



# *Uvalde National Fish Hatchery*

## Monthly Activity Report

### *September 2015*



#### **Staff**

***Project Leader • Patricia Duncan***

***Fish Biologist • Rick Echols***

***Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo***

***Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra***

***Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich***



**Ashlie Peterson**

#### **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, Rio Grande silvery minnow, and San Marcos salamander.

The station continues to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) for existing and upcoming refugia activities of threatened and endangered species native to the Edwards Aquifer system. In addition, updates to the care and maintenance of the Rio Grande silvery minnow were provided by the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources Center.

#### **Workforce Management**

Ian Paige completed two weeks at Uvalde NFH and was replaced by Ashlie Peterson of the Southwest Native Aquatic Resources Center (SNARC). While at Uvalde NFH, they were responsible for water quality maintenance and culture of the Rio Grande silvery minnow in this inaugural season.

#### **Aquatic Species Activities**

William Knight and Manuel Ulibarri of SNARC and Uvalde NFH staff harvested the 4 ponds of Rio Grande silvery minnow on September 28 and 29. Initial enumeration after the harvest resulted in returns of 94.7% survival of silvery minnow after a four month growing period in ponds at Uvalde. At the end of the month, they were awaiting a health screening before being stocked in the Big Bend area of the Rio Grande River.

Comanche Springs pupfish produced by Justin Crow for his DFP project continue to do well. They have now transitioned from feeding on artemia to a flake mix of algae and krill.

Monthly monitoring of Comanche springs pupfish continued in August. Results continue to indicate healthy populations in each of the three ponds with all sizes present. September's estimates are provided at the end of this document.

Young of the year channel catfish are approximately 6.5 inches in length and are growing steadily.

## Facility Maintenance



**Work continues on the Spurgeon well.**

Maintenance continued on our Spurgeon well in September. Completion of the project was delayed because the pump manufacturer had to fabricate replacement parts before the pump could be put back in service. We are planning to ensure that all possible replacement parts are available before the well is taken off line in the future. The well should be again functioning as our main source of water by early October.

Pond cleaning was completed by the end of September. Bird netting was installed on one pond and netting was patched on the other to prevent cormorant predation on catfish fingerlings.

A leaking main water supply line to hatchery ponds was identified and fixed during the month.

Recent dry weather has finally allowed maintenance staff to excavate soil from the bottom of our retention pond to shore up low areas in our levees. These low areas were made evident during our extremely wet spring even though no levees were actually breached.

Jae Ahn spent 6 days with us completing his 5 year facilities audit. He spent considerable time marking locations of water lines so that a master diagram can be generated in the future.

## Outreach

Mark Dietrich and Patricia Duncan attended the fifth annual Dove Hunting Expo held at a local outdoor retailer in early September. This proved to be a great opportunity to get the word out about what Uvalde NFH does for Texas native endangered species and answer questions from the public.

## Safety

All corrections have been made to comply with the findings of the safety inspection.



**Bulk fuel tanks with new safety compliance signage**

## Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 14 visitors for the month. Visitors took part in hatchery tours and partook in the facilities ample birding prospects. One couple came all the way from California to view our birds.

## Weather

Temperatures for September ranged from a low of 61°F to a high of 99°F. Overall, high temperatures were above normal with the

observed average high for the month at 94°F compared to the 111 year average of 92°F. Low temperatures were above normal as well with the average for the month of 70°F compared to the 111 year average of 68°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 3 days in September with precipitation totaling 0.09 inches. According to US Climate Data, September's monthly precipitation averages 2.3 inches. The Edwards Aquifer level continues to rise slowly and is currently at 851.5' compared to 851.2' last month, and 826.4' this time last year.

### Upcoming Events

Patricia Duncan will be attending the project leader's meeting originally scheduled for late September in Albuquerque in late November.

The station's environmental compliance inspection originally scheduled for August will be completed in early November.

Young of the year channel catfish will be moved under protection of bird netting before the end of October to prevent predation by cormorants.

Hatchery staff will be seeking estimates to add two additional large rice tanks to the four recently installed tanks. This will increase our capacity to nearly 500 plants depending on size. This will allow the hatchery to hold a complete genetic refugium called for in the *Genetic Diversity Assessment of Wild and Refugia Texas Wild Rice* with extra room for production of plants for reintroduction.

In October, we will endeavor on monthly collection efforts to collect wild rice tillers from the San Marcos River. Up to 30 tillers will be collected monthly until we have the proper number of representatives of the extant genetic groups.

Uvalde plans to be a part of the local National Night Out celebration in early October after being absent from the event for the past few

years. This is part of a concerted effort to increase our participation in outreach events.

### **Uvalde National Fish Hatchery**

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<b>Uvalde National Fish Hatchery September 2015</b>			
<b>Species</b>	<b>Year Class</b>	<b>Geographic Origin</b>	<b>Approximate Number</b>
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2014	Domestic Strain	200
Channel Catfish	2015	Domestic Strain	10,000
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Pond)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	332,816*
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Tank)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	229
Devils River Minnow (F1)	2013	San Felipe Springs	220
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2014	San Felipe Springs	40
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2015	San Felipe Springs	193
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Upper Comal River	24
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Lower Comal River	25
Fountain Darter (F1)	2013/2014	Comal River Mix	334
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Upper Comal River	31
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Comal River Mix	60
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	4
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	7
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	52
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	36
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	16
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)	22

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