



BUREAU OF FRESHWATER FISHERIES MONTHLY REPORT



June 16, 2022 – July 15, 2023

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

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Ross Shramko, Principal Fisheries Biologist

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Nancy Geiger, Agency Services Rep 3

Seasonals: James Bates, Tylor Blake, Clint Decker, Luke Diglio, Riley Fitz, Thomas Goetschkes, Michael Kays, Kaitlin Kolakowski, Jared Koenigsberg, Mike Leshko, Karl Lightner, Kyle McLemore, Yanni Paredes-Moreira, Fabiana Popolla, Xavier Starrs, Jesse Tyther, Scott Ward, Brooke Wakefoose, and Cheryl Weeks

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Black Bass Assessment

Three electrofishing surveys were completed during this period; to assess the Largemouth Bass and Northern Snakehead populations. The surveys were completed outside of the standardized bass sampling period.

DOD Lake (Salem) – A daytime boat electrofishing survey was completed at DOD Lake WMA on 7/12/23 to assess the Largemouth Bass and Northern Snakehead populations. A total of 34 bass and 2 snakeheads were collected during the 0.58-hour survey. The salinity was slightly elevated at 0.31 ppt and conductivity was 715 us/cm. Electrofishing proved effective in the back canals, however sampling in the main lake was ineffective due to the elevated salinity. Habitat and access improvements should be made to increase boat angler access to the two canal areas which are popular fishing locations. (Smith, F-48-R)

Newton Lake (Camden) – A daytime boat electrofishing survey was completed at Newton Lake on 7/13/23 to assess the Largemouth Bass and Northern Snakehead population. A dredging project was recently completed at Newton Lake to improve habitat, increase flow, and improve recreational accessibility. A few anglers have inquired whether additional stocking was necessary following the dredging project. A total of 33 Largemouth Bass were collected during the 0.75-hour survey. Unfortunately, only the section of the lake with the boat ramp was able to be sampled, due to the low bridges which prevent access. The two sections of the lake that were previously accessible with an older electrofishing boat had equally high catch rates. Currently, there does not appear to be a need for additional stocking, however if surplus Largemouth Bass are available, the location should be considered for stocking. A total of six snakeheads were collected during the survey, which was also consistent with previous sampling. (Smith, F-48-R)

Salem Canal (Salem) - A daytime boat electrofishing survey was completed at Newton Lake on 7/6/23 to assess the Largemouth Bass and Northern Snakehead population. A total of 23 Largemouth Bass and seven snakeheads were collected during the 1.38-hour survey. An additional survey is planned for later in the year to assess the snakehead population. (Smith, F-48-R)

Warmwater Fisheries Assessments / Reproduction Checks / Native Fishes via Seining

Main Memorial Park Pond (Passaic) - This 3-acre waterbody is located within Main Memorial Park in Clifton. In 2015, the waterbody was drained and salvaged for a dredging project. Once completed, it was restocked again in 2017 with Black Crappie, Bluegill, Brown Bullhead, Golden Shiner, and Largemouth Bass. To evaluate the success of the restocking, the lake was sampled on 7/6/23 utilizing a 20'x4' seine. A total of 14 hauls were conducted around the perimeter of the lake, capturing Bluegill (8/haul), Pumpkinseed (4/haul), and Brown Bullhead (3/haul). No Black Crappie, Golden Shiner, or Largemouth Bass were encountered. Mostly intermediate sunfish were captured, suggesting that crowding is occurring. Stocking additional Largemouth Bass here to alleviate the crowding sunfish population and to improve recreational fishing opportunities is recommended. (Rozema, F-48-R)

New Milford Pond (Bergen) - This 1.1-acre pond, also known as Hardcastle Pond, is located in the Borough of New Milford. While small, the waterbody is approximately 12-15 feet deep, is well maintained by an aquatic consultant, and contains two aerators and a fountain. The outlet of the pond flows directly into the tidal portion of the Hackensack River and may be affected during high flood events or extreme tidal inflows. This spring, BFF was contacted by New Milford DPW to have the pond stocked. In response, staff conducted a reproduction check along the perimeter of the pond on 7/10/23 utilizing a 20'x4' seine to assess for stocking recommendations. A total of 15 seine hauls were conducted along the entire perimeter of the pond, capturing Bluegill (<1/haul), Largemouth Bass (<1/haul), Mosquitofish spp. (<1/haul), and unknown Lepomis spp. (<1/haul). Seining was sometimes difficult due to the steep, rocky banks existing around the entirety of the pond causing the seine to snag. Historically, the pond was consistently stocked with Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and Channel Catfish through the mid-2000's by the Hackettstown Hatchery. Despite low numbers of each captured, young-of-the-year Bluegill and Largemouth Bass were both captured, indicating reproductive success of both species. Reports from anglers encountered additionally suggested that Largemouth Bass fishing here is good, therefore stocking of additional Largemouth Bass or Bluegill is currently not recommended. However, potential inclusion of this waterbody into the Channel Catfish annual stocking program would prove beneficial, as the waterbody appears to be popular with local anglers, is well managed/maintained, and has good depth. Additional sampling in the form of electrofishing would provide better data on the Largemouth Bass population here. (Rozema, F-48-R)

Wallington Park Pond (Bergen) Seining- This 0.55-acre waterbody is located within Samuel Nelkin County Park in Wallington Township. On 6/29/23, a general fisheries survey was conducted utilizing a 20'x4' seine to assess the status of the previously unsampled fishery here. A total of 12 seine hauls were conducted around the entire perimeter of the pond, capturing Bluegill (3/haul), Black Crappie (<1/haul), Common Carp (<1/haul), and White Perch (<1/haul). Previous stocking records indicate that Bluegills were consistently stocked by NJFW throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, however no other species were stocked. All other species collected were likely introduced through other means, such as private stockings or illegal introductions. No Largemouth Bass were collected during the survey, and stocking of this species is recommended. (Rozema, F-48-R)

COLDWATER ELECTROFISHING SURVEYS

Blue Mine Brook (Passaic) - Blue Mine Brook is a small headwater stream that flows directly into the Wanaque Reservoir near Norvin Green State Forest. The stream was first classified as Trout Production in 1988 when 8 Brook Trout (5 YOY) were captured during an electrofishing survey. The stream was resampled in the same location on 8/6/2009, finding 36 Brook Trout (30 YOY). An electrofishing survey was attempted on 8/5/2022, however stream conditions were very dry, and the survey did not occur. On 6/30/2023, Blue Mine Brook was resampled above the Highlands Natural Pool to continue monitoring efforts of the Brook Trout population. This year's survey only captured 1 adult Brook Trout, with an additional adult being seen but evaded capture. The lower number of Brook Trout captured this year could potentially be attributed to stressful conditions brought on by the drought conditions found the previous year or in prior years. However, this is difficult to determine considering the Brook Trout population has always been at low densities with only 3-6 adults ever being captured in past surveys. In the habitat

assessment, this stream reach was scored at 152 (Sub-Optimal). This was a minor increase from the 2009 survey, in which the same section scored a 144 (Sub-Optimal), with the only major change being an increase from Sub-Optimal to Optimal scores in embeddedness. This improvement could potentially be attributed to high flow conditions being consistently present from high amounts of rain, causing finer sediments and sand to be flushed at a higher rate downstream. Temperature appears to also not have altered significantly, with measurements for both years being 17.7°C. The Brook Trout population should continue to be monitored closely here to ensure that the population continues to persist despite low densities and previous stressful conditions. (Rozema, F-48-R)

Fox Brook (Bergen) - Fox Brook is a Trout Production tributary to the Ramapo River. On 8/1/2022, a trout production re-inventory electrofishing survey was conducted near Stabled Way, finding no Brook Trout where adults and young-of-the-year had been captured in the past. However, there was some doubt to the origin of the adults captured, with many exhibiting signs of being stocked in the nearby Ramapo River. On 7/5/2023, electrofishing spot checks occurred further upstream near Fox River Crossing to determine if any Brook Trout were present further upstream from the standardized survey location. No Brook Trout were captured during the spot checks, with only Creek Chubs and Bluegills found closer to the outlet of Lake Vreeland. Conversations with local camp counselors at Camp Glen Gray noted that the stream went mostly dry last year with the drought conditions present. Similar conditions were noted by BFF during the 2022 survey, with the stream reach needing to be moved further upstream due to a lack of water. Temperatures taken on 8/1/2022 and on 7/5/2023 were 20.2°C and 22.5°C, respectively, suggesting marginal habitat. Overall, it appears that the fish captured in the 2006 classification survey were likely of hatchery origin and were able to successfully reproduce due to favorable conditions present at the time. A naturally occurring population of Brook Trout within the stream appears to be unlikely due to unstable and unfavorable conditions. Additional temperature work is currently ongoing, and additional sampling, potentially in the form of e-DNA, would provide further evidence towards the absence of Brook Trout here. (Rozema, F-48-R)

Kanouse Brook (Passaic) - Kanouse Brook is a small tributary to the Pequannock River just west of Echo Lake and paralleling Union Valley Road for much of its course. The stream was first classified as *Trout Production* in 1974, when a downstream survey found young-of-the-year Brook and Brown Trout. Additional work at another downstream site in 1988 continued to find Brook Trout. On 7/6/2009, a survey was attempted at the same location as the 1988 survey, but found it too silted in and deep to survey. Instead, the survey was conducted upstream of Oxbow Lane, finding 7 Brook Trout (1 YOY). On 6/30/2023, an electrofishing survey was conducted in the same location to continue monitoring the Brook Trout population. This year's survey was conducted approximately 75m downstream of the previous survey due to an error. A total of 2 adult Brook Trout (no YOY) were captured during this survey. Both Brook Trout were captured near the mid-point of the survey, at which the habitat noticeably shifted from silty, deep-cut banks with large amounts of aquatic vegetation downstream to a more traditional riffle-run stream containing harder substrate upstream. It is likely if the survey were to have continued further upstream, more Brook Trout would have been captured as more favorable habitat would have been sampled. In the 2009 survey, this reach received a scoring of 68 (Marginal) in the habitat assessment. This year, a score of 137 (Sub-Optimal) was recorded. The significant increase in habitat assessment score is likely to not be attributed to actual shifts in present habitat

quality, as historical imagery does not show any land-use changes. Rather, it is possible that the 2009 habitat score for this reach is for the same reach as the 1988 survey conducted further downstream. Overall, no additional work is recommended aside from routine monitoring (once every 10 years for Brook Trout). (Rozema, F-48-R)

Saddle River (Bergen) - The headwater section of the Saddle River, located primarily within the township of Upper Saddle River, is managed as a Wild Brown Trout Enhancement Stream from the NJ state line downstream to Lake Street. This area is fairly popular with local anglers seeking wild trout, as the Saddle River (and some tributaries) are the only Trout Production stream containing Brown Trout in Bergen County. On 6/21/23, two different 150-meter reaches within this upper section of the Saddle River were electrofished to monitor the status of Brown Trout.

The first electrofishing survey on the Saddle River took place just upstream of the Lake Street bridge, within Lion's Park. This location was last surveyed on 7/24/2014, and captured 69 Brown Trout, with 21 being young-of-the-year (YOY). This year, a total of 89 Brown Trout (57 YOY) were captured, as well as 2 stocked Rainbow Trout. A very large, deep pool that may have been created since the last survey, as multiple adult Brown Trout evaded capture here due to the size and depth of the pool making it very difficult to sample. In the habitat assessment, this section of stream scored 124 points (Sub-Optimal) compared to 136 points (Sub-Optimal) in 2014. Overall, the Brown Trout population in this stretch of the Saddle River remains abundant. Occasional monitoring of the status of sedimentation in the section should occur to prevent negative impacts from occurring. Continuation of the monitoring schedule for Wild Trout Streams (once every 10 years) is recommended.

The second electrofishing survey on the Saddle River took place upstream of Old Stone Church Road in Liberty Park. This location was last surveyed on 7/24/2014 and captured 38 Brown Trout (11 YOY). This is similar to the 26 Brown Trout (7 YOY) captured during this year's survey. The overall lower number of trout captured this year could be attributed to low water conditions, as the majority of adult Brown Trout captured during this survey were found in a single deep pool within the survey area, with most of the remaining area being shallow and relatively unsuitable habitat for adult fish. In addition to trout, a single Bluegill was captured, however this fish likely came from escapement from nearby Liberty Park Pond. In the habitat assessment, this location scored 132 points (Sub-Optimal). This is slightly decreased from a score of 145 (Sub-Optimal) given in the 2014 survey. This is primarily explained by a large decrease in vegetative protection from Sub-Optimal to Poor. This, along with impacts seen downstream at the Lake Street location, suggests that erosion is occurring despite bank stability ratings remaining similar. A large section of hillside on the left bank, approximately 20-30m in length, was freshly exposed, loose soil and appeared to be actively cutting and eroding. Despite this, the population of Brown Trout in this location appears to continue to be stable. Occasional monitoring of the status of sedimentation in this section should occur to prevent any negative impacts from occurring. If erosion continues to worsen here, bank stability measures should be implemented. Continuation of the monitoring schedule for Wild Trout Streams (once every 10 years) is recommended. (Rozema, F-48-R)

Stag Brook (Bergen) Electrofishing- This small tributary to the Ramapo River runs very close to the border of New York. It was first classified as *Trout Production* in 1968 when an electrofishing survey captured 22 Brook Trout (10 YOY). A similar number of Brook Trout were also captured in a 2003 survey when a total of 25 (all YOY) were collected. On 8/30/2022, electrofishing spot checks captured 23 Brook Trout (21 YOY) however a standardized electrofishing survey was unable to be conducted due to the stream being dry throughout most of the reach. On 7/12/2023, a standardized electrofishing survey occurred near the Echo Mountain Road bridge to monitor the Brook Trout population. This year's survey captured 6 Brook Trout (1 YOY). The number of adult Brook Trout is similar to previous surveys; however the number of young-of-the-year was significantly lower than in the past. This suggests that last year's drought conditions had a significant impact on fall spawning conditions. Stream temperature appears to have remained consistent, with instantaneous measurements being 19.6°C (2003) and 20.4°C (2023). In the habitat assessment, this stream scored a 158 (Sub-Optimal). This is a minor decrease from the 165 (Optimal) scoring given in 2003, with decreases in vegetative protection and embeddedness being the main reason. This suggests that increased erosion into the stream may be occurring, however the changes in scoring are relatively minor. No additional work is recommended aside from routine monitoring (once every 10 years for Brook Trout). (Rozema, F-48-R)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WMA Fishing Tournament Permits – Fishing organizations began submitting applications for the 2023 season. A total of 180 applications have been received and all conflicts were resolved. Permits continue to be issued as new requests and changes in schedules are received. Anglers reported good fishing results at Assunpink Lake and Stone Tavern Lake over the last month since the bass season opened. (Smith)

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Youth Inclusion Initiative - Participated in the first of three youth inclusion days that will be held in the southern part of the state, on 7/10/23 at Stone Tavern Lake. Freshwater Fisheries staff demonstrated sampling equipment and nine participants from the Rutgers Camden group had the opportunity to try various gear types firsthand. Electrofishing (boat and backpack), shoreline seining, gill nets, and water chemistry meters were all presented. Warmwater fish were collected, identified, weighed/measured, and then released by the group. General fisheries management and the role the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries serves in protecting the states aquatic resources for the benefit of all New Jerseyans was discussed. (Smith/Boehm/Civalier)

PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY (Ed Conley)

Inventory Data

Inventory Data

<u>Stocking Program</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Average Daily Length Increase</u>	<u>Conversion</u>
Spring 2024 RBT (9 months old)	6.3"	0.026	1.63
Fall 2024 RBT (9 months old)	7.0"	0.050	0.98
Fall/Winter 2023 RBT (21 months old)	12.9"	0.019	1.44

Flow Rates – June 2023

9.20 inches of precipitation fell during the month of June.

Production well pumping rate average for June was 6,092 gpm with an average 8.78 million gallons per day pumped during the month.

The potable well pumped 7,811 gallons for the month of June.

Submitted Quarterly Water Diversion reports.

Fish Culture Activities

Submitted Agency approval with treasury to extend the current T1486 Trout feed contract until 3/31/24 or until new one is in place.

CBT Paving Project

Hatchery staff cleaned up raceway areas in preparation of the paving projects. They removed curb stops in fisherman's parking lot, fixed the road between bow range and main drive with some stone, and painted several bollards safety yellow.

Approved CBT funded paving phases 1 and 2 in conjunction with NJDOT. Work began on 7/23/23. Over the duration of a few weeks the facility was milled, paved and re-lined where needed. During this time curbing and handicap parking was brought up to newer standards. The only thing left is for new signs to be installed. The facility was in desperate need of this due to several cracks, erosion, and potholes. This was the original base pavement that has only been micro-paved once in the last 40 years. The first two phases cost about 1.3 million dollars in which the raceways, maintenance area, main road, front lot, circle, fisherman's parking, bow range, and the Well #2 fish loading area for stocking was completed. Funding for phase 3 will hopefully become available at some point in FY2024 to finish other areas needed. See below photos.

Also, the CBT project to repair and tar and chip the well road was completed by a contract during this time period as well. This project cost \$87,000.



CBT-M Projects (Waste Treatment Plant Upgrades)

Staff have been working on the CBT-M projects at the waste treatment plant. Stone was put around the oxidation pond, topsoil was added, and seeded as recommended during the last LSI inspection. The chemical storage area was demolished, and the area was prepped for a new shed that should arrive soon.

Pequest Maintenance

Received purchase order for Wm. Stothoff Co., Inc. for Well #5. They rebuilt the emergency right-angle drive and re-installed it on 6/23/23. The variable drive on Well #5 overheated on 7/5/23, we switched back to Well #7. A vendor came out and looked at it on 7/10/23, cleaned the variable drive and one fan not working and two others not working to full capacity. The three fans have been ordered and will be replaced when they come in.

Received quote from Power and Prestige for upgrade work to Well #5 for a new back-up generator to work the well on electric for \$118,000. Waiting on how to proceed with purchase through CBT funding either as a whole or in a staged process.

Miscellaneous Activities

On 6/28/23, submitted signed Corrective Action Plan to the Bureau of Safe Drinking Water for new potable UV system with an estimated completion date of 6/30/24. This includes permitting, purchasing, testing, and final inspections.

HACKETTSTOWN STATE FISH HATCHERY (Craig Lemon)**Intensive Culture** (Inventory)

<u>Species</u>	<u># Fish</u>	<u>Avg."</u>
Landlocked Salmon	3,200	10.4"
Northern Pike	3,505	8.3"
Tiger Muskellunge	2,000	7.8"
Muskellunge	4,430	3.9"
Channel Catfish	89,721	2.0"
Largemouth Bass	2,000	2.5"

Stocking Totals

(June 16 – July 15)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u># Fish</u>	<u>Size (Inches)</u>	<u>Total Pounds</u>
6/20	Lmb	Mercer Lake	6,750	1.7"	4.6
6/20	Lmb	Assunpink Lake	5,675	1.7"	3.9"
6/20	Lmb	Stone Tavern Lake	1,275	1.7"	1.0
6/20	Lmb	Manasquan Res.	14,400	1.7"	10.0
6/22	Lmb	Sunrise Lake	360	1.9"	1.0
6/22	Lmb	Lake Hopatcong	7,282	1.9"	8.0
6/22	Lmb	Union Lake	4,000	1.9"	22.0
6/22	Lmb	Sunset Lake	4,000	1.9"	4.7
6/22	Lmb	Rainbow Lake	4,000	1.9"	4.7
6/22	Lmb	Parvin Lake	4,000	1.9"	4.7
6/30	Lmb	Wild Duck Pond	550	2.6"	6.5
6/30	Lmb	Wood Dale Park Lake	550	2.6"	6.5
7/1	Lmb	N. Community Pk Pd	10	14"	18
	Bs		72	5.5"	9
	Chc		6	20.0"	12
6/22	Chc	PA. Fish & Boat Co.	145,531	fry	16
6/23	Chc	Spruce Run Res.	51,228	fry	11
6/26	Chc	Greenwood Lake	55,881	fry	17.4
6/29	Chc	PA. Fish & Boat	93,872	eggs	8.5
6/30	Chc	Lake Hopatcong	53,256	fry	10
7/7	Chc	Delaware River	16,838	1.7"	23.3
		Worthington			
7/7	Chc	Delaware River	19,155	1.7"	26
		Poxono			
7/11	Chc	Passaic River	34,162	2.0"	62
7/7	Smb	Mercer Lake	2,500	1.5"	5.2
7/7	Smb	Manasquan Res.	5,696	1.5"	11.9
7/13	Lmb	Lake Lenape	3,881	2.0"	21.3

Bs – Bluegill Sunfish

Chc – Channel Catfish

Lmb – Largemouth Bass

Smb – Smallmouth Bass

Intensive Culture

Landlocked Salmon

Currently culturing 3,200 fish about 10.4-inches in three 2,000-gallon tanks. Staff are cleaning and feeding them daily.

Muskellunge

Currently culturing 4,430 3.9-inch fingerlings in one 2,000-gallon rectangular tank.

Northern Pike

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 7.8-inch fingerlings in one 2,000-gallon tank.

Channel Catfish

Staff checked catfish barrels in pond 90 on 6/12 and 6/20. They brought in 3 masses weighing 7 pounds and equaling 63,920 eggs on the 12th and 11 masses weighing 25 pounds equaling 226,660 eggs. The masses were broken down using a Sodium Sulfide solution and measured into McDonald Hatching Jars. They will be incubated for 4-6 days in 80°F.

Intensive Production Work

We are currently pumping 720 gpm of 52°F spring water, 220 gpm of 68°F recirculation water, and 210 gpm of 80°F recirculation water. Staff are cleaning all tanks in the morning. Tank cleaning takes 6-8 hours a day with all the Esoskids. Feeders are being filled daily. Weight counts and inventories are being performed weekly to measure fish growth.

Extensive Culture

Largemouth Bass/Smallmouth Bass

The adult Largemouth and Smallmouth ponds have all been harvested and the broodfish were returned to their wintering ponds. A small number were stocked during a pilot stocking program. Staff harvested all of the fingerling Largemouth growout ponds and stocked over 105,000 1.5-2.6-inch fingerlings in 14 ponds and lakes. They also harvested the one Smallmouth growout pond and stocked 10,000 1.5" fingerlings in two waters.

Channel Catfish

All broodstock catfish are in pond 90. Pond 74 has 600 two-and-a-half-year-olds. Ponds 78 and 92 were set up with 50,000 three to five-inch fish from last year. Pond 74 was drained and seined and only a couple of dozen cats remained. We suspect that 50-100 Common Merganser ducks ate many of them over the winter as there was very little ice cover. That experiment to overwinter Channels in that pond failed. Staff have observed some fingerlings in Pond 92 while checking spawning barrels. Hopefully that is a good sign of some survival. Catfish spawning barrels were set in ponds 74, 90, and 92 on 5/25 and pulled out on 7/13. Staff checked catfish barrels in pond 90 for the first time on 6/6. Staff checked the barrels six times during that period

bringing in 51 egg masses totaling 1,138,640 eggs weighing 117.5 pounds. All the egg masses were broken down with a Sodium Sulfide solution and incubated in McDonald hatching jars.

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. Ponds 31 and 32 were both stocked with 2 bags of Golden Shiner fry on 5/23 prior to Walleye fingerling setup. Staff have seined the 5-Acre pond and Pond 85 weekly feeding about 15 buckets of minnows to the Walleye fingerlings. The ponds will be sampled the week of July 24th to check on sizes for harvesting.

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. The fry in ponds 18 and 82 seem to be feeding well on the surface.

Hybrid Striped Bass

Delmarva Aquatics delivered a box of Hybrid fry on 6/15. They were offloaded using the hatcheries larger 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. Staff have observed a handful of fry along the shores. The hatchery has received about 15 inches of rain over the past several weeks making it difficult to maintain plankton blooms for the feeding fry.

Information & Education

Provided information and photos for five GoFishFriday's posts 108-112. 1,542 likes, 72 comments, and 49 shares. Answered as many questions as possible on these posts. Hosted our first Youth Inclusion Initiative on 7/12 with a group from Rutgers-Camden. We provided a hatchery tour, fishing technique class, followed by a couple hours of fishing in the Education Ponds. The event went very well. The annual goose roundup was held the morning of 6/21. About 500 geese were rounded up on the hatchery grounds, waterfowl biologists banded 80 fresh adult birds and only 7 young. Staff participated in the Bordentown Fishing Derby on 7/1. They setup the tank truck for viewing and gave a short presentation, handed out bobbers and literature, and helped the kids stock the fish. This pond was dedicated to the late Jim Oross several years ago, and the sign remains in great condition.

Purchasing and Budget

Continue purchasing supplies for the 2023 season including fish and fish feed. Received a delivery of 12,000 six-to-eight-inch Channel Catfish. Received four pallets of fish feed from Cargill on 7/6. 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. Picked up the truck with a bed

on 7/17. Dom and Clint will mount the new plastic distribution tank on it now. Working on a design for the wrapping of the new truck and tank.

New Garage Project

The project is now complete. We were handed the keys on 6/8. The grass is growing, and the contractor removed the silt fence. The building looks great and thanks to Fish & Wildlife leadership for providing the funding for this building. We have begun moving equipment in already.

Pond 89 Work

The pond was drained for the first time in three years to access fish for a pilot stocking 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.

Rain & Flooding

Between 6/26 and 7/15, the hatchery received between 15 and 20 inches of heavy rainfall from four storms. Much of this rain has fallen in the dark of the night and during heavy thunder and lightning making it dangerous and difficult to get to the dam and flood gates. Staff living in the two state houses on site have done an excellent job keeping Trout Brook and the hatchery ponds within their banks. Once these waters subside it takes staff the better part of the following day to get water levels and flows back to normal. Ditches and screens all need to be clean sometimes requiring chainsaws and excavators. A neighbor on Reese Ave. stopped by to report one of the state's trees fell onto his property causing damage to his fence. Staff spent half a day cutting the top of the tree off the fence and a private tree company has been called in to do the rest. Received a call from the Hackettstown DPW Superintendent on 6/5. He had a report from a passerby of a 275-gallon fuel oil tank floating in Trout Brook just below Grand Ave. on hatchery property. Immediately sent staff in waders to the site to check for leakage/plugs. Through visual inspection they determined that the material left in the tank had hardened. The next morning a combination of hatchery staff, town DPW, and local police closed the road down and used a large front-end loader to lift the tank and place it on a trailer for disposal. The town had a HAZMAT inspector on site to look at the tank upon removal. It is not known where the tank came from.