

2013



2014-15 Fishing Regulations—*Steve Yekel*

Inside this issue:

2014-15 Fishing Regulations	1
Fish Consumption Advisory	2
NFK Shoshone still going strong	2
Tracking sauger and catfish...	3
Wolves of the water...Buffalo Bill	4
Bighorn Trout Fishery ... shines	5
Bighorn Mountain Lakes—	6
Update on restoring Porcupine Cr	7
Another Cutthroat population lost	7
What does it take to create trophy	8
Watercraft inspections at borders	9
Youth Encouraged to attend Kids	10
What is new for Access	11
Less fish to be stocked in 2014	11
Contact us	12

It is time again to think about proposals for the 2014-15 fishing regulations. We will be considering new proposals for the Cody Region throughout April. Statewide public meetings to discuss proposed changes are planned in May and early June.

At this point we are proposing few new regulations, which will provide us more time to adequately evaluate those instituted in 2012-13. We will consider and appreciate your ideas for new regulations that help us better manage the fisheries resource.

One major change that has occurred as a result of legislative action this year is the ability for the Game and Fish Commission to designate any fish

as nongame in specific waters or areas. This legislation was passed to provide a mechanism for us to address the illegal introduction of fishes such as burbot (ling) in Flaming Gorge and walleye in Buffalo Bill. Because in the past these illegally introduced fish have been classified as game fish those harvested by anglers had to be eaten (by law they could not be wasted). Designation as nongame allows for us to require harvest and anglers can decide to consume or dispose of these fish.

With the new law, fish designated as non-game in a specific water or area can be harvested (even the little fish) and can be disposed of without violating the state law regarding wanton waste of a game animal. The short version of this story is if

you fish the Green River drainage and want to keep all the burbot you catch doing so will be helping the overall fishery as well.

You might be wondering why I am spending so much time talking about this issue. Well, this new law will allow us to better address the illegal introduction of walleye in Buffalo Bill Reservoir. With Commission approval, we will be able to declare walleye a non-game species in Buffalo Bill and propose a must kill regulation. We feel this is necessary to help control the expanding walleye population in this reservoir.

A public meeting will be held on **May 13 at Bighorn Federal in Cody from 7:00-9:00 pm** where this and other proposals will be presented. Regulation comments will be accepted online via the Game and Fish web-site beginning April 23rd. If you have any questions, give us a call at the office (307-527-7125).



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Fish Consumption Advisory

“Fish are an important part of a healthy diet. Some fish contain methyl mercury which can build up in body tissue and pose health risks.”

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department, in cooperation with the Wyoming Department of Health, have been gathering information to allow people to make informed decisions about how to include fish in a healthy diet.

Fish are an important part of a healthy diet. They are high in protein and essential nutrients, low in saturated fats and contain important omega-3 fatty acids. Fish, however, contain methyl mercury, and some fish contain much more than others. Methyl mercury can build up in body tissue over time and consuming too much of it can pose human health risks. Our bodies can safely metabolize small amounts of consumed methyl mercury, so it may take months or years of regularly eating fish to accumulate levels that could become a health concern. At high levels, mercury can adversely affect developing fe-

tuses and the growing brains of children. For that reason the advisory includes information specific to sensitive individuals, which include pregnant women, women of childbearing age and children.

Most trout in Wyoming have relatively low levels of mercury. Mercury levels increase as fish get larger or older and predatory fish generally have higher levels of

mercury. For example walleye, sauger and catfish have been found to have elevated levels of mercury in Big Horn Lake.

The complete Wyoming Fish Consumption advisory is posted on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website:

<http://wgfd.wyo.gov/web2011/fishing-1001093.aspx>



Most Wyoming trout have relatively low levels of methyl mercury.

The North Fork Shoshone Still Going Strong—Jason Burckhardt

“The North Fork Shoshone River provides anglers with an opportunity to catch quality wild trout.”

The scenery alone would be enough to provide anglers with a quality angling experience that is until they hook into a North Fork Shoshone trout.

Most trout don't live year-round in the North Fork Shoshone River, but merely use the river and it's tributaries to spawn and reproduce. Trout spend much of their time downstream of the North Fork in Buffalo Bill Reservoir where they feed primarily on tiny crustaceans called zooplankton. Anglers have an opportunity to catch these fish on their way to and from their spawning grounds.

Trout population estimates were completed in 2012 on the North Fork Shoshone between the Mummy Cave access site

and Elks Fork. There were 506 trout per mile comprised mostly of cuttbows (255/mile), then rainbows (182/mile) and Yellowstone cutthroat(82/mile). There were also a few brown

trout (16/mile). The trout averaged a whopping 14.5 inches and 1.35 pounds.



The North Fork Shoshone provides anglers with an opportunity to catch a quality wild trout.

Tracking sauger and catfish with help from anglers—Sam Hochhalter

I love to fish partly because of the anticipation that is involved with it. It's the anticipation of the bite, the abrupt (or subtle) change in line tension and the sudden connection to a wild animal, that keeps me on the water from sunrise to sunset. It's the anticipation of catching the fish of my dreams, or of a fresh fillet in the skillet, that keeps me coming back to my favorite fishing spots and venturing out to new waters.

The anticipation and thrill of fishing has carried over into my professional life as a biologist, only it's taken on a subtle twist—I am fishing for anglers and the information they can help provide.

Beginning in 2007 biologists have tagged on average 564 sauger and 420 catfish each year in the Bighorn River and Big Horn Lake—these tagged fish are our lures and bait, and you, the angler, are our quarry.

When anglers call in to the office and inform us of a tagged fish they recently caught I get a jolt of excitement not too different from the sudden tug of a fish taking a lure. The information gleaned from these reports can be immense.

After we measure each fish for length and weight a tag is inserted adjacent to the dorsal fin. Each tag has a unique ID number on one side and a phone number on the other. Tagged fish are then released and are free to go about their business—it's this business, and where in the Bighorn River/Lake system it takes place, that we are interested in.

Each year we receive several dozen calls from anglers who report catching a tagged fish. In 2012, a total of 21 tagged channel catfish and 21 tagged sau-

ger were reported caught.

Anglers are encouraged to report catching a tagged fish even if they do not harvest the fish. Simply write the tag number down and give us a call. The information from released fish is just as important as information from harvested fish.

We have learned a lot about catfish and sauger movement patterns since tagging efforts began. Much of this information is the direct result of anglers calling in with information about tagged fish they have caught.

Anglers have helped reveal that sauger aren't the only species embarking on lengthy seasonal migrations. Catfish tagged in Big Horn Lake have been caught by anglers fishing the lower Shoshone River and in the Bighorn River as far upstream as Basin. Likewise, catfish tagged in the river between Basin and Greybull have been caught by anglers fishing throughout the lake, including the Montana portion.

One of the more amazing movements by a catfish that the tagging project has documented is from a fish tagged in the river near Basin and then caught by a fisherman 11 days later in the Montana portion of the lake—a distance of over 60 miles!

So when you land your next fish while out in the Big Horn Basin, give a close look along the back of the fish—tags tend to get covered with algae after a year or two. If you happen to find a tag, give us a call. We would love to share the excitement of the information you hold in your hand and we promise to send you a letter that tells you when and where that fish was tagged along with other details about that fishes' travels. Thank you for your participation!



Each tag will have WGFD and a number, unique to that tag and fish, on one side and the number to call should you catch the fish (1-800-654-1178) on the other side.



Each spring and early summer biologists tag over 500 sauger throughout the Bighorn River.

ATTENTION ANGLERS!

PLEASE REPORT TAGGED FISH

to WY GAME & FISH: (307) 527-7125 or 1-800-654-1178

What we need to know:

-Tag Number & Color -Location & Date you caught it -Fish Size

Thank you for helping us better manage your fishery resources!



Signs at boat ramps and fishing access sites around Big Horn Lake and Bighorn River seek to improve communication among anglers and managers about tagged fish movement patterns.

Wolves of the Water — Predators in Buffalo Bill Reservoir — Jason Burckhardt

“Our Goal is to determine if the wild rainbow-cutthroat fishery is sustainable in light of the predators in the reservoir.”

Buffalo Bill Reservoir is a unique Wyoming fishery in that it is a large reservoir that is not stocked with fish raised in a hatchery. The trout fishery is sustained by rainbow and cutthroat that spawn primarily in the North Fork Shoshone River drainage. Upon hatching the trout that are spawned in the North Fork tributaries migrate to Buffalo Bill Reservoir where they can grow and mature, feeding on the tiny crustaceans known as zooplankton. Within Buffalo Bill Reservoir these trout grow quite rapidly.

However, angler catch rates, netting and sonar (hydroacoustic) surveys indicate lake trout abundance in the reservoir has substantially increased since Buffalo Bill Reservoir was enlarged in 1994. In several western reservoirs, lake trout have been found to over utilize their prey source causing a crash of the prey population.

Walleye were discovered in the reservoir in 2008. Walleye often prey heavily on trout in western reservoirs, with the



Fish are released back to the reservoir unharmed.

potential to nearly eliminate trout populations. Prior to the illegally introduction of walleye, trout could probably have sought refuge from lake trout predation higher in the water column during the summer time, where the water is a little too warm for lake trout. Now with the introduction of another predator that has an affinity for warmer water, the fate of the trout in Buffalo Bill Reservoir is at stake.

A study was initiated in 2012 with Colorado State University researchers and our state-wide Aquatic Assessment Crew to determine who's eating whom in the reservoir now and into the future.

Preliminary data show that the water temperatures throughout the year in Buffalo Bill Reservoir

are less than optimal for both walleye and lake trout. Temperatures are generally too warm for lake trout in the summer and too cold for walleye in the winter. Therefore, growth rates are below average for both predator species. Unfortunately, the trout are a major prey source for both predators, and walleye have spawned successfully since their introduction. However, the trout grow quickly and may be able to escape predation by growing outside the gape (mouth size) of these predators. We will be extensively sampling the fish of Buffalo Bill Reservoir through 2013 to determine the current state of the reservoir fishery and recommend management actions that can be implemented to protect the wild trout stocks.



Colorado State University researcher Clark Johnson cradles a large lake trout as biologist “pump it’s stomach” to determine what the fish has been eating.



Walleye, like this 10 pounder that was caught in Buffalo Bill Reservoir has the potential to eat rather large trout.

Bighorn River Trout Fishery Continues to Shine—*Sam Hochhalter*

Trout fishing on the Bighorn River from Wedding of the Waters south of Thermopolis to the Black Mountain Road Bridge has been fantastic the last few years. Rainbow trout abundance and individual size reached a historical high in 2011 and remained elevated through 2012. Twenty to thirty fish days were commonly reported by anglers last summer and with plenty of fish over 20 inches in length, fishing on this section of river has, arguably, never been better.

Achieving this level of quality has not been easy. Nearly two decades of study were critical to determining the factors that influence wild rainbow trout recruitment and the success of stocked hatchery rainbows and cutthroat. Likewise, incorporating information gained from these studies into management of the trout fishery has required cooperation among Bighorn River stakeholders.

Tailwaters throughout the western U.S. are notorious for producing high quality trout fisheries. However, many tailwaters are limited by the availability and quality of spawning and overwintering habitat—both of which have marked influences on the Bighorn River trout fishery.

One critical characteristic of trout spawning habitat is gravel that is relatively free of fine sediment. When river gravels are surrounded by too much fine sediment, eggs deposited by spawning trout do not receive adequate ventilation and suffocate.

The Bighorn River receives

relatively large inputs of fine sediment from Red Canyon Creek and Buffalo Creek. We have been working with the Bureau of Reclamation to have annual spring (late-March) flushing flows released from Boysen Reservoir. A short duration spike in flows clears fine sediment from riffles which drastically improves survival of developing eggs. In years with spring flushing flows the number of wild juvenile rainbow trout in the Bighorn River more than quadruples compared to years without a flushing flow.

To compensate for low wild trout production in years without a flushing flow, we stock the river each June with 8,000 Snake River Cutthroat and 16,000 rainbow trout.

The second factor that drives the Bighorn River trout fishery is adequate overwinter (October through March) flows. The number of trout per mile that are greater than 12 inches in length is directly related to the amount of water in the river throughout the winter months (see the graph

Brown trout are not overly abundant in the Bighorn River but there are some big ones!



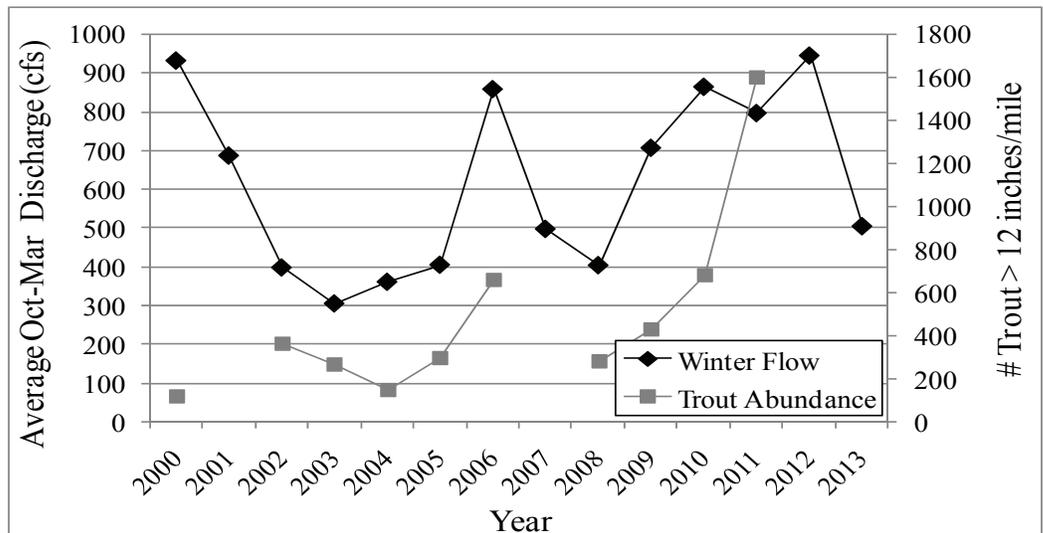
Rainbow trout abundance has increased dramatically in recent years.



below).

The quality of the fishery over the last few years is attributed to annual spring flushing flows combined with optimal overwinter flows.

We will continue to work cooperatively with the Bureau of Reclamation in future years in an effort to maintain the quality of the Bighorn River trout fishery.



Big Horn Mountain Lakes: Hot Weather Retreats with Big Rewards – Sam Hochhalter

When valley bottom temperatures start dabbling in the 90's this summer head for the Big Horn Mountains for cooler temps, stunning alpine scenery, and fantastic fishing.

We actively monitor fish populations in over 60 lakes on the west-slope of the Big Horn Mountains. Of these lakes, trout are stocked in 19 and the remainder support self-sustaining populations.

Accessibility of these lakes is diverse and ranges from road accessible lakes and reservoirs that are perfect for a family outing to highly remote lakes that are only accessible to those anglers willing to hike in with overnight gear.

The number of fish stocked in each lake is determined by it's productivity. Lake productivity is largely a function of elevation, surrounding geology, and lake morphology.

For alpine lakes such as those found in the Big Horn Mountains, stocking densities are typically low to ensure good survival and growth of stocked fish.

To provide anglers with better information on the lakes that we monitor, we are working on producing a map document that shows the location of each surveyed lake. This map will be paired with the latest information on species presence, size composition of the fish population, and the stocking schedule for each lake. Our goal is to provide anglers with a general guide that will allow them to more easily plan their outings. The map document will be available on the Game and Fish, Cody Region website by mid-summer.

Selected lakes by species

Cutthroat Trout

Lost Twin Lakes- These two lakes can be reached from the West Tensleep trailhead and are stocked with Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The size of fish ranges from 12-15+ inches.

Lakes of the Rough- This chain of lakes is located in the headwaters of Shell Creek. Cutthroat are present in all five of the main lakes and range in size from 7 to 15+ inches.

Golden Trout

Golden Lakes- These two lakes (called Fortress Lakes on topo maps) are located off the Solitude Trail near the divide. The self-sustaining golden trout populations range from 6 to 13+ inches in length.

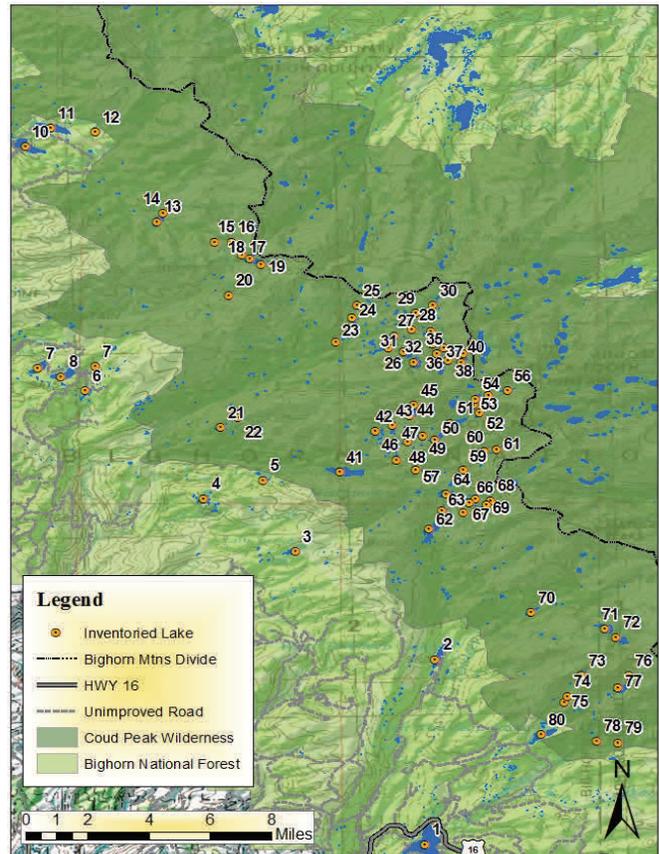
Northeast Solitude Lakes- This chain of 11 lakes (one is called Middle Cloud Peak Lake on topo maps) are the quintessential golden trout lakes of the Big Horns. These self-sustaining populations have fish that range from 4 to 16+ inches in length. Be warned—the hike in requires some willpower.

Brook Trout

Shell Creek Reservoir and Shell Lake- Located within the Shell Creek drainage these two lakes offer excellent brook trout fishing. Fish range from 6 to 12+ inches in length.

Rainbow and Brown Trout

Meadowlark Lake- Right off of highway 16 this lake provides good fishing for rainbow and brown trout up to 23 inches in length.



We are in the process of creating a document that will contain a map of all surveyed lakes along with the latest information on species presence, size composition, and stocking information.



One of many gems found in Cloud Peak Wilderness lakes—Golden Trout.

Update on Restoring Cutthroat to Porcupine Creek—*Sam Hochhalter*

Discussions of restoring Yellowstone cutthroat trout to Porcupine Creek above the natural barrier falls continued over the past year.

In short, the project would involve chemical removal of brook trout over a 3 to 4 year period. During this period we would stock Yellowstone cutthroat of catchable size (8-10 in) so that anglers would continue to have the opportunity to fish the stream in between treatments.

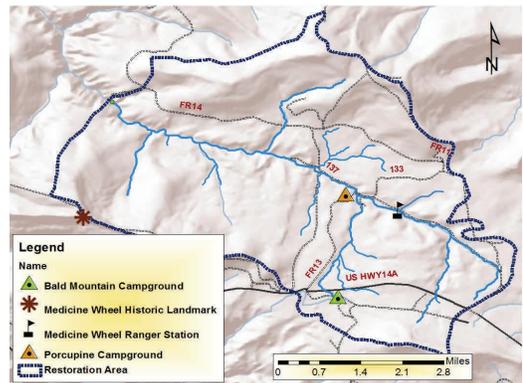
While the project presents a great conservation opportunity, it would have the added benefit of providing anglers with a good chance to catch a native cutthroat due to easy access to quality habitat—most cutthroat populations in the Big Horn mountains are fairly inaccessible.

A meeting was held in Lovell to further discussions between Game and Fish staff and interested stakeholders (March 26th). Public comments will be taken into account prior to moving forward with the project and will be accepted until May 15.

Should the project proceed, chemical treatment of the restoration reach would begin after labor day weekend in 2013.

Regardless of whether the project moves forward or not, we will continue to work with the public to identify streams in the Big Horn mountains where Yellowstone cutthroat trout restoration is feasible.

As always, we are interested in your perspective. Feel free to call or stop by the office with your thoughts on these projects.



Location of the upper Porcupine Creek Yellowstone cutthroat trout restoration project.



Porcupine Creek above the barrier falls. Quality habitat that is readily accessible to anglers makes for a great opportunity to create a native trout fishery.

Yet Another Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Population Lost to Invading Rainbow Trout—*Jason Burckhardt*

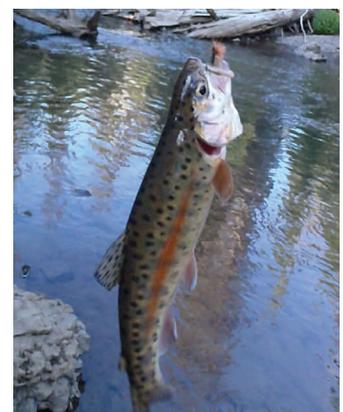
“rainbow-cutthroat hybrids (cuttbows) were found throughout the Grinnell Creek drainage.”

Regular readers of our newsletter will know that Yellowstone cutthroat trout are the only species of trout that are native to our portion of Wyoming. They have disappeared from much of their historic habitats when nonnative trout were introduced. Rainbow trout, from the west coast, are close cousins with Yellowstone cutthroats and where they coexist the two readily hybridize. For this reason rainbow trout are one of the greatest threats to Yellowstone cutthroat populations. Grinnell Creek was the last strongholds for Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the North Fork Shoshone River drainage where they had not hybridized with rainbow trout. Sampling in 2012 found that rainbows had invaded this last vestige of cutthroat purity in the drainage and rainbows and cuttbows were found throughout the drainage. There is now only one remaining geneti-

cally pure population of Yellowstone cutthroats in this drainage, in one small lake and its feeder stream in the North Fork Shoshone headwaters.

There are still cutthroat in the North Fork drainage, but these fish are mixed with rainbows and because of the rampant hybridization in the drainage are of a lower conservation value. Don't get me wrong, the cuttbows in the North Fork are a tremendous sport fish. However, these hybrids are of little value from a cutthroat conservation perspective. The invasion of rainbows into this Yellowstone cutthroat stronghold is unfortunate and it highlights

the importance of restoration projects.



Examples of two cuttbow hybrids sampled in Grinnell Creek in 2012.

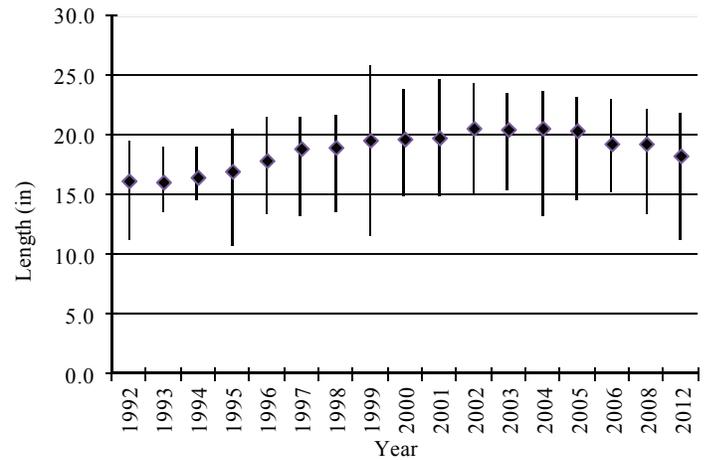


What Does It Take To Create (and Maintain) A Trophy Trout Fishery -Jason Burckhardt

East Newton Lake is not only a trophy fishery, but also serves as a back-up source of Eagle Lake Rainbow trout for stocking throughout Wyoming.

East Newton Lake is a popular fishery for larger than average trout, just five miles north of Cody. Those of you that fish East Newton regularly and are successful, may have many of the fish named, and you may not know how close this may be to actual reality. The “trophy” proportions of this fishery are maintained by stocking relatively few fish in the lake each year which allows those fish to grow to a larger size. We also accomplish this by utilizing restrictive regulations to limit harvest. Trout are unable to reproduce in this lake so the only trout present are those we stock. Only 500 Eagle Lake rainbow trout are stocked each year; 500 brook trout and 250 brown trout are stocked every-other year. Regulations allow for the harvest of only one trout that must be over 22 inches in length and anglers are restricted to the use of artificial flies and lures only.

Our management of this lake goes much further than stocking and regulations but includes the management of the most essential element of fish habitat, water. To maintain water levels sufficient to prevent water temperatures from reaching lethal limits in the summer time or



Minimum, maximum and average length of Eagle Lake rainbow trout in East Newton Lake 1992-2012.

possible winter-kill, we pump over 65 million gallons of water into East Newton Lake from the Heart Mountain Irrigation Canal. This operation costs the department \$3,000 annually for electricity to run the pump and conveyance costs to the canal company.

East Newton Lake is not only a trophy trout fishery, but also serves as a back-up source of Eagle Lake Rainbow trout eggs for stocking throughout Wyoming. From the early 1990s through 2006, Eagle Lake rainbow trout were spawned at East Newton Lake and the eggs were taken to Game and Fish hatcheries to be hatched and reared. As many as 400,000 eggs were taken from East Newton annually. Some of those eggs taken were used to restock East Newton Lake, while others were distributed across the state. We used the egg-take operation as an opportunity to analyze the Eagle Lake rainbow trout fishery in East Newton Lake.

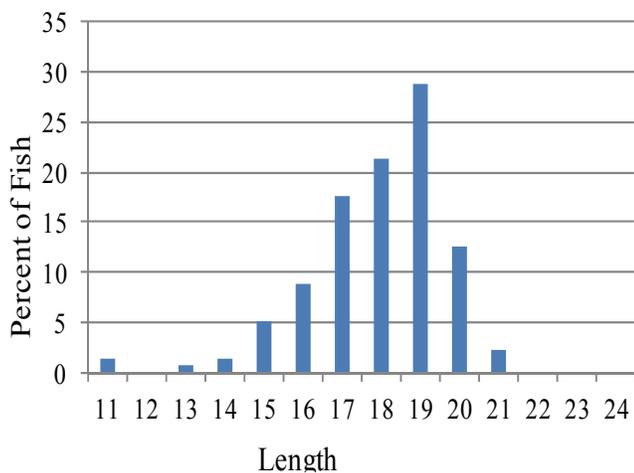
The average length of Eagle Lake rainbow trout in East Newton Lake was greater than 20 inches from 2002 through 2005. The last three sampling occasions the average length of the rainbows has decreased

with rainbows now averaging 18.3 inches. We were able to conduct a population estimate of the East Newton Eagle Lake rainbows and found that there were 439 spawning-sized rainbows in East Newton. This has remained relatively unchanged since we first started completing estimates in 2004.

The productivity of East Newton Lake appears to be declining. Measures to improve the quality and quantity of the Eagle Lake rainbow trout fishery do not appear to be producing the desired results. We eliminated the splake stocking (2006) and reduced the brown trout stocking by half (2008) in an effort to reduce competition with the Eagle Lake rainbows, but these measures still did not improve the desired results. One cause of the reduced productivity could be due to the low productivity water that is pumped into East Newton. Though this water is necessary to sustain the fishery, it may be diluting the nutrients and reducing overall productivity. We are investigating opportunities to improve the productivity of East Newton Lake and its ability to provide a quality angling experience. Stay tuned.



Large rainbow trout, like this one, can be found at East Newton Lake.



Length frequency of Eagle Lake Rainbow trout sampled in East Newton Lake 2012.

Watercraft inspections at Borders by Beth Bear, Statewide AIS Coordinator

By now you've heard of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and are well aware of the damaging effects invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels could have on Wyoming's water resources. Just a few of the negative impacts invasive species can have include impeding water delivery, clogging pipes and pumps used to supply your drinking water, clogging water intakes on your boat which can destroy the motor, and removing the food source for many of the fish you like to catch.

Now for the part you may not have heard yet. The 2012 Wyoming State legislature passed a new statute. The statute requires a boat transported into Wyoming from March 1 through November 30, to be inspected for AIS before launched again in Wyoming. Additionally, any watercraft that has been in a water infested with zebra or quagga mussels within the last 30 days, is required to undergo a **mandatory inspection** before launching in Wyoming *during ALL months of the year*. While we realize that this may take some adjustment for boaters and is an added requirement when bringing your boat into Wyoming, it is a necessary step to keep our waters free of harmful invasive species.

The goal is to make it as easy

as possible for nonresident boaters and resident boaters transporting their boat back into the state to get this mandatory inspection. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) will staff check stations at key entrances into the state as frequently as possible during the boating season (April 15 through September) and we encourage all boaters to plan ahead to have their watercraft inspected at one of these locations. In the Cody Region, watercraft check stations will be operated at the Frannie Hwy 310 Port of Entry at a Hwy 120 pull-off near Cody and at Big Horn Lake and Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Hours of operation and location information for each of these stations can be found on the Game and Fish website at wgfd.wyo.gov/AIS. For questions related to AIS inspections or to schedule an inspection when these locations are not available, contact your regional Game and Fish office or 1-877-WGFD-AIS (943-3247).

If you never boat outside of Wyoming this season or are not a boater at all, we encourage you to keep doing your part in

preventing the spread of AIS in Wyoming by always remembering to Drain, Clean and Dry.

DRAIN all water from your fishing gear and equipment including waders and boots. **CLEAN** all plants, mud, and debris from gear and equipment. Never move a plant or animal from one location to another. **DRY** your gear thoroughly. By doing this each and every time you fish or boat, you won't be the one that moves an invasive species to your favorite water. There are no known populations of zebra or quagga mussels in Wyoming to date, but they have rapidly invaded waters across the country and are present in over 34 states including Colorado, Nebraska and Utah. They could be present in Wyoming waters before our monitoring can detect them, so even if you only boat or fish in Wyoming, it is important that you always Drain, Clean, and Dry. There are currently populations of other invasive species in Wyoming (Asian clam, New Zealand mudsnail, and curly pondweed) and we do not want these species moved to another water. You can report an aquatic invasive species sighting at ReportAIS@wyo.gov.

If you transport a boat into Wyoming from March 1 through November 30, you are required to get your boat inspected for AIS before you launch in Wyoming.



Youth Encouraged to attend Kids Fishing Day—Tara Teaschner

Kids are invited to 'get hooked on fishing' at the annual Cody Kids Fishing Day event Saturday June 1, 2013 at Beck Lake Recreation Area in Cody.

"This is a great opportunity for Cody area youth and their families to spend the day outdoors learning about the sport of fishing," said Cody Region Fisheries Supervisor Steve Yekel. "The event is free of charge and the entire family is encouraged to attend."

The day will begin with educational activities that include casting, knot tying, and learning about aquatic invasive species. A free hotdog lunch will be provided and a fishing derby hosted by the Cody Optimist Club will follow in the afternoon. Children and their families will have the opportunity to catch yellow perch, cutthroat, rainbow, and brown trout. Registra-

tion for educational activities begins at 8:30 a.m. at the south Beck Lake picnic area and the event will conclude at 2 p.m.

Every participant will receive a prize bag and additional prizes will be awarded during the fishing derby. Children will also be entered into a drawing for some great outdoor prizes.

Participants should bring their own poles, tackle and bait. Some fishing gear will be

available if needed. As Wyoming's weather can be unpredictable, everyone should dress warmly and be prepared for cold, wet weather.

Kids Fishing Day events are held across Wyoming in celebration of National Fishing and Boating Week. Saturday, June 1, is also Free Fishing Day across the state of Wyoming. Anyone may fish with-

out a fishing license or conservation stamp on free fishing day. All limits and other fishing regulations apply. More details on Free Fishing Day are listed in the Wyoming fishing regulations booklet and on the Wyoming Game and Fish website at: wgfd.wyo.gov under Education, Aquatic Education, and Youth/Family Fishing Days.

Event sponsors include Cody Optimists Club, East Yellowstone Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Shoshone National Forest, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Albertson's, Denny's Guns & Maps, Rocky Mountain Sports, and Wal-Mart.



Free Fishing Day is June 1, 2013 . Don't miss it!!



What is new for Access? Steve Yekel

This year has been another active year for us and our Habitat and Access folks in pursuit of more fishing opportunities for you in the Cody Region.

After completing the Shoshone River Access Development plan and presenting the ideas of this plan of increasing fishing and recreational opportunity to our

Game and Fish Commission in early 2012, we have been busy searching for partners for more access. A short summary of completed work includes: 1) completing gravel walk trails on our new North Cody Access. In addition we removed all Russian olives within this access area to help revive existing native vegetation.

2) We have negotiated with the Office of State Lands and Investments for a lease for recreational use on two parcels - one on the North Fork Shoshone River near Big Creek and the other called the Cooper Lane/ 7 Mountain Access near Cody. 3) We have re-negotiated for a boat ramp and new park-

ing lot below Corbett Dam and 4) We are Investigating the possibility of a lease on state land in the Idaho Creek drainage for access to a small fishing pond.

In 2013 we will be working on improvement of the takeout ramp near Corbett Bridge and looking for partners to help us develop some of the parcels that we negotiated in 2012. Our strategy is to get the heavy lifting done first. That is to get the negotiation/agreements completed first and then develop the parcels as money becomes available. Agreements are typically the most difficult and time consuming to complete. Considering Game and Fish Department budget short-falls we will be looking for help to complete access and facility development for the benefit anglers and the economy of the local communities.

“Considering Game and Fish Department budget short-falls we will be looking for help to complete access and facility development”



Corbett take out will get a face lift in spring or late summer 2013 to include a new concrete boat ramp and improved parking lot.

Less Fish to be stocked in 2014-- Steve Yekel

You may have heard about the Game and Fish Department budget short-falls. An increased cost of doing business including health insurance, fuel and feed costs (for big game feed grounds and fish hatcheries) have reduced available capital since the last license fee increase in 2008. The 2013 state legislature did not support a license fee adjustment, so we are forced to make some difficult choices to stretch our budgets. So what does this mean to the average angler? Well for the most part the budget reductions we made are internal and will not be

felt by most anglers. Unfortunately, the budget short-fall will require us to reduce fish stocking in 2014 to help balance our budget.

It is important to understand that this reduction in stocking will not effect fishing this year as fish are already being raised in the hatchery for 2013 and will be stocked as usual. Several years ago, the fisheries management crews together with the hatchery crews decided to prioritize the waters we stock into an “A” and “B” category in case there was shortages or limited hatchery space might occur. So when financial cuts were needed we turned to eliminating our “B” priorities. In the Cody region since we stock relatively few fish and thus, the

waters that will not be receiving fish are few. A couple examples of reduced stocks are Upper and Lower Sunshine Reservoirs and Meadowlark Lake. However, we will still be stocking a fair number of “A” priority fish in these waters so your catch rate may decline only slightly. Only four Cody regional waters will not receive fish in 2014. Those are the Lower Clarks Fork River, Island Lake, Blackwater Pond and Shell Ranger Station Pond. If you have questions about these reductions, please contact us.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
2820 HWY 120
Cody, WY 82414

Bits and Pieces

The Cody Kids Fishing Day will be held June 1, 2013 At Beck Lake.

The Wyoming Free Fishing Day (no license required) is also June 1.

If you are interested in helping with the Shoshone River Cleanup in March 2014, let us know or contact a local Trout Unlimited member. We can always use the help.

Newsletter Contributors

Contributors to this years newsletter include the Cody Fisheries Management Crew, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator Beth Bear and Regional Information and Education Specialist Tara Teaschner. Thanks to all.

This and past newsletters for the Big Horn Basin and across the state are available at: <http://wgfd.wyo.gov/web2011/fishing-1000439.aspx>

Fisheries Management in the Cody Region

The Cody fisheries team includes regional fisheries supervisor Steve Yekel, fisheries biologists Jason Burckhardt and Sam Hochhalter.

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Check out our new website at wgfd.wyo.gov and our Cody regional web page under the "News" tab and go to "Game and Fish Regional News".

We manage your fisheries resources for you and we encourage you to call or stop by if you have questions or concerns. 307-527-7125



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