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Klamath Falls Sucker Assisted Rearing Program 2016 Update

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The goal of U.S Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Sucker Assist Rearing Program (SARP) is to rear 8,000-10,000 age-0 Lost River and shortnose suckers to >200 mm for reintroduction into the Upper Klamath Lake (UKL) system. USFWS employees, with help from Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and The Klamath Tribes (TKT), successfully collected an estimated 4,300 larvae from the Williamson River in 2016 and transported them to Gone Fishing. SARP had an estimated 70% survival rate from collection to ponding. Expansion in 2016 will double the current rearing capacity and allow SARP to rear the target number of suckers in low densities as well as investigate experimental salvage fish health treatment efficacy and more specific rearing questions. It will also allow us to hold fish in discrete cohorts throughout their captivity in an effort to differentiate spawning yields among the UKL sucker species.

2016 Highlights

- Completed construction of temporary rearing facility and 7 ponds.
- Using discretionary funds from KFFWO Ecological Services and Region 8 Fisheries Branch, began construction of 15 additional ponds and a larger, more versatile rearing building. This will triple the available space of current operations; however at present funding has not been acquired to expand collect/rear fish numbers.
- With assistance from Reclamation and TKT, collected approximately 4,300 larval suckers from the Williamson River and achieved an estimated 70% survival at ponding.
- Developed standardized rearing methods and prophylactic fish health treatment protocols for larval suckers.
- A subsample of salvage fish are currently being used for bioassays to better understand how we can more effectively treat *Lernaea* and other afflictions.
- Translocation plan will be finalized by September 30 and NEPA is expected to be completed by spring 2017.
- Relocated 2013 & 2014 salvage suckers from Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge ponds in California to Gone Fishing to continue rearing.

2017 Objectives

- Continue to collaborate with Reclamation and TKT. Increase fall/winter canal salvage effort.
- Pursue the design of a classroom sucker aquarium program for local schools, pending permitting.
- Work with CA-NV Fish Health Center to design aggressive disease rehabilitation treatment experiment for Fish Evaluation Station (FES) and salvage fish.
- Refine larval sampling techniques and determine if feasible to target shortnose suckers during collection.
- Translocate first cohort from Gone Fishing to UKL, pending NEPA and appropriate growth rates.
- Improve fish health monitoring and periodic prophylactic treatments.
- Design and install additional natural and artificial habitat in ponds to mimic natural rearing environments.
- Seek additional funding for program-related projects.



Figure 1. Counting individual larvae during pond stocking.



Figure 2. Nine week old LRSN Sucker.



Figure 3. Shade cloth is used to help regulate pond temperatures during warm summer months.



Figure 4. Completed tank and quarantine round setup

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