

## Science at the Hatchery Event Introduces Elementary Students to Fish and our Natural Resources

- By Ethan Swift, MAPP Program



Shawn Good, F&W Fisheries Biologist, shows off a brown trout at Science on the Hatchery

On Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>, approximately 200 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders attended the annual “Science at the Hatchery” event at the Dwight D. Eisenhower U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Fish Hatchery in Chittenden, Vermont. The students from eight Rutland County elementary schools engaged in interactive learning sessions on fish and fisheries habitat, water quality, river dynamics, wetlands, forestry, soils, bird migration, and recycling. Students were given a tour of the fish hatchery and learned about the different life stages of salmonids (fish that spawn in fresh water), and the conditions necessary for their sustenance and survival.

The primary purpose behind Science at the Hatchery is to provide students with science-based, interactive learning sessions presented by federal, state, and local science experts that present outdoor-classroom, hands-on learning experiences.

“It’s important for students to learn from professionals in these sciences,” said Nanci McGuire with the Rutland Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD), a primary sponsor of the event. “We hope that some of these kids will gain an appreciation of our natural resources that they may not have gotten from conventional learning experiences.”

In addition to the Rutland NRCD, the event was also sponsored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Many other natural resource professionals were also on hand, including scientists and educators from the US Forest Service, USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service, Lake Champlain Basin Program, Rutland County Audubon, and Vt. ANR staff from the Department of Fish & Wildlife, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

In addition to the federal fish hatchery, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Dept. maintains five hatcheries throughout Vermont. The Department’s hatchery system produces almost a million fish annually. All of our hatcheries are open for viewing daily. For visitation hours or to schedule a group or school tour, please call the specific fish culture station you wish to see:

Bald Hill Fish Culture Station, Newark 802-467-3660  
Bennington Fish Culture Station, Bennington 802-447-2844  
Ed Weed Fish Culture Station, Grand Isle 802-372-3171  
Roxbury Fish Culture Station, Roxbury 802-485-7568  
Salisbury Fish Culture Station, Salisbury 802-352-4371

For information on future Science at the Hatchery events, please contact Nanci McGuire at [nanci.mcguire@vt.nacdnet.net](mailto:nanci.mcguire@vt.nacdnet.net) or 802-775-8034 x4, or Ethan Swift at [ethan.swift@state.vt.us](mailto:ethan.swift@state.vt.us) or 802-786-2503.