



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

April 2016



Staff

Project Leader • Patricia Duncan

Fish Biologist • vacant

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich

Volunteers • Thomas Jetzer, Patricia Schenk, Mark Kundzins

Workforce Management

A selection for the vacant fish biologist position advertised in March was made in April. Mr. Valentin Cantu, a fish biologist from the San Marcos Aquatic Research Center, was selected for the permanent position at Uvalde. Mr. Cantu brings a great deal of experience to Uvalde with over 10 years of experience with endangered species at San Marcos as a fish biologist and previous experience in other positions there. We look forward to him joining the Uvalde staff on May 15.

Another term fish biologist, GS 7-9 was processed for Uvalde to work primarily with Rio Grande silvery minnow production along with other endangered species.

April saw the departure of volunteers Thomas Jetzer and Patricia Schenk. They made a number of contributions during this year's volunteer season with each working a total of 335.5 hours each at the station. Besides their usual assistance in station upkeep and routine management duties, they finished building recirculating aquarium systems, updated and refined rice tank culture systems and built new solar photovoltaic aeration systems.

Mark Kundzins also completed his volunteer stint at Uvalde at the end of April. While at UNFH he assisted with preparing the silvery minnow ponds, pupfish sampling, station management and catfish pond harvest. During his brief stay at Uvalde Mark contributed 205 hours of work as a volunteer.

Partnerships and Accountability

As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continued for the Texas Wild Rice, Fountain Darter, Comanche Springs Pupfish, Devils River Minnow, and San Marcos salamander in March.

The station continued to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) for existing and upcoming refugia activities of threatened and endangered species native to the Edwards Aquifer system.

In collaboration with the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (SNARRC) and other partners, Uvalde NFH will be raising Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) again in FY2016. Planning discussions continued with Manuel Ulibarri for preparation of the ponds at Uvalde for receipt of the RGSM in May this year. As with last year, the fish produced at Uvalde will augment the numbers released to the Rio Grande in Texas in recovery efforts.

Progress continued on the processing of the Uvalde Student Conservation Association (SCA) Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP) student application. Ms. Tamika Wright, a student at Arizona State University will be joining UNFH as our CDIP intern on May 31 after attending a week orientation program in Louisiana.

Recruitment efforts began for hiring two YCC students to work at Uvalde. Recruitment, interviews and selection will continue in May.

Aquatic Species Activities

Temperatures continued to warm in April although there were still some cool night temperatures. Pond water temperatures ranged from 18.0°C to 27.6 °C. Young of the year channel catfish continued to thrive with an increase in feeding due to the increasing seasonal temperatures. The smaller size class averaged approximately 12 inches while the larger fish were approximately 18 inches in length.



Channel catfish harvest for fish derby

With the warming of temperatures, spawning cans were placed into pond 27 holding channel

catfish broodstock, for channel catfish fingerling production the last week of April. Channel catfish ponds 18 and 19 were harvested in preparation for the annual fish health inspection and movement to fishing derby ponds. Fish stocked into both net covered lined ponds 18 and 19 from October to April showed good growth. Catfish in pond 19 more than doubled their weight and fish in pond 18 weighed five times more than when stocked in the fall.

Production of Devils River minnow continued in the tank house raceways. Transfer of gravel trays from tanks with broodstock Devils River minnows to net cages for collection and hatching of eggs and larval fish rearing continued in April. Larger fry from fish spawned in March were moved from screen net cages to grow-out raceways.

Research aquaria recirculating systems were cleaned and prepared for upcoming research with pupfish and Devils River minnow reproductive performance, egg and early life history survival.

Facility Maintenance

Ponds were prepared to house upcoming fish stockings. Ponds 43 and 48 were prepared for channel catfish for the upcoming fishing derbies in May and June. Preparation continued on ponds 2, 4, 7 and 8 for Rio Grande Silvery Minnow stocking. Pond bottoms were cleared of all debris and holes patched in April to make them ready for fish stocking in early May. Slow filling of the silvery minnow ponds began on the last day of April for fish stocking at the beginning of the second week of May.

While spawning containers were situated in the channel catfish broodstock pond, tanks and hatching troughs were installed in the main tank house for fingerling production. Hatching troughs were installed with paddle wheels for

hatching channel catfish fry as egg masses become available in late April and May.

A PPR was prepared for the installation of wiring to handle the additional large tanks installed last year for the Texas wild rice. A contractor was approved for this work and installation of wiring for the additional rice tanks should be completed by June.

An additional PPR was worked on for the replacement of a 24,000 gallon tank for the quarantine building. Specifications and quotes were under development for this project in April.

In compliance with effluent discharge permits with the Texas Commission on Water Quality, effluent samples were taken and sent to San Antonio Testing Laboratory for analysis in April for the biannual sampling. Steps were also taken to renew the TCEQ Concentrated Aquatic Animal Production General Permit which requires renewal every three years.

Visitors

Uvalde NFH hosted a total of 6 visitors during the month of April.

Outreach



Students view fish at Sabinal STEM Fair

On April 8 Mark Dietrich represented Uvalde NFH at the Sabinal STEM Fair at Sabinal Elementary School. Over 120 fourth to sixth graders got the opportunity to view channel catfish and gar and learn about conservation in aquatic science.

Mark Dietrich took the Uvalde NFH viewing tanks with channel catfish and gar along with educational information to the annual Dia de Las Ninos at the Uvalde County Fairplex on April 29. Over 500 children were able to learn about conservation in aquatic sciences and endangered species at this event.

Both Mark Dietrich and Pat Duncan attended the monthly Uvalde Tourism meeting on April 26. They were able to share information about upcoming fishing derbies with meeting participants.

Plans continue for working with area Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts to develop scouting projects at the hatchery.

Weather

Temperatures started to warm in April but there were still some cool nights. Temperatures ranged in Uvalde from a low of 38°F to a high of 90°F with an average temperature of 68°F in the month of April. There was 1.58 inches of measured rainfall in Uvalde in April.

Upcoming Events

Youth Fishing Derby at Uvalde National Fish Hatchery on May 21

Fishing Derby for Disabled Veterans and Senior Citizens at Uvalde National Fish Hatchery on June 4

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

754 County Road 203
Uvalde, Texas 78801
PHONE:
(830) 278-2419
FAX:
(830) 278-6042

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/ualde/index.html>

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery April 2016

Species	Year Class	Geographic Origin	Approximate Number
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2014	Domestic Strain	200
Channel Catfish	2015	Domestic Strain	5,936
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Pond)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	280,455
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Tank)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	143
Devils River Minnow (F1)	2013	San Felipe Springs	217
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2014	San Felipe Springs	40
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2015	San Felipe Springs	518
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2016	San Felipe Springs	106
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Upper Comal River	11
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Lower Comal River	13
Fountain Darter (F1)	2013/2014	Comal River Mix	250
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Upper Comal River	31
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Lower Comal River	18
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Comal River Mix	58
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	4
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	6
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	63
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	36
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	22
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (J)	3
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (K)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	SMR (Unknown)	80

Species and number at Uvalde NFH at the end of the month.