

# Warm Springs

## *Fish Health Center*

photo: Mudrak



### Photos (top to bottom)

*Microscope.*

*Disease inspection.*

*Cell culture.*

*Sample of blood for triploid grass carp certification.*

photo: Norm Heil



### Station Facts

- Established: 1989.
- The lab has the capability to provide state-of-the-art fish disease diagnostic and fish health certification services to a variety of national fish hatcheries, state fish hatcheries and private fish farms.
- Triploid grass carp certification inspections are also provided to private fish farmers in the 10 southeastern states.
- The fish health section includes virology, bacteriology, and parasitology labs and water chemistry and fish sample preparation labs.
- The staff includes four biologists and one veterinary medical officer at Warm Springs and a biologist triploid certification inspector located at Stuttgart, Arkansas.

photo: Norm Heil



- Operations budget: FY 05 \$445,000.

### Geographic Area Covered

The 10 states of the Southeast Region.

### Station Goals

- Provide service, expertise and information that contributes to the health, survival, enhancement, restoration, and recovery of fish and other aquatic species in support of national and regional priorities.
- Supports hatchery operations to provide quality fish that contribute to ecosystem objectives.

photo: Norm Heil



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- Assists in the development of management strategies through assessment and applied research to support the protection of wild stocks and recovery of threatened and endangered species.
- Educates key audiences about the elements of comprehensive fish health and its critical significance to healthy aquatic ecosystems.

### Services Provided To

- Federal agencies including other Fish and Wildlife Service program offices.
- State agencies.
- Native American Tribes.
- Military bases.
- Universities.
- Non-governmental organizations (NGO's).
- The public.

### Activity Highlights

National Wild Fish Health Survey—Service Regional Fish Health Centers have been mandated to establish and maintain a National Fish Disease Database. This database is to be a comprehensive survey of the health of wild fish populations throughout the United States. The information gathered by the Fish Health Centers will be available to all interested parties on the Internet at <http://wildfishsurvey.fws.gov>

### Public Use Opportunities

- Environmental education and public outreach opportunities to visitors, school groups and various other organizations.
- Beautiful surroundings and natural environment.
- Endangered shortnose sturgeon display for off-site presentations.
- Co-located at the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery.

# Warm Springs Fish Health Center

## Calendar of Events

**February:** Fish-a-Rama, Atlanta and Perry, GA.

**June:** Youth Fishing Event.

## Questions and Answers

*What is a Fish Health Center?*

The Fish and Wildlife Service has several fish health centers that provide service, expertise and information supporting the Service's mission to promote and protect aquatic animal health. Fish health center personnel must apply the knowledge of several diverse scientific disciplines including fish biology, microbiology, epidemiology, toxicology, pathology, physiology, histology, and genetics.

*How do fish get sick?*

Fish, like all animals, may suffer from environmental, nutritional and infectious diseases. Organisms such as parasites, bacteria and viruses are pathogens capable of causing disease in cultured and wild populations of fish. Poor nutrition and water quality can also cause disease under stressful conditions.

*Why a National Wild Fish Survey?*

The most important weapon needed to control or prevent fish diseases is knowledge. Currently, there is very little information about the relationship between presence of pathogens in wild fish and its likelihood of producing disease in either wild or hatchery reared fish. Valuable stocks of fish are at risk because of our lack of knowledge about the distribution of pathogens and parasites in wild fish.

*What kind of sampling is used in the survey?*

Sampling will involve collecting tissue samples to screen for certain bacteria, viruses and parasites that may pose a risk to fish health.