



Monthly Accomplishments

February 2013

Fisheries Activities

In cooperation with Pueblo of Isleta and Pueblo of Sandia, staff completed monthly monitoring for the Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) within the Middle Rio Grande, Pueblo of Isleta, and Pueblo of Sandia. Monitoring efforts are to determine presence/absence of visible implant elastomer tagged fish in relation to augmentation and research efforts.

Staff surveyed a return drain along the Rio Grande for presence of RGSM for the Interstate Stream Commission in preparation of a construction project. No fish were collected within the proposed construction site.

With the assistance of Mora National Fish Hatchery (NFH) and U.S. Forest Service, staff stocked 2,515 Gila trout into Sapillo Creek and Gila River - Forks Area, Gila National Forest for recreational purposes. Sapillo Creek received 800 Gila trout (Main Diamond lineage) averaging 5.3 inches. Gila River - Forks Area received 759 Gila trout (Main Diamond lineage) averaging 5.3 inches and 956 (South Diamond lineage) averaging 4.5 inches.

Since June 2012, Gila trout (Whiskey lineage) have been held in refugium at NMFWCO. The

Gila trout were brought on station for refuge from Whiskey Creek, Gila National Forest, due to the Whitewater-Baldy Complex Fire. Thirty Gila trout were transferred to Mora NFH, where they will establish a broodstock for the Whiskey lineage. The fish were in good condition ranging between 161 to 281 mm (6.3 to 11.0 in). The remaining Gila trout are active, aggressively feeding, and maintaining their wild coloration. The remaining 38 Gila trout will be transferred to Mora NFH in March 2013. Staff have maintained a survival rate of 84%. Gila trout, of the Whiskey lineage, have not previously been successfully held or replicated in a hatchery setting.



In cooperation with staff from Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge (BLNWR), staff completed fish community monitoring within spring habitats on BLNWR. The goal of this monitoring is to document distribution and relative abundance of fishes within these habitats with emphasis on Pecos

pupfish and Pecos gambusia. The monitoring protocol was developed by New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO) and BLNWR staff.

Meeting and Trainings

Staff attended the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's Biological Committee meeting in Durango, Colorado. Topics of discussion for this annual researchers meeting included results of activities for 2012 and recommendations for 2013. Bobby Duran presented *Endangered Fish Monitoring and Nonnative Species Monitoring and Control in the Upper/Middle San Juan River 2012*. Weston Furr presented *Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker Augmentation for San Juan River 2012*.

Staff attended the RGSM Augmentation Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Participants included Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (formerly Dexter NFH & TC), Albuquerque BioPark, Ecological Services, and American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers, L.L.C. (ASIR). The primary purpose of the meeting was to outline recommendations and provide guidance for amending the current RGSM Augmentation Plan.

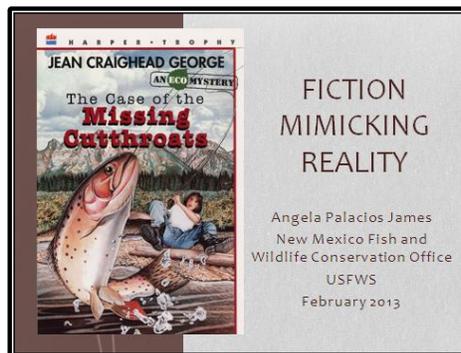
Education and Outreach

Staff participated in the Southwest Conservation Career Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Graduate and undergraduate students from across the country, including Hawaii and New York, participated in the Symposium. Staff provided a Fisheries exhibit during an open forum presenting booths of the various field services provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife, including hydrology, refuges, and fisheries. The NMFWCO display included images of fieldwork and a live fish display of RGSM, flathead chub, and river carpsucker. Staff spoke with students about career options, field experiences, and answered questions students had concerning the fisheries field.

Angela Palacios James presented *The Anatomy of a Cutthroat* to two classes (50 students) from Monte Vista Elementary School. The NMFWCO provided Rio Grande cutthroat specimens, worksheets, and reference guides to provide for a hands-on experience as the 5th grade students explored internal and external trout anatomy. These same classes participate with the *Native Fish in the Classroom* (NFIC) project that aims to generate enthusiasm for natural resources and foster a sense of stewardship for native fish and their habitats. Three additional schools participating in the NFIC project are scheduled to complete this activity in March 2013.



Angela Palacios James presented *Fiction Mimicking Reality* to a class (21-5th graders) from Emerson Elementary School. The presentation tied together points from the fictional book *The Case of the Missing Cutthroats: An Eco Mystery* and work that field biologists do with native fish. Issues discussed in the book, included native ranges of cutthroats, macroinvertebrate sampling, fish tagging and monitoring, and impacts of humans. The book was a class reading assignment, initiated by the teacher, to help integrate the activities of the NFIC project into their curriculum. Two additional classes participating in the NFIC project are scheduled to complete this activity in March 2013.



Personnel

The NMFWCO staff said farewell to Sara Blocker, Fish Biologist, as she moved on to work for the State of Oklahoma. For the past three years, Sara diligently worked on projects related to the Pecos River fish community and rarely hesitated to join in on other projects of the NMFWCO. Sara was also a key person in creating and running the Native Fish in the Classroom Project. Good Luck to Sara Blocker in her future endeavors.



U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Southwest Region
Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation



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Current staff members

Jim Brooks	Project Leader
Jason Davis	Assistant Project Leader
Angela Carrillo.....	Administrative Officer
Stephen Davenport	Supervisory Fish Biologist
Chris Kitcheyan	Supervisory Fish Biologist
Weston Furr	Fish Biologist
Thomas Archdeacon.....	Fish Biologist
Dustin Myers.....	Fish Biologist
Angela Palacios James.....	Fish Biologist
Bobby Duran	Fish Biologist
Sara Blocker.....	Fish Biologist
Andy Dean.....	Fish Biologist
Christine Stewart.....	Fish Biologist
Ernest Tellier Sr.	Biological Science Technician
Tristan Austring	STEP Student
Cole Wolf	STEP Student