

SOUTHWESTERN NATIVE AQUATIC RESOURCES AND RECOVERY CENTER

February 2016 Monthly Activity Report



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STAFF

Center Director.....Manuel Ulibarri
 Deputy Center Director.....Vacant
 Administrative Officer.....Maria Bullard
 Administrative Technician.....Michelle Bell
 Office Assistant.....Casey Booth
 Fish Biologist.....William Knight
 Fish Biologist.....Ian Paige
 Fish Biologist.....Colby Crouse
 Fish Biologist.....Vacant
 Animal Caretaker.....Cecilia Lamb
 Maintenance Mechanic.....Brian Hadlock
 Maintenance Worker.....Ty Terry
 Maintenance Worker.....Vacant

RESEARCH

Research Unit Leader.....Wade Wilson
 Research Fish Biologist...Michael Schwemm
 Fish and Wildlife Biologist.....Tracy Diver
 Fish Biologist (Genetics).....Sandra Bohn
 Fish Biologist (Genetics).....Vacant

FISH HEALTH

Fish Health Leader.....Martha Keller
 Fish Health Biologist.....Marlene Rodarte
 Fish Health Biologist.....Jason Woodland
 Fish Health Biologist.....David Hampton
 Fish Biologist.....Ashlie Peterson

Fish Health Staff Received Fish from Texas Park and Wildlife Division, Lake Texoma, USFWS Photo

Conserving Aquatic Species

On February 17, Fish Health staff traveled to the Oklahoma University Biological Station near Madill, OK to conduct a Wild Fish Health Survey with fish from Lake Texoma. Partners from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department collected the fish for this sampling effort. Assistance with fish health sampling was also provided by Aaron White from nearby Tishomingo NFH. Fish health also received ovarian fluid collected from Gila trout at Mora NFH for pathogen testing and fountain darters from the San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center (ARC), TX, for inspection of parasites related to an on-going research study. Tracy Diver completed several fish health molecular confirmation cases for bacterial kidney disease and has been working to compare qPCR methods to current standard (AFS Bluebook) protocols.

No fish were distributed during the month of February.

Conserving Aquatic Species Cont.



Fish Culture Staff Scanning and Sorting Bonytail, USFWS Photo

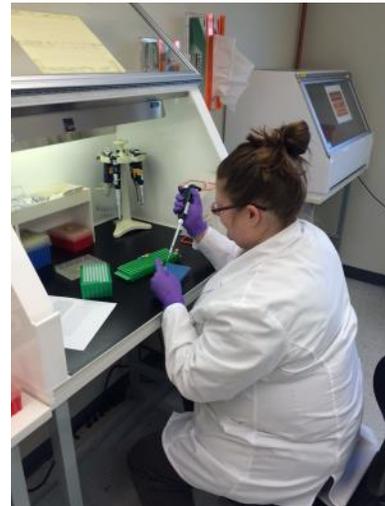
The 2014 year class of bonytail were consolidated into a D-series pond covered with bird netting for temporary holding until water temperatures rise next month and fish densities can be adjusted. The 2012 bonytail were harvested; scanned for tags and sorted by size in preparation for distribution to Reach 2 and Reach 4 of the lower Colorado River. Two ponds of woundfin were harvested in preparation for visible implanted elastomer (VIE) tagging and distribution to the Virgin River near St. George, UT. A total of 370 age -2 Colorado pikeminnow were passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagged and will be stocked into the San Juan River near the Hogback diversion canal and fish weir. The fish will be used to test the effectiveness of the weir by monitoring fish movements through the newly built structure and recording any entrainment of fish.

Two B-series ponds were prepped to receive the 2014 year class of razorback sucker and fish culture staff began removing bird netting from the over wintering ponds. Outdoor raceway #4 was power washed, disinfected and refilled to receive bonytail destined for the lower Colorado River in early March.

Scientific Capacity

Wade Wilson and Tracy Diver completed the final edits on the Bonytail Recruitment Project report. Tracy also genotyped the 2013 and 2014 Main Diamond, South Diamond and Whiskey Creek Gila trout (*Oncorhynchus gilae*) for the 2016 spawn. Sandra Bohn finished the 10% QAQC. Wade Wilson analyzed the spawning matrixes and provided biologists at Mora NFH the final results.

Sandra Bohn finished quantitative PCR screening of fish health samples for the chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*). Forty samples of salamanders from the San Marcos ARC were screened in triplicate and the results were submitted to Fish Health.



Sandra Bohn, Setting up PCR Reactions, USFWS Photo

Fulfilling Tribal Trust Responsibilities

Razorback sucker from the 2014 year class were harvested, sorted and tagged in preparation for distribution to the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI) ponds near Farmington, NM, in April. NAPI staff will culture the fish until the target size is met, fish will then be stocked into the San Juan River.

The annual aquatic animal health inspection for the Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery in Mescalero, NM, was conducted on February 24. Four lots of rainbow trout were sampled and transported to the fish health lab for processing.

Workforce Management and Training

Brian Hadlock, Maintenance Mechanic, WG-4749-10 resigned his position effective February 9, 2016. Best wishes to Brian.

Michelle Bell completed a file plan for Southwestern ARRC. The Administrative Department submitted the 2016 Salaries and Benefits to the Regional Office. Maria Bullard began on-the-job training with Casey Booth; they are currently reviewing basics in FBMS and how to reallocate charge cards.

Michelle Bell attended the Fisheries Administrative Meeting, February 1-4, in Albuquerque, NM. Casey Booth attended the Basic Simplified Acquisition Course in Albuquerque, NM, February 1-5. Maria Bullard completed the 2016 USEER and Veterans Employment Training for Hiring Managers.

Michael Schwemm attended the Oklahoma Natural Resource Conference in Oklahoma City, Feb 24-26. Michael co-authored two talks: "Introgression and population structure of Neosho smallmouth bass" with Andrew Taylor, Jim Long and Shannon Brewer of the USGS Cooperative Research Unit Oklahoma State University; and "Population genetic analysis of the longear sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*) in northeastern Oklahoma" with Brandon Brown (Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation), and Adam Barkalow and Thomas Turner (University of NM).

Sandra Bohn attended the Arizona/New Mexico chapter of the American Fisheries Society annual meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona, where she presented a talk on "Refuge populations of White Sands Pupfish diverge in the absence of high gene flow". She also participated in a webinar on an environmental DNA resources website that is being developed in conjunction with the Department of Defense and assisted with questionnaires that will help determine the website's content.

The National Conservation Training Center bi-annually offers the opportunity for Fish Biologists throughout the Nation to participate in the Fisheries Academy. During late February through early March, Tracy Diver attended the Fisheries Academy as a representative of Region 2. She has been working with fish biologists throughout the Nation to learn about the Fish and Wildlife Service's goals, missions, and responsibilities. In addition, she has been meeting future collaborators in the service with

the hopes of developing research and conservation projects that will aid in the recovery of endangered species.

Martha Keller took part in the inaugural monthly "USFWS Wildlife Health Experts" conference call. This is a service-wide community of practice consisting of veterinarians and other wildlife health experts in the service. This will allow for better communications and exchange of ideas service-wide on wildlife health related issues.

Wade Wilson and Manuel Ulibarri participated in the Expert Peer Review of the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Programs, Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Genetics Project Meeting held in Albuquerque, NM, by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on February 4-5. Martha Keller and Manuel Ulibarri participated in the Arizona Game and Fish Department and USFWS Annual Fisheries Coordination Meeting by phone.



Jameson Paige, CDSO, Presenting at the Quarterly Staff/ Safety Meeting, USFWS Photo

A quarterly safety/staff meeting was held on February 25. The safety focus was on housekeeping in the workplace and hazards associated with slips and falls. All departments gave an update on current projects and changes in procedures. Fish Health hosted the potluck with a "Breakfast for Lunch" theme.

Center staff participated in the Region 2 Fisheries & Aquatic Conservation monthly conference call, the Fish Technology and Health Centers conference call, and National Wild Fish Health Survey & Database committee conference call.

Engaging and Educating the Public and Our Partners



Wil Romero , Special Services Occupational Training Program, USFWS Photo

Wil Romero a freshman at Eastern New Mexico University – Roswell (ENMUR), continues to assist Southwestern ARRC on a weekly basis. Wil is enrolled in a program that assists students in becoming familiar with life skills. Southwestern ARRC has partnered with ENMUR in placing students in a controlled working environment during the school year. The main goal of the program is for the student to become familiar with a working environment and develop skills necessary to succeed in today’s world and workforce. Wil has a set schedule and this month worked with the research staff gaining a better understanding of genetics. He also assisted with the collection of fin clips from the bonytail broodstock that will be sent to Mora NFH, and learned how to find scientific articles online. Wil also worked in the Administrative Department this month, filing safety papers and shredding old documents. In Fish Health he assisted in preparing and organizing sample collection tubes and labeled tubes used for blind passes. In the

Maintenance Department, he worked with staff replacing HVAC filters in the administrative building and assisted Fish Culture staff with the morning fish feedings. Wil is responsible for raising the flag on the mornings that he works at the Center; and has learned the protocol for raising the flag, placing it at half-mast and what weather conditions a flag can be flown in. He is engaged in his daily activities and doing a wonderful job.

Southwestern ARRC had a visit from Dr. Chris Wilson. Chris recently retired from the lead fisheries pathologist position for Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Fisheries Experiment Station. He was provided a tour of the Center and some local insight on quail hunting.

The Center had four visitors this month.

Additional Activities



Ty Terry, Cutting Pipe for New Fence Line, USFWS Photo

Maintenance staff spent a significant amount of time completing routine and preventative maintenance in the Administrative building. They replaced carpet tiles in two offices; air filters in the air HVAC units, cleaned the coils in two of the air handlers for the main lobby and replaced the sprayer to the faucet in the break room. In addition Ty Terry performed monthly service on all generators, precut steel pipe to length and used plasma cutters to cut saddles on the ends of the pipe to build H braces for the new fence line around the Centers interior boundary.

Coats Pump and Supply from Dexter, NM, rebuilt a boiler pump in the administrative building; the pump was installed by Southwestern ARRC staff. Greenfield Electric from Dexter, NM, replaced a broken transformer on the water tower pump station. Storefront Specialties and Glazing from Albuquerque, NM, began installing a new sky light in the administrative building lobby area.

Additional Activities Cont.

New valves were installed on the inflow pipes of pond 12B and 11D; the valves had broken and needed to be replaced in preparation for the upcoming season. Staff began repairing pond liners on two A-series ponds. The 20 year old liner material has deteriorated above the water level areas due to the constant UV rays, and other natural elements. New airlines and airstones were installed on two fish distribution tanks and water tower pump #1 was serviced with new belts and an oil change. The F-250 autocrane was serviced with a new fuel filter, spark plugs, distributor cap and rotor.

Fish health received a new centrifuge this month and maintenance staff repaired the virology/necropsy lab autoclave received in January. All 2015 and 2016 desktop computers have been set-up, updated and software installed.

The Center recycled 250 lbs. of cardboard and 5lbs. of empty printer toner cartridges this month.

The area received .3" of rain.



William Knight and Ty Terry Replacing a Valve on an Inflow Pipe, USFWS Photo

Upcoming Events

- March 1-4: Woundfin VIE tagging and distribution to Virgin River, St. George, UT.
- March 1: Aquatic Animal Health Inspection at Willow Beach NFH.
- March 14: Bonytail distribution to Lower Colorado River.
- March 15: Bonytail refuge population transferred to Mora NFH.
- March 28: Razorback sucker spawning.
- March 28–April 1: National Fish Health Biologist Meeting in Seattle, WA