

**Picnicking** is allowed. A pavilion and tables are located near Lake Taneycomo. Use is first-come-first serve. Two additional picnic tables are located at the trailhead of the White River Bluff trail.

**Fishing** is permitted year-round in Lake Taneycomo. Regardless of age, a Missouri trout permit is required to fish between Table Rock Dam and the Hwy 65 Bridge. In addition, a Missouri fishing permit is required lakewide, except Missouri residents 65 years of age and older or persons 15 years of age and younger.

**Please consult the Wildlife Code Book for special regulations on size, species, permits, and bait restrictions on various portions of Lake Taneycomo.** Fishing access and a public boat launch are located on the area.

### Special Area Rules and Regulations

- Fishing is not allowed in the hatchery facility or the three outlets specified on the area map.
- No free-running pets. Dogs must be leashed at all times.
- No hunting and trapping.
- No littering.
- No fires and fireworks.
- Camping is not permitted.
- Bicycles, horses and motorized vehicles are allowed on paved roads only.
- Destroying, cutting or removing vegetation, including wildflowers, is prohibited. Nuts, berries, fruits, mushrooms and wild greens may be taken for personal consumption only

*This hatchery was acquired in part through the Dingell-*

*Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act*

*administered by the*

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*



## Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery & Conservation Center

### Hours

9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. Tuesday - Saturday

**Closed Sunday, Monday, and all state holidays. Fishing access, trails, and picnic areas open seven days a week.**

From Branson, go six miles south on Highway 165 to the hatchery below Table Rock Dam.

### For local information, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation  
Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery  
483 Hatchery Road  
Branson, MO 65616  
(417) 334-4865 ext. 0  
Hatchery video: [tinyurl.com/gr916w4](http://tinyurl.com/gr916w4)

### Other nearby Department Areas:

Cooper Creek Access  
Ruth & Paul Henning Conservation Area  
Busiek State Forest & Wildlife Area  
Drury Mincy Conservation Area  
Boston Ferry Conservation Area

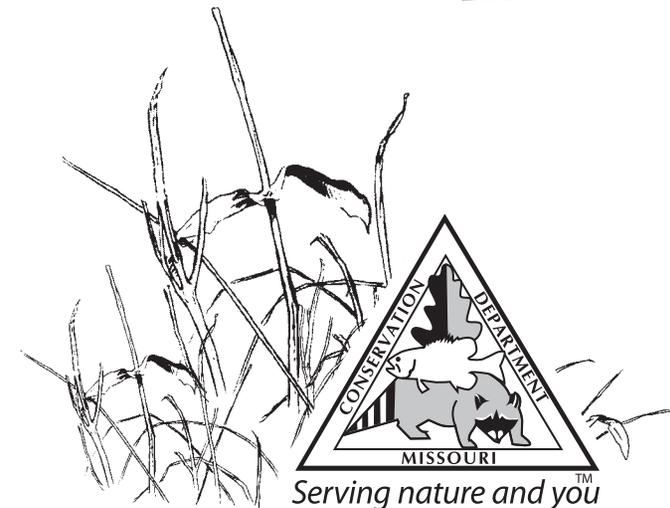
*Additional area information is posted on bulletin boards located in parking areas and area offices.*

06/2021

(Regulations are from the Wildlife Code of Missouri and selected statutes of the State of Missouri. Special area regulations are in Chapter 11 of the Wildlife Code. A free printed copy of the Wildlife Code, which lists most area regulations, is available from the Conservation Department. Chapter 11 in its entirety is available at [www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/3csr/3csr.asp](http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/3csr/3csr.asp).) Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

# Shepherd of the Hills

## FISH HATCHERY



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

## About this Area

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery is the largest trout-rearing facility operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation. It is located six miles southwest of Branson, on Highway 165 just below Table Rock Dam.

The hatchery includes a Conservation Center, where the public can learn about trout culture, aquatic life, fishing, and the Missouri Department of Conservation's role in aquatic resource management. The Center and raceway pools are open 9AM-5PM Tuesday-Saturday, and closed on all state holidays.

Trails are available near the hatchery for hiking and wildlife viewing. Some also provide fishing access to Lake Taneycomo.

## The Hatchery

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery produces more than one million trout each year. Both rainbow and brown trout are raised at the hatchery with most of this production going into Lake Taneycomo. The remainder of the fish are stocked in other Missouri trout management areas or transferred to Missouri's trout parks. All fish are released for public fishing. No trout are sold.

Construction of the hatchery began in 1957 and production of trout began in 1958 with the completion of Table Rock Dam by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This dam created Table Rock Lake, a large reservoir that varies in water temperature from top to bottom. The water near the bottom stays cool, averaging 48 degrees year-round. During power generation, this cold water is released into Lake Taneycomo. The cold water release creates the ideal environment for trout, a fish that thrives in cold water. Few trout reproduce in Lake Taneycomo due to unstable conditions created by frequent water releases from Table Rock Dam.

## Area Features

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery is located in the historic and biologically rich White River Valley. Trails on the hatchery grounds lead visitors through a variety of natural settings along the shoreline of Lake Taneycomo to nearby high rocky bluffs.

A wide diversity of plant life can be found near the hatchery. Sycamore, bur oak, pawpaw, and spicebush thrive along Lake Taneycomo's shoreline. Wildflowers examples include bluebells, wake robins and violets. The forested area on the hillsides consists mainly of oak and hickory trees with scattered stands of short-leaf pine and eastern cedar. Springtime offers a colorful display of flowering trees such as wild plum, serviceberry, redbud and dogwood.

The rocky bluffs near Lake Taneycomo support glade species such as smoke tree and the Ashe's juniper. Prairie grasses and broad-leaved plants include coreopsis, purple coneflower, black-eyed susan, prickly pear cactus, and Missouri primrose.

The grounds are home to deer, turkey, squirrel, raccoon, fox, mink, muskrat, and beaver. On the glades, you might catch a glimpse of several colorful lizards.

To help protect wildlife species, there are several habitat improvements near the hatchery. Wildlife food plots, shrubs, and shelter-producing trees have been planted. Brush piles have been created for smaller animals and reptiles.

Missouri's state bird, the eastern bluebird, is often seen around the hatchery, as are blue herons, green herons and belted kingfishers. Winter bird visitors include gulls, osprey and bald eagles. Red-shouldered hawks, pileated woodpeckers, and numerous songbirds also call this area home. Turkey vultures and black vultures have a winter roost near the boat launch.

## Hatchery Facts

- Both rainbow and brown are raised here.
- This is the only Missouri hatchery that raises brown trout for distribution statewide.
- Brown trout broodstock are collected each year from Lake Taneycomo via the hatchery's fish ladder.
- Rainbow trout eggs and sperm are collected and mixed by staff during spring and fall spawns. Brown trout eggs and sperm are collected and mixed by staff during the winter spawn.
- Fertilized eggs are then placed in egg incubation jars in the hatchery building. In two weeks, eyes will develop and in one month, eggs hatch into sac fry.
- Small trout continue to grow and are fed a commercially processed trout food. After 18 months of care, 10-12 inch trout are ready for stocking into Lake Taneycomo.
- Each day approximately 14 million gallons of water flows through the hatchery from the depths of Table Rock Lake. Well water supplements lake water in the hatchery building.

## Things To Do

**Fish feeding** is available for 25¢ from feed machines.

**Exhibits** describe trout spawning, egg development and rearing techniques. Other nature-related exhibits are also available.

**Aquariums** allow visitors an "eye to eye" view of trout and other native Ozark fish.

**A video** showing the entire trout rearing process can be seen in the Center's auditorium.

**Guided tours** of the hatchery are offered on weekdays during June, July, and August. Tours begin inside the Center at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m.

**Hiking Trails** are available for hiking, nature study, photography and wildlife viewing.