



the wyoming game & fish department

CASPER REGION angler newsletter

photograph © Trent Tatum

Wet Your Line!

New Regulations & Booklet for 2017:

Several new fishing regulations went into effect with the New Year. If you have not already, please look at the new fishing regulations before you begin fishing. Grab a copy of the 2017 edition where you get your license, or the booklet is on our website: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Fishing-and-Boating/Fishing-Regulations>.

Notable Regulation Changes

All Burbot (Ling) and Northern Pike are designated as nongame fish and must be killed immediately if caught from any waters within area 5, including Albany, Carbon, Converse, Goshen, Laramie, Natrona, Niobrara, and Platte counties.

The legal use of trout beads was clarified. Specifically, a trout bead shall be fixed to the leader no more than two inches from the eye of a bare hook or fly. Beads fixed more than 2 inches from the eye of a hook is considered snagging. Beads associated with spinners, worm harnesses, and other lures are not considered trout beads.

The creel limit on Walleye at the Miracle Mile reach of the North Platte River (Kortes Dam to the Sage Creek confluence) is now twelve per day or in possession.

Wild-caught baitfish may be held indefinitely by the holder of a valid, unexpired seining license, but shall not be released, abandoned, or allowed to escape. Wild-caught baitfish transported away from the water of capture must be held in an enclosure preventing their escape and isolated from surface waters.



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from the central waterways of the North Platte River



Pathfinder & Miracle Mile Creel Survey

Help Manage Your Fisheries

Anglers have a golden opportunity to help the Wyoming Game and Fish Department manage fisheries at Pathfinder Reservoir and the Miracle Mile in 2017, just by doing what they love – fishing! Fisheries biologists and technicians began an eight-month creel survey in January at these waters. On survey days, anglers leaving Pathfinder are required to briefly stop at a check station on the Pathfinder Road (Natrona County Road 409) about 1.25 miles south of Highway 220, to complete a brief survey. Anglers provide creel clerks with information on the amount of time spent fishing, targeted species, fishing techniques, fish caught and released, and fish harvested.



Watch for signs!

Creel Clerks will rove access points at the Miracle Mile on survey days to count people who are fishing and conduct interviews to collect the same information. Some anglers will receive a survey card to complete when they are done fishing at the Mile. If you are given a creel card, please deposit it in a creel box when departing from the Mile, or mail it back to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, postage paid.

An intensive creel survey effort like this one allows fisheries biologists to estimate the number of angler trips and angler-hours spent, pinpoint catch rates, and help determine rates of fish population harvest. This information is valuable for evaluating the economic impact of fisheries, assessing the effectiveness of costly stocking programs, and assists managers with making appropriate management changes to best meet public desires.

Where possible, Fisheries Biologists repeat intensive creel surveys every five to ten years. This way, funds are used for the highest priorities, and the most expensive information is only updated as fisheries change. Intensive creel surveys at the Miracle Mile have shown fluctuating angler use, with the most recent peak of 23,012 anglers in 1995 (April - October) and a low of 4,277 anglers in 2009 (same period). Some of this decline was from anglers diverted to the Gray Reef fishery, which was growing in popularity. At Pathfinder Reservoir, the most recent intensive creel survey was completed in 1996. At that time, annual use was estimated at 37,216 anglers, who fished for a total of 159,023 hours. The economic value of the average fishing trip within Wyoming was \$75 in 2015, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Both of these fisheries have undoubtedly gone through recent changes, and updated information is badly needed.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
WALLEYE BAY CREEL SURVEY

DATE: _____ INTERVIEW #: _____

RECORD INFORMATION FOR **TODAY AND YOURSELF ONLY**
AND
WALLEYE BAY ONLY
(Sage Creek to the Narrows).

Do not include information from other waters fished today.

When Finished, How Long Did You Fish at Walleye Bay Today:

Hours	Minutes

How Many Fish Did You Catch at Walleye Bay Today:

Number	Rainbow Trout	Brown Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Walleye
Released				
Kept				

Thank You for Participating in the Management of Your Fishery!

A creel card for Walleye Bay

Funding for major fisheries surveys is limited. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department thanks the North Platte Walleyes Unlimited for a generous donation of \$24,000 to fund part of the creel clerks' salaries and make the survey happen! In addition, the NPWU and the Casper Chapter of Trout Unlimited have committed their time to help at the check station on busy days.

Do your part to make these creel surveys successful by providing accurate information when interviewed and please return creel cards promptly. The information you provide will be used to modify regulations and stocking programs. This is your chance to be involved!

Walleye Tagging Study at Pathfinder

Turn In Your Tag to Claim Your Reward – And, Thank You!

This year, anglers need to look carefully at the Walleye they catch at Pathfinder Reservoir. They could catch a lucky fish and win a prize! All returned tags will qualify for a reward. Rewards vary in value from \$5 to \$200 and have been generously donated by Sportsman’s Warehouse and Rocky Mountain Discount Sports.

Tags are bright-orange, oval discs wired to the Walleye between the dorsal fins (see the picture).




A tagged Walleye at Pathfinder Reservoir.

If you catch a tagged Walleye, please cut off the tag and return it to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. If you prefer to release the Walleye, that’s ok – but you must remove and submit the tag for it to count. Tag return boxes with envelopes for tags will be at the Pathfinder Marina and Bishop’s Point boat launches, where you can deposit tags. Or, you can drop the tag in the mail using the envelope. The tags also have a phone number you can call to get information about returning them.

Fishery biologists are tagging Walleye at Pathfinder this spring to figure out the percentage of the Walleye population caught over the next year. Biologists will roughly compare the number of tags returned by anglers from fish that were caught to the total number of Walleye that were tagged. This “exploitation” or “harvest rate” will help inform future management decisions. This is a chance to help manage your fishery, so make sure to return Walleye tags from Pathfinder Reservoir!

\$ REWARD \$




[Please help us manage the Pathfinder Reservoir Walleye fishery](#)
 The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is conducting a tagging study to learn more about this Walleye fishery.



Please do the following if you catch a tagged Walleye:
 Clip the tag from the fish
 Place the tag in a tag return envelope
 Fill in the information on the tag return envelope
 Place the envelope in the drop box

Tag return envelopes and drop boxes are located at Pathfinder Reservoir boat ramps. You can also mail the tags to the Casper Regional Office of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Call 1-800-233-8544 (in-state toll free) or 307-473-3400 for mailing information.

Anglers who return tags will receive a prize generously donated by Rocky Mountain Discount Sports or Sportsman’s Warehouse. Prizes range in value from \$5 to \$200.

Signs and tag return boxes are at the boat ramps

Speas Fish Hatchery

Part of a Much Larger System

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department manages a variety of fisheries statewide. One of the ways the Department manages these fisheries is through the use of fish that are grown within Wyoming Game and Fish Department Fish Culture facilities. Speas Fish Hatchery is one of the ten facilities owned by Wyoming Game and Fish, and it is located just ten miles from Casper. Speas was originally constructed in 1957 and began full production by 1959. In 2005, an expansion and renovation project began which was completed in 2012. The renovation allows all who visit Speas, the opportunity to see a state of the art facility that raises fish from eggs to stocking.



Culturists and biologists work closely together

Speas raises approximately 250,000 to 275,000 pounds of fish annually which is equivalent to approximately 1.6 million fish.

Speas is a very diverse aquaculture facility that raises ten species year to year. The type, amount, and the size of fish Speas Hatchery raise is determined by the fisheries management needs of the Department.

The Fisheries Division of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is divided into eight different regions, (Casper, Cody, Green River, Jackson, Laramie, Pinedale and Sheridan) with each region having a regional fisheries management crew. Each regional crew is responsible for the management of the fisheries within the region. As part of this management, each crew submits requests for the species, number, and size of fish that will meet the management needs of the waters within their particular region. This process is done two years in advance, so the requests for fish to be reared and stocked out of Speas and the other nine facilities in 2017 were made in 2015. The requests from all of the regional fisheries management crews get combined into one pool which is sent out all of the fish culture facilities. This allows the facilities within the culture section to work together to try to fulfill the needs of each region. The fish hatchery managers work diligently to try to meet each of these requests by raising as many fish as possible without sacrificing fish health or quality. This generates a fish schedule for each facility. In short, what each facility produces each year is determined by the needs of the fisheries statewide.



The big truck "Bow" stocks Bryan Stock Trail Pond in Casper

Once the production schedules for each facility is planned; requests for eggs are made. These requests are for the number of eggs of each species to meet the particular facilities fish schedule. The number of eggs that are needed at each facility is based on number of fish of a particular species they are scheduled to raise and expected survival. For example in 2017, Speas is scheduled to produce 597,000 Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout to meet the needs of the 38 different waters.

To produce this many Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout, Speas submits a request for 663,000 eyed eggs which accounts for the 90% survival rate of Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout raised at Speas.



Regional Fisheries Updates



Seminole Reservoir

Trout fishing in Seminole should be a little better than the last few years due to an upswing in survival of stocked rainbows from 2015. Those fish will be two-year-olds this summer and will average 17 inches. There are quite a few wild Brown Trout present in this lake as well, courtesy of downstream drift from the North Platte River. They are scattered throughout the lake but look for the highest numbers up the Platte arm, especially around steep rocky shorelines where they feed on crayfish.

Walleye numbers have changed little in Seminole over the last three years. What has changed is average size of Walleye. Very good recruitment from seven and ten years ago is evident in the number of large fish currently present. The seven-year-old Walleye will range in size from 16 to 21 inches while the ten-year-old female Walleye are 25 to 32 inches (male Walleye rarely get bigger than 20 inches in Seminole). Our fall netting also showed a large age-two year class. These Walleye will be in the 13-inch range this summer.



A Seminole Walleye



Miracle Mile, North Platte River

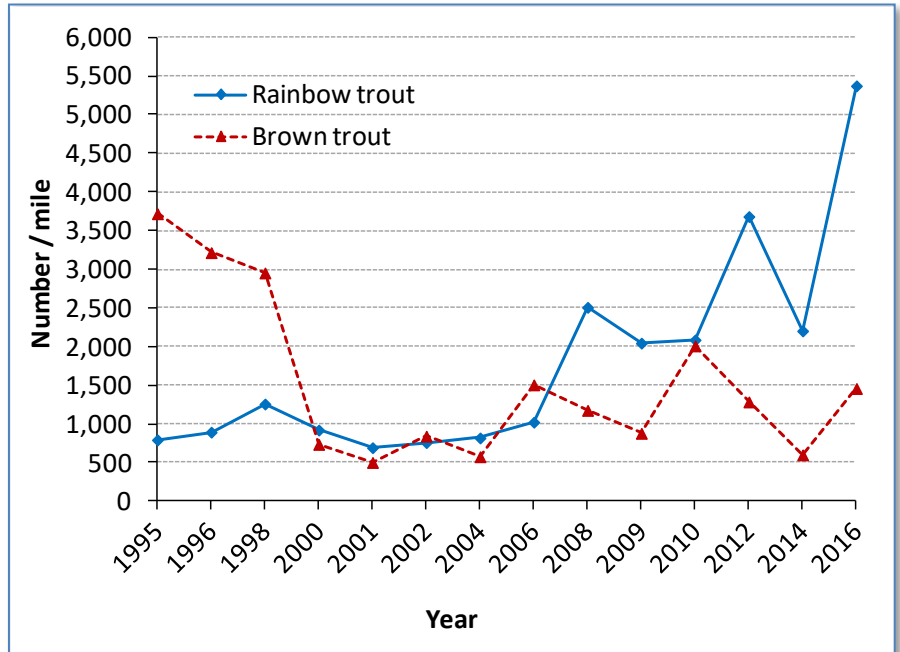
This amazing trout fishery officially lies on about six miles of the North Platte River between Kortez Dam and the confluence of Sage Creek, just upstream of Pathfinder Reservoir. **Fishing regulations changed starting January 1, 2017; anglers can keep up to 12 Walleye at the Miracle Mile.** Anglers can fish with bait, lures, or flies and harvest three trout per day, or have three in possession, only one of which one may measure 16 inches or larger.

The abundance of all trout (estimated number per mile) is cyclic at the Miracle Mile. Anglers contacted for creel surveys provided valuable data showing rates of success and overall catch rates exceeding management objectives for the Mile in 2016.



Fish population surveys in July 2016 showed increases in number of both Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout. The abundance of all trout in 2014 (2,882 fish/mile) was near average following a peak in 2012 (4,967 fish/mile). In 2016, the abundance of all trout skyrocketed to 6,824 fish/mile, mostly owed to very high numbers of age-one Rainbow Trout (6 to 12 inches) and Brown Trout (6 to 10 inches).

Focusing in on just Rainbow Trout, total abundance more than doubled from 2014 (2,203 fish/mile) to 2016 (5,374 fish/mile). On the bright side, the number of age-one rainbows in 2016 showed promise as a strong age-class that will carry the fishery for many years. However, age-2 fish (measuring 12 to 17 inches) were notably low in frequency, down 65% from 2014. Rainbow Trout measuring greater than 17 inches held steady abundance over the last two years, at 422 fish/mile in 2016. The bottom line is that anglers can expect good numbers of small and very large Rainbow Trout this year.



Rainbow and Brown Trout numbers were both up in 2016

Average relative weights (a measure of how plump fish are for their lengths) for all trout species were good at the Mile in 2016. High reservoir levels and stream flows have benefitted growth.

Stream flows in the Miracle Mile over the 2016 water year (October 2016 through September 2016) were above average during the winter and summer. These observations showed that habitat conditions and forage availability had remained beneficial for all life cycle aspects for trout: spawning, incubation, rearing, and growth were all well supported. In fact, above average flows during the winter were likely responsible for the large boost in juvenile Brown Trout observed in the 2016 survey.

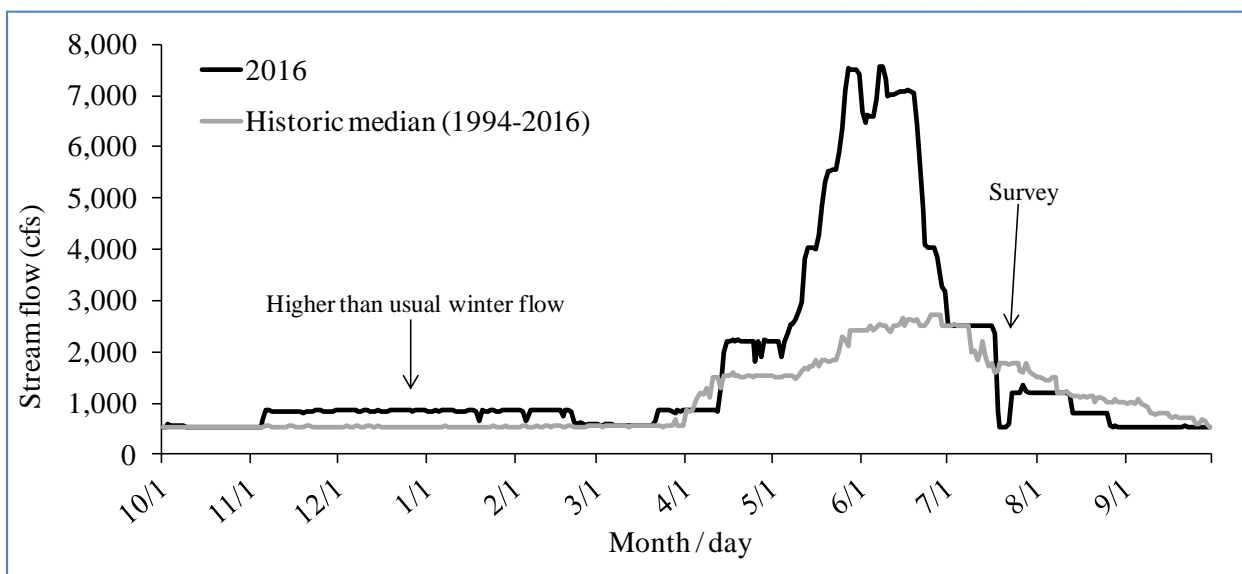


Working up fish at the Mile.



A Rainbow Trout at the Mile





Stream flow (cubic feet per second) in 2016 (black line) at the Miracle Mile was higher than average (gray line).

Remember to be cautious of stream flows when wade-fishing at the Mile! Operational changes at the power plant can result in rapid increases in water release from the Kortess dam.



Pathfinder Reservoir

The water level at Pathfinder Reservoir was nearly double the historic average during spring gill net surveys in late May 2016 and predicted to be similar for spring 2017. Snowpack in spring 2017 was 90% of average in the upper North Platte River basin and a whopping 217% of average in the Sweetwater basin.

Annual spring gillnetting at Pathfinder Reservoir in 2016 indicated that the average Rainbow Trout measured 15.4 inches, smaller than during 2015. On a positive note, higher numbers of small rainbows (10 to 13 inches) resulted from better survival of the 125,980 catchable-sized (nine-inch) fish that were stocked in the fall of 2015 than during the previous few years. They grow quickly to about 12 inches by the following spring if they remain healthy and can avoid predation. The body condition of Rainbow Trout at Pathfinder has remained very good. Rainbows at least four-years-old are most abundant in the reservoir, although these fish are sparse compared to five or six years ago.



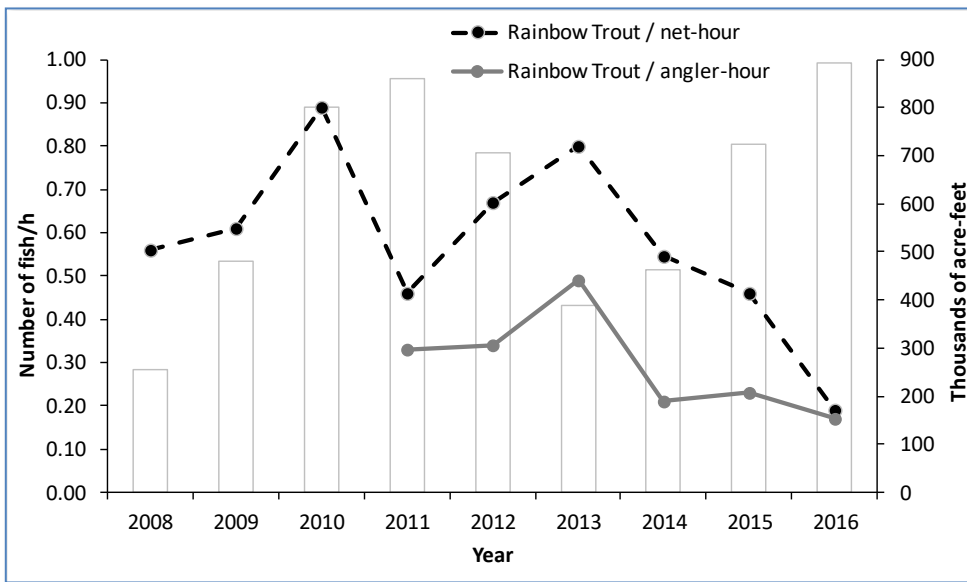
Pulling in a net at Pathfinder



Overall numbers of trout continued a sharp decline that began in 2013. The overall gill net catch rate for rainbows has dropped from 0.80 fish/net-hour in 2013 to an all-time low of 0.19 fish/net-hour in 2016. Anglers have also reported a decline in their catch rates during spot creel surveys, from 0.49 fish/angler-hour in 2013 to 0.17 fish/angler-hour in 2016. Several years of poor survival of stocked Rainbow Trout, due in part to predation by the growing Walleye population, has taken its toll on the trout fishery. A management shift requesting fewer (90,000) but larger Rainbow Trout (ten-inch) to stock at Pathfinder and hatchery efforts committed to optimize fish quality, although costly, are hoped to fuel a rebound in the trout fishery at Pathfinder Reservoir over the next few years.



Picking nets at Pathfinder



Rainbow Trout catch rates were down in gill nets and for anglers in 2016. Bars show reservoir storage



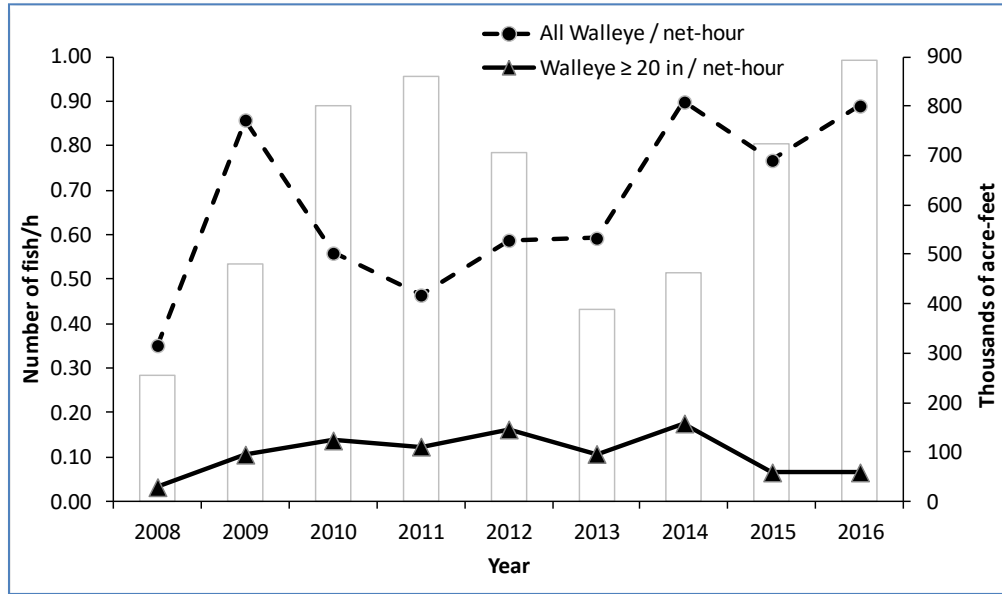
A Pathfinder Rainbow

The adult Brown Trout population in Pathfinder was unchanged in 2016. Most browns ranged from 15 to 20 inches, with a couple over 20 inches, including a 10-pound lunker measuring 27.5 inches! Juvenile browns were very abundant at the Miracle Mile in 2016, which bodes well for the future of Pathfinder’s Brown Trout fishery.

The Snake River cutthroat stocked into Pathfinder Reservoir during 2011 (about 48,000 catchable-size fish) carries on. They are reaching the end of their lifespan and are starting to dwindle, with a gill net catch rate falling from 0.24 fish/hour in 2015 to just 0.09 fish/net-hour in 2016. They reached an average length of nearly 18 inches in 2016, and anglers have reported catching cutthroats larger than 20 inches. Try a new technique or fish in new areas to discover these beautiful fish. A handful of Snake River Cutthroat (about 11,000 catchable-sized fish) were stocked in the fall of 2016.

Excellent Walleye fishing should continue at Pathfinder through 2017 with abundant fish in the 12 to 17-inch range as well as ample opportunities to catch trophy fish. Walleye catch rates in fall gill net surveys have nearly doubled from 2011 (0.46 fish/h) to 2016 (0.89 fish/h), nearly rebounded to the all-time high observed in 2014 (0.9 fish/net-hour). Numbers of age-three and age-four Walleye remained strong in 2016, boosting numbers of quality to preferred-length fish (15 to 20 inches) from 21% to 29% of the population. Higher reservoir levels during recent years than the mid-2000s benefited Walleye recruitment and body condition. Large Walleye, over 20 inches, have leveled off in abundance over the last two years.





Walleye abundance continued to increase overall at Pathfinder in 2016. Bars show reservoir storage.

Take advantage of the strong 2012 to 2014 cohorts of Walleye at Pathfinder Reservoir and harvest these fish! Body condition of Walleye was good in 2016 but has declined from an all-time high observed in 2014. Biologists will watch trends in relative weight, a measure of body condition, for indications of density-dependent limitations on forage availability. If the Walleye population continues to grow, it is possible that body condition will decline and fish growth may slow down. So, enjoy Pathfinder’s smaller Walleye as table fare and help manage your fishery at the same time!



Pathfinder Walleye



Cardwell Reach, North Platte River

The trout population at Cardwell is still going strong with an estimated 1,400 trout per mile or 2,400 pounds of trout per mile. Rainbow Trout are the most abundant species at 71% of the population. Brown Trout make up the remaining 29%. Snake River Cutthroat are occasionally caught, but numbers are very low. Rainbow Trout averaged 16.6 inches and 1.82 pounds. The average size of Brown Trout was slightly smaller at 14.8 inches and 1.60 pounds. The largest fish captured, however, was a Brown Trout which was 23.3 inches and 6.73 pounds.

If you fished Cardwell during 2016, you might have filled out a creel survey card. We ran a remote creel survey there from March through November to get an idea what the average catch rates are and to gauge angler satisfaction with the fishery. The average catch rate was 1.37 trout per hour, which is very high (0.5 fish per hour on average is considered good). Anglers reported catching mostly Rainbow Trout (95% of fish caught).



Brown Trout at Cardwell in 2016.



Alcova Reservoir

We are in the second year of a five year project to evaluate trout stocking in Alcova Reservoir. In order to study whether Rainbow Trout are the best fit for the lake, we have started stocking Kokanee, Bear River Cutthroat and Snake River Cutthroat in addition to Rainbow Trout. The study is designed so we can gauge survival, growth and angler catch rates of these species compared to Rainbow Trout. It is still early in the study, but the results after one year show Bear River Cutthroat survived better than Rainbow Trout, while Snake River Cutthroat survival did not differ from Rainbow Trout. Gauging Kokanee survival is more difficult because they are not easily sampled with traditional trout gill-net sets, but Kokanee did survive and are being caught by anglers. We plan on conducting a sonar estimate of Kokanee this summer (using a high-tech sonar unit to conduct a population estimate) which will help us evaluate survival of Kokanee relative to Rainbow Trout. We will continue to stock Kokanee, Bear River Cutthroat, Snake River Cutthroat and Rainbow Trout for several more years at which point we will collect and analyze data to make a determination on future trout management at this popular fishery.



Alcova Kokanee in 2016

The Walleye population is trending down in Alcova right now. The catch rate in our standard fall gill-net sampling fell from a high of 0.60 Walleye per hour in 2012 to 0.26 Walleye per hour in 2016. On the surface, it would appear that the increased limit is responsible for the decline in Walleye, but the data paints a different picture. We can measure annual survival rates of a population using gill net catch data in conjunction with fish age data we collect from the fish themselves. What we are seeing is that the annual survival rate for Walleye between two and six-years-old (13 to 22 inches) actually increased from around 40% before 2012 to 50% currently meaning a larger percentage of the population is surviving over the course of the year. On top of this, we measure year class strength as the number of two year old Walleye caught in our sample from year to year (because we don't reliably catch one-year-old Walleye - they are too small). This data shows Alcova Walleye had good reproduction in 2009 and 2012 but had below average reproduction since. Because the survival rate has increased, this leaves poor reproduction as the smoking gun behind the decline in Walleye numbers at Alcova.



North Platte River - Gray Reef and Bessemer Bend

We conducted population estimates at Gray Reef and through the Narrows (Sechrist to Bessemer) in October 2016. Overall, the number of trout per mile has decreased significantly from the high point in 2012 and currently stands at 4,000 trout per mile (6,800 pounds of trout per mile). The decrease in number is not unexpected however as 2010 and 2011 saw record levels of natural reproduction followed by poorer than normal reproduction in 2014 and 2015. The population is currently made up mostly of larger older fish from four to six years old. The average Rainbow Trout in the Gray Reef reach was 16.5 inches and 1.7 pounds.



A Bessemer Bend area Rainbow Trout in 2016.

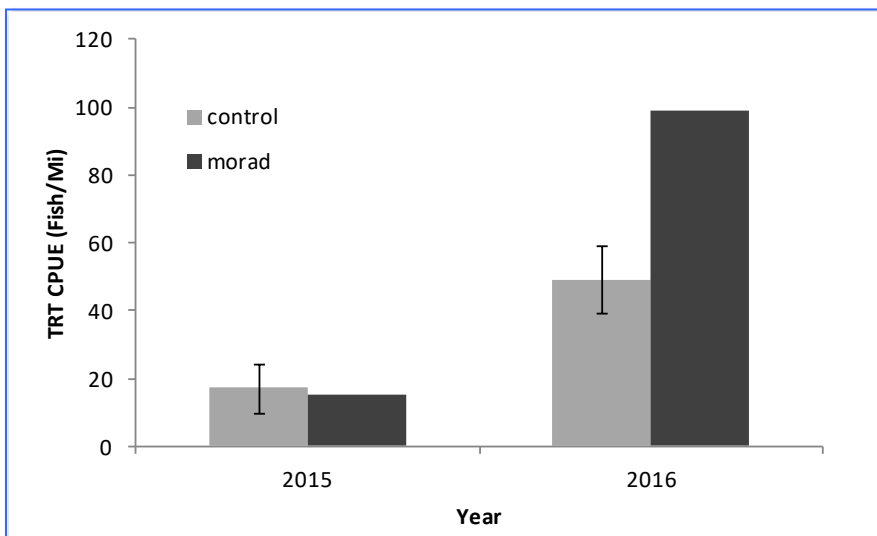


Bessemer Brown Trout in 2016.



North Platte River – Morad Park, City of Casper

We conducted trout sampling on the North Platte River from Robertson Road to the water treatment plant to assess the trout population in the newly restored Morad Park reach with upstream control reaches. We collected baseline data in 2015 before construction through Morad Park and at upstream control sites as well. We did not conduct actual population estimates, but rather did one pass through each reach with an electrofishing boat and recorded the number of fish captured divided by the reach length as an index of trout density (trout captured per mile of electrofishing). We found no difference in trout densities among the



River habitat work has already increased trout numbers at Morad Park

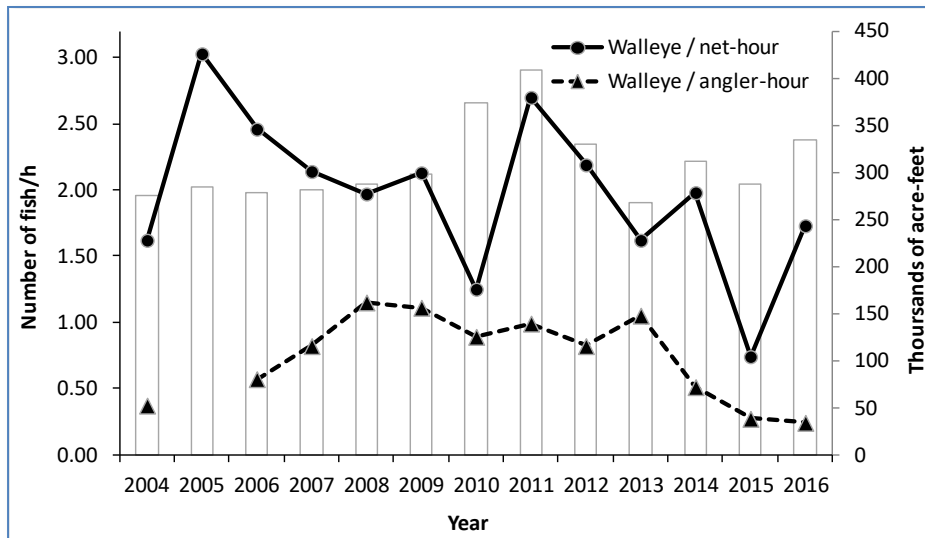
five upstream control reaches and the Morad Park reach in 2015 before construction. In fall of 2016 (one year after construction) we found the trout density through the Morad Park reach was more than double the trout densities in the upstream control reaches, indicating the river work created ideal trout habitat and far more trout are found throughout the project area than are found upstream. This is good news for anglers as the river through Morad Park is not only accessible to shore anglers, but now hosts an impressive trout population as well.



Glendo Reservoir

The Walleye population at Glendo Reservoir began a rebound in 2016 that should continue if favorable conditions support ample reproduction over the next couple years. Water levels have been very good during recent years. Glendo was at 163% of average storage during sampling in August 2016. Overall abundance, indexed by standardized August gill netting, jumped to 1.73 fish/net-hour in 2016 from 0.74 fish/net-hour in 2015 but was still below the previous ten-year average of 1.99 fish/net-hour.





Walleye catch rates increased in gill nets but not for anglers in 2016.



Pulling in a gill net at Glendo

Walleye population structure at Glendo Reservoir showed signs of improvement in 2016, with the proportion of fish measuring at least 15 inches (proportional stock density, or PSD) returning to a more balanced value of 61 in 2016, from an unhealthy high of 90 in 2015. A PSD of 61 in 2016 was closer to a value reflecting a population of Walleye with a balance of young, small fish and large, mature fish. The percentage of Walleye measuring from 10 to 15 inches has stabilized around 35-39% over the last two years, an increase from 15% in 2014. Numbers of age-three to age five fish (15 to 18 inches) dominated the population structure in 2016 and will drive the fishery over the next two years.

Most importantly, a resurgence of age-one Walleye occurred in 2016, and these fish will help the fishery rebuild. This contrasted with 2014 and several previous years when small, young fish were uncommon. The return of age-one and age-two Walleye, however slight, was a good sign for the future at Glendo. Large Walleye will likely take a slight dip in abundance in the near future as the weak numbers of mature, big fish die. The largest Walleye sampled in 2016 measured 28.4 inches and weighed 8.76 pounds!



Fish are measured and otoliths (or "ear bones") are extracted.

Walleye body condition was good at Glendo in 2016. Gizzard Shad were reestablished by importing mature adults from Nebraska over the last two years. Abundant shad fry and fingerlings spawned at Glendo fuel the growth and spawning potential of Walleye, as well as all the other game fish in the reservoir.

Biologists plan to import a few more shad with help from Nebraska Game and Parks in 2016 to ensure that enough mature adults are present to produce a good spawn. At our northern latitude and elevation, Gizzard Shad do not always overwinter and most likely mature at age-three. This means that 2018 is the earliest that shad that hatched in Glendo from recent stockings are expected to mature and begin producing forage. Although a few adult shad transplanted from Nebraska may have overwintered, only small, immature, age-one shad were found in early 2017. Stocking additional mature shad in 2017 is a cheap insurance policy on rebuilding the Glendo fishery.





Only age-one Gizzard Shad were found in early 2017



A Glendo Walleye in 2016

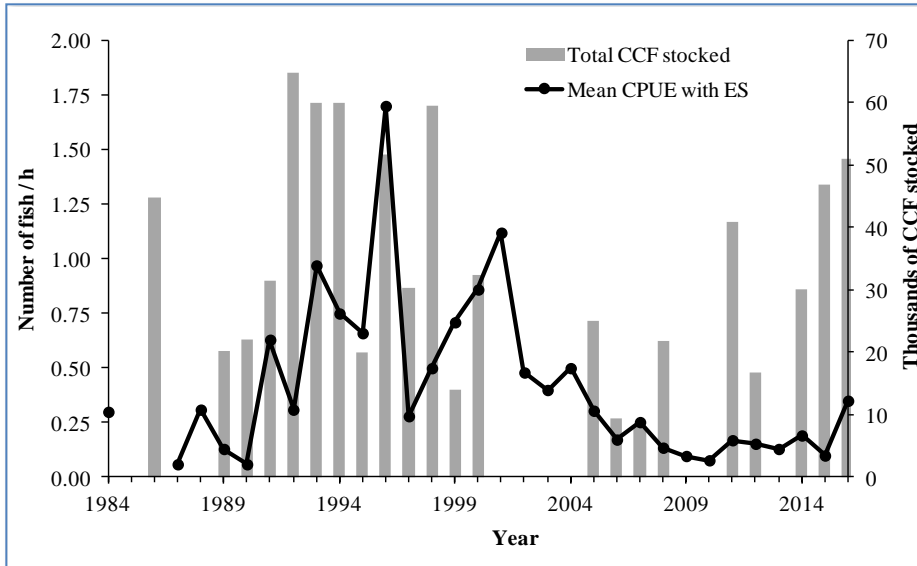
Walleye were first stocked at Glendo Reservoir in 1972 and were completely self-sustaining for the following 40 years. However, an unexpected set of circumstances in 2016 allowed Wyoming Game and Fish to stock over nine million surplus Walleye fry from Garrison National Fish Hatchery in North Dakota. Wyoming Game and Fish trades trout with other states extensively to acquire warm-water species, such as Walleye, Channel Catfish, Bluegill and others. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department had met all of its Walleye stocking needs, leaving a massive surplus on the table and Wyoming benefitted. Hedging against another potentially poor spawning or recruitment year at Glendo for Walleye, Wyoming Game and Fish jumped to claim the fish. It's impossible to tell yet how well the fry survived after stocking. It's also hard to speculate how much the fry will benefit the fishery but biologists will evaluate their contribution as they mature into the population.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife personnel harvest recently hatched Walleye fry from a raceway at the Garrison National Fish Hatchery in North Dakota (left) and Wyoming Game and Fish Department personnel stock 9 million fry at Glendo Reservoir by boat in 2016 (right).

The Channel Catfish fishery at Glendo Reservoir, and the North Platte River upstream relies upon stocking from out of state sources to make up for very poor natural reproduction. The availability of Channel Catfish from out of state has improved greatly in recent years, and a total of 128,000 fingerling to catchable sized fish have been stocked since 2014. These fish will support many years of fishing for this long-lived species. Gill net catch rates in Glendo Reservoir increased dramatically in 2016 (0.35 fish/net-hour) from a low level in 2015 (0.07 fish/net-hour) where catch rates had stagnated for over a decade.





A Channel Catfish from the River above Glendo

The annual gill net catch rate for Channel Catfish (line) at Glendo Reservoir has improved since the number of fish stocked (bars) has been more consistent in recent years, but is still far below rates observed two decades ago.

Large, long-lived catfish were rare in Glendo Reservoir in 2016. No catfish older than age seven were sampled in 2016, indicating that numbers of larger fish had dwindled substantially. These fish were stocked from 2005 through 2008, and would have been ages 8 to 11 in 2016. Thankfully, some of the fish stocked since 2014 are growing into the population (8 to 14 inches in 2016) and are now available for anglers to catch. We should see this fishery take off in the next few years.

The panfish fishery at Glendo improved in 2016 as the abundance and size structure of Yellow Perch continued a cyclic upswing that occurs every four to five years. This happens somewhat in response to declines in Walleye abundance with a slight time-lag. Yellow perch abundance increased for the third year in a row in 2016 (0.82 fish/net-hour), rebounding from the lowest point observed in over a decade during 2013 (0.06 fish/net-hour). A high number of 5-inch fish from 2015 advanced to approximately seven inches during 2016 and was replaced by strong reproduction. Water levels appeared high enough at Glendo during the last four years to maintain good spawning and rearing habitat conditions. Walleye abundance was low during that time period as well. In addition, abundant Gizzard Shad forage returned in 2015, which shifted predation away from Yellow Perch. Black Crappie continued to be rare in 2016, but a very strong and unexpected number of age one (average length of 6.2 in) White Crappie (0.53 fish/net-hour) were observed and promise to produce a crappie fishery within a few years if they survive well.



A Crappie sampled at Glendo in 2016



Casper Fisheries Management Crew



Matt Hahn
Fisheries Supervisor



Gordon Edwards
Fisheries Biologist



Jeff Glaid
Fisheries Biologist,
starts June of 2017

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

3030 Energy Lane
Casper, Wyoming 82604

Phone: 307-473-3400
Fax: 307-473-3433

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
[HTTP://WGFD.WYO.GOV/](http://WGFD.WYO.GOV/)

YOU CAN ALSO FIND US ON:

