



BUREAU OF FRESHWATER FISHERIES MONTHLY REPORT



February 16, 2025 – March 15, 2025

Shawn Crouse, Chief
Craig Lemon, Superintendent
Edward Conley, Superintendent
Christopher Smith, Supervising Fisheries Biologist

Ross Shramko, Principal Fisheries Biologist
Scott Collenburg, Principal Fisheries Biologist

Dominick Mercurio, Crew Supervisor Bldg. Maintenance
Tyler Tresslar, Crew Supervisor, WMAO
Nicholas Healy, Crew Supervisor, WMAO
Brad Duckworth, Crew Supervisor, WW

Eric Boehm, Sr. Fisheries Biologist
Justin Rozema, Assistant Biologist
Samantha MacQuesten, Assistant Biologist
Kyle Civalier, Biologist Trainee

Thomas Bissonnette, Technician I
Shaun Young, Technician II
Charles Sedor, Technician II
Nick Ruberto, Technician II
Doug Cutler, Technician II

Matthew Gadek, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Chris Sherwood, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Andrew Hutnik, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Travis Nitko, Wildlife Worker
Lynsey Bell, Wildlife Worker
Thomas Goetschkes, Wildlife Worker
Brooke Wakefoose, Wildlife Worker
Abby Bronico, Wildlife Worker
Robert Huth, Wildlife Worker

Ross StCerny- Agency Representative 1

Seasonals: Anthony Belske, Chris Cohen, Michael McCarthy, Robert Rubino, Jesse Tyther,
and Cheryl Weeks

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Sport Fish Restoration Grant Annual Report – The 2024 Sport Fish Restoration Grant (NJ F-48-R-30) Annual Report was completed and submitted for review. The report highlights the freshwater fisheries investigations and management activities that staff completed under the grant in 2024. (Smith and staff, NJ F-48-R-30)

Budd Lake (Morris) Northern Pike Trap Netting - R&M staff collaborated with Hackettstown Hatchery staff and assisted with broodstock collection for Northern Pike. Additionally, data was acquired from other warmwater species collected as part of the coolwater fisheries monitoring efforts. Trap nets were set between March 10th – March 14th. A total of 99 Northern Pike were collected and taken back to Hackettstown Hatchery, where they were inventoried and spawned by staff. Other species captured were measured, weighed, and released onsite. (Rozema, NJ F-48-R-30)

Bottom Lake Fish Kill (Camden) - A fish kill was reported at Bottom Lake (7 acres) located in the Borough of Clementon. A site visit was conducted on February 19th. Upon arrival, much of the lake was covered with ice. Two adult Bluegill were found along the shoreline of the Borough's recreational fishing area adjacent to the dam on White Horse Ave. No other dead fish were observed. No foreign odors or chemical slicks, suggesting pollution, were observed. No further action is needed. (Boehm)

Ghost Lake Fish Kill (Warren) - Staff received a report concerning a fish kill at Ghost Lake in Great Meadows. Dr. Groff investigated the fish kill and concluded that it was likely due to prolonged ice cover this winter, which can lead to oxygen depletion due to reduced photosynthesis and limited surface water and air mixing. (Shramko)

Manchester Township Fish Kill (Ocean) – A fish kill was reported at a small, unnamed pond located off Ridgeway Branch a tributary of the Toms River, adjacent to Volante Road in Manchester Township. A site visit was conducted on February 18th. Upon arrival the 12-acre pond was found drained with only a narrow, shallow channel of water remaining. Dead cedar snags, flooded due to beaver activity, covered 80% of the surface area. Approximately 500 Bluegill, 100 Largemouth Bass, 25 Golden Shiner, and 10 Chain Pickerel were observed dead along the southern shoreline. All fish lacked color indicating they died several days ago and were too decayed for testing. Oddly, no water control structure or outlet was present. The fish kill is the result of prolonged drought causing the pond to drain. Without a water control structure, the pond will have to be refilled naturally. No foreign odors or chemical slicks, suggesting pollution, were observed. (Boehm)

Manumuskin Preserve Sand Quarry Pond Fish Kill (Cumberland) – A fish kill was reported at the first unnamed “blue hole” immediately west of Port Elizabeth-Cumberland Rd and north of the railroad tracks in Maurice River Township (39.343277 -74.969452). The property is owned by TNC which provides public access. A site visit was conducted on February 19th. Upon arrival approximately 100, 2-3” Bluegill, and 10 Banded Killifish were found dead along the southern wind-blown shoreline. Old sand quarry ponds, or “blue holes”, are entirely manmade, extremely clear, and typically have low pH levels causing introduced fish populations to struggle. Given the

low number of fish affected this would be considered a very minor kill. The cause of the mortality is most likely attributed to winter kill. (Boehm)

Mercer Lake Fish Kill (Mercer) – A fish kill was reported during the week of February 28th. BFF staff investigated the kill on February 28th and did not observe any dead fish around the area reported. The water conditions appeared to be normal, and two boats were observed fishing. No additional reports were received. (Smith)

Pemberton Lake Fish Kill (Burlington) - Pemberton Lake is a trout stocked Wildlife Management Area, located in Pemberton Twp., Burlington County. A site visit was conducted on 2/28/25. Upon arrival, hundreds of dead fish were observed along the shoreline at the fishing dock on Magnolia Rd., along Colemans Bridge Rd. down to the boat launch and remaining eastern shoreline coves. The kill consisted of multiple species and age classes. Adult Gizzard Shad and White Perch were the most abundant. Bluegill, Black Crappie, and Yellow Perch were also observed in lower numbers. Water chemistry was collected with all readings readily supporting aquatic life (DO was slightly elevated at 16.92mg/L). Numerous discolored, with visible “white spots” White Perch were seen swimming lethargically along the shoreline. Fish specimens were collected by our pathology department for testing at an earlier date. No foreign odors or chemical slicks, suggesting pollution, were observed. The lake continues to be affected by chronic harmful algal blooms (HAB) and the characteristic green water coloration associated with them was present at the time of investigation. Canada Geese recently tested positive for avian influenza (AI) at this location. The cause of the fish kill is currently believed to be winter kill. (Boehm)

Spring Trout Stocking - Finalized the 2025 Spring Trout Stocking schedule with assistance from the Bureau of Land Management and Pequest Trout Hatchery. Finished the Trout Allocation worksheet, Bonus Broodstock handout, and the script for the Trout Stocking Hotline and sent to I&E for posting to our website. Volunteers have been contacted and given information about stocking dates and duties. Completed a phone interview with NJ 101.5 about the 2025 Spring Trout Stocking Season and schedule. (Civalier)

Trout Stocking Program Considerations - BFF staff finalized the strategy for stocking trout above the recently removed Paulina Dam, ensuring that our methods are consistent with long-term conservation goals. Volunteers will be used to spread fish out through the old lakebed above the removed Paulina Dam site. (Shramko/Civalier)

On March 11th, Scott Collenburg met with BLM Staff, Rob Bodnar to review the current trout stocking points for both the South Branch of the Raritan River and the main stem of the Raritan River. Rob identified several improvements that could be made to the trout stocking run along with additional points that should be dropped for safety or access issues and clarification to the directions. The edits and additions to the trout stocking run will be provided to the trout stocking coordinator. (Collenburg/Bodnar)

Wild Trout / Dam Removal Projects - Continued working with recent and historical wild trout data to monitor fluctuations in Brook and Brown Trout population sizes to determine if these populations are stable, increasing, or decreasing over time.

Completed a final review of the Mine Brook dam removal application prepared for EBTJV funding, with the application deadline imminent.

Engaged in a technical discussion regarding a potential dam removal project on Little Pond Brook. This potential project appears promising in terms of reducing thermal stress and enhancing habitat connectivity on a robust Brook Trout population, although the benefits are expected to be modest. (Shramko)

NAACC Assessments – In collaboration with seasonal and full-time staff the Bureau of Freshwater Research and Management Unit has completed assessments on a total of 319 crossings (some with multiple structures) in relation to habitat that was identified as important to native Brook Trout or wild Brown Trout and freshwater fish species that are soon to be listed as Endangered or Threatened (i.e. Bridle Shiners, Ironcolor Shiners, and Slimy Sculpin). On February 27th and March 3rd, biologists Scott Collenburg and Ross Shramko, and Wildlife Worker, Robert Huth, met to discuss the draft report, locations for potential projects, and next steps in data acquisition. Locations have been identified where crossings have created severe barriers to wild Brown Trout movement and isolated native Brook Trout populations. Information like this can be used to determine the best course of action. (Collenburg/Huth)

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT (State Funding)

Attended the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team's (NJISST) Technical Advisory Committee meeting on February 28th to review the 2025 species considerations. Walked through previously watched or emerging species to decide current status, and addressed any new species that may have the potential to appear in New Jersey. (Smith/MacQuesten)

Participated in the Silty Pond Mussel (SPM) Habitat Suitability Map Meeting with Rutgers University and other collaborators on March 3rd. A management plan and educational outreach materials are in the final stages of completion and will be ready within the next few months. The goal of these materials is to raise awareness and prevent further introduction or spread of SPM in the State.

Continued working on website updates, including the development of a new AIS Reporting Form in collaboration with GIS staff members, and exploring different reporting platforms for both public and professional use. Began updates and improvements on NJDEP F&W's AIS web page so that it is ready when the reporting form launches. (MacQuesten)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (State Funding)

USGS Gauging Stations & Anadromous Passage:

Staff answered questions by The Nature Conservancy about the Paulinskill and Pequest USGS gauging stations and their potential for removals. BFF staff commented that they would support the removal of these gauging stations, but for the record it hasn't been determined if the USGS gauge on the Paulinskill is indeed a partial or complete barrier to upstream fish movement. Gizzard Shad have been documented traversing the Paulinskill gauge via staff electrofishing

surveys. BFF has also documented American Shad at the gauging station on the Paulinskill but hasn't documented that American Shad have been found above the gauge. Staff suspects that the gauging station is a partial barrier, but during higher flows / storm events the gauge is likely submersed to a level that would allow American shad passage.

BFF staff is not convinced that American Shad will even enter the Pequest River and swim the few hundred yards to the lower most dams (Collins Dams) due to bedrock constricting the river and creating a natural elevation change possibly too steep, shallow and fast for American Shad passage. If it is determined that American Shad cannot traverse this section, most of the dam removal discussions on the Pequest with regards to American Shad is unnecessary. That being said, of course there are other anadromous species that would benefit from these removals on the Pequest River. Also, TNC said that they found historical documentation of American Shad in the Pequest beyond the dams in question. If this information is accurate then American Shad can traverse the bedrock section and make it to the Collins Dams. There are no reports of American Shad at the base of the dam Collins Dam like there was at the base of the Columbia Dam on the Paulinskill before its removal. (Shramko)

Drought Response Advisory Group – Multiple meetings were held to discuss the current state of drought in the State of NJ. Scott Collenburg provided comments in relation to any concerns with the fisheries resources. Despite the recent rain and snowfall accumulations there was not enough to change the current water supply conditions and New Jersey remains in a drought warning. February has been average in terms of rainfall but conditions have not markedly improved. Stream flows in the south are generally below average. Forecasted increased precipitation for the end of March will hopefully improve conditions. The public is strongly urged to continue voluntary water conservation practices. The Drought Response Advisory Group meets every Friday. (Collenburg/Crouse)

Fish and Mussel Work Group – On March 4th, Biologists with the Endangered and Nongame Species Program, Alex Kisurin and Robert Somes, and US Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist, Jillian Stark, met to electrofish Ireland Brook, a location known to inhabit rare mussels and a diverse fish assemblage. The group also discussed the common goal of overlaying fish distribution data with rare mussel locations to prioritize sampling for mussels. (Collenburg)

FishTrack Database – On March 6th the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife's GIS group met to discuss ongoing projects. An additional meeting was held on March 11th to discuss the FishTrack database in more detail and what would be necessary to transition the old database from Microsoft Access to a geodatabase stored and managed by the GIS group. (Collenburg)

Hoppock Pond in Voorhees State Park – On February 26th, biologist, Scott Collenburg, met with staff from New Jersey State Parks at Hoppock Pond in Voorhees State Park and conducted a thorough assessment to evaluate the feasibility of removing the pond's dam. The primary goal of this assessment was to determine the potential ecological benefits of dam removal, particularly in terms of improving habitat conditions and enhancing the connectivity of aquatic ecosystems both upstream and downstream of the pond.

Currently, Hoppock Pond is entirely filled with sediment, and a channel has formed in place of the former ponded area. This sedimentation has significantly altered the habitat, reducing the water's depth and quality for aquatic species. The dam's removal could help restore natural water flow and provide access for aquatic organisms to move freely between the upstream and downstream sections of the watershed, enhancing biodiversity and ecological health.

The visit involved an evaluation of the site's current conditions, including the extent of sediment buildup and the presence of aquatic species. The team discussed how removing the dam could help restore the natural hydrology of the area, potentially reviving critical habitats and supporting the movement and survival of fish and other aquatic organisms. Restoration of this connectivity could also have long-term positive impacts on the broader ecosystem within the park.

The discussions focused on the potential for ecological restoration and the overall feasibility of dam removal, weighing both environmental benefits and the challenges associated with such a project. The team is now considering the next steps in the process, which may include facilitating funding and planning to determine the most effective course of action for restoring Hoppock Pond's natural environment. (Collenburg)

Lake Sonoma Siphon Project – Data analysis was conducted to determine the impacts of a siphon project that is intended to deliver colder water or mitigate the impacts of warmwater spilling over the Sonoma Lake dam. A native Brook Trout population exists downstream of Sonoma Lake and the spillway introduces stressful warmwater during a critical time of year for the survival of Brook Trout. NJ State Parks, NJDEP Fish & Wildlife, Applied Geoecology, and volunteers have been working together to install the siphon, collect water quality data, and monitor the success of the work. During February, biologists Scott Collenburg and Justin Rozema, analyzed the collected data and found that there was a significant impact on the downstream stream temperature. Unfortunately, the siphon was introducing water temperature that was ~4°C warmer than what models had predicted would have been present. Meaning, the siphon was warming the coldwater stream (fed by springs) when the dam was not spilling. When the dam was spilling, the siphon water was colder than the lake's surface water. However, because there was not enough data to determine the impacts on the water temperature when the spillway was spilling, the usefulness of the siphon to mitigate warmwater from the spillway was not determined. A potential benefit of the siphon may be to use it during the fall when more water in the stream is beneficial to spawning Brook Trout. The project will continue in 2025 to explore these questions. (Collenburg/Rozema)

Newly listed Freshwater Fish Species – On January 23rd the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries biologist, Scott Collenburg, and Chief, Shawn Crouse, met with staff from NJDEP's Watershed Management Unit to discuss the best management practices (BMPs) and potential timing restrictions related to Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern freshwater fish species that were recently listed on January 6th. The Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries supplied timing restrictions in relation to these species and is currently working on BMPs. (Collenburg/Crouse)

State Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles - As part of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) time was spent creating species profiles for freshwater species that are listed as Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern. These species profiles will provide life history information as well as information in regard to their current status and actions related to SWAP. (Collenburg)

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Annual Trout Meeting - Staff participated in the virtual Annual Trout Meeting on March 11th, which included presentations on Rainbow Trout Production at the Pequest Trout Hatchery (Nick Healy), Trout Allocations and 2026 potential changes (Kyle Civalier), and an overview of Brook Trout Conservation and Restoration (Ross Shramko). 229 public participants attended. (Staff, NJ F-48-R-30)

Fisheries Forum – Staff participated in the virtual Fisheries Forum on February 20th, which included presentations by staff on warmwater and coolwater fisheries management activities. The first presentation was on Channel Catfish production (Craig Lemon and Tyler Tresslar). The second presentation was on Warmwater and Coolwater Species monitoring and management (Justin Rozema). The third presentation was on Black Bass and Aquatic Invasive Species monitoring and management. The event was well attended by the public with 180 public participants. (Staff, NJ F-48-R-30))

Statewide Dam Removal Partnership (SDRP) - Attended the virtual quarterly meeting on March 10th. Updates on dam removals across the state were given. Unfortunately, most projects are currently on hold due to a freeze in federal funding. Currently, most of the removal activity is taking place in the Musconetcong, Pequest, and Raritan River watersheds. TNC is interested in finding additional dams for future removals projects. (Boehm, NJ F-48-R-30)

Angler R3 Meeting- Participated in a meeting with BIE staff on March 4th about upcoming event planning for 2025 and collaboration between Freshwater Fisheries and I&E staff. (Crouse, Smith, Rozema)

STAFF & ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

Skillful Angler Program - Received and reviewed 16 Skillful Angler applications from anglers. Thirty-nine applications have been received in 2025 and are coming in steadily. (Civalier)

WMA Bass Tournament Permits – A total of 140 tournaments have been scheduled and permits were issued for events occurring in early March. Permits will continue to be issued over the next few weeks. Anglers have reported good fishing in recent weeks at DOD and Rainbow Lakes. (Smith)

Freshwater Permits - Reviewed Land Management Reviews (LMR's), water lowering permits and fish stocking applications and contacted applicants as necessary to obtain required information. Responded to requests from the public for information on fish stocking and water lowering permit programs. A few projects required significant lowering that necessitated fish salvages. The applicants were provided with a list of consultants to complete the salvage. (Staff

PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY (Ed Conley)

Inventory Data

<u>Stocking Program</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Average Daily Length Increase</u>	<u>Conversion</u>
Spring 2026 RBT (5 months old)	3.9"	0.024	0.90
Spring 2025 RBT (17 months old)	10.9"	0.014	2.24
Fall 2025 RBT (17 months old)	11.6"	0.007	0.71

Flow Rates – February 2025

2.35 inches of precipitation fell during the month of February.

Production Well Pumping Rate Average for February was 5,822 gpm with an average 8.38 million gallons per day pumped during the month.

The potable well pumped 8,322 gallons for the month of February.

Fish Culture Activities

Inventory on 2026 production stock was completed at this time. Some fish were moved out of the nursery and spread into B-line in order to spread out the rest of the fish in the nursery fish. All fish are currently on 2.0 mm feed inside.

Monthly inventories of the Spring 2025 production stock (48 pools) and the 2025 Fall Program fish (2 pools) were completed during this time. Feed quantities have been adjusted to regulate growth rates to reach our final goal for the Spring Stocking. These fish are being fed by the feed truck 4 times a day with 5.0 mm feed. Screens are being cleaned twice a day and basins weekly. Hook a Winner Trout were tagged for the pre-season stocking (pictured above).



Pequest Maintenance

Changed programing parameters on Well 1 datalogger and worked fixing Well 1 control wiring. Also met with PSI Inc. about Well 1 wiring and VFD communication, waiting for a price.

We received a quote for replacing one of the Lighthouse overhead doors and made repairs to two other newer overhead garage doors on lighthouse. Fixed main heater fan in basement of nursery building.

Annual federal emission tests repairs, and inspection on two large distribution trucks were completed. Cleared well road and the TCA railroad bed for numerous trees down from storms. We finished preparing equipment and stocking trucks for the upcoming Spring Stocking season that begins on March 17, 2025. Staff installed a stocking distribution tank on Lands Management flatbed for stocking as well and serviced fish pump for spring stocking. Staff also installed new lines, new mylar ribbon over the raceway lines, and set-up propane cannons in preparation of predatory birds moving in as the weather gets warmer. We welded various ¼ and ½ aluminum screens for upcoming season and installed new fuel gauges on diesel back up tanks.

William Stothoff Company did a camera inspection of Well #6 in preparation of installing the new equipment. We are still waiting on parts.

Miscellaneous Activities

Had annual facility inspection on 2/26/25 of the Waste Treatment Plant and Well houses. We are awaiting the final report.

Interviewed with Tom Pagliaroli on 3/5/25 about the upcoming 2025 Spring Trout Season for his magazine article.

Submitted Federal Interim Performance Report for 2024 calendar year.

Submitted the 2024 Right to Know Survey that is due by 7/1/2025.

Created power point and presented for the Virtual Trout Meeting on 3/11/25. About 225 people participated.

Submitted vehicle purchasing paperwork for a small in-house tank truck. Also working on putting together the paperwork for one of the large stocking trucks after receiving approval for funding.

Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery (Craig Lemon)

Intensive Culture (Inventory)

<u>Species</u>	<u># Fish</u>	<u>Avg.”</u>
Landlocked Salmon	3,200	6.8”
Muskellunge	5,955	10.3”
Largemouth Bass (NJ)	3,000	5.7”
Largemouth Bass (Ark.)	2,500	4.4”
Hybrid Striped Bass	1,600	7.7”
Gambusia	50,000	1.5”

Stocking Totals (February 16 – March 15)

No stocking during this period.

Intensive Culture

Landlocked Salmon

Currently culturing 3,200 fish about 6.8” in two 2,000-gallon tank. Staff clean and feed them daily. Normally we would fin clip them and split them into 3 tanks this month, but low spring flows are keeping us from doing that. We need some precipitation to recharge our springs. These fish will be stocked around November 1st at 15 inches.

Muskellunge

Currently culturing 5,955, 10.3-inch fingerlings in two 2,000-gallon tanks. They were overwintered on a dry pellet diet in 52°F spring water. They have been switched to live forage and will be stocked in April.

Hybrid Striped Bass

Currently culturing 1,600 7.7-inch fingerlings in one 2,000-gallon rectangular tank. These fish have been raised intensively over the winter. They are on a dry pellet diet in 52°F water. Staff just switched them from 3.0 mm to 5.0 mm feed. Regional biologists are working on a plan for them this Spring.

Largemouth Bass

There are two tanks of Largemouth Bass in the Intensive Culture Building. There are 2,500 4.4-inch bass from Arkansas in a 1,000-gallon tank and 3,295 5.7-inch fingerlings that we converted to dry feed in a 2,000-gallon tank. These were overwintered intensively and will soon be moved outside into a pond for future program use. Both lots of fish are on dry feed in 52°F water and are doing well.

Gambusia

Currently culturing 50,000 Gambusia (Mosquitofish) in three 1,000-gallon tanks. These fish are being reared over the winter in 52°F spring water and fed a dry mash diet. They will be used by County Mosquito Commissions in the Spring as Biocontrol measures for mosquitoes. They are brought indoors in the Fall, because they do not overwinter well in the wild.

Intensive Production Work

We are currently pumping 478 gpm of 52°F spring water and 123 gallons of 68°F water. Staff started up the 68°F system on March 3 in anticipation of Northern Pike Trapnetting in Budd Lake. We encountered a couple of issues at startup. The 68°F variable drive motor would not turn on. TGM was called in and they replaced a contact in the panel, and it is fine. The Amiad filter had a faulty pressure switch, which was ordered, and it is currently bypassed. Water levels in the spring houses continue to be extremely low. Staff increased the 52°F pumps recently and spring water levels fell overnight. During the growing season last year one of the makeup valves in the pump room broke while being adjusted. It was bypassed and staff used a PVC ball valve just downstream to control flows. Staff took apart the broken valve and one of the other good valves for comparison. A small stainless pin had snapped which controls the handle to change flows. Staff ordered four new pins and O-rings. Both unassembled valves were thoroughly cleaned and put back together. All four valves are clean and ready for the season.

Extensive Culture

Channel Catfish

Broodfish are being overwintered in Pond 92. Overwintering three-year classes of catfish for future fishing programs in Ponds, 74, 89, and 90.

Hybrid Striped Bass

240 sixteen-inch fish were moved to Pond 89 for future programs. The 2023 holdovers are overwintering in Pond 90. Estimated 1,300 Hybrids and 1,828 Lmb were moved to Pond 90 from Pond 30. The fish looked nice, and the polyculture seemed successful.

Largemouth Bass & Smallmouth Bass

All bass broodstock ponds have been harvested and the adults returned to Pond 50 to overwinter.

Hatchery Extensive Pond Work

Work on the Pond 77 inflow bubbler pipe and pad was completed. Waiting for water to flow to observe how it will work. Put steps in Pond 85. Final dredging work on Ponds 4-Acre, 60, 78, and 82. Filled the Spring hole for Northern Pike 21-day Tricaine withdrawal. Filling the two minnow Ponds 85 and 5-Acre. Started filling Ponds 27 and 30. Staff began feeding many of the ponds as the ice was off and water temperatures are rising.

Northern Pike Broodstock Collection (Budd Lake)

Hatchery staff set three South Dakota style trapnets in Budd Lake on March 10th to capture Northern Pike broodfish. The nets fished for 4 days capturing 99 pike. The catch was made up of 52 males and 47 females. The largest pike was a female weighing 12.13 pounds and measuring 36.3 inches. Twenty female pike were spawned producing 849,596 eggs. Good numbers of Yellow Perch, Bluegill Sunfish, Black Crappie, and White Perch were also captured and returned to the lake. Lake water temperatures ranged from 40-44°F. Females average weight was 7.12 pounds and males were 3.8 pounds. These are the highest average weights since data recording started in 2001.

Tiger Muskellunge Egg Take

Having taken enough Northern Pike eggs, staff made the decision to use the last few ripe

Northern Pike females to make Tiger Muskies. The crew seined pond 45 on 3/12 and brought 6 female and 18 male Muskellunge into the Intensive Rearing Building. Four jars of Tiger Muskie eggs were made between 3/13-3/14 using Budd Lake female Northerns and Hatchery Pond 45 male Muskellunge. All Muskellunge were returned to the pond in good condition. A total of 417,000 eggs were taken.

Information & Education

Provided information and photos for four GoFishFriday's posts 194-197. 1,744 likes, 30 comments, and 91 shares. Answered as many questions as possible on these posts. Supplied the 2024 final stocking numbers to I&E staff. The social media posts had 1,340 like, 77 comments, and 90 shares. Participated as a panelist at the Virtual Trout Meeting on 3/11.

CBT/CBTM Projects

The CBTM project for the dredging and regarding Pond 90 is complete. Twelve loads of stone were delivered and spread. All bills have been submitted, and the project is in the closeout stage. The CBT Project for Boiler Replacement has moved to the next step. An engineering consultant has been chosen, and multiple TEAMS meetings have taken place. The engineering contractor has made several site visits to gather information and measurements. They have also reached out via email a couple of times.

Budget/Purchasing

Finished work on the 2024 spending totals including utilities and salaries. Working with Ross on getting vendors to update their DPA paperwork. Putting together multiple PB119's for fish food, fertilizer, pond dye. Received POs for fish food and boiler maintenance.