



Monthly Accomplishments

November 2012

Fisheries Activities

Staff assisted Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (SNARRC), complete the visible implant elastomer (VIE) tagging of age-0 Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM). Subsequently, staff assisted stocking 144,000 VIE tagged fish into the San Acacia reach and 130,557 VIE tagged fish into the Isleta reach of the Rio Grande. This stocking was in accordance with the RGSM Augmentation Plan (2008-2012) which states that augmentation will occur at individual monitoring sites when September RGSM densities are $< 1.00\text{fish}/100\text{m}^2$.

With the assistance of Uvalde National Fish Hatchery (NFH), staff stocked 3,975 razorback suckers, averaging 408 mm, into the San Juan River. A total of 1,680 RZB were stocked in accordance with developed soft-release protocols at the Animas River confluence. A total of 2,295 RZB were hard-released at the PNM sluiceway since staff were unable to locate a suitable location to set-up holding pens.

With the assistance of SNARRC, staff stocked a total of 395,648 age-0 Colorado pikeminnow (CPM) into the San Juan and Animas Rivers. In accordance with developed soft release protocols, 79,648 CPM were stocked in the San Juan River

near Bloomfield, NM and 316,000 were stocked in the Animas River at Boyd Park, near Farmington, NM.

In cooperation with Pueblo of Isleta, staff completed monthly monitoring for the RGSM within the Middle Rio Grande and Pueblo of Isleta. Monitoring efforts are to determine presence/absence of visible implant elastomer tagged fish in relation to augmentation and research efforts.

Staff assisted New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), White Sands Missile Range, and Holloman Air Force Base staff with annual population monitoring of the White Sands pupfish on Holloman Air Force Base. This long term monitoring will be used to evaluate the status and trends of the White Sands pupfish.

With the assistance from Mora NFH, NMDGF, and U.S. Forest Service, staff stocked 3,060 age-0 Gila trout (Main & South Diamond lineage). The Gila trout were hauled in fish panniers, carried by mules to their stocking site in the West Fork Gila River (below falls), Gila National Forest. The Gila trout were stocked for recreational purposes and were excess fish above the need for recovery purposes.

Staff completed work with students and teachers from Architecture, Construction & Engineering (ACE) Leadership High School who completed construction of two bridges at the RGSM Sanctuary in Albuquerque, NM. The ACE students designed the bridges and put together a materials list and budget. The 12-foot and 35-foot bridges span the artificial stream tying into the interpretive trail constructed in August 2012.



Currently, 68 Gila trout are being held in refugium at NMFWCO. The Gila trout were brought on station in June 2012, for refuge from Whiskey Creek, Gila National Forest, due to the Whitewater-Baldy Complex Fire. The Gila trout are held in two naturalized tank systems mimicking a stream habitat, with substrate and cover. Staff continue to monitor for aggressive territorial behavior, and relocate individual fish to a second naturalized rearing system (with similar sized fish) in efforts to maximize survival. The Gila trout are active, using

cover, aggressively feeding, and maintaining their wild coloration. These Gila trout are of the Whiskey Creek lineage and have not previously been successfully held or replicated in a hatchery setting.

In cooperation with staff from Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge (BLNWR), staff completed fish community monitoring within spring habitats on BLNWR. The goal of this monitoring is to document distribution and relative abundance of fishes within these unique habitats with emphasis on Pecos pupfish and Pecos gambusia.

Staff completed monthly monitoring of the Pecos River fish community at 12 sites ranging from Willow (30 miles north of Roswell) to Brantley Reservoir, New Mexico. Data will be used to define the status of the fish community, with emphasis on Pecos bluntnose shiner, in response to low/no flow during winter months.

Meeting and Trainings

Staff attended the Desert Fishes Council Conference in Death Valley, California. Bobby Duran presented *Evaluation of Augmentation as a Recovery Effort for Colorado Pikeminnow and Razorback Sucker of the San Juan River*.

Staff attended the Razorback Sucker Lake Powell meeting in Denver, Colorado. Participants included Service staff from Region 6 and Region 2, the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

(SJRRIP), and the Upper Colorado River Recovery Implementation Program. The primary topic of discussion was determining the role that Lake Powell may play in the recovery of razorback sucker and potentially the Colorado pikeminnow. Participants began the development of a 5-year work plan to address Lake Powell's role in recovery.

Staff attended the SJRRIP–Biology Committee meeting in Durango, Colorado. Discussion included the review and updating of the Program's Long Range Plan and prioritization of work for FY14.

Dustin Myers completed both Pesticide Applicator and First Aid/CPR recertification courses in Albuquerque New Mexico.

Education and Outreach

Sara Blocker and Angela James held a Teacher Workshop, at NMFWCO, for teachers participating in the 2012-2013 Native Fish in the Classroom (NFIC) Project. Nine teachers were present, representing Emerson Elementary, Monte Vista Elementary, Bosque School, Valle Vista Elementary, and Laguna Elementary. Staff provided an overview of the NFIC project, the NFIC Reference Guide, the field release, and teacher responsibilities. In addition, each teacher had hands-on practice, learning to use a siphon (used to clean aquariums), and practice testing for ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, and pH. Laguna, Valle Vista and Bosque schools will be learning about and raising fish of the middle Rio Grande including

flathead chub, western mosquitofish, longnose dace, red shiner, river carpsucker, white sucker, and the fathead minnow. Emerson and Monte Vista schools will be raising and learning about the Rio Grande cutthroat trout. At the end of the semester, the students will gather for a field day to release their fish into the Rio Grande.



Staff completed the first NFIC aquarium set-up and presentation at Laguna Elementary. Staff presented *Native Fish in the Classroom* to 18 5th-graders who will be responsible for the care of native Rio Grande fish. The presentation included an introduction of the USFWS, NMFWCO, native species, the aquarium set-up, and the student's responsibilities for the semester. The remaining schools will have their systems set-up in December 2012 and all schools will receive fish January 2013. The projects overall goal is to generate enthusiasm for natural resources and foster a sense of stewardship for native fish and their habitats.



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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Southwest Region
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Current staff members

Jim Brooks	Project Leader
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Angela Carrillo.....	Administrative Officer
Stephen Davenport	Supervisory Fish Biologist
Chris Kitcheyan	Supervisory Fish Biologist
Weston Furr	Fish Biologist
Thomas Archdeacon.....	Fish Biologist
Dustin Myers.....	Fish Biologist
Angela Palacios James.....	Fish Biologist
Bobby Duran	Fish Biologist
Sara Blocker.....	Fish Biologist
Andy Dean.....	Fish Biologist
Christine Stewart.....	Fish Biologist
Ernest Tellier Sr.	Biological Science Technician
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