Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Accomplishments November 2013

Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,155 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 8.73 fpp and 7.28 inches in total length. All of the fish have been placed into over-wintering ponds at density levels between 7,000 to 7,500 fish per acre. These fish could potentially be utilized for Tribal Trust requests in FY14 and is similar in number to what was stocked out in FY13. A total of 11 mortalities were recorded by staff for the month and were due mostly to a bacterial infection. Hatchery staff caught the problem early in two ponds and incorporated antibiotics into the feed for ten days.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population moved over to the recirculation tanks in March of 2012 is still doing very well. The 119 fish have now been on station for three-plus years this month. Six mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. No external parasites or diseases were observed in any of the mortalities and probably due to handling stresses.

In September, Inks Dam NFH staff started the process of 1X1 spawning a small sample of the FY2010 Clear Creek gambusia. Hatchery staff duplicated the water temperature and the amount light found during a typical May through September spawning season for the Clear Creek gambusia. Water temperature was controlled with a recirculation chiller-heater unit and the natural wavelength lighting was controlled with electrical controllers to duplicate the average amount of sunlight found during that spawning season time frame. Staff also followed research papers suggesting the placement of vegetation in the spawning tanks. Three tanks were designed with vegetation and three without.

By the end of the month no female gambusia had produced offspring to date. The typical Poeciliid gestation period is approximately 30 days. By November 22, 2013 sixty days had already transpired so the first spawning experiment was stopped unsuccessfully. Hatchery staff is developing a work plan to conduct two additional experiments for spawning the gambusia next month.

The first one will be similar to the first attempt but increase the number of females from one to two. This should divide the time the male spends with the female and perhaps increase our chance at offspring. The second methodology will be natural selection spawning. Clear Creek gambusia are very gregarious and, according to some literature, the gambusia females can be highly selective as to which males they spawn with. Hatchery staff will attempt putting all the remaining females and 1/3 of the remaining males together. These two spawning experiments should take place

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH provided Scout Pack 151 from Georgetown, Texas an extended tour so that the group could earn multiple merit badges. Three volunteers and Greg Landry, Fisheries Biologist, hosted the group and covered fish production and feeding, a roaring game of Backyard Bass, and hikes up the Overlook and Ashe Juniper Trails. The eight scouts and ten adults enjoyed all the events and even the hike up the Overlook Trail didn't tire this group out!

by the beginning of December.

Personnel

All of the hatchery staff has worked enthusiastically to get caught up with everything left unfinished from the furlough. Julie Burks has worked fastidiously on budget issues to meet the end of the month budget deadlines. Staff took some needed time off during the month as well.

Paul Dorman provided Dr. Joe Tomasso from Texas State University – San Marcos and Tom Brandt San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center a tour of the Inks Dam NFH on November 11, 2013. Channel catfish production, facility equipment, paddlefish production, Clear Creek gambusia reproduction, lake water screening equipment, mussel culture, and potential future research collaborations were discussed.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Staff spent most their time on the hatchery's grounds (140 plus acres) and designing and constructing screen baffles for the new spawning experiments.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had 246 visitors for the month of November. This is bit higher than our normal visitors per month, but it was nice to have folks enjoying the facility once again. Several birding and photographers came to see the migratory birds that usually make Inks Dam NFH an early stop to warmer destinations but we only had a few birds to observe.

As for volunteer activities during the month, the Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 27.5 hours. The Friends Group provided Scout Pack 151 from Georgetown, Texas an extended tour so that the group could earn multiple merit badges. Three volunteers and Greg Landry, Fisheries Biologist, hosted the group and covered fish production and feeding, a roaring game of Backyard Bass, and hikes up the Overlook and Ashe Juniper Trails. The eight scouts and ten adults enjoyed all the events and the group received four badges each. The scouts and adults, as always, enjoyed the big four year old broodstock feeding.

The Intermediate Sanction Facility was able to come out in November and helped staff with grounds keeping. They put in a total of 49 hours of labor doing grounds keeping in their one day visit.

Some of the Boy Scouts and parents getting ready for the Backyard Bass game which teaches both the youth and parents about casting but more importantly regulations and the reasons for regulations.

Some of the parents and young scouts, from Pack 151, winding their way up the Overlook Trail to get a bird's eye view of the facility and Lakes LBJ and Inks.

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

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Current staff members

Paul Dorman	Project Leader
Mark Yost	Assistant Project Leader
Julie Burks	Administrative Technician
Gregory Landry	Fisheries Biologist
Larry Guerro	Motor Vehicle Operator
Vacant	Maintenance Worker
Vacant	Maintenance Worker