



Monthly Accomplishments

October 2013

Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,166 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 10.18 fpp and 7.17 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 8 mortalities were recorded by staff for the month and were due mostly to avian predation.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population moved over to the recirculation tanks in March of 2012 is still doing very well. The 125 fish have now been on station for three years this month. Ten mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. No external parasites or disease were observed in any of the mortalities.

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. All males were removed after six days. No female gambusia had produced offspring to date. The typical Poeciliid gestation period is approximately 30 days. This first attempt at spawning was at day 38 by the end of October.

Personnel

All of the hatchery staff has been working enthusiastically to get caught up with everything from grounds keeping to end-of-year paper work. Julie Burks continues working fastidiously to get bills and reconciliations back up-to-date due to the furlough.

Paul Dorman discussed the Clear Creek spawning with Tom Brandt, Center Director for the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC), Robert Edwards, professor with University of Texas –Pan American (UTPA) and Dr. Gary Garrett with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

Paul Dorman was also interviewed, during the furlough, by a local Television Station KXAN, an NBC affiliate, from Austin, Texas. Ignacio “Iggy” Garcia focused on one person trying to keep all of our species alive during this time and the processes. The interview created numerous phone calls from, the Friends



USFWS personnel are very scientific and stalwart but we do have our funny side. This photo just had to be shared.

It is not well known but Paul Dorman had some assistance during the furlough. The Green heron sitting on the UTV kept a pretty close eye on the feeding techniques used to feed the production channel catfish. No harm came to the bird or the UTV after the picture was taken even though the Green heron was disappointed in not getting a “free” meal of channel catfish.

Sometimes it pays to work outside!

Group, TPWD, and individuals from local and surrounding towns asking if they could help out the “individual” taking care of the hatchery. Many “Thanks” goes out to those folks which desired to help but couldn’t.

Maintenance

Staff spent most their time on the hatchery’s grounds (140 plus acres) after the furlough. Even though rain did fall during the seventeen days it grew more grass than abating the drought. The remainder of the month was spent on getting the last of safety abatements completed and sent into the Regional Safety staff.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had only 68 visitors for the month of October. This is about half of the normal number of folks which come each month to visit us. By the end of the month some migratory birds were making this an early stop to warmer destinations. These drew one of the Austin area birding groups and they remarked how nice it was to come to a place which had many different things to see and do.

As for volunteer activities during the month, the Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 14.0 hours. The volunteer hours were minimal, but due to the circumstances they helped out a great deal towards the end of the month with trail maintenance and grounds keeping which was greatly appreciated.

The second annual Highland Lakes Native Plant Festival, held here last year and scheduled again this year, was cancelled. The FOIDNFH were

lucky enough to get the venue moved to Camp Buchner, only several miles down the road from the hatchery, and still managed a great turn out. Several people from the Friends Group manned the closed gate at the hatchery to get redirect folks to the new site. A total of 237 people showed up for the event, at Camp Buchner, and everything went pretty smoothly. Many comments were made “that the hatchery is the preferred destination for the event” and hope in the future to have it here again.

The Intermediate Sanction Facility was unable to come out in October because of other commitments but will be back out in early November to help staff with grounds keeping.

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
Vacant	Assistant Project Leader
Julie Burks.....	Administrative Technician
Gregory Landry	Fisheries Biologist
Larry Guerro	Motor Vehicle Operator
Vacant	Maintenance Worker
Vacant	Maintenance Worker