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News Release



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Devils Hole Pupfish Moved to Propagation Sites

LAS VEGAS...Regional Managers from the National Park Service, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nevada Department of Wildlife gave approval to move Devils Hole pupfish from Devils Hole and Hoover Dam Refuge to Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas and to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery in Arizona on Thursday, May 18, 2006.

Agencies moved four adult pupfish early Thursday morning to Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay and five post-larvae (7-9 mm) pupfish late Thursday to Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery as part of the second step to establish Devils Hole pupfish in aquaria. “Everything looks good this morning and the transfer of the Devils Hole pupfish appears to be successful. The pupfish have acclimated to their new environment and are feeding well,” said Bob Williams, Field Supervisor for the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office and Devils Hole pupfish spokesperson.”

In early May, the agencies moved hybridized Devils Hole pupfish from the Point of Rocks Refuge to establish transportation protocols and to ensure that appropriate propagation techniques were established before moving the genetically pure Devils Hole pupfish to the facilities. Earlier this week, biologists from Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay confirmed the first successful hatching of hybridized Devils Hole pupfish at the aquarium.

“We have had some mortality in adult hybridized fish at both facilities over the past two weeks. However, we feel our experiments with the hybridized fish have been successful and we now have better information on how to successfully capture, transfer, and propagate Devils Hole pupfish in a captive environment,” said Williams.

“Regional and local managers had significant deliberations before deciding to move to the next step. We are optimistically cautious that we will be successful as we begin rearing pure Devils Hole pupfish in a captive setting,” Williams said.

Of the four adult pupfish that were transported to the Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay, two male pupfish were captured from Devils Hole and two female pupfish came from the Hoover Dam Refuge. Recovery Team members recommended moving male pupfish from Devils Hole in order to maintain

genetic diversity by mating them with female pupfish from Hoover Dam. The Team agreed that moving the adult female pupfish from Hoover Dam Refuge and adult male pupfish and post-larvae from Devils Hole would not adversely affect the refuge nor the wild populations.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.