



Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



Monthly Accomplishments

March 2015

Fisheries Activities

All the two year classes of Channel catfish brood stock are now in their spawning ponds and readied for this year's spawning season. The catfish spawning season usually begins in May but depends a great deal on the weather. Inks Dam NFH has received requests from the New Mexico FWCO for FY16, but it won't be finalized until more water data has been collected.

Production numbers for the FY14 Channel catfish are 57,505 averaging 5.49 fish per pound (fpp) and 8.52 inches in total length. Earlier ponded fish from this year class are averaging 9.27 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. Migratory piscivorous birds have still not decreased in abundance and staff continues to increase harassment measures to prevent losses.

Incoming water quality has started to fluctuate in both temperature and dissolved oxygen. Incoming dissolved oxygen averaged 6.28 ppm and an average temperature of 15.3°C by month's end. Feeding response has dramatically increased on all the catfish production, and initial observations are that the fish over-wintered pretty well.

Currently there are 3,946 FY13 channel catfish averaging 1.71 fpp and 12.53 inches in total length. These fish will be used

for future brood stock and future reimbursable fish. Additional production also includes 1,548 FY12 averaging 0.49 fpp and 18.85 inches in total length. These fish will be utilized for brood stock in FY15 and future Fort Hood Reimbursable contract. There were several mortalities recorded, for the month, due to avian predation on this population of fish. Hatchery staff provided 307 fish, from this year class, for the first Fort Hood stocking of FY15. These fish averaged 0.431 fpp at 19.8 inches in total length. A total of 712 pounds were provided to the Fort Hood Natural Resource Division.

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 13, originally, trapped fish. Four mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. The mortalities were mixed, males and females, and no external parasites or disease signs were observed in any of the mortalities. 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 attempts will be made with these fish.

The FY14 Clear Creek gambusia currently in isolation now number 153 fish. One, male mortality occurred during the month. The last of the Asian Tapeworm treatments for this year class was conducted on

Inks Dam NFH has worked with the Clear Creek gambusia for five years and until recently not had a great deal of success in getting them to reproduce until last month.

At that point, only six juvenile fish were born, which to us, a milestone, but not enough! Inks Dam NFH staff would like to report that we continued that success with an additional 112 newly born Clear Creek gambusia this month.



The adult gambusia females can hold the male gametes for up to 180 days. Although we still cannot say that they become gravid because of our work, all of the 112 juveniles were born between 177 and 183 days in captivity. We still have many females that look like potential "mothers" in the near future.

We have finally answered some important questions, but I would like to "Thank" my staff for their diligence with water chemistry, light control, light intensity, and the types and amount of vegetative cover needed to make this all happen.

March 3rd. No complications were observed during the entire 24 hour treatment. This treatment was done fifteen days after the initial treatment and under the twenty-one day recommendation for the second treatment.

A total of 218 FY15 Clear Creek gambusia were trapped and brought back to Inks Dam NFH on February 5, 2015. By the end of March, a total of eighteen mortalities have occurred and the total population number is now 200. The majority of mortalities were males that were of smaller, or younger, and didn't appear to compete with other cohorts. No external parasites or disease signs were observed in any of the mortalities. This year class received their first Asian Tapeworm treatment on March 4th, and the second, follow up treatment occurred on March 20th. No abnormalities or complications occurred during either treatment. Again, some fish were observed passing tapeworm during the first treatment period but not the second.

Last month Inks Dam NFH reported that a total of six captive born Clear Creek gambusia occurred for the first time in five years. This month Inks Dam NFH would like to report that we continued that success with an additional 112 newly born Clear Creek gambusia. Juveniles were collected from 9 of the 13 tanks utilized for spawning. The mean number of offspring per female was 8.9 juveniles per adult female. This number ranged from 4 to 15 per adult female. No mortalities have occurred in either the previous six, or in this month's newly born fish. Early

feeding is going well and staff will begin taking weights and lengths to start determining growth curves and condition indexes.

Personnel

Scott Walker was the top online class taker this month completing eight courses for his upcoming Supervisory Classes next month. Scott also completed his Supervisory Safety Course for the year.

Jerry Simmons attended the Wage Grade Academy at NCTC during the month. Jerry has also applied to be the Texas/Oklahoma Wage Grade Representative, but will regrettably miss the WG Conference in New Mexico because of fish hauling duties.

Maintenance

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. March was another month of

pipe repair around Inks Dam NFH. The major focus was a drain line that appeared to be broken because every time we tried to fill a particular pond it increased our outflows to the river. Once the leaking area was found, obtaining some specialty couplers, and some luck, we fixed the leaks. The remainder of the month has been spent on prepping ponds, repairing roads that were torn up during all the digging, and some solar panel work.

Visitors, Education and Outreach

Inks Dam NFH had a total of 502 visitors for the month of March. Between the badly needed rains, the warm and sunny days brought many people out to fish the White bass run. Another group of people are coming to hike on the trails and/or birding activities. Many of the folks come to see if we have any little fish yet and see what's going on!

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 160.0 hours for the month of March. The membership spent the month starting up weekly bird surveys, milkweed plant marking and mapping, and tours. They delivered tours to three Boy Scout packs from Austin, Round Rock, and Burnet. All total, for the month, 40 scouts and 32 parents or guardians. Another tour was for a family reunion late in the month which had four generations of family. The oldest remembered the old "Meger Fish Camp" and had to return to the area they hold fond memories of. The camp was on the North end of facility close to Inks Dam.



Above: Once we found where the pipe was leaking it became obvious that expensive repairs were needed and assuming they all were repaired this way, more to come! Please note the hose clamps holding the rubber gasket onto the pipe. Below: Done correctly and longer lasting but more expensively.



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



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Phone 512/793-2474
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/inks_dam/index.html

Current staff members

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|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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 |