



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

July 2014



Staff

Project Leader • Grant Webber

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Fish Biologist • Rick Echols

Administrative Technician • Sandra Castañeda

Pathways Student • Rueben Mendoza

Volunteer • Ian Westmeyer

Partnerships and Accountability

As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas Wild-rice, Fountain Darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, and Devil's River minnow. All species continue to be performing well. The station continues to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center 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 facility in West Virginia.

Uvalde is planning to receive the remaining F1 Devil's River Minnow from San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center. The transfer should be made before the end of August. This represents the second half of the lot received early this year. Both groups are of San Felipe Springs origin. We continue to coordinate with the Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in preparation

to receive emergency transfers of additional Devil's River Minnow should the need arise.

The hatchery successfully transferred 1,625 catchable sized channel catfish to the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of northeast Texas. Efforts were coordinated through the Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in San Marcos, Texas.

Workforce Management

Rueben Mendoza continued his work at Uvalde NFH as a member of the Pathways Program. He participated in a webinar on July 17th and was awarded a book for submitting a question that was answered during the webinar. The topic was workforce appreciation. This month, Reuben has assisted staff with a copper sulfate toxicity study on Comanche Springs pupfish, weed spraying, and bird netting repair. In addition, he has been building another San Marcos salamander tank system that will be used to isolate wild-caught salamanders during an emergency collection event. Reuben assesses work tasks very well and is has become a valuable member of the staff.

We welcomed Scott Davis from the San Marcos ARC for three days mid-month to alleviate staff shortages due to Grant's month long detail in Panama City. With his help, we were able to repair bird netting on two 1-acre ponds before removing it to place in storage. This will extend the life of the netting as it will not be exposed to wind and sun damage while not in use. Scott's help was much appreciated.



Scott Davis of San Marcos ARC dismantling bird netting

Ian Westmeyer continued to volunteer with us during the month of June. For the month, he logged 58 hours. His responsibilities for the month included mending and removal of bird netting in addition to his daily care of the fountain darter and Devil's River minnow.

Other volunteers this month included Rick Echols' three daughters Allie (2 hours), Hannah (7 hours), and Audrey (4 hours). They accomplished tasks ranging from aquarium and tank cleaning to transport of fish from tanks to ponds.

Project Leader, Grant Webber, completed a 30-day detail in the Panama City Field Office. Since he has experience in both Ecological Services and Fisheries, he was asked to assist that office as the acting Deputy Field Supervisor. The office has both Ecological Service and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office responsibilities. During his detail, he assisted the Field Supervisor with day to day activities associated with both Fisheries and Ecological Services. Rick Echols served as Acting Project Leader in Grant's absence.

Hatchery staff have completed all required on-line training required before the end of the fiscal year, including FISSA, role based security training, and defensive driving,

Aquatic Species Activities

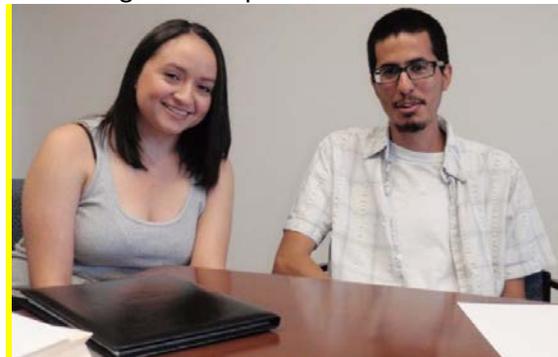
Young of the year channel catfish now average 4.5 inches in length and can be observed taking food in the pond.

Copper sulfate toxicity tests on Comanche Springs pupfish continued this month and should conclude in early August.

Michelle Crawford's light intensity, PhD project, continued to progress this month. After a trial run, she has decided to conduct her light intensity study outdoors under natural light. The plants were not gaining enough growth under the artificial light. Shade cloth will be used to reduce light intensity for each of five treatment groups.

Additional Facility Activities

Staff hosted a film crew from Sul Ross University, Alpine, Texas. Veronica Castro Williams (interviewer) and Aaron Galvan (cameraman) toured the facility before sitting down with Rick Echols and then Rene Guerra for interviews. The production was a requirement for a communications class Veronica was taking at the university, and is intended to inform the viewer as to what we do here at the hatchery. We were glad to help.



Veronica Castro Williams and Aaron Galvan created a documentary on Uvalde NFH.

Facility Maintenance

Staff members continue to make progress on repairs to wind damaged items resulting from the June 12th storm. Bird netting from two

ponds was deemed to be salvageable. These nets have been repaired and brought under cover as they will not be needed in the near future. Downed branches have all been removed, the hatchery sign has been fixed, and the roof on the rice holding building has been reaffixed.

Abundant rainfall continued to fuel growth of grass and weeds this month. Many maintenance hours were spent mowing grass. In addition, areas around pond liners, valves, and parked equipment were sprayed with a weed killer / ground sterilizer to prevent excessive trimming.

Cirilo Alonzo and Rene Guerra began work on a new parking structure for temporary workers and independent researchers that stay in hatchery trailers from time to time. When complete, the structure will also be able to house two vehicles and will have a storage area to hold equipment



Rene Guerra digging a footer for the new parking structure



New parking structure located between two temporary housing trailers

Residents of quarters #4 experienced slow draining of waste water early this month. Removal of an obstruction in the main drain line and pumping down the septic tank improved performance. A clogged AC drain line was also cleared.

In an effort to get the Park Model unit operational and livable for visiting “VIPs”, the air conditioning unit had to be upgraded and propane lines redone. The previous air conditioning duct work was destroyed by raccoons, which also left fleas throughout the unit. Pest control was called to exterminate the unit. Also, since the unit has been vacant for a while, mice urine and feces was found in the duct work. A heating/air conditioning contractor was hired to clean and de-fumigated all the duct work throughout the unit. Windows and doors were also re-caulked to prevent the intrusion of water, insects, and rodents. After all the work was completed, Rueben moved from the smaller recreational vehicle trailer to the Park Model. This move provides Rueben with more home-like feeling and space.

Safety

Jeff Huchinson and Val Cantu conducted the station safety inspection on July 31. We can expect to see the official report in early August, but were told that reportable infractions were minimal.

Recycling Efforts

Staff recycled 20 pounds of cardboard, 15 pounds of paper, 5 pounds of glass, and 12 pounds of plastic this month.

Facility Visitors

The Trio Educational Talent Search summer program visited the hatchery on July

28. Students were from Morales Junior High in Uvalde and Sterling H. Fly Jr. High in Crystal City, TX. The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. The goal of Talent Search is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete high school and enroll in and complete their postsecondary education. Thirty-four students and three teachers got a tour which included a walk around our nature trail. The eager students had many questions.

In addition, at least 12 individuals visited the hatchery this month. Most chose to make Uvalde NFH part of their vacation plans.

Weather

Temperatures for June ranged from a low of 70°F to a high of 100°F. Overall, high temperatures were normal with the reported average high and the observed high for the month at 96°F. Low temperatures were slightly above normal with the long term average for the month at 72°F versus the observed 73.1°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 10 days in July with precipitation totaling 2.19 inches. According to The Weather Channel, the monthly precipitation average for Uvalde in July is 1.22 inches. Year to date rainfall is currently at 11.80 inches compared to the 110 year average of 14.20 inches. Crop irrigation slows during the month of July, but the Edward's Aquifer continued to drop from a level of 828.4 at the beginning of the month to 826.8 feet at the end of July.

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fisheries/uvalde/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/uvalde/index.html)