



Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



Monthly Accomplishments

January 2014

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 again this month due to extremely cold water temperatures this year. Production ponds have averaged 8.54°C or 47.37°F for the month of January. Even though these temperatures represent more “normal” winter-time temperatures, than the past several years, feeding these warm water fish for growth could cause potential fish health issues.

This is due to their extremely reduced metabolisms at these water temperatures. A total of 411 pounds of feed were fed to production fish during this month compared to 2,057 pounds fed last January. This is now the second month for little to no growth in the production Channel catfish to be stocked out starting in May. No mortalities were recorded by staff for the month. Bird predation has been minimal.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population moved over to the recirculation tanks in March of 2012 is still doing very well. The 98 fish have now been on station for three-plus years. Ten 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 handling stresses, spawning stresses, or normal life expectancy.

In January, Inks Dam NFH staff discontinued spawning of the FY2010 Clear Creek gambusia. Staff will continue to monitor all of the “pure” females for any signs of being gravid but it would appear that the spawning attempts have been unsuccessful to date. Hatchery staff is currently developing an alternative work plan to conduct additional spawning experiments during the normal spawning months of May through September.

Personnel

Staff finished taking off time at the beginning of the month to use up their remaining “Use or Lose” leave and prepare for the forthcoming busy year. Greg Landry performed the monthly safety meeting and traveled to the Clear Creek site with former Inks Dam NFH Project Leader, Robert Lindsey to collect water quality data in the upper pool where the wild population of Clear Creek gambusia resides. Paul Dorman attended the LCRA Water Quality Meeting in Austin, Texas and the FARC Meeting with the New Mexico Native American Tribes in Albuquerque, New Mexico about the National Fish Hatchery Review.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine



With the continuing cold weather this month hatchery staff used a tarp to trap warmer air to prevent the smaller tubes and pressure gauges from freezing on the incoming water filter system. To date this seems to be working and no issues have arisen with temperatures hovering in and out of the 20' and 30's for multiple days during the month.



equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Larry Guerro performed pond repairs this month on Pond 5A-1 which has developed a seep into the adjacent Pond 5A. Larry also enlarged the sump pond for the Quarantine and Isolation buildings. This will not only increase capacity for those



Inks Dam employee, Larry Guerro, is increasing the capacity for our sump pond which decreases the chance of species escapement and enhances this facilities opportunities to work on the Service's highest priority programs.

buildings but it will also allow the facility to utilize six production ponds for out-of-basin species. This will increase our capacity by 1.9 surface acres to work on the highest priority programs for the Service.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had 243 hatchery visitors for the month of January, of which, approximately half (117) were here to see the now famous "Lucy" the Long-tailed duck, *Clangula hyemalis*. Many of the cold-hardy birders and photographers that came out to see "Lucy", which has now moved to a pond as close as she could get to the visitors parking lot, came from a meeting in Austin for the Texas Ornithological Society. Nearly 80 people showed up in one day, although some arrived after hours to

which the staff graciously allowed them in to briefly see the duck or take some quick pictures.

As for volunteer activities during the month, the Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 61.0 hours. The FOIDNFH hours were split between tours and birds this month. Pack 266 from Austin brought nine Webelos scouts and nine parents. FOIDNFH gave a presentation on fish production at the hatchery and discussed normal colored catfish and white catfish with respect to cryptic coloration. The scouts also were lead up the Overlook Trail and talked about geology, lichen, plants and erosion. The FOIDNFH also erected three new Blue bird "predator proof" houses and, by months end, the lower base portion of a Chimney Swift tower. The Chimney Swift tower is located near the Ashe-Juniper Bird Blind and assisting the Friends was Paul and Georgan Kyle.

Paul D. Kyle and Georgan Z. Kyle are project directors of the Driftwood Wildlife Association's North American Chimney Swift Nest Site Research Project, an all-volunteer effort to expand public awareness about the beneficial nature and the plight of Chimney Swifts. The Kyles' eight-acre homestead, near Spicewood, Texas, has become a world-renowned Chimney Swift sanctuary and research station, with more than a dozen Chimney Swift towers of various designs located throughout their property.

The FOIDNFH and Inks Dam NFH were very lucky to have the Kyle's assist us with this project, completely funded by the Friends group, as this will help with the Audubon Society Important

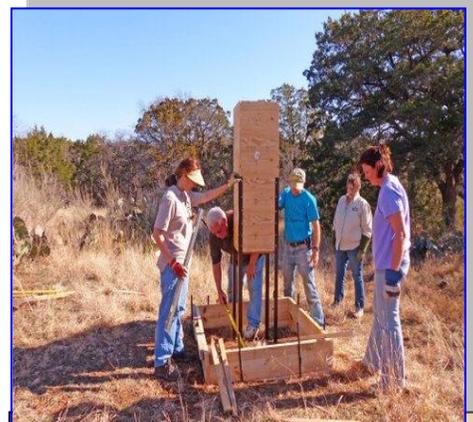
Birding Area (IBA) designation for Inks Dam NFH.



Friends of Inks Dam NFH(FOIDNFH) member, Jerry Stacy, talks to some of the nine Webelos Scouts from Austin Pack 266 at the beginning of the Overlook Trail and talked about geology, lichen, plants and erosion.



FOIDNFH members Jerry Stacy and Sherry Bixler discussing waterfowl migration and viewing "Lucy" the Long tailed duck with Webelos Scouts from Pack 266 while taking a tour of the hatchery.



FOIDNFH members double checking measurements for the foundation for the new Chimney Swift tower before they pour the concrete. The new tower will create new habitat for Chimney Swifts and highlight the Ashe-Juniper Trail.

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
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
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