

SOUTHWESTERN NATIVE AQUATIC RESOURCES AND RECOVERY CENTER



February 2014
Monthly Activity Report

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Michelle Bell and Alyssa Lewis Present at Dexter Middle School,
USFWS Photo

STAFF

Manuel Ulibarri	Center Director
Vacant	Deputy Center Director
Maria Bullard	Administrative Officer
Michelle Bell	Administrative Tech.
Vacant	Office Assistant
Alyssa Lewis	Office Support (Student)
Vacant	Maintenance Mechanic
Vacant	Maintenance Worker
Vacant	Maintenance Worker
FISH CULTURE	
Vacant	Hatchery Manager
William Knight	Supv. Fish Biologist
Vacant	Fish Biologist
Ian Paige	Fish Biologist
Garrad Poole	Fish Biologist
Vacant	Bio Science Tech.
RESEARCH	
Vacant	Research Leader
Catherine Sykes	Fish Biologist (Research)
Wade Wilson	Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Renee Martin	Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Morgan Robinson	Fish Biologist (Genetics)
FISH HEALTH	
Teresa Lewis	Fish Health Unit Leader
Marlene Rodarte	Fish Biologist
Jason Woodland	Fish Biologist
David Hampton	Fish Biologist
Linda Vannest	Fish Biologist
Ashlie Rademacher	Fish & Wildlife Biologist

PARTNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

On February 24th, Michelle Bell and Alyssa Lewis provided an introduction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Southwestern Native ARRC (Center) mission to approximately seventy 6th to 8th grade students from the Dexter Middle School. Included in the first session was history of the Center and description of responsibilities of each section (Fish Culture, Research, Fish Health, Administration, and Maintenance).

In addition to the initial presentation, Center staff will be doing a series of workshops for the students. The next session will be presented by the Fish Culture section, speaking with students about spawning and observing a live spawning event. The next two series will be full day sessions with the science classes; one day with the Research section and the other with the Fish Health section.

FEATURED SPECIES



Male and Female
Big Bend gambusia, *Gambusia
gaigei*, Photo by T. Kennedy

Big Bend gambusia (*Gambusia gaigei*) is federally listed as Endangered with the only wild population existing in the Big Bend National Park, Texas and the sole captive population maintained at Southwestern Native ARRC, Dexter, NM. It is a member of

the poeciliidae (live bearer) family and prefers warm water habitats. The species has been cultured at Southwestern Native ARRC since 1974 and serves as a safeguard in case of catastrophic loss in the wild. The captive population contains approximately 5,000 adult fish and was augmented with 650 individuals collected from the wild population during salvage operations in 2008.

AQUATIC SPECIES AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

No fish were distributed during the month of January.

Age-1 and age-2 Woundfin were harvested from their winter holding ponds, graded for size and prepped for VIE tagging. A total of 20,050 fish were marked with red and green material in preparation for stocking into the Virgin River near St. George, UT in mid-March.

With spring time fast approaching, Fish Health staff was busy responding to numerous partner needs throughout the month. The lab received Gila chub for testing on February 5th. These fish were collected and submitted by Heidi Blasius, Fishery Biologist with the Bureau of Land Management Safford Field Office. The objective of the work is

aimed at monitoring the health of the resident wild population of Gila chub in Bonita Creek, AZ and is part of the larger multi-agency (AZGFD, BLM, FWS, and BOR) effort focusing on Bonita Creek native fish restoration. Four lots of rainbow trout were submitted by the Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery for the annual health inspection. This month Mora National Fish Hatchery began its annual spawning of Gila trout and provided ovarian fluid samples from South Diamond and Spruce Creek broodstock. The samples will be tested for targeted viral pathogens and *Renibacterium salmoninarum*, the causative agent of Bacterial Kidney Disease.

San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center, TX submitted Fountain darters from the San Marcos and Comal Rivers for testing. Ten fish were collected from each location for parasite examination and enumeration. This work is a collaborative research project monitoring for endemic and exotic parasites of concern in this imperiled darter species.

LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Renee Martin completed the 10% QAQC and secondary scoring for several projects including 106 Devils River minnow (*Dionda diaboli*) samples from San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center (ARC), 50 Yaqui beautiful shiner (*Cyprinella formosa mearnsi*) samples from San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, 72 Guzman beautiful shiner (*Cyprinella formosa formosa*) Southwestern Native ARRC refuge samples, and 20 Gila trout (*Oncorhynchus gilae gilae*) samples collected from Iron Creek in 2008. The samples were transferred to our Molecular Ecology Lab from the Museum of Southwestern Biology Division of Fishes at the University of New Mexico.

Research staff participated in the webinar “Environmental DNA (eDNA): An early detection

surveillance tool for invasive Bighead and Silver Carp.” The webinar is part of the advanced topics in conservation genetics distance learning series targeted towards biologists and managers to keep up-to-date on the latest techniques in conservation genetics.

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Many Center staff members received training this month. Ashlie Rademacher completed a 6 month detail in the Fish Culture part of the program. Ashlie and Ian Paige attended the February 24-March 7, Fisheries Academy training conducted at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV. William Knight attended a NCTC DOI Supervisory Course in Albuquerque, NM. Maria Bullard and Michelle Bell attended the Energy Cost and the Utilization KT Sessions for vehicles and small and large equipment. The Center’s supervisory staff (Manuel Ulibarri, Maria Bullard, Wade Wilson, Teresa Lewis, and William Knight) completed EEO/Diversity training provided by Bobbea Cadena and members of the Region 2 Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) on February 25, at Bitter Lake NWR, Roswell, NM. Modules from the DAC’s Cultural Awareness Forum curriculum were presented along with information about the EEO process, hiring, and disability awareness.

Mario Cisneros, IT Specialist from the Regional Information Resources and Technology Management program, worked at the Center February 24 – 28 upgrading computers to Windows 7. He identified a number of hardware and network connection issues and provided support specific to the needs of each Unit within the Center. Many thanks to Mario and also to Michelle Bell and Maria Bullard for coordinating his efforts with the individualized needs of the staff.

Michelle Bell, (CDSO) submitted the 2014 Safety Plan and minutes from the Center’s last three Safety

Meetings to the Regional Safety Office. The 2014 Safety Plan was made available to all employees for review and signature. Michelle also participated in the Quarterly Safety Teleconference Call. Topics of discussion included Annual Safety Inspections, the upcoming Safety Training Day at Bitter Lake NWR in March, the OSHA Refresher Training, and the Safety Plans.

In-house meetings/calls attended by Center staff this month included:

- Monthly Administrative/ Budget meeting,
- Outreach Opportunities Coordination meeting,
- Monthly Fish Health Centers conference call,
- National Wild Fish Health Survey Users Acceptance Team conference call, and a
- Construction coordination meeting/call with the Regional Office, Division of Engineering.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



C Series Ponds, USFWS Photo

Significant progress was made in the construction of the four new C-series ponds. Fish Culture staff was assisted by Cirilo Alonzo, from the Uvalde NFH and Milton Harper, from the Bitter Lake NWR. The project included operating heavy equipment to process and haul dirt, wetting the work area, exposing the new drain line, and picking up rocks and debris. Once the earthen ponds are

completed, staff from the Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office will pour the concrete catch basins and line the ponds with EPDM rubber. The added facilities will be used to produce additional bonytail for stocking into the lower Colorado River. The project is funded by the Bureau of Reclamation, Nevada office on behalf of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.

Center staff performed routine maintenance on the heavy equipment prior to and after the week long pond construction. The equipment was fueled, all fitting's greased, and air filters cleaned and cabs washed.

Staff finished cleaning up the shop building and scrap yard by organizing the tools, equipment and hauling excess materials. This month the Center recycled 150 lbs of cardboard and paper, 70 lbs of aluminum cans, 61 lbs. of used batteries, 42 lbs of burnt out fluorescent lamps, and 17,500 lbs. of scrap steel.

Mike Zamora from Division of Engineering visited the Center several times this month to inspect the 2A and 6C pond kettle replacement project. Mike measured all of the concrete forms, observed the pouring of the concrete bases and wing walls and provided the contractor with a list of deficiencies in need of repair



Kettle Replacement Project, USFWS Photo

The Center and surrounding areas received .10” of rain for the month of February.