

## Channel Catfish Broodstock/ Spawning



Channel catfish are cavity spawners, which means they lay their eggs

in some type of container. In the wild that could be a hollow log or a rock structure. At the Las Animas Hatchery, we provide them with a PVC container that resembles an old milk can.

Channel catfish usually reach sexual maturity at four years of age. Once they reach maturity they are introduced to the spawning ponds where the males



will claim a spawning container and set up housekeeping. He will clean the container and start guarding it against other male rivals. Once a female has decided he will

make a suitable mate, she will enter the container and begin laying eggs. When she is done laying eggs and the male has fertilized the eggs, she leaves the male to guard and care for the eggs.

Hatchery personnel will check the spawning containers every four days and remove the eggs. The eggs are taken to the hatchery building where they are placed in hatching jars until hatching is completed. The newly hatched fry are then placed in nurse tanks where they

are fed a starter diet before going outdoors to grow-out ponds. When the fingerlings reach the appropriate size they are stocked to lakes all around the state.



## Channel Catfish

Las Animas re-entered Channel catfish production in 1989. Channel catfish are native to eastern Colorado and have been stocked in warmwater rivers and reservoirs in other parts of the state.

Las Animas's goal is to produce about 500,000 three-inch fingerling catfish a year and about 150,000 eight-inch catfish a year. The three-inch fish are usually stocked in larger lakes and reservoirs through out the state, while the eight-inch fish are mostly stocked in city or town park ponds where young anglers have a better opportunity to catch them.



### Las Animas State Fish Hatchery & Rearing Unit

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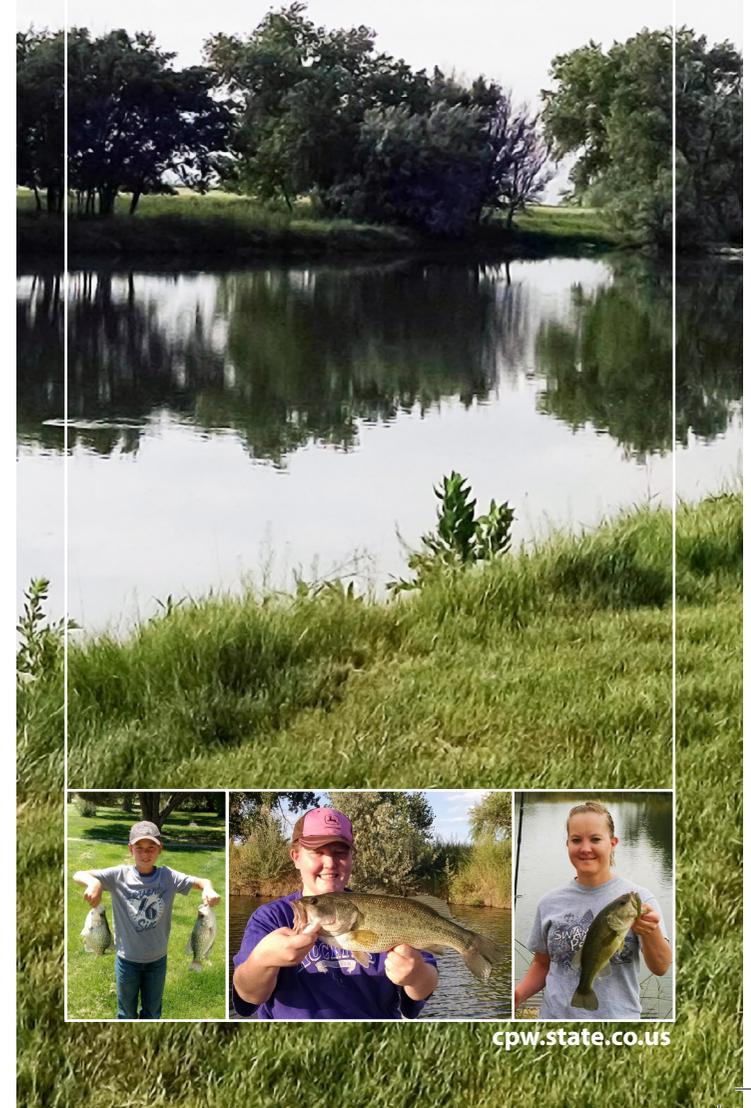
Open year-round 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

## Las Animas State Fish Hatchery & Rearing Unit

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## The Las Animas Hatchery

The Las Animas Hatchery and Rearing Unit, owned and operated by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, is located in Bent County, five miles west of Las Animas on Hwy. 194 and two miles north on County Road 5.5, in the lower Arkansas Valley on Adobe Creek drainage.

Initial construction of the unit began in the 1930s for the specific purpose of raising warmwater fish, thus giving the unit the distinction of being Colorado's first warmwater hatchery.

The increased interest in warmwater fishing has created a demand for hatchery-reared warmwater fish. The Las Animas unit is helping to meet this increased demand on warmwater fisheries and is one of three warmwater production units in the state's hatchery system.

The Las Animas unit's facilities consist of 13 ponds totaling 13.25 acres, 250 feet of concrete raceways, three lined raceways, 12 hatchery tanks and 6 nursebasins. The water supply is from Adobe creek and seepage from Fort Lyon canal. The hatchery is staffed with four full-time employees and two part-time seasonal employees.



CPW operates 19 hatcheries that breed, hatch, rear and stock over 90 million fish per year. Many of the fish produced are to enhance angling opportunities, while others serve a critical role in native species recovery efforts. Colorado fish hatcheries support our angling pastime, which annually contributes 1.9 billion dollars to our state's economy!

## Largemouth Bass

One of the primary species cultured at the Las Animas Unit is the largemouth bass, which was the first species of fish introduced into Colorado in about 1878. Like all sunfish, they are nest builders, spawning in 18–36 inches of water in late spring when water temperatures reach 65 degrees F.

Las Animas has been responsible for the largemouth bass production requests for the state of Colorado since 1989 and currently produces about 1.2 million largemouth bass fry and fingerlings annually.



## Largemouth Bass Spawning



Each spring, Las Animas Hatchery personnel move largemouth bass brood fish to spawning ponds where artificial spawning structure is placed. Males will claim a spawning pad as their own nest and wait for females to come and deposit eggs on their nest.

The staff inspects and collects mats with eggs on them daily. Spawn mats are moved to the hatchery, where they are placed in hatching tanks. When the fry hatch and swim out, they are fed brine shrimp for about a week before being moved outdoors to grow-out ponds.

