



Jennifer Johnson (AZFWCO) holds an Apache Trout at Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery. Jennifer Johnson has been assisting with Apache Trout spawning activities at the hatchery since mid-November.

AZFWCO Staff

Flagstaff

- Jess Newton, Project Leader
- Kirk Young, Assistant Project Leader
- Vacant, Project Coordinator
- Randy Van Haverbeke, Senior Fish Biologist
- Dennis Stone, Fish Biologist
- Michael Pillow, Fish Biologist
- Jim Walters, Biological Technician
- Rick Deshler, Biological Technician
- Vic Scott, Administrative Officer
- Vacant, Office Assistant

Pinetop

- Jeremy Voeltz, Project Coordinator
- Jennifer Johnson, Fish Biologist
- Tim Grosch, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist
- Vacant, Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Parker

- Chase Ehlo, Fish Biologist
- Mitch Thorson, Fish Biologist
- Brad Buechel, Fish Biologist
- John Naugle, Biological Technician
- Sean O’Kray, Pest Control Worker



Conserving Aquatic Species

Chase Ehlo participated in the annual multi-agency Lake Havasu roundup to monitor native fish including Razorback Sucker, Bonytail, and Flannelmouth Sucker. Sampling primarily occurred in the riverine portion of the lake upstream from the Colorado River Delta to Park Moabi.

Chase also participated in tagging and stocking efforts of approximately 500 Razorback Sucker harvested from the Achii Hanyo Native Fish Rearing Facility. A portion of these fish were stocked into Cibola High Levee pond on the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge and Office Cove on the Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge. He obtained two remote PIT scanners from the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and deployed them into Office Cove to monitor post-stocking survival. Additional efforts will be expanded in the future to other backwaters.

Chase also participated in post-stocking monitoring of Razorback Sucker and Bonytail in Reach 4 (RM 192.3 to RM 87.3) of the lower Colorado River with the MSCP.

Chase participated in sampling efforts to harvest large Razorback Sucker from Beal Slough, a connected backwater on the Colorado River near Needles, California.

Kirk Young, Randy Van Haverbeke, Dennis Stone and Michael Pillow participated in the Glen Canyon Dam Aquatic Species Cooperators Meeting in Flagstaff. The meeting is an opportunity to present and discuss aquatic research findings from the previous field season and plan future activities among scientists working in Grand Canyon. Staff gave presentations to fellow scientists on Humpback Chub status and changes, and future projects. At the meeting, several concerns were discussed. Chief among them was management and maintenance of the multiagency Grand Canyon database. Concerns were expressed over investigators

appending data to the database in a timely fashion. Timely data entry, QA, and QC are crucial for cooperating scientists to track fish data (survival, movement, etc.), provide reports, and determine trends. Database managers will address this concern.

Kirk attended the Mogollon Emphasis Area (MEA) team meeting in Albuquerque. The team identified projects from the Key Conservation Priorities and developed 5-year work plans to achieve five projects: Chiricahua Leopard Frog recovery (Recovery Units 1, 2, and 3, involving bullfrog eradication), Riparian Conservation (removal of salt cedar, recontouring and revegetation), Gila Trout recovery (largely in New Mexico), and two grassland projects, Huachuca Sentinel and Malpai/Altar grasslands (multiple activities).

Jeremy Voeltz and Jennifer Johnson attended the fall meeting of the Apache Trout Recovery Implementation Team. The group discussed activities completed during the 2015 field season, as well as planning activities for the 2016 field season. Jeremy and Jennifer also participated in the monthly Fishery Coordination meeting among AZFWCO, A-WC NFH (Alchesay-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery), & WMAT-WORD (White Mountain Apache Tribe-Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division).

Randy and Jess Newton attended a meeting with Ecological Services to discuss upcoming Glen Canyon Dam Long Term Experimental and Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (LTEMP EIS) and Navajo Generating Station (NGS) topics. Randy reviewed the draft Biological Assessment for the LTEMP EIS and sent comments to Lesley Fitzpatrick in ES.

Chase completed a report detailing acoustic telemetry efforts on Razorback Sucker and Bonytail in the lower Colorado River and distributed among other AZFWCO employees for review.

Randy wrote a draft Species Status Assessment (SSA) for Humpback Chub in the lower basin and sent it to the Science Writing Team of the Humpback Chub Recovery Team for review and incorporation into the primary SSA (inclusive of upper and lower basin).

Randy continued to analyze and incorporate 2015 findings into the Little Colorado River annual monitoring report due in January.

Kirk began the laborious task of sorting through data from submersible PIT tag antennas deployed during the September Humpback Chub aggregation project. Based on last year's successful pilot deployment of two antennas, a total of seven antennas were deployed each night of the 18 day survey. Preliminary data include over 3,000 fish detections with about 1/3 of the PIT detections representing unique fish to the antenna effort. Future analysis of the data will include determining if there is gear interference between baited hoop nets and baited submersible antennas, number of unique additional detections (over and above traditional hoop nets) and fish movement.

Randy finished reviewing a draft report from the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program on abundance estimates of Humpback and Roundtail chub in Westwater Canyon, Utah.

Conserving, Restoring, and Enhancing Aquatic Habitats

Randy Van Haverbeke drafted potential Conservation Measures for the LTEMP and sent to Shaula Hedwall (ES) and Lesley Fitzpatrick (ES).

Tim Grosch met with Arizona Game and Fish Department Landowner Relations Program along with a landowner near Holbrook, Arizona to discuss potential habitat enhancement

projects on his property. The landowner has been working on installing solar wells to distribute water but is also seeking technical assistance for other areas of his

Conserving, Restoring, and Enhancing Aquatic Habitats (*continued*)

property specifically his agricultural ground.

Tim Grosch and Kyle Dutro from AGFD Landowner Relations Program visited Battle Tank Grassland restoration project. This project is ongoing to

enhance local grassland communities. The two were inspecting the area after cultural surveys had been completed.

Tim Grosch and AGFD LRP personnel conducted a post completion site visit of an erosion control project south of

Springerville, Arizona. The landowner has been very happy with the results and would like to see what the project will accomplish over time. We will continue to monitor the site in the future to determine success.

Managing Aquatic Invasive Species

Dennis Stone analyzed suspended sediment data collected in the Little Colorado River to see how this affects survivorship of native and nonnative

fishes. Randy Van Haverbeke attended conference calls discussing potential Conservation Measures (CM) to include in the Glen Canyon Dam LTEMP

Biological Opinion. One potential CM would be to develop a rapid response plan for aquatic invasive species entering the Little Colorado River watershed.

Fulfilling Tribal Trust Responsibilities

Jeremy Voeltz worked with the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Hopi Tribe Department of

Natural Resources to begin planning for nonnative species control on waters on the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe.

Through a Cooperative Agreement, AZFWCO has contributed funds to the Hopi Tribe for a portion of this project.

Enhancing Recreation Fishing and Public Use of Aquatic Resources

Kirk Young coordinated an agency conference call regarding the ESA Section 7 Consultation for Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery to stock Rainbow Trout in the lower Colorado River. The purpose of the call was to identify information needs and orient the project to Jessica Gwinn who will be taking over the consultation from Lesley Fitzpatrick. Future data needs include description of a final action and an assessment of potential take of Razorback Sucker.

Jennifer Johnson continued to assist Williams Creek NFH with Apache Trout spawning. Spawning started in mid-November, occurs once a week and is expected to continue through mid-January. New protocols are being used during this year's spawning season. Genetic diversity and Bacterial Coldwater Disease are major concerns with the Apache Trout rearing program. All efforts are being made to minimize these threats in order to produce quality recreational fish.

Jennifer was nominated to serve as the regional Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) point of contact for



Jennifer Johnson assists personnel at Williams Creek NFH with Apache Trout spawning. Spawning started in mid-November and is expected to continue through January.

Conservation Education. The duties include serving as a subject matter expert; providing regional perspective and priorities to HQ-FAC, and enhancing communication between HQ-Regions-Field.

Tim Grosch accompanied Kyle Dutro from AGFD Landowner Relations Program on a site visit to a Ranch SW of

Holbrook. Kyle has been working with the rancher to gain access for public recreation so he was already familiar with the area. The two evaluated a potential grassland restoration project that could benefit existing landscape manipulation. More investigation needs to be completed.

Workforce Management, Training, and Scientific Capacity

AZFWCO's three sub-offices gathered in Flagstaff for our annual holiday

party. All the food was superb, including Mitch's tuna fish tacos, which he

personally caught off the coast of San Diego...fish on, Mitch!

Workforce Management, Training, and Scientific Capacity *(continued)*

Jeremy, Jess, and the two Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (DFHP) co-chairs (Megan Bean - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Cynthia Tait - U.S. Forest Service) conducted interviews for our DFHP Coordinator position. We selected a candidate who has been approved by Human Resources. Stay tuned for the name announcement in next month's report.

Kirk Young was selected to be AZFWCO's new Assistant Project Leader. Congratulations, Kirk!

Jess drafted and submitted annual AZFWCO work plans to the Regional Office and Headquarters. This will be an exciting year for fish conservation in Arizona.

Jess Newton, Kirk Young, and Jeremy Voeltz attended the annual Region-2 Fisheries Leadership meeting in Albuquerque, NM.

Michael completed three training modules through Lynda.com focused on improving the quality and efficiency of producing informational videos out of our office. A license for the training website was purchased through the Regional Office. The courses were "Script Writing for Nonfiction Video," "Creative GoPro Photography and Video Techniques," and "Sony Vegas Pro Essential Training." He also started, but has not yet completed courses titled: "ArcGIS Essential Training" and "Foundations of Programming: Fundamentals." Lynda.com is an online education company that offers

training videos and programs on a variety of topics.

Jennifer completed the required American Heart Association 2015 Heartsaver Instructor Update course. The course provides AHA instructors necessary updates on new science and key changes published in the 2015 AHA Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC.

Several staff completed annual ethics and scientific-Integrity training.

Jennifer updated the Whiteriver office's chemical inventory list.

Michael compiled the 2015 Arizona Game and Fish permit report for the Flagstaff AZFWCO office that will be submitted with our 2016 permit renewal request to AGFD.

Public Education and Engagement

Tim Grosch attended the Arizona National Livestock Show in Phoenix, AZ at the end of December.

Jeremy Voeltz was interviewed by Rob Keck from Bass Pro Shops to discuss conservation and recovery of Apache Trout. The interview will be part of Sirius

XM Radio's Bass Pro Shop "Outdoor World" radio program. The interview will be archived and available on the AZFWCO facebook page following its airing on January 2nd.

Did you know AZFWCO has a facebook

page? We post information on our staff, upcoming projects, educational events, and volunteer opportunities across the state. We currently have 714 "likes" from 20 countries. Check us out at www.facebook.com/AZFWCO.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ Colorado River Aquatic Biologists Meeting in Laughlin NV – January 6th & 7th
- ◆ Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's 36th Annual Researchers Meeting in Durango CO -- January 12-13
- ◆ Arizona-New Mexico Chapter American Fisheries Society annual Meeting in Flagstaff, AZ -- February 4-6



The photo (left) shows ranch land near Holbrook, AZ. This site is being evaluated by Tim Grosch (AZFWCO) and Kyle Dutro (AGFD) as a potential grassland restoration project that could benefit existing landscape manipulation.

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