



## Monthly Accomplishments

September 2013

### Fisheries Activities

Currently there are 60,174 FY 2013 channel catfish averaging 17.05 fpp and 5.92 inches in total length. All of the fish have been placed into over-wintering ponds at density levels between 7,000 to 7,500 fish per acre. These fish could potentially be utilized for Tribal Trust requests in FY14 and is similar in number to what was stocked out in FY13. A total of 9 mortalities were recorded by staff for the month and were due to avian animal predation.

Hatchery staff harvested and loaded the last of the Fort Hood's FY13 reimbursable agreement this month. Staff loaded 155 fish weighing 215 pounds. These fish averaged 0.72 fish per pound and a total length of 16.61 inches. This last stocking is used by the Fort Hood Natural Resources Management Branch to promote the out-of-doors for kids and youth. The "Kids Fishing Day" this year was held on September 14 and ran most of the day.

The original (FY2010) Clear Creek gambusia refugium population moved over to the recirculation tanks in March of 2012 is still doing very well. The 135 fish have now been on station for almost three years. Five mortalities were recorded in the FY2010 population during the month. No external parasites or disease were observed in any of the mortalities.

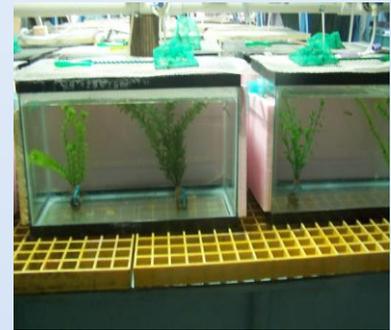
In September, Inks Dam NFH staff started the process of 1X1 spawning some of the FY2010

Clear Creek gambusia. Hatchery staff duplicated the water temperature and the amount light found during the typical May through September spawning season for the Clear Creek gambusia. Water temperature was controlled with a recirculation chiller-heater unit and the light was controlled with electrical controllers to duplicate the average amount of sunlight found during that spawning season time frame.

Staff also followed research papers suggesting the placement of vegetation in the spawning tanks. Three tanks were designed with vegetation and three without. Male gambusia were removed after six days of being with the females. To date, no female had produced offspring yet; keeping in mind that female gambusia can hold gametes for up to six months.

### Personnel

All of the hatchery staff finished their mandatory training for the year. Julie Burks continues working meticulously with the upcoming closer of FBMS, the end of the Fiscal Year and potential government shut-down. Paul Dorman attended the September LCRA Region Water Board Meeting in Austin, Texas. There has still been no request for the mandatory 20% water reduction but lake levels are becoming closer every day to the 600,000 acre/feet level.



Above and Below: Two of the three spawning tanks set up for the Clear Creek gambusia with the vegetation

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Mark Yost, Assistant Project Leader GS9/11/12, has left to accept his new position with the State of New Mexico Game and Fish. This leaves only Larry Guerro, Gregory Landry and Paul Dorman for the field duties and Julie Burks in the office.

## Maintenance

Staff split their time performing routine equipment and facility maintenance, working on ponds to prepare for the winter months and the possible government shutdown.

Larry Guerro took the Regional Distribution Unit (RDU) to the White/Volvo Dealer in Buda, Texas for its end-of-the-year repairs and service. Everything checked out fine and it had two recalls performed on the computer system. Larry also took the vehicle into Georgetown, Texas for the yearly front-end alignment as well. This will allow the RDU to be ready for any facility to utilize the truck should the need arise and prepare the truck for next seasons busy schedule.

## Visitors, Education and Outreach

The hatchery had a total of 127 visitors for the month of September. Many of these folks got to observe fish being fed and asked questions about the facility and what we do. Staff fielded numerous questions on the potential government shutdown and its effects. Other visitors asked about seeing Inks Dam or participated in the trail walks or bird watching. By the end of the month some migratory birds were making this an early stop to warmer destinations.

As for volunteer activities during the month, the Friends of Inks Dam NFH (FOIDNFH) and other volunteers had a total of 58.0 hours. The volunteer hours were 7.0 for outreach, 11.5 for maintenance, 29.5 for landscaping, and 11.0 for assisting with hatchery operations. This activity was primarily focused on the upcoming Native Plant Festival, in early October, which began last year. The first Highland Lakes Native Plant Festival as part of the Native Plant Week in Texas (October 14-20) had a total of 211 visitors attending the daylong event and several booths included nature activities for children and youth.

Volunteers and Friends Group members work on trails, printed trail maps, groomed the native plant gardens around the Education Building, worked around the bird blind all in preparation for the October Festival.

The Intermediate Sanction Facility also came out on two days during the month to mow and trim weeds in fields, around buildings and structures, and around the production ponds. They put in a total of 51 hours for the all the labor those both days.



Taken at last year's Native Plant Festival, Carol Adams, TPWD Environmental Education Specialist from Inks Lake State Park showing some of children animal furs, skulls and other interesting items they could find in the outdoors.



Taken from last year's Native Plant Festival, an unidentified volunteer showing some young kids some feathers from birds they could recognize.

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



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## Current staff members

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