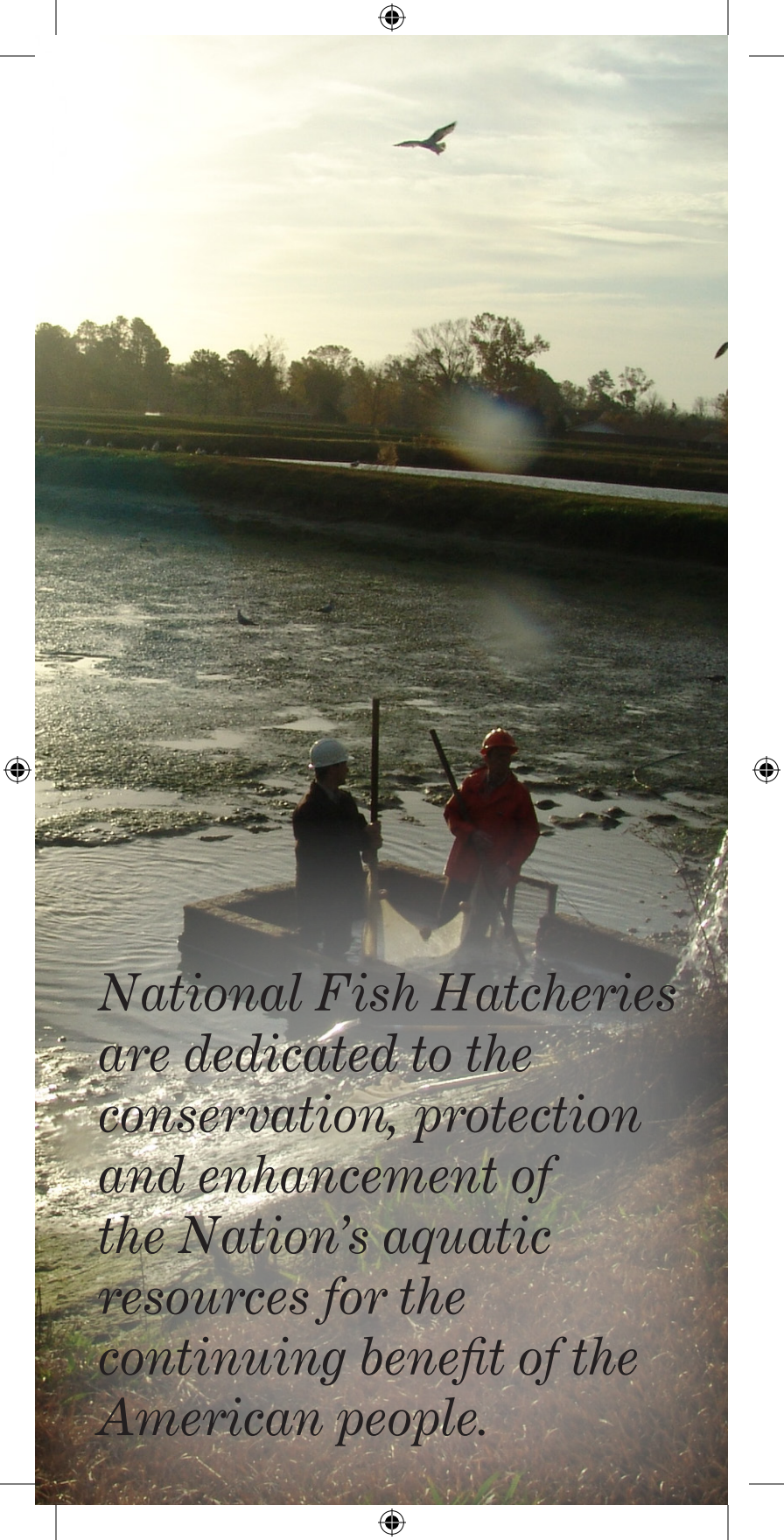


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Edenton

National Fish Hatchery



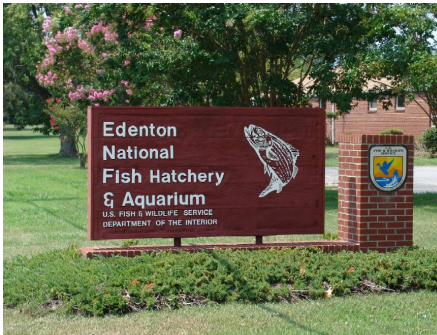
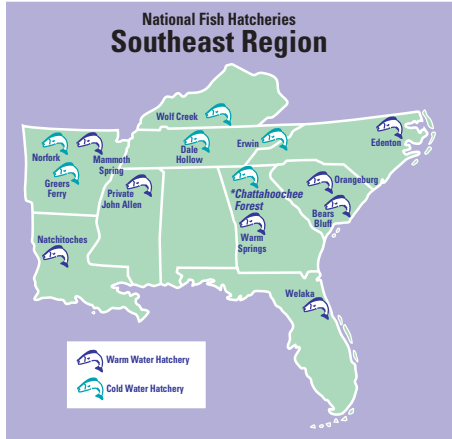
A photograph of two workers in a boat on a large body of water, likely a hatchery, with a bird flying in the sky. The workers are wearing hard hats and safety gear. The water is calm, and the background shows a line of trees under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

*National Fish Hatcheries
are dedicated to the
conservation, protection
and enhancement of
the Nation's aquatic
resources for the
continuing benefit of the
American people.*

Edenton National Fish Hatchery

Introduction

Edenton National Fish Hatchery (NFH), operated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, has been producing fish for public use and restoration for well over a century. Established in 1898, the 63 acre hatchery is one of the oldest, built in the historic port town of Edenton, North Carolina at the head of the Albemarle Sound, 90 miles southwest of Norfolk, Virginia.



Edenton NFH entrance

Edenton National Fish Hatchery is one of fourteen hatcheries managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Southeast Region. These hatcheries serve a vital role in the management of our fishery resources.

What We Do

This is a National Fish Hatchery and is supported by your Federal tax dollars. Fish raised on Federal hatcheries are stocked in public waters to support Federal fishery responsibilities mandated by law. These include fish for restoration



Striped bass

where, for example, man-made dams have altered a stream's natural reproductive capability; to recover threatened or endangered populations; to restore interjurisdictional fish populations, or to support depleted recreational fish populations in Federal and state waters.

Current programs at Edenton NFH

Restoration of interjurisdictional Atlantic striped bass

Because "interjurisdictional" fish move across local, state, and sometimes national boundaries, concern for their well-being is a major activity for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Conservation measures are necessary in order to maintain healthy populations of these fish in our public waters. Edenton NFH produces more than 200,000 "Phase-II" (large) striped bass for interjurisdictional restoration each year. Fish that were raised and tagged at Edenton have been caught from Cape Hatteras to New England.

Restoration of interjurisdictional American shad

American shad is an important food and gamefish. Landings in the late 1950s exceeded 5,000 metric tons, and this number dwindled to near



Electrofishing

zero in 2005. Edenton is conducting restoration efforts for the Neuse and Roanoke Rivers. In future years, other river systems will likely be enhanced with hatchery reared shad.



Lake sturgeon

Lake sturgeon restoration

Edenton produces imperiled lake sturgeon for restoration of Tennessee River system populations in Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina. This ancient fish, which can reach

eight feet in length, was returned to North Carolina rivers for the first time in over seventy years by Edenton NFH in 2015.

Restoration of interjurisdictional river herring

The two species of river herring (alewife and blueback herring) are a culturally and economically important group that are the base of the food chain for many larger fish and birds. Having suffered drastic declines, there is a moratorium on fishing for them. Edenton is conducting a pilot project for restoration of blueback herring in several tributaries of the Chowan River.

Disaster Response

Edenton maintains the capability to quickly respond and restore fish populations decimated by man-made or natural disasters. In recent years, Edenton has produced largemouth bass and bluegill to recover waters devastated by hurricanes Floyd and Isabel.

Fishery management assistance

Edenton NFH provides fishery management assistance to National Wildlife Refuges in the Carolinas and Virginia, and to state

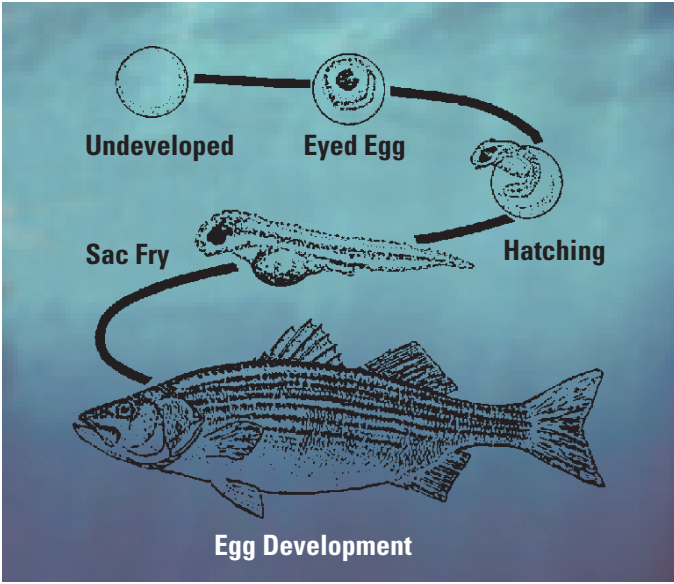
agencies with river herring spawning surveys in the Chowan River system.



How We Do It

Edenton NFH is a warmwater hatchery. This means the fish raised here do best in water temperatures above 65 degrees.

For the production of Atlantic striped bass, personnel from Edenton NFH, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and North Carolina Marine Fisheries collect adult “broodfish” from the wild during spawning runs. These adults are transported to the Watha state fish hatchery where they are monitored for egg maturation. They are injected with hormones that induce spawning in circular tanks and the eggs are collected for hatching. The five-day-old fry are collected and transported to Edenton for grow-out.



The rearing ponds are fertilized to encourage the growth of tiny microorganisms on which the young fry feed until they reach fingerling size of about one to three inches. Most hatcheries stock their striped bass at this size. Edenton on the other hand, grades them to uniform sizes, and re-stocks ponds for what is called “Phase-II growout”. These fish are grown to around eight inches in length and released in late fall. While this method is more intensive, it yields much greater survival due to reduced predation and better (cooler) water temperatures at stocking.

The ponds where the fish are reared are specially constructed with a concrete catch basin or “kettle”

in front of the drain. When the fish are ready to be transferred, various size screens can be inserted in the kettle to allow the water, but not the fish, to drain out. The fish collect here and can be



Harvesting

removed with nets when the pond is nearly empty. Fish are weighed and counted and then loaded onto specially designed distribution trucks with oxygen for transport to stocking sites.



Stocking

Once at the stocking site, hatchery biologists pump water from the river or lake into the tanks on the distribution truck for a period of 30 minutes to an hour or more. This is to acclimate the fish to the water in terms of temperature and water chemistry (pH, salinity, etc). Once released, they are not shocked by a sudden change of water, and disperse into the receiving waters in good health.



Shad tank

American shad and river herring production is somewhat different. Wild broodfish are collected from the rivers and brought to Edenton. Fin clips are taken for genetic analysis and the fish spawn naturally in circular tanks. Millions of fry are stocked into North Carolina rivers after only a few days.

Aquarium - Edenton NFH's aquarium features one large (700 gallon) and three smaller tanks. These showcase aquatic species living in Eastern North Carolina. The aquarium is open to the public year-round. Assorted hatchery information and brochures may be obtained here.



Aquarium

Rearing Ponds

Ponds are used for fish production during the summer growing season, and may be dry between harvests. During the winter most ponds are drained which helps eliminate harmful disease organisms and undesirable vegetation. All of the ponds that have water in them usually contain fish; however, many are small fry or fingerlings that are hard to see. Likewise, larger fish generally stay in deeper water and may not be visible. *Please exercise caution when walking around the ponds, and children must be supervised at all times—we want only fish in the water!*



Pond

Nature Trail

Edenton NFH is a stop on the Charles Kuralt Nature Trail, and the North Carolina Birding Trail. When walking along the ponds, many species of waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds are viewable, as are osprey and the occasional bald eagle. The hatchery also has a raised boardwalk through a natural wetland which ends at Pembroke Creek. As well as the previous bird types, many species of songbird and woodpecker are common. The hatchery and boardwalk are ideal spots for birdwatching.



Boardwalk

For More Information

Visiting hours are 7:00 am to 3:30 pm daily, open all year including most holidays. The hatchery is generally closed weekends and holidays during the winter when we have very few fish on station. Special group tours of the hatchery can be arranged by contacting the hatchery office, and we offer a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities.



Nesting Killdeer



Caring for the eggs



American shad hatching



Stocking shad fry

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National Fish Hatchery
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Website: www.fws.gov/edenton**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD**

September 2015

