Feed Training of Yellow Perch

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What is Feed Training?

• Training fish to switch from their natural diet to accepting a formulated diet.

• Understanding nutritional needs and behavior of the fish helps with feed training.

• Age and size affect the ability and willingness to accept a prepared diet.
Yellow Perch Fry Natural Foods

- Move to larger feed items as they grow. Insect larvae, worms, grubs, etc.
- Pisciverous: Eat other fish (and each other!)

Walleye Culture Manual, NCRAC

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Three Approaches to Feed Train

Hatchery

- Start at first feeding
- Mouth gape
- Use rotifers, newly hatched brine shrimp, krill
- Wean progressively onto formulated diet over 7-14 days
- Produce your own natural food source, food for your food source, and keep small fish alive
- LABOR!

Pond-Tank-Pond

- Fry stocked to fertilized ponds (or hatched)
- Culture for 4-8 weeks
- Bring into tanks, high density, “force” feed

All Pond

- Fry incubated in ponds
- Same initial 4-8 weeks with fertilization
- Lights, belt feeders, feed and fish concentrators
Yellow Perch Fry

- Formulated Diets
  - High protein (45% -50%), higher fat (16-20%), high energy diets – trout diets
- 10-15% Body Weight per day feeding on belt feeders
- Krill powder top coat, about 5 - 10% of diet
Pond-Tank-Pond Method

- Fish are harvested at ¾ inch average size (6 weeks)
- Brought to flow-through tanks
  - Well water or well/pond mix
- High densities, crowding, and competition for food
- Highest we’ve had is about 2 ounces / gallon or 60 grams / gallon = 0.13 lb / gal
- Recommendation: Do not exceed 0.25 lb/gal
- Duration: 2 to 3 weeks, most on feed in first week
Pond-Tank-Pond Method

- Salt 2 to 3 grams per Liter of water daily
- Schooling fish are happy fish, round tanks definitely better
- Larger tanks may work better
- Siphon tank bottoms daily – Remove mortalities and uneaten feed
  - Most difficult part of feed training
  - There will be mortality, because some fish will not accept a formulated diet.
Feed Types - Starters

Krill Powder
Feed Types – and up to #4
Feed Types – Advanced Fingerlings

1.5mm  2.5mm
Feed Training

Belt Feeder

- Provides constant controlled feed to your fish
- Requires little labor to clean and load once a day
Challenges

• Hard to estimate number of fry from pond accurately
  – Small fish, average 0.1 – 0.3 grams each
  – Algae, tadpoles etc. throw off weights
• During feed training, some are not accounted for in regular mortality checks
  – Cannibalism? Dissolve?
Fingerlings and Grow-out
Contact Information

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