



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

February 2015



Staff

Project Leader • Vacant

Acting Project Leader • Jeff Conway

Acting Project Leader • Rick Echols

Fish Biologist • Rick Echols

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich

Volunteer • Catherine Baxter

Volunteer • Mike Brown

Volunteers • Thomas Jetzer & Patricia Schenk



Jeff Conway and Valentin Cantu discuss captive rearing of the Devil's River Minnow

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.

The Uvalde NFH continues to hold 700-F1 juvenile fountain darters for USGS life history studies at the Leetown Science Center in West Virginia. Fish that are not needed for USGS studies will be used in yet to be determined studies at Uvalde NFH.

Workforce Management

Jeff Conway completed his 30 day detail as Acting Project Leader. He was instrumental in completing the first draft of our annual report and a copper toxicity proposal. He also aided staff in harvesting and enumerating two Comanche Springs Pupfish ponds. He has now returned to Mora NFH just in time for their busy Gila Trout spawning season. We appreciate all of his hard work and input.

Administrative assistant Mark Dietrich attended the Administrative Professional's Workshop in Albuquerque. The meeting was perfectly timed

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.

Jeff Conway and Rick Echols met with staff at San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center to discuss husbandry of Edwards Aquifer species and potential life history studies. A closer look at system design proved helpful. They also took part in the 19th "not closing" anniversary of the facility.

for Mark as he was able to associate names and faces and help solidify administrative processes within Region 2.

Cirilo Alonzo attended a continuing education class to maintain his pesticide applicator's license currency.

Former volunteer Catherine Baxter is our newest hire. She will be employed as an emergency hire for a 60 day period. During this time she will be providing daily care for our aquatic species and setting up copper toxicity trials.

Aquatic Species Activities

Young of the year channel catfish average 11 to 12 inches in length for the second month. Fish remain healthy, but growth rates continue to be slow due to cold weather.

A second pond of Comanche Springs Pupfish was harvested, enumerated, and transferred to a new pond this past month. Harvest totals for this pond were only 1,284 compared to the first pond that had a total in excess of 35,000. This is likely attributed to a prolonged period in late summer and fall when plankton counts crashed in this pond. The new pond should support ample reproduction, as a well-established plankton bloom is in place.

Volunteers Thomas Jetzer, Patricia Schenk, and Mike Brown have continued to work on our new recirculating tank systems for life history and chemical toxicity studies. In addition, Thomas and Patricia have been busy painting guard rail and repairing a canopy structure over the hatchery interpretive sign.



Volunteers Patricia Schenk and Mike Brown assist acting project leader Jeff Conway with Comanche Springs pupfish sample counts

Facility Maintenance

Contractors began an electrical expansion project for our main tank house in early February. Many of our tanks now require recirculation pumps and chillers which require much more electricity than the original capacity could cover.

Construction began late this month to install steps adjacent to the kettle in pond 48. Cirilo and Rene took this opportunity to replace the broken concrete apron and increase the capacity of the kettle by increasing the height of the kettle walls. This pond has long served as our derby fishing pond.



Framing for concrete steps and kettle repair

The Wilson well finally received its long delayed scheduled maintenance. Nothing out of the

ordinary was noticed and the job went smoothly.



Wilson Well maintenance

Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 7 visitors for the month.

Weather

Temperatures for January ranged from a low of 29°F to a high of 83°F. Overall, high temperatures were well below normal with the observed average high for the month at 62°F compared to the 111 year average of 69°F. Low temperatures were below normal as well with the average for the month at 42°F compared to the 111 year average of 45°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 8 days in February with precipitation totaling 0.80 inches. According to US Climate Data, February's monthly precipitation averages 1.08 inches. The Edwards Aquifer is currently at 824.2' compared to 824.4' in January and 834.7' this time last year.

Upcoming Events

We feel it important that a second person be certified as a pesticide applicator; therefore, Rick Echols will be seeking his pesticide applicator's license this spring.

The hatchery should receive additional San Marcos Salamanders within the next few months and start an egg handling study soon afterwards.

Delivery of 4 additional large rice tanks should occur within the next 2 months.

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

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Uvalde National Fish Hatchery February 2015

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	80,799
Devil's River Minnow	2013	San Felipe Springs	268
Devil's River Minnow	2014	San Felipe Springs	150
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Upper Comal River	57
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Lower Comal River	55
Fountain Darter (F1)	2013/2014	Comal River	737
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Upper Comal River	29
Fountain darter (F1)	2015	Lower 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)	53
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	38
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	16
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	12
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)	26

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