



# Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery



## Monthly Accomplishments

## May 2015

### Fisheries Activities

As everyone knows, Central Texas was devastated with massive flooding and destruction during the month of May. To date, Lake Austin has risen more than 22 feet and Lake Buchanan has risen more than 10 feet. The flooding had no real negative effect on us like some in the Austin area or communities just south of us. Lightning strikes burned out the incoming water meter which is currently being repaired and it backup will need to be repaired or possibly be replaced. Water quality at months end is just starting to become an issue because of the flood water but we'll know more as time progresses.

The catfish spawning season continued during May. Staff has now collected the entire FY16 request for Channel catfish eggs. Spawning for Channel catfish will probably end at the end of the month. Staff has ponded the FY15 fall request for the Arizona Apache request (30,000) and the early FY16 New Mexico request (15,000) for the Navajo Nation. Additionally, staff will be stocking the remainder of requested channel catfish for all of FY16 early in June.

Production numbers for the FY14 Channel catfish are 31,916 averaging 3.53 fish per pound (fpp) and 9.84 inches in total length. Mortalities have been light with only 4 recorded. Inks Dam NFH staff stocked the Navajo Nation request in New Mexico. These fish were 6.21 fpp and 8.12 inches in total

length. Total stocked was 17,009 channel catfish. Staff also stocked Zuni Pueblo and Navajo Nation with 7,556 fish at 2.69 fpp and total length of 10.31 inches. Both stockings occurred in May.

Currently there are 3,784 FY13 channel catfish averaging 0.70 fpp and 17.74 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 0.33 fpp and 22.84 inches in total length. These fish will, and have been utilized for brood stock in FY15 and Fort Hood Reimbursable contract requests. There were seven mortalities recorded for the month on this population of fish. Hatchery staff provided 394 fish, from this year class, for the third Fort Hood stocking of FY15. These fish averaged 0.54 fpp at 18.43 inches in total length.

In mid-April Inks Dam NFH received approximately 50,000 American paddlefish from the Tishomingo NFH. Staff moved the paddlefish out to the 20ft. circular tanks and by months end these fish were 22 fpp at 5.32 inches in total length. Current inventory stands at 6,474 fish with survival to date at 12.95%. Mortality has been normal for this species with no signs of disease.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population has now been in recirculation tanks for two full

May is again the month for the Annual Hatchery Outdoor Program. The Friends of Inks Dam NFH, volunteers, and staff put this program together so that local 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, from the local ISD's, can learn and develop an appreciation for the outdoors and the flora and fauna that resides there. Besides it's just great fun!



Local students learning about fish morphology. A large mounted gar with lots of teeth sure keeps their attention!



The wide variety of colorful neo tropical birds also seems to keep their attention. This is becoming an increasingly popular with the HOP kids.

...and it wouldn't be HOP without the Master Caster Class. Who says fun can't be competitive?



years and approaching five in refugium. There are now only 11, original refugium fish. No mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month.

The FY14 Clear Creek gambusia currently in isolation now number 121 fish. A total of 21 mortalities occurred during the month. The majority was female and it could be associated with age, spawning, or giving birth. No external parasites or disease signs have been noticed. Only seven male mortalities occurred in the same time frame.

There currently is 165 FY15 Clear Creek gambusia. There was a corresponding increase in mortalities from this year class as well. A total of 20 occurred for the month. The majority of mortalities, in this population as well, were female 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 196 F1 juveniles this month and now has on inventory a total of 384 F1 juveniles from the FY14 and FY15 Clear Creek gambusia. Juveniles were collected from 12 of the 12 tanks now utilized for spawning. The mean number of offspring per female was higher, this month, to 7.9 juveniles per adult female. The number ranged of offspring per female ranged from 1 to per adult female. An F1 juvenile mortality occurred during a tank cleaning but all are on feed and doing very well.

Another interesting side note to the new F1's and adults, this month, is that they would have been procreated 33 to 58 days past what the literature states the adult females could hold male gametes up to 180 days for reproduction. This may suggest that some of these were actually bred, became gravid, and gave birth in captivity.

Approximately half of the new F1's will be moved over to the flake and frozen brine shrimp feeding regimes next month.

### **Personnel**

Paul Dorman continued 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 all of the facility residences. Paul has also been working with Regional Engineering staff on the remainder of FY15 DM projects; Drain Line 6, Equipment Storage Bldg. Rehab, and the incoming water line 3 replacement.

### **Maintenance**

Staff performed routine equipment and facility maintenance during the month. Inks Dam NFH maintenance staff used Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuges D-5 bulldozer to push 6-8 inch rock along the facilities shoreline to prevent bank erosion. Work was completed before the rainfall and the silt fences held up nicely. Many "Thanks" to Balcones NWR for letting us use their equipment.

### **Visitors, Education and Outreach**

Inks Dam NFH had 225 visitors for the month despite the rains and stormy weather. Early in

the month, many folks were coming out to see the neotropical birds that had migrated back to Inks Dam NFH for nesting and the summer months. Some of the monthly visitors came out to fish but the majority came to see what the facility does.

The Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 341 hours for the month of May. This month the FOIDNFH membership spent the month with weekly bird surveys, milkweed plant marking, mapping, tending the milkweed garden, picking seed pods and the Hatchery Outdoor Program.

The FOIDNFH put on the yearly Hatchery Outdoor Program (HOP) for the local school districts. This year Burnet, Marble Falls, and Llano ISD's brought a total of 306 students and over one hundred parents and teachers for the month long event. A big "Thank you" goes to the 25 FOIDNFH volunteers, at each event, for all their hard work and making this year



Students from the local ISD's learned not only geology but ecology and life history of small organisms living in the rain pools on the granite hill while hiking up the Overlook Trail

another success. Staff and volunteers heard from parents, teachers and the kids that "This is the best field trip of the year!"

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