

Virginia Fisheries Coordinator's Office

Virginia Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Complex Fact Sheet for Members of Congress

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator John W. Warner (R)
Senator George F. Allen (R)
Rep. Robert C. Scott (D-3rd)



Contact

Albert Spells, Project Leader
Virginia Fisheries and Aquatic
Resources Complex
11110 Kimages Road
Charles City, VA 23030
Phone: 804/829 2421
Fax: 804/829 6067
TDD: 800/877 8339
E-mail: albert_spells@fws.gov

Profile

Established: 1987
Staff: 2 (current)
3 (full)
FY 2002 budget: \$168,700

The Virginia Fisheries Coordinator is co-located at, and supervises, the Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery at the newly established Virginia Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Complex.

Purpose

The purpose of the Virginia Fisheries Coordinator's Office is to work with partners to protect and restore declining and depleted nationally significant interjurisdictional fisheries in Virginia, Maryland and along the Atlantic coast. Species of concern include, but are not limited to, Atlantic coast striped bass, American shad, river herring, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon and American eel.

Management Activities

- Supervises Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery
- Evaluates hatchery stocking programs to determine their effectiveness

- Works with Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery to help manage American shad, striped bass, American eel and Atlantic sturgeon
- Works with other agencies on fish restoration projects
- Provides tours, presentations and other interpretive activities
- Marks fish to provide information on the success of stocking programs
- Works with state, federal and private partners to restore important fisheries habitat

Highlights

A project to determine the presence of sturgeon in Virginia's rivers was very successful and contributed to altering opinions that Atlantic sturgeon may have been extirpated from the Chesapeake Bay.

Between 1985 and 1993, more than 8 million striped bass were cooperatively released into the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia and Maryland.

Fishways on the Potomac and James rivers have allowed returning adults to reach historic spawning grounds that were closed for 50 years and 200 years, respectively.

Hatchery-released striped bass accounted for nearly three percent of the recreational catch in Virginia in 1994, for a value of about \$1 million to the Virginia economy.

The station is developing blueback herring culture technique that could be instrumental in managing this species.

Issues

Hatchery-released American shad make up more than 60 percent of juveniles captured on the James River, and from forty to more than seventy percent of adults, indicating that the restoration program will continue indefinitely on the James River.

Little current data exists on location, quality and quantity of good spawning and nursery habitat for river herring and American and hickory shad in Virginia's rivers and tributaries. These fisheries (commercial and recreational) compose a multimillion dollar industry in the state, and without sound habitat management their values can be further eroded.

Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) has nearly vanished on the mainstem James River. SAV is important for juvenile American shad survival, and its absence may be a cause for the slow recovery of American shad on the river.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

January 2003

