



Inside this issue:

<i>Boysen Reservoir</i>	2
<i>Ocean Lake</i>	3
<i>Drought Continues</i>	4
<i>Luckey Pond</i>	5
<i>Dubois Hatchery Update</i>	5
<i>Sauger Studies</i>	6
<i>Pilot Butte Reservoir</i>	6
<i>Lake Cameahwait</i>	7
<i>Wind River</i>	7
<i>Middle Depression Res.</i>	8
<i>Middle Fork Popo Agie</i>	8
<i>Lakes along the Loop Road</i>	8
<i>Shoshone Lake</i>	9
<i>Beaver Rim/Jeffrey City Ponds and Reservoirs</i>	9
<i>Brooks Lake Area</i>	10
<i>Pelham and Fish Lakes</i>	10
<i>Torrey and Trail Lakes</i>	11
<i>Jakey's Fork Wilderness Lakes</i>	11
<i>Tayo Creek Wilderness Lakes</i>	11
<i>Habitat is Prioritized</i>	12
<i>Mission Statement</i>	14
<i>Fishing Contests</i>	14

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*Welcome Interested Anglers!!*

This is the first installment of a newsletter designed to inform interested anglers of the activities of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Fish Division within the Lander Region. The Lander Region encompasses the Wind River Drainage (exclusive of the Wind River Indian Reservation), the Sweetwater River Drainage, and parts of the North Platte River Drainage around Rawlins.

The Lander Region fisheries staff consists of three fish management biologists, an aquatic habitat biologist, and three fish culturists (stationed at the Dubois Hatchery). The management personnel are responsible for inventorying and monitoring fish populations, providing input for the protection and conservation of all aquatic life and habitat, and specific management of fish populations through fish stocking recommendations, fish regulation proposals, and species and habitat restoration. The aquatic habitat biologists mission is to restore and/or manage habitat to enhance and sustain wildlife populations in the future. Personnel at the Dubois Hatchery produce fish for

stocking not only in the Lander Region, but throughout Wyoming. In turn, fish produced at other Wyoming Game and Fish Department hatcheries are often stocked within the Lander Region to meet requests for particular species or sizes of fish.

We hope that you find this newsletter useful and informative. We welcome any feedback that you may have, or suggested ways that we may improve it. The publication is intended for anglers and anyone else who is interested in the aquatic resources in the Lander area. The resources we manage belong to you and we value your opinions and suggestions. You can contact us at the physical or email addresses listed on the back page.

It is our intent to produce an issue of this newsletter each spring to update you on the findings, progress, and recommendations from the previous year.



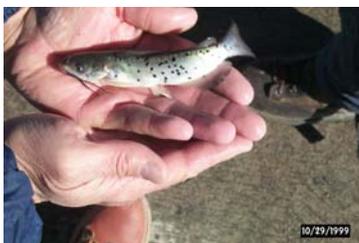
## Boysen Reservoir

*“We need anglers to fish for trout at Boysen Reservoir.”*

Fishing Boysen Reservoir can always be interesting because you’ll never know what kind of fish you’re going to catch next. There are 12 different game fish species that you can catch in Boysen Reservoir. Sauger, ling, channel catfish and stone catfish are native to the Wind River. Walleye, yellow perch, black crappie and rainbow trout are popular non-native fish that were introduced in Boysen Reservoir many years ago.

The Wyoming Game & Fish Department stocks rainbow trout and channel catfish in Boysen Reservoir. All other fish exist through natural reproduction.

Rainbow trout in Boysen Reservoir grow exceptionally well and obtain a larger size, on average, than other large reservoirs and lakes in Wyoming. We hope anglers recognize the value of this trout fishery. The Wyoming Game & Fish Department manages the revenue generated from license fees the best we can. The way we justify trout stocking is by the return of trout to anglers. We need anglers to fish for trout at Boysen Reservoir to justify continuing the stocking program.

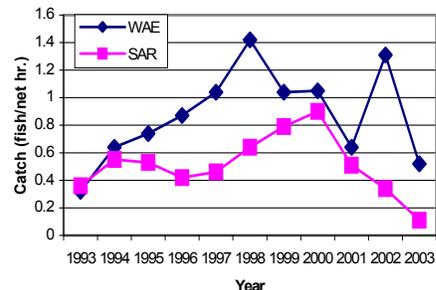


*Channel catfish just prior to release into Boysen Reservoir.*

Channel catfish are native to the Wind/Bighorn River. Stocking of channel catfish was initiated in 1995. Besides rainbow trout, few other game fish are caught from shore. We put channel catfish in Boysen Reservoir to enhance shore fishing opportunities, especially in the turbid upper reservoir region. Anglers are attracted to the channel catfish, especially since a few 10 to 15 pound catfish have been caught. We don’t know how large they will get in Boysen Reservoir. Catfish live to 15 to 20 years of age in Wyoming. As of 2004, channel catfish are less than 9 years of age in Boysen Reservoir.

Walleye, sauger, yellow perch and crappie are the fish anglers seem to be seeking. Populations for these species are typically cyclic, not only in Boysen Reservoir, but

across the country. Currently we are seeing a decreasing abundance of walleye and sauger. The figure below shows the netting abundance of walleye and sauger.



*Netting trend for walleye (WAE) and sauger (SAR) abundance from standard netting locations in Boysen Reservoir 1993 through 2003.*

The reason(s) for the decrease are usually driven by environmental factors but also can be influenced by biological factors, such as abundance of predators. Walleye tend to become more abundant when Boysen Reservoir fills. Flooded vegetation provides nursery habitat (protection and food) for young fish. It also leads to increased production of forage for the reservoir referred to as the “new reservoir effect”. During drought years, the shoreline recedes from the important refuge and young fish as well as forage fish become the target of predation. It becomes difficult for young walleye to survive even though reproduction is successful. During the drought, the shoreline re-vegetates setting up for good walleye production.

Juvenile yellow perch and black crappie have an increased chance of surviving when walleye abundance is low. That is part of the reason that anglers are catching more yellow perch and black crappie compared to a few years ago.

## Boysen Reservoir continued

Most anglers recognize that Boysen Reservoir lacks good crappie habitat. There are many adult crappie but where do you find them? We have recently worked with the Wyoming Department of Transportation to recommend placing tree structures to miti-

gate for one of the State's highway projects. The location is just south of Tough Creek in the first small bay. Give this area a try the next time you look for crappie.



*Tree structures in Boysen Res.*

## Ocean Lake

The main sport fish in Ocean Lake are walleye, yellow perch, and crappie. Walleye in Ocean Lake have little or no success in reproducing naturally due to substrates dominated by fine silt. Therefore, the walleye fishery has been maintained by annual stocking. On July 2, 2003, a total of 159,960 walleye fingerling (1553/lb.) were stocked into the lake from Garrison National Fish Hatchery. Requests were increased from 160,000 to 320,000 fingerling/year beginning in 2004. To better evaluate this stocking program a walleye specific sampling scheme was initiated in 2001. Over the next several years we will be gill netting each fall to evaluate the change in stocking and the status of the walleye population in the lake. Six overnight sets were made from September 16-19, 2003. The number of walleye caught increased somewhat compared to 2002 and the average length increased from 14.7 to 16.9 inches. Relative weight, which is a measure of condition or plumpness of the fish, also increased significantly. Interviews with anglers during the year have also indicated that walleye fishing is gradually improving. If the increased requests for walleye fingerlings

*We hope to see continued upward trends in walleye fishing in Ocean Lake with increased stocking.*

can be met by Garrison National Fish Hatchery, we will hopefully continue to see improved walleye fishing in the future. Since 1990, a group of sportsmen from Riverton has placed approximately 500 discarded Christmas trees on the ice at Ocean Lake each year. The trees are placed in groups on the ice and wired to 6-inch diameter by 12-inch long concrete cylinders provide by Inberg-Miller Engineering. At ice-off, the trees sink to the bottom where they will hopefully enhance fish habitat and encourage stabilization of lake sediments. During 2003, the trees were placed near the west shoreline (Zone 12T, 692802 easting, 4784515 northing) in 12 feet of water. In late January 2004, the trees were again put along the eastern portion of the lake at Z12T, 693448E, 4784374N. In addition to the Christmas trees, the Wyoming Department of Transportation provided trees removed from highway right-of-ways in the Ocean Lake area. Several hundred trees, mostly Russian olives, were placed in the same location as the Christmas trees.



*Christmas trees and Russian olives at Ocean Lake.*

## Drought Conditions Continue in 2003



While not as severe as the few previous years, drought conditions continued to plague the region during 2003. The cumulative effect of several years with below normal precipitation is taking its toll on our fisheries as more and more springs, streams and ponds dry up. If you find a pond, reservoir or lake that you think winter killed in 2004, let us know so that we can inform other anglers. During drought years we lose fisheries from insufficient water depth and volume to support fish. Alerting us to fisheries problems ensures that we become more attentive to the needs for restocking or investigating why fish died.

7 Following is a list of popular waters that we know have winter killed or dried up as of 2003.

- Carmody Reservoir
- Antelope Springs Reservoir
- Silver Creek Reservoir
- Strawberry Creek
- Cow Lake
- Rim Lake near Rawlins

Many others, while still supporting limited fish numbers, have less water and less flow. This causes stressful conditions for fish and limits their growth, survival, and ability to reproduce successfully.

### CUTT-SLAM

The Wyoming Cutt-Slam program encourages anglers to learn more about Wyoming's native cutthroat sub-species and develop more appreciation and support of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's cutthroat trout management programs.

To participate you must catch Wyoming's four cutthroat sub-species in their native range in Wyoming. Send us a clear photo with information on the date and location of catch. We will have a Wyoming Game and Fish fisheries biologist verify species identification.

Once we've verified your catch of all four sub-species, you will receive a color certificate featuring all four sub-species to recognize your accomplishment.

Visit our web site or check with your local Game and Fish office for more information.



From the top: Colorado River cutthroat, Yellowstone cutthroat, Bonneville cutthroat and Snake River cutthroat

## *Luckey Pond*

Luckey Pond is a new reservoir that was constructed near Lander in 2002. The 5-acre pond is located behind the State Training School, just off of Chittum Road. Construction of the dam was a joint effort between Wyoming State Training School, Popo Agie Anglers, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Honor Farm, and NRCS.

An oversight committee has been formed and they are currently working on developing improved facilities for use by the public. A handicapped fishing pier has already been built and there are plans for bathrooms, pic-

nic facilities, walk paths, and a wildlife viewing blind. These improvements will be added as funds and donations become available.

The pond was stocked with rainbow trout and Bear River cutthroat trout in 2003, with annual stocking of trout planned for the future. Luckey Pond is only open to fishing from dawn to dusk, and catch and release is highly encouraged. This pond is within biking distance of Lander and offers an excellent opportunity for the youth of that community.



*Luckey Pond*

## *Dubois Hatchery Update*

After being out of production for several years due to Whirling Disease concerns, the Dubois Fish Hatchery is starting to produce fish for the Lander region and statewide waters again. This year we will be stocking grayling, brook trout, rainbow trout, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, and Snake River cutthroat trout in Lander region waters. Other hatcheries throughout Wyoming will also be stocking fish in the Lander region. All waters that were scheduled to receive fish annually have and will continue to be stocked. Hopefully, if the fire season is not too severe this summer, we will also be able to stock a number of our wilderness lakes by helicopter.

Over the next year and a half the Dubois Fish Hatchery will be going through some improvements and changes. We have already installed three twenty-foot circular tanks, and are in the planning process to remove all of the old cement raceways throughout the facility and replace them with circular units. Circular tanks will enable us to produce more fish and better quality fish with the same amount of water. In addition, the concrete units inside the hatchery building will be replaced with new fiberglass rearing units. We hope the renovation will enable us to continue to raise high quality fish for the Lander area and other waters around the state.



*New circular tanks at the Dubois Hatchery*

## Sauger Studies

*“The information gained from the sauger research should enable us and the Wind River Reservation to better manage this native species and prevent it from declining as it has in other areas of the country.”*

The sauger is a fish native to the Wind/Big Horn River in Wyoming. It was also found in the North Platte River historically, but no longer exists there. Within much of its native range across North America it has declined in numbers and distribution. In order to learn more about how the sauger is doing in the Wind River drainage, the Game and Fish Department has been cooperating with the University of Wyoming, the Wind River Indian Reservation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct research. The bulk of the research is being conducted by students from the University of Wyoming's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit as part of their Masters Degrees. The



*Walleye and sauger*

first such student, Craig Amadio, completed Phase I of the sauger research last year. He was able to determine general distribution and numbers of sauger within the Wind, Little Wind, and Popo Agie river systems, as well as describing the habitat they are using.

Two new students, Kris Kuhn and Patrick Lionberger, will begin Phase II and III of the research beginning in 2004. Their work will look at spawning habitat, juvenile habitat, and movement and migration patterns. Many fish will be implanted with radio tags so that they might be tracked as they move within the system. If you happen to catch a sauger trailing a wire (the radio antennae) from its stomach, please release it unharmed to the water.

## Pilot Butte Reservoir



For many years Pilot Butte Reservoir has been stocked with 2,000 catchable sized (8 inch) rainbow trout annually. These fish are stocked in early spring. In the hopes of providing better fishing opportunities for this reservoir, beginning in 2005 we will begin stocking 25,000 advanced fingerlings (5 inches) rainbow in the fall as well as the 2,000 catchable (8 inches) rainbows in the

spring. Each group of fish will be given a different finclip (one of the fins removed prior to stocking) so that we can determine which stocking strategy provides better results to the fishermen. So, beginning in 2005 please examine the fish you catch from Pilot Butte for missing fins and let us know what you find.

## Lake Cameahwait

Special regulations for largemouth bass at Lake Cameahwait were first instituted in 1988 when all largemouth bass less than 15 inches had to be released. That regulation was changed in 1996 to read: Limit of 2 largemouth bass per day or in possession; all largemouth bass between 10 and 15 inches must be released; only one may exceed 15 inches.

To help determine if the regulation is working as intended, and to generally keep track of the largemouth bass population, electrofishing is conducted at the lake every three years. On June 11 and 12, 2003 sampling was conducted after dark with an aluminum electrofishing boat.

The work is done at night because the bass seem to be less shy of the boat and are easier to catch. A total of 317 largemouth bass were captured during the two evenings. After measuring and weighing, all of the fish are released unharmed to the water. Average length dropped significantly when compared to the last sampling information from 2000 (See table below). However, this decrease is attributable to more smaller (5-11 inch) fish in the sample for 2003 rather than fewer larger fish. As in the past, the majority (84%) of the largemouth bass are within the 10-15 inch slot required to be released under the special fishing regulation. Thus, the regulation is having the intended affect.

*Largemouth bass are doing well in Lake Cameahwait*

Year	Mean Length	Length Range	Mean Weight
2003	12.6	5.1-17.9	1.1
2000	13.7	9.2-18.8	1.5
1998	13.6	4.4-17.2	1.5
1995	10.6	1.0-17.0	0.8
1992	8.5	5.1-21.2	0.4

## Wind River

Good fishing on the Wind River keeps anglers coming back. Anglers have caught nearly 1 trout per hour since 1995 and closer to 2 trout per hour in some years. Compared to other waters, the average catch rate for trout in the Wind River is relatively good. High water during late spring and early summer leads to swift turbid water which makes fishing difficult. However, fishing opportunities are often excellent from mid summer through the fall. Many anglers fly fish the Wind River throughout the winter, taking advantage of the occasional warm, sunny day.

### Introductions of Unwanted Species

You can help to maintain your favorite fisheries by not dumping fish or other aquatic organisms into these waters. Introduction of unwanted species can compete with the existing species for food and space. New diseases and parasites might be brought in. If an unwanted species takes over a water, then we have to spend more of your license dollars to reclaim the fishery if it is possible to reclaim at all. Remember; don't dump minnows or other species of fish into any of our waters.

## Middle Depression Reservoir

This reservoir has been managed as a catchable rainbow trout fishery, with annual requests of 5,000 Eagle Lake rainbow. The Department has operated an aeration system during the winter for many years and until recently this has allowed trout to successfully overwinter in this shallow reservoir. However, improvements in irrigation systems has resulted in reduced water flows within this drainage. A conversion from a ditch delivery system to a pressurized pipeline resulted in more efficient irrigation practices, which reduced irrigation return flow and seepage flow to the Cottonwood Drain (water supply for Middle Depression Reservoir) significantly. This, coupled with possible drought effects, has resulted in partial winterkills during at least two of the past three years.

On October 27-28, 2003 the trout fishery was sampled with two gill nets to verify survival of fish through the

***"There were also rainbows carried over from previous years, many of which were over 5 pounds."***

winter of 2002-2003 and determine the condition of 2003 stocked rainbow trout prior to winter. Twenty seven rainbow trout were captured, all of which were in excellent condition. Fish stocked in April and May were already 10-17 inches in length. There were also rainbows carried over from previous years, many of which were over 5 pounds. So, despite some documented winter losses during the past few years, a portion of the stocked rainbow trout are still surviving and providing a trophy aspect to the fishery. Growth and condition of stocked fish is excellent during their first summer in the reservoir, and they are entering the winter in good condition.

Don't sell this water short—it's got a good number of nice rainbows, with a fair number of real trophy sized fish.

## Middle Fork Popo Agie River

We evaluated the fish population in the Middle Fork Popo Agie River through Lander City Park and found that, despite the low water levels in late summer, there are over 900 brown trout per mile. This is a very respectable number of trout for a stream this size and many of the fish are in the 8-12 inch range.

For all you Lander residents - you have some excellent fishing opportunities right through town where you can hone your skills in pursuit of brown trout.

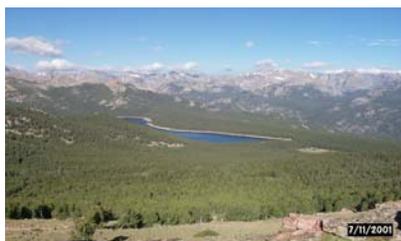
## Lakes along Loop Road

Louis, Fiddlers, Worthen Meadows, and Frye continue to be stocked annually with catchable rainbow trout and provide good fishing opportunities for those traveling the Loop Road. Louis is also stocked with splake (lake trout-brook trout cross), which provide additional fishing opportunities, especially for ice fishermen.

Cow Lake winterkilled during the 2002-2003 winter. Several years of low snowpack and drought conditions likely contributed to the unfavorable winter conditions. The lake was restocked, as scheduled, with 549 fingerling brook trout on July 17, 2003. Provided they make it through the winter, there should be some catchable sized fish available during 2004.

## Shoshone Lake

This popular fishery is sampled with gill nets every year to track the condition of the brook trout population and determine if regulations are appropriate. The limit was increased from 2 fish to 4 fish in 2002. For several years it has appeared that the fishery has been dominated by a strong years class of brook trout. These fish are now 8 years old and will soon be reaching the limit of their lifespan. As this happens, average



*Shoshone Lake from Cyclone Pass*

size of the brook trout caught by anglers may decrease for a time. However, we are seeing a couple of strong year classes that have entered the fishery and these should provide for continued good fishing for this lake.

Better water conditions during 2003 resulted in the lake filling for the first time in 3 years. This was good to see and should help to insure continued fish production

## Beaver Rim/Jeffrey City Ponds and Reservoirs

Several years of drought has taken its toll on many of these waters. Carmody Lake, Antelope Springs Reservoir, and Silver Creek Reservoir have all lost their water and fish populations. When Mother Nature provides the needed water we will restock, but until then there is little we can do. Western Nuclear still had some rainbow and brook trout last fall, but extremely low water levels may have resulted in winter losses. Come spring we will evaluate the situation and make decisions concerning restocking.



*Low water levels at Silver Creek Reservoir*

BLM personnel have approached Merritt Oil Company with the idea of filling the reservoir by using the oil company wells and then use the BLM well to hopefully maintain the water level. Before pumping begins, the BLM has plans to do some additional rip rap work at the outlet of the pipelines to prevent erosion. The present plans call for the reservoir to be filled in the spring of 2004. A Department Habitat Grant was used to help pay for the electric pump and the installation. With some luck, this popular fishery could be back in business by next year.

A well has been drilled by the BLM to provide supplemental water to A&M Reservoir. The BLM has moved forward with the idea for a permanent electric pump that will be powered by the nearby powerline. A contractor will be wiring and hooking up the pump during the spring of 2004.

Rim Lake south of Rawlins experienced total winterkill during 2002-2003 and was restocked during May.

## Free Fishing Day

Wyoming free fishing day will be **June 5, 2004**. You can fish without buying a license on this day! Whether you're new to fishing or you haven't had the chance to wet a line recently, free fishing day provides an opportunity to explore the world of fishing. Free fishing day is held in conjunction with National Recreational Fishing and Boating week. The goal is to provide an opportunity to experience Wyoming's outstanding fisheries and remind people that fishing is a great way to relax, connect with family and friends and enjoy themselves.

## Brooks Lake Area

"...consider releasing the fish so that other anglers can enjoy them."

Fishing couldn't be in a more enjoyable location than the Brooks Lake. Many locals and tourists attract to Brooks Lake during the summer. However, don't let the abundance of people discourage you from fishing Brooks Lake or the small surrounding lakes. The fishing is best in early summer.

Upper and Lower Jade lakes are located just below the rim west of Brooks Lake. Both lakes support Snake River cutthroat trout averaging 15.5 to 16 inches in length.

Lower Jade also has lake trout. If you consider fishing the Jade Lakes, consider releasing the fish so that other anglers can enjoy them. Brooks Lake has plenty of fish if your looking for a meal.

Upper Brooks Lake and Rainbow Lake are approximately 3 miles upstream of Brooks Lake. Our recent sampling indicates that Rainbow Lake has a lower density of trout than Upper Brooks Lake. Upper Brooks Lake has a relatively good abundance of medium sized brook trout. The upper size from our netting was 15.6 inches. The trail past Upper Brooks Lake is well traveled and we suspect many fish the lake. We hope Upper Brooks Lake offers the opportunity to keep a trophy brook trout from time to time. But remember, to grow a trophy anglers can't be greedy.

## Pelham and Fish Lakes



*Survey box used for collecting voluntary angler use information.*

Pelham Lake continues to be a popular fishery in the Wind River Mountains. Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations have remained fairly good over the years with average size staying between 15 and 16 inches during the past 4 years. Eighty-one percent of the fish we netted and 57% of the fish anglers reported catching were greater than 14 inches, which is the minimum length limit. Our special regulation and management have successfully met our management objectives and have led to 85% satisfaction level by anglers surveyed.

Fish Lake, another popular fishery in the

Wind River Mountains, has supported a good population of Snake River cutthroat trout typically averaging around 16 inches. Special regulations have helped maintain the high abundance of cutthroat in Fish Lake. Ninety three percent of the anglers surveyed at Fish Lake were satisfied. We will continue to survey anglers and sample the fishery at frequent intervals to ensure we keep management on track with any change in use at Fish Lake.

## Torrey and Trail Lakes

Torrey and Trail lakes are scheduled to be sampled in 2004 with sonar equipment to estimate fish densities and gill nets to determine fish size and relative abundance. This more intensive sampling program is the initial phase of a study to determine changes in our stocking program and an attempt to make fishing better. Our culture section collected rainbow trout from the Fire Hole River in Yellowstone Park. We will monitor how well the Fire Hole will do in Torrey and Trail lakes.

We also have scheduled time to re-assess burbot (ling) using newly acquired netting gear that seems to be more effective for sampling burbot. We rarely catch burbot in our standard sampling gear. The new gear should allow us to better track the status of this unique species. It may take a few years to obtain reliable trend data. We'll keep you posted on our progress in future newsletter issues.



## Jakey's Fork Wilderness Lakes

In 2003, we sampled lakes that we stock in the upper Jakey's Fork Drainage. Our sampling identified that most lakes support good fisheries. Lost Lake is one exception. We are scheduled to restock Lost Lake with golden trout but when a brood source is lo-

cated. Lakes with cutthroat are Rim, Pinto and Sandra. Rainbow trout can be found in Rim, Peat and Marion lakes with a few goldbows (golden X rainbow hybrids) in Marion Lake. Boone Lake supports a high abundance of grayling.

## Tayo Creek Wilderness Lakes

Fish populations within lakes of the upper Tayo Creek Drainage were surveyed August 14-20, 2003.

**Squirrel Lake** is an 8-acre lake located on a small tributary stream, which enters the Middle Fork Popo Agie River below Tayo Park. It has a maximum depth of 39 feet. It is managed under the "unique species" concept for grayling. Grayling were first stocked in Squirrel Lake in 1960, with subsequent stocking approximately every four years, until 1994. Fish had been scheduled for 2002, but were not stocked because no

helicopters were available. Sampling with gill nets found no fish. There is no inlet stream to the lake and no suitable spawning habitat was evident in the outlet. We plan to restock this lake with grayling every 4 years

**Hank's Lake** is located along Hank's Creek on a 10,250-foot elevation bench above Tayo Creek. There is no established trail to the lake. A rainbow trout population was established from the stocking of fish in 1955. A gill net set on August 15, 2003 and pulled



*Lower Tayo Lake*

*(Continued on page 12)*

*(Continued from page 11)*

the following day yielded a catch of nine rainbow trout. The fish ranged in length from 7.6 to 13.6 inches, with a mean of 10.5 inches. Many fish and abundant spawning habitat were observed in the inlet stream.

**Poison Lake** is a 23-acre lake located along the main Tayo Creek trail at an elevation of 10,047 feet. There is no record of this lake ever being stocked. Previous information indicated that it contained hybridized combinations of cutthroat, golden, and rainbow trout. We caught only brook trout. The average length of the brook trout was 8.6 inches and the largest was 11.0 inches.

**Mountain Sheep Lake** is located at an elevation of 10,200 feet on a side-drainage to Tayo Creek. In 1961, it was reported to have cutthroat and cutthroat-golden hybrids. As with Poison Lake, only brook trout were found this year. The fish averaged 9.1 inches in length, with a range of 6.2-11.1 inches.

**Coon Lake** is located only 300 feet from the continental divide at an elevation of 10,534 feet. It is 33-acres in size, with a maximum depth of 47 feet. Golden trout were stocked in 1955, 1959, and 1963. Sampling information from 1961 and 1977 found the fish population to consist of cutthroat-golden hybrids, but there are no records of cutthroat being stocked in the lake. One gill net pulled on August 18, 2003, yielded 39 fish. The majority (33) were classified as golden trout, four appeared to be golden-cutthroat hybrids, and two were considered golden-rainbow hybrids. Average length was 11.2 inches, with a range of 6.7-17.0 inches. This lake is a good bet for anyone wanting to catch some golden trout.

**Lower Tayo Lake** is a large, 53-acre lake thought barren of fish. Upper Tayo Lake was stocked with golden trout in 1939, but in the late 1950s and early 1960s it was determined that no progeny from the plant survived. A gill net set in the lower lake on August 18, 2003 and pulled the following day yielded two golden trout. The fish were 10.2 and 8.4 inches in length. Evidently some fish drifted down from the original stocking of golden trout in 1939 and have maintained a limited population ever since.



*Golden Trout from Coon Lake*

## *Habitat is Prioritized!*

Habitat issues may be the single greatest challenge facing the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some habitat types are imperiled. Potential impacts to wildlife habitat are expanding, with the development of coalbed methane and natural gas, power plant construction and the demand for additional power generation, transmission facilities and urban sprawl. At the same time, we are being asked

to take a far more active role in the conservation of wildlife species, which are or may be listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Conserving these species one species at a time is impractical. To effectively answer this challenge, the Department has a strategic need to be collaboratively involved in habitat-related decisions at a landscape level on public and private lands in Wyoming.

## *Habitat Vision Statement*

*“The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is the steward of Wyoming’s wildlife, dedicated to the conservation of sustainable, functional ecosystems capable of supporting wildlife populations at least as healthy, abundant and diverse as they were at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will take a holistic approach to habitat management, integrating various land uses while involving the general public, private landowners and land management agencies. Our lands will be managed to emphasize and maintain the wildlife habitat and public access values for which they were obtained.”*

## *Habitat Mission*

*Restore and/or manage habitat to enhance and sustain wildlife populations in the future.*

## *Habitat Goals*

- | Manage, preserve and restore habitat for long- term sustainable management of wildlife populations.
- | Increase wildlife based recreation through habitat enhancements that increase productivity of wildlife.
- | Increase or maintain wildlife habitat and associated recreation on Commission lands.

## *Aquatic Habitat Ranking*

Following the above guidelines and further direction the Aquatic Habitat for the Lander Region was prioritized. Native fish species were a major concern with special emphasis on Yellowstone cutthroat trout and sauger. The region was prioritized on the bases of the Regional Fisheries Sub-Basin Management Plans.

1. Lower Wind River/Boysen Reservoir Corridor
2. East Fork Wind River Watershed
3. Upper Wind River Tributaries Watershed (North)
4. North Fork Popo Agie Watershed
5. Little Popo Agie Watershed
6. Upper Sweetwater River Watershed
7. Lower Sweetwater River Watershed
8. Upper Wind River Tributaries Watershed (South)
9. Middle Fork Popo Agie Watershed

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WE'RE ON THE WEB  
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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.*

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### ***FISHING CONTESTS - HOW MANY ARE HELD WITHIN THE LANDER REGION?***

Excluding kids fishing days, there were only two fishing contests held in the Lander Region in 2003. Both were held at Boysen Reservoir.

The Wild West Winter Carnival is an annual ice fishing derby held in the winter time.

The Boysen Walleye Challenge (former Governors Cup Tournament) is an annual contest held by the Wyoming Walleye Circuit. It was a live release contest. There were 107 teams that caught 1,156 walleye and released 1,149 of them. Nine walleye entered in the contest were greater than 25 inches.

Fishing contests are authorized by the Wyo-

ming Game & Fish Department. Only contests that follow our guidelines are authorized. However, some contest sponsors have their own contest regulations, which are often more restrictive than Wyoming's Fishing Regulations. Fishing contests can have more restrictive regulations but not less restrictive. As an example, the Walleye Circuit only allows teams to hold 5 fish in their live-well at a time during a live release contest. No team may possess more than 5 dead walleye even though fishing regulations would allow 2 anglers to keep their possession limit of 12 fish. Contests that fail to meet Wyoming Game & Fish Department guidelines are not permitted or reauthorized.

