



## Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

### Monthly Activity Report

June 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. The last of our razorback sucker YC2006 (8) were tagged and placed in a pond for the summer. They will be stocked in the San Juan River this fall along with all other razorbacks on station. As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas wild-rice, fountain darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, and San Marcos salamander.

Staff have been preserving freshly expired razorback sucker for the past several months. In early June, 17 razorbacks were sent to San Juan River RIP member, Steve Platania, to determine a baseline identity for razorbacks reared at Uvalde National Fish Hatchery by analyzing hard parts for mineral content. Mineral content of hard parts can be correlated with the mineral content of the water in which they are raised. In the future, it may be possible to determine natal origin based on analysis of scales without the use of tags.

The Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center arrived on June 4 to take delivery of 500 channel catfish averaging 3.28 lbs. for a kids fishing derby.

On June 26, hatchery staff delivered 413 channel catfish averaging 3.78 lbs. to Maverick County Lake in Eagle Pass, Texas. The delivery was made in cooperation with Texas Parks and Wildlife. Fish arrived in excellent condition.

Results of our yearly fish health inspection are in. The Southwest Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center's Fish Health Unit found no reportable pathogens. Uvalde NFH has now received a classification of "A" for five consecutive years.

### **Workforce Management**



Ian Westmeyer, continued to volunteer with the hatchery. For the month, he logged 105 hours. He has taken on the responsibility of feeding fountain darters and cleaning tanks. In

addition, he has cleared trails, treated a wood deck on our mobile home, and assisted with fish harvesting and distribution. He continues to be a positive asset to Uvalde NFH.

Hannah Echols helped her dad with his daily species care activities for a total of 16 volunteer hours.

Sandra continued rehab after knee replacement surgery last month, and has been on a limited work schedule. She should return to a normal work schedule next month.

## Weather

June's air temperatures ranged from a low of 65°F to a high of 108°F. Overall, temperatures and precipitation were near normal for June. Measurable rainfall occurred on 10 days in June with precipitation totaling 3.61 inches. According to The Weather Channel, the monthly precipitation average for June is 2.97 inches. Abundant rainfall permitted a temporary lifting of our local burn ban, which allowed staff to torch an ever growing mountain of wooden construction materials and pallets.

## Additional Facility Activities



The Uvalde National Fish Hatchery's Annual Fishing Derby took place on June 1, 2013 in conjunction with National Fishing and Boating

Week. The derby was open to children age five through thirteen, so no license was required. Families began arriving long before the event began at 8:00 a.m. This year the catch limit was increased from 2 to 4 fish. Almost every child caught at least one fish. In addition to the fishing, a raffle drawing was held and 20 lucky children won fishing rod and reel combos. Chips, soda, and water were donated by Wal-Mart and HEB, and made available throughout the event. There were 102 children registered as anglers and were accompanied by approximately 75 adults. This event was a success due to the many volunteers that help during the event and through prize donations. These groups included friends and family of the hatchery staff, HEB, Wal-Mart, U.S. Border Patrol, Uvalde EMS, Inc., Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and the Uvalde Police Department.

Only a minimal number of channel catfish were spawned this year. The 7,000 fry produced will supply our fishing derby for the next 2 years and replace aging broodstock. Reducing production will save money spent on feed and valuable water resources.

## Facility Maintenance



In the course of moving items out of our old fish holding house before it was demolished and general clean-up, staff rediscovered old artifacts from the early days of the hatchery. An attractive display has been created that

showcases these old tools, some dating back more than 50 years.

Staff took cardboard, glass, paper, steel, plastic, and used dry cell batteries to our local recycling facility. Approximately 40 pounds of cardboard, 15 pounds of glass, 80 pounds of paper, 2 pounds of steel, and 30 pounds of plastic were recycled.

Fountain darter tank systems received their semi-annual thorough cleaning. During this process, calcium deposits are dissolved and removed from tanks, chillers, pumps, and piping with measured doses of muriatic acid.

Experience has shown that failure to do so may cause pumps to stop working or not restart during power outages.

The large Texas wild rice tank also received a thorough cleaning. Plants were placed in a second tank, while the first tank was picked, scraped, and power washed clean of algae and other aquatic weeds. New plants were potted from cuttings of more established plants. During this time, it was discovered that the “spare” tank had developed a large crack in the bottom. It is scheduled to be fixed in July.

## **Facility Visitors**

Mike Montagne and Randy Gibson visited Uvalde NFH on June 13. San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center Director Tom Brandt and Edwards Aquifer Authority member, Nathan Pence visited Uvalde NFH on June 14. The purpose of the visits was to gain a better understanding of how the facility might play a role in housing additional endangered species native to the Edwards Aquifer system. Special attention was given to building design and biosecurity issues. Everyone seemed impressed with the potential Uvalde NFH offers.

The hatchery was visited by 13 individuals this month for bird watching, tours, and other outdoor visitation activities.