DOWNEAST SALMON FEDERATION

Monthly Hatchery Report January, 2017

1 Downstream of our East Machias hatchery

Report by: Zach Sheller

A report of monthly activities and events

A Report on activities from the *Peter Gray Hatchery*, East Machias, ME.

Welcome to 2017! A new year for us all and the sixth year of the Parr Project. Let me start off by saying I appreciate all of your energy and interest in this project that keeps us moving forward. Although we have only been through one month of 2017, we have already been busy with a variety of tasks to include getting eggs transferred from the USFWS Craig Brook Hatchery to our two facilities.

As of the last day of January, both DSF facilities have the eyed Atlantic salmon eggs they will receive for the 2017 rearing season. The Peter Gray Hatchery is host to over 370,000 eggs and our Pleasant River Hatchery is holding 67,000 salmon eggs. This is the largest number of eggs we have had at the Peter Gray Hatchery since the beginning of the Parr Project. Those eggs are currently residing in our heath stack egg trays with cold river water flowing over them. Exciting times, full of opportunities!

2 Eyed eggs being laid down at EMARC

On top of the 60,000 plus eggs at our Pleasant River hatchery, our DSF staff joined forces the DMR and USFWS staff to egg plant 80,000 salmon eggs in the upper reaches of the Pleasant River. Icy conditions were challenging, but in one day those fertilized, eyed eggs made their way into the permeable spawning habitat of the Pleasant River. For those that need a quick refresher, egg planting is where we utilize a water pump

to bore holes in gravel spawning shoals where eyed eggs are then placed. As the cones are pulled out of the gravel (see picture below) the eggs are covered with the gravel. This process essentially creates man-made salmon redds. If you haven't seen them on our Facebook page, there are a couple egg planting videos taken this year at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqBGfQs5qEo and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGBluw5I5kw .

3 Egg planting in the upper parts of the Pleasant River

There have been some staffing shifts and additions at DSF to help us further the mission of restoring salmon and their habitat. Kyle has shifted into a new position at DSF coordinating the habitat restoration and habitat protection arm of DSF. As always there are many projects to do, so Kyle is already busily rolling along. With Kyle's shift away from day to day hatchery operations, I (Zach) have moved into the hatchery manager/fisheries biologist role. This is a great opportunity coming at a time of growth for DSF and the amount of work (and our capacity to complete it) we are doing is also growing. In short this equates to more help for the fish in our rivers and the river ecosystems themselves.

With my move to the manager position we hired Rachel Gorich to fill the assisstant hatchery manager/fisheries biologist position. Rachel has been a volunteer, a part time employee, and partner through her work with Maine DMR and the Downeast Fisheries Partnership of the Parr Project for the past three years. If you would like to learn more about Rachel you can check out her staff profile on our website: https://mainesalmonrivers.org/about/staff-profiles/ or on our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/downeastsalmon/photos/a.

121011951318958.31457.120993654654121/1225056287581180/?type=3&theater. We look forward to all that Rachel will add to our DSF team!

4 The Pleasant River on an egg planting excursion

The winter weather and eggs arriving at our hatcheries also signifies the beginning of the Fish Friends (formerly USFWS Salmon in Schools) program. This program puts 200 salmon eggs in classrooms across the state of Maine to increase our youth's exposure to salmon. This exposure hopefully inspires the next generation of salmon enthusiasts. DSF visits each school delivering eggs, ensuring a proper tank setup, and giving an interactive lifecycle presentation to the class. With certain classes we also have a gym activity that gets the kids running around and thinking about the trials and tribulations Atlantic salmon face in the rivers and ocean. DSF has eight schools participating this year, some of which have been with us for

years and others are newcomers to the program. It always amazes me how intent the students are during the presentations on salmon and the amount (a third grade class I gave a presentation to first this year must have asked no less than 100 questions) and quality of questions the kids ask. They also love to tell fishing stories!

That's the January 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