

Scientists zapping Lake Tahoe aquatic life

By Kevin Oliver, KCRA-TV

It's shocking research on invasive species, literally.

Researchers and scientists spent this past week on Lake Tahoe zapping fish with electricity as they try to survey the number of non-native fish and stop their spread.

The researchers used modified vessels called E-boats, equipped with electrified probes that stun anything that swims within 10 feet of them.

Researchers then scoop up the stunned fish as they float to the surface.



Researchers regularly survey fish using a specialized boat with electrical probes extending from it. Photo/Kevin Oliver/KCRZ

Invasive fish are pulled from the water, put into storage tanks and hauled off to be examined and disposed of.

Researchers used five boats simultaneously to conduct what

they called a "blitz" in order to get as accurate a count as possible of how many invasive fish are in various areas of the Tahoe Keys in a three-day period.

Biologists use the figures to compare data in an attempt to see what kind of an effect invasive species are having on the lake.

Part of the study will look at whether they can break the spawning cycle and reduce the number of non-native fish by pulling them from the water before they fertilize their eggs.

The same researchers found large goldfish during past expeditions. Three more goldfish were found earlier in the week.