



Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

Monthly Activity Report

September 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. This month, fish were harvested from the ponds and placed in raceways for one week to relieve stress. Fish were then anesthetized so that length and weight data could be collected for each individual fish. The fish will also be individually scanned to confirm Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag retention, which were implanted last spring. All data will be provided to the New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Coordination Office. The last of the razorback suckers on station will be stocked into the San Juan River by the end of October. As identified in approved Recovery Plans, refugia efforts continue for the Texas wild-rice, fountain darter, Comanche Springs pupfish, and San Marcos salamander. The Texas wild rice is responding well to increased sunlight and is again producing tillers that can be clipped off of the parent plant and potted for new plants.

Workforce Management

Ian Westmeyer continued to volunteer with the hatchery. He logged 40 hours during the month of September. For the month, he concentrated

on the general feeding and care of fountain darters and San Marcos salamanders. In addition, he provided assistance to staff by participating in razorback sucker harvest and data collection.

Additional Facility Activities

Rick Echols took a rare opportunity to spend a day away from the hatchery. On September 4, he accompanied Jeff Hutchinson and Scott Davis on an expedition to the San Marcos River to collect Texas wild rice tillers for propagation.



As reported by Jeff, the wild rice populations in the river are doing relatively well with most stands increasing in coverage over the last few years.



The experience gave Rick the opportunity to observe healthy stands of rice growing in its natural environment. This will better enable him to mimic natural conditions in tanks back at the hatchery. Collection was limited to the upper 3 populations on the river. Samples from the remaining 8 populations will be collected at a later date.

The 2013 year class channel catfish were harvested from a one acre pond and split into two ponds for overwintering. These fish will become future broodstock and quarry for our young anglers at our annual fishing derby held in June.

Grant Webber met with researchers from Texas State University to discuss potential future research projects at the facility. Potential future projects included research on endangered Texas wild-rice and endangered Houston toad (*Bufo houstonensis*). Attendees included Mike Forstner (Texas State University), Joseph Tomasso (Texas State University), Dittmer Hahn (Texas State University), Thom

Hardy (Texas State University), Michelle Crawford (PhD student, Texas State University), and Tom Brandt (Center Director, San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center).

Facility Maintenance

Cirilo Alonzo and Rene Guerra spent much of the month increasing the depth of a pond that receives effluent water from our main tank house. When complete, our storage capacity for effluent water will be greatly increased. This pond is also interconnected to an adjacent wildlife pond which can also receive overflows and direct flows from the tankhouse. The station now has roughly seven surface acres of area that can be utilized to store water for wildlife and retention for re-saturation into the aquifer. These ponds also provide an additional safeguard against escapement into downstream waters since they have no outflows.



Recycling Efforts

Staff recycled 50 pounds of cardboard, 30 pounds of paper, 15 pounds of glass, 3 pounds of tin, and 20 pounds of plastic this month. In addition, some batteries were replaced for uninterrupted power supply back-ups for some station electronics were replaced.

Facility Visitors

The hatchery was visited by 25 individuals this month for bird watching, tours, and other outdoor visitation activities.

Weather

September's air temperatures ranged from a low of 58°F to a high of 99°F. Overall, temperatures were near normal, but precipitation was above normal and welcome. Measurable rainfall occurred on 13 days in September with precipitation totaling 3.24 inches. According to The Weather Channel, the monthly precipitation average for Uvalde in September is 2.59 inches.