



# *Uvalde National Fish Hatchery*

## Monthly Activity Report

### *January 2015*



#### Staff

*Project Leader • Vacant*

*Acting Project Leader • Teresa Lewis*

*Acting Project Leader • Jeff Conway*

*Fish Biologist • Rick Echols*

*Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo*

*Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra*

*Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich*

*Volunteers • Mike and Joan Brown*

*Volunteers • Thomas Jetzer & Patricia Schenk*

*Volunteer • Catherine Baxter*

#### Partnerships and Accountability

As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas wild rice, Fountain Darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, Devil's River minnow, and San Marcos salamander. All species are performing well.

The station continues to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) and Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program for existing and upcoming refugia activities of threatened and endangered species native to the Edwards Aquifer system. In addition, an agreement is in place for the Uvalde National Fish Hatchery to provide 700-F1 juvenile fountain darters to the USGS's Leetown Science Center in West Virginia for life history studies on an as needed basis.

Future partnerships will likely focus on west Texas threatened and endangered species.

#### Workforce Management

Administrative assistant Mark Dietrich completed FBMS training during January. He will be attending the Administrative Professionals Workshop in Albuquerque next month.

Teresa Lewis completed her 60 day detail as Acting Project Leader. During her time here she submitted FONS projects, made great strides towards completing the annual report and provided input and encouragement for employees to complete their individual development plans. She also met with our electrician to discuss providing electrical service to our proposed new rice tanks and is working on a biosecurity plan for the station. Teresa has returned to Dexter to lead the fish health unit. We all appreciate her dedication to the service and her willingness to help us out in a pinch.

Jeff Conway, fish biologist at Mora NFH began a 30 day detail as Acting Project Leader. He has spearheaded the completion of the first draft of our annual report and has disseminated the Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan and asked for comment. He also aided with the harvest of two Comanche Springs Pupfish ponds.

Volunteer Catherine Baxter continues to do background research from home in preparation for copper toxicity studies on Comanche Springs pupfish.

Uvalde NFH continues to make use of Thomas Jetzer and Patricia Schenk's mechanical and construction skills. They have been building 4

new recirculating tank systems to be used for life history and chemical toxicity studies.

### Aquatic Species Activities

Young of the year channel catfish average 11 to 12 inches in length. Fish remain healthy, but growth rates have slowed due to the cold weather.

One pond of Comanche Springs Pupfish was harvested, enumerated, and transferred to a new pond this past month. A mild weather spell in January has proven to be the best time for pupfish movements because aquatic vegetation that would otherwise strand a large portion of the fish is at a yearly minimum. The first pond contained in excess of 35,000 individuals.



**Volunteers Mike Brown, Patricia Schenk, and Thomas Jetzer along with biologist Rick Echols joyfully harvesting pupfish.**

Intermittent roofing panels were again installed over the 9 small rice tanks. Partial shade seems to produce healthier rice plants and retard algae growth. Rice seeds were harvested and stored for future planting again this past month. All other species continue to do well.

### Additional Facility Activities

Excavation began early this month which will culminate in the installation of 4 new large rice tanks. The tanks will be adjacent to two existing tanks and will allow the hatchery to increase rice capacity and meet the minimum required in the draft report Genetic Diversity Assessment of Wild and Refugia Texas Wild Rice (*Zizania texana*) Populations 2012.



**Cirilo Alonzo and Rene Guerra prepare for the installation of 4 new large rice tanks.**

### Facility Maintenance

In anticipation of high winds, bird netting was surveyed and repairs were made and additional stakes were installed to hold it down. As in most cases when you are prepared, the anticipated event never happened.

A second Comanche Springs pupfish pond has been connected to a dry pond to catch overflow water and prevent escapement of eggs and fry.



**Volunteer Mike Brown prepares a “dry pond” to receive overflow water. This biosecurity measure will minimize the likelihood of fish escapement.**

### Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 21 visitors for the month.

### Weather

Temperatures for January ranged from a low of 30°F to a high of 83°F. Overall, high temperatures were well below normal with the observed average high for the month at 60°F compared to the 111 year average of 64°F. Low temperatures were below normal as well with the average for the month at 38°F compared to the 110 year average of 40°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 7 days in January with precipitation totaling 1.40 inches. According to US Climate Data, January’s monthly precipitation averages 1.15 inches. The Edwards Aquifer is currently at 824.4’ compared to 824.2’ in December and 836.1’ this time last year.

### Upcoming Events

A second Comanche Springs pupfish pond is set to be harvest and moved to a new pond in early February, weather permitting.

Cirilo Anonzo will be taking a one day pesticide training class in February to maintain his pesticide applicator’s license. Rick Echols plans to pursue this training as well.

The station looks forward to starting a salamander egg handling study. The study will commence after a review of the proposal.

Purchasing of 4 additional large rice tanks is now in the hands of contracting. Cirilo and Rene have prepared the site and are awaiting delivery.

### **Uvalde National Fish Hatchery**

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**Uvalde National Fish Hatchery January 2015**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Year Class</b>	<b>Geographic Origin</b>	<b>Approximate Number</b>
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2013	Domestic Strain	136
Channel Catfish	2014	Domestic Strain	3,000
Comanche Springs Pupfish	Mixed	Phantom Springs	107,517
Devil's River Minnow	2013	San Felipe Springs	268
Devil's River Minnow	2014	San Felipe Springs	368
Fountain Darter	2012	Upper Comal River	36
Fountain Darter	2013	Upper Comal River	27
Fountain Darter	2012	Lower Comal River	39
Fountain Darter	2013	Lower Comal River	21
Fountain darter	2013/2014	Comal River	765
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	11
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	10
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	54
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	38
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	16
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	12
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	19
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	17
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (J)	3
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (K)	12
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	SMR (Unknown)	26

Species and number at Uvalde NFH at the end of the month.