



# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

*Preserving The Biological Diversity Of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra & Mojave Desert*

Winter  
2006

### Summing Up 2006

2006 was a busy and productive year for the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office (Service). This issue of our newsletter will provide an update of this year's activities and accomplishments. Although we implement projects on the ground, much of our work is behind the scenes and is vital to the conservation of Nevada's species.

The mission of the Service is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance, fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. In Nevada and portions of California, our mission is also to protect the natural biological diversity of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra and Mojave Desert ecosystems.

During 2006, we reviewed the status of a number of species to determine if they were threatened and looked at ways to remove or reduce those threats. We completed two 90-Day Findings on petitions to list species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. We also completed five-year status reviews to determine if a change in the status was warranted for six listed species. In addition to these reviews, we completed monitoring, habitat, and population surveys for numerous other species in Nevada.

We worked closely with other federal and state agencies, private landowners, and local governments to conserve Nevada's species. We completed 13 formal consultations and worked collaboratively with our



**Biologist Kim Field monitors threatened desert tortoises**

partners on options to reduce impacts to species and their habitats.

Since threatened and endangered species often occur on private land, we completed two Safe Harbor Agreements. These agreements guarantee landowners will not incur any new restrictions on the use of their land if they improve, restore, maintain, or create habitat for endangered species. The Service and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) worked together to develop a Safe Harbor Agreement for a migratory fish species (threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout) that covers privately owned lands in the northeast

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portion of the State. In addition, NDOW and the Service developed a draft Safe Harbor Agreement for the endangered razorback sucker and bonytail chub in southern Nevada. NDOW is the permit holder of these agreements and will be enrolling private landowners through Certificates of Inclusions.

To ensure Nevada's species have a viable future, we are continuing to work with communities and agencies to develop recovery plans for Nevada's listed species. This year, we completed a draft recovery plan for the endangered Carson wandering skipper and a stakeholder assessment for

collaborative recovery planning for the threatened desert tortoise. Information on these plans is available on our web site.

Recovery of threatened and endangered species is a group effort. It takes committed partners and cooperative landowners. We assisted our partners by providing guidance and funding to six private landowners for restoration of listed species and their habitats. We also entered into six formal agreements with other agencies and local communities to protect and enhance several species and their habitats.

## Summing Up 2006—Research and Reports

Using the best available science is a high priority for Service managers when making decisions affecting Nevada's species. Our team of contaminate biologists conduct studies to determine the effects of environmental contaminants on the health of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Technical assistance is provided on a variety of issues including water quality standards, mining, agriculture, pesticide use, wastewater treatment discharges,

and industrial discharges. Our biologists also respond to oil and chemical spills and toxic releases and provide recommendations on restoring natural resources injured by these releases.

This year, the Service completed three research projects and six reports. In addition, we sponsored and contributed to eight Nevada Biodiversity Initiative research projects and are continuing research on four additional projects.

## Summing 2006—Fisheries

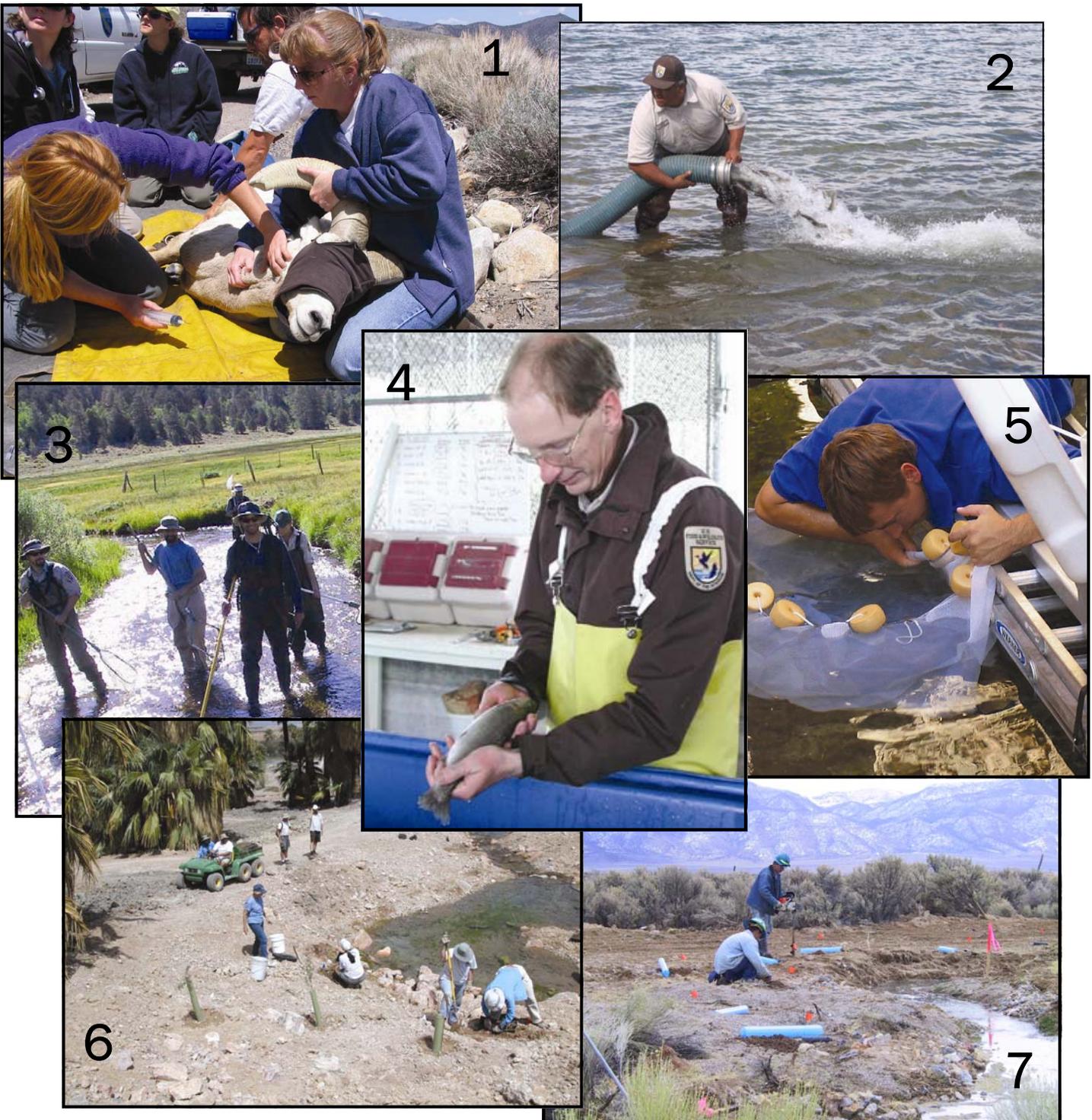
As part of an ongoing effort to reestablish native trout in the Tahoe, Truckee and Walker Basins, we produced, marked and distributed:

- 10,000 8 inch Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) into the Truckee River
- 13,800 5.5 inch LCT were stocked into Fallen Leaf Lake in the Lake Tahoe Basin
- 62,000 6-10 inch LCT stocked in Walker Lake

Some of LCT reared at the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery were stocked to support recreational fishing in Mono County, California and Washoe County, Nevada:

- 10,000 4 inch LCT stocked in June Lake
- 280 LCT over 19 inch (weighing over 3 pounds) broodstock were stocked into Sparks Marina

## Reflections of 2006



1) Marcy Haworth (right front) assists with Sierra Nevada big horn sheep blood sampling; 2) Roy Hicks stocks LCT; 3) Chad Mellison (right front) participates in electrofishing at Silver King Creek; 4) Jay Bigelow spawns Lahontan cutthroat trout at the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery; 5) Grant Webber captures Devils Hole pupfish; 6) Southern Nevada Field Office employees participate in workday at Moapa National Wildlife Refuge; 7) Partners for Fish and Wildlife restoration project in eastern Nevada.

## Summing Up FY 2006—Accomplishments

The following is a list of some of the projects and accomplishments the Service completed in 2006. For more information on many of these and other projects please visit our web site at <http://www.fws.gov/nevda>

### Research and Reports

- Science panel convened regarding captive propagation actions—Devils Hole pupfish
- Science Advisory Committee drafted revised recovery criteria—desert tortoise
- “Range Wide Monitoring of the Mojave Population of the Desert Tortoise: 2001-2005 Summary Report”
- Las Vegas Wash Monitoring and Characterization Study: “Ecotoxicologic Screening Assessment of Selected Contaminants of Potential Concern in Sediment, Whole Fish, Bird Eggs, and Water, 2000-2003”
- “Hexachlorocyclohexanes and DDT, DDE, and DDD isomer Residues in Eggs of Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*) at Sites 10B and 9, Las Vegas, Nevada”
- “Investigations of the Effects of Synthetic Chemicals on the Endocrine System of Common Carp in Lake Mead, Nevada and Arizona” USGS Fact Sheet
- Published report: “Preliminary assessment of contaminants and potential effects to fish of the Truckee River, Nevada”
- In review: “Mercury in fish and aquatic macro invertebrates in the Humboldt River, Nevada 1998-2000”
- Preliminary assessment of fish community dynamics and trace element exposures to aquatic invertebrates and salmonids, lower Bryant Creek and East Fork Carson River”

### Support for Nevada Biodiversity Initiative Research

- Assess the impacts of urbanization on the native biodiversity of the Tahoe basin
- Assess the status of reptiles on Anaho Island at Pyramid Lake
- Document the effects of livestock grazing, fire suppression, alien weed invasion, and climate change on the Great Basin sage brush biota
- Examine regional and local biotic responses to climate change to understand the potential consequences of these changes to biodiversity
- Assess impacts of development on biodiversity of the Carson Range
- Assess the distribution and status of the Sand Mountain blue butterfly
- Document and assess the status of populations of Nevada’s most at-risk butterfly taxa
- Assess patterns of songbird distributions and abundances in montane aspen forest patches

### Continuing Research

- Mercury assessment study at Ruby Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
- Fish Multigeneration Testing of Las Vegas Municipal Effluents for Reproductive Effects to Fathead Minnow, Clark County, Nevada
- Assessment of Environmental Contaminant Uptake by Trust Resources Utilizing the Las Vegas Wash and its Tributaries, Clark County, Nevada
- Assessment of petroleum products in stormwater drainage reaching the Truckee River

### Fisheries

- Walker Lake Fisheries Improvement Program—implementation of the following:
  - Lahontan cutthroat trout survival study—stocked 62,000 floy tagged LCT into Walker Lake
  - Increased creel census for recreation fishery
  - LCT acclimation facility
- Cui-ui run of 950,000 spawning adults passed through Marble Bluff Fish Passage Facility
- Began Walker River Basin restoration program
- Hatchery stocking activities: 24,000 into the Tahoe and Truckee Basins, 10,000 in June Lake

### 90-Day Findings

- Non-substantial (no further review warranted), petition to list Mono Basin Area Sage Grouse
- Substantial (an in-depth review warranted and underway), petition to list Sand Mountain Blue Butterfly

## Summing Up FY 2006—Accomplishments

### Five-Year Reviews

- Five-year reviews resulted in no change in status for the following species: Paiute cutthroat trout, desert dace, White River spinedace, Amargosa niterwort, Ash Meadows gumplant, and spring-loving centaury

### Monitoring and Surveys

- Completion and analysis of 2001-2005 monitoring data for desert tortoise
- Jarbidge River watershed bull trout population and habitat surveys
- Lahontan cutthroat trout stocking and monitoring
- Support services to USGS for Independence Valley speckled dace surveys
- Annual non-sport fisheries surveys with Nevada Department of Wildlife, California Fish and Game, and other partners for the following species: Moapa dace, Devils Hole pupfish, Ash Meadows fishes, Big Spring spinedace, Pahranaagat roundtail chub, Hiko White River springfish, White River springfish, Pahrump poolfish, Railroad Valley springfish and tui chub, White River spinedace, Clover Valley speckled dace, Paiute cutthroat trout, and Wall Canyon sucker
- Annual native Amargosa toad and Columbia spotted frog surveys with Nevada Department of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Natural Heritage Foundation and other partners
- Native rare plant surveys for the Amargosa niterwort, Las Vegas bearpoppy, Las Vegas buckwheat and a suite of plants from White River Valley such as Sunnyside green gentian and Tiehm's blazing star

### Safe Harbor Agreements

- Draft Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement for Razorback sucker and bonytail chub
- Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement for the Humboldt Distinct Population Segment of LCT

### Recovery Planning and Implementation

- Completion of stakeholder assessment for collaborative recovery planning—desert tortoise
- Completion of draft recovery plan—Carson wandering skipper
- Stream restoration at Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge—Moapa dace and other native species
- Burned Area Emergency Response restoration at Jackrabbit Springs at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge—Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish, Ash Meadows speckled dace, and other native species

### Partners for Fish and Wildlife Projects

- Duckwater Tribe Big Warm Springs Restoration benefiting the Railroad Valley Springfish
- Squaw Valley Ranch Wetland and Montane Parkland Restoration
- Carson River/Bentley Ranch Riparian Riverine Protection
- Little Walker River Riparian and Wetland Restoration
- Uhalde Ranch Sage Grouse Restoration Project
- Habitat restoration in Oasis Valley for the Amargosa toad

### Partnerships and Agreements

- Memorandum of Agreement for habitat restoration from the advanced fuel filtration East Walker River oil spill: with California Department of Fish and Game, Nevada Department of Wildlife and Nevada Department of Environmental Protection
- Memorandum of Agreement—for Moapa dace in the Muddy River system; with the Southern Nevada Water Authority, Coyote Springs Investment LLC, the Moapa Band of Paiute, and the Moapa Valley Water District
- Stipulation for Withdrawal of Protests Agreement for the monitoring, management, and mitigation plan for groundwater development in Spring Valley—with Southern Nevada Water Authority, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Conservation Agreement—Sand Mountain blue butterfly: with Churchill County, Friends of Sand Mountain, California Off Road Vehicle Assoc., Bureau of Land Management, and Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe



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We're on the web!

<http://www.fws.gov/nevada>

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## A Message From The Field Supervisor

Fiscal Year 2006 started out like most other with us working on consultations, recovery projects for Lahontan cutthroat trout, cui-ui and other conservation actions, but it quickly became one filled with new challenges. Our greatest challenge being the effort we undertook with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and National Park Service at Death Valley to monitor and develop refuge populations of Devils Hole pupfish. While much is still needed to ensure the long term persistence of the pupfish, scientists and agency staff at all levels came together to make the best decisions possible to conserve the species.

I see many new challenges and opportunities ahead of us in 2007. Not only will we work with our partners on the conservation of Nevada's species, but we working toward completing our third programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement with the Nevada Department of Wildlife for razorback sucker and bonytail chub. We will continue to look for opportunities to assist private landowners and tribal governments with habitat restoration and species conservation projects and we look forward to initiating efforts to reintroduce Lahontan cutthroat trout back into it's native habitat in the Lake Tahoe.

We will be facing a new challenge as we work with our state and federal partners in a national effort to slow the spread of an aquatic invasive mussel that has just been confirmed in Nevada. We are ready to meet these new challenges as we move into 2007 and we will continue to work with our partners and developing new opportunities to conserve Nevada's species.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Williams

