

The Cutthroat Chronicles

Official Newsletter of the Snake River Cutthroats

1st Quarter, 2022

A Message from the President

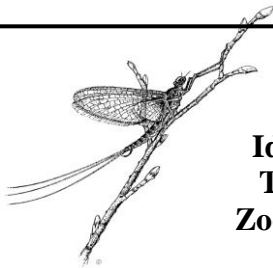
President's Message, First Quarter, 2022

I hope you all made it through the winter healthy and happy. We weren't idle this winter. We had general membership and board Zoom meetings, the club Christmas party, an ice fishing trip, and raffles. I want to thank all of those that entered raffles. TU has started the Priority Waters determination for Idaho and a few of us in the club are involved in that. 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. As we gear up to start fishing this spring remember to share your wisdom with others. We are all participants in cold water fishing and conservation whether it's with hooks dressed with fur and feathers or worms and marshmallows. Remember to check and use all of your safety equipment on your trips. Wear a PFD when in a boat. An unplanned swim in the cold spring waters can be a real surprise. 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. Stay healthy and safe.

Here are a couple of happenings to keep in mind. Our chapter business meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 15th. Two SRC Board positions will become open, so if you want to take part in the SRC activities, get in touch with me (Fishvik@aol.com, 208-569-2243). We will soon decide if this will be a ZOOM or walk-in meeting in a TBA (Papa Tom's Pizza?) location. The other upcoming meeting is the April 29th-30th TU Idaho Council meeting at the Riverside Inn 2900 West Chinden Ave., Boise. A 6:30 PM meeting on the 29th features Chris Wood, TU CFO, on Snake River Dam removal, On the 30th, Council meetings are scheduled. Care to comment through TU on removal of the dams? Do so using:

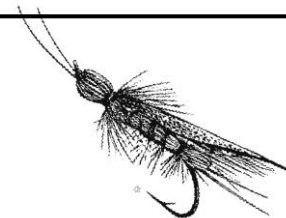
<https://www.votervoice.net/BroadcastLinks/UGQQxMWhJwwA2vANldAfRA>

Arn



UPCOMING EVENT

Idaho Department of Fish and Game on Current Topics and the Status of Henry's Lake Fishery. Zoom Meeting on Wednesday, April 13th, 6:30 PM



Snake River Cutthroats

1

www.snakerivercutthroats.org



Idaho Department of Fish and Game on Current Topics and the Status of Henry’s Lake Fishery.

Several things are now influencing the upcoming fishing season and how the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDF&G) Department’s Upper Snake River Region fisheries crew is handling the impact of these. A serious drought is upon us, and IDF&G is considering the possibility of applying “hoot owl” or complete closures to waters that will become dangerously low and warm. This is to protect game fish and has precedents in being applied on Montana and Yellowstone Park waters recently.

Henry’s Lake fishery status is always of interest to the angling community.



How did salmonids fare through the winter? What are predictions for success in the upcoming season? Is the lake warming up? These are a few of incoming questions to be addressed. A catch and released season now applies to the lake. Ice-out on the lake is many times a few days before general season opens. So will we get to enjoy it? Nate Tillotson will be one of the presenters. Nate is a new regional fisheries biologist. He replaces Jenn Vincent who has moved on to the IDF&G Boise Office.



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Parmesan Encrusted Whitefish

Ingredients

- 20 ounces firm white fish (such as Rocky Mountain whitefish)
- 2/3 cup panko
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan
- 2 tablespoons butter softened at room temperature
- 1 clove garlic (grated)
- 1 lemon zested and juiced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne

Instructions

- Pre-heat oven to 425 degrees and line baking sheet with foil. Spray with cooking spray and place fish fillets on top.
- In a small bowl, use a fork to mix together all remaining ingredients except the lemon juice (panko through cayenne.) Gently press mixture on top of the fish filets then bake until fish flakes easily with a fork, about 20 minutes. Drizzle fish with lemon juice before serving.

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 carolastaples@gmail.com

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



Rainey Creek Research

by
Joe Timchak

If you're driving through Swan Valley and a bunch of high school students in and about Rainey Creek, you are probably seeing Compass Academy students at work.

For the past several years, the Snake River has sponsored research on Rainey Creek Compass Academy AP Biology and Invertebrate Zoology students. Rainey Creek has the potential to be a major spawning tributary for Cutthroats. However, spawning numbers in Rainey Creek are just a fraction of those found in Palisades Creek. Compass

investigated two sites on Rainey Creek. One site was on the Griffel Ranch (Site I) located about a mile above the confluence with the South Fork, the other site was located in the Targhee National Forest (Site II).. The sites were characterized as developed and undeveloped. Compass students found some significant differences between the sites. The macro invertebrate biodiversity was significantly higher in

Site II, possibly due to high amounts of sediment found at Site I. Fecal coliform counts were always higher at Site I, sometimes much higher. Nitrates and phosphate levels varied, (weather dependent?) but were higher at Site I. Dissolved oxygen was good at both sites but always higher at Site II. Our experiments indicate Rainey Creek has issues, but how they affect Cutthroat Trout is difficult to assess. Biologists working on Rainey Creek are tending towards low summer instream flows and habitat degradation as the main culprits in low Cutthroat counts.

Compass Academy would like to thank the Snake River Cutthroats for their generous support. The club has helped purchase scientific equipment, transportation and food. Without this support the students' research would not be possible and hundreds of students would not have learned about topics such as water chemistry, biodiversity and of course, the Cutthroat Trout!



notice a Rainey Academy

Cutthroats done by

has the South Fork Rainey nearby Pine students



**Snake River Cutthroats Ririe Reservoir Ice Fishing (Brrr!) Outing
By
Arn Berglund**

On Saturday Feb. 26 a small but hearty group of the club headed out on the hard water of Ririe Reservoir for the second Cutthroats Cold Kokanee Catch. We headed out complete with ice rods, Swedish Pimples, meal worms, ice augers, ice shelters, food, a grill and a variety of liquid refreshment both hot and cold. The weather was great, and fishing was great, but the catching wasn't. We didn't catch any. The hearty participants included:, Cory and Mary Ann Lyman, Jordon Doty, Arn and Eric Berglund, Hanna Olson, Dave Pace, Brian King, Dan Kotansky Charlie Allen, Gale Danielson and Curtis St Michael. In addition a number of Cory and Jordon's relatives from southern Nevada joined us. Despite the lack of catching success, a good time was had by all.



South Fork Snake River 2021 Trout Population Estimates

Patrick Kennedy
IDF&G Regional Fisheries Biologist

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game continued annual fish population monitoring at the Conant (32nd yr.) and Lorenzo (27th yr.) monitoring reaches of the South Fork Snake River in the fall of 2021 to evaluate the effectiveness of management actions on the river, and health of the trout populations. Data from these surveys are used in decision making to achieve the goals outlined in the state fish management plan, which include preserving the genetic integrity and population viability of native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) and reducing Rainbow Trout (RBT) abundance to less than 10% of the species composition at the Conant monitoring reach in the upper river. This is an initial summary of our 2021 surveys from these reaches and may be subject to change with further review and analyses. Estimates below are for age-1 (approximately 4-inch) trout and older.

Conant

In 2021, the total trout (YCT, Brown Trout (BNT), and RBT) abundance at Conant decreased from 6,175 trout/mi. to 4,617 trout/mi., which is slightly lower than the 10-yr. average (2011-2020) of 5,170 trout/mi. The YCT estimate (1,869 YCT/mi.) was lower than 2020 (2,731 YCT/mi.), and was similar to the 10-yr. average (1,855 YCT/mi.). Yellowstone Cutthroat comprised 43.1% of the total trout catch during the survey, which was an increase from 2020 (33.6%).

The RBT estimate (2,063 RBT/mi.) was not significantly different from 2020 (2,230 RBT/mi.), and was above the 10-yr. average (1,888 RBT/mi.). Rainbow Trout comprised 33.2% of the total trout catch during the survey, which decreased from 2020 (43.1%).

The Brown Trout (BNT) estimate (1,073 BNT/mi.), was not significantly different from 2020 (1,342 BNT/mi.) and was slightly below the 10-yr. average (1,136 BNT/mi.; see Figure 1). Brown Trout comprised 23.7% of the total trout catch during the survey, which was similar to 2020 (22.4%).

To summarize the Conant surveys, we continue to observe high abundances of total trout and a very stable BNT population. Rainbow Trout suppression efforts have not resulted in significant declines to RBT abundance yet, but it is still early in this long-term management effort. Notable changes to the species compositions of RBT and YCT, but not BNT, provide encouragement that additional suppression efforts may help to achieve the management goals for reducing RBT abundance.

Lorenzo

In 2021, the combined abundance of YCT and BNT in the Lorenzo reach (2,359 trout/mi.) was not significantly different from 2020 (2,650 trout/mi.), but was above the 10-yr. average (2,011 trout/mi.).

The YCT estimate (903 YCT/mi.) was not significantly different from 2020 (1,260 YCT/mi.) and was much higher than the 10-yr. average (496 YCT/mi.). Yellowstone Cutthroat comprised 35.4% of the total trout catch during the survey.



The BNT estimate (1,456 BNT/mi.) was not significantly different from 2020 (1,390 BNT/mi.) and very close to the 10-yr. average (1,511 BNT/mi.; see Figure 2). Brown Trout comprised 56.8% of the total trout catch during the survey.

Catch for Rainbow Trout was too low to generate a mark-recapture estimate, so it is not directly comparable to the other estimates of species composition listed here. However, using species composition and total trout abundance we roughly estimate 224 RBT/mi. in 2021, which was higher than the 10-yr. average (63 RBT/mi.). We caught 89 Rainbow Trout during sampling which comprised 7.8% of total trout catch.

To summarize the Lorenzo surveys, the YCT and BNT populations remain stable with continued high abundances. The RBT population is something we will continue to watch here as we observed a second consecutive year of increasing abundance and catch composition.

Lufkin Bottom

We have surveyed the Lufkin Bottom reach intermittently since 2014 to monitor shifts in species compositions in this section of river. This is the fifth year we have sampled this reach to describe species composition and abundance of trout within the Canyon of the South Fork Snake River. In the future, we plan to survey this section every three years to describe trends in abundance and species composition. Averages below are from survey years 2014 – 2016, and 2018.

In 2021, the total trout (YCT, BNT, and RBT) abundance at Lufkin (4,670 trout/mi.) was not significantly different from 2018 (4,314 trout/mi.), which is higher than the average (3,664 trout/mi.).

The YCT estimate (1,524 YCT/mi.) was not significantly different from 2018 (1,713 YCT/mi.) and was lower than the average (1,708 YCT/mi.). Yellowstone Cutthroat comprised 34.0% of the total trout catch during the survey, which decreased from 2018 (38.7%).

The Brown Trout estimate (2,736 BNT/mi.) was not significantly different from 2018 (1,386 BNT/mi.) and was higher than the average (1,128 BNT/mi.; see Figure 3). High BNT catch but few marked recaptures resulted in low accuracy of this estimate. Brown Trout comprised 35.7% of the total trout catch during the survey, which was similar to 2018 (34.2%).

The RBT estimate (1,079 RBT/mi.) was not significantly different from 2018 (1,386 RBT/mi.), and was above the average (924 RBT/mi.). Rainbow Trout comprised 30.3% of the total trout catch during the survey, which increased from 2018 (27.1%).

The Lufkin Bottom reach appears to have consistently high abundances of total trout and the BNT population is stable. The proportion of RBT has increased slightly and the proportion of YCT has slightly decreased. This change in species composition is one of our concerns, though the changes appear to be minimal so far.

Fly of the Month

Bitchin' Bugger

The big stonefly season is not too far away. Fly patterns for the nymphs of these big insects abound. This one comes from Arrick Swanson of Arrick's Fly Shop in West Yellowstone. It is a bit unique in that it combines the woolly bugger form with that of the famed Bitch Creek nymph. These features make it a streamer as well as a nymph pattern. These two life forms are just what big trout key on during the early season.

- Hook:** TMC 5263, or equivalent, size 4-8
- Thread:** Black, 6/0
- Tail:** Black marabou with pearl Krystal Flash and white rubber hackle
- Body:** Overhand weave of black chenille on top and orange chenille on bottom
- Thorax:** Black Chenille
- Hackle:** Brown saddle palmered over thorax
- Legs:** White rubber hackle



2021-2022 Calendar

Date	Activity
Wednesday, April 6 th , 2022	SRC Board Meeting, 6:30 PM via ZOOM
Wednesday, April 13 th , 2022	Membership Meeting via ZOOM, 6:30 PM IDF&G Regional Fisheries Presentation
Wednesday, May 4 th , 2022	SRC Board Meeting, 6:30 PM via ZOOM
Saturday, May 7 th , 2022	Henry's Lake BLM Willow Planting Outing: Contact Ryan Beatty USBLM Office, Idaho Falls 208-524-7500
Wednesday, May 11 th , 2022	Annual Business Meeting ZOOM (??); 6:30 PM Location and media TBA
Friday-Saturday April 29 th -30 th , 2022	TU Council Meeting Riverside Hotel 2900 West Chinden Blvd, Boise: Friday, 4/29 6:30 PM Chris Wood TU CEO on Snake River Dams and other subjects. Saturday, 4/30, Idaho TU Council meetings

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Historian/Newsletter: Bruce Staples (208-522-9242) (New email address bstaples9740@gmail.com)
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