

# 2007

Volume 10



Wyoming Game and Fish Department—Cody Region



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## 2008-09 Fishing Regulations- see many proposed changes

The 2008-09 fishing regulations may look much different to anglers if proposals are adopted in July by the GF commission. Two committees consisting of fisheries biologist from across the state examined our present way of handling fishing and baitfish regulations with the goal to protect the aquatic resource, simplify regulations and provide more area wide management flexibility. Statewide and area specific regulations are proposed for change. The goal of most changes is to standardize and reduce regulations that anglers felt were getting hard to keep track of. For a closer look at the specifics of these proposals go to the G&F—Fish Division Website beginning about **May 1** (<http://gf.state.wy.us>) and click on “What’s New”.

A formal hearing to gather public comment on these proposals will be held **May 15** in Powell at the NWC Fagerberg lecture hall, Room 70. The meeting hours are 7 to 9 pm. We appreciate and value your input so plan on attending this important meeting.



Big Horn Lake channel catfish

## Fisheries Management in the Cody Region

The Cody fisheries crew consists of Steve Yekel, the regional fisheries supervisor and fisheries biologists Jason Burckhardt and Mark Smith and aquatic habitat biologist Lew Stahl. We manage the Big Horn Basin Fisheries with a team approach. Since the region has so many great fisheries we have divided management responsibilities with Jason covering most of the Absaroka Front drainages,



Fisheries Biologist Mark Smith

while Mark manages the Big Horn River and all west slope tributaries of the Big Horn Mountains. Lew works basin wide and is the fish passage guru for the Department.

We manage these resources for you and we encourage you to call or stop by if you have questions or concerns.

Our contact information is on the back page of this newsletter.



Fisheries Biologist Jason Burckhardt.



Fisheries Supervisor Steve Yekel

*"Some statewide and Area 2 recommended regulations require anglers to identify their catch."*

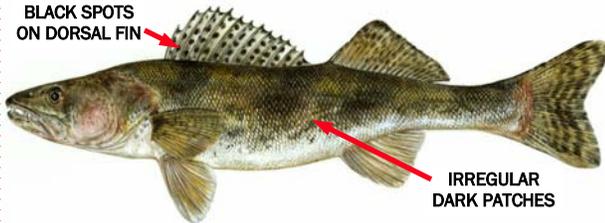
## Fish Identification

In order to better manage our aquatic resources and conserve native sportfish the recommended regulation changes for 2008-2009 require anglers to identify their catch. Some of these fish live in the same locations as their close relatives and look identical to the unsuspecting individual. Do you know the keys to identifying these species of fish?

Images courtesy: Michelle LaGory & LuRay Parker

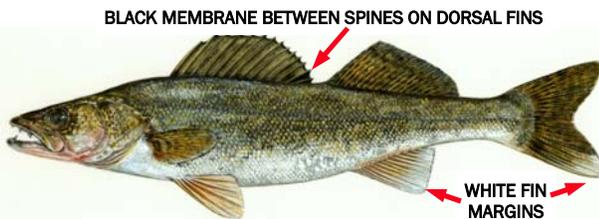
### Wyoming Natives

#### Sauger



Distinguished from Walleye by black spots on dorsal fin, irregular dark patches across their sides, and a wider head.

#### Walleye



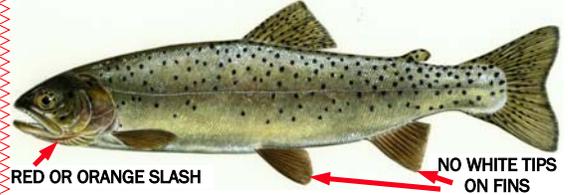
Distinguished from Sauger by white markings on lower lobes of tail and anal fins and black membranes between last two or three spines of dorsal fin.

#### Splake



While neither of these species are native, the creel limits differ and anglers fishing areas where both are present need to be able to distinguish them. Both brook trout and splake have light spots on a dark background. Some red or pink spots with blue halos concentrated on lower half of body. Lower fins and tail have striking white border offset by black. Angler can distinguish brook trout by their almost square tail, whereas splake have a forked tail.

#### Cutthroat Trout



Distinguished from rainbow trout and rainbow cutthroat hybrid (cuttbow) trout by black spotting that is generally concentrated towards the tail; few or no spots on head, red or orange slash under jaw; no white tips on fins.

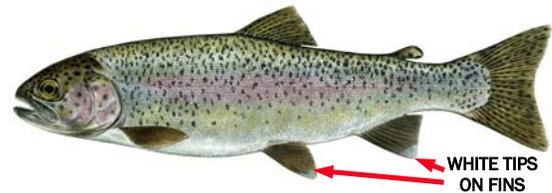
#### Rainbow Cutthroat Hybrid (Cuttbow) Trout



Have a combination of rainbow and cutthroat characteristics. They have more spots on the head than cutthroat, may or may not have red or orange slash on lower jaw and have the presence of white tips on fins.

**NOT CONSIDERED A CUTTHROAT UNDER RECOMMENDED REGULATION**

#### Rainbow Trout



Distinguished from cutthroat trout by more uniform black spots and more spots on the head, absence of red or orange slash on lower jaw and presence of white tips on fins.

#### Brook Trout



## Cloud Peak Wilderness Lakes-*Mark Smith*

The Cloud Peak Wilderness encompasses a large portion of the southern Bighorn Mountains. Most of the wilderness lies above timberline and includes hundreds of lakes and streams. Fisheries on the east slope of the Bighorn Mountains are managed by the WGFD Sheridan Region while those on the west slope are managed by the Cody Region. Major trailheads on the west slope include West Tensleep Lake, Bucking Mule and Paintrock Lakes.

We manage approximately forty lakes on the west side of the wilderness area for fishing. Species available include Yellowstone cutthroat, rainbow, brook, golden and lake trout.

Most of the lakes in the Cloud Peak Wilderness are not stocked and the fisheries are maintained by natural reproduction. In even numbered years we stock fish into nine lakes by helicopter. Currently we stock five lakes with Yellowstone cutthroat and four lakes with golden trout. Stocked lakes typically lack inlets and outlets and without stocking would not maintain a fishery.

If you have fished much in the

Big Horn's you know that brook trout are prolific throughout the range. In high mountain lakes such as those in the Cloud Peak Wilderness, too many brook trout generally mean many small thin fish. To reduce the number of brook trout and increase their size several lakes were stocked with lake trout in the 1990's. Recent sampling has shown that the introductions achieved those goals wherever lake trout survived.

If you are planning a fishing trip into the wilderness area it is a good idea to do a little research on the lakes you would like to fish. Nearly half of the lakes shown on a standard topographic map of the west side of the Cloud Peak Wilderness do not currently have fish in them.

As a rule of thumb, lakes that have brook trout will have the smallest fish but typically the fastest action while those with golden or cutthroat trout will have slower action but usually larger fish.

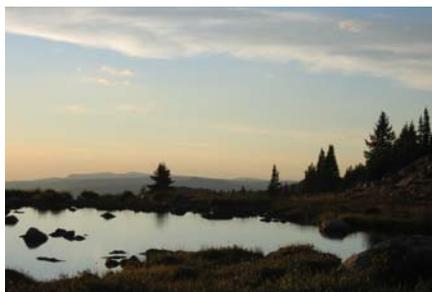
The Cloud Peak Wilderness Lakes are generally ice free by the fourth of July and fish well thru September.



Brook trout are found throughout many lakes.



Yellowstone cutthroat can grow large in Cloud Peak Wilderness lakes.



Emerald Lake has great fishing for Yellowstone Cutthroat.

## Summary of Recent Cloud Peak Wilderness Lakes Surveys-*Mark Smith*

**Emerald Lake-** Yellowstone cutthroat averaged 11.5 inches and ranged from 7-16 inches.

**Mistymoon Lake-** Brook trout averaged 8.5 inches and ranged from 7 to 10 inches. Lake Trout averaged 12.5 inches and ranged from 7 to 23 inches.

**Golden Lakes 1 & 2-** Golden trout averaged 9 inches and

ranged from 5 to 13 inches.

**Lake Helen-** Brook trout averaged 8 inches and ranged from 4 to 12 inches. Lake trout averaged 15.5 inches and ranged from 7 to 21 inches.

**Gunboat Lake-** Golden trout have become scarce in the lake due to the absence of stocking between 1994 and 2006. Golden trout averaged 9 inches.



Mistymoon Lake

### Bighorn River Tagged Fish- *Mark Smith*

Anglers fishing the Lower Bighorn River and Big Horn Lake should look for tags near the dorsal fins of sauger, channel catfish and shovelnose sturgeon.

Much information can be learned from fish that are tagged and recaptured. One of our interests is to determine how fish move between Big Horn Lake and the Shoshone and Bighorn Rivers.

If you capture a tagged fish and wish to release the fish,

just write down the tag number and let the fish go with the tag.

Report tagged fish to Mark Smith at the Cody Regional Office 1-800-654-1178



Tagged Big Horn Lake Channel Catfish



Tagged shovelnose sturgeon



Tags may be yellow, blue, brown or green

*"Look for tags on sauger, channel catfish and sturgeon"*

### Keeping Fish Out of Canals- *Mark Smith*

In a perfect world, fish would avoid water diversions and stay in the river where they belong. Unfortunately we find fish trapped in even the smallest of ditches and canals.

We would like to better understand the timing and magnitude of fish straying into canals in the Big Horn Basin. In 2006 we initiated a study to collect this information from select canals in the Shoshone and Nowood

River drainages. The ultimate goal of the project is to provide information that will be useful in reducing the movement of fish into water diversions.

Our methods for describing the number, type, and timing of fish going into canals is simple. We place a net in the canal and strain all of the water that passes. We capture many sticks and leaves and anywhere from zero to hundreds of fish.

In 2006 we found almost all fish were entering the canal at night in studies within the Shoshone drainage. However, in the more turbid waters of the Nowood more fish enter the canals during the day.

To date we have captured 17 species and 5,500 fish. Sport fish captured include brown trout, rainbow trout, Yellowstone cutthroat, sauger, channel catfish, mountain whitefish and stonecats.



Nets sieve water flowing into the canal



The contents of nets are examined and sorted



Many sizes and species have been captured in the study

## Bighorn River Trout-*Mark Smith*

You might think that managing trout fisheries below dams is relatively easy. After all, the upstream reservoir provides cold clean water year round and trout thrive in cold clean water right?

The truth of course is more complicated. Water in reservoirs is often stored for many uses besides fish and while fish might grow like weeds in a tailwater (the river below a dam) they often have trouble reproducing.

Some of the best trout fisheries in the world are located in tailwaters and Wyoming is no exception. The Miracle Mile and Grey Reef sections of the North Platte as well as the Green River below Fontenelle, Shoshone below Buffalo Bill and Bighorn below Boysen all benefit from the cold clear water from the upstream reservoirs.

Because the Bighorn River at

Thermopolis is more than 20 river miles below Boysen some of the benefits of the dam are lessened. For example Red Canyon and Buffalo Creeks enter the river below the canyon and with a good rain will turn the entire river reddish brown.

The Bighorn provides exceptional growth for trout. Fish will increase more than an inch a month during summer. However if they are not larger than 10 inches by winter, they often can't survive the cold icy months.

The Bighorn lacks sufficient spawning areas for trout and without stocking the fishery wouldn't be very good. If stocked fish survive their first winter they will be 14-15 inches the following summer. If they survive two winters they will be 18-20 inch bruisers. Most fish stocked in the Bighorn don't live much longer

than three years so we don't see too many fish over twenty inches but those that do can be very large.

Mild winters and fair winter releases from Boysen in the winter of 2005-06 produced good survival of fish stocked in both 2005 and 2006. Combined with back to back flushing flows on the river, which improves spawning and food availability the fishery is in better shape than it has been for ten years.

Fish the Bighorn in 2007—you shouldn't be disappointed.



The largest fish on the Bighorn are typically brown trout.

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*"Fish the Bighorn in 2007—you shouldn't be disappointed"*

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Boat electrofishing on the Bighorn River.

## Chemical Treatment Protects Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout-*Mark Smith*



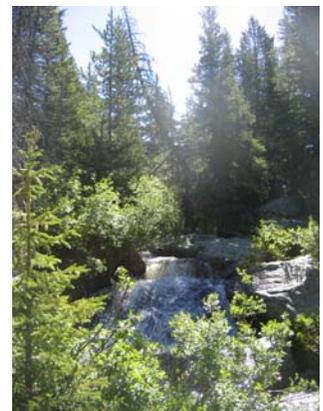
A drip bucket delivers Antimycin to Dry Medicine Lodge Creek to remove brook

As we reported in the 2006 newsletter we have undertaken a project to remove brook trout from the lower portions of Dry Medicine Lodge Creek in the Big Horn Mountains. The project is designed to protect and enhance the existing Yellowstone cutthroat population in the headwaters of the stream.

In August 2006 we used the chemicals Antimycin and Rote-none to remove fish from 3 miles of the creek. Chemicals were dripped into the stream

over a 10 hour period. The treatment was very successful but will be repeated in 2007 to assure that we didn't leave any brook trout behind prior to restocking with Yellowstone cutthroat.

Yellowstone cutthroat are rare in the Big Horn Mountains. To insure their future existence will require that we protect and expand current populations as well as find other places for them.



Dry Medicine Lodge Creek will provide a sanctuary for Yellowstone cutthroat.



Fish technicians Tim Blubaugh and Erin Gittinger show off large mouth bass.

## Renner Reservoir—another regulation change? -Mark Smith

Just when you think you have things right, nature throws you a curve ball. In the case of Renner Reservoir the unexpected pitch is the rapid natural reproduction of hybrid sunfish.

We began stocking the reservoir with hybrid sunfish (a cross between a bluegill and a green sunfish) in 1998. These fish have done very well at Renner and produced some of the largest sunfish you will see in Wyoming. By about 2003 we started detecting natural reproduction in the reservoir, but we were still stocking small fish each year so it was difficult to determine the magnitude of reproduction that occurred. After a cessation in stocking in 2004 and 2005, we are certain that not only are the hybrid sunfish reproducing

but they are doing so in large numbers.

This has been great news for bass in the reservoir. In the past, it was difficult for a bass to grow larger than 12 inches because food resources were limited. With a steady supply of small sunfish we are now routinely sampling bass larger than 15 inches and we have handled bass as large as 20 inches.

Unfortunately this changing biology necessitates a change in the regulations to keep Renner the quality fishery it is known for. The good news is — since we are no longer relying on stocked sunfish in the reservoir and reproduction appears to be excellent, we no longer see a need for the ten fish limit on hybrid sunfish.

With a burgeoning population

of small sunfish it is more difficult for small bass to survive to become large bass and the large bass that consume small sunfish are increasingly important to maintain balance in the fishery. Since large bass are our best option for keeping good numbers of good sized sunfish in the reservoir, we are proposing a regulation that would allow the harvest of six bass with only one exceeding 12 inches.

As always, we want to hear from you before these proposals become regulation. There are more regulation alterations this year than usual so plan to attend a meeting, give us a call or write a letter with your thoughts.

*"We are proposing a regulation that would reduce harvest of bass over 12 inches"*



Golden Trout from the Big Horn Mountains.

## Golden Trout -Mark Smith

As you might have read in our newsletter last year we have resumed stocking golden trout in Wyoming. After a hiatus of more than ten years we have a brood source of genetically pure goldens. That said, there are many kinks to be worked out before we will

have a source that reliably produces the number of fish we would like to stock. In 2005 we stocked Snowbank and Copper Lakes 2 & 3 in the Absoraka Mountains as well as Daphnia, Rainbow, Cliff, and Snyder lakes in the Beartooth Mountains. In 2006 we stocked Gunboat

Lake and Upper and Lower Pouch Lakes in the Big Horn Mountains. These fish were stocked as fingerlings, so within the next couple years they should be catchable size.



Aerial view of Hogan Reservoir.

## Hogan Reservoir on the Rebound -Jason Burckhardt

Hogan Reservoir (off of Park County Road 7RP) was chemically treated with the piscicide, Rotenone in the spring 2005 to remove a large sucker population that limited stocked trout growth and survival.

Hogan was restocked with Snake River cutthroat in the summer 2005, after the Rotenone detoxified and reservoir levels increased. Sampling in June 2006 found the Snake River Cuts doing well, averaging nearly

14 inches and just over a pound. The removal of suckers was successful with none captured during our sampling.

## Mud and Minnows- *Beth Bear*

The Game and Fish Department started a project this year funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to gather information about fish and habitat in warmwater streams of the Big Horn Basin. Many of these streams had never before been sampled. Fifty different sites were sampled throughout the basin in the Greybull, Shoshone, and Nowood River drainages. Over 26,000 fish were collected including 23 different species.

The most common fish caught were longnose dace (a small minnow) and white suckers. Most fish sampled were non-game species but some game fish were also caught including trout (brown, rainbow, and Yellowstone cutthroat), mountain whitefish, channel catfish,

stonecats, sauger, yellow perch, and hybrid sunfish.

The fish found in the warmwater streams throughout the basin may be small, but they are very important. These tiny fish can be indicators of aquatic health, are food for many game fish, and help maintain balance in the aquatic ecosystem. So even though many anglers may never see these fish or catch one, you can rest assured that these fish are doing their part to keep fishing great.

Of all the fish species caught, seven are non-native in Wyoming. Some of these non-natives, such as brook stickleback, plains killifish, and common carp, may be harmful to native minnows and suckers by out competing them for food.

Preventing the spread of these nonnative fish to other areas in the basin is very important for native game and nongame fish. You can help by not transporting these non-natives as baitfish.

Much of the area sampled in the basin is private land, and we thank the many private landowners who allowed us access to streams through their property. Sampling will continue during the spring and summer of 2007 focusing on the main stem Shoshone River, Nowood River tributaries, and Big-horn River tributaries.

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*"These tiny fish can be indicators of aquatic health"*

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The lake chub is just one of many small minnows found in warmwater streams throughout the basin.



The Nowood River near Big Trails, Wyoming.



To say this is a dirty job would be an understatement according to Erin Gittinger, Beth Bear, Anna Senecal and Kevin Letson (below)-fisheries technicians/biologists.



A seine is the most practical way to catch these small fish



The plains killifish is a colorful non-native found in warmwater streams throughout the basin.

## The North Fork Shoshone Reaches Blue Ribbon Status-*Jason Burckhardt*

*"The good news for the angler is that the "good 'ol days" on the North Fork are now!"*

A trip to the North Fork of the Shoshone River, west of Cody along State Highway 14-16-20 (Buffalo Bill Scenic Byway) is worth the trip for the scenery alone. This stretch of the North Fork was once described by Teddy Roosevelt as "50 miles of the most scenic land in America."

The river is managed as a wild fishery with all reproduction occurring naturally. The fisheries here are greatly enhanced by spawning runs of Yellowstone cutthroat and rainbow trout out of Buffalo Bill Reservoir.

Long before Europeans settled this country the North Fork was home to native Yellowstone

cutthroat trout as well as mountain whitefish and other non-game fish. Rainbow trout were introduced not long after the construction of Buffalo Bill Reservoir and now rainbows as well as rainbow/cutthroat hybrids (commonly referred to as cuttbows) comprise a majority of the fish in the river.

The good news for the angler is that the "good 'ol days" on the North Fork are now! There have been times when there were more fish in the river, but now the ones that are there are bigger. There has been a shift in size structure of trout in the North Fork Shoshone since the mid 1990s. The population now contains a larger proportion of trout in the 13-20 inch size range. The biomass (pounds of fish per mile) has increased to the point where the North Fork is now considered a "blue ribbon" fishery. The average of the last four population estimates puts the trout biomass at over 600 pounds per mile.

Several changes have occurred within the North Fork Shoshone-Buffalo Bill Reservoir fishery, which may have caused the increase in bigger fish. The enlargement of Buffalo Bill Reservoir, in 1991, increased the surface area of Buffalo Bill Reservoir, increasing available habitat for trout. The drought has likely increased the growth of trout in Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Reduced inflows to Buffalo Bill Reservoir have reduced the turbidity levels within the reservoir increasing primary production and fueling an increase in zooplankton, the primary forage for these trout within the reservoir.

The lower reaches of the river are primarily private though it can be floated and fished. There are three public fishing areas and a fourth being planned (River's Rest) by the Game and Fish Department. The upper reaches are all located on Shoshone National Forest lands and are easily accessible via automobile. So get out and enjoy the "good 'ol days!"



A healthy Yellowstone cutthroat caught during sampling.

## The South Fork Shoshone an Overlooked Gem-*Jason Burckhardt*



Anglers should not overlook the South fork Shoshone for brown trout in the lower reaches and brook trout and Yellowstone cutthroat in the upper reaches.

With a sister river like the North Fork so close, with its big fish running out of Buffalo Bill Reservoir and more public access, it's no wonder the South Fork Shoshone River does not get the attention other areas do. But the South Fork is a great fishery in its own right. The lower South Fork is primarily a brown trout fishery. Population estimates conducted in 2006 found just over 770 trout per mile with 750 of those being brown trout. The trout averaged

just over 10 inches and over 1/2 pound.

Upstream, beyond "the end of the road" the trout species change to mostly brook trout and some native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Although the Yellowstone cutthroat are native, they are being squeezed out. Sampling conducted in 2006 found that some of the creeks with cutthroat strongholds were being taken over by brook trout, while the cutthroat were holding their own in a few

other streams.

Public access to the lower South Fork is limited, as private property borders much of its length. There are a few parcels of BLM adjacent to the river allowing for some access. For those adventurous individuals willing to hike a few miles, the upper reaches of the South Fork offer some terrific fishing on Shoshone Forest lands.

## Fire and Fisheries—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly—*Jason Burckhardt*

Wildfires have been much maligned over the last hundred years or so. Up until recently we tried to put out every wildfire that started. Most people don't like the looks of a forest shortly after a wildfire (the ugly), and in some instances wildfires can negatively affect fisheries in the short term (the bad). Wildfires can destabilize hill slopes and increase sedimentation in streams. This can reduce invertebrate (bug) production, spawning success of trout and fill adult trout habitat.

However, fire is a natural component of the forest environment and can benefit trout fisheries in the long term (the good). Fire can increase stream flows by reducing the number of water using conifers within the forest. Fire normally introduces additional woody debris into streams, used by trout and the insects on which trout feed. Fire can increase the solar energy in headwater streams, increasing trout growth in waters stifled by colder temperatures.

Fire changes the composition of trees in the forest, promoting the growth of pioneering species such as aspen and willow. Over time the additional sedimentation in the stream channel will be sorted and distributed on the floodplain allowing for the establishment of willows and other riparian vegetation. Aspen and willow add beneficial nutrients to the stream when the leaves fall in the fall, and serve as a food and building source for beaver. Beaver can create trout habitat through the construction of their dams.

So, how might a fire, such as the Little Venus Fire that burned much of the Greybull River drainage in 2006, affect the trout fishery? There have been reports of direct fire related mortality in at least one tributary, Jack Creek. The fire burned hotly in that drainage, probably heating the water beyond the tolerance of the cutthroat in that stream. However, this mortality seemed to be

localized as population estimates conducted in Jack Creek after the fire found the cutthroat doing pretty well. Their populations were within the range of those sampled in the past. Sampling in other tributaries lightly affected by fire within the Greybull drainage found robust populations of Yellowstone cutts.

The hill slopes of the Absaroka volcanic mountains in the Greybull River drainage are characteristically unstable. There have already been reports of debris flows damming portions of the River for short periods. The increased sedimentation in the river may negatively affect reproduction and adult trout habitat in portions of the main stem Greybull River.

The Little Venus Fire will likely provide long term benefit to the Yellowstone cutthroat trout fishery in the Greybull River.

*"The Little Venus Fire will likely provide long term benefits to the Yellowstone cutthroat trout fishery in the Greybull River drainage."*



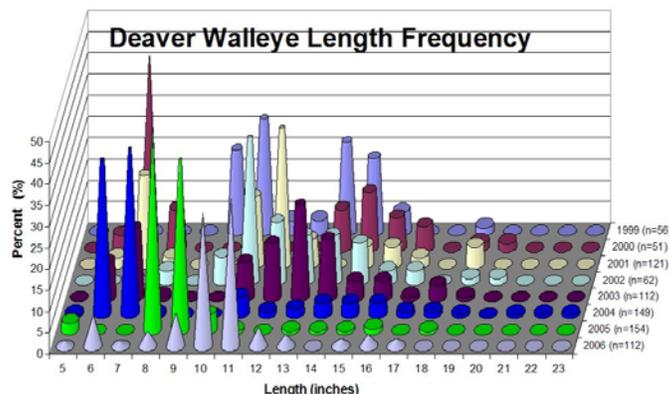
An angler with a healthy Yellowstone cutthroat on the upper Greybull River.

## Time for a Change at Deaver Reservoir—*Jason Burckhardt*

Deaver Reservoir, located off Wyoming State 114, 3 miles northwest of the town of Deaver, has experienced some changes the last few years. Deaver has been experiencing an increase in angling pressure for the last several years. The loss of area fisheries or the reduction in their productivity, due to drought, has concentrated anglers at this little hot spot for the last several years. We have been seeing a decline in the walleye fishery for the last several years. The number of quality walleye of a harvestable size has been dwindling. Unfortunately angler harvest has effected the population to

the point that we are proposing an implementation of special regulation on this small water,

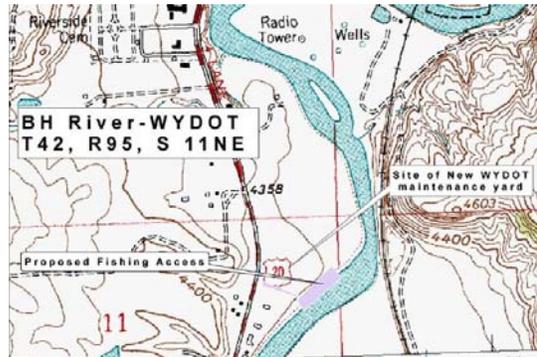
reducing the limit of walleye from six fish to three fish.



Length Frequency of walleye caught at Deaver Reservoir 1999-2006

*"Angler harvest has affected the walleye population to the point where we are proposing the implementation of a special regulation."*

## New and Improved Access Around the Region

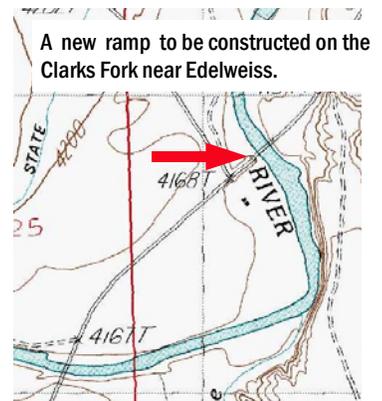


New fishing access site on the Big Horn River adjacent to the WY Department of Transportation maintenance yard near Thermopolis.

**Bighorn River access at WYDOT**—A new pedestrian access point is now available to anglers thanks to a cooperative effort between the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) and the Game and Fish. It is located behind the new WYDOT maintenance shop in Thermopolis on Highway 20. The small parcel will allow access to about 600 feet of the blue ribbon section of the Bighorn River. This site is small but teeming with rainbow and brown trout.

*There are several new and improved access sites proposed across the region.*

**Clarks Fork Boat Ramp**—Beginning with reconstruction of a segment of Wyoming Highway 120 near Edelweiss slated for 2007, anglers will enjoy the fruits of another project that partners the WYDOT and the G&F for better access and facilities. We will install a new concrete ramp at our existing public access area adjacent to Edelweiss while WYDOT will give a new face to the approach road and parking area as part of the highway project. So keep your eyes open for the completion of this new improved float access site.



A new ramp to be constructed on the Clarks Fork near Edelweiss.

**Gibbs Bridge Landing**—This is the year of partnerships with the Bureau of Reclamation, Buffalo Bill State Park and Game and Fish Department coming together to develop a new ramp just below Gibbs Bridge on Buffalo Bill Reservoir. The ramp is designed to be used at multiple elevations as the reservoir recedes. Larger boats will be able to launch when reservoir levels are higher, while North Fork Shoshone River floaters will have better boat takeout throughout the floating season.



**Rivers Rest**—We are still working on plans for construction of a new ramp on a parcel of land known as Rivers Rest located on the North Fork Shoshone River. The BLM decision notice should be available soon. This will cut anglers float time in half as it is located 1/2 way between forest access and the new Gibbs Bridge ramp mentioned above.



The proposed float access on the North Fork Shoshone River at Rivers Rest.

## Aquatic Nuisance Species

### What are aquatic nuisance species?

Aquatic nuisance species are non-native, harmful aquatic plants, animals or microscopic organisms that can negatively affect the aquatic environment.

### Why should I care about aquatic nuisance species?

Aquatic Nuisance species can:

- \*Reduce game fish populations
- \*Ruin boat engines and jam steering equipment
- \*Make lakes/streams unusable by boaters and swimmers
- \*Dramatically increase the operating costs of drinking water plants, power plants, dam maintenance, and industrial processes
- \*Reduce native species
- \*Degrade ecosystems
- \*Affect human health
- \*Reduce property values
- \*Affect local economies of water-dependent communities.

### What can I do to help?

- \*Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment
- \*Eliminate water from equipment before transporting
- \*Clean and dry anything that came in contact with water (Boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
- \*Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

### What aquatic nuisance species are found in the Cody Region, and where are they?

**New Zealand Mud Snails** have been found in the Big Horn River near Thermopolis. The **Whirling Disease** parasite has been found in the South Fork Shoshone River and in the lower Clarks Fork River. **Brook Stickleback** have been found in the Big Horn and Shoshone riv-

ers as well as Deaver Reservoir.

### Watch out for Quagga Mussels!

Quagga's are a nuisance species now found in Lake Mead. So be aware if you travel with your boat out the Cody Country to these large water bodies. This mussel is akin to Zebra Mussels but larger. **Be sure to drain your live well and check your boat and trailer thoroughly.**

### Other Common Hitchhikers—we don't have—we don't want them!!

Zebra Mussels, Hydrilla, Spiny Water Fleas, Round Gobies, Water Hyacinth.

For more information visit : <http://protectyourwaters.net/>



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**



Zebra mussel (top) and quagga mussel (actual size of zebra mussel is around 3/4 inch) (Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey)

## Proper Live Release is Important—*Jason Burckhardt*

Catch-and release fishing has grown in popularity in recent years. Voluntary catch and release fishing is a way to improve the angling in some waters by allowing those fish to be caught by anglers again and again. Some anglers practice catch-and-release fishing all or much of the time, while others release only non-legal fish (due to fishing regulations). Wyoming Game and Fish Department regulations require that, "Any fish that is not to be counted in the creel limit shall be immediately released to the water with as little injury to the fish as possible." Here are a few tips, taken from scientific publications, to help reduce the injury to those fish you do not

intend to keep:

- Handle fish as little as possible and release them quickly - do not fight fish to exhaustion.
- Minimize or eliminate the time fish are out of the water.
- Consider using artificial lures or flies—bait caught fish generally have a higher mortality.
- When a fish is deeply hooked, do not try to remove the hook, clip the leader instead—



cutting the line in deep-hooked rainbow trout reduced mortality by 58% in one study.

- Active bait fishing (keeping the bait moving and setting the hook the instant a strike is detected) has a lower mortality rate than passive (setting the rod down) fishing.
- Keep those fish caught in the gill, tongue, esophagus or eye, as they have a higher mortality rate.

*Wyoming Game and Fish Department regulations require that, "Any fish that is not to be counted in the creel limit shall be immediately released to the water with as little injury to the fish as possible."*



Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
 C/O Mark Smith  
 2820 HWY 120  
 Cody WY 82414

# Wyoming Free Fishing Day Saturday June 2, 2007!

**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
<http://gf.state.wy.us/>

Wyoming Game and Fish Cody Office  
 Phone: 307-527-7125  
 Toll Free: 800-654-1178

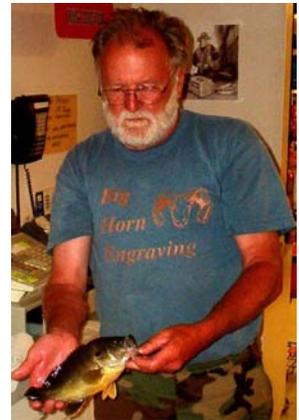
*Fish Division Mission Statement*

*"As stewards of Wyoming's aquatic resources, we are committed to conservation and enhancement of all aquatic wildlife and their habitats for future generations through scientific resource management and informed public participation. We will use an integrated program of protection, regulation, propagation, restoration and control to provide diverse, quality fisheries resources and angling opportunities. Our efforts will balance the productive capacity of habitats with public desires."*

## Newsletter Contributors

Contributors to this years newsletter include the Cody Fisheries Management Crew, Lew Stahl (Cody Region Aquatic Habitat Biologist), Dennie Hammer (Cody Region Information and Education Specialist), Beth Bear. Thanks to all.

## Big Fish Board



Doug Nixon shortly after weighing his state record Green Sunfish.

## Bits and Pieces

**FREE fishing day is June 2, 2007.** No license is needed to fish on this day (all other regulations apply).

The **Basin Kids Fishing Day** will be held on May 12th at the Basin Water Plant Pond.

**Cody Youth Fishing Day** is on June 2nd at the Beck Lake Recreation Area.

Our "Big Fish Board" at the office is getting old. Maybe no one except us catches big fish anymore. Please send us your big or unusual fish pictures for our board. If you can't make it to the office send them electronically to: [mark.smith@wgf.state.wy.us](mailto:mark.smith@wgf.state.wy.us)



Beck Lake Catfish



Wind River Brown Trout