



BUREAU OF FRESHWATER FISHERIES MONTHLY REPORT



May 16, 2025 – June 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
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Matthew Gadek, Sr. Wildlife Worker
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Andrew Hutnik, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Travis Nitko, Wildlife Worker
Lynsey Bell, Wildlife Worker
Thomas Goetschkes, Wildlife Worker
Abby Bronico, Wildlife Worker
Robert Huth, Wildlife Worker

Ross StCerny- Agency Representative 1

Seasonals: Anthony Belske, Noah Brady, Jenna Brodnyan, Chris Cohen, Michael Kays, Samantha Lavan, Matt McCall, Michael McCarthy, Erin McLean, Hannah Orloff, Robert Rubino, Jesse Tyther, and Cheryl Weeks

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (Federal Grant Funding, F-48-R-30)

Brook Trout Project - Multiple small tributaries of the Musconetcong River were scouted for possible inclusion in the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries Brown Trout Removal Projects. Staff are considering adding a 4th stream this summer for Brown Trout removals from Brook Trout streams to aid in the restoration of Brook Trout. Brown Trout have been identified as a major threat to long term Brook Trout population abundance in many wild trout streams in NJ. The removal of this non-native competition has shown to have positive impacts to Brook Trout populations in other small wild trout streams in New Jersey. (Shramko)

Cramer's Creek - On 6/3/25, a follow-up backpack electrofishing survey was conducted on Cramer's Creek, a tributary to the South Branch of the Raritan River, building on the initial sampling conducted in August of 2022. While the original survey downstream of Route 31 documented a strong wild Brown Trout population and led to a recommendation to reclassify the stream as Trout Production, the most recent survey was conducted further downstream, but upstream of the Round Valley Reservoir pumping station driveway. Fewer than 10 Brown Trout were encountered in this reach, but the focus of this survey was not on abundance alone. Rather, it was to evaluate the stream's potential to support wild trout populations and assess its suitability for native species restoration. Given the presence of coldwater habitat and the opportunity to expand the range of native Brook Trout, Cramer's Creek is being considered for Brown Trout removal and Brook Trout introduction. This potential management action aligns with broader conservation goals to restore native fish populations and improve the ecological integrity of New Jersey's coldwater streams. (Collenburg)

Continued GIS work on the Brook Trout Catchment Project and Wild Trout Biomass analysis. Continued updating project shapefiles and survey data. (Shramko)

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (State Funding)

Fish Kill - West Hudson Park Pond (Hudson) - A report of dead fish and a turtle was received by BFF staff on 6/9/25 at West Hudson Park Pond (Town of Harrison). In addition, numerous fish were reported to be on the surface struggling to breathe, and a photograph of a sheen on the water's surface was sent. Biologist Rozema investigated the report on 6/10/25. Only two dead fish were seen, a single Bluegill and a Channel Catfish. Both fish appeared to have been dead for a long time and were too decayed for testing. Numerous live Bluegill were seen along the shoreline of the pond, as well as multiple live turtles. No fish or turtles appeared to be actively in distress. Dissolved oxygen was recorded at 8.2 mg/l and fountains in both basins were operational. No sheen was observed anywhere on the pond. Hackettstown Hatchery had recently stocked Bluegill, Channel Catfish, and Largemouth Bass for Free Fishing Day in this location within a week prior to the report. It is possible both fish succumbed to either fishing mortality or transport-related stress. (Rozema)

Lake Hopatcong HAB Treatment – Staff reviewed project statements and provided comments in consultation with internal and external partners for Lake Hopatcong HAB treatment regarding timing restrictions associated with the Endangered Bridle Shiner. (Staff)

Lommason's Glen Brook – A site visit was conducted at Lommason's Glen Brook to determine the status of the road repair project and see if the project is following best management practices to protect the Brook Trout stream flowing adjacent to the road. There are a few concerning developments that Fish & Wildlife staff feel could be addressed better. Staff reached out to DEP's Water Enforcement Bureau for more information but are still waiting for a return call. (Shramko)

Trout Stocking - Managed trout stocking logistics and adjustments, including conversations with volunteers that assist in stocking regarding stream conditions and stocking feasibility. (Shramko)

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT (State Funding)

Began drafting a **New Jersey Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Rapid Response Plan**. The New Jersey AIS Rapid Response Plan will be based on adaptive management, where impacts are assessed, management is applied, variables and results are properly documented, and changes made to strategies as treatment outcomes are assessed, and options weighed. (MacQuesten)

Participated in eDNA sampling of the Millstone River on 6/3/25, in collaboration with Rutgers University and USFWS for Silty Pond Mussel detection. (MacQuesten)

The new **AIS Reporting Form** was published on 6/18/25 and ready for public introduction. NJFW's AIS webpage was updated, and social media posts and Postmaster/GovDelivery messages were approved and released on 6/18/25. The new reporting form will allow NJDEP Fish & Wildlife to better track invasive species across the state and take appropriate management actions. (MacQuesten)

Stroud Water Research Center - Advised Stroud Water Research Center on permitting and sampling plans for New Zealand Mudsail and Brook Trout monitoring in the Musconetcong Watershed. (Shramko)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (State Funding)

Drought Response Advisory Group – Meetings are held every Friday to discuss the current state of drought in the state of NJ. Scott Collenburg, Principal Fisheries Biologist, provided comment in relation to any concerns with the fisheries resources. Given the steadily improving water supply across the state, including precipitation levels aligning with historical norms, reservoirs at or near full capacity, and notable recovery in streamflow and unconfined groundwater, the group recommended lifting the statewide Drought Warning. An Administrative Order (AO) was signed by the Commissioner midweek to formally lift the Warning and revert passing flows and reservoir releases to permitted levels. This AO was issued alongside a press release and shared with the group upon publication on June 11th. However, due to continued

below-normal streamflow and groundwater conditions in the Coastal South region—driven by long-term rainfall deficits and the area’s sandy, slow-recovering geology—the group recommended maintaining a Drought Watch status there. This designation does not require an AO and can be lifted once local conditions normalize. The group will reconvene next Friday to confirm final data and the next steps. (Collenburg)

Ironcolor Workgroup Sampling – Two days, June 5th and 13th, were spent in the field collecting data for Ironcolor Shiners, related to a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant awarded to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (ANS). A meeting was also attended by both ANS and Fish and Wildlife staff on June 11th to discuss habitat parameters that will be important to assess and correlate with the presence of Ironcolor Shiners this upcoming summer. In 2023, eDNA results reflected the presence/absence of the soon to be listed endangered species. Field work in 2024 and 2025 is being conducted to verify the eDNA results. The work ultimately aims to understand the Ironcolor Shiner distribution and habitat, and implement or suggest management actions to conserve the species soon to be listed as endangered in New Jersey. (Collenburg/Crouse)

NAACC Assessments – The Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries has made significant progress on its ongoing efforts to assess road-stream crossing structures using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) framework. These assessments are conducted to identify barriers to aquatic organism passage, with an emphasis on improving habitat connectivity and identifying important barriers for wild trout populations, particularly Brook Trout. During this reporting period, seasonal fisheries technicians, in collaboration with full-time staff, completed 118 NAACC assessments at road-stream crossing sites within the Raritan River and Upper Delaware River drainages. These sites were selected based on historical documentation of Brook Trout presence and their potential to serve as key habitats for conservation efforts. The successful completion of these assessments marks a critical step forward in identifying and prioritizing crossings for potential remediation or restoration. The data collected will support broader initiatives aimed at enhancing aquatic connectivity and preserving native fish populations throughout the watershed. (Collenburg)

State Wildlife Action Plan - As part of the ongoing update to the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), staff continued reviewing and refining recommended actions to improve outcomes for New Jersey’s Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) over the next decade. Following last month’s efforts to prioritize key conservation actions across regions—with input from Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries biologists Scott Collenburg, Justin Rozema, Eric Boehm, and Kyle Civalier—biologists participated in two follow-up meetings held on May 21 and May 27. These meetings provided an opportunity to revisit and further evaluate proposed actions, ensuring that regional priorities reflect current science and on-the-ground conservation needs, particularly for freshwater fish species. This continued collaboration across agencies and partners supports the development of a focused and actionable SWAP update. (Collenburg, Boehm, Rozema, Civalier)

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Youth Inclusion Initiative (YII) Kick-Off Meeting - Participated in the kick-off meetings for DEP's Youth Inclusion Initiative on 6/4/25 and 6/5/25. (Staff)

STAFF & ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

Biologist Region Updates – Biologist regions were updated, and new regional administrative duties were given to biologists. Civalier and Boehm's regions were realigned, a new GIS map of 2025 biologist regions was created for the website. (Shramko, Smith, Crouse)

Interviews - Staff reviewed applications for the Boat Steward and Seasonal Tech. positions, narrowed down candidates for interviews, and conducted interviews. Participated in candidate review and supplied Human Resources with scoring rubric as per instructed to aid with the hiring process. (Smith, Shramko, Collenburg, Boehm)

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 constituent emails and phone calls about general fisheries questions, licenses, and 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)

Skillful Angler Program: Received and reviewed 52 Skillful Angler applications from anglers. Applications reached 180 for 2025 and are coming in steadily. (Civalier)

2025 Fieldwork Spreadsheet - Continued planning for seasonal fieldwork and finalized the 2025 fieldwork spreadsheet. (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 (8 months old)	5.8"	0.025	1.00
Fall 2026 RBT (8 months old)	6.2"	0.030	0.83
Fall 2025 RBT (20 months old)	12.7"	0.023	1.63

Flow Rates – May 2025

8.39 inches of precipitation fell during the month of May.

Production Well Pumping Rate Average for May was 6,244 gpm with an average 8.99 million gallons per day pumped during the month.

The potable well pumped 18,579 gallons for the month of May.

Fish Culture Activities



580,625 production sized Rainbow Trout along with 7,855 Broodstock were stocked this year during a typical 10-week season (3 Pre-season and 7 In-season) that started on 03/23/24 and was completed 05/23/24. Goals were met and exceeded the typical 570,000 baseline with additional production sized Rainbows that were added to the stocking truck loads during the last 3 weeks, bringing the total to 588,480 Rainbow Trout that were loaded and stocked into public rivers, lakes, and ponds throughout New Jersey this Spring. These extra fish should provide excellent angler opportunities to come. 75 Hook a Winner tags have been reported so far this year. The production summary is below.

PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY
2025 SPRING TROUT STOCKING SUMMARY

<u>#FISH</u>	<u>#LBS.</u>	<u>AVERAGE LENGTH</u>
RBT Production - 580,625	312,754	11.4"
RBT Broodstock - 7,855	18,584	RBT II - 15.7" RBT III - 21.3"

TOTAL RAINBOW TROUT – 588,480
TOTAL LBS. – 331,338

The H-line was emptied, sterilized, and reset. All power washing and sterilization of the remaining empty pools has now been completed and have been reset.

The Nursery Building was emptied, cleaned, and sterilized. The inventory was completed on the 2026 production stock and 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 3.0 mm feed. Screens are being cleaned twice a day and basins weekly. 39,000 four-inch Rainbow trout surplus trout were given to Hackettstown Hatchery for forage during this time.

The fish for the 2025 Fall Program fish were inventoried. 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.

Coordinated daily load assignments of Spring Stocking Trout runs to various water bodies onto selected distribution trucks. Hatchery Staff stocked all of the Pequest River runs. All the Oxygen bottles were stripped off the truck at the end of stocking except one that Hackettstown Hatchery needed to borrow. Trucks have been cleaned and sterilized.

Pequest Maintenance

We had multiple alarms during this time period regarding communications, well levels, and a few quick power glitches which staff had to respond. Called TGM Electric for Well# 6, power failure on Saturday 5/31 resulted in two wires burning, replaced connections and test fired. Replaced AC power supply and battery maintainer for Well# 3 communications. Also, we bought new 12V DC batteries for backup communication system for all 7 wells. Fixed the exhaust on Well #7 Diesel, tree branch had damaged it during a storm. Fixed the pond bathroom sink and drain that was leaking. Took zero turn mower for service. Serviced all mowers and trimmers for summer clean up around hatchery. Removed tank for lands distribution truck. Replaced tires on two pick-up trucks at Petty Tire Service. Had Portasoft Inc. perform the yearly cleaning and routine maintenance on UV System. They changed bulbs and quartz sleeves. Still having some continued running issues will re-schedule another visit.

Miscellaneous Activities

5/29/25, Met with Robert Hall from DEP Surface Water Permitting and John Meier from Water Resource Management/RVE regarding the Renewal of our NJDES 0033189 Discharge permit. We discussed the write-up of the upcoming new permit and had a site visit.

Assisted engineers with CBT Project P1334-00 Well Rehabilitation and Upgrades at Pequest State Trout Hatchery. A phase meeting has been set-up for 6/17/25. We also assisted an electrical engineer and utility mark out for P1336-00 Fuel Tanks Upgrades Project at Pequest State Trout Hatchery. We went over the scope write-up for other CBT projects such as tank replacement in the Nursery building as well as roof replacement and fascia.

Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery (Craig Lemon)

Intensive Culture (Inventory)

<u>Species</u>	<u># Fish</u>	<u>Avg."</u>
Landlocked Salmon	3,200	9.0"
Northern Pike	16,000	5.8"
Tiger Muskellunge	4,400	6.7"
Muskellunge	22,000	1.8"
Channel Catfish	80,000	fry

Stocking Totals (May 16 – June 15)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u># Fish</u>	<u>Fish/Pound</u>	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Length</u>
5/20	Np	Deal Lake	4,110	46.2	89	5.0"
6/4	Np	Spruce Run Res.	5,184	21.8	238	6.1"
6/9	Np	Budd Lake	1,888	19.1	99	6.1"
6/10	Np	Pompton Lake	4,080	20	204	6.1"
6/13	Np	Farrington Lake	2,900	20.7	140	6.1"
6/13	Np	Pompton River	2,456	20.8	118	6.1"
6/2	Bs	Frelinghuysen Pond	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		32	1	32	12.0"
	Chc		37	0.3	133	22"
6/2	Bs	Grover Cleveland Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		27	1	27	12"
6/2	Bs	Hughes Lake	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		40	1	40	12.0"
	Chc		49	0.3	163	22"
6/2	Bs	West Hudson Pk Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		54	1	54	12.0"
	Chc		67	0.3	223	22"
6/2	Bs	Cooper Pond	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		50	1	50	12.0"
	Chc		62	0.3	207	22"
6/2	Bs	Cedar Brook Pk Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		46	1	46	12.0"
6/2	Bs	Carteret Pk Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		33	1	33	12.0"
	Chc		38	0.3	127	22"
6/3	Bs	Log Basin/Stacy Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		35	1	35	12.0"
	Chc		42	0.3	140	22"
6/3	Bs	N. Community Pk Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		25	1	25	12.0"
	Chc		28	0.3	93	22"
6/3	Bs	Gloucester City Pond	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		25	1	25	12.0"
	Chc		28	0.3	93	22"

<u>Date</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u># Fish</u>	<u>Fish/Pound</u>	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Length</u>
6/3	Bs	Rowands Pond	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		25	1	25	12.0"
	Chc		28	0.3	93	22"
6/3	Bs	Holmdel Park Pond	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		35	1	35	12.0"
6/3	Bs	Macs Pond	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		44	1	44	12.0"
	Chc		87	0.3	290	22"
6/4	Bs	Mt. Arlington Pk Pd	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		25	1	25	12.0"
6/5	Bs	Corliss Park Lake	40	6	7	6.0"
	Lmb		43	1	43	12.0"
5/28	Lmb	Lake Mercer	7,000	1,409	5	1.5"
5/28	Lmb	Assunpink Lake	11,693	1,409	8.3	1.5"
5/30	Lmb	Elmer Lake	8,550	1,409	4.9	1.5"
5/30	Lmb	Union Lake	26,940	1,409	15	1.5"
5/30	Lmb	Sunset Lake	8,700	1,409	5	1.5"
5/30	Lmb	Davis Mill Pond	5,100	1,409	2.9	1.5"
5/30	Lmb	Maskells Mill Pond	4,800	1,409	2.8	1.5"
5/30	Lmb	Alloway Lake	12,000	1,409	6.9	1.5"
6/3	Lmb	Delaware Lake	3,797	1,598	3.56	1.5"
6/5	Lmb	Hammonton Lake	7,255	1,598	4.54	1.5"
6/5	Lmb	Lake Lenape	16,150	1,598	10.1	1.5"
6/5	Lmb	Manasquan Res.	18,000	1,598	11.3	1.5"
6/5	Lmb	Lake Riviera	3,000	1,598	1.9	1.5"
6/6	Lmb	Budd Lake	23,641	1,598	15.5	1.5"
6/6	Lmb	Merrill Creek Res.	62,068	1,598	40.7	1.5"
6/10	Lmb	Lake Lefferts	6,747	2,247	3	1.4"
6/10	Lmb	Round Valley Res.	50,000	2,247	22.3	1.4"
6/10	Lmb	Oak Pond	5,000	2,247	2.3	1.4"
6/10	Lmb	Penbryn Lake	5,000	2,247	2.3	1.4"
6/10	Lmb	Pemberton Lake	5,000	2,247	2.3	1.4"
6/5	Smb	Lake Mercer	2,700	1,286	2.1	1.6"
6/5	Smb	Union Lake	8,980	1,286	7	1.6"
6/5	Smb	Lake Audrey	6,000	1,286	4.7	1.6"
6/5	Smb	Manasquan Res.	7,200	1,286	5.6	1.6"
5/21	Fhm	Passaic Co.	15,000	800	18.7	2.0"
5/21	Fhm	Warren Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"
5/21	Fhm	Morris Co	15,000	800	18.7	2.0"
5/22	Fhm	Burlington Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"
5/22	Fhm	Camden Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"
5/22	Fhm	Gloucester Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"
5/22	Fhm	Salem Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"
5/23	Fhm	Bergen Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"
5/23	Fhm	Mercer Co.	20,000	800	25	2.0"

Intensive Culture

Northern Pike

Currently culturing 16,000 5.8-inch fingerlings in three 2,000-gallon tanks and two 1,000-gallon rectangular tanks. All the 2025 production fish have been stocked. Plans are to hit the two surplus lakes, and the rest are going out-of-state.

Tiger Muskellunge

Currently culturing 4,400 6.7-inch fingerlings in one 2,000-gallon rectangular tanks.

Landlocked Salmon

Currently culturing 2,800 fish about 9.0" in three 2,000-gallon tanks. Staff clean and feed them daily. Recent precipitation has helped our spring house levels enabling us to fill a third tank and split and fin clip the salmon. Staff fin clipped the left ventral fin. These fish will be stocked around November 1st at 15 inches.

Muskellunge

Currently culturing 22,000 1.8-inch fingerlings in six 350-gallon tanks. Staff did a great job with the brine shrimp conversion to dry feed. Very little mortality from cannibalism and fungus this year.

Channel Catfish

Currently culturing 80,000 fry in one circular tank. Waiting for more tank space to open so we can dump a few more hatched jars of fry.

Intensive Production Work

We are currently pumping 595 gpm of 52°F spring water, 319 gallons of 68°F water, and 140 gpm of 80°F water. Staff started up the 80°F Recirculation System on 5/14 in preparation for Channel Catfish egg collection. Upon startup a leak was discovered in the drum filter backwash line and was repaired. Replaced the backwash pump/motor combo. Staff arrived at work on the morning of 5/27 to find both boilers down. A heat circulator pump was down on one and a clogged condensation line caused a sensor to fail on the other. Staff switched heat circulators and got one to run and got recirculation temperatures back up. Parts were ordered and replaced on the other. The water temperature in the system is currently 80°F

Extensive Culture

Channel Catfish

Ordered 12,000 six to eight-inch Channel Catfish fingerlings from Arkansas. They arrived on 5/13 at 6 pm. They were split 6,000 each into Ponds 16 and 77. Staff checked catfish barrels for the second time and came up with 9 egg masses out of Pond 92. The masses were inventoried, and staff dissolved the matrix on all of them and then jarred them. The eggs have hatched in half the jars already and fry have been transferred to circular tanks for growout. Staff harvested Pond 74, and the fish were stocked in 16 small, urban ponds. About 500 fish were stocked averaging 22 inches and 3-5 pounds.

Hybrid Striped Bass

Ordered 250,000 fry from Keo Fish Farm in Arkansas. Staff started filling Pond 60 on 5/15 and fertilized it the same day. The fry were picked up at the Budd Lake FedEx office at 9 am on 5/20. Six boxes were brought back to the hatchery and staff tempered them for an hour. The fry looked good coming out of the bags.

Largemouth Bass & Smallmouth Bass

Smallmouth Bass fry collection on 5/7 & 5/8 – Moved and estimated 30,000 to 40,000 fry to Pond 82. Pond 82 had been fertilized a couple of times prior with pulverized Alfalfa Meal.

Largemouth Bass fry collection on 5/12.

Setup numbers

Pond 54-estimated 40,000

Pond 57-estimated 40,000

Pond 78-estimated 50,000

All Smb and Lmb broodstock ponds were drained and the adults were moved to Pond 15 for holding.

All fry production ponds were harvested with the following results:

Pond 54 - 94,902 fingerlings

Ponds 56 & 57 – 135,884 fingerlings

Pond 78 – 74,463 fingerlings

Pond 82 (Smb) – 33,327 fingerlings

Fingerlings averaged 1.5 inches and 1,600 fish per pound.

Largemouth Bass fingerlings were stocked in 20 waters and Smallmouth Bass were stocked in 4 waters. One of the best years the hatchery has ever had on bass. Very excited to see the success of the new Smallmouth brood and production ponds. This year's production exceeded the total of our last six years combined.

Golden Shiners/Fathead Minnows

Shiner fry arrived FedEx on 5/9. We ordered six boxes and RVTA purchased two boxes. Our boxes went into Ponds 31, 32, and 83 – two boxes each. RVTA's boxes went in Pond 18. Fry are being fed daily with a mash diet and numbers look good in the ponds. Ponds 85 and 5-acre are being fed daily and are showing good signs of fry production.

Walleye

After struggling with trapnetting Walleye broodstock this Spring due to low water conditions in Swartswood Lake, we reached out for assistance from NY and PA. New York DEC's Oneida Fish Hatchery was able to supply us with 2 million eyed eggs. We received them on 4/24. The eggs hatched and 500,000 fry were setup in the 4-Acre Pond between 5/2-5/4. The pond has been fertilized numerous times with a boat and spray truck. Rainy and cloudy conditions have not been ideal for growing fry so far this season. The 4-acre Walleye pond was drained with poor results for the first time in many years. We have reached out to several states for surplus. Still holding out hope from NY and PA. who are currently draining their ponds.

Hatchery Extensive Pond Work

Several production ponds have been harvested. Bass broodstock ponds are empty. Water levels are being adjusted daily. Screens are being brushed every morning. Fingerling production ponds

are being fertilized, temperature, oxygen, and Secchi disk reading are being monitored daily. Surface and ground water levels are looking better this Spring following severe drought conditions last Fall and Winter. Staff have been doing a great job balancing water flows in fry ponds following several heavy rains. Staff plugged Pond 91 to push more clean, warm water to Pond 92 for Channel Catfish spawning.

Urban Fishing Program (PERCH)

Regional Biologists provided a list of 17 smaller water bodies to be stocked with Largemouth Bass, Bluegills, and Channel Catfish. Pond 74 was harvested, and the fish were counted and placed in Separate ponds. The following were stocked:

Largemouth Bass – 624 fish - 12-14 inch average, up to 18 inches

Channel Catfish – 466 fish – 22-inch average – up to 12 pounds.

Bluegill Sunfish – 566 fish – 6-7-inch average.

The hatchery borrowed one of Pequest's stocking trucks to help. Our big truck had to be towed on the second day of stocking.

Mosquito Control

A second load of minnows were ordered and delivered from Arkansas. Nine County Mosquito Control Agencies received Fathead Minnows between 5/21-5/23. About 170,000 minnows were given out. The hatchery made a run to Camden County with a truck full of minnows to supply several Southern counties.

Information & Education

Provided information and photos for five GoFishFriday's posts 206-210. 2,861 likes, 159 comments, and 194 shares. Answered as many questions as possible on these posts. Provided information and pics for two other social media posts. The first was on fish stocked for the Urban Fishing Program and the second a Channel Catfish spawning video. The video has been viewed over 48,000 times. Participated in several meetings with PeaceNJ providing information about grants they have applied for to remove an old swimming platform from the Musconetcong River and do some bank restoration work. Staff participated in the Trenton Fishing Derby on 6/14. I & E held a Families First Catch Center on 6/14.

Hatchery Maintenance

Met with a lawn contractor in the East Hatchery. We have lost several staff and can't find the time to mow both hatcheries with current staff. Staff got the old Ford tractor with the sickle bar attachment fired and tuned up to start mowing around pond banks.