



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

April - May 2013



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery Staff

Project Leader – Grant Webber

Assistant Project Leader – Vacant

Administrative Technician – Sandra Castaneda

Engineering Equipment Operator – Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker – Rene Guerra

Fish Biologist – Rick Echols

Animal Caretaker – Vacant

Partnerships and Accountability

In partnership with the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program, the station continues propagation efforts for razorback sucker. Razorback sucker were harvested from ponds in late March. PIT tagging began on April 1 and was completed on April 9. Razorbacks handled the stress of harvesting, tagging and reallocation to ponds without incident. Fish previously from 2 ponds were split into 4, to allow for summer growth. As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas wild-rice, fountain darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, and San Marcos salamander. Young of the year Comanche Springs pupfish have now been observed in all four culture ponds. There is nothing of note to report on any of the other species.

On May 13, the RDU was loaded with 12,441 channel catfish averaging 8.5 inches for delivery to various tribal waters within the Navajo Nation in order to fill agency tribal commitments. Reports indicated that the fish arrived in good condition.



Workforce Management

Karin's last day as assistant project leader was April 17; she began serving in her new position as a fisheries program biologist on April 22nd in Albuquerque, NM. We thank Karin for her hard work at Uvalde NFH and wish her well in her new position.



Sandra began an extended leave period to have knee replacement surgery. We wish her a speedy recovery.

Ian Westmeyer, a 14 year old home school student, began volunteering at the hatchery on May 28. Ian is a hardworking, efficient, and respectful young man. He is very interested in conservation, and may want to pursue a career with the Service. Ian will assist staff in the daily care of all species and lend a hand with various maintenance projects. He plans to continue volunteering at Uvalde during the school year since his home school schedule is flexible.



Facility Maintenance

The Spurgeon well pump maintenance is complete and it is currently on line. The pump was lowered an additional 10 feet as an effort to maintain flows during our continuing drought conditions. The obstruction that prevented the well from being pulled was cleared through the use of acid. The acid allowed for the pump and associated components to be removed. Worn parts were replaced and all components were reassembled in the well. The pump has been operating for over a month and is functioning normally.

Removal of storm damaged bird netting was completed on two of our lined ponds. After 5 plus years of use, the netting was extremely fragile, such that the effort required to repair

the netting was no longer worth the time.

Koi, once used as live food for bass, have now been removed from the hatchery since bass are no longer reared at Uvalde NFH. The fish were no longer needed and required resources to maintain. The removal of koi from the hatchery will save time, space, money, and valuable water resources.

April's air temperatures ranged from a low of 42°F to a high of 98°F. Overall, the month was much cooler than normal. Precipitation totaled 2.56 inches this month. According to The Weather Channel the monthly precipitation average for April is 1.71 inches.

May's air temperatures ranged from a low of 42°F to a high of 103°F. Again, the month was much cooler than normal. Measurable rainfall occurred on 9 days in May with precipitation totaling 4.05 inches. According to The Weather Channel, the monthly precipitation average for May is 3.03 inches. Vegetation has responded well to the needed rainfall, as staff has spent additional time mowing and disking empty ponds.

The Dexter Fish Health Unit conducted its annual fish health inspection on May 7, 2013. The Uvalde NFH staff provided four different lots of fish to the on-site Fish Health Biologist for testing. The test results are expected to be received in approximately one month.

Additional Facility Activities

Staff took cardboard, glass, paper, steel, plastic, and used dry cell batteries to our local recycling facility. Approximately 110 pounds of cardboard, 55 pounds of glass, 120 pounds of paper, 8 pounds of steel, and 45 pounds of plastic were recycled in the months of April and May.

Facility Visitors

The hatchery was visited by 37 people in April and 10 people in May for bird watching, tours, and other outdoor visitation activities.