



# Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



## Monthly Accomplishments

December 2013

### Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,154 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 8.73 fpp and 7.28 inches in total length. Lengths and weights have not changed for this past month due to extremely cold water temperatures this year. Production ponds have averaged 9.14°C or 48.44°F for the month of December. Even though these temperatures represent more “normal” winter-time temperatures, than the past several years, feeding these fish for growth could cause potential fish health issues. This is due to their extremely reduced metabolisms at these water temperatures. A single mortality was recorded by staff for the month but some fish have been “flying off” with the Ospreys and some of the migrating Cormorants.

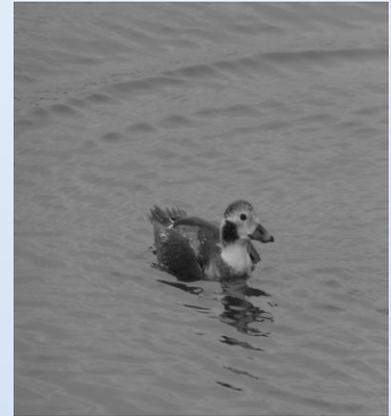
The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population moved over to the recirculation tanks in March of 2012 is still doing very well. The 108 fish have now been on station for three-plus years. Eleven mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. No external parasites or diseases were observed in any of the mortalities and probably due to handling stresses, spawning stresses, or normal life expectancy. It should be noted that several mortalities were in the hybrid tank and there was no attempt to spawn these fish.

In December, Inks Dam NFH staff started another series of

work plans to spawn the FY2010 Clear Creek gambusia. The staff setup a series of six replicates of 2X1 spawning by increasing the number of females from one to two in an attempt to divide the time the male spends with the female and perhaps increase our chance at offspring. There is some live bearing spawning literature that suggests having more females than males helps to prevent female spawning mortality found in 1X1 spawning.

The second methodology, attempted in December, was natural selection or communal spawning. Clear Creek gambusia are very gregarious and, according to some literature, the gambusia females can be highly selective as to which males they spawn with. Hatchery staff put all the remaining females and 1/3 of the remaining males together. Hatchery staff continued duplicating the water temperature and the amount light found during a typical May through September spawning season.

Water temperatures were controlled with a recirculation chiller-heater unit and the natural wavelength lighting was controlled with electrical controllers to duplicate the average amount of sunlight found during that spawning season time frame. By the end of the month no female gambusia had produced offspring to date. The typical Poeciliid gestation period is



Hatchery staff noticed an unusual migratory visitor that came in with the last storm for the year. After several days of trying to figure out what it was, and eventually verified by a birding expert, Inks Dam NFH is now residence for a Long-tailed duck.

The female Long-tailed duck, *Clangula hyemalis*, must have been blown way off course because this diving duck is also considered a sea-duck. It primarily resides, in winter, on both coasts and Canada. She is quickly becoming popular with birders and photographers as the news of her arrival and now residency is starting to get out.



approximately 30 days. Hatchery staff is currently developing an alternative work plan to conduct additional spawning experiments during the normal spawning months of May through September.

## Personnel

Paul Dorman and Julie Burks provided Regional Facilities Coordinator, Jae Ahn, with necessary data for the Motor Vehicle Survey and completed all of the new Concur travel training. Greg Landry performed the monthly safety meeting, which was attended by all staff, and completed the Sustainable Practices database entries. Larry Guerro contacted Ed Bass of Region 2 NWRS Facilities Management about classes for becoming a heavy equipment trainer. Staff took time off during the Holiday season to be with friends and family.

## Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Larry Guerro graded some of the facility roads that needed some maintenance after the rains we received in December. Pond repairs were also undertaken this month.

## Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had 81 hatchery visitors for the month of December, 150 additional visitors for the Doris Mager presentation and 31 for the Highland Lakes Bird and Wildflower Society presentation in the Education Building. Many cold-hardy birders and photographers came out to see

the migratory birds that usually make Inks Dam NFH a traditional stop and our unusual migrant, the Long-tailed duck. The female Long-tailed duck, *Clangula hyemalis*, must have been blown way off course because this diving duck is also considered a sea-duck. It primarily resides, in the winter, on both coasts and northern Canada.

the crowds thoroughly enjoy watching the program.

Paul Dorman provided a talk for the Highland Lakes Bird and Wildflower Society on Pelicans and Cormorants. The talk focused on how the hatchery and its staff prevent these birds from preying on the fish raised here and the issues of disease transference created by the birds

moving from area to area.



**Above:** A group of approximately 150 adults and children watched the presentation on American raptors by Ms. Doris Mager. Doris, aka, "The Eagle Lady", has been working with North American raptors and putting on presentations, like this, for more than 30 years. **Below:** ET, which stands for Extra Terrific, flies from Doris' hand back to the perch for the crowd. Although ET steals the show with her flying; Doris and the rest of her birds, stimulated enthusiasm, in the audience, for nature, conservation, and the outdoors.



As for volunteer activities during the month, the Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 94.5 hours. The majority of the FOIDNFH hours were dedicated to the Annual Doris Mager presentation on American raptors. This is the only location that Doris does her program where she can fly her birds and

U.S. Department of the Interior  
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## Current staff members

Paul Dorman .....	Project Leader
Vacant .....	Assistant Project Leader
Julie Burks.....	Administrative Technician
Gregory Landry .....	Fisheries Biologist
Larry Guerro .....	Motor Vehicle Operator
Vacant .....	Maintenance Worker
Vacant .....	Maintenance Worker