

January – March 2009



FISHERIES DISTRICT 9 NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from Fisheries District Nine! Winter has come and gone and we are looking forward to a warm spring. Here is a closer look at our activities thus far in 2009:

Pool 13 Commercial Harvest Season

We held a special commercial harvest season for paddlefish on Pool 13 of the Arkansas River from January 5th – January 9th. Unlike previous special seasons, entry was limited to 25 fishers who were drawn randomly from a pool of 50 plus that applied to fish the season. A total of 324 paddlefish were harvested during the special season with 60% being gravid females. The value of eggs from the gravid females harvested is estimated to be in excess of \$28,000.



AGFC Check Station at the 2009 Special Season

Arkansas AFS Meeting

Bob and I attended the Arkansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society annual meeting held in Rogers. Jerry McKinnis and Dr. Donald Jackson were keynote speakers and several excellent presentations were given by students and professionals from around the state. We thank Darrell Bowman (Arkansas AFS president) and the city of Rogers for hosting another great meeting.

Lake Dardanelle Creel Survey

The Lake Dardanelle Creel Survey is back for 2009. The survey began on December 1st, 2008 and will continue through November 30th, 2009. The survey is being conducted at several popular fishing access sites around the lake, including Lake Dardanelle State Park, Ouita, Piney at HWY 64, Spadra, Horsehead Creek, Ozark Dam, and Shoal Bay. River Valley resident J.D. Masters is once again the Creel Clerk for the survey. Data gained through the second year of the survey will yield valuable information for future management of the Lake Dardanelle Fishery.

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VHS Sampling

Under the direction of AGFC Fish Pathologist Kelly Winningham, We sampled fish from the Fourche Lafave River, the Mulberry River, and Lake Dardanelle for inclusion in a study to identify Arkansas as “VHS free”. Viral hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) is a fish disease that has caused kills in Northern and Midwestern states. The fish we collected for the study were sacrificed and samples collected will be tested for presence of the virus. To date, the presence of VHS has not been documented in Arkansas...Let’s hope it stays that way.



Largemouth Bass Collected on the Fourche LaFave River near Nimrod Lake for inclusion in VHS sampling

Sauger Project

We captured 100 sauger in two nights of sampling below Ozark Dam on the upper end of Lake Dardanelle. Some of the fish were taken to Charlie Craig State Fish Hatchery in Centerton to be spawned. As

Sauger Project, continued

a result, 81,000 fry were produced and placed in a hatchery pond for grow out. The surviving fingerlings will be stocked into the Arkansas River. An interesting side note: We captured a shovelnose sturgeon during our sampling! Shovelnose were once common in the Arkansas River but populations declined following the completion of the lock and dams.



Bob with a Arkansas River Shovelnose Sturgeon

Lake Hinkle Catfish Tag/Reward Study

A statewide channel catfish tagging study is being conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of stocking channel catfish in several lakes and streams. The tags have the words REWARD printed on them, and anglers who call the number on the tag, answer a few questions, and mail the tag back will receive a reward ranging from \$10 to \$100 (determined randomly). So far, catfish have been stocked with reward tags in the

Lake Hinkle Catfish Tag/Reward Study

following waters: Beaver Lake, Bull Shoals Lake, Caddo River, **Lake Hinkle**, Lake Hogue, Lake Ouachita, Lake Overcup, Little Missouri River, and White River. Have you caught a catfish with a tag? Anglers who have caught a tagged fish are urged to call the phone number on the tag to report their catch. For tagged catfish caught in Lake Hinkle, call 1-877-967-7577.



A tagged channel catfish

Stream Team Work

We assisted Stream Team Coordinator Jim Ahlert by planting 100 plus trees and shrubs on the bank of the Ouachita River. Results of this effort will help to stabilize the stream bank and prevent future erosion problems.

Snakehead eradication project

We both participated in the Snakehead eradication project in Monroe and Lee counties in Eastern Arkansas. Bob spent a whole week chasing down these nasty critters, while Frank was there for 4-days. The Northern snakehead was found in the Piney Creek drainage (Piney Creek in Lee County) in April of 2008. This non-native fish has a reputation for being extremely aggressive and capable of eating other sport fish. They are also very prolific reproducers and are capable of spawning more than once per year. Because of their reputation and to protect native fishes, the AGFC decided to attempt to eradicate them from the Piney Creek watershed. Rotenone (poisonous to fish) was applied to the entire watershed by ATV, boat, and helicopter. A total of 671 snakeheads were collected following the kill.



Matt Horton (District 10) holds a dead snakehead