



US Fish & Wildlife Service

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

Preserving The Biological Diversity Of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra & Mojave Desert

Spring 2005

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Making A Difference In Nevada

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office (NFWO), has the responsibility for implementing the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Program areas for the NFWO include endangered species, fisheries, environmental contaminants and the Partners in Conservation programs.

The NFWO's 60 employees are located in Reno, Las Vegas and the Lahontan

National Fish Hatchery Complex in Gardnerville.

In addition to implementing the Endangered Species Act, the NFWO is also actively involved in state water issues that directly affect endangered species and wetlands and in the funding process for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

Wildlife Recovery Lands Acquisition Programs Helps Secure 460 Acres For Springfish Critical Habitat

Funding from the 2003 US Fish & Wildlife Recovery Lands Acquisition Program Grant in combination with Question 1 (a Nevada Division of State Lands program), was used to secure key habitats essential for recovery of the threatened Railroad Valley springfish *Crenichthys nevadae*. The acquisition of 460 acres in Nye County, locally known as Lockes Ranch, will protect source pools and/or outflows for three major spring systems containing populations and critical habitat necessary for the recovery of the springfish.

The property will be managed by Nevada Department of Wildlife for other important wildlife species in addition to the springfish and will provide excellent hunting and fishing opportunities.

The US Fish & Wildlife Recovery Lands Acquisition Program provides funds to states for acquisition of lands for endangered and threatened species.



Lockes Ranch, Nye County, Nevada

"The Railroad Valley springs fish is the only fish species native to the thermal spring system of the Railroad Valley in Nye County. "We feel fortunate that we were able to use these limited funds for acquiring this critical springfish habitat," said Bob Williams, Field Supervisor for the NFWO. "It would not have been possible without our project partners, the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Trust for Public Land."

"The Trust for Public Land played a vital role in this project by skillfully negotiating the sale of this important property," said Doug Hunt, Deputy



The Railroad Valley springfish
Crenichthys nevadae

Acquisition (continued)

Administrator for the Nevada Department of Wildlife . “We look forward to working together on other important properties in Nevada where US Fish & Wildlife Recovery Lands Acquisition funds can be used in combination with NDOW’s Question 1 Bond funds.”

The Railroad Valley springfish still occur in six known historical habitats; four

thermal springs near Locke’s Ranch (Big, North, Hay Corral, Reynolds) and two thermal springs on the Duckwater Shoshone Indian Reservation (Big Warm and Little Warm). The average total length of the Railroad Valley springfish varies between 23-39mm (.9-1.5 inches), depending on the spring it occupies.

Employee Spotlight

Developing partnerships requires patience, perseverance, an extroverted personality, and the ability to “think outside the box”. Bridget Nielsen embarked on a tremendous challenge when she became interested in developing partnerships for the NFWO with Tribes and private landowners. Over the last five years, she has been instrumental in the success of the partnership programs in Nevada.

Bridget’s work with the Nevada Department of Wildlife has resulted in the submission of two highly successful Recovery Lands Acquisition grant requests that have enabled the state of Nevada to acquire important habitat essential for the recovery of the threatened Railroad Valley springfish and bull trout. Another grant is pending to acquire lands to protect the habitat for the endangered desert dace.

Her coordinated efforts to restore habitats for endangered and threatened species in Nevada has also led to the completion of the first Safe Harbor Agreement in Nevada. The endangered White River spinedace was reintroduced into historic habitat on private lands under this agreement.

Bridget graduated in 1991 with a Bachelor’s degree in Biology and Environmental Science from the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Following graduation, she secured a term position with the now U.S. Geologic Survey, Biological Resources Division in Reno, Nevada, working in desert fish research. She came to the NFWO in 2000, as the lead for the recovery of listed desert fish species such as the Railroad Valley Springfish, White River spinedace, and the Clover Valley speckled dace.

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Nevada has grown from expending less than \$30,000 per year in 2001, to over \$175,000 in fiscal year 2005. In addition, she was able to obtain an additional \$300,000 from other agencies. These funds have restored and enhanced habitat for species such as the endangered White River spinedace, endangered Southwestern willow flycatcher, threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, and endangered Sulphur Springs buckwheat in addition to many highly localized, endemic species of fish and plants.

In 2005, the NFWO assisted private landowners in the development of proposals for the Private Stewardship Proposal Program totaling over \$250,000. Nevada’s federally recognized tribes were able to obtain grants totaling more than \$600,000 in 2004 and over \$300,000 in 2005.



Bridget Nielsen Samples At
Indian Springs In White Pine
County

Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Established

The NFWO has established a Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (DTRO) to help insure better coordination between scientists and managers on decisions that affect the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*).

Recovery efforts for the desert tortoise have been underway since it was listed as threatened in August 1980 under Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended). The desert tortoise occurs in Arizona, Nevada, California and Utah. Managers applaud the coordination of the widespread recovery and research efforts by the new office.

“The DTRO will facilitate increased scientific understanding and improve the recovery progress for the desert tortoise,” said Roy Averill-Murray, Desert Tortoise Recovery Coordinator.

Activities of the DTRO will: 1) increase research activities outlined in the Recovery Plan and assessment; 2) assist in coordination between managers and research scientists; and 3) track and report new information about the efficacy of management actions.



Desert Tortoise

Marble Bluff Fish Passage Moves Record Numbers Of Cui-ui

This year, the Marble Bluff Fish Passage Facility at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, operated by the Nevada Fishery Resource Office (NFRO) staff, moved record numbers of spawning cui-ui above Marble Dam into the Truckee River. The spawning migration began in late March and continued through May.

Approximately 2,000 of the cui-ui went through the redesigned fish passage facility every five minutes at the peak of the migration. “This years above average snow-pack supported a large cui-ui migration for spawning in the Truckee River,” said Lisa Heki, the Service’s Fisheries Program Manager. “We have over one million fish above Marble Bluff Dam, which is a record for the facility.” This years run follows a four-year drought with only small runs in 2002 and 2003, with no runs at all in 2001 and 2004.

“I’m extremely encouraged with the age and quality of the fish that came through this year,” said Heki. “There was a good mix of very healthy, large size males and females averaging from five to eight pounds.”

The cui-ui were listed as endangered in

1967 and were on the original Endangered Species List when the Act was passed in 1973. The cui-ui are only found in Pyramid Lake and use the lower portions of the Truckee River for spawning. Cui-ui are known to be long lived. A female with viable eggs was documented to be 51 years old.

It is hoped that the cui-ui migration will also have a positive impact on the successful fledging of white pelicans nesting Anaho Island in the Pyramid Lake area. Pelican fledgling success over the past four years has been low since the pelicans were dependent on cui-ui runs for nourishment.

The fish lock at Marble Fish Passage Facility was reconstructed in 1998 into a fish lock system using expertise from the NFRO and Bureau of Reclamation engineering skills. The thirty-foot high lock operates similar to an elevator, lifting the fish up above the dam into the Truckee River. The Bureau of Reclamation maintains the fish lock and it is operated by the NFRO. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe has land management responsibilities for Pyramid Lake.



William Cowan weighs, measures, and checks overall condition of cui-ui as they pass through the Marble Bluff Fish Passage.



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Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

We're on the web!

<http://nevada.fws.gov/>

A Message From The Nevada Fish & Wildlife Field Supervisor

I am pleased to provide you with this update of Fish & Wildlife Service activities in the State of Nevada. We are committed to working with local communities and our partners to restore and protect species and their habitats in Nevada.

It is with great pleasure I announce the establishment of the Desert Tortoise Resource Office and the selection of it's Coordinator, Roy Averill-Murray. This office will be instrumental in the coordination and recovery efforts for the desert tortoise throughout the Mojave.

I invite you to learn more about the many partnership programs offered by the Fish & Wildlife Service. Our program in Nevada has expanded and grown in popularity over the last five years. I have highlighted one of Wildlife Recovery Lands Acquisition Program Grants in this update. This success would not have been possible without our partners.

I look forward to sharing information with you in the future as we move forward together to protect and enhance Nevada's species and their habitats.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Williams

