



A Humpback Chub captured during the May 2015 population monitoring trip in the Little Colorado River, Arizona.

AZFWCO Staff

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Dennis Stone, Fish Biologist
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Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Jeremy Voeltz, Jess Newton, and the New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO) had a coordination meeting on stocking plans and procedures for the threatened Gila Trout in Arizona. Mora National Fish Hatchery, in New Mexico, maintains wild brood stocks of the rare Gila trout for restoration and recovery of the species in AZ and NM.

Jeremy Voeltz coordinated with staff from the Arizona Ecological Services (ES) Field Office and Regional Office to continue compiling information for the Species Status Assessment (SSA) for Roundtail and Headwater chubs. Jess Newton reviewed and commented on the manager's draft of the SSA for the Headwater Chub and the Lower Colorado River Distinct Population Segment of Roundtail Chub. This document is part of the Candidate review process to determine if threatened or endangered species status is warranted under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Jeremy Voeltz provided comments to the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) on the "6 Species Conservation Strategy" for Roundtail Chub, Headwater Chub, Bluehead Sucker, Flannelmouth Sucker, and Zuni Bluehead Sucker. The Agreement and Strategy is set for renewal this year.

The Arizona FWCO and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation completed the grant package to fund Arizona FWCO's Apache trout recovery activities in 2015 and 2016.

Jennifer Johnson, with assistance from staff from the San Carlos Apache Tribe's Recreation and Wildlife Department completed annual lake surveys on San Carlos Reservoir and Talkalai Lake. Seneca was not sampled due to low water levels. During last year's survey of San Carlos Reservoir only Carp were collected, however this year we collected 12 species including several sportfish species: Bluegill, Green Sunfish, Black Crappie, Flathead Catfish, and Channel Catfish in addition to Carp

and Gizzard Shad. Carp and Gizzard Shad accounted for 64.9% of the total catch. The return of species other than Carp is encouraging. The Flathead Catfish and Largemouth Bass populations continue to be healthy at Talkalai Lake.



Daniel Vann holds a Largemouth Bass captured at Lake Talkalai

Randy Van Haverbeke, Dennis Stone, Mike Pillow, Jim Walters, and Rick Deshler participated in the May 19-29, 2015 Little Colorado River (LCR) monitoring trip. The purpose of these efforts is to gather long term

measurable information on population status and trend of the endangered Humpback Chub and other native and nonnative fishes in the Desert/Southern Rockies LCR ecosystem in Grand Canyon via mark-recapture methodology. This monitoring trip consisted of four separate crews to monitor the population below Lower Atomizer Falls (13.58 km) of the LCR as well as the translocated population above Lower Atomizer and Chute Falls (14.11 km) up to 17.67 km. Along with the USFWS personnel, the trip also consisted of six volunteers and one partner from AGFD. Each crew set and pulled a total of 180 net sets.

Mike Pillow finished entering and checking the data collected during the April Little Colorado River monitoring trip from Coyote and Boulders camps and Dennis re-checked the April Salt camp data that were entered into the Access database template in April.

Kirk Young and Jess Newton participated in a Long Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) conference call to discuss the hybrid alternative and the existing Trout Removal Triggers. Kirk committed to assemble several



Volunteers Christina Jovanovic (left) and Brandi Salmon measure and record biological data on a Humpback Chub captured during the May Little Colorado River monitoring trip

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management (*continued*)



A Black Crappie captured at San Carlos Reservoir in May 2015

key Grand Canyon biologists to assess the triggers and change them if necessary or advantageous.

Randy Van Haverbeke worked on developing a proposal to translocate humpback chub into the

mainstem Colorado River in Grand Canyon (GC). The purpose of this would be to augment or establish a second population of humpback chub in GC (i.e., outside of the Little Colorado River), and would be a part of the ongoing adaptive management process in GC.

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Dominic Barrett, in his final month as AZFWCO's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist, processed a new FY15 Cooperative Agreement with the National Wild Turkey Federation. He also initiated a landowner agreement titled Battle Tank Grassland Restoration Project. The project's objectives are to restore 400 acres of historic grassland communities, improve rangeland conditions, and increase suitable habitat for Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, other avian species, and resident wildlife. Dominic also closed out several completed landowner agreements this month.

Mitch Thorson and John Naugle prepared Giant Salvinia spraying equipment such as replacing hose, filter, and pumps. Giant Salvinia is an aquatic invasive plant and our 2015 control and eradication seasonal work begins in June.

Randy Van Haverbeke attended a Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) Practitioners forum at the

National Conservation and Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. The purpose of the forum was to 1) learn more about the SHC initiative, and 2) to provide an opportunity for field-oriented biologists within USFWS to interact with and provide feedback to the Directorate level via the Core SHC Team members. About 50 biologists attended, representing all regions within the USFWS. Most attendees were from the Ecological Services, Refuges, and Fisheries branches. Progress was made by having frank and open discussions about the challenges and solutions facing implementation of the SHC process. Topics of discussion covered the full spectrum of SHC issues including designation of SHC species, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), species population objectives, monitoring criteria, adaptive management, communication, and forming a community of practice. Four key areas emphasized by the Core SHC Team were 1) SHC should be based in strong science, 2) monitoring should result in



An illustration of the USFWS approach to Strategic Habitat Conservation. Image: www.fws.gov/landscape-conservation/shc.html

meaningful and measurable outcomes (although these measurable result do not necessarily need to be population estimates), 3) there should be engagement by states and partners, and 4) the work should be cross-programmatic in nature (inclusive of refuges, ES, fisheries, etc.).

Randy also spent time as available discussing the SHC initiative with other Fisheries and ES co-workers.

Partnerships and Accountability

Jess Newton provided comments on the document titled: "Lees Ferry Recreational Trout Fishery Management Recommendations: The Voice of Lees Ferry Anglers, Guides, and Businesses." This document was developed by International Federation of Fly Fishers; Trout Unlimited; Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation; Anglers United, Arizona Flycasters Club; Northern Arizona Flycasters; and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation

Partnership.

AZFWCO staff participated in the monthly Fishery Coordination meeting among AZFWCO, Alcheyay-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery and White Mountain Apache Tribe, Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division.

Kayla Barrett led the bimonthly Desert Fish Habitat Partnership conference call.

Kirk Young and Seth Felder

(USGS) conducted the on-site helicopter fly-in logistics for the May Little Colorado River Humpback Chub sampling trip. Kirk also modified the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery pipeline replacement Intra-Service Consultation and submitted it to Ecological Services. The Intra-Service document was modified to facilitate Army Corp of Engineers water quality permit review and issuance.

Cooperation with Native Americans

Jeremy Voeltz continued coordination with the White Mountain Apache Tribe to include summaries of Roundtail Chub data for populations on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation for inclusion in the Service's Species Status

Assessment for Roundtail Chub.

Mitch Thorson consulted with Colorado River Indian Tribes on what kind of inflow and outflow culverts to install on some of their backwater habitats. The design of

these culverts allows water to enter these facilities during high flows and close off from the inside to reduce outflow thereby maintaining higher water levels within the backwaters.

Public Use and Outreach

Jennifer Johnson delivered six Apache Trout to the White Mountain Nature Center. The Nature Center will be open daily through the summer.

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 574 "likes" from 20 countries. Check us out at www.facebook.com/AZFWCO.

Or click here: 

Leadership in Science and Technology

Jeremy Voeltz coordinated with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and U.S. Forest Service to discuss a NFWF pre-proposal to analyze existing stream temperature data in the Southwest, and to look at ways to prioritize filling in data gaps.

Kirk Young along with Randy Van Haverbeke organized and participated in a Grand Canyon biologist meeting to assess biological triggers for trout mechanical removal for eventual incorporation into the Grand Canyon Long Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) process. Cooperating biologists from USFWS, U.S. Geological



Three hundred age-0 Humpback Chubs were collected and transported to Southwest Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center for eventual translocation in Grand Canyon.

Survey (USGS), National Park Service (NPS), Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) discussed concepts for a general predator index (as opposed to trout-specific index) and an approach that emphasizes management actions as a first response to Humpback Chub declines rather than trout removal. The conceptual approach can reduce the likelihood of mechanical removal of trout, an action of considerable interest to several Southwest Indian tribes. The group will meet to flush-out approaches further in late July.

Colorado River (LCR) to Southwest Native Aquatic Resource and Recovery Center (SNARRC) in Dexter, New Mexico for grow-out and future translocation into Havasu Creek. Approximately 300 larval chub were collected during the May LCR stock assessment trip. The larvae were flown out of the LCR by helicopter and transported by truck to Grants, New Mexico. SNARRC received the fish in Grants and transported them the rest of the way to Dexter. The collection and use of larval fish to support translocations have eliminated a separate helicopter supported trip to collect fish normally scheduled in July and facilitates collection of fish from a life-stage with low impact to the



A submersible Passive Integrated Transponder tag antenna constructed by Marsh & Associates, LLC was installed in the Little Colorado River in April. The antenna has been continuously contacting tagged fish throughout April and May.

Kirk Young, USGS, and NPS worked collaboratively to plan, collect and transport larval Humpback Chub from the Little

Workforce Management

AZFWCO said farewell to Dominic Barrett and Kayla Barrett at the end of May. Dominic accepted a position in Region 6 as the Deputy Regional Coordinator of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. The Barrett family is relocating to Denver, CO, and Dominic will start his new position in early June. Jeremy Voeltz completed Dominic's close-out performance evaluation.

AZFWCO had our bi-monthly all staff conference call in May.

The Regional Directorate Team all came to Phoenix for a FWS All-Employee-Meeting. Staff came from across Arizona and included programs such as Refuges, Ecological Services, Fisheries, External Affairs, Migratory Birds, etc. Vic Scott, Kirk Young, and Jess Newton were able to attend from AZFWCO. The primary topic was our region's new "Emphasis Area" approach to conservation. Emphasis Areas will allow us to focus our FWS resources within key landscapes in order to maximize our impact for on-the-ground conservation.

Kirk Young and Mitch Thorson conducted mid-year employee performance reviews with staff.

Kirk Young and Mitch Thorson interviewed and selected a candidate for the GS 5 Fish

Biologist in Parker. The candidate declined the position and we are continuing to work the list.

Mitch Thorson arranged and conducted interviews for a WG-4 Pest Control Worker position in Parker AZ. Sean O'Kray was selected for the position and has a background of spraying *Salvinia* along the Colorado River.

Kirk Young submitted recruitment requests for a new term GS 9/11 biologist for the Parker Office. The new position will replace a recently vacated permanent position and will assist the office with a greater role in MSCP and conservation actions on the Lower Colorado River.

Mike Pillow worked with Vic Scott (USFWS) to coordinate travel documents for all of the Little Colorado River volunteers on the May trip. Mike was also in communication with the volunteers to answer questions and provide logistics updates as they prepared to travel to Flagstaff for the trip. Mike, Dennis Stone, and Randy Van Haverbeke also assisted with packing, preparing, coordinating personnel, and cleaning/unpacking after the May 2015 Little Colorado River Humpback Chub monitoring trip. Randy also coordinated flight plan manifests and schedules with the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) to ensure that all volunteers met basic



Dominic and Kayla Barrett are leaving AZFWCO for Colorado. Dominic starts his new position as Regional Coordinator of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program for Region 6 in June. Good luck, we will miss you guys!

aviation safety training requirements.

Jennifer Johnson worked with Steven McEvoy on the annual safety inspection at the Whiteriver office. Mike Pillow worked with Brian Woolridge (USFWS) on the Flagstaff station safety inspection. The Rocky Mountain Research Station (USFS) also conducted a building-wide safety inspection for the Flagstaff AZFWCO office. No major safety concerns were identified at either site. Jennifer Johnson, Mike Pillow, and Jess Newton completed annual updates to our three Station Safety Plans.

Upcoming Events:

Coming Soon to **USAJOBS.GOV** - June AZFWCO vacancy announcements:

- 1) Permanent GS-401-11: Partners for Fish & Wildlife Biologist, Whiteriver, AZ
- 2) Term GS-401-7: Coordinator Biologist for the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership, Whiteriver, AZ
- 3) Term GS-482-11: Fish Biologist – Conservation and recovery of fish in the lower Colorado River. Parker, AZ

Colorado River Humpback Chub Aggregation Monitoring Trip – **Aug 27 – September 14**

Little Colorado River Humpback Chub fall stock assessment I – **September 22 – October 2**

Little Colorado River Humpback Chub fall stock assessment II – **October 22 – November 2**

Desert Fishes Council, Death Valley – **November 19-22**

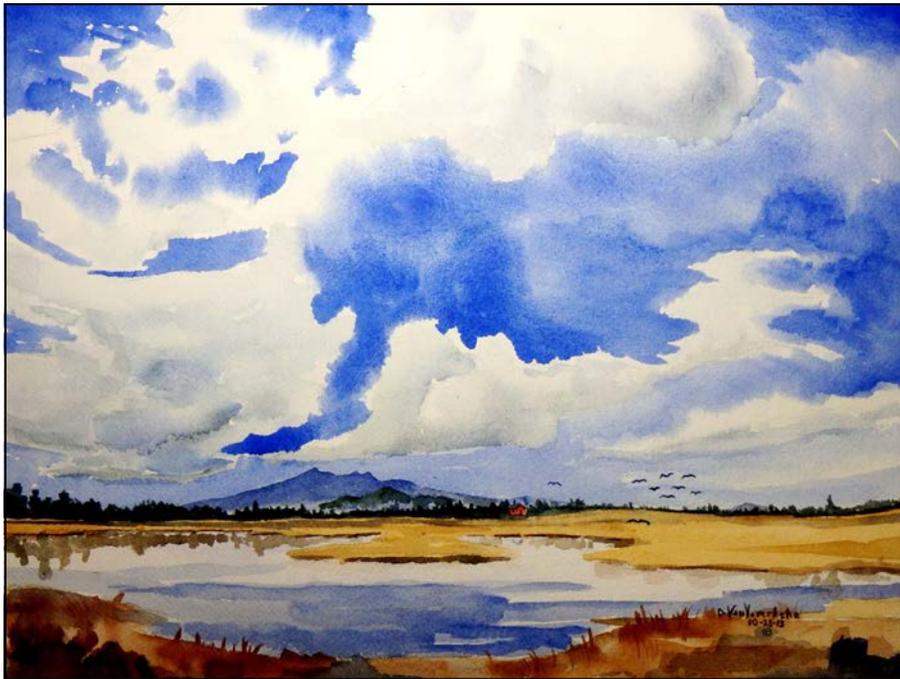
Personal Accomplishments

Mike Pillow participated in his first ever half-marathon road race: the Orange County Half-Marathon. The course ran from Newport Beach to

Costa Mesa, California on May 3, 2015. He finished the race with a time of 1:33.01 in 114th place.



Mike Pillow and his son, Wyatt pose for a photo following the Orange County Half Marathon in Costa Mesa, California.



Randy Van Haverbeke enjoys spending some of his free time painting landscapes using watercolors. This painting depicts Marshall Lake, located southeast of Flagstaff, Arizona with the San Francisco peaks in the background.

More AZFWCO photos from May 2015:



Jose Verdugo holds a Flathead Catfish captured at Lake Talkalai in May 2015



A Flannemouth Sucker captured during the May Little Colorado River (LCR) monitoring trip. All Flannemouths greater than 150 mm are given Passive Integrated Transponder tags, each with a unique ID number. Photo: Jamie Wisenall



Randy Van Haverbeke and volunteers Jamie Wisenall (center) and Kirsten Tinning during LCR monitoring in May 2015. Photo: Jamie

