

Work Task C9: Razorback Sucker and Bonytail Pen Rearing Tests

FY07 Estimates	FY07 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY07	FY08 Approved Estimate	FY09 Proposed Estimate	FY10 Proposed Estimate	FY11 Proposed Estimate
\$35,000	\$38,786	\$111,040	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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Start Date: FY05

Expected Duration: Closed in FY07

Long-term Goal: Continuously seek measures to improve quantity and quality of fish reared and released under the Fish Augmentation Program.

Conservation Measures: RASU3, RASU4, BONY3, and BONY4.

Location: Reach 2, Lower Colorado River at Willow Beach, AZ.

Purpose: Assess utility of pen-rearing of RASU and BONY in the LCR at Willow Beach NFH to increase rearing capability at the hatchery and as a means of conditioning fish to the river environment prior to release.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): The work is connected to B2, as work is being accomplished at Willow Beach NFH using fish reared at that facility.

Project Description: This project had two main objectives: 1) to determine whether juvenile and sub-adult RASU and BONY will continue to grow if placed into net pens in the Colorado River adjacent to Willow Beach NFH, and 2) to assess use of net pens to acclimate fish to ambient river conditions (temperature and flow) prior to release into Lake Mohave. This program constructed rearing pens in the river at Willow Beach NFH for the purpose of evaluating both of these objectives.

Previous Activities: Net pens and docking materials were purchased and delivered to Willow Beach NFH. The four-pen design was selected to provide long-term stocking space and structural stability in the river. Local purchases for miscellaneous hardware and materials (cement, cables, eyebolts, etc.) were made. Dive inspections of the river bottom for assessment of anchor placements and test installations of docking materials were accomplished by the Reclamation Dive Team.

Assembly and installation was completed and 2,500 RASU with an average of 340 mm TL were placed into the nets pens in April. Growth and survival were monitored between April and October. A subsample of 600 RASU was measured for growth at the end of June, and all RASU were measured at the end of October. In general, growth was poor, with an average growth of

only 10.3 mm over the 6-month period. Survival was high, greater than 95%, and the fish were in excellent physical condition at the end of the test period. The fish were subsequently stocked at locations within Reach 3 on the LCR.

FY07 Accomplishments: Lack of significant growth of net-penned fish during 2006 was sufficiently conclusive to terminate further growth studies, and no further research on net pens was conducted during 2007. Net pens, however, were used for holding fish for short-term research on tag retention and for holding fish prior to stocking. Remaining funds for this work task were reassigned to B2 and used for any costs associated with operation and maintenance of the net pens and for repair of the water intake system damaged by the October 2006 thunderstorms (See B2). The net pens and docking materials were not be disassembled; however, they were used to support activities at the hatchery in association with B2 and will continue as such over the life of the program. Net pens are still providing areas for acclimation of native fish to the river prior to final distribution to Lake Mohave.

FY08 Activities: None, this project is closed.

Pertinent Reports: A brief study report is in review, and will be available upon request from the LCR MSCP.