



# Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



## Monthly Accomplishments

April 2014

### Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,152 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 5.71 fpp and 8.35 inches in total length. Staff has increased feeding to everyday with the increasing pond temperatures. This is the only the second month of substantial growth for these production fish in the last five months.

No health issues have been noted by staff and only a single mortality was recorded for the month. Preparations are underway to harvest 15,000 Channel catfish for the Navajo Nation at the beginning of next month. These fish will be coming out of the first and only, lined ponds at Inks Dam NFH and will present several issues to overcome to get these fish harvested.

Channel catfish brood stocks were ponded for the upcoming spawning season last month. A total of 294 four year-old and 380 three year-old brood stock were placed into separate ponds by staff with aide from volunteers. Staff placed spawning cans into the ponds late this month but no spawns were observed or taken. With increasingly warmer temperatures this month spawning will probably occur in early May.

Hatchery staff got the Holding House prepped for Channel catfish spawning and all the feeders, sand filters, air stones and early rearing fry troughs are cleaned and readied for this year production.

Additionally, hatchery staff prepped the Butler Building for FY14 American paddlefish from the Tishomingo NFH. Staff readied tanks, air stones, screens, the artemia hatcher was setup and a feed order was prepared. Because of staffing and budget concerns no American paddlefish will come to Inks Dam NFH again this year.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population has now been in recirculation tanks for two full years. The 79 remaining fish have now been on station for almost four years. Seven mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. All of mortalities have come from either the pure males or the remaining hybrid females. No external parasites or diseases were observed in any of the mortalities and probably due to normal life expectancy since they have been on station this long.

The Texas FWCO received the genetic results from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) on samples, taken several months ago, to determine the amount of hybridization in the upper pool population before obtaining another population. Clarification on those results should be forthcoming from the FWCO and a determination on the whether or not to get another population for the facility.

Hatchery staff spent many



Above: Many of the tours provided at Inks Dam NFH involve feeding the large catfish brood stock. Although very enjoyable to watch these big fish forage close to the shoreline, visitors also learn about how we get all the catfish we provide to Tribal partners.

Below: One of the kids from the Burnet and Houston Church groups that visited the hatchery enjoyed the Master Caster Class. This one is really getting the hang of it!



hours this month getting the new pH systems calibrated and worked out some of the problems with the system. With the addition of some new pumps, early in the month, the systems have worked very well and the pH levels are now being reduced very slowly to more accurately reflect pH levels at the upper pool site. Staff also created a new spawning baffle to allow the live-born offspring to escape without getting eaten. This should increase separation between mother and young without intervention from staff; reduce stress on both parent and offspring and potentially greatly increase survival. Attempts at spawning should begin sometime the second or third week in May.

## Personnel

Julie Burks attended the Administrative Conference call and has been working diligently to get all the reimbursable paperwork finished for Fort Hood contract.

Gregory Landry performed the April Safety Meeting for the hatchery staff. He also went to the Clear Creek site to download water quality data from the sonde.

## Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Most of the monthly maintenance effort was spent preparing for the spawning of the Channel catfish, getting ready for the American paddlefish from Tishomingo NFH and prepping the RDU for the first deliveries of the year to our Tribal partners.

## Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had 234 visitors and approximately one quarter (53) of those visiting were people fishing at the river for White bass. Many of these visitors were new to the hatchery and remarked how enjoyable it was to see fish, fish in the river, hike, bird, and just enjoy the outdoors. Visitation is up for the year and many are first time visitors.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 85.5 hours for the month of April. Most of the FOIDNFH hours were for two tours given on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of the month. These tours provided adults and youth insight into the mission of the USFWS and participate in Outdoor Educational programs to explore and connect with nature.

The tours included 46 adults and three grandchildren from the Lone Star Blue Bird RV Club. The participants fed the brood stock catfish, took a hike up the Overlook Trail, and was given a PowerPoint presentation on the hatchery and its programs. The second tour was a church group (Burnet & Houston) with seven adults & 15 children (ages 4-14) Like the other tour group they hiked up the Overlook Trail, discussed fish production at the hatchery, fed the brood stock, and took part in the Master Caster Class. Both tours had great responses from all the participants.

The ISF crew and staff spent one day on the facility weed eating and mowing. The crew of six provided 40 hours of work and assisted staff with making the facility presentable for visitors.



The Church Group makes it to the top of the Overlook Trail and all have smiles as they enjoyed not only the hike but the views!



Some of the Lone Star Blue Bird RV Club receives an introduction from the FOIDNFH to the facility and a brief history.



Many tours enjoy the Master Caster Class and it turns out to become a large competition to see who can make it into all the casting rings first!

U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Southwest Region  
Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation



Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery  
345 Clay Young Road  
Burnet, TX 78611  
Phone 512/793-2474  
[http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/inks\\_dam/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/inks_dam/index.html)

---

## Current staff members

Paul Dorman .....	Project Leader
Vacant .....	Assistant Project Leader
Vacant .....	Environmental Education Specialist
Julie Burks.....	Administrative Technician
Gregory Landry .....	Fisheries Biologist
Vacant .....	Animal Caretaker (Term)
Larry Guerro .....	Motor Vehicle Operator
Vacant .....	Maintenance Worker
Vacant .....	Maintenance Worker