



Grand Rapids Area Spring Fishing Report 4-12-2010

By Jason Green

For the past Eighty years the DNR has gathered eggs at the Cut Foot Sioux Walleye Stripping station for stocking purposes around Minnesota.

Every spring the nets are placed across the narrows to trap walleye moving upstream to spawn. Each day the nets are emptied and the walleye are separated into different holding nets depending on their sex. Females are sorted based on how ripe they are or how ready they are to drop their eggs. Generally the females are larger with extended bellies because of the eggs. If you gently squeeze the belly and eggs easily drop the female is ready to be stripped. If they do not drop easily she will go back into the holding net till she is ripe.

If a white milky substance (called milt) appears this is a male. When the females are ripe workers gently push on the belly causing the eggs to drop into a large bowl. When the eggs come in contact with water they will begin to swell. At this point the eggs must be fertilized within a couple minutes. The male's milt is squeezed directly into the bowl

to fertilize the eggs. The milt or sperm is only active for a few seconds so this step moves along quite quickly.

After the eggs are fertilized they are placed into a strainer and covered with mud. The mud coats the sticky outer coating of the egg. In natural reproduction this sticky coating helps the egg stick to gravel and rock during the incubation period but can cause problems at the hatchery.

After the eggs are coated in mud they are placed in coolers with fresh moving water. Over the next couple of hours the eggs will continue to swell. Once they have reached their maximum size the coolers are transported back to the hatchery.

The complete process can last anywhere from 3 days to 2 weeks from set up to tear down depending on spring progression and weather conditions.



Holding Nets Filled With Walleye



Eggs Gently Being Squeezed From a Female. Mud Covered Eggs Keep Them From Sticking During Transportation And Back At The Hatchery

