

The Cutthroat Chronicles

Official Newsletter of the Snake River Cutthroats

January, 2021

A Message from the President *by Matt Woodard*

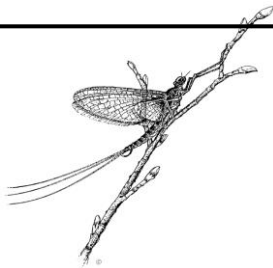
Greetings:

We have made it through 2020. Happy New Year!! Hopefully, everyone has stayed healthy and virus free during the pandemic. These have been and continue to be difficult times, but there are signs of things slowly getting better.

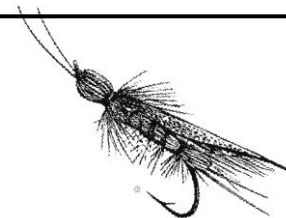
Wintertime when the weather and temperatures drive us inside is a great time to sit down at the fly-tying bench and rebuild your supply of favorite patterns for next spring and summer. Over the next couple of months, we have put together some great guys to talk fly-tying and fishing via Zoom. We had a lot of positive feedback from our November Zoom meeting. I hope that this format offers a safe way for us to share information.

The next Snake River Cutthroats membership meeting will be held January 13, 2021 at 7:00 PM. World class fly tyer and published author Kelly Glissmeyer will tie and discuss flies for winter fishing conditions in our area. The meeting will be held online using the Zoom platform. Visit www.snakerivercutthroats.org or the Cutthroats Facebook page for a link to access the meeting.

I will look forward to seeing many of you on the Zoom call on January 13th. Stay safe and healthy out there.



UPCOMING EVENTS
January 13th, 2021 7PM
Kelly Glissmeyer via Zoom



**Flies for Winter Season
Kelly Glissmeyer**



**The Fly Tying Glissmeyers
(l-r Kelly, Avery, Mike)**

Author (Fly Fishing & Tying Journal, The Fly Fisher), fly tier, fly fisher, and teacher of both, Kelly Glissmeyer came into these from essentially humble beginnings in southern Utah's St. George area. Trout waters there are sparse compared to those in the Greater Yellowstone Area, but provide enough to get started. So after schooling up through college and doing a church mission in Germany (where else would one go when named Glissmeyer?) employment took him, with a few in-between stops, to West Yellowstone. What an opportunity for a fly fisher and budding fly tier! Here Kelly could learn from and swap fly tying ideas with the likes of Barnes, Danskin, Jacklin, and Mathews. With time he came to eastern Idaho through managing Deseret Industries stores in Idaho Falls then Rexburg. All the time during free hours Kelly fly-fished and pursued fly tying. So his reputation in each of these grew (so did his fly tying family: see above pc) to the point of being invited to demonstrate tying skills in shows and shops throughout the west. Through these appearances generosity in sharing ideas and enthusiasm became obvious as did a willingness to offer interested attendees gifts from his tying efforts with ideas on how to present each. Kelly will display all these skills at the tying vise during the meeting except gifting examples unless someone can figure out beforehand how to do so electronically.

Upper Snake Region Bag Limits

Bass (*Largemouth and Smallmouth*)

- Bass limit is 6, both species combined

Brook Trout

- Brook Trout limit is 25
- Harvest allowed during any open season unless otherwise noted under Special Rules

- **Bull Trout**

- Bull trout limit is 0, catch-and-release

Kokanee

- Kokanee limit is 15

Sturgeon

- Sturgeon limit is 0, catch-and-release
- Sturgeon must not be removed from the water and must be released upon landing
- Barbless hooks and sliding sinkers are required, see [fishing regulations](#) for details

Tiger Muskie

- Tiger Muskie limit is 2, none under 40 inches

Trout

Trout limit is 6, all species combined. Bull Trout and Brook Trout listed separate

Stiffies limit is 25, see Big Lost River Exception

Electronic Newsletters Available

For those still receiving hard copies of the newsletter via standard mail, but would prefer to receive it via email, please send your email address to Carol Staples, our membership chair, at casbas@cablone.net.

Fewer mailings mean more dollars for conservation projects. The fish will appreciate your cost-saving efforts.



Ririe Reservoir Fall Walleye Index Netting

By John Heckel – IDF&G Regional Fisheries Biologist

Walleye were illegally introduced to Ririe Reservoir and were first discovered in 2008. In 2009, annual monitoring of the Walleye population began to determine the status of that population and changes to the existing fishery. Fall Walleye Index Netting (FWIN) began in 2010 and ran consecutively until 2017. Biologists found that the Walleye population was low and stable, so they chose to change monitoring to a three-year rotation. During the last week of **October 2020**, fisheries biologists conducted their ninth gill netting year for e in Ririe Reservoir Walleye by setting the nets in the same locations as previous surveys for the same number of nights.

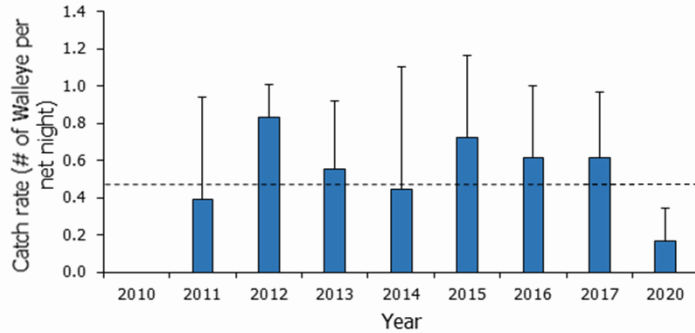


Figure 1. Catch rates of Walleye over time from FWIN. The dashed line represents the average (0.52 fish per net night) from 2010-2017.

The catch rate for Walleye this year (0.17 fish per net night) was lower than in previous years, but they are still present in the reservoir (Figure 1). The number of Walleye in Ririe Reservoir is low, as Walleye made up less than 1% of the total catch of game fish in the nets. Yellow Perch, on the other hand, made up 77% of the game fish caught in the nets. Although anglers and biologists have caught large Walleye in the past, no Walleye greater than 15 inches were captured this year (Figure 2).

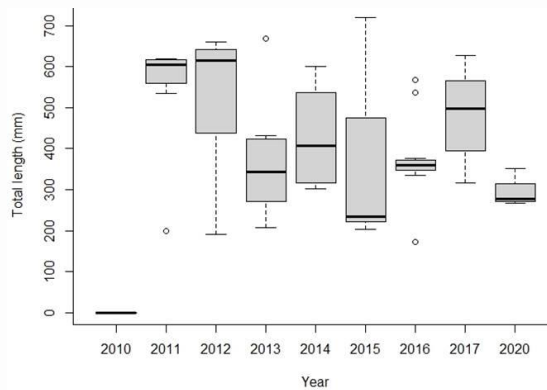


Figure 2. The total length (mm) of all Walleye caught using FWIN per year on Ririe Reservoir. The bold line in each box represents the median length for that respective year.

Biologists captured many kokanee in the 10 to 12-inch range and Yellow Perch up to 10 inches, which bodes well for ice fishing this winter on Ririe. Surprisingly, biologists also captured the most Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout that they have sampled since FWIN began.

High trout numbers continue in the South Fork Snake River

By Pat Kennedy, IDF&G

The South Fork Snake River in eastern Idaho supports the largest river population of native Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Idaho as well as other popular game fish including Rainbow trout and Brown trout. Idaho anglers have repeatedly asked Fish and Game managers to focus management efforts on protecting native trout species when possible. This public sentiment is reflected in our [state fish management plan](#) where the goals for the South Fork Snake River include: protecting the genetic integrity and population viability of cutthroat, and reducing rainbow trout abundance to less than 10% of the trout in the upper river near Conant, as was the case in the mid-1980's. These goals are also reflected by the Yellowstone cutthroat trout [management plan](#). Each fall, IDFG employees use boat electrofishing techniques to estimate trout numbers in order to gauge management efforts relative to goals stated in the management plan. Results from 2020 surveys suggest two things; trout numbers are at a record high and Rainbow trout still comprise more of the population in the upper South Fork than called for in the management plan.

Almost every year since 1986 IDFG conducted abundance estimates in October near the Conant boat ramp to monitor trout abundance in the upper river. At our Conant monitoring reach, we estimated trout densities to be 6,302 fish/mile. The 10-year average is 4,710. Good trout numbers are expected to contribute to continued good catch rates for anglers. Rainbow trout, which are the biggest threat to cutthroat trout through competition and hybridization, continue to provide management challenges. Rainbow trout made up 43.1% of the trout catch, so IDFG plans to continue efforts to lower their abundance using the [angler incentive program](#) and other tactics.

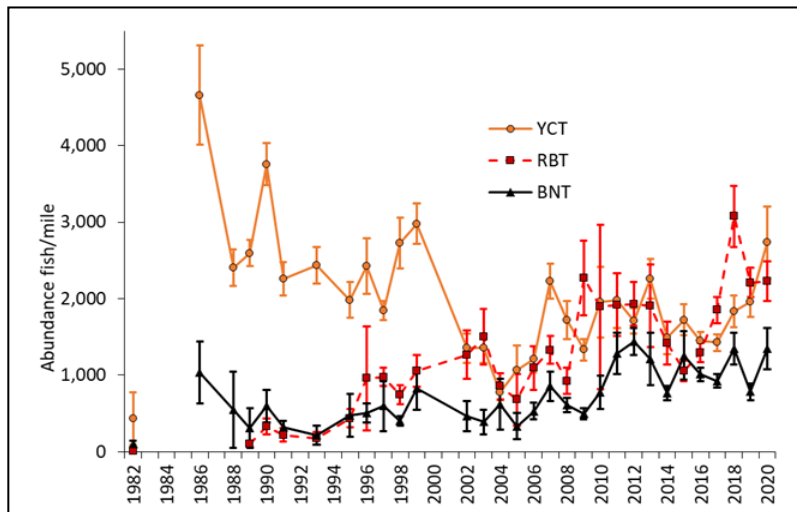


Figure 1. Estimates of fish per mile for Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT), rainbow trout (including hybrids; RBT), and Brown Trout (BNT) at the Conant monitoring reach from 1982 through 2020 with 95% confidence intervals.

Abundance surveys have been conducted near the Lorenzo boat ramp most years since 1987 to monitor abundances in the lower river. At Lorenzo, Yellowstone cutthroat were estimated at 1,260 fish/mile, the highest on record (Figure 2)! The ten-year average for cutthroat is 407 fish/mile. The total trout estimate was 2,650 trout/mile which was significantly higher than the ten-year average of 1,889 trout/mile. Brown trout are doing well here too with 1,390 fish/mile which is slightly lower than the ten-year average (1,477 fish/mile).

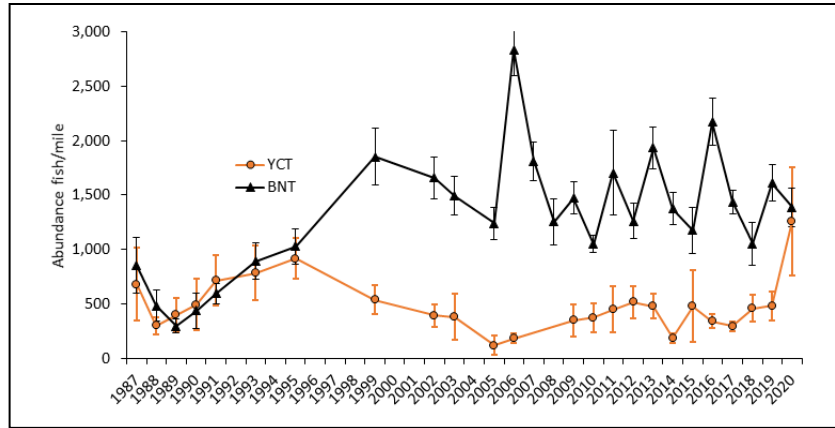


Figure 2. Estimates of fish per mile for Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) and brown trout (BNT) at the Lorenzo monitoring reach of the South Fork Snake River from 1987 through 2020 with 95% confidence intervals.

The most important take-home message from these surveys is that trout abundance is high in the SFSR. The total trout estimate is higher than ever estimated at Conant, since 1982. Cutthroat appear to be doing fairly well, despite the continued threats from rainbow trout. Unfortunately, what’s good for one species seems to be good for the other, as rainbow trout continue to comprise a greater proportion of the population.

Other rivers in the western U.S. also host estimates of trout per mile in the thousands, but few boast estimates higher than 5,000 trout/mi. Within Idaho, the South Fork Boise, Big Lost, and Henry’s Fork rivers boast some of our highest abundance estimates, but none have exceeded 6,000 fish/mi. Other rivers in the west such as the Green River below flaming gorge reports 10,000 trout/mi, but stocked 14,500 RBT in the summer of 2020. Similarly, the Idaho rivers with high abundance typically receive at least some hatchery trout supplementation. The SFSR is not supplemented with hatchery trout. The exceptional wild trout population in the South Fork highlights the extremely high productivity observed in recent years in the river and the potential this tailwater fishery possesses. For anglers, high abundances of trout should ensure that fishing will remain great into next year and beyond.

Another Bing Lempke Story

Young Admirer

Bing was participating in a fly tying event in Missoula, Montana. A wide-eyed young boy was in the front of those watching Bing’s magic at the fly tying vise. The youngster commented:

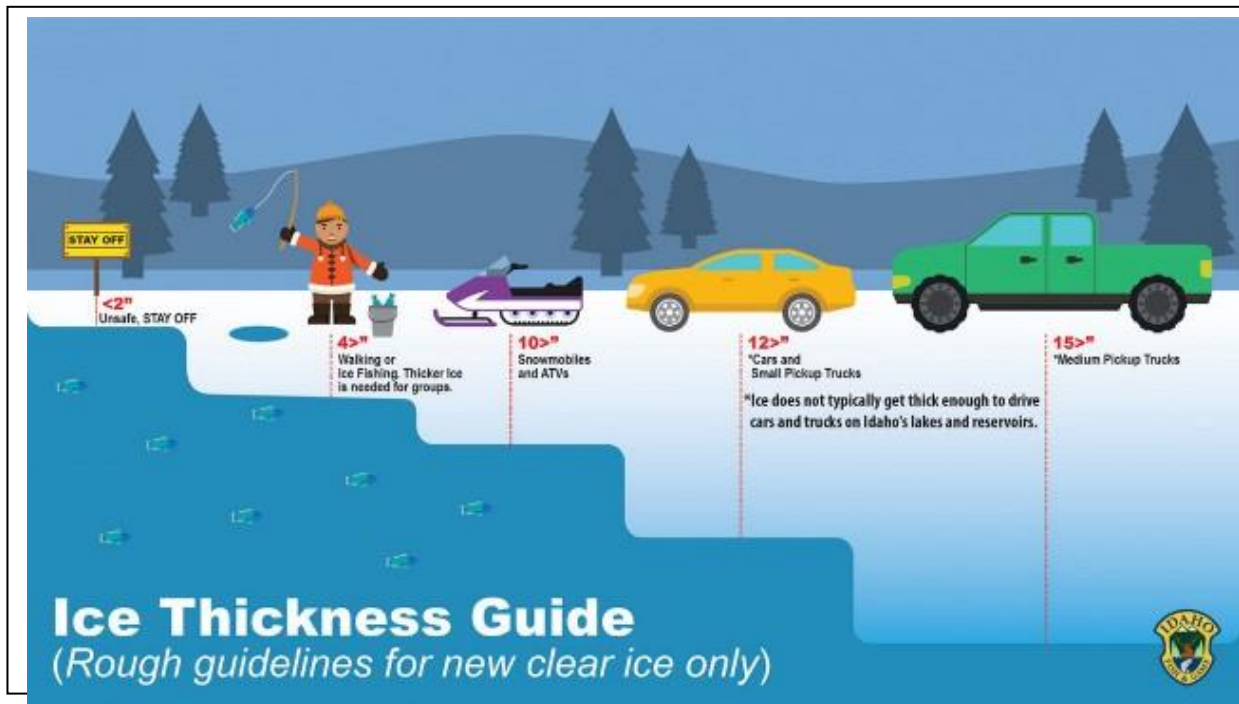
“Gee, Mister, you sure can tie flies!”
“Thank you, and do you like to fish?”, Bing responded.
“Yes, we fished the Bitterroot yesterday morning.”
”Did you catch anything?”, Bing asked.
“Yup! And we kept some for dinner.”, came the reply.
“What did you catch them on?”, Bing asked
“Worms.”, said the lad.



“Whew, I wouldn’t eat any fish I caught on a worm!”, Bing teased.
“Oh, that’s OK!”, replied the lad, “We cleaned them really good inside and out before we had them for dinner!”
Everyone present, including Bing, laughed.

Idaho Has a Variety of Ice Fishing Opportunities

- Good news for anglers is that there's no offseason for fishing in Idaho, and we don't believe in cabin fever when there are so many outdoor activities during winter. Ice fishing provides a fun way to get out of the house for a day or a weekend and catch fish.
- Ice fishing is pretty self-explanatory. All you need aside from your regular fishing tackle is an ice auger and slotted spoon to keep slush out of the ice hole. Anglers should also know basic ice safety. See Glenna Gomez's artwork below.



- Anglers looking for places to go ice fishing can probably find one within a couple hours drive time. See IDF&G's [ice fishing webpage](#), or call a [regional office](#).
- On choosing a place for ice fishing, pay close attention to access. You will need a parking area and an easy place to walk onto the ice. IDF&G partners with various agencies to help maintain winter parking lots in many locations.
- If you're new to ice fishing, or have never fished at all, don't be discouraged from trying it because it's easy to get started.
- Bring basic tackle, such as hooks and weights, some bait or flies, and give it a try. You will quickly learn what works and what doesn't and adapt accordingly, and you will also quickly learn why it's a fun and unique way to go fishing, as well as a great way to get outdoors during winter.

A quick word of caution. Idaho is a diverse state with respect to climate and geography, so be sure to check local conditions before going ice fishing. Idaho's prime ice fishing season typically runs December through February, but can vary.

Fly of the Month

H&L Variant

This pattern gained fame in West Yellowstone, mostly through use by the Pat Barnes Tackle Shop. It was a preferred pattern for those fly-fishing the Madison River. Pat, Sig, and their guides tied it by the hundreds of dozens. H&L stands for House and Lot. It was also in popular use on Colorado streams and gained more fame through being President Eisenhower’s favorite pattern.

- Hook:** Daiichi 1150 or equiv., size 8-16
- Thread:** Black, 6/0
- Tail:** White calf tail
- Body:** Stripped peacock herl
- Thorax:** Peacock herl
- Hackle:** Dry fly quality brown saddle or cape hackle
- Wing:** Upright and divided white calf tail



2020 Calendar

Date	Activity
Wednesday, January 13 th , 2021	6:30 PM, Guest: Kelly Glissmeyer
Wednesday, February 10 th , 2021	6:30 PM, Guest: Boots Allen
Wednesday, March 10 th , 2021	6:30 PM, Guest: Ken Bitton
Wednesday, April 14 th , 2021	TBA

Note: all membership and board meetings are proposed to be held via ZOOM until further notice. Visit www.snakerivercutthroats.org or the Cutthroats Facebook page for a link to access the membership meeting via ZOOM.

Snake River Cutthroats
291 Dale Drive
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
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