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# News Release



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## **Divers Complete Devils Hole Pupfish Survey**

Southern Nevada...Divers recently completed population surveys for the endangered Devils Hole pupfish and estimate the population has increased from an all time low of 38 in April 2006, to 85 on September 23, 2006.

According to Bob Williams, Field Supervisor for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife's office in Nevada, the number of Devils Hole pupfish fluctuates during the year, with the population in the fall being higher than the population in the spring. "We are encouraged with the increased number and it indicates the pupfish are successfully reproducing and recruiting in their natural environment," said Williams. "We are hopeful that a majority of adults observed will be able to persist over the winter and reproduce in the spring."

Biologists report the majority of the adults observed during the dive were young fish and the condition in Devils Hole to be in excellent condition. The breeding shelf just under the surface of the water has substantial algae growth, which is important to the survival of the pupfish. It is anticipated that the condition of the habitat will provide a favorable condition for survival over the winter and reproduction in the spring.

In continuing efforts to increase the population of the Devils Hole pupfish, agencies report positive results at Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery (WBNFH). Four Devils Hole pupfish larvae, hatched at WBNFH, have survived to the juvenile stage. While this is a limited success in the rearing of Devils Hole pupfish in captivity, it is one step closer to successful recruitment of adult fish.

"We will continue on the course outlined though the Decision Making process that was conducted in August," said Williams, "and continue propagation efforts at WBNFH and the restoration of the refuge facilities at Hoover Dam and Point of Rocks."

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.