



Blanche Hook of the San Carlos Apache Tribe Recreation and Wildlife Department, pulls in a gill net at Cienega Trap Tank.

**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  
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Jim Walters, Biological Technician  
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**Pinetop**

Jeremy Voeltz, Project Coordinator  
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Tim Grosch, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
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**Parker**

Chase Ehlo, Fish Biologist  
Mitch Thorson, Fish Biologist  
Brad Buechel, Fish Biologist  
John Naugle, Biological Technician



## Conserving Aquatic Species

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Kirk Young, Chase Ehlo, Mitch Thorson and Brad Buechel met with the Fisheries and Habitat leads of the Lower Colorado River Multi Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) program to identify projects to develop under our Interagency Agreement. The projects represent the confluence between USFWS species recovery needs/research and MSCP requirements. Activities include research into Bonytail and Razorback Sucker demographics in High Levee Pond; determining habitat use, survival and movement of Razorback Sucker in Topock Marsh; and water quality and species assemblage monitoring in Imperial Ponds and Three Finger Lake.

Chase and Brad used a remote PIT tag scanner to monitor the Razorback Sucker population in Topock Marsh, an off-channel marsh located on the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. To date, the scanner has detected 326 individual Razorback. This is approximately 10% of the original population stocked there in 2010.

Our Parker, AZ field office conducted its annual Lake Havasu Roundup in the Bill

Williams area of the Lake. This included running trammel nets throughout the river and the lake to monitor Razorback Sucker and Bonytail populations as well as to provide data on game fish populations to the state wildlife agencies. No native fish were collected during the sampling, indicating that very few native fish utilize the lower reaches of Lake Havasu. Over the weeklong survey, 45 trammel nets were deployed which entrained 558 fish leading to a CPUE (catch per unit effort) of 12.4 fish per net.

Jeremy Voeltz and Jess Newton continued to collaborate with Arizona Ecological Services Office (AESO) on refining the species status assessment model for the proposed-threatened Headwater and Roundtail Chub.

Randy Van Haverbeke and Kirk attended a Humpback Chub Species Status Assessment workshop in Salt Lake, Utah. The workshop focused on discussion and review of Humpback Chub current condition across its range

and species viability.

Jess drafted a research proposal to collaborate with the U.S. Geological Survey Arizona Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. This cooperative agreement would study the “relationship between fish presence and hydrograph components in streams of the Mogollon Rim emphasis area, Arizona.” Results would inform streamflow management methods for the conservation of native fish and reduction of undesirable nonnative fish populations.

Jess and Kirk submitted our 2015 annual report required under our ESA Recovery Permit to work with threatened and endangered species.

Dennis Stone showed Ben Vaage Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) what instruments and chemicals were required to measure dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> via titrations for a laboratory experiment he is working on concerning fish tolerance levels.

## Conserving, Restoring, and Enhancing Aquatic Habitats

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Jess Newton and Kirk Young wrote and submitted five project proposals seeking funding from the National Fish Passage Program. If funded, these projects would remove 12 fish passage barriers, reopen 400 acres of off-channel habitat, and reopen 12.5 miles of stream habitat. Wish us success in getting these funded!

Brad Buechel continued off-channel habitat water quality surveys on Topock Marsh, Three Fingers, Office Cove, Parker Dam, and Emerald Canyon Golf Course ponds while adding Three Mile Lake as a new habitat where water quality data is being collected.

Kirk attended a Long Term Experimental Management Plan EIS public meeting in Flagstaff. This plan will guide the management of Glen Canyon Dam for the next 20 years. The meeting was well attended (~30-40 publics) and included an overview of the project, alternatives and key resources

considered. Resource breakout areas were provided for further discussions. The public was encouraged to leave comments in writing either on a form provided or online at the EIS project website.

Tim Grosch met with Arizona Game and Fish Department Landowner Relations Program (LRP), a Department Wildlife Manager and an area landowner near Snowflake 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 property. This project will benefit migratory birds along with other native wildlife.

Tim also prepared a SHPO concurrence letter for cultural clearance on the Battle Tank Grassland restoration project. The letter was submitted to the PFW State

Coordinator and forwarded on to SHPO for 30-day review.

Tim and AGFD LRP personnel revisited a potential water project east of Snowflake to further evaluate the benefits the project may bring to the area. We will investigate further to determine whether a viable project exists in this location.

Tim and AGFD LRP personnel met with a local landowner to discuss a potential riparian area restoration project along Eagle Creek. The area receives a high amount of trespass cattle which degrade the river system and surrounding landscape. Our intent is to fence the riparian area thereby restoring it from over grazing and other damage these trespass cattle may cause. Discussion includes the possibility of developing a native fish, reptile and amphibian refugia pond in the future.

## Managing Aquatic Invasive Species

Kirk and Jess traveled to Albuquerque to brief the Regional Director, Deputy Regional Director, and Assistant Regional Director (Fisheries) on the need for feasibility studies for a Temperature Control Device (TCD) on Glen Canyon Dam. A TCD capable of selective cold-water releases from Lake Powell may be the only way to manage a

future potential population explosion of warm-water predatory nonnative fish in the Grand Canyon. Current and predicted reservoir elevations and water temperatures in Lake Powell will likely favor warm water predatory nonnative fish in Grand Canyon, with potential devastating effects on endangered Humpback Chub populations.

Dennis Stone continued working on a manuscript concerning the effects of suspended sediment concentrations, flood discharges, and dissolved carbon dioxide levels on nonnative and native fishes in the Little Colorado River, AZ.

## Fulfilling Tribal Trust Responsibilities

AZFWCO (Jess, Jeremy, Jennifer and Tim Grosch) and the San Carlos Apache Tribe's Recreation and Wildlife Department had our bi-annual coordination meeting. Highlights include (1) in April we will jointly conduct native fish surveys on streams that have not been surveyed in over 10 years, (2) in May we will jointly conduct recreational fisheries surveys including finalizing plans to start a new trophy trout fishery in a select lake, and (3) in March we both agreed to submit our new Memorandum of Understanding for signature by our respective leaders (the MOU will guide our collaborative work for the next five years).



Jennifer Johnson assisted San Carlos Apache Tribe Recreation and Wildlife Department staff with a survey of Cienega Trap Tank. The tank is being evaluated as a potential trophy trout fishery.

**Pasture Canyon Lake, near Tuba City, Arizona on the Hopi reservation. The reservoir is being drained and the dam is being repaired. This provides an opportunity to remove undesirable fish species from the lake.**

Jennifer participated in the monthly Fishery Coordination meeting among AZFWCO, A-WC NFH (Alchasy-

Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery), & WMAT-WORD (White Mountain Apache Tribe-Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division).

## Enhancing Recreation Fishing and Public Use of Aquatic Resources

Jennifer Johnson participated in the national Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) Conservation Education conference call. Plans were discussed for the upcoming World Fish Migration Day in May.

Arizona Game and Fish Department and FWS Region-2 Fisheries (including AZFWCO) met to have our annual fisheries coordination meeting. The meeting was co-led by the State's chief of fisheries, Chris Cantrell and our

Assistant Regional Director, Stewart Jacks. Jess, Kirk, Jeremy, Chase and Brad attended for AZFWCO. Important topics included hatchery production and stocking of native and recreational fish, the State's feasibility study of switching some recreational stocking programs from nonnative trout to native trout, disease concerns at our hatcheries, updates on recovery initiatives for imperiled native fish, and updates regarding our strategic visions and organizational structures.

Tim Grosch assisted Arizona Game and Fish Department Region 1 personnel with a turkey capture near the Blue River in Game Management Unit 27. The trapping occurred over a three day period on private land. The landowners have partnered with the PFW program in the past and are strong proponents of wildlife conservation. 31 turkeys were captured and were relocated to areas where turkey populations were in need of augmentation.

## Workforce Management, Training, and Scientific Capacity

Jess, Chase, Brad, Tim, and Jeremy attended the joint annual meeting of the

Arizona/New Mexico Chapters of the American Fisheries Society and The

Wildlife Society. There were some great presentations on new research

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

regarding managing native and nonnative-invasive fish populations.

Randy and Kirk met with personnel at GCMRC (Scott Vanderkooi, Carol Fritzing, Charles Drost and Seth Felder) to discuss the draft Risk Assessment in order to come to agreement on measures and coordination for 2016 helicopter operations in support of the Little Colorado River work. Process improvements include an updated Risk Assessment, closer coordination with the subcontractor and USGS, and documenting procedures such as post-flight, post-season and pre-season coordination, assessment, scheduling and planning.

Tim Grosch attended the Apache County Natural Resource Conservation District meeting in Springerville, AZ. The meeting covers financials, ongoing projects, future projects and general information for conservation measures occurring within the county.

Jess submitted a recruitment package to fill our vacant Administrative Support Assistant position. Kirk Young put together a complete hiring package for backfilling behind his recently vacated project coordinator/supervisor position. The hiring is on hold due to shortages in the recent draft Fisheries budget allocation.

Tim also attended a Non-Lethal Predator Damage Management Workshop co-sponsored by USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services and White Mountain Apache Tribe at HonDah Casino in Pinetop, AZ. The objective of the workshop is to provide information on the science behind non-lethal methods and the practical applications of various non-lethal methods integrated into predator damage management strategies to protect livestock and other property. The group discussed the importance of the non-lethal component of managing predator damage as it relates to resource owners being able to be proactive in managing predation. Tim will be able to relay this technical advice to cooperators he works with on a daily basis.



**Tim Groch (AZFWCO, left) assisted AGFD with a turkey capture project near the Blue River in Arizona Game Management Unit 27. Thirty-one turkeys were captured and relocated to areas where populations are in need of augmentation.**

Kirk served on a stakeholder committee to interview and provide input into hiring the USGS Assistant Chief position at Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center. Two candidates provided a formal presentation on their background and addressed the question of how to integrate science into decision making. The presentation was followed by a formal interview with stakeholders that included NPS, water interests, USBR and USFWS. A selection is expected in March.

Jess and Vic Scott worked to finalize our FY2016 budget request for AZFWCO.

AZFWCO Flagstaff, Parker, and Whiteriver personnel participated in the Region-2 All Employee Meeting in Phoenix.

Dennis Stone participated in a meeting concerning the use and data archiving procedures of GCMRC's master fish database.

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

Michael Pillow sent out an email calling for volunteers for our upcoming Humpback Chub monitoring field season. Most of his time in February was spent organizing volunteer applications and answering questions relating to our fieldwork and the monitoring project in general. There are a lot of qualified people from across the country that are interested in helping out with the work that we do. We plan to have a crew list finalized within the first week of March.

Michael began preparing for the upcoming 2016 field season by taking inventory of first aid kits and replacing expired or missing items.

Michael completed a three-day Wilderness First Responder and CPR recertification course in February. Jennifer Johnson completed “Endangered Species Act of 1973 – Overview” online through DOI Learn. The course provides a thorough overview of the various sections of the Endangered Species Act.

Tim participated in a webinar titled “Effectively Engaging Producers in Conservation Conversations” offered through USDA NRCS. During this course we learned what social scientists are discovering about how farmers are thinking about conservation practices

and practical strategies for engaging them.

Jennifer also renewed her Basic Aviation Safety (A-100) and Mishap review (A-200) training, completed 16 hours of Wilderness First Aid training, and taught Heartsaver First Aid and CPR courses to Arizona Ecological Services Office in Phoenix and Tucson. Twenty-one students participated.

Kirk, Michael, Jess, and Jennifer completed FISSA training for 2016.

Jennifer completed quarterly safety committee meeting minutes and submitted them to the Regional Office.

## Public Education and Engagement

The Parker Field Office recruited community volunteers to assist with the annual Lake Havasu Round-up on the Bill Williams River portion of the Lake. These volunteers learned some of the sampling methods that fish biologists utilize to monitor populations as well some things about the recovery of endangered fish species in the Colorado River.

Brad Buechel along with Mitch Thorson and John Naugle attended Kid’s Archery

Day where they helped area students learn how to shoot archery and introduced them to the sport of bow fishing.

Jennifer participated in the online webinar “Applying Diversity Best Practices to Conservation Education” presented by Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Jennifer completed a draft fact sheet for the American Paddlefish for the upcoming World Fish Migration Day in May. The national FAC conservation education team

is developing fact sheets for several species across the country.

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 759 “likes” from over 20 countries. Check us out at [www.facebook.com/AZFWCO](http://www.facebook.com/AZFWCO).

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ **March 14-18:** Lake Mohave Razorback Roundup
- ◆ **April 19-29:** Little Colorado River Humpback Chub Monitoring Trip I
- ◆ **May 17-27:** Little Colorado River Humpback Chub Monitoring Trip II
- ◆ **September 20-30:** Little Colorado River Humpback Chub Monitoring Trip III
- ◆ **October 18-28:** Little Colorado River Humpback Chub Monitoring Trip IV
- ◆ **August 27-September 13:** Mainstem Grand Canyon Humpback Chub Monitoring, hoop nets
- ◆ **September 23-October 7:** Mainstem Grand Canyon Juvenile Humpback Chub monitoring, seine

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