a hydrologic and hydraulic model. The data required to generate stream flows at the dam and post-dam removal was discussed including rainfall, land use/land cover, soils, and timing information for watershed areas. The basics of setting up a HEC-RAS model and what is required for your model was also discussed. (Boehm, F-48-R)

**Blackwells Mills Dam meetings** - Weir modification options provided by USGS to create anadromous fish passage at the Blackwells Mill Dam on the Millstone River were reviewed. USGS staff is currently in the process of modeling the feasibility of several options and will provide NJDEP with results in the upcoming months. (Boehm & Crouse)

**Warren Mill Dam pre-app meeting** - Attended pre-app meeting on 5/13/2024 to present freshwater fisheries concerns ahead of time to those involved with removal to mitigate potential issues once work begins. (Boehm)

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## **PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY** (Ed Conley)

### **Inventory Data**

<u>Stocking Program</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Average Daily Length Increase</u>	<u>Conversion</u>
Spring 2025 RBT (7 months old)	5.0"	0 .023	1.84
Spring 2024 RBT (19 months old)	11.4"	0 .022	1.89
Fall 2024 RBT (19 months old)	11.9"	0 .019	1.02

### **Flow Rates – April 2024**

5.14 inches of precipitation fell during the month of April.

Production Well Pumping Rate Average for April was 6,673 gpm with an average 9.6 million gallons per day pumped during the month.

The potable well pumped 16,954 gallons for the month of April.

### **Fish Culture Activities**



Since the 2024 Spring Stocking program began on March 18<sup>th</sup> 513,760 production size Rainbow Trout have been stocked along with 7,840 brood-stock, and an 8,400 surplus as of the end of Week #5 In-season. Surplus production fish started being added to stocking trucks during the end of Week #4. With the final two weeks of stocking remaining, Spring 2024 production trout remains only in the H-line. 77 Hook-A-Winner tag numbers returned so far.

The fish for the 2024 Fall Program were inventoried and reset into several pools to reach the desired growth for stocking in October. Also, fish for the 2024 Winter Stocking Program were set up at this time to be stocked in November. Feed quantities have been adjusted to regulate growth rates to reach our final goals for stocking. These fish are being fed by the feed truck 4 times a day with 5.0 mm feed. Screens are cleaned twice a day and basins weekly.

The C, D, G, and F lines were all emptied, power washed, sterilized, and reset with 2024 production over the last month. Spring sorting of the 2025 production stock outside has

concluded in which smaller fish graded off using metal grader boxes and pools are reset as they become available. Pools are then reset to 13,500 Rainbow Trout. The rest of C, D, and some of the F-line were reset at this time with these fish. Approximately 28,070 four-inch surplus trout were given to Hackettstown Hatchery for forage during this time.

Some of the fish in the nursery building were set up in the F and G-lines, while the rest are being fed by automatic feeders twice every hour for about 10 hours a day in the nursery building. The feeders are being filled daily with 2.5 mm feed. All tanks are still being cleaned by all shifts and flows were adjusted, and outside screens are being cleaned twice daily. Outside 2025 trout are being fed 3.0 mm by the feed truck 4 times a day.

Rainbow Trout Broodstock for 2024 spawning were inventoried and reset at this time on the I-line.

Hatchery flows were adjusted during this period and dissolved oxygen levels are being monitored.

Coordinated daily load assignments of Spring Stocking Trout runs to various water bodies onto selected distribution trucks. Hatchery Staff stocked all the Pequest River runs.

### **Pequest Maintenance**

Well #5 starter was re-installed after it was sent out to be rebuilt, a new starter was installed on the fish pump. Two new garage doors were installed on the lighthouse. Also, staff repaired the throttle linkage on the Case tractor and a couple of facility toilets. Staff have also been making repairs on stocking equipment and tankers when needed, as well as daily oxygen checks.

We are still in the process of evaluating the running data on the new UV system before it is tested and brought on-line. We have had several issues with programming that the vendor is trying to figure out.

The asbestos abatement was completed on a couple of pipes so Core Mechanical could finish the recommended Trane upgrades on chiller system. It was determined that another valve has to be replaced going to the chiller. It will need to be installed without shutting the water down if no other valves are located in the ground, since it comes off of the production well line. This involves freezing the pipe.

### **Miscellaneous Activities**

5/13/24, had a phone meeting with Jason Freeborn to go over a few upcoming CBT projects at Pequest Trout Hatchery. Most of the slated projects will need to go through engineering phases.

On 5/6/24, Ross StCerny started full-time as an Agency Representative Trainee for the Pequest Trout Hatchery. Welcome aboard Ross!

Submitted the required renewal paperwork for federal depredation permit.



## **Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery** (Craig Lemon)

### **Intensive Culture** (Inventory)

<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u># Fish</u></b>	<b><u>Avg.”</u></b>
Landlocked Salmon	3,200	7.5”
Muskellunge	40,000	fry
Northern Pike	38,633	4.7”
Tiger Muskellunge	6,300	3.8”

### **Stocking Totals** (April 16 – May 15)

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>#Fish</u></b>	<b><u>Pounds</u></b>	<b><u>Length</u></b>
4/17	Np	Rhode Island F & W	25,011	87.3	2.6”
4/23	Np	Cranberry Lake	10,389	68	3.1”
4/25	Np	Deal Lake	17,280	134	3.3”
4/29	Np	Passaic River	4,799	59	3.8”
5/8	Tm	Delaware River	6,368	50	3.5”
5/14	Tm	Delaware River	7,298	86	4.0”
4/16	Mk	Monksville Reservoir	760	175	11.0”
4/17	Mk	Little Swartswood Lake	120	28	11.0”
4/18	Mk	DOD Lake	180	41.4	11.0”
4/18	Mk	Lake Hopatcong	2,042	475	11.0”
4/18	Wa	Delaware River	242,950		fry
4/18	Wa	Delaware River-Belvidere	161,250		fry
4/24	Fhm	Passaic Co. Mosq. Co.	15,000	11.2	1.5”
4/24	Fhm	Warren Co. Mosq. Co.	20,000	15	1.5”
4/24	Fhm	Monmouth Co. Mosq. Co.	10,364	7.75	1.5”
4/24	Fhm	Ocean Co. Mosq. Co.	10,993	8.21	1.5”
4/25	Fhm	Morris Co. Mosq. Co.	20,000	15	1.5”
4/25	Fhm	Mercer Co. Mosq. Co.	20,000	15	1.5”
4/25	Fhm	Burlington Co. Mosq. Co.	20,000	15	1.5”
4/25	Fhm	Camden Co. Mosq. Co.	20,000	15	1.5”
4/26	Fhm	Warren Co. Mosq. Co.	30,000	22.5	1.5”
4/26	Fhm	Gloucester Co. Mosq. Co.	31,048	23.2	1.5”
4/26	Fhm	Bergen Co. Mosq. Co.	30,163	22.5	1.5”
4/30	Fhm	Salem Co. Mosq. Co.	30,000	22.5	1.5”
4/30	Fhm	Cumberland Co. Mosq. Co.	23,356	17.43	1.5”
4/30	Fhm	Gloucester Co. Mosq. Co.	24,174	18.04	1.5”
5/1	Fhm	Warren Co. Mosq. Co.	37,158	27.8	1.5”
5/2	Fhm	Morris Co. Mosq. Co.	14,780	11.03	1.5”

Fhm – Fathead Minnows

Mk – Muskellunge

Np – Northern Pike

Tm – Tiger Muskellunge

Wa – Walleye

## **Intensive Culture**

### **Landlocked Salmon**

Currently culturing 3,200 fish about 7.5" in three 2,000-gallon tanks. Staff clean and feed them daily. All fish were clipped, and hand counted into three 2,000-gallon rectangular tanks.

### **Muskellunge**

3,100 eleven-inch holdover Muskies were stocked in four lakes. 70,000 eyed Muskie eggs were obtained from the PA Fish & Boat Commission on 4/25. Fry hatched on 5/3 and are being cultured in four 350-gallon circular tanks. Staff are cooking and feeding them brine shrimp.

### **Hybrid Striped Bass**

Staff inventoried 1,374 holdover fingerlings and moved them to Pond 30. They averaged 5.5 inches with a weight count of 11.9 f/lb. The pond temperature was 52°F, and they will grow into the fall with similar size Largemouth Bass due to lack of pond space.

### **Mosquitofish**

The first load of minnows arrived from Arkansas on 4/23. The fish were given to 12 counties totaling 357,036 fish. Staff made two trips to Camden County with our big tanker to provide fish to Southern Counties.

### **Largemouth Bass**

The Arkansas holdover bass fingerlings were inventoried and moved to Pond 30. A total of 1,828 fish weighing 203 pounds were moved. The NJ holdover bass were hand sorted with 400 bigger fingerlings going into the Silver \$ Pond and 1,5000 smalls going into Pond 30.

### **Northern Pike**

The pike are doing great this year. Connecticut and Rhode Island both were here to pick up surplus fry. Currently culturing about 38,000 four-inch fingerlings. Staff are sampling and doing inventories a couple of days a week. Assessing feed size and making changes weekly. Will look to stock surplus in the very near future. Experimented with a new diet 0.8 and 1.0 mm and are very happy so far. No signs of deformities when handling them.

### **Tiger Muskellunge**

Tiger fingerlings are doing very well. Growth rates are good seems hard to keep enough feed on them. We have stocked surplus fish for the past few weeks and have the production number good for now.

### **Intensive Production Work**

We are currently pumping 750 gpm of 52°F spring water and 300-gpm of 68°F recirculated water. Bumping up 68°F flows to keep up with fish growth. Added external oxygen stones to keep up with DO's in 68°F system. Plan to start up the 80°F system on Tuesday 5/21 in prep for Channel Catfish egg take starting in early June. Both the 68°F and 80°F system drum filters were repaired by staff.

## **Extensive Culture**

### **Largemouth Bass/Smallmouth Bass**

The adult Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass broodstock and fingerling ponds are full. Pond 50 was drained on 4/24. Staff setup 90 Lmb and 80 Smb as follows:

Pond 15 – 40 Smb

Pond 50 – 40 Smb

Pond 13 – 59 Lmb

Pond 17 – 31 Lmb

Take a Kid To Work Day was 4/25 and another 40 Lmb were set in Pond 48 and 9 more in Pond 17.

Smb seen nesting in Pond 15 on 5/1. Started filling Pond 18 on 5/13 preparing for Lmb fry. The first schools of Largemouth fry visible in Pond 13 on 5/14. Checked Pond 15 Smb nest on 5/14 and there were no eggs or fry visible. Some miserable weather for the past two weeks. Water and air temps fluctuating and lots of rain.

### **Channel Catfish**

Arkansas Channel Catfish delivery came on the night of 5/7 at 9:30. 12,000 six-to-eight inch fish were delivered in 8 holes on the truck. They had the tractor trailer, so we had to use four of our small tankers to get the fish to Ponds 16 and 78.

### **Hybrid Striped Bass**

The Hybrid two-year olds are feeding well in Pond 77 now that water temperatures have risen to 60°F. Staff moved this year's holdover fingerlings to Pond 30. They are going to be cultured with Largemouth Bass fingerlings as we do not have pond space to keep them separate. Kids caught a bunch of the Pond 77 hybrids at Take a Kid To Work Day and they looked to be about 14 inches.

### **Fathead Minnows**

500 pounds of minnows were purchased from Keo Fish Farms in Arkansas. Staff split them between Ponds 85 and 5-Acre for spawning. They are being fed daily. Fry are visible along the shorelines.

### **Walleye**

Fry were set up in the 4-Acre Pond from 4/13-4/15. A total of 2400 mls x 215 fry/ml = 516,000 fry. All surplus fry were sent to the Delaware River. The pond has been fertilized numerous times by boat and tank sprayer. Staff spotlighted for fry a few times and they were visible each time. Staff conducted a couple of plankton tows, showing good zooplankton populations. The fish look to be about 0.75 inches long at day 30. Hope to harvest around day 45.

### **Golden Shiners**

Shiner fry delivery was received on 5/10 around 10:30 am from Fed Ex. There were 8 boxes in total with two of the boxes donated by RVTA. Staff tempered the boxes for 30 minutes in the

ponds. Two boxes were set up in the following ponds: 31, 32, 82, 83. All of the shiner ponds were fertilized a few days in advance to create a plankton bloom for them to feed on.

#### *Hatchery Extensive Pond Work*

All the extensive ponds have been filled in the West Hatchery. Flows are being adjusted daily. Fry production ponds are being fertilized. Put liners in ponds 31 and 32. Staff continue working on creating one big pond out of ponds 87a, 87b, and 87c. Staff are using both excavators, bulldozer, dump truck, skid steer and tractor to remove brush and dirt. They are doing a great job, and we hope to have the pond filled by early fall. Concrete patching has been completed on several pond flumes and bubblers.

#### **Information & Education**

Provided information and photos for four GoFishFriday's posts 151-154. 1,824 likes, 72 comments, and 66 shares. Answered as many questions as possible on these posts. Prepared a PP presentation for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Freshwater Fisheries Forum on this year's Walleye trap netting at Swartswood Lake and spawning back at the hatchery. Tyler and I gave the presentation together from the hatchery. Staff participated in both. Take Your Kid To Work Day events. One in Trenton and a second one back at the hatchery. Great fun and education were had by all! Provided Bass Pro Shops a handful of fish for their store in Atlantic City. Trapper Ed held a Spring Class the weekend of April 20-21.

#### **Purchasing and Budget**

Working on purchases for the 2024 season. Working with Sarah to get as many vendors as possible to prepare their DPA paperwork for upcoming purchases. Earlier issues getting PO's, and PV's back from Purchasing/Procurement in Trenton seems to be improving. Working on purchases for chemicals and Alfalfa Meal. Thanks to the Procurement staff for helping resolve some of the issues from earlier this year. And helping us learn many things new to us.

#### **CBT/CBTM Projects**

Had an initial meeting with Construction Management Specialist to address removal of existing Intensive Recirculation System boilers and installation of new ones. Met with them again to show and discuss issues with crumbling concrete structures connecting Ponds 56 & 57. Working on completing a CBTM project from 2023 involving creating a drainage ditch alongside the new garage.

#### **Other Bureau Assistance**

Staff assisted in checking and pulling trap nets in Monksville Reservoir. Seasonal staff have helped the past couple of weeks on trout stocking runs.