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Susan Gouveia

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 9:18 AM
To: Canning, Sean; Susan Gouveia
Subject: FW: NJDEP Press Release - NJDEP Moves to Address Disease at Pequest Trout Hatchery
Attachments: Trout Euthanized--P18.pdf

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From: Randazzo, Cindy [mailto:Cindy.Randazzo@dep.state.nj.us]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 8:54 AM
To: Randazzo, Cindy
Cc: Rogers, Joseph
Subject: NJDEP Press Release - NJDEP Moves to Address Disease at Pequest Trout Hatchery

Dear Municipal Clerk:

Please see the attached NJDEP Press Release concerning the Disease at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and the NJDEP's efforts to address it.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly,

Sincerely,

Cindy W. Randazzo
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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lawrence Ragonese (609) 292-2994

March 19, 2014

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DEP'S DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE MOVES TO ADDRESS DISEASE AFFECTING THE PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY'S RACEWAY SYSTEM
114,000 BROOK TROUT TO BE EUTHANIZED FOR THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF THE HATCHERY AND TROUT PRODUCTION IN NEW JERSEY

(14/P18) TRENTON – Due to the re-occurrence of a fish disease that has affected a section of the Pequest Trout Hatchery in Warren County, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is euthanizing a portion of its brook trout population that was scheduled to be stocked this spring and is taking other steps to protect the overall integrity of the facility.

This action is consistent with the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Fish Health Policy, which was approved last week by the State Fish and Game Council following a public comment period and two public hearings. The plan states that fish found positive of pathogens, such as furunculosis, will not be stocked in state waters.

Furunculosis, a fatal disease caused by a bacterium known as *Aeromonas salmonicida*, mostly affects cold water species of fish such as trout. Laboratory tests last weekend confirmed the presence of the disease in brook trout in an upper portion of the concrete raceway system used to raise trout for stocking of New Jersey's waterways.

It is important to note that no human health risks are associated with this bacterium and that it is not transmissible to humans or other animal species.

"We continue to thoroughly test and treat fish in all sections of the hatchery and are taking all precautions necessary to contain this disease," said Division of Fish and Wildlife Director David Chanda. "Weighing all the factors with this most recent outbreak, it is in the best interest of the hatchery now and to safeguard the 2015 stocking program that the 114,000 brook trout that tested positive for furunculosis are euthanized."

Despite the loss of the large number of brook trout, the Division still will release healthy trout in state waters in time for the Opening Day of Trout Season scheduled for April 5, at 8 a.m. None of the trout being stocked this spring have the disease. Some may have been exposed to the bacterium that causes furunculosis but were effectively treated. Others that will be stocked have tested negative.

For more information on spring trout stocking program please visit:

http://www.nj.gov/dep/few/pdf/2014/trout_changes14.pdf

The 114,000 trout to be euthanized are a portion of the more than 600,000 trout the Pequest Hatchery raises every year. The fish are being humanely euthanized by introducing carbon dioxide into the water.

The 31-year-old Pequest Fish Hatchery had its first outbreak of furunculosis last fall, likely transferred into the hatchery by birds. Osprey feeding on infected fish in the wild may have spread the bacteria through contact when feeding on fish in the affected pool at the hatchery. As a result, some 25,000 trout were euthanized last fall.

Located in Oxford, the Pequest Trout Hatchery utilizes state-of-the-art techniques and procedures to produce some 300,000 pounds of trout each year for stocking in nearly 200 ponds, streams and lakes throughout New Jersey. Artesian wells in the Pequest Valley provide a constant flow of cold water necessary for the rearing of trout.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife utilizes robust measures to protect raceways at Pequest from bird infiltration, including wire deterrents strung over the raceways and air cannon. The division is continuing to investigate other options, including enclosing the raceways under fabric domes or barn-like structures. It also is exploring installation of extra wells to allow each raceway to have its own unique water supply for each group of fish.

Rainbow trout appear to be resistant to the disease, so the hatchery is increasing production of these species for stocking in future years. Brown and brook trout tend to be more susceptible and these fish will be vaccinated to provide protection against the disease. The Division also is considering acquiring brown and brook trout that have been bred for resistance to furunculosis.

For the short term, the affected areas of the hatchery will be drained, dried, steam cleaned, and disinfected before the next round of fish are introduced back into the raceway.

For more detailed information on the outbreak at Pequest, visit: http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2014/peq_furunc_presentation.pdf

To view the newly approved state Fish Health Policy, as it relates to furunculosis and the state's 2014 trout stocking, visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/workgroups/docs/troutmgtnotice20140221.pdf>

For more information on the Pequest Trout Hatchery, visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/pequest.htm>

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