

The Cutthroat Chronicles

Official Newsletter of the Snake River Cutthroats

November/ December, 2021

A Message from the President

Prestidents Message 12/21

I hope you all are healthy and happy as we enter the holiday season. It has been a busy fall for the club. Conservation projects, the statewide TU meeting, general membership and board Zoom meetings and raffles. I want to thank all of those that volunteered time and entered raffles. The club has been able to move along in this time of Covid and uncertainty. Hopefully we will be able to get back more normal club activities in the near future.

A couple of things in the near future. Our Christmas Party will be at the Senior Citizens Center on Wed. Dec 8th. Sign up is at Jimmy's and more info can be found in newsletter and on the club website. We are also planning a winter outing, ice fishing, Stay tuned for more information as we get it. (like when we get ice!). And last make sure you get your comments in to your state and federal legislators and those of Washington and Oregon on the removal of the four lower Snake River dams. Have a great holiday season, stay healthy and have a happy new year.

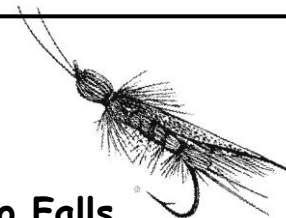
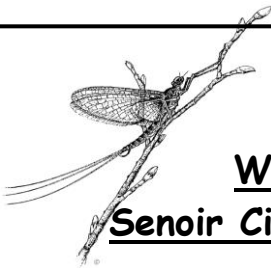
Arn

UPCOMING EVENT

Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 8th, 6:30 PM

Senoir Citizen's Center, 525 W. 21St. Idaho Falls



Christmas Party



**Wednesday December 8th,
Sr. Citizens Ctr, 525 W. 21st St.
Idaho Falls
Festivities begin at 6 PM
With dinner at 6:45 PM
COVID-19 Vaccinations
required as per Sr. Center rules**

**Sign up at Jimmy's All Seasons Angler
Before December 7th
\$20.00 per person**

It's sure to be another fun event. Gifts and camaraderie will be part as well as great food. The club provides catered meat.

According to your last name, please bring the following:

A through H - Bring a side dish,
I through Q - Bring some kind of salad,
R through Z - Bring some kind of dessert dish

**See functions to the right for which
volunteers are needed.**

Want to donate an item for the gift activity?

**Leave it at Jimmy's any time before
Wednesday, December 1st.**

Help Needed for Christmas Party Efforts

Like to volunteer? Here's where help is needed.

Set-up: Be at the Senior Citizen's Center at 5:40 PM to help arrange tables and seating.

Gifts: We have obtained some gifts. They range from books to tying and fishing equipment. Want to donate a gift? Leave it at Jimmy's by December 1st.

Clean-up: We need volunteers to clean up the Center and put things away after we've finished. This will be done between 9 and 10 PM.

**Contact Arn Berglund 208-569-2243,
fishvik@aol.com or Rob Knox 760-419-1682,
robertwk44@hotmail.com to volunteer for
any of these.**

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@cableone.net.

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



Wyoming Cutt Slam: A Fun Local Fishing Opportunity

by Dave Pace

I originally heard about the Wyoming Cutt Slam program at an Expo presentation. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has created a certificate program where you catch each of the four main cutthroat trout species that the State has to offer, take their picture, document where you caught them, and then they send you a "Cutt Slam" certificate. The Expo presentation shared how three of the four species are available near Afton, WY, a local high country gem. It sounded like a nice area to check out.



Snake River Cutthroat – Greys River

Fast forward 10 years or so and when a newer board member, Brian King, brought it up again, I decided the time had come.

We shopped around for others interested and added Curtis St Michel to the crew.

Another past board member, Tim Crain, supplied us with some good information from a trip he did a couple of years prior with his son. The Wyoming Game and Fish website provided a lot of info with distribution maps and photos from others who have completed the program. We also reached out to one of their biologists who provided some excellent info on where to find the Yellowstone Cutthroat. So we had formulated a plan and our summer schedules pushed the trip into fall, my favorite season.

Bright and early on August 28th we commenced the expedition. The center for the three species near Afton is called the Tri-Divide at the very head of the Greys River where the Greys, LaBarge Creek and the Smiths Fork all begin. We drove south through Afton to just past Smoot and got onto the gravel driving up the Smiths Fork. After finding a nice place to camp we commenced trying to catch our first cuttie species, the Bonneville Cutthroat. We had better luck going back down the drainage a little where we found more water and here we all rounded up our Bonnevilles. The next day we packed up and drove up the Smiths Fork, over the ridge and into the LaBarge Creek drainage. We had to drive a fair bit down the LaBarge to a large meadow, we all rounded up our second cuttie species, the Colorado River Cutthroat. That evening we drove back up the LaBarge and over the top of the Tri Divide into the Greys drainage. There was a sign there that said "Greys River, Watch me Grow" which says it all. It starts out as a two foot wide trickle, then 62 miles later at its confluence with the Snake River at Alpine, it is a respectable river with a white water section that would make all but expert boaters pucker a bit. We spent the night up high on the Greys and collected our third cuttie species, the Snake River Cutthroat, the next day fishing below our camp. The Smiths Fork and LaBarge were definitely small creek fishing, but the Greys in that area was more like a small river with deeper holes and a lot more holding water. We mostly fished with dries but Curtis did test out the dark side and caught some larger fish on nymphs in water we had just fished with dries.

The next day we spent the day relocating just over Togwotee Pass within the Yellowstone Cutthroat distribution. We camped at Falls Campground right on Brooks Lake Creek. This is Yellowstone Cutthroat country but you have to do your research to find them. Most of the streams in the area have been stocked with non-native rainbows. We chose to fish Pelham Lake, a short drive from our campground. The lake is about a ½ mile hike from where you can drive and we all packed float tubes into this beautiful high mountain lake at 8800 ft. There we enjoyed the day and all collected our fourth and final cuttie species, the Yellowstone Cutthroat.

Overall we had an amazing time exploring some new beautiful country an easy days drive from home in Idaho Falls. I highly encourage others to see what this area has to offer. I think too often I get stuck in a rut and keep going back to fish my favorite waters.



Big Lost River Angler Use and Harvest
By
John Heckel – IDF&G Regional Fisheries Biologist

Check stations and fish tagging (i.e., “Tag You’re It”) studies were conducted simultaneously throughout the upper Big Lost River basin in 2019 to collect data on angler effort, angler use, catch rates, and harvest. The reason for this work came from our concern of declining fish numbers at sites IDFG monitors regularly, and from concerns of anglers who thought too many fish in the Big Lost were being harvested.

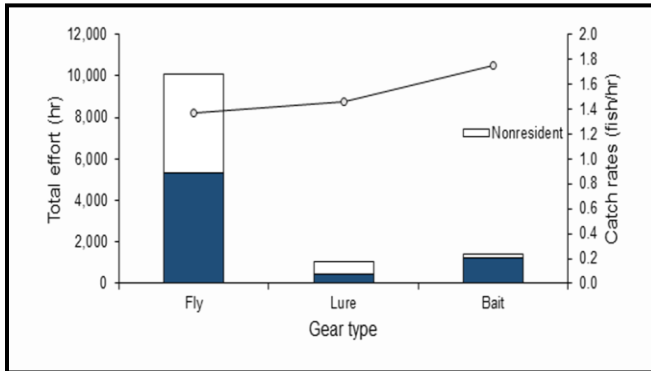


Figure 1

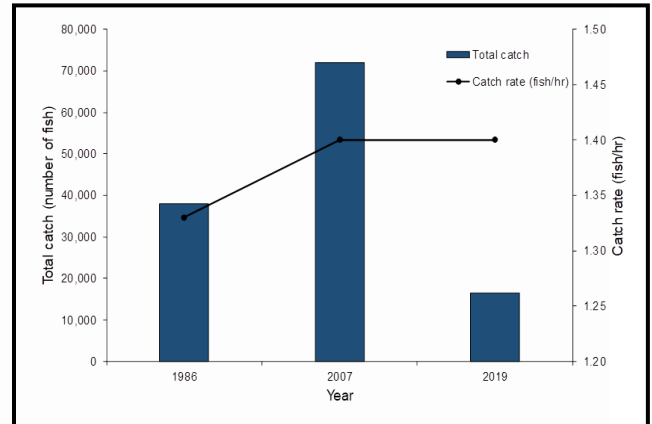


Figure 2

During surveys, bait anglers had the highest catch rates over other angler types (Figure 1). Bait anglers also reported the highest harvest rates at 38%, followed by lure anglers at 13%, and fly anglers at 1%. The overall estimate was 8% of the fish caught in the Big Lost River in 2019 were harvested. On average, anglers caught 1.4 fish/hr. This was similar to catch rates reported in earlier studies, although total catch was lower than previous studies because the total number of hours fished in 2019 was lower than previous survey years (Figure 2).

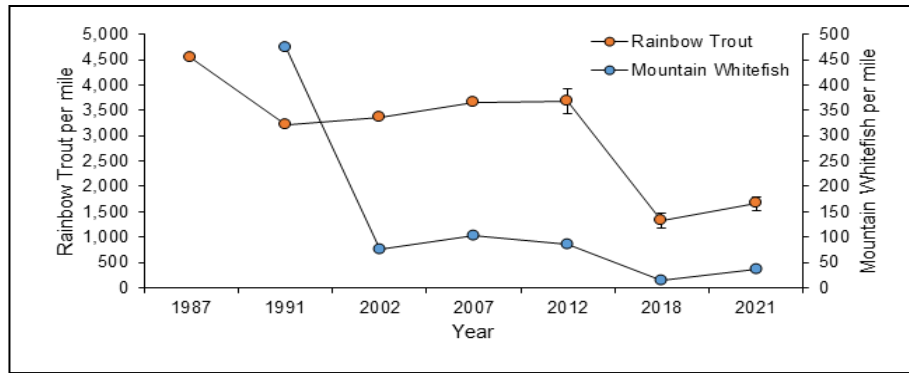
IDFG stocks hatchery fish in the Big Lost River. We marked several of the fish we stocked in 2020 with tags. Overall, 28% of the fish with tags that were stocked were caught by anglers. Some of these hatchery fish that were stocked (10%) were harvested.

We have observed declining numbers of trout in the Big Lost River since 2007, and anglers have been voicing their concerns in recent years. The creel and “Tag You’re It” studies were important in providing current data on where anglers are fishing, how many fish are being harvested, and how the hatchery fish are being used in the upper Big Lost River. These data provide IDFG with information to guide decisions on how to improve fishing. Based on these studies, it appears harvest of trout is low and is likely not the reason causing trout numbers to decline. We’ve also learned where anglers are spending their time and where hatchery fish are making a difference for anglers during their fishing excursions.

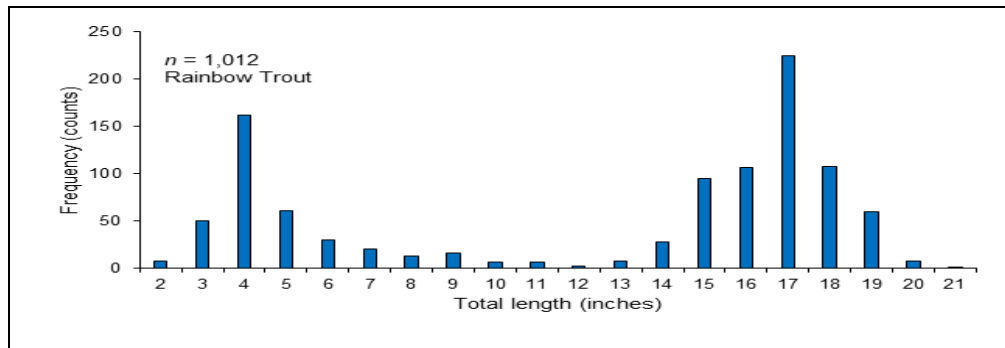
Big Lost River Tailwater: Fish Population Estimates
John Heckel – IDF&G Regional Fisheries Biologist

Check stations and fish tagging (i.e., “Tag You’re It”) studies were conducted simultaneously throughout the upper Big Lost River basin in 2019 to collect data on angler effort, angler use, catch rates, and harvest. The reason for this work came from concern of declining fish numbers at sites IDFG monitors regularly, and from concerns of anglers who thought too many fish in the Big Lost were being harvested.

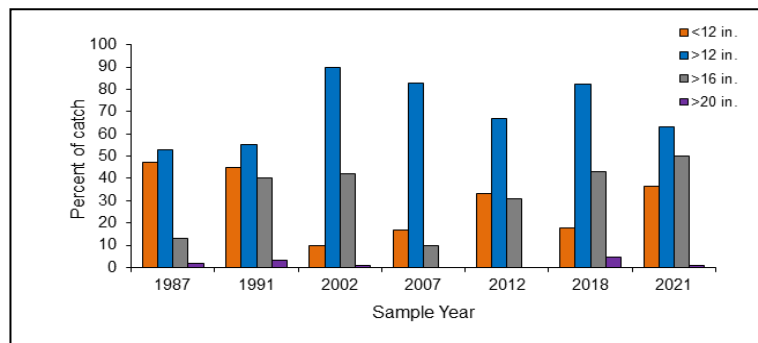
The Cutthroat Chronicles



Although overall abundances are less than historical numbers, there are currently a lot of large Rainbow Trout greater than 16 inches present in the population. We estimated more than 850 Rainbow Trout greater than 16 inches per mile present in the fishery! In addition, we have a very strong juvenile year class in the population, which will contribute to the catchable-fish population in the upcoming years. Our population estimates include fish that are greater than or equal to about 6 inches, so the estimate does not include the juvenile fish that are smaller than 6 inches seen in the figure below.



We observed varying abundances in size classes over time (figure below). We will be increasing the frequency of our population surveys in the tailwater to collect more up-to-date data that will help us better understand the population dynamics of these wild Rainbow Trout and Mountain Whitefish populations. We anticipate the Rainbow Trout size class shifting to more fish in the 8-16 inch range over the next few years as the older, larger fish die, which will provide more space and opportunity for the juvenile fish to grow and compete for resources.



We tagged a proportion of fish in the population with T-bar anchor tags that include a unique ID number that can be reported to IDFG at <http://www.tag.idaho.gov/>. These tags provide fisheries biologists with important information that helps us better manage and understand our fish populations. If you catch a fish with tag, please report it at the web address.



New Trout Population Data from the Warm River

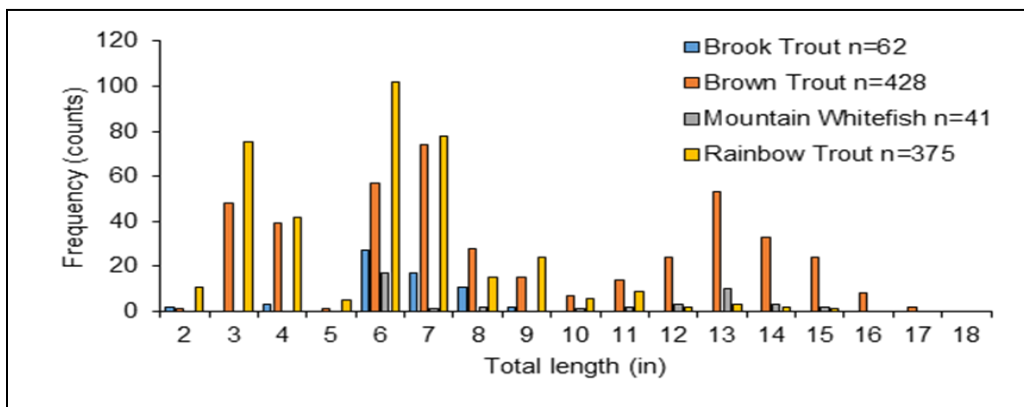
By John Heckel, IDFG Regional Fisheries Biologist

In early September, IDFG fisheries biologists conducted their first population survey in the Warm River, a tributary of the Henrys Fork Snake River. This abundance estimate is a new survey in which IDFG has never sampled before. Warm River is approximately 36.5 miles long from its headwaters in the Island Park Caldera to its confluence with the Henrys Fork. At roughly 10 miles upstream from the confluence, Warm Springs contributes 200 cfs of water to the main stem of Warm River and this is where it really begins to be characterized as a spring creek with aquatic vegetation and ultra-clear water.

Due to the accessibility of clean water, an IDFG fish hatchery operated from the 1930s to 1950s near the Warm Springs origin. Catchable-sized Rainbow Trout have been stocked annually near the Warm River Campground just upstream of the confluence with the Henrys Fork since the 1960s, but Brown and Rainbow Trout fingerlings were also stocked in the river several times from the 1960s to 1980s. Despite these stockings, the trout population in Warm River is primarily wild fish with both migratory and resident life histories present.

The survey reach began about one mile downstream of the spring's origin. Due to the wide and shallow nature of this section of the river and the lack of road access to much of the river, IDFG staff used a towed barge electrofishing setup and two backpack electrofishers to sample the fish population.

We sampled over 1,500 fish representing multiple fish species including Brown, Brook, and Rainbow trout, Mountain Whitefish, and nongame species Paiute and Mottled sculpin. We conducted a mark/recapture population estimate on game species. In a mark/recapture estimate, fish were sampled and those six inches or longer were marked on day one, then after resting the water for one week we conducted the recapture run. While measuring fish captured in the recapture run, we looked for the mark from the previous week. We calculate our abundance estimate based off of the number of fish that were marked on day one, the number of fish in total that were sampled in the recapture run, and the number of marked fish that were recaptured. Using this analysis technique, we estimated 1,182 trout per mile. Using the same analysis broken down by species, we estimated 772 Brown Trout, 753 Rainbow Trout, and 55 Mountain Whitefish per mile, respectively. We did not recapture enough Brook Trout to estimate their abundance by species. We sampled 620 fish that were greater than six inches long and 927 fish that were less than six inches long. The high abundance of fish less than six inches suggests that the Warm River has very important natal rearing habitat for young fish, and there is likely a contribution to the population from migratory fish that move upstream from the Henrys Fork.



Brown Trout comprised the highest frequency of larger trout that were sampled in the reach and the average total length of Brown Trout was nine inches. There was a high abundance of juvenile Rainbow Trout sampled and the average total length of Rainbow Trout was just over six inches, while Brook Trout average length was seven inches. Warm River offers great opportunities for anglers to catch multiple trout species in one waterbody. We observed multiple hatches of insects occurring during the survey, which can provide some great dry fly fishing for fly anglers. Because there are only a few places where anglers can drive to the river there is plenty of water for folks that want to fish off the beaten path, but be sure to carry bear spray and be aware that this is grizzly country.

Fly of the Month

Green Caddis Mite

This is another Chuck Collins creation from the fly tying vise. He was a superb practitioner of weaving fly bodies. Whether the Pott mite, Montana nymph (overhand) weaves or obscure others, Chuck mastered them all. His woven Pott mite patterns were excellent renditions of those old Montana standards. This is his application of the Pott Mite weave to form an effective fly pattern.

Hook: TMC 5263, or equivalent, size 2-6
Thread: Black, 6/0
Underbody: Two strands of light yellow embroidery floss
Body: Caddis green fish hair
Hackle:: Barred badger guard hair
Head: Peacock herl



2021-2022 Calendar

Date	Activity
Wednesday, December 1 st , 2021	SRC Board Meeting, 6:30 PM via ZOOM
Wednesday, December 8 th , 2021	Christmas Party Senior Citizens Center, 6 PM
Wednesday, January 5 th , 2022	SRC Board Meeting via ZOOM; 6:30 PM
Wednesday, January 12 th , 2022	Membership Meeting via ZOOM: 6:30 PM Guest: Matt Klara of Big Sky Anglers, West Yellowstone, MT
Wednesday, February 2 nd , 2022	SRC Board Meeting via ZOOM; 6:30 PM
Wednesday, February 9 th , 2022	Membership Meeting via ZOOM: 6:30 PM Guest: TBA

Note: all membership and board meetings are held via ZOOM until further notice. Visit www.snakerivercutthroats.org or the Cutthroats Facebook page for a link to access membership meetings, outings, and other activities. .Board meetings are open to all members.

Snake River Cutthroats
291 Dale Drive
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
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Idaho Falls, ID
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Snake River Cutthroats

Club Officers

President: Arn Berglund (208-569-2243)
Past President: Matt Woodard (208-221-1353)
Ex. Vice President: TBA
VP Conservation: Myles Pawlaczyk (949-701-1767)
Treasurer: Jim Mathias (208-684-4200)
Secretary: Joe Timchak (208-569-0630)

Senior Advisors

Gary Barnes
Jimmy Gabettas
Buck Goodrich
Ron Hover
Cal Johnson
Scott Long
Dave Pace
Bruce Staples
Marvin Stucki

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3 Yr Directors: Dan Smith (908-652-1837), Lee Morse (208-252-0703), Paul Voegeli (303-324-0104),
2 Yr Directors: Wade Allen (208-390-3130), Mike Glissmeyer (208-569-3843), Dakota Roberson ((307-389-5856)
1 Yr Directors: Andy Bosworth (207-713-3457), Brian King (530-310-0529) (208-528-7997), Charlie Allen (208-360-1302)

Committee Chairs

Membership: Carol Staples (208-522-9242)
Historian/Newsletter: Bruce Staples (208-522-9242) (New email address bstaples9740@gmail.com)
Education: Jeff Armstrong (208-522-7005)
Expo: Scott Long (208-520-3750), Rory Cullen (208-419-8477)
Programs: Charlie Allen (208-360-1302)
Publicity: Rob Knox (760-419-1682)
Outings: Marv Stucki (208-589-9677)
Website: Scott Long (520-3750), Rob Knox (760-419-1682), Tim Woodard (208-201-1669)
Youth: Joe Timchak (208-569-0630)
IT/Web Site: Myles Pawlaczyk (949-701-1767)