

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Orangeburg

*National Fish  
Hatchery*



*Orangeburg National Fish Hatchery was established in 1912. It consists of two separate units, the Orangeburg main station and the Orangeburg substation. The main station is located just outside the city limits of Orangeburg. The substation is located seven miles southwest of Orangeburg.*

## Orangeburg National Fish Hatchery



Striped bass  
(*Morone saxatilis*)

Orangeburg NFH is one of over 60 Federal hatcheries located throughout the country. Orangeburg is a warm-water fish hatchery. Fish are reared in earthen ponds and the water temperature ranges from 60 to 85° F. The hatchery has the capability to produce a variety of freshwater fish: striped bass, redbreast sunfish, bluegill sunfish, and shortnose sturgeon, etc. Orangeburg National Fish Hatchery stocks four to five million fish annually in reservoirs, lakes, and coastal streams across the southeast region.

### **Pond Preparation**

Before stocking ponds with fish, they are filled with water and organic and inorganic fertilizer are added. Fertilization increases the natural food production which is vital for fish less than 1" in size.

### **Number of Fish in a Rearing Pond**

The number of fish stocked into a rearing pond is determined by the size of the pond. Striped bass are stocked at a rate of 100,000 to 150,000 per surface acre of water. Redbreast and bluegill sunfish broodstock (mature fish that lay eggs) are stocked at a rate of 50 to 60 pairs per surface acre. Ponds at the hatchery range in size from 0.5 to 1.5 surface acres.

### **Size of Fish**

Striped bass are stocked into ponds when they are less than 10 days old and less than 1 inch in length and remain in ponds until they reach a size of 2" to 12" depending on stocking requirements. Fish such as redbreast and bluegill sunfish are produced from broodstock that are placed in a pond and allowed to reproduce naturally. They are harvested at an average size of 3".





### Feeding Fish

While in ponds, fish feed on naturally occurring organisms (phytoplankton and zooplankton.) Commercially prepared fish foods are fed to them by hatchery workers 3 or more times a day. The size and type of fish determine the number of times they are fed.



### Harvesting Fish

Fish are harvested from ponds by lowering the water level and concentrating the fish into a concrete basin that is part of the pond. A seine (a long net) is used to catch and move fish to a tank

containing water and oxygen.

### Transporting Fish

Fish are hauled to rivers and/or lakes in a special designed tank (called a distribution tank) that contains water and a supply of oxygen. The number of fish that can be hauled is determined by the size and distance to the release site. On average 50,000 to 100,000 are hauled per trip.

### Shortnose Sturgeon

The shortnose sturgeon is listed as an endangered species throughout its range from Canada to Florida.



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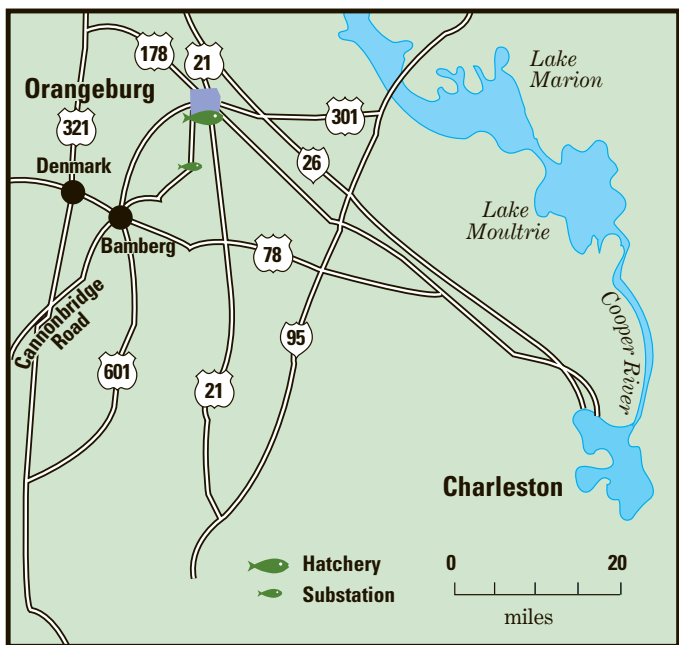
Reasons for this are, destruction of habitat, damming of rivers, and commercial overfishing. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been investigating culture techniques of the shortnose sturgeon since the early 1980s. Adults and fingerlings are held at Orangeburg National Fish Hatchery for research purposes.

### **Why Fish Hatcheries?**

The continually increasing human population has drastically impacted fisheries and has led to overfishing and a decrease in food and game fish populations. Habitat loss due to land and water development, pollution, and the introduction of non-native species have also contributed to this decline. These increased demands on fishery resources resulted in the need for fishery management. One strategy of fishery management was the creation of fish hatcheries. Fish



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hatcheries rear fish to maintain and enhance native fish populations, and to aid in the restoration of threatened and endangered species.

### **The U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been active in the conservation of the nation's fish, plants, and wildlife since 1871. The Service's responsibilities encompass freshwater and anadromous fish, marine mammals, migratory birds and endangered species. The USFWS is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of these species and their habitats. The Service shares this mission among its National Fish Hatcheries, National Wildlife Refuges, Technology Centers, Ecological Services and its Law Enforcement Division. The Service also works cooperatively with other federal, state, and private agencies.

**Public Use**

For your enjoyment the hatchery has a one-mile observation walk which identifies the natural wildlife found around the hatchery. Several species of birds such as the great blue heron, snowy egret, Canada geese, wood ducks and others can be viewed. Turtles, alligators, and a variety of other plants and wildlife can be observed while at the hatchery. Fish raised at the hatchery can be viewed at our aquarium which is open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 3:30 pm.

**For Additional Information Contact:**

Orangeburg  
National Fish Hatchery  
Hatchery Manager  
P.O. Box 410  
Orangeburg, South Carolina 29116

For Weekend Group tours, call above phone number between 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.

*All illustrations: USFWS*

**Orangeburg  
National Fish Hatchery  
427 Lakeview Drive, Hwy 21 Bypass  
Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115  
803/534 4828  
803/534 4917 fax  
E-mail: R4\_OBSC@FWS.gov  
<http://southeast.fws.gov>**

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