

2006

Volume 9



Wyoming Game and Fish Department—Cody Region



Big Horn Basin

Angler News

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Major Milestone Reached

This has been an exciting year for fisheries in the Big Horn Basin. A major milestone has been achieved. We built and installed the state's first fish screen on an irrigation canal (See page 7). Lew Stahl, the Cody Aquatic habitat biologist, is heading up this important effort to reduce fish losses to canals (or fish entrainment as us fish guys call it) and find solutions to barriers to fish movement. The loss of aquatic resources to canals means less fish for the angler and also means that the Game and Fish must stock more fish to meet a reasonable level of angler success. Solutions will require working closely with private landowners, and irrigation districts. These solutions need to be win-win situations for all. This continues to be one of the top priorities because we feel it will make dramatic differences to Big Horn Basin fisheries. Our top four aquatic resource issues are listed in the Nibbles (page 2). ©



The North Fork Shoshone River

Please Note!

The news regarding fisheries across Wyoming can now be found by logging on to the game and fish website <http://gf.state.wy.us/fish/fishing/Newsletters/>. You can use this link to share the newsletter with other anglers and to review past issues. Also check out the regularly updated Cody regional news at the GF website.

Fisheries Management in the Cody Region

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

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

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

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



Fisheries Supervisor Steve Yekel



Fisheries Biologist Mark Smith



Fisheries Biologist Jason Burckhardt.

Nibbles

"We would like your comments and suggestions to help make sound fisheries management decisions"



An example of the addition of sediment from a Shoshone River tributary .

The "Nibbles" segment started in last years newsletter to make anglers aware of issues that may impact Cody region fisheries. We hope the issues mentioned will spawn comments and suggestions to conserve or improve your fisheries and help us make sound fisheries management decisions.

In 2004 our fisheries administration asked us to provide a list of issues that could or are presently impacting fisheries in the Cody Region. Our top four priorities are:

- Fish passage and loss of fish to water diversions
- Native species restoration/preservation -
- Actively pursue public fishing access opportunities
- Work cooperatively with agriculture, other water users , and agencies with vested interest to improve water quality and quantity.

You will notice throughout this newsletter our efforts to begin addressing these priorities. We encourage your suggestions for solutions.

We continue to have concerns about our declining native species including sauger. In a recent genetic study conducted by Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks it was reconfirmed that our Wyoming sauger are still genetically pure and one of the few that hold such status within the Yellowstone and Missouri River drainages. We continue

to feel that this warrants more protection for this species. We hope you feel the same and would support a more conservative sauger limit in upcoming regulations. Would you support a 2 fish sauger limit?

Water quality is an important issue not only for drinking water but for fish habitat and fish health as well. Increased sediment loading is the culprit that degrades food producing riffles and fills pools used by fish for winter habitat . In addition, fish gills, eyes and feeding habits are greatly influenced by decreased water quality. In an effort to educate the public about this and discuss programs that can reduce sedimentation, we, together with the National Resource Conservation Service and other agencies will be sponsoring a **workshop** in the near future—stay tuned for a date this fall or next spring.

Take a Self Guided Tour of the Tensleep Hatchery – Jeff Stafford

Preparation for the 2006 fish-stocking season commenced in November of 2005 with the first eggs of the season. Throughout the winter and early spring months, we incubate, ship and hatch trout eggs. Many of the fish and eggs will be shipped to other fish hatcheries to be raised and stocked in 2006. We will keep about 150,000 to raise and stock ourselves. As of January, we had incubated about 1.7 million Rainbow trout eggs and we are preparing for the upcoming Yellowstone Cutthroat trout spawning season.

The hatchery has a little different look this year. Last year, the circular tanks were covered with a building to protect the fish from predators and direct sunlight. Also, a new informational kiosk was built to improve

the self-guided tour system, which was implemented in 2005. This kiosk has signs with information about the Yellowstone Cutthroat brood fish. A new oxygen generator was installed to improve rearing conditions for fish in our circular tanks and brood facility. If you stop by, you will notice the oxygen bubbling up from air stones in the bottom of the tanks.

We would like to encourage everyone to visit the hatchery. Pick up a self-guided tour brochure that contains information and a map to guide you through all the sites at the hatchery. If you have any questions while you are here, don't hesitate to ask! Formal tours are available and can be scheduled in advance by calling (307)-366-2404. Our visiting hours are

from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm daily.

Here are some of the local waters Tensleep will be stocking in 2006:

- South Worland Pond-** Rainbow trout
- Lower Medicine Lodge Lake-** Splake (cross between brook trout and lake trout)
- Lower Sunshine Reservoir-** Splake
- East Newton Lake-** Splake
- Irma Mitigation Pond-** Splake
- Boysen Reservoir-** Rainbow Trout
- Beck Lake-** Yellowstone Cutthroat (large brood fish)
- Deaver Reservoir-** Yellowstone Cutthroat (large brood fish)



The new brood stock facility at Tensleep Hatchery

Slow Change at Harrington Reservoir

The illegal introduction of perch into the Harrington Reservoir prompted the Game and Fish to introduce walleye beginning in 2003. The walleye are starting to show up in anglers creels and there is potential for very good growth .

The reservoir was sampled in April 2005 and good numbers of perch, bluegill, and large-mouth bass were found. There were four walleyes sampled that averaged 3.3 pounds.

Harrington is in a transition phase as we are trying to establish walleye into a water that is already full of fish. The more large walleye we have, the more rapidly the reservoir will transition to a destination for walleye anglers.

Harrington reservoir is located near Otto between Cody and Basin. You can find the reservoir by following the highway signs from the east end of the town of Otto. There is a 15-horse power boat motor limit on the reservoir.



Harrington Reservoir Bass shown by avid angler and Game and Fish volunteer, Earl Kelsey of Basin.

Meadowlark Lake- a Good Bet for Trout



Meadowlark Lake Brown Trout

Meadowlark Lake is located along Highway 16 between Tensleep and Buffalo. The lake has a good reputation for catches of rainbow, brook, and the occasional brown trout.

The lake is located near forest service campgrounds and private resorts with many amenities. The lake has a boat ramp that is best suited for small boats.

The Game and Fish Department currently stocks the lake each summer with

50,000 3-inch and 5,000 8-inch rainbow trout.

The lake is relatively shallow with the deepest point only 20' deep. Fishing from shore is often as good or better than from a boat. Most bank anglers use traditional trout baits such as night crawlers and Power-bait. Slow trolling with small lures is also productive.

Our netting in 2005 found that rainbow trout outnumber other trout by a 6:1

margin. Rainbows averaged 11 inches with the largest 16 inches.

Brook trout averaged 10 inches with the largest 11 inches. A few brown trout were sampled with one just over 6 pounds.

Meadowlark is a good option for a family outing that offers convenient access and a good chance to catch trout. Because of its popularity, summer weekends don't offer solitude.

Summaries of Recent Sampling

Mayland Stock Pond—The fishery was completely lost due to drought. The reservoir was restocked in 2005 with large-mouth bass and hybrid sunfish.

Emerald Lake (Big Horn Mountains)— This lake offers good sized Yellowstone cutthroat to those willing to make the hike. Sampling in 2005 found cutthroat averaged 11.5 inches with some as large as 18 inches. There are five other

fishable lakes in close proximity.

Irma Mitigation Pond — Located on Bureau of Reclamation land off of Mountain View Drive (a road off of Bartlett Lane) is annually stocked with Splake (brook trout lake trout hybrid). Sampling in 2005 found a decent population of splake in this small lake. Splake are piscivorous (fish eating) by nature so streamers or fish imitating lures will get their attention.

North Fork Shoshone River— Juvenile trout were collected from the lower North Fork Shoshone River in 2005 and tested for *Myxobolus cerebralis*, the organism that causes Whirling Disease. None of the fish collected were infected with the parasite.

Big Horn Lake— Sampling in 2005 found all game fish were in excellent condition due to the increased food available by the

rise in the reservoir. Walleye and sauger numbers remain low while catfish are still plentiful.

Hidden Lake — a small lake off the North slope of Carter Mountain near Cody was sampled after a stock of Yellowstone Cutthroat in 2003. Fish averaged 10.9 inches and ranged from 9.3 to 12.6 inches.

Tillett Springs Rearing Station- Ben Milner



Spawning a female rainbow trout at Tillett Springs rearing station.

Tillett Springs Rearing Station ended 2005 the same way it began, spawning Firehole Rainbow trout and planting large brood culls in several Wyoming waters. The spawning operation began in November 2005 and continued through the second week of January. The majority of the one million eggs taken this year will be hatched, raised, and stocked throughout the state by Wyoming Game and Fish Department hatcheries. A small percentage of the

eggs taken are used as future brood fish. It takes approximately 3 years for the fish hatched from these eggs to grow large enough to be added to our brood stock for future spawning operations. Half of this year's 2,000 brood culls were planted into Beck Lake and Deaver Reservoir, with the others going into the North Platte River from Alcova Reservoir to Douglas. The brood culls offer an excellent angling opportunity as they average about

2.5 pounds each with many tipping the scales at over 5 pounds.

Tillett raised brown, rainbow, and cutthroat in 2005 totaling over 170,000 fish and weighing 35,000 pounds that were planted in Wyoming. Please feel free to come and visit. Tillett is located approximately 17 miles northeast of Lovell, with visiting hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

"A number of Bighorn River sauger and catfish are currently tagged"

Please Report Tagged Fish

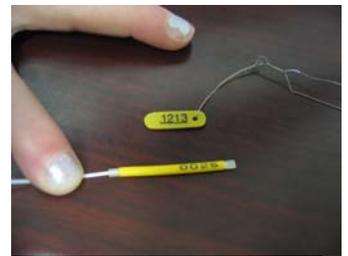
Fish managers occasionally use tags to gain information about a particular fish population. Tagged fish can help managers understand not only movement but also growth and the approximate number of fish in a population.

Most tags used by the Game and Fish Department simply have a number that corresponds to information collected when the fish was tagged. You can be assured that if you catch a tagged fish in Wyoming, there is a fish biologist that wants to know

where it was caught, how big it was, and whether or not you kept the fish. If you do capture a tagged fish and intend to release it, leave the tag in and write the number down. A fish captured multiple times is more valuable than one captured only once.

We have been tagging catfish in the Bighorn River and Big Horn Lake for a number of years. More anglers reporting tagged fish will lead to a better understanding of these fish. For example, because of a Montana

angler, we know that channel catfish #468 captured near Jim Creek on the Yellowtail unit in 2001 moved all the way to Yellowtail dam by 2003 (37 miles). Please report tagged fish by calling 1-800-654-1178.



The two types of tags currently attached to Bighorn River fish



An April 2005 flushing removed much of the fine dirt from the Bighorn River

Flushing Flows

On April 12th 2005 the Bighorn River received a welcomed cleaning. A designed release of water from Boysen dam was initiated to move fine dirt (silt) downstream.

Designed releases of this magnitude are called flushing flows by fisheries managers. The concept of flushing a river is akin to using your garden hose to clean dirt from your rain gutter.

After six years of below average flows, the Bighorn River had accumulated tons of silt. The amount of silt was impacting the fishery by covering gravel and rock important for trout spawning, and food production.

The 2005 flush was able to clean the river considerably, but our measurements suggest that more flushing is needed to get the river back to a desired state.

The Bureau of Reclamation who administers Boysen Reservoir has been retaining additional water in the reservoir this winter to provide another flushing flow in 2006.

The 2006 flush occurred on March 29-30 with follow up evaluation indicating greatly improved substrate conditions. Sediment was reduced and fish were busy using the clean gravels for spawning. We are looking forward to an increase in spawning success in the near future.

Bighorn River Trout

The Department stocks approximately 13,000 rainbow and 8,000 cutthroat in the Bighorn River from Wedding of the Waters to Black Mountain Road. The fish are stocked at 6-7 inches in early summer and grow to nearly 12 inches by fall.

To evaluate how well these stocked fish are doing, the fisheries management crew electro-fishes the river from Wedding of the Waters to 8th street in Thermopolis each fall.

The number of trout in the river has been declining since 2002. However, better water conditions and improved condition of our stocked fish appears to be reversing this downward trend.

Brown trout are not stocked in the river and tend to be outnumbered 2:1 by rainbow trout. In 2005 we estimated

slightly more adult brown trout in the river compared to 2004 but young fish (less than 1 year old) were less abundant. Brown trout in 2005 averaged 13 inches and the largest fish captured was 25 inches.

Rainbow trout reproduce in the river but without supplemental stocking of fish they wouldn't provide a consistent fishery. In 2005 we found more adult rainbows than in 2003 or 2004. Even more encouraging was a large number of young (less than 1 year old) rainbows, primarily due to excellent survival of fish stocked in early August. Rainbow trout sampled in 2005 averaged 11 inches and the largest was 25 inches.

Snake River Cutthroat averaged 12 inches in 2005 with the largest fish sampled stretching 20 inches. Snake River Cutthroat are outnum-

bered 5:1 by other trout species in the river but their eagerness to take surface flies will sometimes lead folks to believe they are more abundant.

Fishing on the Bighorn should be better in 2006 than in recent memory. And if water conditions continue to be good, 2007 could be the best fishing the Bighorn has seen in a long time.

The Big Horn River begins at the Wedding of the Water, where the river changes (in name only) from the Wind River to the Big Horn. From the Wedding of the Waters (just south of Thermopolis) to the Sorenson Public Fishing Area (just north of the Black Mountain Road), there are approximately 20 miles of water that offer very good fishing for brown, rainbow,



A large Bighorn River Brown shown by fisheries technician, Kirk Handley.

"Fishing on the Bighorn should be better in 2006 than in recent memory"

The Clarks Fork Hatchery deals with a Bumper Crop of Tumbleweeds– Dave Miller

The Clark's Fork Fish Hatchery is located in Clark Wyoming on the banks of the Clarks Fork River.

This year, in the Clark area, there was a tremendous proliferation of the various plants that are commonly referred to as tumbleweeds. Strong winter winds caused thousands of these plants to be blown into the fish rearing raceways at the fish hatchery and then flushed into the Clark's Fork River. Early season anglers fishing the river at the hatchery outlet will encounter these hook snagging weeds until spring run off moves them downstream.

Besides tumbleweed the Clarks Fork Hatchery also deals with growing trout for stocking throughout Wyoming. A recent improvement project installed a vacuum degassing system that removes harmful nitrogen gas and replaces it with oxygen. This system will improve the capability of the hatchery to raise healthy fish.

If you are traveling in the Clark area stop in for a visit and take a few tumbleweeds home as souvenirs.



The Clark's Fork Hatchery and Clarks Fork River invaded by blown tumbleweeds



Renner Reservoir is a good place to get kids hooked on fishing

“Renner is the basin's most consistent producer of bass and sunfish”



Golden Trout. Image by Michelle LaGory.

Renner Reservoir—a Hot Spot for Sunfish

Renner Reservoir located between Hyattville and Tensleep is the basin's most consistent producer of largemouth bass and sunfish. The reservoir has a small gravel boat ramp that is ideal for small boats (there is a 15 hp maximum restriction on motors). Fishing at Renner during summer months can provide non-stop action. Hybrid sunfish are widespread in the reservoir and will aggressively hit flies, lures or

bait. The sunfish have small mouths so if you are missing many strikes consider offering something smaller. The hybrid sunfish are providing a larger food source for the bass than they have had in the past. The result is that a few bass are now exceeding 15 inches which was unheard of in the past. Our sampling in 2005 found that sunfish averaged 5 inches with the largest stretching 8 inches. Large-mouth bass averaged 10

inches with the largest being 17 inches. Remember the regulation for Renner Reservoir was changed beginning in January 2006. The current regulation allows the harvest of six large-mouth bass only two (2) of which may be between twelve (12) and fifteen (15) inches, and only one (1) fish may exceed fifteen (15) inches. The limit for sunfish is ten (10).

The Golden are Back! The Golden are Back! Yeah!

Golden trout, native to the Kern River drainage in California, have done well in Wyoming's high mountain lakes. We stopped stocking golden trout in 1993 when we found that our brood source was hybridized with rainbow trout. While some naturally reproducing golden trout populations remained, those that relied

on stocking dwindled. In 2005, we stocked several high mountain lakes with golden trout on the west side of the Big Horn Basin via helicopter. These lakes include Copper lakes 2 and 3 (the upper most lakes), Daphnia, Rainbow, Cliff, and Snyder lakes in the Beartooth Mountains, along with Snowbank Lake in the

South Fork Shoshone River drainage. These golden trout were stocked as fingerlings, so within the next year or two they should be catchable size. Gunboat Lake and Upper and Lower Pouch Lakes, in the Big Horn Mountains are on the stocking schedule for golden trout in 2006.

Wyoming's Largest Fish?

Ever wonder what the largest fish in Wyoming is? It may be a Lake Trout but it could also be the little known grass carp.

Grass carp are not your run of the mill carp seen sucking mud at your local pond. Grass carp are an entirely different species.

The grass carp also known as the White Amur is a native fish of the large rivers in China. Grass carp eat only aquatic plants, and they eat a bunch. Grass carp often exceed 50 pounds and have been known to reach weights exceeding 100 pounds.

The ability of grass carp to “mow” down aquatic vegetation makes them a useful tool in keeping shallow ponds clear of excessive vegetation.

Renner Reservoir is one of a small number of places in Wyoming where you might encounter grass carp. The grass carp in Renner have been doing a good job keeping the lake from filling with vegetation. You can see the carp moving about in schools in the reservoir. The fish are so large and spooky that often all you see are large wakes moving away from you.

Because grass carp only eat plants there is little chance of catching one while fishing and if you did hook into one you would lose some tackle.

All grass carp brought into Wyoming must be individually certified disease free and incapable of reproducing. This makes these “mowers” costly. Please show respect for these fish by not trying to harm them. If it wasn't for them you would probably be catching weeds at Renner rather than bass.



A 40 inch grass carp from Renner Reservoir

Trout Creek Fish Passage Project– *Lew Stahl*

Safe upstream and downstream passage is important to a healthy fish population. Adult fish need to get over or around various obstacles on their way to spawning areas and both adults and juveniles need to move about to meet food and habitat needs. Fish are susceptible to being trapped in water diversions, whether these diversions are for irrigation, power generation, city water, or other uses. Small fish are especially susceptible to being trapped in diversions as they move downstream, because they are easily swept by the flow (entrained) into the diversion. This year, passage was improved on Trout Creek an important spawning

tributary on the North Fork Shoshone River by screening one of the irrigation ditches. A combination screen and trash rack was installed on the existing headgate that prevents many of the larger fish from entering the irrigation ditch while not interfering with the flow. A second structure was placed in the ditch downstream of the headgate. This structure is a self-cleaning, water powered, rotating drum screen. Water passes through the screen, powering the drum to turn. Leaves and other debris pass over the top as the screen rotates while fish are diverted back through a pipe to the creek. A rock cross-vane was

constructed in the creek, to keep water flows directly below the return pipe, so returned fish safely re-enter the flow and can continue downstream. This project was a cooperative project with permission from five different irrigators, and funding from the East Yellowstone Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Wyoming State Chapter of Trout Unlimited, US Fish and Wildlife Service Private Lands Program, Jackson Hole One-fly, Wyoming Centennial Community Foundation, proceeds from a Wyoming Game and Fish Commissioner's big game license, the Wyoming Game and Fish Grant Program, one private landowner, and one anonymous donor.

"This structure is a self-cleaning, water powered, rotating drum screen"



Headgate Screen / Trash Rack keeps larger fish out of the canal.



The rotating drum screen will help keep these little cutthroat from entering the irrigation canal.



Rotating drum screen turning in the ditch.



A rock cross-vane (upstream U shape structure) maintains a pool and stream flow at the end of the bypass pipe where fish re-enter the stream.

Deaver Reservoir – Boom or Bust?



Aerial view of Deaver Reservoir.

Deaver Reservoir, located off Wyoming State Highway 114, 3 miles southwest of the town of Deaver, has experienced some changes the last few years. The **GOOD NEWS** is that during last springs sampling we had the highest catch rate recorded on Deaver reservoir. The **BAD NEWS** is that the vast majority of the fish caught were less than 10 inches. Deaver has been sustaining an increase in

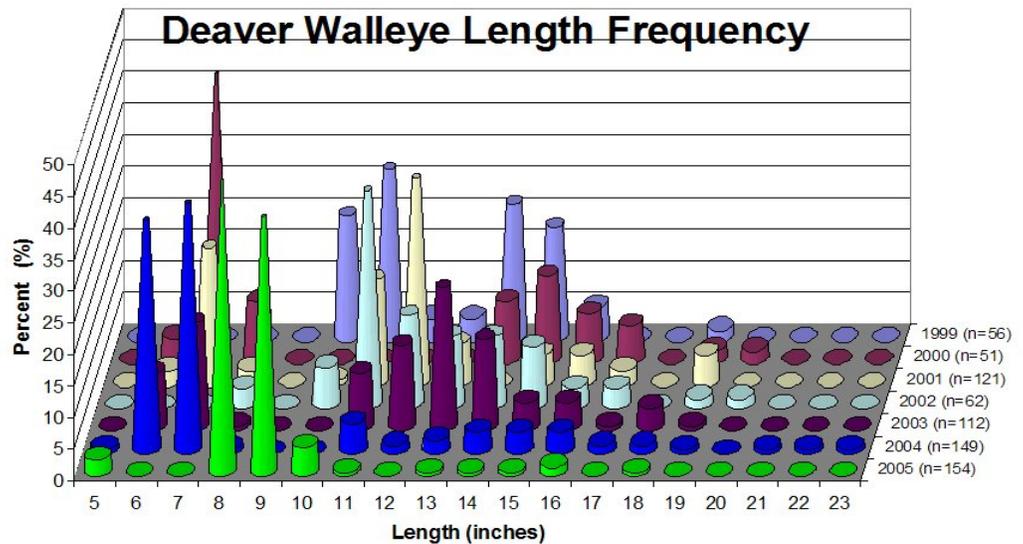
angling pressure for the last several years. The loss of the Big Horn Lake (Yellowtail Reservoir) walleye fishery and other area fisheries, due to drought, has concentrated anglers at this little hot spot. We have seen a decline in the walleye fishery during those years. The number of fish of a harvestable size is dwindling. Unfortunately angler harvest has effected the population to

the point that we are considering implementation of special regulation on this small water. The special regulation may entail a reduction in the bag limit and/or a minimum size limit.



Walleye by Michelle Lagory

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



Length Frequency of walleye caught at Deaver Reservoir 1999-2005

Going Native in Dry Medicine Lodge Creek



Work on Dry Medicine Lodge Creek will be to expand and protect Yellowstone cutthroat in this stream.

A small population of Yellowstone Cutthroat trout were discovered in Dry Medicine Lodge Creek on the west side of the Big Horn mountains in 2001. Cutthroat trout occupy a short section of stream above a series of cascades. Brook trout occupy the remainder of the stream between the cascades and where the stream terminates in a sink. When brook trout are introduced to an area that harbors cutthroat trout the most common outcome is that

cutthroat decline and eventually disappear as the brook trout population grows. To prevent the possibility of brook trout introduction into upper Dry Medicine Lodge Creek, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department plans to eliminate brook trout from the lower 2 miles of the stream and replace the fish with Yellowstone cutthroat.

All cutthroat captured below the cascades prior to the treatment will be saved and located to a

safe area. Brook trout will be removed using the naturally derived chemicals Antimycin and Rotenone that are toxic to trout at very low concentrations. These chemicals break down rapidly and have been proven to not affect birds and mammals at treatment doses. The treatment is scheduled for August 2006.

Yellowstone Cutthroat Not Listed as a Threatened Species

In Late February of this year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that they would not be adding Yellowstone cutthroat trout to the endangered species list. This finding was the result of a 12-month status review initiated by a lawsuit over the rejection of the original 1998 petition to list this fish.

The rejection of the petition is good news, particularly if you like to fish for these fish. Listing could have resulted in re-

strictions on activity, including fishing, where the species is found.

The Department is working to ensure the long term persistence of this species and prevent future listing by restoring this fish to its historic habitats where feasible and prudent. Restoration activities may include the introduction of Yellowstone cutthroat into fishless areas and/or the removal of competing or hybridizing spe-

cies.

Historically, Yellowstone cutthroat trout occupied much of the Yellowstone River basin, including the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River, Wind-Bighorn River, and Tongue River basins in Montana and Wyoming, along with the Snake River basin in Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. Yellowstone cutthroat trout are the only trout native to the Bighorn River Basin.



Yellowstone (left) and Snake River (right) cutthroat trout. Images by Michelle LaGory.

The Cutthroat of the Upper Yellowstone

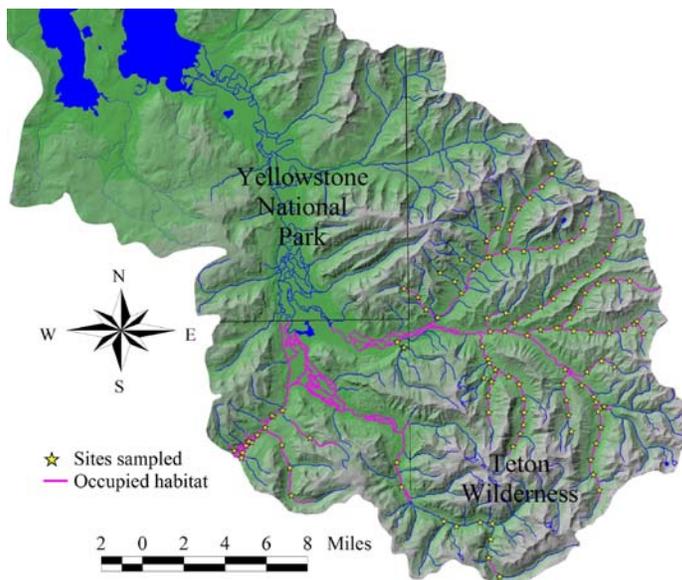
One of the last remaining strongholds for Yellowstone cutthroat trout is Yellowstone Lake and its tributaries.

In 2003 we initiated a project with Yellowstone National Park to assess the dynamics of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the upper Yellowstone River. This study looked at the seasonal movements of Yellowstone cutthroat and their distribution and abundance throughout the drainage.

The last couple of years we surveyed 32 tributaries within the upper Yellowstone River drainage of the Teton Wilderness. Yellowstone National Park is conducting similar surveys within the Park boundary. We sampled 123 locations and surveyed many miles of stream to determine the distribution of cutthroat within the drainage. Juvenile Yellowstone cutthroat trout were found at most of the locations we sampled. There

were a few stream in which barriers to fish movement were encountered. These barriers blocked portions of headwater stream from being inhabited by Yellowstone cutthroat. We also found some resident populations above barriers on Hidden

Creek, Senecio Creek, and the South Fork of the Yellowstone. Yellowstone cutthroat trout were found to occupy approximately 126 miles of perennial stream upstream from Yellowstone National Park.



The sites sampled and range of Yellowstone cutthroat trout within the upper Yellowstone River upstream from Yellowstone National Park.

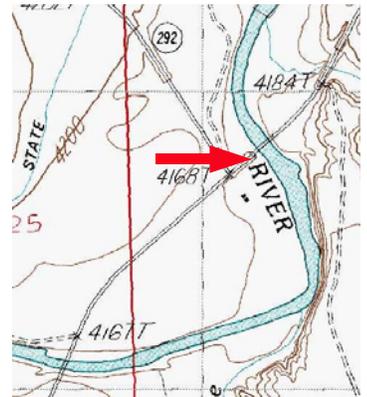
"Yellowstone cutthroat trout were found to occupy approximately 126 miles of stream upstream from Yellowstone National Park."



A typical Yellowstone cutthroat trout from the upper Yellowstone River

New and Improved Access Around the Region

An new ramp on the **Clarks Fork near Edelweiss** to improve the float access on this river is being engineered and should become a reality in the near future. The ramp is being constructed along the highway 120 right-of-way in conjunction with the reconstruction of the highway bridge and in cooperation with the Wyoming Department of Transportation. Completion of this ramp is tentatively scheduled for 2007.



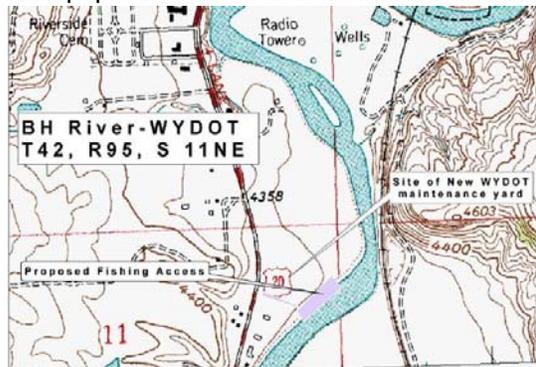
A new ramp to be constructed on the Clarks Fork near Edelweiss.

Rivers Rest is a proposed float access site on the **North Fork Shoshone River**. This access would cut the current float distance from the Shoshone National Forest boundary to Gibbs Bridge in half. The BLM is currently preparing an Environmental Assessment of the development of this access.



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

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

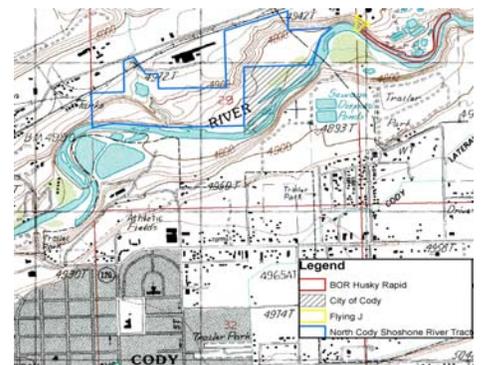


New fishing access site on the Big Horn River adjacent to the WY Department of Transportation maintenance yard near Thermopolis.

A new fishing easement on the **Big Horn River** near the new **WY Department of Transportation (WYDOT)** maintenance yard should be completed in early summer 2006. This 570 foot segment of the Bighorn River will be open to pedestrian access only.

Access to the river will be via the WYDOT maintenance yard parking lot located along WY State Hwy 20 and a short walk path that will be constructed in cooperation with the East Yellowstone Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

The WGFD is pursuing a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to take management control of a parcel of land on the **Shoshone River, North of Cody**. Long-range plans are to incorporate this 108 acre parcel into another adjacent public access tract (~28 acres) just recently acquired by the City of Cody. These lands also touch the WGFD Flying J Easement (1.04 acres) that provides an important link to additional USBR lands downstream reserved for public access. About two miles of continuous river public access would be obtained if all future agreements are completed.



Proposed fishing access site on the Shoshone River just north of Cody off of County Road 2AB.

Aquatic Nuisance Species

What are aquatic nuisance species?

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

Why should I care about aquatic nuisance species?

Aquatic Nuisance species can:

- *Reduce game fish populations
- *Ruin boat engines and jam steering equipment
- *Make lakes/streams unusable by boaters and swimmers
- *Dramatically increase the operating costs of drinking water plants, power plants, dam maintenance, and industrial processes

esses

- *Reduce native species
- *Degrade ecosystems
- *Affect human health
- *Reduce property values
- *Affect local economies of water-dependent communities.

What can I do to help?

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

animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

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

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

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



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

South Fork Dike Pond, Time for a Change

As we pulled the nets out of South Fork Dike Pond in June of 2004 we had one question "Where are all the trout?"

Our nets were overwhelmed with suckers and yellow perch; only a handful of trout were found. We sampled South Fork Dike Pond again in 2005, hoping that our 2004 sampling was not indicative of what was really in the water. Unfortunately, we found similar results. The white suckers were the majority of the catch. Excluding yellow perch (most of which were too small to be considered catchable) game fish comprised only 11 percent of the catch in 2004. Things were a little better in 2005 with game fish comprising 24 percent of the catch. Even worse is that South Fork Dike Pond is not producing the large fish that it has in the past. Only a handful of brown trout over 20 inches were sampled. The robust sucker population is obviously affecting the growth and survival of our stocked

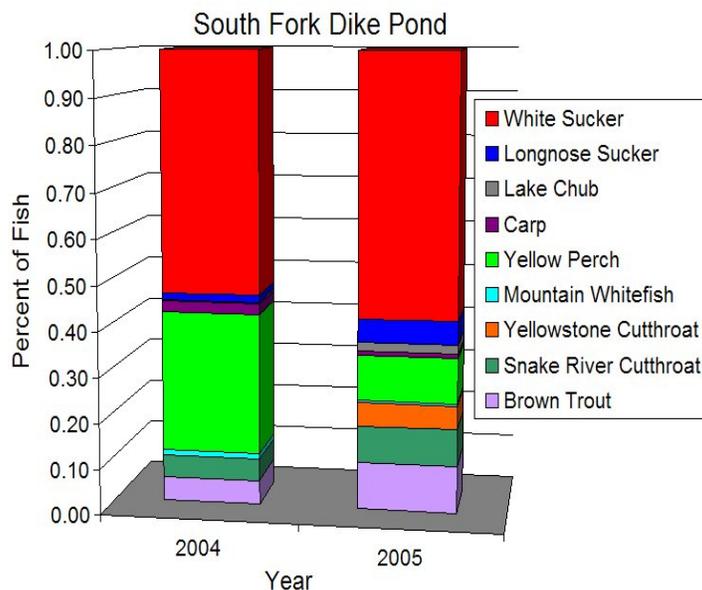
trout.

South Fork Dike Pond was created along with the enlargement of Buffalo Bill Reservoir to reduce the dust associated with fluctuations of the reservoir.

The Bureau of Reclamation and Department are currently developing a strategy to drain and rehabilitate South Fork

Dike Pond.

Future stocking will be with Yellowstone Cutthroat trout (YSC) to protect the upstream Marquette Creek drainage, a native YSC fishery, that spills into the dike pond.



The catch composition of gill nets set in South Fork Dike Pond in 2004 and 2005.

"South Fork Dike Pond is currently overwhelmed with non-game fish and yellow perch."



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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."

Newsletter Contributors

Contributors to this year's newsletter include the Cody Fisheries Management Crew, Lew Stahl (Cody Region Aquatic Habitat Biologist), Ben Milner (Fish Culturist at Tillett Springs Rearing Station), Jeff Stafford (Tensleep Hatchery Assistant Superintendent), Dave Miller (Clarks Fork Hatchery Superintendent) and Dennie Hammer (Cody Region Information and Education Specialist). Thanks to all.

Bits and Pieces

FREE fishing day is June, 3 2006. No license is needed to fish on this day (all other regulations apply).

The **Basin Kids Fishing Day** will be held on May 13th at the Basin Water Plant Pond.

Cody Youth Fishing Day is on June 3rd at the Beck Lake Recreation Area.

Lakes in the **Cloud Peak Wilderness** will be stocked by helicopter in August 2006. Only lakes where fish can't naturally reproduce are stocked.

Sand Coulee Reservoir (FUBAR), a BLM Reservoir west of Powell, continues to be plagued by low water levels due to a failed outlet pipe. The BLM has been trying to secure funding for repairs since 2003.

Big Fish Board

The "rocket perch" (top-right) is displayed by its creator Jon Crooks of Cody. This cub scout almost had his derby car filleted by dad.



Joe Barski (bottom-right) caught this 29" walleye at Wardell Reservoir on May 19th 2005. Joe fishes Wardell frequently but this is by far the largest walleye he has landed at the lake.



Please send us your big or unusual fish pictures for our "big fish board". We will post them in the Cody office and may use them for next years newsletter.