

Work Task B11: Overton Wildlife Management Area

| FY15 Estimate | FY15 Actual Obligations | Cumulative Expenditures Through FY15 | FY16 Approved Estimate | FY17 Proposed Estimate | FY18 Proposed Estimate | FY19 Proposed Estimate |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| \$50,000 | \$0 | \$428,954.45 | \$50,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

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Start Date: FY06

Expected Duration: FY16

Long-Term Goal: Develop and maintain offsite rearing capability to augment production at State and Federal hatcheries

Conservation Measures: RASU3, RASU4, RASU6, RASU7, and RASU8

Location: Reach 1, Overton, Nevada

Purpose: To provide additional rearing capacity for razorback suckers

Connections with Other Work Tasks (Past and Future): This work task is closely related to the Work Tasks B6, C13, and D8. Ponds at the Overton Wildlife Management Area (Overton WMA) also receive fish from the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery (B2) for grow-out and future repatriation.

Project Description: The Overton WMA is located in Clark County, Nevada, at the upper end of Lake Mead at the confluence of the Muddy and Virgin Rivers, 65 miles northeast of Las Vegas. The wildlife area is managed solely for fish and wildlife and their habitats and has limited public access. The Overton WMA covers more than 17,000 acres and includes three primary waterfowl management ponds, all of which are available for native fish culture.

The LCR MSCP activities for this site include receiving Lake Mead and Lake Mohave razorback suckers for grow-out to target size (300+ millimeters [mm]) for future program needs. The Overton WMA may also provide opportunities to conduct species research under the LCR MSCP Adaptive Management Program.

Previous Activities: Prior to 2008, a number of site modifications, including repairs and improvements to the water delivery infrastructure, were completed. These were specific to Honeybee and Center Ponds and were implemented to facilitate managing for native fish culture under the LCR MSCP. Pond

improvements, maintenance, and repairs have also been performed since 2008 and have included the purchase of a chemical spray unit to curtail aquatic vegetation and maintain sufficient open water areas, installation of a new boat ramp in the northeast corner of Center Pond, purchase of a new outlet structure and valves, and renovation of Honeybee Pond. Between 2009 and 2011, a total of 4,615 razorback suckers were stocked into Center Pond. From this time through the present, stocked fish and pond water quality have been monitored on a biannual and monthly basis, respectively. In FY14, the LCR MSCP and Nevada Department of Wildlife consolidated native fish production and monitoring by combining operations at the Lake Mead Fish Hatchery and Overton WMA ponds under a single agreement; this agreement is being funded through Work Task B6.

FY15 Accomplishments: FY15 is the first year that the use of Overton WMA as part of fish production at the Lake Mead Fish Hatchery was tracked under Work Task B6. No funds were expended under Work Task B11 in FY15: no major capital expenditures were required at Overton WMA, and labor costs associated with regular pond maintenance and harvests were captured under Work Task B6.

Field work associated with the Overton WMA ponds was conducted throughout the year and included quarterly monitoring of pond water quality as well as a fall sampling event to assess razorback sucker pond stocks in both Honeybee and Center Ponds. A total of 1,158 fish were captured from Honeybee Pond, including 53 razorback suckers, 1,091 common carp, 8 largemouth bass, and 6 bullhead catfish. Razorback suckers accounted for 12.2% of the biomass, and 4.6% of all fish captured. Razorback suckers averaged 370 mm total length and 648 grams (g) in weight and were returned to the pond for additional grow-out. A total of 95 fish were captured from Center Pond, including 52 razorback suckers, 37 largemouth bass, 3 bluegill, and 3 channel catfish. Razorback suckers accounted for 82.3% of the biomass and 54.7% of all fish captured. Of the 52 razorback suckers captured, 51 were removed from the pond and stocked into Reach 2 for augmentation purposes. These fish averaged 515 mm total length (range 343–593 mm) and 1,634 g in weight (370–2640 g). The remaining fish was returned to the pond for additional grow-out. No additional razorback suckers were stocked into the Overton WMA ponds during FY15 due to the abundance of common carp in Honeybee Pond and the estimated size of the current razorback sucker population in Center Pond. Sampling and stocking efforts in Honeybee Pond have been put on hold until a strategy is developed to manage the abundance of common carp.

FY16 Activities: Center Pond will be augmented in FY16 with additional stockings of Lake Mohave razorback suckers. Razorback suckers in both ponds will be monitored as needed using standard methods such as hoop nets, trammel nets, remote passive integrated transponder tag scanners, and/or electrofishing. Water quality information will be collected quarterly, as well as in association with all fish monitoring activities, using standardized methods consistent with

water quality data collection from previous project activities. Management of aquatic vegetation and routine maintenance on the existing water delivery infrastructure will be performed as necessary. Budget expenditures under Work Task B11 are expected to be minimal in FY16.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife will continue to manage the Overton WMA ponds in support of LCR MSCP needs into the future: fish populations and water quality will also continue to be monitored through routine sampling efforts. Site and infrastructure improvements will also continue, but these actions are expected to occur at a reduced level. Native fish rearing and hatchery production activities will be consolidated under the Lake Mead Fish Hatchery (B6) and Work Task B11 is expected to close.

Proposed FY17 Activities: This work task will be closed in FY16.

Pertinent Reports: Annual administrative reports are available upon request.