



Monthly Hatchery Report February, 2017

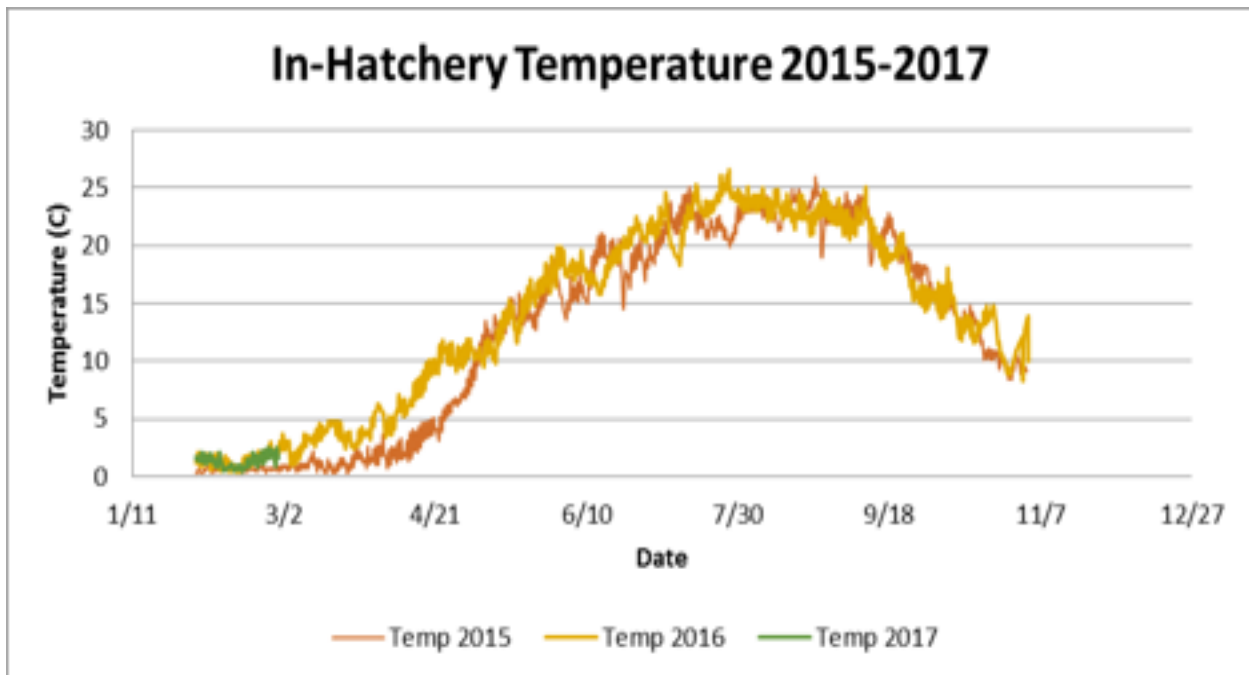


Report by: Zach Sheller

A report of monthly activities and events



Ah February...a time of cold and snow - at least this past February was. Having not received much snow to date, the Downeast region received many feet of snow over multiple storms during February 2017. Although a strain on the shoveling muscles, this moisture finding its way into the streams and rivers adds to the amount of space available to the salmon parr by increasing the amount of water in the rivers. There is also the hope that some of the snow will stay put in the woods of the upper watershed, slowly releasing to the river system as the temperature warms. After drought conditions most of the summer and fall last year, a river full of water is a welcomed sight. Below is a hatchery (and therefore river) temperature graph to date. I have included the temperatures from 2015 and 2016 for comparison. You can see that our temperature profile has been pretty similar to the temperatures seen last year. The short, green line is this year's temperature.





Both DSF facilities have been chugging along, incubating the thousands of eyed Atlantic salmon eggs located at each facility. With our water source straight from the river, the eggs in our hatchery are developing at the same rate as wild Atlantic salmon eggs in the river. We are expecting our eyed eggs to hatch into alevin around mid-March. When the eggs hatch into alevin in the wild they are still protected by the gravel of the salmon redd. To mimic the salmon redd in our hatchery, we utilize our Substrate Incubation Boxes (SIBs) that are filled with plastic media that acts as our gravel. These SIBs (picture below) allow our emerging salmon to develop more naturally and emerge from the SIB at the same time as the salmon in river are emerging from the salmon redds.



In early February we also finished dropping off all the eggs for the classrooms participating in the Fish Friends Program. Those salmon are now being cared for by eager students who also represent our next generation of Atlantic salmon advocates! We will visit all of those schools again in March, or they will come visit the Peter Gray Hatchery, to talk about incubation of salmon in the hatchery vs. the wild.



One of our business partners, Machias Savings Bank, came for a facility visit that included some egg picking and fish feeding. Below are a couple pictures of MSB's president and his two sons, picking salmon eggs with DSF's Rachel. It is always wonderful to see the excitement and joy that kids get when learning about, and helping with Atlantic salmon.





Planning is on-going for the hatchery expansion that will be taking place in East Machias this spring. We are fundraising as we speak to add a 36'x44' hatchery space that can house 15 additional rearing tanks. This will allow us to spread the 350,000 plus fish we have between a larger numbers of tanks to reduce stress on the salmon as they grow. This hatchery expansion could also provide additional space to possibly raise more fish and explore other research and conservation opportunities as they spring up. If this opportunity excites you, please let us know.

That's the February update on the hatchery activities. I hope you are well and as always feel free to message me with any questions and/or comments you may have.

Regards,

Zach Sheller