

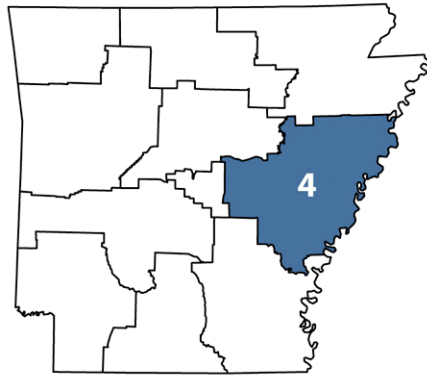


FISHERIES DISTRICT 4 NEWSLETTER

Jeff Farwick District Biologist E-mail: jfarwick@agfc.state.ar.us

Lee Holt Asst. District Biologist E-mail: rlholt@agfc.state.ar.us

Brinkley Regional Office 1201 Hwy. 49 N. Brinkley, AR 72021 Tel: (877) 734-4581



East Central Arkansas Fishing News January, February, March 2009

Hello again, this is the latest edition of our quarterly newsletter from your fisheries biologists in District 4, the East-Central Arkansas district. This newsletter will highlight some of our activities from this past quarter.

We are responsible for the following ten counties: Arkansas, Crittenden, Cross, Lee, Lonoke, Monroe, Phillips, Prairie, St. Francis and Woodruff. There are numerous fishing lakes in the area and the Arkansas, Cache, L'Anguille, Mississippi, St. Francis, and White Rivers all flow through the district. Our primary job consists of sampling fish populations to obtain information used to recommend special regulations, supplemental stockings, or any other management technique to improve fishing.

We hope that you enjoy this newsletter and that it gives you some insight

into our daily efforts to improve fishing in our district. We encourage you to become aware of environmental issues in your area that may affect the quality of the natural resources. If you become aware of an important issue, please call or e-mail us at, jfarwick@agfc.state.ar.us, so that we can include it in this newsletter. Feel free to share this newsletter with someone else, and let us know of anyone who would like to have a copy.

Fisheries Management Activities

During this quarter we primarily continued our efforts with the northern snakehead. We finally were able to proceed with our proposed eradication. The eradication project was a tremendous undertaking and was perhaps one of the

greatest endeavors ever attempted by any fish and wildlife agency. The rest of this news letter will focus on our eradication efforts.

Northern Snakehead Eradication

Northern snakeheads (NSH) are native to China and parts of Russia. The occurrences of northern snakeheads in the United States have been associated with Asian live-food markets. While no adverse effects on sport fish populations have been documented in waters containing NSH in the United States, concerns persist as to the impact that NSH could potentially have on native fisheries. These concerns are supported by several biological and behavioral traits of the NSH. Northern snakeheads are obligate air-breathers, can spawn up to five times during a season, practice dual parental care, and prefer vegetated backwater areas. Considering these traits, it is obvious how a population of NSH could easily become established in the delta habitat of Piney Creek. Combining these traits with the unknown threat potential, the biological concerns are warranted. Therefore, it was the objective of AGFC to take a proactive approach and attempt to control the spread of the existing NSH population from the Piney Creek drainage. A complete eradication of all fish in the drainage using the fish toxicant rotenone was proposed by the AGFC Fisheries Division and approved (and financially supported) by the agency's board of commissioners.

The eradication effort was operated according to the Incident Command System (ICS) created by FEMA and other federal agencies to provide communications and logistics structure to large-scale operations, which involve large incident areas, numerous task forces, and multiple agencies. The ICS facilitated this operation very well and is recommended for other agencies that may encounter such situations.

The eradication consisted of aerially applying 2,500 gallons of liquid rotenone and

hand-distributing 18,000 pounds of powdered rotenone to over 400 miles of creeks, ditches, and backwater areas within the 50,000 acre Piney Creek watershed. At any given time, there were up to 110 individuals actively involved in the eradication, assessment, or support of the project. GIS technology was a crucial tool throughout the planning and implementation process. As many as 250 tactical maps were produced daily to guide the eradication and assessment crews. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was an essential partner of the AGFC in this effort. The USFWS provided a helicopter, pilot and support crew for aerial application of liquid rotenone, Marsh Masters with operators, and numerous field personnel. The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) also partnered with the AGFC and USFWS in this project and provided numerous student volunteers for post-treatment assessment and data collection. Additional assistance during this project was provided by biologists from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and several student volunteers from Arkansas Tech University (ATU) and the University of Arkansas (UA). A private helicopter was also contracted for additional aerial applications of rotenone.



Helicopter refueling during the NSH eradication.

Post-treatment assessments indicated that the eradication was a success. Hundreds of dead NSH were collected and no live fish were observed in any of the treated areas. This

eradication effort will allow AGFC fisheries biologists and UCA researchers some additional time to further assess and monitor the threat potential of this species. It also allows time for biologists and researchers to plan additional NSH control measures in Arkansas and within other areas of the Mississippi River Basin.



Colton Dennis, black bass biologist, mixing up some rotenone.



Signs warning the public about the treated areas.



Northern snakeheads feeling the effects of rotenone.

Recent Fish Stockings

<u>Lake (County)</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Number</u>
Cox Cypress Lake (Arkansas)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	244
Cypress Bayou Pond (Lonoke)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	160
Dagmar WMA Ponds (Monroe)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	871
DeWitt City Lake (Arkansas)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	453
FmHA Pond (Woodruff)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	150
Forrest City Sports Complex Pond	Channel Catfish	Catchable	150
Miller Pond (Woodruff)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	150
Tommy L. Sproles/Pickthorne Lake	Channel Catfish	Catchable	525
Pine Tree WMD Area (St. Francis)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	844
Mike Freeze/Wattensaw WMA Ponds	Channel Catfish	Catchable	1,626
Ward City Lake (Lonoke)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	178
Wrape Plantation Lake (Arkansas)	Channel Catfish	Catchable	153
West Memphis City Park Lake (Crittenden)	Rainbow Trout	Catchable	2,250
Cabot Community Pond (Lonoke)	Rainbow Trout	Catchable	2,000
Marion McCollum/Lake Greenlee (Monroe)	FL Largemouth Bass	Yearling	2,080