



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

May 2016



Staff

Project Leader • Patricia Duncan

Fish Biologist • Valentin Cantu

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich

CDP Intern • Tamika Wright

stocked into four ponds. As with last year, the fish produced at Uvalde NFH will augment the numbers released to the Rio Grande in Texas in recovery efforts.

On May 25, Pat Duncan participated in the RGSM Genetics Management and Captive Propagation Work Group Meeting by conference call. The past year and future RGSM propagation, stocking and plans were discussed.

Workforce Management

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 May.

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.

Martha Keller from the Dexter Fish Health Center came and directed the annual fish health inspection at Uvalde NFH on May 3. Samples from all fish species were taken during the fish health inspection for later evaluation.

In collaboration with the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (SNARRC) and other partners, Uvalde NFH also began culture of Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) again in FY2016. On May 10, 140,000 RGSM were transported to Uvalde NFH and



On 16 May 2016, Valentin Cantu began working at the Uvalde NFH as the fish biologist. A native of Uvalde, he began working at the San Marcos National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center (NFHTC) in San Marcos, Texas in 1999. Valentin Cantu earned a bachelor's degree in aquatic biology with a minor in chemistry at Southwest Texas State University and master's degree in aquatic biology at Texas State University. As a lead biologist at the San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center (SAMRC) he conducted research projects with three listed Central Texas

salamander species. As a Region 2 USFWS diver, he coordinated refugium salamander collections efforts, along with other endangered species. He also worked with Texas wild rice, fountain darters, Devil's River minnows, Comal Springs riffle beetles, and Peck's Cave amphipods at San Marcos.



Ms. Tamika Wright, a student from Northern Arizona State University joined UNFH as our CDIP intern on May 30, after attending a week long orientation program in Louisiana. A native Hawaiian, Ms. Wright comes to us from Wahiawa, on the island of Oahu and is pursuing a double major in Environmental Studies and French. She is enrolled in the Global Science and Engineering Program (GSEP) for STEM students, where she will spend her senior year in the country of origin of the language she is majoring in. After graduation, Ms. Wright plans to join the Peace Corps before continuing on with further studies.

Another term fish biologist, GS 7-9 was advertised for Uvalde NFH to work primarily with Rio Grande silvery minnow production along with other endangered species.

Recruitment continued in May for two YCC students to work at Uvalde. YCC students will begin work at UNFH in June.

A full time term Engineering Equipment Operator, WG-9 for UNFH was developed and submitted for advertisement.

Aquatic Species Activities

Temperatures continued to warm in May. Pond water temperatures ranged from 17.0°C to 30.4 °C. Young of the year channel catfish continued to thrive with an increase in feeding due to the increasing seasonal temperatures. The smaller size class averaged approximately 13 inches while the larger fish were approximately 20 inches in length. Fish were moved to fishing derby ponds in preparation for May 21 and June 4 fishing derbies.

With the warming of water temperatures to above 25°C, spawning cans placed into pond 27 which contains channel catfish broodstock. Cans were monitored in May for egg mass production. The first egg masses were collected and hatched in mid May which resulted in thousands of young channel catfish fry. Rearing of channel catfish fry in troughs with automatic feeders continued in the tank house during May.

Facility Maintenance

Final preparation and filling of four ponds for stocking of the Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) took place in early May. Ponds were slowly filled and fertilized to provide a rich zooplankton population for larval RGSM stocked on May 10.

On May 11, Howard Wiedknecht worked on the programming of the repaired flow meter for the Spurgeon Well. He provided the calibration and programming of the software so the water flow could be placed on automatic control again. Mr. Wiedknecht also provided consultation on programming water flow with the new tank for the Quarantine Building.

Work began on the installation of wiring to handle the additional large tanks installed last year for the Texas wild rice. The selected

contractor visited the site and began work but due to the large amount of rain in May work was delayed until drier conditions prevail.

An additional PPR was worked on for the replacement of a 24,000 gallon tank for the quarantine building. Specifications and quotes under development for this project continued in May.

Plans were made and materials ordered to install an additional water inlet to pond 48 across the pond from the kettle. This will help provide better water quality in this pond.

Outreach



The 2016 Uvalde National Fish Hatchery Annual Kid's Fishing Derby was a resounding success. We registered a new record of 642 area children participants from across the region, an increase of 162% compared to last year. They came from as far away as Del Rio to the west, Brownsville to the south, Houston to the east and San Angelo to the north. An estimated 1200-1300 people were present for this event.

At 0800 sharp, a near mile long line of vehicles with eager fishermen, waited for the gates to open and fishing to commence. We had 4 registration tables manned by hatchery volunteers that kept up with the flow of participants. The day fortunately stayed mostly cloudy keeping the temperatures down so everybody was able to stay relatively comfortable.



There were two, 1 acre ponds open for fishing filled with approximately 5500 channel catfish grown from fish propagated here at the hatchery. Both ponds were again filled with fishermen lined up shoulder to shoulder trying their luck. The successful fishermen proudly displayed their catch as they left the derby with many thanking us as they departed to a fish fry.



Assistance with the derby was provided by Texas State Game Wardens from six area counties along with a number of U.S. Border Patrol office agents helping us out with traffic control.

Mark Dietrich represented Uvalde NFH at the Dalton Elementary School Career Day on May 13 where he presented information on fish conservation and provided a demonstration with the traveling fish tank.

Mark Dietrich and Pat Duncan attended the monthly Uvalde Tourism Council meeting on May 24.

Visitors

Uvalde NFH hosted a total of 33 visitors during the month of May.

Weather

Temperatures continued to warm in May along more than normal precipitation. Temperatures ranged in Uvalde from a low of 51°F to a high of 95°F with an average temperature of 75°F in the month of May. There was 6.1 inches of measured rainfall in Uvalde in May, which was 3 inches more than the normal amount for this time of year.

Upcoming Events

June 4 Disabled Veterans and Seniors Fishing Derby at Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

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