

FY 2015

TXFWCO Activity Report: November



Ciénega Creek in Big Bend Ranch State Park

Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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Monthly Report

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Activities

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West Texas Sampling Trip

On 17-21 November 2014, Mike Montagne and Kenny Saunders of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) conducted a West Texas sampling trip to Big Bend Ranch State Park (BBRSP) to sample Alamito and Ciénega Creek, and to Big Bend National Park (BBNP) to sample Terlingua Creek. The team also stopped and evaluated the damage done to Phantom Cave Ciénega due to the heavy flooding in September.

Due to relatively recent rains, Alamito and Ciénega Creeks were both running in the BBRSP and contained many fish. Terlingua Creek was also running and had change dramatically since our last visit due to heavy rains in September. The channel morphology had changed and water was flowing in a portion of the drainage. No Rio Grande silvery minnow were identified in the field, but collections were taken and will be verified in the lab.

We will return to Phantom in January 2015 to begin the repairs to the main pool. A new weir will be poured directly behind the current weir at the mouth of the cave to repair the undercutting under the structure caused by floodwaters pouring into the cave.



Ken Saunders maps a seep entering Terlingua Creek.

Paddlefish Reintroduction Project

On 17-21 November 2014, Pete Dias, with help from TPWD in Marshal TX, conducted American paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) radio telemetry monitoring at Caddo Lake and the Big Cypress Bayou. The towers continue to collect data at each of the three locations. Approximately 42 miles of Big Cypress Bayou and Caddo Lake were searched by boat and twenty two of the forty seven paddlefish were contacted, and all within 5 miles of the spillway of Lake O' the Pines.

Do to the continued congregation of tagged paddlefish in the area just downstream of the spillway at Lake O' the Pines (17 of the 22 contacted), the team electrofished the area and captured five paddlfish, only one having been captured there before. Because we continue to capture different fish at the spillway, we believe that most of these fish are still alive and are staying here for a reason.



Recaptured paddlefish being measured.

Fish collection at Camp Maxie

On 18-19 November 2014, Patrick Webster and Diego Araujo conducted fish collection for a contaminants study at Camp Maxie. The scope of work included capturing three specimens of each species, largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), and bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*) and having them tested by a lab to test for human health risk by consumption of the fish in the pond. The TXFWCO used trammel nets in the four fishing ponds and captured largemouth bass, and bluegill.

December/January Schedule of Activities:

1-3 December 2014: Devils River minnow monitoring

3 December 2014: Rio Grande silvery minnow stocking at Dryden, TX

12 December 2014: Fish Passage Meeting with Real County

17-18 December 2014: R2 Gulf Meeting

9 January 2015: Meeting with TNC to discuss monitoring

12-16 January 2015: Pecos pupfish monitoring and Phantom Ciénega repair

12-13 January 2015: Camp Bowie fish collections

26-30 January 2015: Paddlefish tracking trip