



Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



Monthly Accomplishments

February 2014

Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,154 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 7.30 fpp and 7.69 inches in total length. Lengths and weights have changed only slightly this month due to continued extremely cold weather. This is now the third month of little to no growth for these production fish. Staff managed to get in eleven days, late in the month, of feeding despite the colder temperatures.

Bird predation has been minimal. Staff has yet to see any signs of health issues related to the large temperature swings over the past three months. No mortalities were recorded by staff for the month.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population is still doing very well. The 88 fish have now been on station for three-plus years. Ten mortalities were again recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. All of mortalities have come from either the pure males or the remaining hybrid females. No external parasites or diseases were observed in any of the mortalities. It may be that we are at the end of their 'captive' life expectancy and that another population needs to be brought onto station.

In January, Inks Dam NFH staff discontinued spawning of the FY2010 Clear Creek gambusia. Staff continues to monitor all of the "pure" females for any signs of being gravid. It still appears that earlier spawning attempts have been unsuccessful.

Hatchery staff is currently developing an alternative work plan to conduct additional spawning experiments during the normal spawning months of May through September. Hatchery staff is also working on the water quality parameter (pH) that may be the cause for our inability to successfully spawn these fish. Currently our well water used in the recirculation system is too high compared to observed pH in the upper pool at the Clear Creek site. Staff has been researching methodologies to correct this situation during the last couple of months.

Personnel

Greg Landry, Julie Burks and volunteer Cecilia Escamilla traveled to the Clear Creek site to collect water quality data in the upper pool where the wild population of Clear Creek gambusia resides. Staff observed that no repairs or attempts to repair the dam at the Clear Creek site were undertaken during the month. The landowner was to start the project this month but it would appear that it has not taken place again.

Paul Dorman met and escorted Mrs. Clay Young and her son around the hatchery to show her the changes that have taken place over the years, while she discussed many things that took place when her husband was Project Leader from the early 1970's through the early 90's. The main hatchery road was dedicated in his name in the



Above) Part of the activities enjoyed by Girls Scout Pack 294 from Austin, Texas and (below)



Cub Scout Pack 287 from Spicewood, Texas was feeding the four year-old brood stock catfish. It was a bit cold but they still got to see the biggest fish on station.



Friends Group members discussing how the Chimney swift tower should go together and who would climb up the ladder!

mid 2000's. She also provided the Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) with a talk on her and her family's life while at Inks Dam NFH. The Young family resided at Inks Dam NFH for more than 20 years.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Hatchery staff finished the Riverbank Stabilization DM Project at the end of the month. Personnel have waited to borrow the D5 CAT Bulldozer from Balconies Canyonlands NWR for six months but repairs to it and the trailer had not been completed. A rental one was purchased and the task completed. Staff installed over 180 feet of silt fence and reseeded the effected area.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had 183 visitors for the month of February, of which, more than half (101) were here to see the now famous "Lucy" the Long-tailed duck, *Clangula hyemalis*. Many of the birders and photographers that came out to see "Lucy", which is still in the pond closest to the visitor's parking lot, were delighted to add her to their list of birds observed or capture her on film. Many of the other visitors were here to participate in the white bass fishing that "typically" begins the later part of February. These folks were disappointed that the water temperatures hadn't raised enough to get the fish moving up the river. Some fish were taken late in the month.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 97.5 hours. The FOIDNFH hours

were split between two tours and working around the Education Center and Bird Blind. Pack 294 from Austin brought seven Girl Scouts and four parents to visit the hatchery. FOIDNFH gave a presentation on fish production and fish morphology. They hiked up the Overlook Trail and talked about geology, lichen, plants and erosion. The group also participated in feeding the four-year old Channel catfish brood stock which is always a big "splash" with the younger kids! The second tour was Cub Scout Pack 287 from Spicewood, Texas. The nine scouts and five parents learned about Channel catfish and why we stock them, fed the brood stock and hiked up the Overlook Trail to see the entire hatchery before heading off to the Longhorn Caverns for another adventure.

The FOIDNFH finished erecting the Chimney Swift tower which is located near the Ashe-Juniper Bird Blind. The Friends Group, assisted by Paul and Georgean Kyle, completed the project early in the month once the concrete base dried. The FOIDNFH and Inks Dam NFH were very lucky to have the Kyle's expertise in assisting us with this project which was completely funded by the Friends group. This will help with the Audubon Society Important Birding Area (IBA) designation for Inks Dam NFH.

The FOIDNFH also spent numerous hours prepping flower beds, pruning trees and shrubs after the monthly Friends Group Meeting. Volunteers applied new mulch to the numerous flower beds, weeded and watered the plantings around the bird blind, and really spruced things up for the anticipated warmer spring months. The Intermediate Sanction Facility

also helped spruce up the hatchery by doing 28 hours of mowing and weed whipping around the hatchery grounds this month.



Friends of Inks Dam NFH completed the new Chimney swift tower on the Ashe Juniper Trail. This will assist us in obtaining our IBA designation with the Audubon Society and is an excellent addition to the facility.



Hollis Neier, FOIDNFH volunteer, discussing fish morphology with Girl Scout Pack 294 from Austin, Texas. Other activities included a hike up the Overlook Trail and feeding brood stock Channel catfish.



Paul Dorman discussed Channel catfish production with Cub Scouts Pack 287 from Spicewood, Texas. Other activities included a hike up the Overlook Trail and feeding brood stock Channel catfish.

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



Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery
345 Clay Young Road
Burnet, TX 78611
Phone 512/793-2474
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/inks_dam/index.html

Current staff members

Paul Dorman	Project Leader
Vacant	Assistant Project Leader
Vacant	Environmental Education Specialist
Julie Burks.....	Administrative Technician
Gregory Landry	Fisheries Biologist
Vacant	Animal Caretaker (Term)
Larry Guerro	Motor Vehicle Operator
Vacant	Maintenance Worker
Vacant	Maintenance Worker