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Currents

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REGION 2 – SOUTHWEST REGION *Fisheries Program Highlights* (January – March 2009) June 2009

Edited by Jeremy B. Voeltz, Arizona FWCO



Paddlefish broodstock are brought to Tishomingo NFH to produce fish for restoration efforts

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Tishomingo NFH Volunteers Experience Hatchery Life



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Volunteer James Wood assists with paddlefish spawning at Tishomingo NFH

Kathleen Brintle, a student at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma, and James Wood, a high school student in Lawton, Oklahoma, are pursuing careers in Fisheries and Wildlife Management. They have logged many volunteer hours monitoring water quality, caring for fish and turtles, and assisting with spawning paddlefish at Tishomingo NFH. Both students provided much needed assistance during critical times while gaining knowledge and experiences related to their fields of study.

Kerry Graves, Tishomingo NFH

Inks Dam NFH Goes Solar

Biologist at Inks Dam NFH have completed their pilot study and now know the optimum size and power requirements for aerating one-acre ponds using solar power. Aeration helps prevent fish kills during the hot Texas summers when dissolved oxygen levels can plummet in ponds. Combining a 120-watt photovoltaic panel with a 1/8 horsepower pump and 9-inch disc air diffuser mixes the entire pond and maintains high and constant oxygen levels. The complete setup cost \$1,100, and efficiently reduces consumption from traditional energy sources.



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A 120-watt panel provides enough power to aerate a one-acre pond at Inks Dam NFH

Marc Jackson, Inks Dam NFH

Apache Trout Outreach in Arizona Reaches Thousands

Staff from the Arizona FWCO and Alchesay-Williams Creek NFH complex participated in the 9th annual International Sportsmen's Expo and 3rd annual Arizona Game and Fish Department Outdoor Expo; both in Phoenix, Arizona. A live Apache trout aquarium was set-up for kids and adults to observe the Arizona State Fish, and Apache trout videos and other outreach materials were distributed to the public. An estimated 35,000 people attended each event, including a day devoted to children and youth, with thousands of students attending the Expo's.



Kids take a look at live Apache trout at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Outdoor Expo

Jennifer Johnson, Arizona FWCO

Tishomingo NFH Aids Oklahoma DWC with Striped Bass Spawning



Striped bass eggs hatch out in incubation jars at Tishomingo NFH

Tishomingo NFH recently transferred over 750,000 striped bass fry back to two hatcheries operated by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC). After the DWC hatcheries reached their maximum capacity, they requested that Tishomingo NFH incubate and hatch additional striped bass eggs. The eggs were incubated in a temporary system, isolated from other culture units for parasite and pathogen control).

Mary Davis, Tishomingo NFH

Paddlefish Get a Head Start at Tishomingo NFH



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Paddlefish eggs in hatching jars at Tishomingo NFH.

This spring biologists collected 53 sexually mature paddlefish to spawn and raise the new paddlefish as part of a 10-year stocking plan to augment paddlefish populations in Fort Gibson Lake and Grand Lake O' the Cherokees. The adult paddlefish were brought back to the Tishomingo NFH hatchery where eggs were collected from the females and fertilized with milt taken from the males. The paddlefish fry will grow to an average size of 12 inches by mid summer and then biologists will tag and return them to the two lakes, as well as John Redmond Reservoir in Kansas. Tishomingo NFH and Oklahoma FWCO are working closely with the Oklahoma Department of Conservation on paddlefish restoration efforts.

Rebecca Fillmore, Tishomingo NFH

Making a Difference – Restoring the San Marcos River

In March 2008, staff from the San Marcos NFHTC and Baylor University planted 138 yellow stargrass and 258 arrowhead plants in a section of the San Marcos River previously occupied by invasive water trumpet. By March 2009, the plants that survived had flourished and multiplied, creating valuable fish and invertebrate habitat.

This restoration project was made possible by the removal of 2000 square meters of invasive water trumpet dredged from the river in 2005 and 2006. Future research on dredging and replanting techniques will likely improve success rates of reestablishing native habitat in the San Marcos River.

Mara Alexander, San Marcos NFHTC



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Revegetation creates habitat for fish and invertebrates in the San Marcos River

New Refuge for Clear Creek Gambusia Nearly Complete

Inks Dam NFH continued work on the Clear Creek gambusia refuge facility. The Clear Creek gambusia is endangered and very vulnerable to extinction. This new refugium will help prevent extinction, while providing a source of fish for future restoration efforts. The refugium will have solar-powered aeration to cut energy costs, and will drain to a settling basis to contain wastes and prevent escapement of species to local waters.

Marc Jackson, Inks Dam NFH



A shade canopy covers the Clear Creek gambusia refuge facility at Inks Dam NFH

“Razorback Round-Up” in its 20th Year



Razorback suckers are held in a cage in Lake Mohave prior to processing and then being released back into the lake

Twenty years ago, a group of scientists began monitoring the population of razorback sucker in Lake Mohave, Arizona-California. The lake contains the largest remaining population of razorback sucker. Over the years the wild population has declined and while the “round-up” continues every year, the focus has changed from monitoring, to actions focused on reversing the decline of the species. Adults are tracked through the use of small tags, and wild-spawned larvae are captured, raised in hatcheries and stocked both in the lake and in off-channel backwater habitats. This year, Arizona FWCO biologists captured 162 adult and sub-adult razorback sucker as well as over 1500 larvae that will be grown to a larger size at the Willow Beach NFH.

Mitch Thorson, Arizona FWCO

First Region 2 Fish Biologists Workshop a Success

Dexter NFHTC hosted the Service's first Southwest Region Fish Biologists Workshop in February. This workshop was attended by biologists from 10 fishery stations in the Southwest Region with presentations from each station that showcased facilities and unique programmatic aspects of each station. The workshops on Tuesday included an in-depth discussion of the federal application process provided by the Division of Human Resources staff and a discussion about Region 2 climate change issues and the Service's climate change strategic planning process. Wednesday's session was opened by Stuart Leon, Chief of Fisheries from the Washington Office, followed by presentations that included Dr. Chester Figiel's overview on the National Fish Strain Registry, and a WebEx presentation on the Wild Fish Health Survey by Joshua Bradley from the Washington Office. Thursday's agenda provided attendees an opportunity to hear from Assistant Regional Director Mike Oetker. The three day agenda included hands on instruction in fish health assessments, an introduction to implanting sonar tracking, and tours of Dexter NFHTC's culture & propagation, research, and fish health units. There were also unsubstantiated rumors of late-hours karaoke at the hotel bar. The workshop was a success and next years' Southwest Region Fish Biologists Workshop will be held at the San Marcos NFHTC.

Connie Keeler-Foster, Dexter NFHTC; Pam Sponholtz, Arizona FWCO; Ralph Simmons, Tishomingo NFH; Manuel Ulibarri, Dexter NFHTC



Biologists and special guests attended the 1st Region 2 Fish Biologists Workshop at Dexter NFHTC

Southwest Region Fisheries Division

National Fish Hatcheries

The National Fish Hatcheries (NFH), at Willow Beach, Alchesay-Williams Creek, Uvalde, Tishomingo, and Inks Dam; develop and maintain brood stocks of important fish species, both sport fishes and critically imperiled non-game fishes. The hatcheries are the source of fish and eggs distributed to partners with similar aquatic conservation missions, such as native fish restoration or fulfilling federal mitigation responsibilities. Hatcheries are often called upon to provide a place of refuge for imperiled aquatic organisms, such as aquatic plants and amphibians.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCO) in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas evaluate wild native fish stocks and their habitats, and work with partners and other Service programs to restore habitats and fish populations.

These offices provide technical fish and wildlife management assistance to tribes and other partners with a primary focus on native aquatic species.

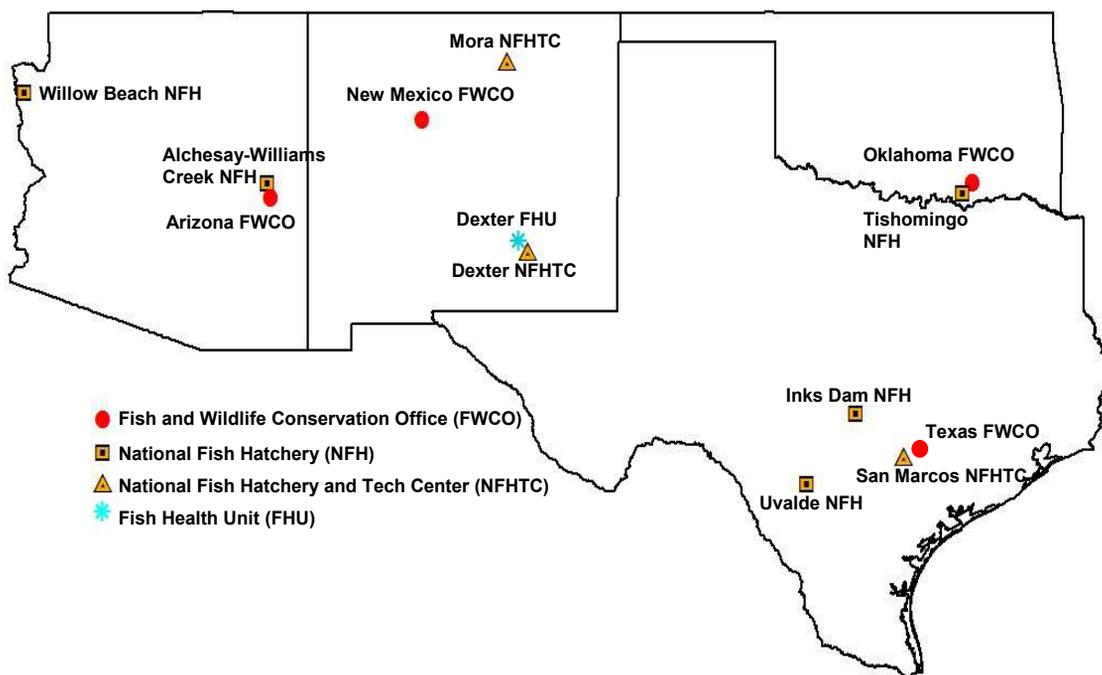
Fish Technology Centers

The Fish Technology Centers (NFHTC), at Dexter, Mora, and San Marcos; develop leading-edge technology for use by tribal, state, and federal fish hatcheries and fishery biologists to make fish culture more productive, cost-effective, and scientifically sound.

Technology improves hatchery efficiency; helps assure the genetic integrity of fishes, at the same time minimizing the effects of hatchery fish on wild fish stocks.

Fish Health Unit at Dexter

The Fish Health Unit (FHU) at Dexter assesses the well-being of fish that live in the wild or are raised at hatcheries. Fish health biologists are highly trained in various scientific disciplines, like immunology, epidemiology, toxicology, and genetics. They apply that knowledge in fish health assessments that might lead to early detection of potentially devastating diseases, prescribing preemptive measures.



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