



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

December 2014



Staff

Project Leader • Vacant

Acting Project Leader • Teresa Lewis

Fish Biologist • Rick Echols

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich

Pathways Student • Rueben Mendoza

Volunteers • Dale & Jane Slocomb

Volunteers • Thomas Jetzer & Patricia Schenk

Volunteer • Catherine Baxter

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, and San Marcos salamander. All species are performing well. The station continues to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) and Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program for existing and upcoming refugia activities of threatened and endangered species native to the Edwards Aquifer system. In addition, an agreement is in place for the Uvalde National Fish Hatchery to provide 700-F1 juvenile fountain darters to the USGS's Leetown Science Center in West Virginia.

Workforce Management

Administrative assistant Mark Dietrich continues to make considerable strides in learning his new job. He spent much of November completing Concur, Quicktime, purchasing, and FBMS training.

Teresa Lewis, of the Southwestern Fish Health Unit, continued with her 60 day Acting Project Leader detail. She has been working on a biosecurity plan for the station and a first draft of the annual report.

Rueben Mendoza's last day of work at Uvalde NFH was December 19. He will be returning to his studies at the University of Montana after a holiday break with family and friends in Colorado.

Volunteer Catherine Baxter has been doing background research from home in preparation for copper toxicity studies of Comanche Springs pupfish.



Dale and Jane Slocomb completed their volunteer stint with us on December 19. With their effort, the outdoor classroom is a completed project. Jane's artwork was an amazing compliment to Dale's master craftsmanship. We now need to find local youth leaders to take advantage of this great asset. They have moved on to another volunteer program in Palacios, Texas before settling into a permanent residence.



Completed outdoor classroom.

Thomas Jetzer and Patricia Schenk began their fourth season of volunteering on December 2. They have been busy cutting dam boards, building tank systems, repairing the holding house siding, and replacing hatchery signage.

Aquatic Species Activities

Young of the year channel catfish now average 10 to 12 inches in length. Fish remain healthy and growth rates continue to be good.

Rice plants continue to thrive. Viable rice seeds were harvested and stored for future planting this past month. All other species continue to do well.

Michelle Crawford has discontinued the portion of her Texas wild rice PhD project at Uvalde NFH. She will concentrate on the portion of her project that is on the San Marcos River.

Additional Facility Activities

A holiday party was held on December 18. Staff were recognized for their hard work with performance awards. Rueben Mendoza specifically was recognized with a Star award and Ian Westmeyer was recognized for his 771 cumulative hours of volunteer service. The festivities were capped off with the traditional white elephant gift exchange.

Facility Maintenance

In an effort to increase biosecurity, a 6 inch pipe has been installed between one of our Comanche Springs pupfish ponds and an adjacent dry pond. This will allow overflow water and any eggs or fry to collect in the “dry” pond minimizing the chances of inadvertent colonization of the effluent slough. Once proven successful, this procedure will be repeated for all species capable of producing offspring in ponds.



New biosecurity measure. Water will enter this adjacent dry pond before leaving the pond by the conventional drain line.

Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 11 visitors for the month.

Weather

Temperatures for December ranged from a low of 21°F to a high of 76°F. Overall, high temperatures were below normal with the observed average high for the month at 63°F compared to the 110 year average of 65°F. Low temperatures were above normal with the average for the month at 45°F compared to the 110 year average of 42°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 9 days in December with precipitation totaling 0.34 inches. According to US Climate Data, December monthly precipitation averages 1.34 inches. We finished the year with 22.25 inches of rain compared to the 110 year average of 22.55 inches. Average rainfall for the past two years has not improved the Edwards Aquifer levels. The current level is

824.2' compared to 825.6' in November and 836.5' this time last year.

Upcoming Events

One of three ponds of Comanche Springs pupfish are set to be moved to a new pond during our first warm spell in January. Measures are currently underway to control aquatic vegetation so that harvest goes smoothly.

A study to look at the proper timing for handling San Marcos salamander eggs is being designed. A proposal for this work should be ready for review by the end of January.

Material quotes continue to be gathered to purchase and install up to 6 large rice tanks. Preliminary installation work should begin in January with tanks arriving by the end of February. Quotes to provide electric service to the tanks are also being gathered.

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

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<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/uvalde/index.html>

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery November 2014			
Species	Year Class	Geographic Origin	Approximate Number
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2013	Domestic Strain	136
Channel Catfish	2014	Domestic Strain	3,000
Comanche Springs Pupfish	Mixed	Phantom Springs	170,382
Devil's River Minnow	2013	San Felipe Springs	268
Devil's River Minnow	2014	San Felipe Springs	368
Fountain Darter	2012	Upper Comal River	36
Fountain Darter	2013	Upper Comal River	27
Fountain Darter	2012	Lower Comal River	39
Fountain Darter	2013	Lower Comal River	21
Fountain darter	2013/2014	Comal River	774
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	11
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	10
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	51
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	37
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	13
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	19
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	17
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)	24

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