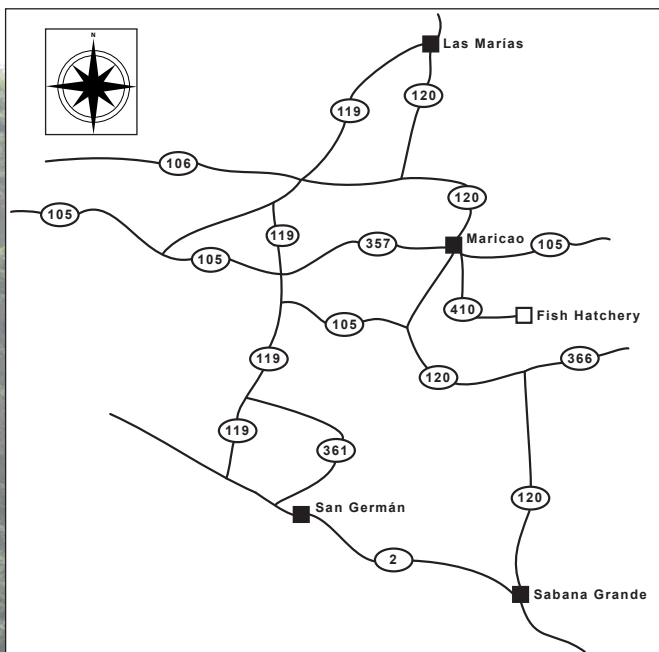


## Finding the Maricao Fish Hatchery



The Hatchery visiting hours are:

Thursday to Sunday 8:30 am. - 11:30 am,  
and 1:00 pm. - 3:00 pm.

The hatchery will be closed on the following holidays:

New Years Day  
Three Kings Day  
Mothers Day  
Fathers Day  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas

Telephone: 787-838-3710 / Fax: 787-838-2889  
San Juan Offices: 787-999-2200 ext. 2696



The Department of Natural and Environmental Resources recreational fishing projects are possible thanks to a federal contribution from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Wallop-Breaux amendment to the Dingell-Johnson Sportfish Restoration Act.

The Department of Natural and Environmental Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, origin, social status, political views, religious, physical or mental disability.

Designed by:

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[www.drna.gobierno.pr](http://www.drna.gobierno.pr)

# MARICAO



# Fish

# Hatchery

Did you know...?

- It's the only fish hatchery in warm waters that produces Largemouth Bass in the tropics.
- That 50,000 to 200,000 Largemouth Bass are produced and stocked to the local reservoirs each year.
- Largemouth Bass stocked in Puerto Rico can reach the size of 12 inches in a year.
- The biggest Largemouth Bass caught in Puerto Rico was in Dos Bocas Reservoir and it weighed 14 pounds.

The Maricao Fish Hatchery was built in 1937 under the direction of renowned biologist Dr. Samuel F. Hildebrand of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. The purpose of the hatchery was to study some freshwater fish and introduce new species to the island such as Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*). Both cold-water species were unable to adapt to the warm waters of Puerto Rico. While growing in our waters, they could not reproduce, so they began to experiment with warm-water fish such as sunfish and catfishes.

In the early 70's, the administration of the hatchery passed to the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources where it remains at present in the Division of Marine Resources. Currently, the Maricao Fish Hatchery is the only state government facility dedicated to the maintenance and diversity of freshwater fish populations in Puerto Rico.



January 1953

Photo by Antonio Atiles, USDA Agricultural Education Service, UPR Puerto Rico Digital Library

Through the years, the hatchery has experimented with the rearing of many species of fish, including trout, sunfish, tilapia, catfish, peacock bass, carp and shads. However, at present, the species that occurs primarily is the bass, which is the most attractive fish for freshwater anglers, while experimenting with a native species the guabina.

Since its foundation in 1937, the productive capacity of the hatchery had been relatively low due to space and water supply. The need for modernization and expansion of facilities became evident with the accelerated growth of recreational fishing on the Island.

With the sponsorship of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the first steps to expand and modernize the facilities of the hatchery began. The expansion represents an increase of 62% in pond surface area and the modernization of the entire water system and structures for the production of fish. With these improvements, the Maricao Fish Hatchery has become a larger, modern and a more productive facility (comparable to other hatcheries in the U.S.). In fact, it's the only hatchery with warm waters that produces bass in the tropics.



January 2010

Photo: R. Del Moral

Beside Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), the Redear Sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*), Bluegill Sunfish (*Lepomis macrochirus*) and Redbreast Sunfish (*Lepomis auritus*), we expect to continue with the production of Peacock Bass and other native species. These have been reproduced in the "nursery", which was recently built to carry out research on other native fish. Today we continue with the stocking of Largemouth Bass and Sunfishes in all reservoirs around the island.



Photo: E. Roza



Photo: R. Del Moral

