



Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Accomplishment Report

September 2014



AZFWCO Staff

Flagstaff

Jess Newton, Project Leader
Kirk Young, Project Coordinator
Randy Van Haverbeke, Senior Fish Biologist
Dennis Stone, Fish Biologist
Mike Pillow, Fish Biologist
Jim Walters, Biological Technician
Rick Deshler, Biological Technician

Pinetop

Vacant, Assistant Project Leader
Jeremy Voeltz, Project Coordinator
Dominic Barrett, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Jennifer Johnson, Fish Biologist
Kayla Barrett, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Karla McGhan, Administrative Officer
Vacant, Office Assistant

Parker

Mitch Thorson, Fish Biologist
Tammy Knecht, Fish Biologist
John Naugle, Biological Technician

Apache Trout Crew

Dan Aguilera, 1040 Seasonal
Zebediah Buck, 1040 Seasonal



AZFWCO Mission: Working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and other aquatic organisms and their habitat in Arizona and the Southwest.

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

The Apache trout crew continued nonnative trout removals on Apache trout recovery streams. The crew covered 2.5 miles of stream and removed 701 nonnative trout while collecting 297 Apache trout.

Kirk Young, Randy Van Haverbeke, and Mike Pillow completed the second, of two, yearly 18-day humpback chub aggregation monitoring trip in the Colorado River, Grand Canyon. During this trip, the crew focused on sampling *known* aggregations of humpback chub. Humpback chub were detected at all sample locations and young-of-year fish were collected in the lower river. In addition, a portable PIT tag receiver was deployed at survey locations and resulted in 202 unique fish detections.



Dennis Stone, Mike Pillow, Rick Deshler and Jim Walters completed the September 2014 humpback chub monitoring trip in the Little Colorado River. On this trip, they experienced some significant flooding which made capturing fish and setting hoopnets quite difficult.



Jeremy Voeltz submitted the annual progress report to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to update them on activities under the current

grant for the Apache Trout Keystone Initiative. Much of the information in the progress report was provided by Jennifer Johnson as a part of her data management for the Apache Trout Keystone Initiative.

Kirk Young, Mitch Thorson, and Tammy Knecht completed the draft report entitled, "Investigations of razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*) and bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*) Movement, Survival, and Habitat Use: Parker Dam to Palo Verde Diversion Dam Annual Report 2014." The report summarizes year two of assessing survival and movement of razorback in the Lower Colorado River. This year fish performance was compared between backwater-reared and hatchery-reared fish. Results were mixed in that backwater-reared fish survived somewhat better in the lower river study area and hatchery fish survived better in the upper reach.

Randy Van Haverbeke generated population abundance and survival estimates in Program MARK for the spring Little Colorado River humpback chub monitoring trips since 2001.

Randy Van Haverbeke submitted a summary trip report to the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center regarding the September 2014 humpback chub mainstem aggregation monitoring trip .

Mitch Thorson met with our partners on the Imperial Pond Renovation Project. The first application of Rotenone (piscicide) will be in November and the second in December.

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Dominic Barrett met with a contractor to verify work associated with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW)-funded Turkey Springs Forest Management Project. A contractor masticated selected juniper and small-diameter Ponderosa pines throughout the project area (approximately 84 acres). The project will benefit



Before



After

resident and migratory wildlife.

Kayla Barrett coordinated Desert Fish Habitat Partnership's (DFHP) FY15 proposal process. Jeremy Voeltz and other members of the DFHP project ranking committee evaluated and ranked projects submitted under the 2015 Request for Proposals. The recommendations were submitted to Kayla who then forwarded the information on to the Steering Committee for final consideration.

Kayla Barrett coordinated with DFHP's science and data chair to discuss DFHP's strategic plan update, specifically how to incorporate the Lower Colorado River habitat assessment into DFHP Framework and how to incorporate lower Colorado River watershed rankings into proposal ranking criteria. Kayla and the science and data chair team will be drafting a new strategic plan for DFHP for FY15 funding reports due in January.

Dominic Barrett met with private landowners and a contractor to discuss the PFW-funded County Road #2010 Streambank Stabilization Project and the Milligan Valley Erosion Control Project.

Mitch Thorson obtained the final signed agreement from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) for

AZFWCO's control and eradication efforts targeting giant salvinia, an aquatic invasive plant. This grant agreement is for the next five years of work.

Mitch Thorson participated in a teleconference to discuss the Topock Marsh vegetation survey. USGS has received funding from USFWS to map the vegetation throughout the marsh.

Tammy Knecht completed monthly water quality sampling for Alamo Lake. Tammy also submitted the Scope of Work to Army Corps of Engineers for the new grant agreement to continue the Alamo Lake water quality work.

Partnerships and Accountability

Dominic Barrett participated in Private Lands Partners Day in Starkville, Mississippi. The event was hosted by Partners for Conservation, Mississippi State University, and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program. FWS

Region 2 PFW Cooperators, Jim and Jeanne O'Haco also attended the important event.

Jess Newton and Jeremy Voeltz attended a Region 2 Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation meeting in

Albuquerque.

Jess Newton proposed final amendments to the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the eight partner organizations of the Lake Havasu

Partnerships and Accountability (*continued*)

Fisheries Improvement Partnership 2014-2024. The purpose of the partnership is to promote a healthy and productive fishery. Proposed amendments relate to native fish protection in the context of an MOU primarily focused on enhancing a valuable sport fishery.

Jess Newton attended the Arizona Multiagency ESA Coordination Meeting. The meeting was hosted by Arizona Ecological Services Office and was attended by leadership from Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and Arizona Game and Fish Department. Topics included listing

decisions, critical habitat designations, status assessments, and recovery actions in Arizona.

Mitch Thorson participated in the Lower Colorado River Fisheries Management Agencies Work Group meeting to discuss how NDOW, USFWS, AGFD, NPS and LCR MSCP will manage the lower Colorado River into the future.

The DFHP annual meeting will be held at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources office in Salt Lake City, UT on 12 November 2014. If you're interested in attending, please contact DFHP coordinator, Kayla

Barrett, for more information.

Kayla Barrett facilitated and coordinated the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership bimonthly teleconference. Topics discussed were FY15 submitted project proposals, annual meeting and other upcoming meetings, and our new website.

Kayla Barrett added new members to DFHP (Timmie Mandish, NRCS; Bruce Brown, Eastern Rocky Mountain Council Conservation Vice President; and Therese Thompson, WNTI coordinator).

Cooperation with Native Americans

Jeremy Voeltz and Jess Newton, along with staff from the Regional Office and Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, attended a Statement of Relationship technical workgroup meeting with the White Mountain Apache Tribe's (WMAT) Chairman, Vice Chair, Tribal Council, attorneys, and staff from the WMAT Outdoor and Recreation Department. The AZFWCO will continue working with the WMAT on the on-going Species Status Assessment for roundtail and headwater chubs in the lower

Colorado River basin and how to manage data to be consistent with the SOR and Information Protocol between the WMAT and USFWS. In addition, progress was made on the on-going section 7 consultation for the National Fish Passage Program's Regional Programmatic Endangered Species Act compliance.

Dominic Barrett reviewed cultural resources survey reports for three PFW-funded projects. In compliance with NHPA, notification

letters were sent to five potentially affected Tribes.

Jeremy Voeltz worked with the San Carlos Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, and Navajo Nation to modify trout stocking schedules and locations due to poor water levels and/or water quality.

Tammy Knecht and Mitch Thorson submitted the 2014 Colorado River Indian Tribes draft report to BOR.

Public Use

Jess Newton represented the USFWS at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Glen Canyon Dam Power Generation. This public event occurred on National Public Lands Day and the keynote speaker was the Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell. Other speakers included Assistant Secretary for Water and Science,

Anne Castle, and preventatives from water and power partners, ecosystem conservation partners, elected officials, and community members.

Jennifer Johnson and Kayla Barrett participated in the annual Blue Ridge Junior High School Career Day. Jennifer and Kayla spoke to approximately 100 seventh and

eighth graders about careers in natural resources. The students were very attentive and had lots of good questions.



Public Use (*continued*)

Randy Van Haverbeke gave a presentation at a local high school in Flagstaff about native fish and life in the Grand Canyon. The students were really interested in the presentation and found the Grand Canyon story fascinating.

Kayla Barrett and Megan Bean (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department) developed a new website for the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership. Kayla and Megan will

continue to work on the website until the unveiling at DFHP annual meeting.

Did you know AZFWCO had a Facebook page? We post information on our staff, upcoming projects, educational events, and volunteer opportunities across the state. We currently have 497 “likes” from 20 countries. Check us out at www.facebook.com/AZFWCO.

facebook

Check out DFHP’s Facebook page. We post information on projects, request for proposals, pictures, steering committee news, and much more. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Desert-Fish-Habitat-Partnership/193053497376208>

facebook

Leadership in Science and Technology

Kirk Young submitted close-out documentation for the Director’s Fellows Program project that was completed this summer. The research project yielded information on swimming ability of young bonytail chub (as surrogate for humpback chub) at different water velocities. Swimming performance deteriorated with decreasing water temperatures. Existing water

temperatures and velocities in the Colorado River near the Little Colorado River confluence are at levels that could impair young chub’s ability to swim effectively. Though not quantified, the work also noted that while chub’s ability to swim at higher temperatures improved markedly, their energy demands (observed by food consumption) also increased.

Thus, swimming ability may improve in a warmer climate; however energy demands and food demands may also increase.

Dominic Barrett continued assisting the Desert Surrogate Species Team with mapping proposed surrogate species of the Chiricahua Mountain Subgeography.

Workforce Management

Dominic Barrett attended Interagency Consultation for Endangered Species at the National Conservation Training Center.

Kayla Barrett completed the August AZFWCO Accomplishment Report.

Staff participated in AZFWCO’s monthly teleconference.

