



CHARLIE CRAIG HATCHERY NEWSLETTER

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January – March Quarterly Report 2009



Greetings again from the Craig crew in northwest Arkansas. Once again our annual walleye spawning project has fast-forwarded us well into the year of 2009. Also during these last three months we have replaced a big water drain line from our reservoir pond, had a run-in with mother nature, tried our hand at spawning sauger, and experimented in using a new hormone on our female walleye.

The Charlie Craig Hatchery targeted a production number of 1.9 million walleye fry. Actual rearing produced 2,606,000 for stocking plus 740,000 from Chesapeake State Fish Hatchery in Missouri.

Calendar of Events

January 9 – Shere' and John Michael assisted with marking and release of brown trout into Beaver tail waters.

January 15 – The hatchery staff attended a Fire Safety meeting.

February 3-5 – Shere', Clarence, Heath, and John Michael attended the Arkansas Chapter of American Fisheries Society annual meeting in Bentonville while Tommy attended the Mid-Continent Warm-water Fisheries Workshop in Iowa.

March 18 – Hatchery staff hosted a field trip for the Crossroads Alternative School in Rogers.

March 19 – Tommy hosted a 7th grader from Siloam Springs for a job shadow.

March 31 – Tommy attended the AGFC Strategic Plan Development Team meeting in Little Rock

The first big task we tackled after the holidays was the leak in our water drain line from our reservoir pond. After much discussion we decided to insert new high grade 10” pvc pipe into the existing thinner 14” metal pipe under the levy. The pipe that could be dug up outside the levy was replaced entirely. Time will tell just how successful the new infrastructure will be.



Tom removes old pipe with boom loader as Heath and Clarence directs.

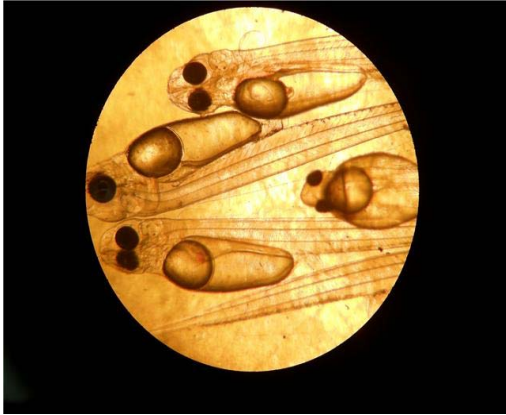
As many of you heard, and know first hand, we experienced a catastrophic ice storm during the last week of January. There were power outages, destruction, and ice build up and the Craig hatchery was not immune to any of these. However, we only suffered minimal roof damage to our old office and one of our pole barns. Two days was all that we needed to clean up the debris on the hatchery.



One of the female sauger marked and measured.

This year, in addition to our walleye project, we were asked to spawn sauger which was a first for this hatchery. With our past success with spawning walleye and the similarities between sauger and walleye, it was assumed we could successfully produce sauger fry using basically the same methods and procedures. In the end, we were able to label our sauger production as successful with a 70% hatch rate. This most likely means future attempts for spawning and producing sauger at the Craig Hatchery. Brood stock for spawning was collected at the Ozark-Jeta Taylor Lock and Dam and Powerhouse in Ozark on the Arkansas River. Much appreciation to District 9 fish biologists Bob Limbird and Frank Leone for a couple of late nights of gill netting.

While most of the AGFC fisheries field division was out on the well publicized Northern snakehead eradication, we at the Craig hatchery were doing what we normally do during mid-March...collecting and spawning walleye. We officially began brood stock collection this year on March 11th on the Kings River. After a few nights there and several more on Beaver Lake tail waters, we finally had harvested enough. Less than desirable conditions including low water in the Kings River and lack of power generation at Beaver Dam stretched our electro fishing efforts to March 20th. It wasn't the smoothest collection year but it could have been much worse.



Young walleye fry under a microscope.



Walleye brood stock catch on the electro fishing boat.

Another first for us was the use of a different spawning aid; a drug called luteinizing hormone releasing hormone analogue (LHRHa). In order to utilize this Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) we had to go through the National INAD Program (NIP) protocol. This was also a first for us. The protocol involves precise records and documentation throughout the entire LHRHa drug use on our part. We are confident all the appropriate measures were taken.

We are happy to report a successful walleye spawning season regardless of procedures or which spawning aid drug we used. No devastating fungus outbreaks or rare impotence problems for our walleye and nobody was injured! A big thank you goes out for the work of Ron Moore (as always) and the use of his electro fishing boat, Clint Smith, Cody Wyatt, Rob Underdown, and former Craig hatchery technician Andy Lowry.

Stocking Schedule
January/ February/ March

Date	Species	Number	Size	Waters
3/27/09	Walleye	250,000	Fry	Mammoth NFH
3/27/09	Walleye	500,000	Fry	Charlie Craig
3/30/09	Walleye	300,000	Fry	Quachita Nursery Pond
3/30/09	Sauger	81,000	Fry	Donham
3/30/09	Walleye	450,000	Fry	Charlie Craig
3/31/09	Walleye	150,000	Fry	Norfolk National Nursery Pond
4/1/09	Walleye	180,000	Fry	Charlie Craig
4/2/09	Walleye	250,000	Fry	Charlie Craig
4/3/09	Walleye	730,000	Fry	Mammoth NFH
4/3/09	Walleye	125,000	Fry	Beaver Lake
4/4/09	Walleye	330,000	Fry	Charlie Craig