

SOUTHWESTERN NATIVE AQUATIC RESOURCES AND RECOVERY CENTER



March 2014
Monthly Activity Report

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Research Leader
Fish Biologist (Research)
Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Fish Biologist (Genetics)

Fish Health Unit Leader
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Fish & Wildlife Biologist



COMPLETED KETTLE PROJECT
USFWS PHOTO

KETTLE PROJECT

Specialized Steel, from El Paso, TX completed kettle construction this month. Center staff seamed the pond liners from both ponds in preparation for reattachment to the new concrete structures.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Staff attended a seminar entitled "Exotic Trematodes and Their Second Intermediate Hosts in Texas" presented by Daniel Huston, USFWS Pathways intern from the San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center (ARC) on March 25. Daniel has been in the Roswell area for approximately 2 months on detail to the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge and received a tour of facilities after presenting his seminar. His thesis research is linked to an ongoing fish health collaborative project with San Marcos ARC.

FEATURED SPECIES



PECOS BLUNTNOSE SHINER (NOTROPIS simus pecosensis), PHOTO CREDIT: T. KENNEDY

The Pecos bluntnose shiners (*Notropis simus pecosensis*) brought to Dexter on May 29, 2013 were released back into the Pecos River, NM near the Dexter Bridge by New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO) on March 6. Center staff successfully maintained 100% of the fish through the Pecos River irrigation season and once the threat of surface flow intermittence had ended the fish were returned to the river. Tissue samples were collected and archived from 50 individuals prior to release. The species was federally listed as threatened in 1987 and historically occurred in the Pecos River system from Santa Rosa to Carlsbad, New Mexico. Its abundance has experienced dramatic declines over the past 6 years primarily due to diminished habitat range and surface flow intermittence during irrigation season. Partners in this this cooperative effort include; the NMFWCO, Ecological Services Field Office, Bureau of Reclamation and the Center.

AQUATIC SPECIES AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Fish Distribution for March 2014

| Species | Number | Size | Agency | Site |
|---------|--------|------|--------|---|
| CCF | 4,000 | 10" | COE | Santa Rosa Lake, NM, hauled by New Mexico Department of Game and Fish |
| PBS | 600 | 40mm | BOR | Pecos River, Dexter Bridge, NM |

Spring time marks the onset of an extremely busy fish culture season. Several ponds were prepped to receive fish as ambient and water temperatures increased. Razorback sucker juveniles were PIT tagged in preparation for stocking into the Navajo Agriculture Products Industry ponds on the Navajo Nation in April. The fish will be grown to 300+mm and eventually stocked into the San Juan River in support of the species augmentation plan for the San Juan Recovery Implementation Program. Guzman beautiful shiner, Leon Springs and Comanche Springs pupfish were harvested from their ponds to facilitate bi-annual maintenance of the rearing units. Razorback sucker broodstock were also harvested and brought indoor for spawning. Upon request from the Virgin River Program and due to anticipated drought conditions in the Virgin River, UT the VIE tagged woundfin scheduled to be released this month will be held until next year for stocking once water levels and river conditions improve.



ASHLIE RADEMACHER, GARRAD POOLE AND IAN PAIGE, WOUNDFIN TAGGING, USFWS PHOTO

Aquatic Species and Conservation Management cont.

Channel catfish (CCF) were harvested from their rearing pond and hauled to Santa Rosa Lake by New Mexico Department of Game and Fish staff. Approximately 400 fish were kept on station for a scheduled fishing derby in Clovis, NM, and outreach activities (fish anatomy/ dissection) with the local middle school science classes in April. This is the final year the station will be rearing CCF.



DAVID HAMPTON, WILLOW BEACH NFH ANNUAL FISH HEALTH INSPECTION, USFWS PHOTO

As part of the continuing Gila trout spawning effort at Mora National Fish Hatchery, ovarian fluid samples from South Diamond, Main Diamond, and Whiskey Creek broodstock were tested in March. In addition, five lots of razorback sucker were sampled for annual health inspection at Willow Beach NFH on March 4. During the inspection, hatchery staff requested assistance with identifying a seasonal mortality issue in their young-of-year razorback sucker. Onsite diagnostic examinations and tissue samples tested as part of the inspection were inconclusive. Texas shiner (n=15) from the Blanco River in Texas were also submitted for health testing on March 27.

LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Center staff coordinated a transfer of live Rio Grande silvery minnow from the USGS Columbia Environmental Research Center in Yankton, SD for histology at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science as part of ongoing diagnostic testing and research efforts focused on devising improved test methodology for the species.

The Molecular Ecology Laboratory (MEL) received 20 Texas wild rice (*Zizania texana*) leaf cuttings from San Marcos ARC. The plants were collected in the San Marcos River and will be used to augment the refuge population. DNA was isolated from the leaves and archived for future genetic analysis. MEL staff continued to analyze sequencing data from 72 beautiful shiner samples representing Dexter's refuge stock, 50 beautiful shiner samples collected from San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge in 2013, and 5 beautiful shiner collected in Mexico. A draft report describing the genetic diversity of these populations based on microsatellite and sequence data is being written.

Renee Martin continued to work on the Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*) primer note. Morgan Robinson completed the QAQC for this project.

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Catherine Syke's final workday was March 8. We thank Catherine for her significant contributions to the USFWS and wish her well as she moves on to the next chapter of her life.

Workforce Management cont.

Center staff attended a mandatory Regional Office sponsored safety training at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge on March 10. This comprehensive safety class covered a broad range of safety related topics including hazard communications, lab safety, PPE, temperature stress prevention, and emergency action plans. Staff also completed their annual review of the Center Safety Plan. On March 24 – 28, Michelle Bell attended the OSHA Safety Training at the Regional Office in Albuquerque, NM.

Health Quest from Roswell, NM inspected, tagged, and replaced outdated fire extinguishers in preparation for the summer season.

Jet Glass Inc. from Roswell, NM provided an onsite windshield repair visit on March 27 for Center vehicles.

Center staff participated in a number of conference calls this month, including Fisheries, Fish Technology Centers, Fish Health, Aquatic Animal Health Policy Committee, Budget and Administration and National Wild Fish Health Survey UAT/AQHIS calls.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

A new booster pump was installed on the water heating system in the fish culture building. Coats Pump, from Dexter installed new pump seals on the old pump which will now serve as a backup.



C-SERIES POND CONSTRUCTION,
USFWS PHOTO

replacement of several broken valves and other water line repairs.

Fish culture staff assisted Milton Harper from Bitter Lake NWR with loading of excess fish culture equipment belonging to the San Juan Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP). The equipment was no longer being used at Uvalde and had been stored at Dexter prior to shipment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado River Fishery Project in Grand Junction, Colorado.



EXCESS FISH CULTURE EQUIPMENT,
USFWS PHOTO

The Center received 22 visitors and .30” of rain for the month of March.