

Inks Dam NFH

Paul Dorman, Project Leader

October

October 2012

Monthly Accomplishments

Fisheries Activities

The current inventories of FY 2012 channel catfish have been split into their over-wintering production ponds at Inks Dam NFH for the FY 2013 stocking requests. Hatchery staff stocked these fish into six more additional ponds to reduce densities to approximately 7,000 fish per acre. Currently there are 66,671, FY 2012 channel catfish averaging 6.31 fpp and 8.08 inches in total length. Only four mortalities have been recorded and probably caused from handling during the splitting process. An additional 8,459 channel catfish from FY11 spawning season have been ponded to meet the FY13 reimbursable contract for the Fort Hood Military Base and early spring derbies.

The original (FY2010) gambusia refugium population moved over to the recirculation tanks in March is still doing very well. That population has a total of 70

documented 100% pure *Gambusia heterochir* males. There are 38 females that have been genetically verified as 100% pure *Gambusia heterochir*, in the female recirculation tank, and an additional 36 pure and 6 hybrid females from the FY2010 population are still being separated from the recirculation tanks until the six hybridized females are removed. These fish have now been on station for two years. Two male mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month.

The new FY2012 population collected in partnership with TPWD and the Texas FWCO are doing well. Collection was deemed necessary because of the concern about a possible dam breach during the dam modifications on the very old existing structure. Additionally, the species has a documented lifespan of one year and the FY2010



On October 20, 2012 Inks Dam NFH hosted a Native Plant Festival as part of the Native Plant Week in Texas (October 14-20). A total of 211 visitors attended the daylong event and several booths included nature activities for children and youth.



gambusia is rapidly approaching two years of age. The new fish have been separated by sex, quarantined, and will remain that way for the 180-day quarantine

Personnel

During October, field staff participated in a monthly safety meeting centered on the Non Law Enforcement Firearms Training. To participate in the “hands-on” training staff had to successfully pass an online course that took almost four hours to complete. Wade Hibler, Texas Parks and Wildlife Certified Firearms and Hunters Education Instructor conducted the 3.5 hour hands on training. All field staff passed their courses and training.

The entire hatchery staff completed the National Safety Council Certified Defensive

Maintenance

Facility maintenance for October included copper sulfate treatments in all ponds, Fluridone treatments to control unwanted aquatic vegetation and algae, dragging pond bottoms and paddle wheeling ponds to help increase turbidity, and adding “blue water dye” for control of aquatic vegetation. The “blue dye” continues to have a negative effect on the four

requirement. Inks Dam NFH has a total of 50 females and 18 males in refuge from the 2012 population. No mortalities were recorded in

Drivers Training course in harmony with DOI and FWS policies. Also, the hatchery staff, with the exception of our Administrative Technician, completed a Heavy Equipment Safety Refresher course online. All field staff were certified as successfully completing their initial ATV/UTV required training in accordance with 243 FW6 and 321 FW 1. All field staff will now have three years before they need the online refresher course.

Mark Yost, Assistant Project Leader, completed all the FY 2012 Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) Inks Dam NFH has for

Ospreys that recently have been using the ponds as their “buffet” tables which delights wildlife photographers but not our biologists.

Deferred Maintenance (DM) construction of the two new kettles for Ponds 7C and 10 were started late this month by Batas LLC. The demolition of

the FY2012 population during the month.

FY 2012. Many “Thanks” to Teresa Lewis from the Dexter Fish Health Center and Bonnie Johnson from the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership (AADAP) Program, in Bozeman, Montana working with Mark on the new online system. Paul Dorman completed the FY 2012 Annual Energy reporting into the RMIS database and reviewed the data with Mark Orton, Region 2 Division of Engineering.



The demolition of pond 10 was undertaken to remove an extremely outdated kettle design but leave the newer, safety retaining wall. Eventually this pond will be lined to increase water conservation.

the kettles, earth work, construction of footers, and tying rebar has taken place to date. Concrete work will begin in earnest early in November.

Equipment maintenance for October included full service for the Chevy dually pickup, replacing the blades on the John Deere (JD) Z-Trak mower, fixing the tire, battery, and the PTO safety switch wire on the JD 1250 tractor, installing a new power inverter in the Regional Distribution Unit, fixing a leak in the fuel tank on the JD 310G backhoe/loader, and replacing the solenoid that controls the 4-wheel-drive engagement on the JD 5225 tractor.

The hatchery recycled 740 pounds of plastic, aluminum, tin, and cardboard at the Marble Falls Recycling Center during October. Fuel Blenders LLC also picked up one 50 gallon drum of oil to be recycled and one 50 gallon drum of old filters to be recycled. The recyclables taken to the BOPATE event last month and the efforts by staff to properly recycle everyday items displays the dedication Inks Dam NFH staff has to keep our local community and the facility clean.

Volunteers from the Friends of Inks Dam NFH continue to implement the restoration of wood signs around the facility. So far the volunteers have restored twelve signs and are working on several more. The wooden sign restoration project by the volunteers and Friends Group should be finished by November.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

Much of the efforts geared toward outreach during October were in preparation for the Native Plant Festival on the 20th of the month. The event was to celebrate Native Plant Week in Texas (October 14 -20) and included seven booths showcasing local resources and information about the Texas Hill Country's natural environment, water

conservation, rainwater collection and of course native plants. The Friends of Inks Dam NFH did the many hours of preparation, advertising, and preparing of the event. Fifty native trees, donated by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) were adopted by event visitors, native plants were sold by the Native Plant Society of Texas, and there was a voluntary canned food drive to benefit the local Helping Center. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists provided booths and areas for kids to enjoy animal identification and backyard fishing. A local business, Consolidated Water, provided information on the varied rainwater collection systems that can be found in Texas. Tours and information about the hatchery were given by hatchery staff, and plant tours given on the Ashe- Juniper and Overlook Trail were provided by the Friends Group.

Additionally, the Native Plant Society of Texas sponsored three speakers for the event which was held in the Education Building. Kelly Bender from TPWD spoke to the crowd on "Wildscaping with Native Plants". Jessica



Some of the 211 visitors taking in the booths set up by groups and organizations providing information on native plants, water conservation, rainwater collection, children activities and Inks Dam NFH role and mission in Region 2.

Robertson from the Backbone Valley Nursery spoke on “Soil Microbiology – Natures Water Conservationists” and Mark Leathermen from Rainwater Harvest Resources spoke on “Rainwater Collection – How and Why”. Paul Dorman, Project Leader, spoke about the hatchery and its programs. In all, a total of 211 people visited the hatchery for the event. Many of the visitors were impressed to learn that a fish hatchery had more to do and see than just fish! Some were fascinated that they didn’t know they had the facility in their back yard and hadn’t visited before now.

There were also an additional 85 visitors counted during the month for a grand total of 296 visitor in October. The volunteer hours reported for October included a total of 136 hours, which included 14.5 hours for administrative help, 66.5 hours for outreach, 52 hours for visitor amenities, and 3 hours of maintenance. The assistance that we receive from the Friends Group and volunteers is greatly appreciated.



The booth set up by the Friends of Inks Dam NFH displaying past and current outreach programs, local flora and fauna, and the role and mission that Inks Dam NFH plays in Region 2.



One of the many tours (Overlook Trail) provided to the visitors during the Native Plant Festival to examine not only the native plants found on station but to view the many different things the hatchery provides.