



Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



Monthly Accomplishments

March 2014

Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,153 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 6.34 fpp and 8.04 inches in total length. Lengths and weights have finally started to increase due to the rapidly increasing warmer weather. This is the first month of substantial growth for these production fish in the last four months.

Bird predation has increased greatly with the birds migrating back North. Staff has not seen any signs of large losses nor



View from ponds down on to the Colorado River arm that feeds Lake LBJ. Some days there are more than 100 American White Pelicans and 500-600 Double-crested cormorants. The noise they make is incredible; it even woke up residences across the river.

health issues associated with the bird predation or rapidly increasing temperatures in the ponds. A single mortality, non-bird related, was recorded by staff for the month.

All channel catfish brood stock has been ponded for the upcoming spawning season. A total of 294 four year-old and 380 three year-old brood stock were placed into separate ponds by staff and aide from volunteers. With warmer temperatures this month spawning will probably occur in early May.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population has now been in

recirculation tanks for two full years. The 86 remaining fish have now been on station for almost four years. Twelve mortalities were 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 and probably due to normal life expectancy since they have been on station this long.

Staff is waiting on results from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) on genetic samples, taken several months ago, to determine the amount of hybridization in the upper pool population before obtaining another population. Results of that genetic testing should be coming in April or May.

Hatchery staff has preparing for the upcoming start to the Clear Creek gambusia spawning season in May. Staff has installed the new pH control units for the recirculation systems holding the gambusia. Testing these units began at the end of the month on empty tanks. Additionally, staff started these fish back on to light control during the month. This will allow plenty of time to get the fish acclimated to (normal) full light at the beginning of spawning season.

Personnel

Staff attended the 7-hour safety meeting held in Austin,

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) provided three tours for the month. They all had great fun but also learned about many different things that can be seen or done in the out-of-doors.



Above: FOIDNFH welcoming Pack 226 from San Antonio to Inks Dam NFH.



Above: FOIDNFH member, Cathy Hill teaching fish morphology to the Pack 8 kids from Houston, Texas.

Below: All smiles after a successful climb up and down the Overlook Trail by home schooled kids and family members from Johnson City, Texas



Texas at the USGS Office. This meeting doubled as our normal monthly safety meeting. All staff completed their FY14 Federal Information Systems Security Awareness + Privacy and Records Management (FISSA+) training for the year and continued working on the FY13 Annual Report.

Julie Burks attended and the PPR training conference call and the reimbursable agreement conference call along with Paul Dorman.

Gregory Landry was asked by Ann Timberman, Surrogate Species Coordinator, Region 2, to volunteer for the team to determine methods to better disseminate information about surrogate species. This is an opportunity for this cross-program/RO and field teams to take the lead in clarifying concerns, confusion and providing positive examples of surrogate species being used in conservation to benefit implementation.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. With the large increase in visitors this month the septic field and septic tanks needed additional maintenance.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had 585 visitors for the month of March, of which, more than half (319) were here just during "Spring Break", the week of March 10th through the 16th. Visitors were almost equally split between birding, fishing for white bass in the park, and coming to see the

facility and production. The number of folks coming to visit is almost double that of last year during the same time period.

The now famous "Lucy" the Long-tailed duck, *Clangula hyemalis*, viewed and photographed by hundreds of people, left at the end of the month. She was here for more than 90 days and according to the birding experts she was the second to last of the six Long-tailed ducks to leave the state. Some of the early neo-tropical birds are just starting to arrive with the warmer weather.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 90.5 hours for the month of March. Most of the FOIDNFH hours were for three tours given to youth in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and home schooled students. These tours provided the youth with insight into the mission of the USFWS and participate in Outdoor Educational programs to explore and connect with nature.

The tours included six home schooled children and four adults from Johnson City, Pack 226 from San Antonio brought 25 scouts, plus siblings, and 25 adults, and Pack 8 brought 42 scouts and ten adults from Houston, Texas. FOIDNFH had a total of 18 volunteers for all the programs and all the tours had great responses.

The FOIDNFH gave presentations on fish production and fish morphology. The scouts, siblings, and adults also took part in the "Master Caster Program" which always turns into a great competitive event. 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 FOIDNFH also spent several hours with the Intermediate Sanction Facility (ISF) working on the Ashe-Juniper Trail and Bird Blind. They supervised the eight ISF folks who cleaned and weed-whipped the entire trail. The ISF crew also cleaned, mowed, and weed-whipped around the numerous shrubs and trees, for the birds, planted last year.

The ISF crew and staff spent an additional two days weed eating, mowing, and rock placement around the incoming water filter pad to prevent erosion when it rains, if it every rains again in Texas? ISF had a total of 120 hours for three days' worth of work and are a great connection to the local community for this facility.

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
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