



FISHERIES STREAMS AND RIVERS NEWSLETTER

Jeff Quinn Stream Management Biologist E-mail: jquinn@agfc.state.ar.us
Mayflower Office 213 Hwy. 89 South Mayflower, AR 72106
Tel: (501) 470-3309 ext. 207

April, May, June 2009

The Stream Fisheries Program provides high-quality fisheries information for management purposes and applies the results of research to improve fish populations, habitat, and fishing.

Big Piney Sampling

In June, we sampled the Big Piney at two sites to evaluate the Smallmouth Bass Management Plan. The stream had not been sampled since 1994. Spotted bass were very abundant and they were the dominant black bass in the stream.



Above: Frank Leone (District 9 Fisheries Management Biologist) holds a spotted bass near Parker Ridge Road Bridge.

We harvested a few bass to determine their age, growth, and reproductive parameters. I was slightly surprised to observe in mid-June that both spotted bass and smallmouth bass had not spawned. What I found most interesting was a smallmouth bass less than 160 mm TL (not quite 7 inches) that was gravid (full of eggs).



Above: A gravid smallmouth

Arkansas River Catfish Sampling

Graduate student Chris Verba (from ArkansasTech) needed assistance catching catfish on the Arkansas River. I helped him catch fish when the river was rolling at 160,000 to 190,000 cfs. He sampled 100 catfish of the three species (channel, blues, flatheads) for age and growth. We have had three years of really high flow, and several years previous to this lower flow. Chris is attempting to look at the influence of flow on growth, and compare this relationship in three different pools (Dardanelle, Pool 7, Pool 2).



Above: Chris Verba catching “cats” in the Arkansas River.

Statewide Stocked Catfish Exploitation: Results are Rolling in Quickly!

A statewide study is being conducted to assess the exploitation rate of catchable channel catfish stocked in Arkansas waters. The study has two objectives: 1). determine exploitation in Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) reservoirs, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) lakes, streams, and 2). determine exploitation of catchables (~11 inches total length) vs. yearlings (~7 inches) in ACOE reservoirs. For the purposes of this study three categories of waterbodies are being studied: large ACOE-owned reservoirs, AGFC lakes (125-6,000 acres), and streams. Six fisheries from each category were selected for study. The fish were tagged with reward tags containing a toll-free phone number (local regional offices) for the anglers to call. Anglers reporting a tag were asked several questions. Tags must be mailed in for anglers to receive a reward payment.

I trained clerical staff at the Jonesboro, Mountain Home, and Russellville Regional Offices as how to document the catfish exploitation study calls. I also posted catfish study signs at access areas of Lake Hinkle, Lake Overcup, Caddo and Little Missouri Rivers.

Clerical staff at the field offices have handled over 500 phone calls, to date. Lakes Overcup and Hogue are being heavily exploited for catfish.

Other Stuff

In February, I broke my leg playing basketball. I spent a lot of time in physical therapy and visits to the doctor.

I attended Frank Leone’s graduate thesis defense at Arkansas Tech University, and edited the Arkansas River Paddlefish Project Report (for 2009) that Frank wrote.

I made a presentation before the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission concerning my program (AGFC Stream Management), and what my job entails.

I attended a “Stream Stats” workshop held by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (ANRC).

AGFC employees Bob Leonard, Frank Leone, Jeremy Risley, and I met with the ACOE-Little Rock District about dike notchings. I also commented on several 404 permits.

I assisted the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith class of Ichthyology in taking samples on the Arkansas River, and AGFC Fisheries District 3 to sample Strawberry River. I was surprised at how degraded the streambanks were on this river. I also assisted District 10 with pulling bass otoliths.

For the third year, a contract of the pallid sturgeon study was submitted to Little Rock.

I worked on revising my old bowfishing study for publication.

I finally cleaned up my shop and worked on a couple of boats.

I attended the Ozark Summit meeting in Eureka Springs.

I revised page proofs for three book chapters to be published in the upcoming paddlefish book.

I worked on a Crooked Creek sampling report.

I helped the Black Bass Program order a fiberglass river boat for a telemetry study on the Ouachita River.

Final thoughts...

Remember to take time to go fishing... plus, take a kid with you. Life’s too short to spend all your time at work.