

Fisheries of the Wind River Basin

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Fisheries Management

- Manage 1111 streams and 883 lakes in the Lander Region
- 10 salmonid species, 10 cool or warm water sport fish species and 17 nongame fish species

	Game Fish	Non Game Fish
Native	Yellowstone cutthroat trout, sauger, ling, channel catfish, stone catfish, and white fish	White, mountain and longnose suckers, flathead and lake chub, river carp sucker, red horse, longnose dace, sand shiner, and fathead minnow
Non Native	Rainbow, golden, brook and lake trout, walleye, bass, perch, crappie	Carp, emerald shiner, spottail shiner, sculpin, killifish, Darter....

Sampling

- Electrofish – estimate fish/mile
- Gill net or Trap net – monitor fish abundance
- Seine – monitor juvenile fish and forage
- Sonar – used to survey fish densities in reservoirs
- Angler surveys – monitor catch rate, harvest, angler preference and satisfaction

Management Concepts

- Catchable
- Basic Yield
- Trophy
- Wild
- Unique

Why are fisheries important?



Why are the fisheries important ?

- 1996 – 413,141 anglers bought licenses in Wyoming
- In a 1998 economic study, fishing generated 293 million dollars in Wyoming
- Boysen Reservoir – 39,449 anglers days in 1993
- Biological – feed on insect, food for birds and mammals, educational requests...

Commercial Importance

- Outfitters
- Boysen Marina
- Bait Dealers
- Sporting good stores
- Boat dealers
- Tournament/Special interest
- Motels, Restaurants, Service Stations...



Management efforts

- Provide fisheries through stocking – 260,000 fish stocked in the Lander Region in 2001
- Protect fish from over-harvest by regulation
- Identify problems, enhance habitat where opportunities lie and obtain in-stream flows when possible
- Purchase access
- Information and Education

Priorities

- Native Fish – Yellowstone cutthroat trout, sauger and burbot (ling)
- Important waters
- Whirling Disease
- Aquatic Nuisance
- Access
- Habitat

Native Fish



Prevent listing on Endangered Species List

Yellowstone Cutthroat

- Determining changes in distribution from historic range
- Monitoring population changes
- Evaluating genetic purity
- Identifying barriers
- Coordinating with federal agencies (USFS and USFWS)

Whirling Disease

- Prevent spreading of *Myxobolus* spores
- Identify waters infected
- Evaluate effects on fish populations
- Inform anglers

Access

- Acquire permanent fishing access
- Purchase walk in access
- Provide handicap facilities
- Boat ramps

Habitat

- Protecting riparian areas and looking for opportunities to improve the watershed





Problems Identified

- Accelerated erosion – tie drives, overgrazing, subdivisions, etc...
- Barriers to fish – dams, dewatered channels, etc...
- Channelization – loss of fish habitat
- Competition – introduced fish

Progress

- **Native Fish** – funded sauger study, currently evaluating Yellowstone cutthroat communities and monitoring other native fish.
- **Whirling disease** – protecting hatcheries, learning and informing anglers with new information.
- **Aquatic nuisance** – importation ban to prevent Zebra Mussel, New Zealand Mudsnail and Golden Algae introductions.
- **Access** – recent boat ramp improvements at 6 lakes, ½ mile fishing easement at Dubois, handicap facilities on 3 lakes, walk-in access at 3 streams and 1 reservoir

Progress cont.

- Habitat
 - ✓ Spot treatments - Little Popo Agie PFA, Lander City Park, Wind R. PFA ...
 - ✓ Trust fund habitat projects – Town of Dubois, private land owners ...
 - ✓ Watershed Approach – work with conservation district on Popo Agie, Irrigation improvements on E. Fork Wind River ...
 - ✓ Instream flow filings on 3 streams and studies on 3 other streams.

Drought

- Can have adverse impacts to juvenile fish and spawning
- Can be beneficial to healing stream banks

Summary

- Increasing efforts to maintain native fish communities.
- Taking steps to prevent spreading of disease and introduction of aquatic nuisances.
- Placing more emphasis on long term habitat projects rather than short term projects.
- Looking for access to quality fishing areas.