

SBSC Weekly Highlights, February 2, 2007

GCMRC Scoops Bugs & Shovels Snow at Bottom of Grand Canyon: USGS/Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center scientists along with cooperators from the University of Wyoming, Loyola University in Chicago, and Idaho State University recently completed one of the coldest Grand Canyon river trips in recent memory. The trip was on the water (January 5-19th) during the cold snap that froze much of the western United States and awoke to the rare sight of snow on the river at river mile 138. The purpose of this USGS funded project is to determine the relative importance of various food resources to fishes in the Grand Canyon. This will establish the degree to which native fishes are limited by food resources, by either low production at the base of the food web (i.e., algae) or via shunting of food resources to nonnative species including trout and inedible New Zealand mudsnails. Scientists spent most days in dry suits sampling the river bottom for algae and bugs, while most evenings were spent electrofishing and dissecting gut contents from fish. Collecting samples during the winter months is important to assess seasonal variability in food resources. (Contact: Ted Kennedy, SBSC-GCMRC, (928) 556-7374 tkennedy@usgs.gov)