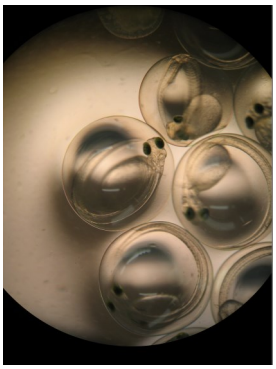
GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION

RICHMOND HILL FISH HATCHERY

Facts and Information

INTRODUCTION

Located on 87 acres in Bryan County, the Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery includes 31 fish rearing ponds, and three Kid's Fishing Event (KFE) ponds. Donated by Henry Ford in 1936, the hatchery produces striped bass, hybrid bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and largemouth bass.



Richmond Hill Hatchery is the sole producer of Atlantic striped bass fry, hybrid striped bass fry, and white bass fry in the state. These fry are distributed to other hatcheries across the state to be reared to a one-inch fingerling size before being stocked into reservoirs across Georgia.

The hatchery also supports striped bass restoration efforts in coastal rivers, such as the Savannah.

The hatchery has produced over 800 million striped and hybrid bass fry since the statewide propagation program started in 1968.

RENOVATION

Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery recently completed a major renovation that includes a new state-of-the-art hatchery and regional administrative facility.

The new hatchery building has the capacity to increase fry production by more than 25 percent compared to the old facility, meaning more bass for more fishing opportunities for anglers.

The hatchery now has an incubation room with a recirculating water system, which allows for the better conservation of water.

Funding for the hatchery renovation was derived from mitigation funds from the Savannah River Deepening Project and other state monies .

Anglers support the operation of the hatchery through their fishing license purchase and through the Sport Fish Restoration Fund by paying taxes on items like fishing equipment and boat fuel. Those tax dollars get returned to Georgia based, in part, on how many fishing licenses are sold.

More details about the renovation are on the reverse of this page.

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RICHMOND HILL FISH HATCHERY: RENOVATION DETAILS

Renovations to the new Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery will provide numerous benefits :

- New water chillers and heat exchanger system provide greater precision and control of water temperature, reduces water usage, and is more energy efficient than the old system.
- Increased egg incubation capacity by 25%.
- Installed dedicated largemouth bass incubation vessels , which reduce the demand on aquarium space further increasing egg incubation capacity.
- Ability to recirculate up to 150 gpm in incubation room resulting in a potential water savings of 216,000 gallons per day.
- Drive-thru facility allowing for easier loading and off-loading of fish, thereby reducing fish stress.
- Conditioned feed storage will expand the life and nutrient levels of fish food.
- Increased American shad spawning tank capacity by 33%. These tanks can also be used to grow out different fish species to larger sizes.
- Addition of four, 6-foot circular tanks that will allow for tank spawning of striped bass, if necessary, and also provide space for indoor grow out of different fish species.
- Aeration columns in hatchery head tank will de-gas and oxygenate water prior to it entering hatchery to provide optimal water quality conditions.
- Increased hatchery wet lab space by approximately 100%.
- Alarm auto dialer communicates alarms to offsite staff if pumps fail or if water levels drop below acceptable levels.

PRODUCING STRIPED AND HYBRID BASS

Richmond Hill Hatchery is the sole producer of Atlantic striped bass fry and hybrid striped bass fry in the state. How are these fish produced?

- Each spring, brood fish are collected and transported to the Hatchery.
- For striped bass, the eggs from a female striped bass are fertilized with sperm from male striped bass.
- For hybrid bass, the eggs from a female white bass are fertilized with sperm from male striped bass.
- Eggs are stirred and water is added to activate the fertilization process.
- Eggs are placed in special hatching jars. Chilled water (66 degrees F) flows around the eggs to keep them rolling and oxygenated.
- Eggs hatch in approximately 44 hours and the newly hatched fry flow from the jar into an aquarium.
- Fry survive the first few days by absorbing their yolk sac.
- Striped bass fry are fed a diet of newly hatched brine shrimp before they are stocked into the rearing ponds.
- Both hybrid and striped bass fry are stocked into ponds at Richmond Hill, McDuffie, Cordele, Dawson and Bowens Mill hatcheries.
- After a 30-day growing process, fish are approximately one-inch in length, and are then harvested from these ponds and stocked into inland reservoirs all over Georgia.

Dependent on Richmond Hill Hatchery: There is no natural reproduction of hybrid bass in Georgia, and very limited natural reproduction of striped bass. So, the entire inland fishery of these two species is dependent on these efforts at Richmond Hill.

MORE ABOUT GEORGIA FISH HATCHERIES

georgiawildlife.com/allhatcheries