



John Naugle (AZFWCO, left) and Sean O'Kray (AZFWCO) conduct a water quality survey of High Levee Pond on Cibola National Wildlife Refuge in October 2015.

AZFWCO Staff

Flagstaff

- Jess Newton, Project Leader
- Kirk Young, Project Coordinator
- Randy Van Haverbeke, Senior Fish Biologist
- Dennis Stone, Fish Biologist
- Michael Pillow, Fish Biologist
- Jim Walters, Biological Technician
- Rick Deshler, Biological Technician
- Vic Scott, Administrative Officer

Pinetop

- Vacant, Assistant Project Leader
- Jeremy Voeltz, Project Coordinator
- Jennifer Johnson, Fish Biologist
- Tim Grosch, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist
- Vacant, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
- Vacant, Office Assistant

Parker

- Mitch Thorson, Fish Biologist
- Brad Buechel, Fish Biologist
- John Naugle, Biological Technician
- Sean O'Kray, Pest Control Worker



Conserving Aquatic Species

Jeremy Voeltz and Jess Newton participated in the 6-Species Statewide Coordination Team meeting. The team revised and moved toward finalizing the 2015 strategy and task list. The six species are Roundtail Chub, Headwater Chub, Flannelmouth Sucker, Little Colorado River Sucker, Bluehead Sucker, and Zuni Bluehead Sucker.

Jeremy and Mike Andersen (Arizona Game and Fish Department) worked with Dr. David Lawrence (NFWF's Fresh Water Fish Keystone Director) on an Apache Trout status summary document describing activities completed under the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Apache Trout Keystone Initiative between 2008 and 2015. The report will be used during Dr. Lawrence's presentation to the NFWF Board in November to propose a continuation of NFWF funding for Apache Trout recovery activities.

Jennifer Johnson downloaded images and performed maintenance on ten trail cameras installed at fish barriers on Apache Trout recovery streams. The cameras were installed to evaluate barrier performance



Jim Walters (AZFWCO) measures age-0 Humpback Chubs collected for translocation above Chute Falls in the Little Colorado River (LCR). Each fish was given a PIT tag prior to translocation. These fish are expected to grow quickly in their new home and contribute significantly to the overall chub population in the LCR.



Trail camera images to evaluate fish barrier performance under low flow (top) and peak flow (bottom) conditions on an Apache Trout recovery stream.

under a variety of flow conditions.

Kirk Young and Randy Van Haverbeke incorporated reviewer comments and modified the document that details the "triggers" for the lethal removal of nonnative predatory fish in the Grand Canyon. The lethal removal of nonnatives is controversial for several Tribes due to cultural values and religious beliefs. Yet, management agencies need this tool if Humpback Chub numbers begin to plummet. To reduce the chance that this tool will be needed, the Service's Grand Canyon Humpback Chub Team is driving the effort to develop a new approach using tiered triggers: Tier-1 triggers would initially require positive chub population enhancement actions prior to declining to critical levels, thereby decreasing the

probability that Tier-2 triggers for the lethal removal of nonnatives would ever be reached. The near final draft was sent back out to Grand Canyon agency biologists for one last review. The final trigger document will be forwarded to NPS and USBR in early November for incorporation into the EIS process.

Kirk participated in a conference call to discuss conservation opportunities associated with the impacts from the coal powered Navajo Generating plant. Discussions focused on opportunities for Colorado Pikeminnow, Razorback Sucker, and Humpback Chub in the Grand Canyon.

Kirk downloaded data from seven submersible PIT tag antennas deployed in the Grand Canyon in conjunction

Conserving Aquatic Species (continued)

with the Humpback Chub Aggregation monitoring. The effort expanded on last year's pilot effort involving deployment of two antennas that increased unique detections of Humpback Chub by 30% over our traditional hoop and trammel net survey.

Randy continued to analyze and incorporate spring 2015 findings into the Little Colorado River annual monitoring report due in January.

Michael Pillow, Dennis Stone, and Randy entered and checked the data collected during the September Little Colorado River (LCR) Humpback Chub monitoring trip. These data will be combined with the data collected in October and compiled into a fall LCR trip report.

Randy, Dennis, Michael, Jim Walters, and Rick Deshler participated on the October trip into the LCR to monitor the endangered Humpback Chub. This year's trip was rather difficult because the LCR was in flood stage. However, all crews operated safely, and the work was completed. While catch rates of chub were low at all three camps, we will likely still obtain a fall 2015 population estimate. In addition, the crew at Coyote Camp

(including Michael and Jim) successfully captured age-0 humpback chub for translocation, and released 303 age-0 chub above Chute Falls. These young chubs were primarily captured by seining. Other participants on the trip included Robin Osterhoudt (AGFD), Pilar Wolters (AGFD), Kristy Manuell (AGFD), Jeff Van Vrancken (USFWS), Katie Kain (USFWS), Ben Goldfarb (volunteer), and David Hubbard (volunteer).



Michael Pillow (AZFWCO) releases 303 age-0 Humpback Chub translocated above Chute Falls in the Little Colorado River.

Conserving, Restoring, and Enhancing Aquatic Habitats



Jeremy Voeltz (AZFWCO) evaluates a road crossing along Deep Creek, an Apache Trout recovery stream in the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

Jeremy and Jess participated in the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (DFHP) conference call. Agenda items included planning of our annual meeting, outreach, proposal review, and the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) board meeting and workshop. Jess also traveled to Sacramento to represent DFHP at the NFHP-Coordinators workshop.

Jeremy and Jennifer began evaluating road crossings on streams within the Apache Trout recovery area on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. If these stream crossings are inhibiting movement of Apache Trout (as well as meeting other criteria), future funding proposals under the National Fish Passage Program will be developed in cooperation with WMAT-WORD.

Jeremy worked with the Regional Office and the Arizona Game and Fish Department and New Mexico

Department of Game and Fish to extend and modify a Cooperative Agreement for Gila Trout conservation activities in Arizona and New Mexico funded by the Western Native Trout Initiative.

Brad Buechel continued to conduct off-channel habitat water quality surveys on Topock Marsh, Cibola High Levee Pond, Three Fingers Lake, Office Cove, Parker Dam pond, and Emerald Canyon Golf Course. John Naugle and Sean O'Kray introduced Brad to the water quality sampling areas in both Cibola High Levee Pond and Three Fingers Lake

Staff gages were installed in Office Cove Pond and Lake Havasu (near the Office Cove Pond berm) to document water levels in both water bodies. AZFWCO is investigating how quickly water diffusion and exchange takes

Conserving, Restoring, and Enhancing Aquatic Habitats (continued)

place through the Office Cove Pond berm.

Brad has been drafting a memorandum of the off-channel habitat water quality

data accumulated over the past three months.

Managing Aquatic Invasive Species

Kirk Young attended Green Sunfish (GS) planning calls to identify options for containment and response to the threat of GS establishment in Grand

Canyon. A population of GS has established in a backwater slough about 12 miles upstream of Lees Ferry. Plans included netting off the backwater and

treatment with the piscicide Rotenone. Treatment to remove GS will be led by AZGFD and NPS and is scheduled for the first week in November.

Fulfilling Tribal Trust Responsibilities

Jennifer and Jeremy participated in the monthly Fishery Coordination meeting among AZFWCO, A-WC NFH

(Alchesay-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery), & WMAT-WORD (White

Mountain Apache Tribe-Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division).

Enhancing Recreation Fishing and Public Use of Aquatic Resources

On October 27th, Jeremy, Jennifer, and Tim Grosch assisted with stocking threatened Gila Trout into the West Fork of Oak Creek in central Arizona in order to establish a new recreational fishery for this rare native species - now found in the headwaters of Oak Creek for the first time since the late 1800s. The stocking team consisted of members

nonnative Brown Trout population in the West Fork of Oak Creek to the point that the agencies concluded that Gila Trout would be able to thrive in the creek. The Gila Trout were raised at the USFWS Mora National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico.

In 2016, Willow Beach National Fish



Jennifer Johnson (AZFWCO) releases a bucket full of threatened Gila Trout into the West Fork of Oak Creek in October 2015.



Brad Buechel (AZFWCO) measures a Bluegill captured during an electrofishing survey of Lake Mead in October 2015.

and Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program) and Arizona Game and Fish Department met in Phoenix to discuss our overlapping stocking programs and coordinate our approach to ESA Section 7 consultation.

Brad Buechel assisted fisheries biologists Greg Cummins and David Partridge, of the Arizona Game & Fish Region-3 Kingman office, with their annual electrofishing survey of Lake Mead. In total, ten sites in two nights were sampled for species richness. Length and weight data of the entrained fish were recorded to assess the condition and fitness of species present.

from the Arizona Game and Fish Department, USFWS, U.S. Forest Service, and nearly 20 volunteers from local angling groups and fly fishing clubs. The 2014 Slide Fire suppressed

Hatchery will restart their historic rainbow trout production and stocking program in the lower Colorado River. In preparation for this, USFWS (including AZFWCO, Region-2 Fisheries, Ecological Services,

Workforce Management, Training, and Scientific Capacity

We are pleased to announce Tim Grosch as the new Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Biologist for the Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Whiteriver. He comes to us from USFWS -Region 6, where he worked for the Colorado FWCO, but was stationed at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming.

AZFWCO had our bi-monthly all-staff and monthly senior-staff calls and all supervisors and personnel completed annual Employee Performance Appraisals.

Jennifer, Jeremy, Kirk, Vic Scott, and Dennis completed the DOI Scientific Integrity course in DOI Learn. Kirk Young attended a Financial Assistance Management training course in Boise, Idaho.

Jeremy completed interim programmatic reporting and annual financial reporting for the current Apache Trout Keystone



Tim Grosch joined the AZFWCO team in October as the new Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Biologist. Welcome, Tim!

Initiative Grant between the USFWS and NFWF.

Dennis Stone cleaned gear and equipment, and downloaded PIT tag scanners used during the September LCR trip. Dennis, Michael Pillow, and Randy Van Haverbeke repacked equipment for the October 2015 Humpback Chub monitoring trip in the LCR. Michael also assisted the out-of-town October trip crew members by answering questions and coordinating logistics for the pre-LCR trip meetings. Randy conducted topside helicopter sling operations for the crews flying out of the LCR September monitoring trip.

Kirk and Vic put together an employee orientation checklist with appropriate links for use as new employees come on board. Kirk also completed documents to establish and fill a term GS 7/9 Fish Biologist position to be stationed in Flagstaff.

Public Education and Engagement

Did you know AZFWCO has a Facebook page? We post information on our staff, upcoming projects, educational events, and volunteer opportunities across the state.

We currently have 692 “likes” from 41 countries.

Upcoming Events

November 19-22: The Desert Fishes Council annual meeting in Death Valley, CA. (Chase Ehlo, Jeremy Voeltz, Jess Newton)



David Hubbard (volunteer) and Pilar Wolters (AGFD) work up fish collected during the USFWS Little Colorado River Humpback Chub monitoring project in October 2015.

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