



# *Uvalde National Fish Hatchery*

## *Monthly Activity Report*

### *January 2016*



#### **Staff**

***Project Leader • Patricia Duncan***

***Fish Biologist • vacant***

***Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo***

***Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra***

***Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich***

***Volunteers • Thomas Jetzer and Patricia Schenk***



**Bees swarm together against the cold at Uvalde in January**

#### **Partnerships and Accountability**

As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continued for the Texas Wild Rice, Fountain Darter, Comanche Springs Pupfish, Devils River Minnow, and San Marcos salamander in January.

The station continued 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.

Operational work plans for Uvalde NFH for 2016 were prepared and submitted to the regional office in January. Uvalde NFH staff participated in budget and monthly region 2 FAC conference calls.

In collaboration with the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (SNARRC) and other partners, Uvalde NFH will be raising Rio Grande silvery minnow again in 2016. These fish produced at Uvalde will augment the numbers released to the Rio Grande in recovery efforts.

#### **Workforce Management**

A job announcement was prepared for the vacant fish biologist position and steps were taken to begin the job advertisement and selection process for the position.

Our two volunteers, Thomas Jetzer and Patricia Schenk continued to work on a variety of projects at Uvalde. In January, we finalized the approval of another volunteer who will be coming to Uvalde starting in March. Mr. Mark Kundzins will be coming to us from his last volunteer site at Yellowstone National Park.

Uvalde NFH was selected to receive a Student Conservation Association (SCA) Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP) student this season. The CDIP was created to provide students with ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds the chance to learn about conservation science. In January, the job description was submitted to CDIP for the upcoming recruitment process. On January 28 Pat Duncan attended the conference call on

managing the CDIP program at Uvalde. The student will begin work at Uvalde in late May.

### Aquatic Species Activities

Temperatures continued to be low in January causing pond water temperatures to range from 9.4 to 15.6 °C . Young of the year channel catfish continued to thrive although feeding was decreased due to the seasonal low water temperatures. The smaller size class averaged approximately 8 inches while the larger fish were approximately 13 inches in length.

Raceways for wild rice were cleaned out and pumps removed for maintenance. Both older raceways and the new larger raceways were cleaned and new drain pipes and pump heads installed to better control water movement and adjust flow rates. Debris and any weeds were cleaned out and plants were resituated into cleared tanks with improved flow rates for growth and tiller development.

Production of Devils River minnow continued in the tank house raceways. Transfer of gravel trays from tanks with broodstock Devils River minnows to net cages for collection and hatching of eggs and larval fish rearing continued in January. Larger fry from fish spawned in December were moved from screen net cages to grow-out raceways.

Comanche springs pupfish continued to be reared in outdoor ponds and inside in raceways. Research aquaria recirculating systems were repaired, cleaned and equipped for upcoming research with pupfish reproductive performance, egg and early life history survival. Another group of aquaria were prepared to increase the number of replicates available for future research.

Discussions were held about the status of existing Yaqui catfish and the potential for future propagation with Arizona Wildlife Refuge staff, SNARRC and region 2 FAC leadership.

Manuel Ulibarri provided important historical background information on the production of Yaqui catfish in the past at Uvalde. Further information and evaluation of the age of existing Yaqui catfish stock, their genetics, and the potential for bringing in wild stock along with the required resources, need to be determined before propagation efforts can begin.

### Facility Maintenance

A number of projects were completed by the hatchery volunteers Patricia Schenk and Thomas Jetzer. They placed new grow lights in frames they built over different fish tanks in the main tank house. A number of new aquaria were prepared and/ or repaired and installed to increase the number of replicate tanks in research aquaria systems. The volunteers also made repairs into the airlines and fittings on the small photovoltaic aeration systems to improve their efficiency. The existing holding house was cleaned out by the volunteers also so that tanks could be installed for quarantine purposes. Plans were made with the volunteers for the installation of existing tanks and recirculating systems into the quarantine building to provide a quarantine area away from refugia and pond operations at Uvalde NFH.

A variety of equipment repairs were performed in January. The tractor required repair of the radiator along with correction of other problems. The backhoe and the bobcat also required repairs in order to continue hatchery operations.



**Removal of berm and pipe blocking slough flow at Uvalde**



**Completed removal of berm and pipe for improved slough drainage**

Work continued on repairing, and cleaning out the slough draining the upper station. Flood rains earlier in the year had moved debris into the canal slowing the movement of water which required major clearing. There was also a large berm at the end of the slough which required removal for water to drain off the station properly. After much work, in January the large berm which blocked water flow through the slough was finally removed by Uvalde staff. This together with additional clearing of the entire slough will provide the needed path for water flow in time before the new rains in the spring.

Work was also performed to station quarters with the addition of gutters on the roof of the shed by the trailers. Concrete was also poured with stone to make a porch adjacent to trailers.

## Outreach

Mark Dietrich and Pat Duncan attended the Uvalde Tourism and Visitors Meeting on January 26. Pat Duncan attended the Uvalde CEO meeting on January 27. Plans were made to schedule a meeting with area Girl Scouts to develop scouting projects at the hatchery. Educational tours with San Antonio boy scouts for the hatchery were planned for spring.

## Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted 2 visitors for the month, including one hatchery tour.

## Weather

Temperatures for January ranged from a low of 27°F to a high of 84°F with an average temperature of 40°F. Pond water temperatures ranged from a low of 49°F to a high of 62°F for the month of January. No measurable rainfall occurred in January in Uvalde.

## Upcoming Events

Mark Dietrich will be attending the administrator's conference at the regional office in Albuquerque from February 1-4.

Pat Duncan and Mark Dietrich will be presenting information on opportunities in fisheries and wildlife management at the Uvalde High School Career Day on February 11.

Pat Duncan will be attending Aquaculture America in Las Vegas, Nevada from February 22-27.

### **Uvalde National Fish Hatchery**

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### Uvalde National Fish Hatchery January 2016

Species	Year Class	Geographic Origin	Approximate Number
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2014	Domestic Strain	200
Channel Catfish	2015	Domestic Strain	5,945
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Pond)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	145,601
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Tank)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	146
Devils River Minnow (F1)	2013	San Felipe Springs	218
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2014	San Felipe Springs	40
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2015	San Felipe Springs	420
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Upper Comal River	11
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Lower Comal River	14
Fountain Darter (F1)	2013/2014	Comal River Mix	250
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Upper Comal River	31
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Lower Comal River	19
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Comal River Mix	60
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	4
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	7
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	63
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)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	22
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (J)	3
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (K)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	SMR (Unknown)	80

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