



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



**May 16, 2022 – June 15, 2023**

Shawn Crouse, Chief  
Craig Lemon, Superintendent  
Edward Conley, Superintendent

Christopher Smith, Principal Fisheries Biologist  
Ross Shramko, Principal Fisheries Biologist

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

Scott Collenburg, Sr. Fisheries Biologist  
Eric Boehm, Sr. Fisheries Biologist  
Maria Berezin Dowling, Assistant Biologist  
Justin Rozema, Assistant Biologist

Thomas Bissonnette, Technician I  
Ron Jacobsen, Technician II  
Charles Sedor, Technician II  
Kyle Civalier, Technician II  
Brad Duckworth, Technician II  
Nick Ruberto, Technician II

Matthew Gadek, Sr. Wildlife Worker  
Jonathan Kline, Sr. Wildlife Worker  
Shaun Young, Sr. Wildlife Worker  
Doug Cutler, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Andrew Hutnik, Wildlife Worker  
Travis Nitko, Wildlife Worker  
Scott Bentley, Wildlife Worker  
Chris Sherwood, Wildlife Worker

Steve Jeffries, Repairer

Nancy Geiger, Agency Services Rep 3

Seasonals: James Bates, Clint Decker, Thomas Goetschkes, Kaitlin Kolakowski, Mike Leshko, Karl Lightner, Kyle McLemore, Yanni Paredes-Moreira, Fabiana Popolla, Xavier Starrs, Jesse Tyther, Brooke Wakefoose, and Cheryl Weeks

## **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

**Spring 2023 Trout Stocking:** Trout stocking season was complete as of May 26<sup>th</sup>. Review of the spring trout stocking season and preparation for fall stocking has begun. Database changes have been made to reflect any changes that were discussed mid-season; this will allow for easier preparation in Winter 2024 for the Spring 2024 Trout Season. (Berezin-Dowling, Hunter and Angler and F-48-R)

### **Fish Kill Investigations**

**Weequahic Lake (Essex)** - A fish kill was reported and investigated at Weequahic Park, initially on 6/8 and again on 6/15. This fish kill impacted only Common Carp; however, the impact was significant. The kill was reportedly ongoing during the week of 6/5 and by the week of 6/12, the dead fish seemed to be floating from well-hidden coves with limited access/visibility by the public into the center of the pond and towards shorelines with easier recreational access. The bulk of the fish likely died during the week of 6/5, but were not easily seen or reported until the week of 6/12. Essex County Parks reported upwards of 1,000 dead carp on site by 6/14. The site was investigated by Charles Sedor of BFF on 6/8, after the initial report was made indicating that many large fish of unknown species were dead along the banks of the pond. Sedor noted nearly 100 dead Common Carp, all of which were too far into the decomposition process to be taken back to the laboratory for pathology testing. There were no fish actively dying on site. On 6/14, a second report was made by Essex County Parks indicating that over 1,000 dead Common Carp were observed and that they had begun a clean-up effort on the pond. On 6/15, Maria Berezin Dowling and Charles Sedor investigated the site once more. Essex County Parks had already made a considerable effort to clean up the dead fish, however, nearly 500 dead Common Carp were seen on site. All the fish were very far along into the decomposition process, indicating that they had likely been dead since the week prior. Given that the kill was limited to a single species, an environmental contaminant or water quality issue is unlikely. Dissolved oxygen and temperature were normal (8.64 mg/L and 22.6°C, respectively). (Berezin-Dowling)

**Rahway River (Union)** - A fish kill on the Rahway River was reported during the week of 6/12 and investigated by Charles Sedor and Maria Berezin-Dowling on 6/15. The fish kill appeared to impact all species present as White Suckers, a variety of sunfish species, a Black Crappie, and a Channel Catfish were all observed deceased on site. All the fish were too far along in the decomposition process to take back to the laboratory for pathology testing. The area of the river where the kill occurred had low water, very little flow, and appeared to be at least partially impounded. Dissolved oxygen was 5 mg/l at the time of the investigation, indicating that low dissolved oxygen may have led to the fish kill. There was no evidence of an environmental contaminant. (Berezin-Dowling)

### **Black Bass Assessment**

**Round Valley Reservoir (Hunterdon)** – On June 6<sup>th</sup>, one night of boat electrofishing was conducted to target Largemouth Bass as a follow up to an inventory that was conducted in 2016. 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. Data have not been analyzed. (Collenburg F-48-R)

**Spruce Run (Hunterdon)** – On May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> nighttime boat electrofishing was conducted to target Centrarchids. The objective of this sampling was to assess the fishery related to the species collected as part of Research and Management’s general monitoring program. Data have not been analyzed. (Collenburg F-48-R)

**Stream Temperature Monitoring** – This program was initiated in 2012 to monitor stream temperature in our major rivers that are currently regulated as Trout Maintenance. The continuous temperature monitoring program is designed to closely monitor stream temperature in areas that have marginal thermal habitat for the purpose of trout stocking, understanding thermal regimes in our major river systems, and expand the program to Trout Production streams to gain a deeper understanding of stream temperature’s role on the entire life cycle of wild trout in New Jersey and assist in guiding management of these streams. This reporting period effort focused on planning and installation of continuous temperature loggers at sites. (Collenburg F-48-R)

2023 Locations – Continuous temperatures monitoring sites were selected this year and were installed for four main project types:

- Brook Trout Strongholds – understanding the resiliency of stream temperature to future increases in air temperature where we have known Brook Trout or wild trout.
- Multi-Stressor Study – locations that have been identified as having rainfall surge events defined as a 2°C increase of water temperature, or greater, in a 30-minute period. Locations installed for this study will be accompanied by electrofishing surveys and collection of other water quality metrics.
- Annual Survey Site – locations that have been monitored with stream temperature for the past 5 years and have associated fish survey data.
- Investigation – several sites were selected to understand potential loss of wild trout or to support the other coldwater habitat research. (Collenburg)

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**Multi-Stressor Study** – NJDEP’s Division of Science and Research’s proposal for a study to determine the role anthropogenic stressors (contaminants, degraded water quality) have on sensitive fish populations in Northern New Jersey was accepted with partnership with Fish and Wildlife and the Bureau of Freshwater and Biological Monitoring (BFBM). With the recent discovery of the role of tire anti-degradant 6 p-Phenylenediamine (6PPD; and degradant byproducts) in urban runoff mortality syndrome in coho salmon, there is an increased interest how this chemical interacts with other salmonids across the country. While trout species in New Jersey are not as acutely sensitive to these anti-degradants as coho salmon, additional stress from degraded water quality and acutely toxic compounds in run-off may contribute to a multi-stressor scenario. NJFW has committed to stream temperature monitoring on the study sites along with conducting electrofishing surveys on the current fish assemblage. Between May 23<sup>rd</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>, a total of 22 sites were selected to install continuous stream temperature monitors. (Collenburg, F-48-R)

**State Wildlife Action Plan** – As part of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) revision, the list containing the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) was reviewed and species were suggested for addition based upon a pre-screening criteria and best professional judgement. The document and list are still in draft form and being coordinated by the Endangered and Non-Game Species program. The Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries reviewed and supplied comment on the freshwater fish that should be on the SGCN list. (Collenburg/Crouse)

**Pine Hill Conservation Management Team (Mason's Run)** – Attended a meeting of the Pine Hill Conservation Management Team on 5/24/23, to discuss management activities at Mason's Run and within the conservation management area. Beaver activity continues to be a problem with newly discovered flooded areas affecting an established swamp pink population. The Brook Trout population appears to have been impacted by beaver activity over the last few years with only a few individuals observed by team members. An electrofishing survey is planned for later in the summer to assess the population. (Smith)

**Warren Grove Range (Ocean Co.) Meeting** – Attended meeting on 6/13/23 to review the base's INRMP (Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan). The plan covers flora and fauna management for both Warren Grove Range and Atlantic City Air National Guard Bases. NJDEP Fish and Wildlife, USFWS, and NJ Forest Fire Service staff were present and are currently providing comments to be included within the plan. Surface waters on both bases are typical of those found within the Pinelands region. These waters are acidic in nature (low pH), tannin stained and feature an intact, acidophilic, Pinelands fish assemblage. Fishing is not permitted on either base. Surface waters (lakes/rivers) are limited at both installations. Care should be taken to minimize disturbance and maintain the existing water quality to preserve these unique fish populations. (Somes/Davis/Boehm)

## **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

**Orange Park Pond Fishing Derby (Essex)** - On the evening of 5/16/23, staff from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries and Law Enforcement collaborated with Essex County Parks and the Essex County Environmental Center to host a fishing derby as part of a pilot fishing program. Hackettstown Hatchery provided a total of 65 Largemouth Bass, 61 Channel Catfish, 1 Walleye, 3 Tiger Muskellunge, and a mix of approximately 120 Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Black Crappie, Yellow Perch, and White Perch to stock primarily the week prior to the event. A total of 17 anglers attended the event, consisting primarily of parents/grandparents and younger children. In total, 40 fish were caught by attendees with the species caught being estimated at 60% Bluegill/Pumpkinseed, 30% Largemouth Bass, 5% Channel Cats, and 5% Bullheads. For this event, the majority of Largemouth Bass and panfish species were stocked on May 11 ahead of the event, while the majority of Channel Catfish were



stocked just an hour prior to the event. This likely accounted for the difference in success rates between Largemouth Bass/Sunfish and Channel Catfish. It was noted that fishing success appeared to be notably higher than in year's past, and all attendees appeared happy with the result of the derby. A few days after the event one of the young anglers caught one of the Tiger Muskies and sent us a photograph (right). (Crouse, Lemon, and Rozema)

**Stacy Park Pond Fishing Derby (Mercer)** – Attended the Stacy Park Pond Fishing Derby, hosted by the City of Trenton and NJDEP on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the first of two free fishing days in the state. The derby was well attended with approximately 30 participants. Representatives from NJDEP, NJDEP Fish and Wildlife, Watershed Ambassadors, City of Trenton, and Delaware River Basin Commission were in attendance. The lake was pre-stocked with large catchable size Channel Catfish and Largemouth Bass the week before the event. Additional fish were stocked after the event was completed. (Smith)

**Hughes Lake Father's Day Fishing (Passaic)** - Hughes Lake is a 2.5-acre waterbody located within Third Ward Park in the City of Passaic (Passaic County). On June 3, 2023, Fish and Wildlife staff from the Bureaus of Freshwater Fisheries and Law Enforcement participated in a Father's Day kid's fishing education event as part of Free Fishing Day and a pilot fishing program. Hackettstown Hatchery stocked this pond on June 1 with a total of 71 Largemouth Bass, 73 Channel Catfish, and a mix of 50 panfish. Additional fish were stocked the day of the event including 20 Largemouth Bass, 20 Channel Catfish, 40 panfish, and 5 Tiger Muskellunge. In total, approximately 12 kids along with family members attended the event. Another 2-3 older anglers not participating in the event were also present fishing the lake at the time of the event. It was estimated that between 15-20 fish were seen caught, many of which appeared to be fish stocked from the week prior by Hackettstown Hatchery. Approximately half of the fish caught were Largemouth Bass, with most of the remainder caught being Channel Catfish. Few (if any) sunfish were witnessed caught, and no Tiger Muskellunge were captured, however all Tiger Muskellunge were stocked the day of the event. Overall, it was said that fishing success was greater this year than is typical for this event. (Rozema)

**Angler R3 Workshop-** Participated in a two-day workshop session hosted by the Bureau of Information and Education in conjunction with The Wildlife Institute, DJ Case & Associates, and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation from June 6-7. Staff from the Bureaus of Freshwater Fisheries, Information and Education, and Law Enforcement as well as the Office of Communications and Business Administration attended and brainstormed how current Freshwater Fishing R3 efforts can be improved upon. Goals and objectives of the Angler R3 Plan were discussed to begin development of a working, coordinated, and collaborative plan among Fish and Wildlife staff. (Crouse, Smith, Rozema, Healy)

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

### **Inventory Data**

<u>Stocking Program</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Average Daily Increase</u>	<u>Conversion</u>
Spring 2024			
RBT (8 months old)	5.2"	0.031	0.81
Fall 2024			
RBT (8 months old)	5.7"	0.022	1.71
Fall/Winter 2023			
RBT (20 months old)	12.2"	0.019	1.44

### **Flow Rates – May 2023**

0.75 inches of precipitation fell during the month of May.

The Pumping Rate Average for May was 6,405 gpm. An average of 9.22 million gallons per day was pumped during the month of May.

The potable well pumped 17,334 gallons for the month of May.

### **Fish Culture Activities**

595,290 production sized Rainbow Trout along with 8,235 Broodstock were stocked this year during a 10-week season with 3 Pre-season weeks and 7 In-season weeks that started on March 20th and was completed May 26th. Goals were met and exceeded the typical 570,000 baseline with additional production sized Rainbows that were added to the stocking truck loads since May 4th, bringing the total to 603,525 Rainbow trout that were loaded and stocked into public rivers, lakes, and ponds throughout New Jersey this Spring. These extra fish combined with nice weather should provide excellent angler opportunities to come. The production summary is below.

### **2023 SPRING TROUT STOCKING SUMMARY**

	<u>#FISH</u>	<u>#LBS</u>	<u>AVERAGE LENGTH</u>
RBT Production -	595,290	308,735	11.4"
RBT Broodstock -	8235	16,454	RBT II - 15.0" RBT III – 20.2"

### **TOTAL RAINBOW TROUT FOR SPRING**

**603,525 FISH**

**TOTAL LBS. FOR SPRING**

**325,189 LBS**

The G and H-lines were emptied, sterilized, and reset. All power washing and sterilization of the remaining empty outside pools has now been completed and have been reset.

The Nursery Building was emptied, cleaned, and sterilized. Inventory was completed on all 2024 production stock and feed quantities have been adjusted to regulate growth rates to reach our final goals for stocking.

12,000 four-inch surplus Trout were given to Hackettstown Hatchery for forage during this time.

Up to 120 Hook-A-Winner tag numbers returned.

### **Miscellaneous Activities**

Power outage late on 5/20 into 5/21. Well #5 direct drive failed and had to switch to Well #7. The panel was re-set and flows checked. Several staff responded. We were at half flow until 7 came online. Larger fish started to stress until full flow returned. Stothoff, Inc. came out to see if there was any damage to the recently rebuilt well on 6/6.

Power and Prestige, Inc. also came out to look at Well #5 on 6/1. They would be the company to upgrade to a Genset to produce electric instead of the current direct drive method that failed. They looked at things and will get back with an estimate and availability of parts. Thought it may take up to a year to get a genset but may be able to get a transfer switch quicker.

Brief power outage early AM on 6/4 that set off alarms. The panel was reset, and flows checked. Well #1 had to be taken out of bypass.

DOT Meeting 5/25, they came out to get some measurements for paving quotes and provide us quotes in a three-year plan which was submitted to Ed Mulvan. CBT Funds were approved for Year 1 of the project totaling \$848,944.56.

Repairs to the well road and chipping were also approved under CBT Funds in the amount of \$87,000. Work will be scheduled soon.

Provided the Office of Natural Resource and Restoration (ONRR) a tour of the Pequest Trout Hatchery on 5/17.

Provided Law Enforcement Interns with a tour on 5/24.

Finished the Pequest portion of the Federal 5-yr Performance Report for submittal.

Predatory bird devices are in place (overhead lines, reflective streamers, propane cannons and scary-men, and scare crackers). This past month we saw mostly Great Blue Herons with an occasional Osprey coming into the hatchery.

## **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	10.0”
Northern Pike	3,505	6.7”
Tiger Muskellunge	2,000	5.9”
Muskellunge	5,000	2.6”

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

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u># Fish</u></b>	<b><u>Size (Inches)</u></b>	<b><u>Total Pounds</u></b>
5/31	Np	Budd Lake	1,885	6.6”	118.4
6/2	Np	Pompton River	2,456	5.7”	98.2
6/5	Np	Spruce Run Res.	6,450	6.0”	307
6/9	Np	Pompton Lake	3,060	5.8”	129.2
6/13	Np	Farrington Lake	2,984	6.1”	151
6/13	Np	Passaic River	3,422	6.5”	202
6/14	Np	Deal Lake	1,191	6.4”	70
6/6	Wa	Lake Hopatcong	5,838	1.8”	6.7
6/7	Wa	Swartswood Lake	7,950	1.8”	13.2
6/7	Wa	Greenwood Lake	30,720	1.8”	35.7
6/7	Wa	Monksville Res.	8,780	1.8”	9.4
6/7	Wa	Canistear Reservoir	5,600	1.8”	10.8
6/8	Wa	Lake Hopatcong	35,492	1.8”	38
6/9	Wa	Delaware River	23,000	1.8”	25
		Belvidere			
6/9	Wa	Delaware River	23,270	1.8”	25
		Kittatinny			
6/9	Wa	Delaware River	32,690	1.8”	35
		Phillipsburg			
5/16	Lmb	Orange Pk Pd	20	14”	40
	Bs		50	6”	8.3
	Chc		20	20”	40
5/30	Lmb	Lake Hopatcong	53,720	1.0”	
6/1	Lmb	Hughes Lake	73	14”	146
	Bs		50	6”	8.3
	Chc		71	20”	142
6/1	Lmb	Stacy Pond	55	14”	110
	Bs		50	6”	8.3
	Chc		61	20”	122
6/1	Lmb	Roosevelt Pond	55	14”	110
	Bs		50	6”	8.3
	Chc		65	20”	130
6/1	Lmb	Rowands Pond	55	14”	110
	Bs		50	6”	8.3



	Chc		50	20"	100
6/3	Lmb	Stacy Pond	20	14"	40
	Bs		40	6"	6.7
	Chc		20	20"	40
6/3	Lmb	Hughes Lake	20	14"	40
	Bs		40	6"	6.7
	Chc		20	20"	40
6/3	Lmb	Mt. Arlington Pk Pd	10	14"	20
	Bs		25	6"	4.2
	Chc		10	20"	20
6/15	Lmb	Haworth Pk Pd	41	14"	82

Bs – Bluegill Sunfish      Chc – Channel Catfish      Lmb – Largemouth Bass  
 Np – Northern Pike      Wa - Walleye

### **Intensive Culture**

#### **Landlocked Salmon**

Currently culturing 3,200 fish about 10.0-inches in three 2,000-gallon tanks. Staff are cleaning and feeding them daily.

#### **Muskellunge**

Currently culturing about 5,000 2.6-inch fingerlings in two 1,000-gallon rectangular tanks. The fish ended brine shrimping on 5/15.

#### **Northern Pike**

Completed our 2023 Northern Pike fingerlings stockings between 5/31-6/13. A total of 20,257 fish were stocked weighing 1,006 pounds. Surplus fish were stocked in Cranberry Lake and Deal Lake. Surplus fry were given to Connecticut and Rhode Island F&W agencies. We are still culturing surplus fingerlings that will be traded with the PA. Fish & Boat Commission for Muskellunge fingerlings and Massachusetts F&W for Landlocked salmon fingerlings. They are being cultured each in one 2,000-gallon rectangular tank and being cleaned and fed daily.

#### **Tiger Muskellunge**

Currently culturing 2,000 5.9-inch fingerlings in one 2,000-gallon tank.

#### **Channel Catfish**

Staff checked catfish barrels in Pond 90 for the first time on 6/6. They brought in 15 masses weighing 35 pounds and equaling 330,300 eggs. The masses were broken down using a Sodium Sulfide solution and measured into 8 McDonald Hatching Jars. They will be incubated for 4-6 days in 80°F water. They have all hatched and were moved into six 350-gallon circular tanks. They are being fed #1 and #2 BioVita dry feed. Staff checked the barrels again on 6/12 and brought in three masses. The pond temperature had dropped to 72°F which slowed down spawning.

### **Intensive Production Work**

We are currently pumping 610 gpm of 52°F water and 250 gpm of 68°F water. Staff are cleaning all tanks in the morning. Tank cleaning takes 6-8 hours a day with all the Esocids. Feeders are being filled daily. Weight counts and inventories are being performed weekly to measure fish growth. Staff turned on the 80°F recirculation system on in preparation for Hybrid Striped Bass and Channel Catfish.

### **Extensive Culture**

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

Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass broodfish were all set up between 4/4-5/3. A total of 107 Smallmouth were set up in two ponds and 174 Largemouth in four ponds. The first Largemouth fry were spotted on 5/22 and over the next two weeks staff moved good numbers of fry into four fertilized growout ponds. Smallmouth fry were also moved into a growout pond. The Smallmouth broodfish from Yards Creek Reservoir did not spawn very well as we have seen in the recent past. They will be held over the winter to put some weight on and should be better next season. The adult Largemouth have all been harvested and either moved into Pond 53 to overwinter or were stocked as part of a pilot program.

#### **Channel Catfish**

All broodstock catfish are in pond 90. Pond 74 has 600 two-and-a-half-year-olds. Ponds 78 and 92 have about 50,000 three to five-inch fish from this year in them. All these ponds are being fed daily as the weather is warming up. Catfish spawning barrels were set in ponds 74, 90, and 92 on 5/25. Staff checked catfish barrels in pond 90 for the first time on 6/6. They brought in 15 masses weighing 35 pounds and equaling 330,300 eggs. Staff checked the barrels again on 6/12 and brought in three masses. The pond temperature had dropped to 72°F which slowed down spawning.

#### **Walleye**

Staff harvested the 4-acre pond between 6/6-6/8. On day 1, staff set up 40,680 phase 1 fingerlings in ponds 31 and 32 to be grown into phase 2 four-inch fingerlings on Fathead Minnows. Day 2 staff seined and stocked 95,264 phase ones in the five in state waters. On day three staff stocked another 89,528 surplus fingerlings in the Delaware River between Kittatinny and Phillipsburg. A total of 225,374 phase one fingerlings were harvested weighing 245 pounds for a 43% return. Ponds 31 and 32 were both stocked with 2 bags of Golden Shiner fry on 5/23 prior to Walleye fingerling setup. Staff seined the 5-acre pond twice and stocked about 15 buckets of minnow fry on the fingerlings so far.

#### **Golden Shiner**

We received eight boxes of Golden Shiner fry from I.F. Andersons in Arkansas on 5/23. Two boxes were stocked into the following four ponds:

Two boxes in Ponds 31 and 32 as early forage for phase one Walleyes.

Two boxes were stocked into Pond 82 for future use.

Two boxes were stocked into Pond 18 to be used for stocking into Round Valley Reservoir.

#### **Hybrid Striped Bass**

Delmarva Aquatics delivered a box of Hybrid fry on 6/15. They were offloaded using the hatcheries big John Deere tractor and floated into the pond. There was supposed to be 250,000

three-to-five-day old fry inside. The pond and box temps were very close, around 70°F , so they were tempered for about 30 minutes and released into the pond. The pond had been previously fertilized and had a six-inch Secchi Disk reading – very nice.

### **Extensive Culture Work**

Screens are being brushed daily, and water levels and flows are being adjusted. Dissolved oxygen and temperature data is being collected. All 60 ponds are full. Many of the ponds are being dyed to keep filamentous algae controlled. Staff have been fertilizing the Walleye/Largemouth/Smallmouth/Hybrid Striper fingerling ponds with pulverized Alfalfa Meal and liquid Nitran at least weekly.

### **Information & Education**

Provided information and photos for five GoFishFriday's posts 103-107. 2,369 likes, 66 comments, and 65 shares. Answered as many questions as possible on these posts. Weighed in a New State Record Hybrid Striped Bass on 5/23 caught by Jim Piascik in Monksville Reservoir. The fish weighed 17 pounds and 12 ounces, breaking the previous record caught last fall by over a pound. Put together all the information and provide it to I & E staff for certification. Gave a tour to the NJDEP Natural Resource Damages folks on 5/17 and a group from Heath Village on 5/18. Robert Somes brought a group of Girl Scouts for a tour and fishing on 5/20. Attended Lake Hopatcong Days with a tank truck and aquarium on 5/20. Answered questions and handed them out. materials and bobbers all day. Gave a tour to four CO interns on 5/24. Gave a tour to Muskies Inc. Chapter 22 and about 25 kids on 6/10.

### **Purchasing and Budget**

Continue purchasing supplies for the 2023 season including fish and fish feed. Planning on a delivery of 12,000 six-to-eight-inch Channel Catfish soon. Also have a scheduled delivery of four pallets of fish feed from Cargill on 6/30. Obtained quotes and finished a PB119 for a truck bed for our year-old new tank truck. Obtained a PO and dropped the truck off for its new bed. Working on a design for the wrapping of the new truck and tank.

### **New Garage Project**

Participated in a DPMC meetings on 5/30 and 6/9. The old garage was demolished on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. The project is now complete. We were handed the keys on 6/8. The grass is growing, and the contractor will be back to remove the silt fence. The building looks great and thanks to F & W leadership for providing the funding for this building. We will begin moving equipment in soon.

### **Pilot Fishing Program**

Pond 89 was completely drained for stocking. The following fish were harvested:

14-inch Largemouth Bass – 350, 20-inch Channel Catfish – 350

6-inch Bluegill – 350

Fisheries Management staff decided on how these fish would be divided into five ponds on this year's schedule:

Orange Park Pond – Essex Co.

Stacy Pond – Mercer Co.

Hughes Lake – Passaic Co.

Rowlands Pond – Camden Co.

Roosevelt Pond – Burlington Co.

Hatchery staff prestocked for all the events. Staff from the hatchery, fisheries lab, CO's, I & E, and other F&W groups attended the day of the events at Orange Park, Stacy Pond, and Hughes Lake. Fish were also stocked the day of the events at those three. Lots of time was put into these events on the hatchery side of things trying to hold these fish for a couple weeks ahead and access them to stock two different times for these events.

### **Pond 89 Work**

The pond was drained for the first time in three years to access fish reserved for a pilot fishing program. It is staying empty as staff work with heavy machinery to dredge and regrade the pond bottom. Staff have cleared much of the dried mud using a long reach excavator, excavator, bulldozer, and track skidsteer. The hatchery has reached out once again to Forest fire to see if we can borrow their large dump truck for a month to remove material.

### **Chainsaw Training**

Nick Ruberto and Chris Sherwood attended a four-day chainsaw training course at the Central Region Office from 5/22-5/24. Both passed the difficult course. Thanks, and Congrats!

### **Intensive System Boiler and Heat Circulator Issues**

Between Friday 5/19 and Tuesday 5/2, the hatchery experienced a series of problems beginning Friday afternoon with a heat circulator. A second circulator went down followed by one of the two large boilers hours later. Technicians from two companies worked Friday afternoon and evening and Saturday morning and got the circulators fixed. Parts were ordered for the boiler and the technicians returned Tuesday and worked all day and finally on their last attempt got the boiler running by unclogging the exhaust pipes. This episode came at a critical time when both heating loops were running, and the building was full of fish.