

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Private John Allen

*National Fish Hatchery*



*Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery is one of many hatcheries managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the southeast. These hatcheries serve a vital role in the management of our fishery resources. The Fish and Wildlife Service also manages over 500 national wildlife refuges across the country. As the Nation's primary steward of fish and wildlife resources, the Service provides leadership in wildlife and habitat protection; fish and wildlife research; and in the conservation and protection of migratory birds, fishes, marine mammals, and threatened and endangered species.*

*Private  
John  
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**Introduction**

The establishment of this hatchery, one of the oldest in the country, can be credited to the efforts of Congressman “Private” John Allen. (The humble title he used in reference to himself.) On February 20, 1901, before the U.S. House of Representatives, the Congressman delivered an eloquent speech, half-seriously, proposing the establishment of a Federal fish hatchery in Tupelo. He stated, in part, “thousands and millions of unborn fish are clamoring to this Congress today for an opportunity to be hatched at the Tupelo hatchery.” In 1982, the hatchery was renamed in honor of this historic Mississippi legislator.



*150 pound Gulf  
sturgeon*

**What We Do**

This hatchery is called a warm water hatchery because the species of fish raised here do best in the summer water temperatures that range between 75 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. The hatchery has 15 ponds and raises about 5 million fish every year! Fish that are important to the fishery resources of Mississippi and the Gulf Coast are raised here and stocked throughout the region in cooperation with state game and fish agencies.

*Cover art:  
Paddlefish, Duane  
Raver/USFWS*



*Sampling for  
adult paddlefish*

For a variety of reasons, many species of fish have shown a significant decline in population over the past 20 to 30 years. Sport and commercial anglers alike are experiencing dwindling catches of striped bass, sturgeon, shad, and red drum along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. These fish species are estuarine (they live in saltwater) or anadromous (return once a year to spawn in fresh water.) While all the reasons for this decline are not entirely known, it is agreed that a combination including loss of habitat, construction of dams, dredging of rivers, over fishing, and various forms of pollution are all contributing and interwoven factors.



*Alligator Gar*



*Gulf coast striped bass tagging*

Because their ranges transcend local, state, and in some cases, 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. National fish hatcheries such as Private John Allen are helping to achieve these objectives by restoring native fish populations for all to enjoy.

Some of the species and programs that Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery are involved in are described below.

Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery serves as one of the primary paddlefish restoration sites in the southeast. Native paddlefish are collected from Mississippi and the surrounding states. This unique species must be spawned artificially by surgically removing eggs from the females. Great care is taken to return these fish to the wild. Young paddlefish resemble tadpoles for several weeks after hatching. The fish must be fed natural food items which are harvested from hatchery ponds. After 90 days the fish are large enough to be released into the wild.



*Phase II striped bass*



*Restocking of  
native mussels*

Some of these fish are tagged before they are released. When and if the fish are caught again, biologists can find out when and where they were released and how far they have traveled. All this information helps us learn more about the paddlefish's life history.

This hatchery is a part of a major nations program to restore striped bass (also called rockfish). This hatchery produces up to 500,000 striped bass every year! Some of these striped bass are stocked when they have reached a length of two inches, others are kept for a longer period of time and fed a special diet until they grow to be about four to six inches, and then they are stocked in waters throughout the region.

Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery is part of a multi-hatchery effort conducting research on freshwater mussels. This hatchery provides a variety of host fish for several on-going research projects on freshwater mussels being conducted at Mammoth Spring National Fish Hatchery in Arkansas.

The hatchery is open daily 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. During your visit please feel free to call upon us to answer any questions you may have about the hatchery.

Occasionally you may see hatchery staff feeding the fish or possibly transferring or harvesting a production pond. Seasonally, fish can be seen in the holding house where distribution and truck-loading operations take place. An abundant variety of birds may be seen in and around the hatchery ponds.



*Historic Manager's Residence*

You may also visit the historic manager's house which is located on the hatchery grounds. This two story Victorian home was constructed in 1904 and served as the residence for the hatchery manager until the 1980s. The residence was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. The grounds surrounding the home hold a variety of native plants, many of which are the "antique" variety donated as cuttings from plants handed down through the generations. These areas make up our Backyard Habitats which are designed to attract a variety of birds, insects, and other wildlife.

### **Group Tours**

Special group tours of the hatchery can be arranged by contacting the hatchery office.

### **For More Information**

Hatchery Manager  
Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery  
111 Elizabeth Street  
Tupelo, MS 38801  
662/842 1341

**We hope you enjoyed your visit with us.**

*All photos USFWS, unless otherwise indicated.*

Elizabeth Street

Mobile Ohio Railroad

Pond

1

2

3

4

Pond

5

6

7

Pond

10

Pond

8

Pond

Pond

King's Creek

Pond

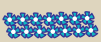
Pond

Pond

Pond

Pond

Pond



Backyard Wildlife Habitats

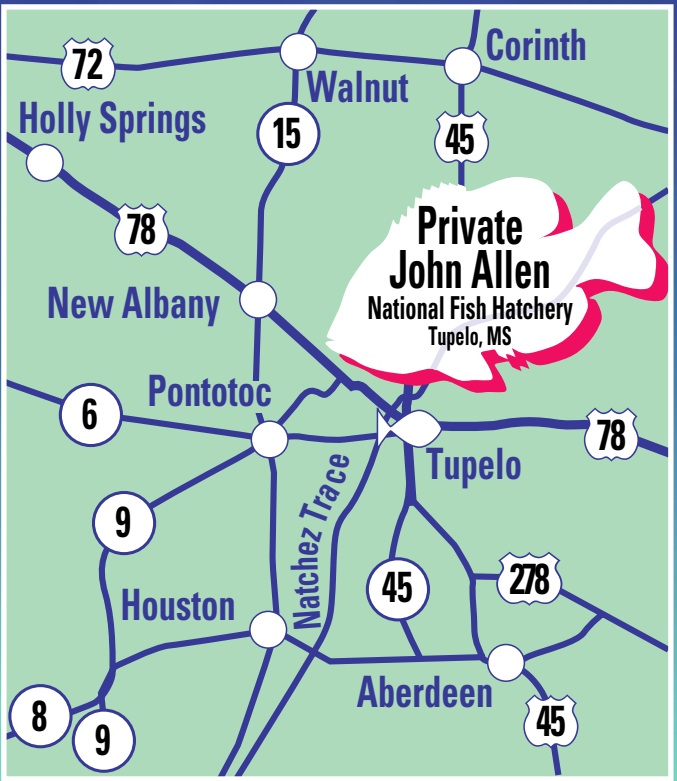


## Hatchery Key



*Fishing day*

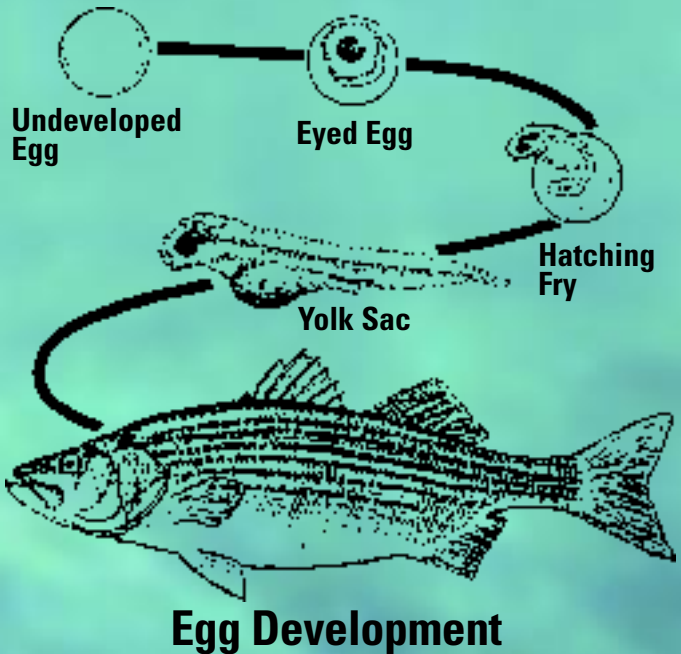
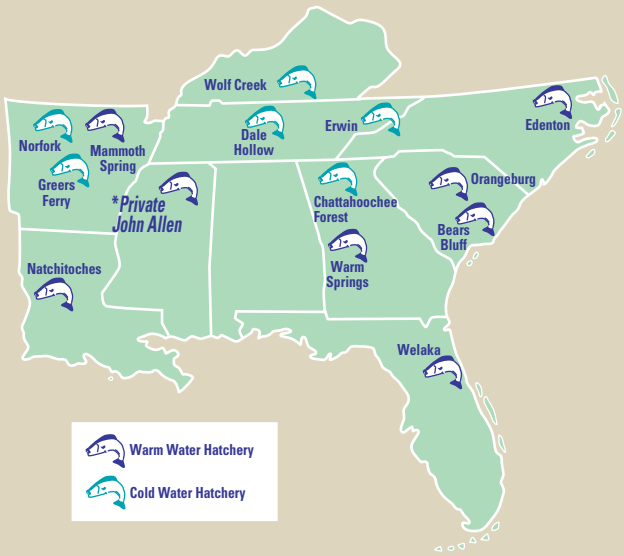
1. **Visitor Display and Footpath**
2. **Historic Manager's Residence**  
Constructed in 1904, this house is on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of Tupelo's social life in the early 1900s took place around this facility.
3. **Public Restrooms**
4. **Shop**
5. **Feed Storage House**  
Commercial fish feed purchased by the hatchery is kept here.
6. **Maintenance Garages** - These buildings are used for the maintenance and operation of the hatchery. For safety reasons, their use is limited to Hatchery Personnel only.
7. **Fish Holding House** - When ponds are drained, fish are brought here for sorting and are loaded on trucks for distribution. This activity takes place seasonally throughout the year (much like a farmer harvesting his crop) so at times this building is empty.
8. **Paint and Oil House**
9. **Well Pump House** - Hatchery water source.
10. **Office** - Headquarters for hatchery activity and someone is generally available at this location. Assorted hatchery information and brochures may be obtained here. (Closed on major holidays.)
11. **Ponds** - Full of water during the warm months and generally empty during the winter for "drying out." You may walk around the pond area, but please use caution as the ponds are deep and we want only fish in the water.



*Conservation awareness*



# National Fish Hatcheries Southeast Region



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<http://southeast.fws.gov>**

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

**October 2001**

