



Monthly Accomplishments

April 2015

Fisheries Activities

The catfish spawning season has begun. Staff collected the first spawns at the end of the month with a total of two pounds of spawn (15,000 eggs) collected. This is a bit unusual because in the past eleven years spawns have never been collected this early. Over those years, the spawning has been slowly moving earlier and earlier but this is definitely a first. These fish will be utilized for a request by the New Mexico FWCO for a research project this year.

Production numbers for the FY14 Channel catfish are 40,152 averaging 4.27 fish per pound (fpp) and 9.25 inches in total length. Earlier ponded fish from this year class are averaging 9.61 fpp and will be the first fish stocked out for FY15 Tribal requests in June. Several mortalities were recorded for the month caused by avian predation. Initial observations are that the fish over-wintered pretty well, with some size variations.

Inks Dam NFH staff started harvesting ponds, at the end of the month, for the first FY15 Tribal requests. All went very smoothly despite a “new” crew and the first pond had 94% survival from stocking. The second pond will be harvested on May 1 with all fish being shipped on May 4 to the Navajo Nation in New Mexico.

Currently there are 3,945 FY13 channel catfish averaging 1.48 fpp and 13.13 inches in total

length. These fish will be used for future brood stock and future reimbursable fish. Additional production also includes 1,214 FY12 averaging 0.52 fpp and 16.61 inches in total length. These fish will, and have been utilized for brood stock in FY15 and Fort Hood Reimbursable contract requests. There were several mortalities recorded, for the month, due to avian predation on this population of fish. Hatchery staff provided 334 fish, from this year class, for the second Fort Hood stocking of FY15. These fish averaged 0.53 fpp at 18.40 inches in total length.

Inks Dam NFH received approximately 50,000 American paddlefish from the Tishomingo NFH in the middle of April. Staff has been using a variety of initial feed regimes to get these difficult early feeders on feed. So far, the paddlefish have been doing quite well. By the end of the month, the fish had nearly doubled in size from the initial pickup size. Mortality has been normal for this species.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population has now been in recirculation tanks for two full years and approaching five in refugium. There are now only 11, original refugium fish. Two mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. Mortality now is more than likely due to normal life expectancy. All of these fish have been consolidated into one tank since no more spawning

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH has made a Monarch Butterfly milkweed garden in front of the old LCRA Administrative Building steps. Below: New signage of the Monarch garden put up by the Friends group. The garden has two of the native milkweed scattered throughout.



The white dot, at the point end of the red arrow, is a Monarch Butterfly egg. The leaf is an Antelope Horn milkweed. The orange arrow is pointing to an “instar” caterpillar stage of the Monarch Butterfly. This little guy is an early stage. Below: This is a much more advanced instar stage and plainly visible.



attempts will be made with these fish.

The FY14 Clear Creek gambusia currently in isolation now number 142 fish. A total of 11 mortalities occurred during the month. The majority was female and since no age is associated with these fish it is thought they were probably older fish. Staff is noticing that some of the females that have spawned are included in these mortality numbers. Only three male mortalities occurred in the same time frame.

There currently is 184 FY15 Clear Creek gambusia. There was a corresponding increase in mortalities from this year class as well. A total of 16 occurred for the month. The majority of mortalities were females as well but staff is finding that these smaller fish may be having issues passing offspring at birth. All female mortalities had very developed offspring not yet born. At this point staff is unable to document the cause of this problem.

Inks Dam NFH collected an additional 78 juveniles this month and now has on inventory a total of 189 F1 juveniles from the FY14 and FY15 Clear Creek gambusia. Juveniles were collected from 10 of the 15 tanks now utilized for spawning. The mean number of offspring per female was lower to 5.2 juveniles per adult female and may be due to size of the female. This number ranged from 1 to 15 per adult female. One mortality occurred during a tank cleaning but all are on feed and doing very well.

One particular side note to the new F1's, the first six that were born in the middle of February,

staff can see clear signs of sexual dimorphism in those fish. It also appears that one of those females might be gravid! Early feeding is going well and staff has continued taking weights and lengths to determine growth curves and condition indexes for this species.

Personnel

Scott Walker attended the aquaculture water recirculation program in Arizona this month. Matt Paulson, from the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center in La Cross, Wisconsin has accepted the position of Fisheries Biologist. He will start in the beginning of June. Sadly, Julie Burks, Administrative Technician here at Inks Dam NFH, has accepted a position with Refuges in Region 4. She will be missed by all the staff. Paul Dorman has been working with Mark Reiser, Senior Project Manager, for McMillen - Jacobs Associates on the incoming water filter project. He has also been working with the contractor on the FY15 DM residence housing electrical rehabilitation for two of the residences.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. **No pipe repairs were attempted or completed during this month!** The remainder of the month has been spent on prepping the Regional Distribution Unit (RDU), mowing, marking milkweed species, prepping pond harvest equipment, catfish spawning, and culture assets.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

Inks Dam NFH had a total of 361 visitors for the month of

April. With the warmer and sunny days many people have come to see the wildflowers, fish the White bass run, which seems to be longer than normal, to hike on the trails and/or birding activities. Many of the folks have also come to see what it is we are doing and why we do it.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 178.0 hours for the month of April. This month the FOIDNFH membership spent the month with weekly bird surveys, milkweed plant marking and mapping, tending the milkweed garden, cleaning bluebird nest boxes, filling feeders by the bird blind, and tours.

The FOIDNFH had a tour for the month of April. Boy Scout Pack 145, from Austin, visited late in the month. A total of six scouts and 10 parents or guardians hiked up the Overlook Trail and toured the hatchery.

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



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Current staff members

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