



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

November 2014



Staff

Project Leader • Vacant

Acting Project Leader • Teresa Lewis

Fish Biologist • Rick Echols

Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo

Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra

Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich

Pathways Student • Rueben Mendoza

Volunteers • Dale & Jane Slocomb

Volunteer • Catherine Baxter

Workforce Management

Mark Dietrich was hired as the new Administrative Assistant mid-month. Mark is a retired Senior Chief Petty Officer with the US Navy and currently resides in Uvalde with his wife. Mark is quickly learning our systems of doing business with the help of Marta Estrada from the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center. He has taken on the additional responsibilities of station IT and will serve as the outreach coordinator for Uvalde NFH. He enjoys the outdoors and is an accomplished taxidermist.



Mark Dietrich eagerly awaiting his next assignment.

Partnerships and Accountability

As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas wild rice, Fountain Darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, Devil's River minnow, and San Marcos salamander. All species are performing well. The station continues to maintain communications with the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) 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's Leetown Science Center in West Virginia.

Mark and Rick attended the monthly Uvalde Board of Tourism Luncheon / Meeting. Mark was introduced as the hatchery outreach coordinator and made many new contacts for the development of new projects.

Teresa Lewis began a two month stint as Acting Project Leader. She will be returning to the Southwestern Fish Health Unit in mid-January.

Dale and Jane Slocomb began volunteering at the hatchery on November 3rd. Their most recent permanent address was in Roanoke, Virginia, but since retiring, home is wherever

their mobile home is parked. Dale has many years of experience in the construction business, so his skills were immediately put to work. First on his list was completion of our outdoor classroom. Jane is more artistic, so her talents were put to use creating unique signage for the nature trail / outdoor classroom area.



Jane and Dale Slocomb with their handiwork.

Catherine Baxter donated 6 hours of time to the hatchery this month. In the months to come, she will be conducting a literature review and helping to develop a study to predict toxicity of copper sulfate to Comanche Springs pupfish.

Aquatic Species Activities

Young of the year channel catfish now average 9 to 11 inches in length. Broodstock channel catfish were harvested, counted and weighed before being placed in a new pond for the winter. Fish remain healthy and growth rates continue to be good.

Young Devil's River minnows were enumerated this month. We currently have 369 young fingerlings. They have recently transitioned to flake food and naturally occurring algae that grows on the surface of their net basket. They seem to be thriving.

The station continues to hold 788 juvenile fountain darters destined for virus challenge studies at the USGS Leetown Science Center in

West Virginia. We now have a shipping date for the first 200 fish.

Newly arrived San Marcos salamanders continue to do well. Males and females are being held separately in preparation for future research studies.

Rice plants continue to grow and proliferate. New plants recently brought to the hatchery underwent a bit of a transplant shock, but are now growing and doing much better.

Michelle Crawford's Texas wild rice light intensity, PhD project, continued this month.

Additional Facility Activities

Feral hog trapping activities continued this month. It has become obvious that we need a new trap design to be successful.

Facility Maintenance

A fourth retention pond to collect effluent water from our tankhouse is now functional. Cirilo's artful eye created a very aesthetically pleasing design. For the most part, water will be kept at the level shown in the picture below to provide interest to hatchery visitors, although it will periodically be allowed to go dry to satisfy biosecurity needs. Total capacity is about 10 times what is shown here.



New retention pond.

Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 16 visitors this month.

Weather

Temperatures for November ranged from a low of 28°F to a high of 83°F. Overall, high temperatures were well below normal with the observed average high for the month at 66°F compared to the 110 year average of 72°F. Low temperatures were well below normal with the average for the month at 43°F and long term averages for the month at 49°F. Measurable rainfall occurred on 7 days in November with precipitation totaling 2.32 inches. According to The Weather Channel, October monthly precipitation averages 1.54 inches. Year to date rainfall is currently at 20.86 inches compared to the 110 year average of 22.55 inches. The Edward's Aquifer level is currently at 825.6', compared to 82.7' at the end of last month and 836.5' this time last year.

Upcoming Events

A study to look at the proper timing for handling San Marcos salamander eggs is being designed. This information will be useful in maximizing hatch rates.

Water continues to flow into our wildlife pond. Water levels should be perfect by the time our annual Christmas bird count takes place in late December.

Material quotes are currently being gathered to line an additional pond. Quotes are also being sought to purchase 4 additional 24 foot rice tanks to take our capacity from 200 to 450 plants as called for by the draft plan – Genetic Diversity Assessment of Wild and Refugia Texas Wild Rice (*Zizania texana*) Populations 2012

A quarterly safety meeting and holiday potluck is scheduled for December 18th.

Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

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

| Uvalde National Fish Hatchery November 2014 | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Species | Year Class | Geographic Origin | Approximate Number |
| Channel Catfish Broodstock | 2013 | Domestic Strain | 136 |
| Channel Catfish | 2014 | Domestic Strain | 3,000 |
| Comanche Springs Pupfish | Mixed | Phantom Springs | 170,382 |
| Devil's River Minnow | 2013 | San Felipe Springs | 269 |
| Devil's River Minnow | 2014 | San Felipe Springs | 369 |
| Fountain Darter | 2012 | Upper Comal River | 37 |
| Fountain Darter | 2013 | Upper Comal River | 28 |
| Fountain Darter | 2012 | Lower Comal River | 41 |
| Fountain Darter | 2013 | Lower Comal River | 24 |
| Fountain darter | 2013/2014 | Comal River | 788 |
| San Marcos Salamander (M) | 2013 | San Marcos River | 11 |
| San Marcos Salamander (F) | 2013 | San Marcos River | 11 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (A) | 43 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (B) | 31 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (C) | 15 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (D) | 13 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (F) | 19 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (G) | 17 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (J) | 3 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | San Marcos R. (K) | 12 |
| Texas Wild Rice | N/A | SMR (Unknown) | 24 |

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