



## Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

### Monthly Activity Report

July 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*

*Volunteer – Ian Westmeyer*

### **Partnerships and Accountability**

In partnership with the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program, the station continues propagation efforts for razorback sucker. As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas wild-rice, fountain darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, and San Marcos salamander.



Photo provided by Chris Stautzenberger – Texas Parks and Wildlife

On July 5th, hatchery staff delivered 326 channel catfish averaging 16-20" and 2.72 lbs. to Popeye Lake in Crystal City, Texas for a kids fishing event on July 6th. Game Warden Chris Stautzenberger, with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, was the point of contact and helped organize the event. Chris has assisted with our own annual kids fishing derby for many years. The event provided a great opportunity

to make use of our surplus broodstock. It was a tremendous success as more than 150 children accompanied by 100 adults took part.

Texas Parks and Wildlife arrived on July 8<sup>th</sup> to take delivery of 440 channel catfish that were then transported to the Frio County Regional Park Lake. These fish represented the last of our surplus 2011 year class. Trimming our catfish numbers will allow the station to save money on feed and labor over the next year.

### **Workforce Management**

Ian Westmeyer continued to volunteer with the hatchery. For the month, he logged 125 hours. In addition to his animal care duties, he spent considerable time cleaning lined aquaculture ponds and kettles and prepared a hatchery residence for painting.

Hannah and Audrey Echols each logged 6 volunteer hours during the month of July. Their primary duties included water quality monitoring, fish feeding, and the cleaning of fish and rice tanks.

### **Weather**

July's air temperatures ranged from a low of 65°F to a high of 103°F. Overall, temperatures

were near normal, but precipitation was below normal. Measurable rainfall occurred on 9 days in July with precipitation totaling 0.85 inches. According to The Weather Channel, the monthly precipitation average for Uvalde in July is 2.79 inches.

### **Additional Facility Activities**

Staff took cardboard, glass, paper, steel, plastic, and used fluorescent bulbs to our local recycling facility. Approximately 30 pounds of cardboard, 12 pounds of glass, 40 pounds of paper, 2 pounds of steel, and 20 pounds of plastic were recycled. Additionally, 25 long tube fluorescent bulbs were taken to the recycling facility.

Young of the year channel catfish have been observed feeding and growth rates are on schedule. Snakes and predatory birds have not been a significant source of mortality for young catfish or any other species so far this year.

### **Facility Maintenance**

Staff began installing approximately 380 feet of 12 inch diameter PVC drainline for the station's tankhouse. The drainline will provide a pervious basin (wildlife pond with walking trail) for drainages emanating from raceways in the tankhouse. Using the water flows from the tankhouse will minimize costs to the station since it will no longer be necessary to pump (diesel powered pump) water from the hatchery's secondary slough into the wildlife pond to maintain water levels. The pond will also provide an additional safeguard against potential escapement for fish occupying raceways in the tankhouse.



The water entering the pond has a very low lingering time since the soil allows high rates of water flows downward into the aquifer. Except for a few incidentals, existing materials were used to complete the project.



All new Texas wild rice plants started from tillers of existing plants last month are doing well. Our old rice holding area has proven to be a perfect area to get new plants established because the water is shallower and plants are easier to observe and clean. Two tanks from the old system are now dedicated to producing new rice plants. Once established, they will

then be moved to one of our two new, larger rice tank systems.

## **Facility Visitors**

Tom Brandt visited the hatchery on three occasions. Kenneth Ostrand, Valentin Cantu, and Jeff Hutchinson each made the trip once. The purpose of their visits were to begin the development of a long term plan for Uvalde's role in the preservation of endangered Edward's Aquifer Species and to offer advice on system design for individual species.

Members of Uvalde Boy Scout troop 244 visited the hatchery on July 24<sup>th</sup> for a guided tour. They learned about the species we raise and walked our nature trail. Potential scout projects were discussed.

The hatchery was visited by 23 individuals this month for bird watching, tours, and other outdoor visitation activities.