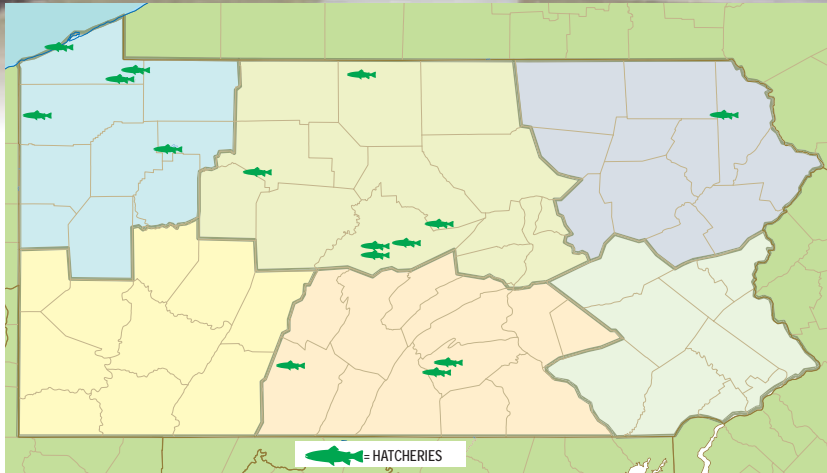


PA State Fish Hatcheries: Engines for Rural Economic Development



Investing in State Fish Hatcheries is Good for Pennsylvania's Economy!

It's time for Pennsylvania to fund a comprehensive state fish hatchery upgrade program. The economic benefits of upgrading state hatcheries include:

- The benefits flowing from major construction projects in the rural communities where hatcheries are located.
- The benefits derived from operation of state hatcheries and employment of staff.
- The travel and tourism benefits from visitation to state hatcheries.
- And most important of all, the economic benefits of recreational fishing supported by state hatchery fish.

Hatchery Construction Projects Help Rural Economies

Whether it's the construction of the new Brandy Camp/Blue Valley Demonstration Mine Drainage Treatment/Fish Culture Station or upgrading state hatcheries, these projects will pour positive economic benefits into rural Pennsylvania. Funding capital improvement projects at these facilities will provide opportunities for contractors, equipment suppliers and construction workers. For example, building the Blue Valley Project in Elk County, being built by a partnership involving watershed groups, state agencies, and federal funds, will cost about \$4 million. Rebuilding the state fish hatchery at Reynoldsdale will cost nearly \$6 million. Other hatchery upgrade projects will cost between \$2 and \$3 million dollars. These construction projects will provide benefits for local economies.

"Only states that have adopted some sort of funding mechanism beyond a dependence on license dollars have been able to begin successful implementation of the type of long-term hatchery improvements like the ones we recommend for Pennsylvania."

— FishPro Consulting
Engineers & Scientists

INTRODUCTION

There are fifteen (15) state fish hatcheries in Pennsylvania. Owned by the state and operated by the Fish and Boat Commission, these hatcheries are strategically located across the Commonwealth to take advantage of high-quality water supplies and to maximize fish stocking logistics. Our state fish hatcheries are engines for economic development.

Eight hatcheries combine to produce some 4 million adult trout annually. Stocked into the waters of the Commonwealth, these trout support fishing activity that generates some \$500 million in economic activity each year.

More than 100 million juvenile fish of popular species like striped bass, wall-eye, catfish, muskellunge, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, pike and pickerel are reared at six state fish hatcheries. The warmwater/coolwater hatcheries supplement natural reproduction of these species and contribute to recreational fishing generating more than \$1 billion for Pennsylvania annually.

Three stations support steelhead trout fishing. In addition to providing a unique trophy trout fishery in Erie County, these state-hatchery steelhead are a vital part of the region's economy, conservatively valued at \$7 million annually.

In addition to supporting recreational fishing, Pennsylvania's state hatcheries are also at the heart of groundbreaking efforts to restore species such as American shad and paddlefish to what were once their native waters.

A recent comprehensive, independent study of the state hatchery system noted that it is run efficiently, is well maintained relative to its age, and that it compares favorably to other states. **The report also called for some \$81 million in upgrades and improvements over a period of 25-30 years to ensure the system's long-term future.**

The Fish and Boat Commission has identified **about \$25 million** in construction projects at state hatcheries to be undertaken over the next three to four years to upgrade these hatcheries to improve wastewater treatment and keep Pennsylvania fishing!

Catch us on the web: www.fish.state.pa.us

PA State Fish Hatcheries: Engines for Rural Economic Development

Funding much-needed projects at state hatcheries is like adding fuel to a proven economic engine.

Hatcheries Provide Employment Opportunities

Not to be overlooked is that fact that Pennsylvania's state fish hatcheries are important employers, particularly for their small, rural host communities. In the state hatchery system, 126 Pennsylvanians are employed in full time and seasonal work. These state civil service jobs are important for the communities where they are located. Reinvestment in state fish hatchery infrastructure ensures continued local employment.

Pennsylvania's Fish Hatcheries: A Catch In Themselves

While state hatcheries are naturally associated with recreational fishing, they lure more than just anglers. School groups, scouts, civic organizations and families take advantage of the free public tours available at these facilities, making them a true travel destination. Because many of the state fish hatcheries are located in rural communities, they are major tourism destinations for their areas.

Thousands of visitors come each spring to the open house the PFBC hosts at the Linesville Fish Culture Station, on the shores of Pymatuning Lake in Crawford County. Tens of thousands more stop by the visitors' center throughout the year; between 1997 and 2002, 300,000 visitors have toured the hatchery. These visitors also eat at local restaurants, purchase fuel and many stop by local vendors to buy feed they use at the lake spillway, a place so alive it's been featured nationally as the spot "where ducks walk across the fishes' backs."

The Reynoldsdale Fish Culture Station also boasts an impressive visitor's center, featuring taxidermy of many popular game fish species. The hatchery draws nearly 10,000 visitors each year, making it one of the top tourism destinations in all of Bedford County.

Fishing Opportunities Depend on State Fish Hatcheries!

Each year, nearly 2 million people, including about 500,000 children, go fishing in Pennsylvania. Residents and visitors combine to take some 18 million fishing trips in the Commonwealth annually. But anglers aren't the only ones making a prize catch: fishing is a real trophy for Pennsylvania's economy. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the American Sportfishing Association estimate fishing and fishing related activities generate more than **\$1.6 billion for Pennsylvania's economy** each year. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania projects the positive economic impact at **\$4.7 billion.**

Sportfishing in Pennsylvania supports 14,000 jobs and generates \$53 million in annual revenue for the state's general fund through sales and income taxes.

Pennsylvania's state hatchery system is an engine that drives the economic benefits from recreational fishing. The travel and tourism related economic benefits of recreational fishing are spread across Pennsylvania. State-reared fish are stocked in every county. Anglers travel and anglers spend money on their pursuit of sport fish in Pennsylvania. Although the economic benefits supported by most state hatcheries are spread widely across several regions, the steelhead trout fishing program, supported by work at three hatcheries, focuses on the Erie area. By focusing a program, exclusively supported by hatchery efforts, on the unique fishing resource offered by Lake Erie and its tributaries, the tremendous economic benefits of our state hatcheries becomes clear. When we take action to keep Pennsylvania fishing, we support economic development and travel and tourism!

A History of Popular Support

From the very beginning, Pennsylvanians have recognized the value of state fish hatcheries. A legislative act in 1873 established Pennsylvania's very first state



fish hatchery in Lancaster County. Two years later, the legislature appropriated money for a "western Pennsylvania" hatchery in Corry, Erie County.

In 1903, the Bellefonte Hatchery (Centre County) opened after citizens of the town Bellefonte raised \$3,500 for hatchery land and railroad siding to the grounds. In 1905, Citizens of Crawford County made a gift to the Commonwealth of the Crawford Hatchery, located about a mile from Conneaut Lake.

Throughout the 1900s, state fish hatcheries were acquired or upgraded using general obligation state bond funds or general fund appropriations. However, the last major Commonwealth investment in hatchery infrastructure took place in the 1960s and 1970s under Project 70 and Project 500.

A Chance For A Wise Reinvestment

While money for the state hatchery system has been hard to come by in recent years, popular support has remained strong. Even as the Commonwealth has wrestled with tough state budget issues, nearly 3 out of 4 voters (74%) polled in 2002 said they supported increased state funding for natural resource management agencies like the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Pennsylvania has never expected only the direct users of public facilities to bear all the capital project costs. Whether it is a student living in a new dorm at a state university, a sports fan attending a ball game in a new stadium, a family picnicking at a state park or a history buff at the state museum, users have never been asked to pay all the fees for major infrastructure costs.

The time is right for another reinvestment in Pennsylvania's state hatchery system. The Pennsylvania IMPACCT Commission found an economic impact of \$37 was generated for every dollar spent supporting activities like fishing.