Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Accomplishments June 2016

Fisheries Activities

Water Quality
This month's average dissolved oxygen level, for the incoming water, was 2.60 parts per million (ppm) and a mean temperature of 24.60°C. Monthly pond dissolved oxygen levels averaged slightly lower at 5.92 ppm (76.0% saturation), at an average pond temperature of 28.57° C. The filter system is still self-cleaning every 30 minutes to prevent fouling and manual cleaning is performed every two weeks.

Channel catfish
All of the FY15 fish are in their larger production ponds. To-date, 18,537 are left in the production ponds for FY16 Tribal requests. These fish currently average 3.83 fish per pound (fpp) and 9.70 inches in total length.

Hatchery staff stocked Zia and Ohkay Owingeh this month. A total of 16,273 were transported to these locations. The FY15 fish averaged 4.17 fish per pound and 9.28 inches in total length.

Since last month, these fish have responded well to pesticide spraying to control the increase in external protozoan problems, such as; Trichodina and Chilodonella. Only two mortalities were recorded for the month for this population.

Production numbers for the FY14 Channel catfish are 2,937 averaging 1.58 fish per pound (fpp) and 12.86 inches in total length. No mortalities were recorded for the month. These fish will be used as future brood stock and future reimbursable fish for Fort Hood.

Currently there are 1,161 FY13 channel catfish averaging 0.47 fpp and 19.58 inches in total length. Hatchery staff shipped 60 of these fish to the City of Llano for a Kids Fishing Program over the 4th of July weekend. This program has been a big success over the years and we're glad to carry on the tradition. No mortalities were recorded for the month.

Additional production also includes 228, FY12, catfish averaging 0.25 fpp and 23.74 inches in total length. These fish are now being utilized for Fort Hood Reimbursable contract requests. Staff provided the Fort Hood Natural Resources with 245 of these fish. Total weight was 807 pounds and they averaged 22.3 inches in total length. Four mortalities were recorded for the FY12 population this month and probably due to spawning activities.

Channel catfish spawning ended on June 3rd with a total of 425,625 eggs taken. A total of 325,270 eggs hatched (76.4%) and resulting fry started onto commercial feed. Hatching success was hampered by the cooler than normal water temperatures because of the late May and early June flooding. The increase in hatching time created fungus issues in the spawns when the eggs were well developed and could no longer be treated with a fungicide.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH and hatchery staff provide two tours to "older" kids this month. The focus for Florence ISD and the Sea Camp kids was more of an introduction into how, what and whys of what we and people in fisheries do.

Dr. Scott Walker speaks to the Florence ISD kids about the Endangered Clear Creek gambusia here at Inks Dam NFH.

Paul Dorman is explaining catfish eggs and enumeration of eggs to answer the age old question, "How do you know how many fish you have?"

Clear Creek gambusia

All FY14, FY15, and F1's adults are now on a 14 hour on and 14 hour off light cycle. Staff has increase time so these fish are now on full light regimes for spawning. Water temperatures have also been increased gradually to better represent the late spring an early summer seasons. Other water quality indices are being monitored to duplicate optimum water conditions for spawning conditions. Spawning will probably end in July because number of newly hatched fish has decreased dramatically.

The FY14 Clear Creek gambusia currently in isolation totals 51 fish. A mortality occurred during the month in this population. There are currently 33, FY15, Clear Creek gambusia. Two mortalities occurred during the month in this population. Mortality, so far this year, has been greatly reduced during this spawning season. No external parasites were found in the mortalities of either population.

To date the FY14 and FY15 Clear Creek gambusia adults (100% pure) produced a total twenty-two (22) FY16, F1 fry with only two mortalities this month. Production has been poor but when fish are taken from the wild populations like these were it is hard to tell age. These fish may be past prime and explain why production was poor.

The FY15 F1 Clear Creek gambusia total 232, of which; 144 are female and 87 are males. A total of three F1 mortalities occurred during the month. No external parasites were observed on the mortality and probably due to spawning.

Hatchery staff decided to see if we can get these fish to spawn, unaltered, in their first year. By spawning these we should get age 1 fecundity numbers for life history data since most of the fish we get from the wild are of unknown age. They will be genetically tested after spawning in FY16. To-date we have produced, through our spawning technique, a total of 550, FY16 F2's. There are still several "gravid looking" females in separated tanks to see if they will birth but it appears the spawning season is coming to a close.

Personnel

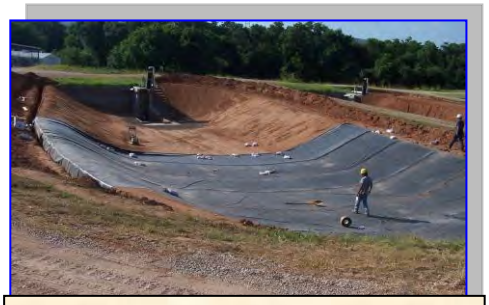
Jeff Pivonka, WG-4749-6/7 is our newest staff member and co-driver on the Regional Distribution Unit once he gets all his training done. Jeff is a veteran and originally a Texas native. We look forward to having Jeff on our staff. Additionally, Region 2 Division of Human Resources (DHR) posted the job announcement for a Fishery Biologist position towards the end of June. That position hopefully will be filled in July.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Several new Deferred Maintenance Projects (DM) projects were started this month and one to redo a painting project that didn't meet specifications the first time.

Kettle framing work on 13B is part of three kettles being replace this FY.

The kettle project started on the first of June, and the liner projects started several weeks later. The repainting project started at the end of the month. All are proceeding and no major problems. Hatchery staff would like to "thank" Michael Zamora of the Division of Engineering (ENG) for his invaluable assistance with these projects. His knowledge and skill set is greatly appreciated.



EPDM liner being installed in one of the early rearing fry ponds. These save on water, chemicals and labor costs.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

Inks Dam NFH had 269 visitors for the month despite the heat. The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 215.0 hours for the month. They performed the usual monthly maintenance and six tours.

The first two tours were older participants. Eleven teenagers and three adults from the Houston Texas area were participating in a Texas A & M University sponsored event called "Sea Camp." It is part of the university's effort to give children a chance to have different experiences and learn about different careers and occupations. They got to see some catfish eggs and fry, feed

the brood stock catfish, Master Caster Class and a hike up the Overlook Trail. There were lots of discussion, from the kids and adults, on degrees and education and how to get started in this field. The second "older group" was from Florence middle school. This was part 2 of the tour for the Florence middle school held in May. A total of 30 kids and four adults participated.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH was also asked to provide tours, in June, for the Burnet ACE Program. This program is sponsored by the R.J. Richey middle school and involves children who are at risk and are in an afterschool program during the regular school year. All total they provided four tours for a total of 36 kids and twenty adults. This author would like to include a quote; from one member of the Friends group and speaks to "why" the Service promotes youth in the outdoor and we do the outdoor education at Inks Dam NFH.

"They are, hands down, the most polite and well behaved kids we have ever had. They really enjoyed the solar print session because they have something they made to take home! Once they cooled off we headed to the Master Caster Station to watch kids absolutely LIGHT UP when they master the new skill of casting. They transition from sullen, to embarrassed, to determined and finally triumphant when they succeeded! Experiencing this made my year!" Enjoy some pictures.

Burnet ISD kids from the summer ACE Program find a pool in the granite bluff on the Overlook Trail at Inks Dam NFH. The kids are trying to figure out how the "shrimp" got way up here!

Kids from the ACE summer Program, from Burnet ISD, studying harvester ants and the role they play in the ecosystem.

Some of the kids "waiting' for their solar print to develop in the sun. The prints are made of flowers, leaves, anything the kids can find. The kids get to take a piece of nature home with them when they are done.

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
Tammy Simmons	Administrative Technician
Gregory Landry	Fisheries Biologist
Vacant	Fisheries Biologist
Vacant	Animal Caretaker (Term)
Jeffery Pivonka	Maintenance Worker
Jerry Simmons	Maintenance Worker
Jerry Crouch	Maintenance Worker