



# Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

## Monthly Activity Report

### October 2015



#### Staff

**Project Leader • Patricia Duncan**

**Fish Biologist • Rick Echols**

**Engineering Equipment Operator • Cirilo Alonzo**

**Maintenance Worker • Rene Guerra**

**Administrative Assistant • Mark Dietrich**

#### 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, Rio Grande silvery minnow, and San Marcos salamander.

The station continues 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. In addition, the Rio Grande silvery minnow grow out was completed this month. Discussions and planning will be conducted with the regional office and the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources Center (SNARC) for fish production activities for the 2016 growing season.

#### Workforce Management

Ashlie Peterson from the Southwest Native Aquatic Resources Center (SNARC) spent the first two weeks of October at Uvalde NFH. She took care of the Rio Grande silvery minnow in raceways and completed a pre-stocking health check.

Patricia Duncan completed a week of leadership training at NCTC.

#### Aquatic Species Activities

Rio Grande silvery minnow that were harvested on September 28 and 29 were held in raceways until October 15, when they were stocked in the Big Bend area of the Rio Grande River at Dryden and Shaffer's Crossing. In total, 132,500 fish were stocked which reflected a 94.6% survival rate since they were brought to the hatchery as sac fry. Rueben Mendoza, who provided most of the daily care of these fish early on, was invited to participate in the stocking effort. The event was documented by a videographer. Rene Guerra, Cirilo Alonzo, and Patricia Duncan represented Uvalde NFH and Manuel Ulibarri, William Knight, and Colby Crouse represented SNARC on the stocking event which was a success.



**Colby Crouse and William Knight crowd fish as Rueben Mendoza looks on.**

October marked the beginning of an effort to collect specimens of Texas wild rice from GPS marked areas of the San Marcos River. Rick Echols took possession of tillers from 14 distinct plants from zone "A" and was able to make 26 new plants. Additional efforts to add rice plants

to our existing stock will be made on a monthly basis.

Comanche Springs pupfish produced by Justin Crow for his DFP project are growing steadily and appear healthy. They have now fully transitioned from feeding on brine shrimp to a flake mix of algae and krill.

Monthly monitoring of Comanche springs pupfish continued in October. Results continued to indicate good populations in each of the three ponds with all sizes present. Small seasonal declines are indicated in October's estimates at the end of this document.

Young of the year channel catfish were harvested, split into two size classes and placed in two ponds covered with bird netting. The smaller size class averages 6 inches while the larger fish are approximately 10 inches in length.



Mark Dietrich, Rick Echols, and Rene Guerra respond to a joke while harvesting catfish.

## Facility Maintenance

Maintenance was completed and a 24 hour pump test was done on the Spurgeon well in early October. Use of the Wilson well continued until critical fish harvesting could be completed.



Spurgeon well pump test prior to putting it back online.

An electrical contractor made a sight visit to gather information for a proposal for electrical expansion in our tank house. Plans are now to have multiple small pumps and chillers for the housing of new Edward's Aquifer species which will necessitate the electrical expansion.

Efforts continue to increase water retention capacity of effluent from our tank house and build up our levees to prevent water intrusion during high water events. These efforts will continue intermittently as dry weather allows.

## Outreach

Mark Dietrich participated in the local Uvalde version of National Night Out on October 6. Mark indicated that the event was well attended with about 300 individuals passing by his live fish display. In addition he attended the monthly luncheon sponsored by the Uvalde Board of Tourism.

## Facility Visitors

The hatchery hosted approximately 17 guests for the month. A home school group from Uvalde enjoyed a guided hatchery tour.

## Weather

Temperatures for October ranged from a low of 49°F to a high of 96°F. Overall, high temperatures were above normal with the observed average high for the month at 84°F

compared to the 111 year average of 83°F. Low temperatures were above normal as well with the average for the month of 62°F compared to the 111 year average of 58°F. Above average nightly temperatures can be attributed to abundant cloud cover. Measurable rainfall occurred on 10 days in October with precipitation totaling 12.37 inches. Two high water events occurred during the month, but the hatchery only incurred minor damage. According to US Climate Data, October's monthly precipitation averages 2.4 inches. The Edwards Aquifer level continues to rise and is currently at 854.0' compared to 851.5' last month, and 825.6' this time last year.

### Upcoming Events

Patricia Duncan will be attending the project leader's meeting originally scheduled for late September in Albuquerque in late November.

The station's environmental compliance inspection originally scheduled for August will be completed in mid-November.

A large patch of netting material has been purchased and will be spliced into the existing net in order to make it cormorant proof.

#### **Uvalde National Fish Hatchery**

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

**Uvalde National Fish Hatchery October 2015**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Year Class</b>	<b>Geographic Origin</b>	<b>Approximate Number</b>
Channel Catfish Broodstock	2014	Domestic Strain	200
Channel Catfish	2015	Domestic Strain	5,945
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Pond)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	216,739
Comanche Springs Pupfish (Tank)	Mixed	Phantom Springs	175
Devils River Minnow (F1)	2013	San Felipe Springs	219
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2014	San Felipe Springs	40
Devils River Minnow (F2)	2015	San Felipe Springs	241
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Upper Comal River	22
Fountain Darter (W)	2012-2014	Lower Comal River	22
Fountain Darter (F1)	2013/2014	Comal River Mix	305
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Upper Comal River	31
Fountain Darter (F1)	2015	Comal River Mix	60
San Marcos Salamander (M)	2013	San Marcos River	4
San Marcos Salamander (F)	2013	San Marcos River	7
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (A)	63
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (B)	36
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (C)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (D)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (F)	15
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (G)	24
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (J)	3
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	San Marcos R. (K)	11
Texas Wild Rice	N/A	SMR (Unknown)	80

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