

Southwest Region

Oriental (Asian) clams were found in Bull Bayou at Hot Springs NP. Population densities as high as 84 per square meter were reported. However, research biologist Gerry Hoddenbach says clam specialists report 2,000 to 5,000 per square meter have been known in Arkansas. The clams are a specific problem not only because of their proclivity to cover stream bottoms and directly affect benthic organisms and indirectly affect other aquatic life, but also because clam larvae

can penetrate irrigation pumps, pipelines and other water conveyances and cause mechanical problems. Canals have been known to be all but blocked by colonies of clams that cause flooding problems during times of high water. There are few, if any, controls for the clams.

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Unit archaeologists returned to Point Reyes NS for the first two weeks of October to complete underwater remote sensing operations in Drake's Bay. The session emphasized the use of side scan sonar as the primary inventory tool used in association with a magnetometer and sub-bottom profiler.

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A contract with Harvey, Stanley, and Associates, and environmental consulting group, has resulted in the capture and radio-collaring of one mountain lion at Carlsbad Caverns/Guadalupe Mountains. While no others have been captured in the lion study there, a professional lion hunter recently killed three of the animals on adjacent ranch land.

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The Rio Grande Fisheries Recovery Team in Santa Fe met on Nov. 15-16 to discuss the recovery plans for the Big Bend NP Gambusia. The decision was to try to rehabilitate one of the natural springs that has been altered, by drilling a well designed to enhance the natural artesian flow. Chief Scientist Milford Fletcher said the Gambusia population is more than adequate to justify the effort and he expected the springs alteration to be accomplished within the next year.