



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

June 2015



Staff

Project Leader • Patricia Duncan

Fish Biologist • Rick Echols

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich

Pathways Program • Rueben Mendoza

Directorate Fellowship Program • Justin Crow

Partnerships and Accountability

As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas Wild Rice, Fountain Darter, Comanche Springs Pupfish, Devil's River Minnow, Rio Grande silvery minnow, and San Marcos salamander. All species are thriving.

The station continues to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) for existing and upcoming refugia activities of threatened and endangered species native to the Edwards Aquifer system.

Communications continue between staff at Uvalde NFH and SMARC regarding the implementation of a San Marcos salamander reproductive study.

Workforce Management

Patricia Duncan officially took the reins as the new project leader at Uvalde National Fish

Hatchery. The additional help has been long needed and is appreciated. In addition to helping with hands on fish care, much of her time has been spent taking care of required training and reviewing procedural guidelines.

Cirilo Alonzo and Rene Guerra spent a week in Farmington, New Mexico grading a 3 acre culture pond used to raise razorback sucker for the San Juan program.

Aquatic Species Activities

The results of our annual fish health inspection are in. Once again, Uvalde National Fish Hatchery maintains its "A" rating for another year.

Justin Crow has remained busy with his Directorate Fellowship Program project. He has successfully produced Comanche Springs pupfish by pairwise mating. He is now refining procedures and is specifically looking at treating eggs with formalin to prevent fungus.

Rueben Mendoza's Rio Grande silvery minnow feasibility study got going in earnest this month. One hundred and forty thousand fry were stocked on June 4th. They were allowed to feed on zooplankton for the first 3 weeks before feeding was initiated on June 23. Feed is distributed all along the perimeter of each of four ponds three times per day as these fish tend to be scattered in small schools throughout the pond. Growth rates on these fish have been phenomenal thus far. Fish are currently at 30mm and only are required to be 55mm by mid-October when they are due to be stocked on the Rio Grande at Big Bend National Park.



Rueben Mendoza and Manuel Ulibarri temper Rio Grande silvery minnow before releasing into a pond



Rio Grande silvery minnow are now in excess of 30mm

Two hundred 2014 year class channel catfish were selected and held together in a separate pond. They will become next year's broodfish.

Monthly monitoring of Comanche springs pupfish continued in June. Results indicate healthy populations in each of the three ponds. June pond population estimates are provided at the end of this document.

Facility Maintenance

Our Chevy S-10 previously placed on surplus was sold and picked up by the new owner early this month. This was done proactively to comply with a service-wide audit.

The analog sensor for our well monitoring system reported as faulty in last month's report has now been replaced. We are now once again able to see an accurate flow rate to our culture ponds. A second sensor was also purchased and will be kept on hand in case this happens again. Patricia received a lesson on troubleshooting and the overall functionality of the system from the system engineer.

We continue to reap the benefits of an extremely wet spring. Although ample rainfall fell in June, there was no concern for the safety of property or aquatic species as was the case the month before. We now have to deal with gnats, mosquitos, and mowing that never seems to end.

Additional Facilities Activities

The four newly arrived rice tanks appear to be of top quality. They were installed by the end of the first week of June.



Installation of four new rice tanks

Electrical service was brought up to code on two existing large rice tanks and service was provided for one of four of our new rice tanks. The remaining three tanks will have electrical service sometime in early FY2016.

Outreach

Our remaining derby fish were repurposed for a Boy Scout fishing event on Saturday, June 6th. About 25 local scouts participated in catch and release fishing while enjoying the comradery of other scouts. Lunch was served prior to the completion of the event. Older scouts seeking to become Eagle Scouts will be completing projects at the hatchery later this summer.

Channel catfish that were able to survive the gauntlet of two fishing events and broodstock selection were transported to Popeye Lake in

Crystal City, Texas for yet a third youth fishing derby. This event is sponsored by Crystal City and Texas Parks & Wildlife.

Kountry Klub Daycare toured the hatchery and walked the nature trail in June. The children were particularly fascinated by our preserved seven legged frog and the baby catfish.

Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 35 visitors for the month. Activities ranged from bird watching to hatchery tours.

Weather

Temperatures for June ranged from a low of 62°F to a high of 91°F. Overall, high temperatures were well below normal with the observed average high for the month at 88°F compared to the 111 year average of 93°F. Low temperatures were below normal well as the average for the month was 67°F with the 111 year average at 72°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 23 days in June with precipitation totaling 3.08 inches. According to US Climate Data, June's monthly precipitation averages 3.54 inches. The Edwards Aquifer level continues to rise and is currently at 848.1' compared to 838.3' last month and the low in March 2015 of 824.6'. It was at 828.4' this time last year.

Upcoming Events

Cirilo Alonzo will be providing consultation and possible hands on heavy equipment operation to San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center for the removal of accumulated debris from a lined settling pond. This should occur during the month of July.

Uvalde staff will take part in hands on instructor led firearms training during the month of August.

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

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Uvalde National Fish Hatchery June 2015

Species	Year Class	Geographic Origin	Approximate Number
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2014	Domestic Strain	200
Channel Catfish	2015	Domestic Strain	10,000
Comanche Springs Pupfish	Mixed	Phantom Springs	239,258*
Devils River Minnow (F1)	2013	San Felipe Springs	234
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2014	San Felipe Springs	40
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2015	San Felipe Springs	140
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Upper Comal River	35
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Lower Comal River	32
Fountain Darter (F1)	2013/2014	Comal River	451
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Upper Comal River	24
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	6
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	8
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	53
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	36
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	12
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	16
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (J)	3
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (K)	12
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	SMR (Unknown)	22

Species and number at Uvalde NFH at the end of the month.

*Recent spawning activity may make pupfish more susceptible to trapping resulting in an overestimate of numbers