



Idaho Fish and Game

NEWS

Vol. 21, No. 2

Be Outside-Fishing



A pond, a bluegill, a little girl—summer is the time and Idaho is the place to Be Outside.

Photo courtesy of Rob Ryan

Panhandle

All Styles of Fishing Find a Place Here

*By Jim Fredericks
Fisheries Manager
Panhandle Region*

With hundreds of miles of streams, large natural lakes, more than 40 small lowland lakes, and dozens of mountain lakes, there's something for every type of angler in the Panhandle. Below is a summary of what anglers can expect to find this year, as well as a list of some of the "best" bets for kids and novice anglers.

The big lakes (Coeur d'Alene, Pend Oreille, Priest)

Kokanee anglers will be pleased to know that following three years of precariously-low kokanee densities on Coeur d'Alene Lake, the population has bounced back to the point where we expect anglers to find plenty of kokanee in 2009. The six-fish limit will remain in effect to insure a complete population recovery.

The kokanee numbers are also welcome news to Chinook anglers. No Chinook have been stocked since 2006 as part of the effort to rebuild the kokanee population. Though natural reproduction has maintained the fishery, the lack of hatchery fish and a liberal six-fish limit have reduced the Chinook population. With the increase in kokanee, it's now time to resume Chinook stocking, though the benefits

continued on page 2

Take a Kid Fishing: How To

*By Evin Oneale, Regional Conservation Educator
Idaho Department of Fish and Game – Southwest Region*

An appreciation for the outdoors is one of the greatest gifts any parent can give a child. The natural world is full of wonder, surprises and many valuable life lessons.

And one of the easiest "vehicles" for introducing kids to the outdoors is fishing. Should they be fortunate enough to catch the fishing "bug," it is a pursuit children can enjoy for the rest of their lives. What a gift to give any child.

Thanks to efforts by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and

their many partners, a fishing excursion in and around Idaho has never been easier. Dozens of urban ponds have been constructed in recent years; there's likely to be one close to where you live. With the weather warming, and school waning, it's time to take the kids out and go fishing.

My two avid young anglers have been fishing since they were each three years old, and I've learned a few things about taking young kids fishing that should prove useful to other parents of budding anglers. Rule #1: leave your own fishing gear at home. You'll be plenty busy keeping their line in the water. Rule

#2: plan for a short (two hours max) outing. Nothing will sour a youngster on fishing faster than spending hours waiting for the fish to bite. Better to keep it short and go again when the fish are more cooperative. Rule #3:

*Be Outside
special
center section,
page 5*

plan to pursue other, non-fishing activities during your outing. Bird and bug watching, dirt digging and chasing butterflies are just some of the non-fishing activities kids love, and they'll be developing an appreciation for the outdoors at the same time. Rule #4: make it fun for everyone.

Go to fishandgame.idaho.gov and click on the Fish Planner logo for a list of all the fishing waters in Idaho including directions to reach each one.

Several of these places are designated Family Fishing Waters. These special waters are open all year, have general six-fish limits on all species, and have no length, bait or tackle restrictions. Look for the "FFW" designation next to these Family Fishing Waters.

Have a great summer and take a kid fishing – often. You'll create a fishing buddy for life.

Free Fishing Day June 13

Fish for free on June 13, this year's date for Free Fishing Day in Idaho.

The annual no-license-required event provides a great time to be outside and to take someone fishing for the first time. Anglers 15 and older do not need to have a fishing license on this day. Limits and all other rules do apply.

Special events are planned around the state to teach angling skills. Those events will be announced locally.

What's Inside:

Commissioner's Corner .3
Dworshak Improves 4
Be Outside Section..... 5
A Life Outdoors..... 8
Crappie, Kokanee..... 9
Water Levels Better 10

Panhandle

continued from page 1

won't be noticed for at least another year. In 2009, anglers can expect to see fair numbers of Chinook in the 5- to 10-pound range. With an abundance of kokanee, Chinook growth rates will improve, and by late summer many Chinook will likely be pushing 20 pounds. Coeur d'Alene Lake continues to offer excellent largemouth and smallmouth bass fishing, as well as good catches of northern pike, crappie, and perch.

Efforts to reduce the number of lake trout in Pend Oreille using commercial netting equipment and the angler incentive program are making a difference. Though far too early to declare victory, kokanee survival rates increased in 2008, which is the first step to restoring the kokanee population. We all look forward to the day when a restored kokanee population will allow us to rebuild the world-famous rainbow trout fishery. In the meantime, we are still encouraging anglers to harvest both rainbow and lake trout.

Every lake trout and every rainbow trout over 13 inches caught from Pend Oreille is worth \$15. (Details on how to participate in the program can be found on the Fish and Game website—<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>—under the "Fishing" page.) Anglers will continue to find a good number of lake trout in 2009.

There are three to four year classes of juvenile lake trout produced before the suppression effort began that are now working their way into the fishery. Anglers targeting those 14- to 20-inch fish will have success, though anglers can expect to find fewer mature adults, as the efforts to reduce the population have definitely been effective on the larger fish. We are also asking anglers to keep targeting rainbow trout. Though the ultimate goal is to manage the lake for trophy rainbows, that can't be done without rebuilding the kokanee population, which is the foundation of the trophy fishery.

Anglers will find plenty of lake trout (mackinaw) in Priest Lake again in 2009. The fishery is managed for high catch rates and lots of harvest opportunity.

Following the collapse of the kokanee population, growth rates of lake trout have declined to where most mature lake trout grow less than an inch per year. Consequently, there are a lot of old, but not very big, fish in the lake.

Most are in the 15- to 25-inch range, though several lake trout in excess of 20 pounds are caught each year.

Most Priest Lake anglers fish by jigging or by trolling. Jigging typically involves a $\frac{3}{4}$ - 2 oz. jig fished with a non-stretch line at depths of 120-200 feet, whereas most trollers use plugs or a dodger/squid or flasher/fly combo on downriggers. Though

caused high flows well into summer, the snowpack this year is right about average. This means the rivers should be in fishable shape by late June.

Anglers should be aware that all cutthroat trout in the St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene drainages must be released. Anglers looking for harvest opportunity can find rainbow trout in the lower reaches of the North Fork



High catch rates and lots of opportunity to take lake trout like these is the goal on Pend Oreille as fisheries managers work to rebuild kokanee numbers. Kokanee are the foundation for trophy trout fishing here but suffer with too many lakers.

IDFG photo

jiggers tend to have higher catch rates, often catching a limit of six fish in a couple of hours, the bigger fish are more often caught by trollers.

Rivers and Streams

The St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene rivers will provide excellent trout fishing in 2009. Cutthroat populations have continued to build in recent years, following a decline in the mid-90s caused by two years of floods. Unlike 2008, when the heavy snow pack

of the Coeur d'Alene River. Both rivers offer plenty of whitefish as well, which not only make for fun fishing, but are tasty when smoked. Many of the tributaries have abundant populations of brook trout. Though they aren't generally big, anglers can keep up to 25 brook trout.

Although the Kootenai, Moyie, and Clark Fork rivers don't have the high trout densities that more well-known rivers do, they all produce some exceptional rainbow trout—generally without the crowds.

Lowland Lakes

Whether an angler wants to go after a 40-pound state record tiger musky, a limit of hatchery rainbow trout, or a bucket of bluegill, the lowland lakes in the Panhandle offer the opportunity. More than 150,000 catchable (9- to 11-inch) rainbow trout will be stocked in the region's small lakes and ponds this year. Stocking began in mid-April and will continue through mid-summer, when surface water temperatures become too warm. Trout fishing is great throughout the year, though anglers will have to fish a bit deeper during the heat of the summer. Some of the most frequently stocked lakes include Round, Kelso, Fernan, Robinson, Smith, and Hauser. Once temperatures cool off in September, most lakes will be stocked one more time. Many lowland lakes have naturally reproducing populations of bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, and bass. The best time for most of these species is during the May–June spawning season, as their aggressive behavior makes them easier to catch. Following spawning, most of these species will move to slightly deeper water. Though the fish may not be as easy to find, anglers can still catch plenty.

Mountain Lakes

More than 50 mountain lakes are regularly stocked in the Panhandle Region. For the angler looking to enjoy the backcountry and get away from the crowds, these lakes offer the chance to catch plenty of fish in some

continued on next page

Idaho Fish and Game News

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Ed Mitchell, Editor
Owyhee Publishing, Printing

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Commissioner's Corner

Greatest Memory of All

Even the last few weeks have shown us that spring weather in Idaho can be ever-changing but now is the time to get outside and enjoy Idaho's bounty.

In the last few weeks the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has hosted Kids Fish Free for a Day attended by hundreds of excited youth, so let's continue

this interest by taking your children and grandchildren—or act as a big brother or sister—and take a child fishing. Many of our local ponds are filling with water fresh from the snowmelt, making fishing great.

Not into fishing? Then take a day nature walk. Many of the flowers and grasses are in full bloom, just coming out of winter and with recent rains making them a majestic view. As you are walking don't forget to look for the newborn animals that have just arrived. Many of our big game animals are now caring for their young. Birds such as sage grouse, pheasants, and chukars are beginning their nesting cycle.

Almost all animals in one form or another are ever-present during the spring, preparing to give birth or raising their offspring. The great thing about living in Idaho is that you can draw a 50 mile circle around your community and see almost anything you want.

So let's load up the backpack with lunch, water and a pair of binoculars and get out of the house, away from the city noise and modern technology, explore and enjoy spring time in Idaho. Oh, and don't forget to take a child along, their excitement and expressions will be your greatest memory of all.

Panhandle

continued from previous page

of the state's most beautiful settings. Because of the cold winter and cool spring this year, anglers will likely find some of the highest lakes still covered with ice until early July. Though a few of the lakes can actually be reached by driving, most require a hike of at least a mile. The most remote lakes are several miles in, and consequently see few visitors in a summer. With the exception of the "drive-to" lakes, the mountain lakes are stocked with 1- to 2-inch trout fry. Because of the short growing season and the lack of nutrients in the high elevation lakes, the fish don't grow exceptionally big.

Anglers should generally expect fish in the 9- to 12-inch range. On the flip side, catch rates are often extremely good, with hungry fish readily taking bait, lures, or flies. Mountain lakes are managed with a six fish limit, so they are a great place for anglers looking for an opportunity to harvest a few trout.

Best Bets for Kids

- In May and June, bluegills spawn near the shoreline of lakes such as Rose, Robinson, Avondale, and Kelso. Not only

are they aggressive, but because they're visible, kids can sight-fish, which really holds their interest. Properly filleted and fried, there aren't many kids who won't love to eat their catch!

- The chance for some exercise and the abundance of fish

make mountain lakes a great place to take kids. There is no finer meal than fresh-caught trout on the shore of a mountain lake, so don't forget the frying pan!

- For families that like the big lakes, trolling for kokanee can provide some fast action that will keep a kid's attention.

The gear is fairly simple, typically consisting of leaded line, cowbells, a rubber snubber, and a wedding ring spinner. Kokanee fishing is generally good throughout the summer.

- For those without a boat, the small lakes and ponds stocked with rainbow trout are a great bet. Kelso Lake, Post Falls Park Pond, Bull Moose Lake (by Priest Lake), Dayrock Pond (near Wallace), Steamboat Pond (near Enaville) and Fernan Lake all have great access for shore anglers.



Bob Barowsky



A colorful native cutthroat trout may make a lasting memory for a young angler.

IDFG photo

Fishing in Idaho

High Value, Affordable

*By Ed Schriever
Chief of Fisheries*

I hope you enjoy the fishing focus of this edition of Idaho Fish and Game News. This edition highlights many of our best fisheries and some excellent beginner-friendly fishing opportunities. Please remember that there are also many, many great fishing opportunities beyond those highlighted in

this edition. Do some exploring!

For Idaho's population of avid anglers this edition will provide an update of fisheries that may be familiar and may also entice you to venture to untested waters. We know from evaluating our license database that a high percentage of Idaho anglers buy a fishing license, and presumably go fishing, every year. There are also a

continued on next page

Commission Calendar

July – Quarterly Meeting

July 22,23,24

(Public Hearing July 22)

McCall

Rules: nonbiological for all game animals; Rules: nonresident deer and elk tag quotas; nonresident deer and elk tag outfitter set-aside;

Rules: nonbiological for 2010-2011 fishing seasons; Consider release of bighorn sheep tags for auction and lottery; Commission direction on

the expenditure of Animal Damage Control funds; legislative proposals; Migratory game birds briefing.

August – Special Meeting or Conference Call

August TBD

October – Conference Call

October 29 or 30 TBD

Season setting: Migratory game birds (waterfowl seasons and limits for firearms and falconry);

Season setting: Sage-grouse seasons;

FY11 budget request.

Ratification of rules.

November – Quarterly Meeting

November 18,19,20

(Public Hearing November 18)

Coeur d'Alene

Season setting: 2010-2011 Fishing Seasons; Appoint Commission representative to WAFWA; Election of Commission chair, vice-chair.

Clearwater

Dworshak

Fertility

Improves

By Sean Wilson, Dworshak
Reservoir Research Biologist

Bigger kokanee in Dworshak Reservoir indicate an early payoff for biologists' efforts to bring more life back to this fishing water.

Dworshak Reservoir suffers from "oligotrophication," a fancy word that means the reservoir has shown a continual loss of nutrients since its impoundment in 1972. So why should we be concerned about this decline in nutrients? After all, it seems that in recent years we have been spending countless dollars to reduce nutrient input into rivers, lakes and streams to keep them cool, clear and clean. While cool, clean, clear water is desirable, in some of our lakes and reservoirs, naturally occurring nutrients have declined to the point that fish growth and numbers have diminished considerably.

The loss of nutrients may lead to fewer and smaller kokanee. Recent surveys found that anglers spend around \$6 million annually in fishing trips to Dworshak Reservoir, mostly in pursuit of the feisty little landlocked salmon.

Kokanee have excellent tasting orange flesh; and with a little experience, anglers can catch and keep up to 25 fish a day. Unfortunately, if the productivity decline in Dworshak Reservoir continues, the resulting smaller kokanee could lose its appeal to anglers and the local economy will be hurt.

All reservoirs start out as highly productive systems when they are first impounded. The decay of newly flooded plant material acts as a natural fertilizer. After four to eight years, this natural fertilizer is typically used up,



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work barge applying fertilizer on Dworshak Reservoir. Early signs indicate the effort to add fertility so that kokanee have a better chance to grow is paying off.

Photo courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

and productivity levels off to match the natural input of nutrients from streams that feed into it.

Unfortunately, construction of Dworshak Dam eliminated an important nutrient source to the North Fork Clearwater River and its tributaries that now drain into Dworshak Reservoir. These tributaries once supported abundant runs of salmon and steelhead. These fish grew large in the ocean and returned to the river to spawn and die. Upon death, their bodies provided a natural fertilizer to the watershed called "marine derived nutrients." Because of the age of the reservoir and the absence of these nutrients, Dworshak is less productive.

To make matters worse, nitrogen levels have declined more than phosphorus levels in Dworshak. When this happens, blue green algae, which can fix their own nitrogen, become the dominant algae. Blue green algae are undesirable because zooplankton, which are the primary food source for kokanee, will not eat them and, if blue green algae become abundant enough, they can release toxins that poison animals.

In an effort to reverse the oligotrophication process, Fish and Game

and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began a cooperative experiment in 2007 to restore productivity to Dworshak by supplementing it with nutrients. This should not only increase the productivity of the reservoir, but it should also bring the nitrogen and phosphorus into balance to create a more desirable and more efficient food chain.

The Corps applies ammonium nitrate, a common agricultural fertilizer, to the reservoir weekly from April until September. Fish and Game monitors water quality, plankton communities, and fish populations to make sure the applications are working. So far, the project is showing some early signs of success.

It typically takes several years for fertilization to achieve full effect. The effects are first seen at the bottom of the food chain and work their way up another level each year. In the first year of this project, microscopic organisms at the bottom of the food chain increased dramatically. Last year, there was a slight decline in these creatures as organisms that feed on them increased. If this trend continues, the zooplankton populations should see significant increases

this year. Zooplankton are the food base for most young fish and all kokanee. An increase in zooplankton should speed growth for kokanee, and provide a better forage base for most other fish in the reservoir.

This project is more about quality than quantity. The goal is not so much to produce more algae, but to produce a more desirable algae. Last year, the percentage of edible algae in the reservoir was the highest it has been since monitoring began in 2004.

Though it is still early to see the full benefits to kokanee, there are some early increases in their growth. The average length of kokanee last year wasn't any more than we have seen since 2004, but they certainly were fatter.

Last year kokanee numbers were down from previous years, but because they grew well, they supported a good fishery. This year there may be even fewer adult kokanee in the reservoir, but early indications are that they are growing quite well. Because larger kokanee are easier to catch, the lower numbers don't necessarily mean poor fishing. Anglers may not find a lot of kokanee in Dworshak this year, but they should find some big ones.

Affordable Fishing

continued from previous page

fairly large number of Idaho anglers who don't go fishing every year. The reason for this behavior is unclear, but I'm willing to bet it has a lot to do with competing interests that take up more and more of our free time.

Families may opt out of a fishing/camping trip for a trip to Disneyland. Many of us have recently been introduced to a new term – *staycation* – a stay-near-home vacation. The concept is gaining popularity because of tough economic times. People are looking

for value with their recreational dollar. The recent flu situation may also influence folks to stay closer to home this summer. Fortunately, Idaho is a great state for recreation and vacationing. Whether you are vacationing or just looking for something fun to do for a day or weekend, I encourage you to include fishing in Idaho as you plan your activities.

I would especially like to invite beginners and people who used to fish but haven't recently, to wet a line. I am a lifelong angler and like most "fish-

ing junkies" I have invested a small fortune in fishing equipment. I never cease to be amazed at the constant parade of new "stuff" that is produced and the advancement of fishing gadget technology.

A natural progression that takes place when people participate in fishing, or any hobby for that matter, an evolution of sorts.

I can tell you for a fact that my first fishing pole was exactly that – a 10-foot-long piece of bamboo with eight feet of fishing line tied to the end with a bobber and a hook. I was seven years old. Now, 43 years later, my "stuff" is virtually all graphite. But here's the deal – I don't have any more fun catching fish today with a graphite rod than I did then with a cane pole.

I am concerned that people might not take up fishing because they think it requires a huge investment. There's

nothing wrong with buying cool fishing stuff – it's just not a requirement for catching fish or having fun. Please don't let a lack of fancy equipment keep you or your kids from a chance to try fishing.

Fishing licenses are a great recreational value and remember that kids 13 years and younger don't even need a license to fish.

One of the key objectives identified in our Fisheries Management Plan is to maintain a diversity of fishing opportunities. There are obviously biological and ecological limits to what we can provide, but I think the fishery program in Idaho does an admirable job of providing a wide variety of fishing; the reports in this newsletter are a testament to our commitment and ability to meet the demand for fishing recreation.

Don't let 2009 go by without enjoying the pleasure of a fishing trip.



Citizens Against Poaching

To report wildlife violations in Idaho telephone:

1-800-632-5999

Be Outside: It's Easy

By Vicky Runnoe, Education Supervisor, IDFG

One of the best things about re-connecting children with nature is its simplicity.

You do not need to make an expensive trip to a sporting goods store to buy gear or take an exotic vacation to a faraway place. Instead, you can start right in your own backyard. What may look pretty tame to you can become an incredible place of new discoveries and adventure for your children. From sandboxes and forts to crawling in the grass and running through the sprinkler, your children will find many ways to explore and play while exercising their bodies and imaginations. Help make your yard an interesting place to explore by adding things like a sandbox, vegetable garden, bird feeders, or a plot of native wildflowers. Make sure to involve your children in outside planning, planting, and building; this is valuable outside time, too.

Be sure to check out nearby safe outdoor locations for your children to explore. Neighborhood parks offer wonderful natural settings for children and families to enjoy. Vacant lots and small neighborhood woods both have long traditions as places where children gathered to play and explore. Public lands such as state parks, national forests, nature centers, and wildlife management areas are all excellent outdoor locations available to families looking for outdoor recreation farther from home.



Ayla, the bird watcher.

IDFG photo

jars, and flashlights can be used for exploration. If you would like to try fishing, but have no equipment, Fish and Game has rod loaner programs.

Simply by opening the door, you will be opening a whole new world of experiences that will benefit your child for a lifetime.

Afraid of the Big Outdoors?

When asked why they do not allow their children to play outside, most parents identify fear as their main concern.

Fear of traffic, crime, and strangers are those most frequently mentioned. As a result, the boundaries of childhood freedom have shrunk considerably from the time when these parents were themselves children. One study of nine-year-olds found that the radius around the home where children are allowed to roam shrank to a ninth of what it had been in 1970.

Of the fears mentioned above, it is fear of strangers that is most commonly identified. Fueled by urban myths about strangers poisoning Halloween candy and intensive media focus on isolated incidents, parents are led to believe that bad people lurk behind every bush in every neighborhood in every community in the country. In fact, statistics show that violent crimes against children have been declining over the last few decades. Additional statistics document

that most crimes against children are committed by family members or friends.

With heightened media coverage of violent crime, local news creates a powerful image of a dangerous world, an image that lurks in the minds of parents. But according to many experts including Dr. Catherine Serio, a Clinical Psychologist with Heathwise in Boise, this image is misleading. She said "There is a huge misconception in the public about safety and the risks that are posed to children. In reality, the kids that we're raising are no less safe than we were as children. It's just the perception that the world is a less safe place."

Tools such as the media and the internet allow access to far more information than ever before. What was once largely private information is now public, creating the perception that far more criminals are around today than in the past. What becomes lost in this information overload is

continued on next page

Be Outside!



**For ideas on connecting
children to nature
from backyards to mountaintops
go to:**

beoutsideidaho.org

Why Be Outside?

By Sue Nass, Television Writer/Producer, IDFG

"Can I go out and play?" is the question kids have asked through the ages.

But not any more. Over-scheduling, parental fear, video games, social networking, organized sports, television...all have conspired to take our kids away from free play outdoors. And the cost? Skyrocketing obesity, a marked increase in mental health issues and a lack of creativity.

There is hope. A nationwide movement to battle this "nature deficit disorder" has been triggered by Richard Louv's book "Last Child in the Woods". All over the country, a growing number of children's advocates, environmentalists, business and political leaders are concerned about the long term consequences. They wonder how childhood changed from the way they remember it.

"And the thought they might be part of one of the last generations where it's normal and expected for kids to go outside and play in nature, really bothers people," Louv said. "The real question is: will this lead to cultural change?"

Keeping Kids Fit

Pediatricians are now saying that this generation of American children may be the first to have a lower life expectancy than their parents. And it's largely because of a sedentary lifestyle," Louv said.

The average American child sits in front of some type of screen four to six hours a day which doesn't leave much time to play outside. Consequently, childhood obesity has tripled in 30 years. It develops into a cycle. A kid who becomes overweight finds it more difficult to move, so that child spends less time doing outdoor activities.

Moreover, the likelihood of that child developing type 2 diabetes increases. Statistics show if nothing changes, one in three children born since the year 2000 will develop diabetes. "And in the last year and a half, I've seen children as young as 10 coming in with type 2 diabetes, which even 10 years ago, would have been really unheard of," said Jeannee Diaz, Registered Dietitian and Personal Trainer at the Humphreys Diabetes Center in Boise.

What really frightens health providers like Diaz is the possible early onset of complications associated with the disease. "When you have diabetes for a number of years, unless it's controlled well, there's all kinds of long term complications. Heart attacks, blindness, strokes, kidney failure, amputations."

These complications may begin to appear 20 years or so after the initial diagnosis. If a child develops type 2 diabetes at 10 instead the more common age of 40, that person could experience frightening health problems as a young adult.

The economic side of this health dilemma is equally daunting. A person with diabetes costs the health care system about thirteen thousand dollars a year compared to about twenty-five hundred dollars a year for the average person.

Yet this complicated problem has simple solutions. Diaz said we need to go back to what American families did 30 years ago: return to the dinner table. Studies show families who eat meals together eat less. And go outside and play.

continued on next page

Why Be Outside?

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Mental and Emotional Health

When children are outside they *create* play. This challenges their brains to develop in a capable, creative and adaptable way. It also instills a sense of confidence. Screen time is the opposite. It is about passively receiving images.

"So when you give a child a stimulus like a television or a video game their attention is learning to shift constantly and not to stay focused, and not to sustain," said Catherine Serio, PhD, Clinical Psychologist at Healthwise in Boise. Mental health experts call it 'continuous partial attention'. We all experience it when we are bombarded with multi-media, but sometimes it becomes a cognitive problem.

"And the way that it presents in kids is ADD, attention deficit disorder. I cannot stay focused on one thing. I'm continuously darting from one thing to another," Serio said.

Being outside challenges a child's brain to focus on one thing. However, when that outside play is organized by adults, kids don't learn other important life skills.

"What are we doing to kids when we don't allow them to make up their own games and negotiate their problems?" asked Louv. "What are we doing to kids when we take kids out of a natural environment, put them into one where all the information is pre-programmed?"

Outside play develops the capacities for creativity, problem-solving, and emotional growth. "If they don't have unstructured time, then all they're really learning to do, is to perform some skill that we have defined for them, not to discover," Serio said.

Serio encourages parents to limit their children to one structured activity per semester. "And I would invite parents to simply let themselves off the hook. Put down their "to do" list, open a door, go with your child and see what's in your backyard. It's really that simple."



A strong connection with nature makes happier, healthier young people. Experts say we are in danger of losing that connection.

IDFG photo courtesy Evin Oneale

A Start:



beoutsideidaho.org

So how do we begin to combat nature deficit disorder? How do we trigger this cultural change?

We start right here with the *Be Outside* Initiative, this community effort to help Idaho families be healthier, happier and more in touch with the world around them.

Many opportunities already exist and can be found on the interactive beoutsideidaho.org website.

To enter an event contact Diane Norton via email at the Idaho Division of Tourism diane.norton@tourism.idaho.gov.

By Sue Nass, Television Writer/Producer

Many experts say the health of the earth is also in danger. If children don't enjoy playing outside in nature, how will they ever learn to care about our planet?

"Where will the future stewards of the earth come from? Yes, we will always have conservationists, but increasingly they will carry nature in their briefcases, rather than their hearts." Richard Louv said.

Louv is concerned that the baby boomers working in conservation fields are beginning to retire in large numbers and there may be few to replace them.

"The studies show that conservationists, environmentalists, whatever you want to call them, almost to a

Healthy Kids, Healthy Earth

person had some sort of transcendental experience in nature when they were kids. What happens if that virtually ends? Where will the future stewards of the earth come from?"

There is anecdotal evidence that a lack of

experience in nature already is affecting the quality of today's students.

Marlene Zuk, Ph.D., is a Professor of Biology at the University of California-Riverside. She worries about the change she has seen in natural resource students over the last decade.

"They haven't grown up noticing

biodiversity. They're not out turning over rocks or logs in the stream and they're not out noticing even little stuff."

Zuk is an entomologist, that is, a scientist who studies bugs. She said

it's not about taking a trip to a pristine wilderness. It's about being interested in the "micro fauna" in your own backyard.

"We always want graduate students that are interested in big questions in science, but to answer big questions in science you have to have some sense of what's already out there."

They're not out turning over rocks or logs in the stream and they're not out noticing even little stuff

Afraid of the Big Outdoors? —

continued from previous page

the understanding that crime and criminals are not new threats.

Instead, the new threat to children is excessive time indoors. Childhood overweight and obesity are increasing dramatically in this country. Along with this weight gain have come typically adult-onset health problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. More and more of our children suffer from childhood depression and attention deficit disorders. Linking all of these concerns is the decline of outdoor play. To help our children we need to reconcile our concerns over safety with the obvious health benefits of time outside.

So, how do parents protect their children while allowing them the freedom to play outside? Exercising reasonable caution can help parents feel confident in providing outdoor time to their children:

- Take the time to identify safe areas within your neighborhood where your children can play.
- Insist that children use the buddy system and send along a cell phone so your children can check in periodically.
- Visit with other parents to establish boundaries within

which kids can roam the neighborhood. This provides more eyes to keep a benign watch on the activity.

- If your children are very young, accompany them, but resist the temptation to hover. Allow them to explore on their own. Knowing that you are nearby will increase their confidence in their own abilities.
- Identify safe routes for walking or bicycling to school or a friend's house. Accompany your children a few times to make sure they know the route and are careful around traffic.

One of the most powerful tools parents can give their children is

confidence. Help your children learn to "pay attention" to their surroundings. Teach them to trust their feelings when something does not seem right and to act on those feelings. A child who knows what to do if a stranger approaches is a child that is much less likely to become a victim because they are sure of themselves and their abilities. Focus family talks about "stranger danger" on reinforcing safe behaviors, not increasing fear.

The outdoors is one of the best places for children to grow, learn, exercise their curiosity and let their imaginations soar. Parents and children both have the tools to confidently and safely enjoy time outside. The benefits to our children will last well beyond childhood.

It's All About Mentoring

By Katie Knick, 15

Last summer I had the babysitting experience of a lifetime. I've always loved the outdoors and when my mom's friend asked me to turn her five-year-old daughter into an outside-crazy girl, I couldn't say 'yes' fast enough. For eight hours, one day a week, she was all mine.

Shasha and my summer together was a never-ending adventure. Between watching crawfish in the nearby pond, blackberry picking and infinite recording of the numerous birds species we saw, Shasha's enthusiasm for the outdoors continued to grow.

I was surprised at how easy it was to come up with ideas to get outside. For example, we never ate lunch indoors unless it was raining. Walking or riding bikes to the park for our picnic became the highlight of our days together. Sometimes we'd bring a kite or make popsicle stick boats to race down the small stream.

The best day of our summer began as any other. We filled up the birdfeeders and played hop-scotch in the morning. After our picnic we headed to the crawfish pond on our bikes. Moments later we were crouched on the rocks that bordered the water, nets gripped

tightly in anticipation. Shasha spotted it. It was the biggest crawfish I'd ever seen. The five-year-old squealed with delight at her discovery. The bright red monster was perched on some algae about two feet deep. As we prepared to catch it, suddenly we were interrupted by a

splash on the other end of the small pond. We jumped a mile and looked but could see nothing. Just as we diverted our attention back to the crawfish, it was suddenly snatched away by a mink underwater! The mink was gone with the crawfish as quickly as it had come.

As Shasha and I stared at the water in wonder, the mink suddenly leaped to shore five feet from us and began eating its prize. We squatted motionless and watched the scene.

Suddenly a second splash was heard from the shallow end of the pond and another mink swam toward us. This mink rose out of the water and joined the first one on the rock. Then the two minks began to fight over the precious prey. They tumbled over each other screaming and clawing until finally one lost the "battle" and slunk back into the water, reluctantly swimming away. This all happened five feet from our saucer-size eyes.



Shasha and Katie on the way to the crawdad pond.

IDFG photo by Vicky Osborn

Sharing my outdoor experiences was fun and rewarding. I enjoyed our time together just as much as Shasha did, and the fact that we could have so

much fun and enjoy so many surprises simply by spending time outside was amazing to me. It's an experience I'll never forget.

Take Someone Hunting Today

By Rob Brazie
Senior Conservation Officer
Eagle District

I was recently asked what I like best about my job as a conservation Officer for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Quickly, I said "Taking a young hunter into the field on his first hunt." It doesn't matter if it is for pheasants or turkey, deer or elk, the excitement and satisfaction are the same. The cackle of the flushed pheasant, a quick shot, a good retrieve, and the smile of a youngster as they take the magnificent bird from the dog's mouth is beyond compare.

It is rewarding to see the satisfaction the young hunter gets when they gently place that first pheasant into their vest and understand that now they are a hunter.

Conservation organizations all agree about the need to pass on our outdoor traditions to the next generation. A hundred years ago, hunting was a way of life. A child picked up the single-shot rifle after school, and went hunting for game that ended up on the table. Today, a child is more likely to play hunting video games than actually go hunting.

If sportsmen hope to preserve the hunting heritage, we must find a way to reach today's youth. Interested children frequently have no family member to take them hunting. As experienced sportsmen, we need to share



Senior Conservation Officer Rob Brazie with new hunters Flora and Caleb and two southwest Idaho spring gobblers.

IDFG photo courtesy Rob Brazie

our passion and knowledge to introduce kids to the hunting heritage.

How do you mentor?

At the top of the list is the desire to share your knowledge. You don't have to be an expert to be a good mentor. Learning together can be just as rewarding and is often more enjoyable. Excellent early season activities include scouting for sign and studying animal behavior. Take a trip to the range to work on marksmanship and

evaluate safety skills. Remember to start small and make it fun.

Second on the list is patience. Harkening back to your first experiences can help you to remember "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." If you judge the success of your hunt by the number of animals in your game bag, mentoring may not be for you. A good mentor makes "the hunt" the primary objective; the animals harvested are a bonus. Remember that this hunt is about your partner. Leave your gun

behind and focus on their experience. Let them see that a successful hunt is measured by all the things that make up the day, not just the final outcome.

Safety is the third ingredient in my "good mentor" recipe. Of everything you teach a young hunting partner, safety is the most important. Remind them of the basic rules of gun safety, including understanding muzzle control, being sure of your target, and treating every gun as if it were loaded.

continued on next page

A Way of Looking at A Life Outdoors

By Jack Trueblood
Idaho Fish and Game, Retired

Growing up the son of an outdoor writer put me in position to gather up lots of memories about hunting, fishing and other outdoorsy things. I was lucky in that I didn't have to wait for a weekend or vacation to enjoy some kind of outdoor adventure.

When I was growing up in the 50s it wasn't at all unusual to come home from school and find the family car, a 1952 Studebaker, loaded up with a lunch, guns and a dog, ready for an afternoon quail hunt in the hills south of the Snake River. Just little guys when we started going, my brother Dan and I would grab handfuls of toy cars and jump in the back seat with Joe, the English pointer. There was a cover of canvas on the seat to keep the dirt and dog hairs from getting into the upholstery. The canvas smelled, but not bad. It smelled of sagebrush and dog and spent shotgun shells and grubby little boys, but it didn't smell bad.

While the folks hunted with Joe, Dan and I would carve tiny roads and caves for our little cars, sticking around "camp" and having fun. When the hunters returned we would have something to eat and get headed for home about dusk. The smells would change, to smoke from my father's pipe and hot coffee from the thermos. When we came over the last hill, giving us a view of the farmland around Marsing and Homedale, the lights in the barnyards would be twinkling on one by one, warm yellowish lights of that era rather than the artificial day of the powerful mercury-vapor lights in use now.

The green Studie would slice through the warm autumn evenings smoothly, with a long funnel of dust behind it and the long funnel of the headlights in front. The smell of sagebrush was on us all from the bushes and the campfire and it came in the open window on the warm air. Sometimes my father would sing a few lines of "You are my Sunshine" or "Tennessee Waltz." He would call my mother darling and she would call



A young Jack Trueblood shares crappie cleaning chores with his father, Ted.

Photo courtesy of Jack Trueblood

him dear, and Dan and I would click our fingers together—brass-ended clusters of empty shotgun shells, one on each of our 20 digits. The smell of burnt gunpowder got on my hands, and the memory stayed.

Any time we boys were not in school was a trip opportunity. Maybe spring crappie fishing at Owyhee Reservoir or the annual summer "boy trip," two weeks or more in the high country of Idaho. We hiked to lakes in the Copper Basin country, caught trout in the Boise River tributaries, explored old settlements and learned a lot of camp lore.

Both of my parents could cast a fly, shoot, cook in camp or anything else our survival required. When night came they could look at the stars and name the constellations as they appeared. They could name almost every flower and other plant in our area, and my mother became a recognized expert in the fungi of Idaho. It was a remarkable way to grow up and a remarkable education.

When my kids were little I owned two campers and sold them both, and we camped on the ground. We cooked on a campfire. They, like Dan and I before them, didn't have any hand-

held games or electronic gizmos. We all made our own fun.

When we camped at a reservoir near home, my kids had a chance to fish but usually opted for swimming. It might be an inherited trait. When I was their age my crowd had an inner-tube route on irrigation canals near Nampa. After a few miles we'd climb out, walk a quarter-mile and

When I watch television it seems all my attention is focused to a small point inside the screen, like a funnel going to a point. When I'm outside the funnel is reversed

put our tubes in a drainage ditch that would bring us within a half-mile of where we started. We called it Riding the Circuit and could do it twice on a good afternoon.

What did it do to me, or for me, all that outside fun? It taught me that there is something interesting to learn everywhere you go. If you look close

enough almost every place has fascinating stuff. If you look under the sagebrush and junipers, you will find little fungi that are like small puffballs growing on stems, or others that are like puffballs on a star. When it is dry, the rays of the star wrap around the puffball for protection. When it gets damp they spread open so spores can exit the puffball. Who knew?

I learned that it is OK, even fun, to go alone. Voices will spook wildlife anyway. It is also OK to take someone you care about so you can share the world of nature.

There is a huge difference between making your own fun outdoors and being entertained inside. When I watch television it seems all my attention is focused to a small point inside the screen, like a funnel going to a point. When I'm outside the funnel is reversed, and this huge landscape and all the little parts of it are at the big part of the funnel, and I am the focus, just soaking it all in. It seems to me a far greater return on my investment of time.

That's what being outside has done for me. It has given me a different way of looking at things.

Those who don't go, can't know.

Mentoring Hunters

continued from previous page

Reinforce the fact that safety is everyone's responsibility. Never hesitate to tell someone "Watch your muzzle" if they are being unsafe and expect them to the same for you. Plan your hunts based on your partner's skills and experience levels.

So you have desire and patience.

You understand that the hunt is more about the experience and less about the kill. You stress safety always, and practice what you preach.

What's next?

Start close to home. Do your kids have friends who would like to get into the field? What about your neighbors or co-workers? Older hunt-

ers are also looking for new hunting opportunities.

If you mentor a youth, try to take hunter education with them; you will be surprised at what you both can learn. Talk to local landowners about hunting access. Many landowners are happy to provide access to youth hunters. These contacts can help young hunters learn about the responsibilities that go with permission to hunt

on private property. Check out youth hunting opportunities offered by local groups such as The National Wild Turkey Federation or Ducks Unlimited.

Hunting is a privilege, and what better way to protect this privilege than by mentoring young hunters? What we learned in hunting needs to be handed down. It is only through the passage of this knowledge to others that we ourselves learn.

Southwest Crappie, Kokanee, Wild Trout and Family Fishing

By Jeff Dillon
Southwest Region
Fisheries Manager

With the diversity of sportfishing opportunity in southwest Idaho, any angler should find something to their liking in 2009.

Probably the biggest boom right now is the crappie population in both C.J. Strike and Brownlee reservoirs. There was a big spawn in 2006, so both reservoirs are loaded with three-year-old fish in that 8- to 10-inch range. Fishing is just starting to heat up, and will only get better later in spring as crappie move into the shallows to spawn. This is kid-friendly fishing at its finest. Small jigs with or without a bobber and cast near shore will be effective, with lots of opportunity to take some fish home for dinner. While there are no bag limits on crappie, and they are abundant right now, anglers are encouraged to harvest only what they can consume.

Another bright spot in the region continues to be the kokanee fishing in Lucky Peak Reservoir. A consistent stocking program the last decade has produced a reliable fishery each year with good catch rates for 14- to 17-inch fish. Most of the time kokanee fishing requires a boat and is a little more specialized than trout fishing. Downriggers, flashers, dodgers, lead

core line, and other trolling gear is the preferred method. But from spring through early summer, even beginners without this gear can catch fish. Try drifting or trolling small spinners or wedding rings tipped with corn. Use rubber core sinkers to fish at various depths. Kokanee will generally be found in the top 20 feet or so until water temperatures warm in late June.

Smallmouth bass and channel catfish will provide great action on the Snake River and its reservoirs. Brownlee is probably the most reliable warm water fishery in the region – it seems like something is always biting there. Bass fishing is best from early spring to summer.

Anything from a worm on the bottom to soft plastic jigs to crankbaits will work on these aggressive fish. The catfish bite will start a little later and usually gets good by mid-May and lasts through the summer. In the river, fish the holes below riffles, and in the reservoir focus on any shallow sloping banks. Any traditional stink bait, worms or fresh cut bait will work. Channel catfish are abundant and this is the best fishery for them in the Pacific Northwest. Feel free to harvest some of these fish, but please keep only what you can eat.

Wild trout enthusiasts also have a wide menu to choose from. The South Fork Boise below Anderson Ranch



An 18-inch kokanee from Arrowrock Reservoir provides a lively, tasty catch.

Photo courtesy Darrell Powell

Dam is our most productive fishery, but many of the higher elevation rivers have healthy populations of wild redband (rainbow) trout, mountain whitefish, and the occasional bull trout.

Many smaller tributary streams also have brook trout. Consider exploring the upper Middle Fork and North Fork Boise and their tributaries. After the spring runoff subsides this is a great place to camp, escape the crowds, and have some fishing water to yourself. Don't expect trophies, just lots of wild fish that are willing to take a fly, lure, or bait.

There are some waters managed with special regulations, so be sure to read the fishing rules proclamation as you plan your trip.

No discussion of the southwest region fisheries would be complete without mentioning our close-to-home urban fisheries. There are more than 20 small ponds scattered around the region, many near parks or other facilities.

They are perfect when you just have a few hours after work, or want a quick trip with the kids. Most are regularly stocked with rainbow trout through early June and then again in the fall, and all the ponds have bass and bluegill that remain active all summer. Fish and Game will also be stocking large channel catfish in some of these ponds from late June into August. See the Southwest Region "Family Fishing Waters" brochure to find a pond near you.

McCall Area Offers Perch, Trout

By Dale Allen
Fishery Manager
McCall Office, Southwest Region

Now that spring is finally come, it's time to get out and try some new or old fishing spots. Here are a couple of ideas and status of some fisheries around the McCall area.

Tripod Reservoir: This eight acre reservoir is just west of Highway 55 at Smiths's Ferry. Fish and Game stocks rainbow trout here starting in May and fishing is usually pretty good. This is a good spot for a short trip up into the mountains to try your luck. Most

anglers are bottom fishing with either worms or salmon eggs. It's a nice place to use a float tube and throw spinners or fly fish.

Fischer Pond: Fischer Pond is also right on Highway 55 just as you enter the town of Cascade. This pond is only a couple of acres, but we manage it as an urban pond and it gets stocked every couple of weeks with rainbow trout. There is lots of shoreline and a nice big dock to fish from. New this year is an outdoor aquarium with viewing windows to watch fish.

Rowlands Pond: This five-acre pond outside of McCall is another

great spot for families or beginning fishermen. The pond is slightly east of McCall on Lick Creek Road past Little Payette Lake. Again, we stock this pond regularly with rainbow trout, and it's a good place to try fishing. Just around the corner is Lake Fork Creek, which is stocked frequently along the road for a mile or so.

Horsethief Reservoir: Horsethief Reservoir, owned by Fish and Game, is kept full of water throughout the year and is managed strictly as a family fishing water. Large numbers of rainbow trout are stocked in the spring after ice-out to maintain good fishing. Trout fishing for 9- to 12-inch fish is

usually very good to excellent in the spring. Typical baits for shore anglers include powerbait, worms, marshmallows, salmon eggs, etc. Boats typically troll with pop gear and worms or park somewhere and use bait. Fly fishing from float tubes is also popular on this lake. There are also a few larger 12- to 20-inch brown trout in the lake that anglers (particularly fly fishermen) enjoy chasing around. These finicky eaters are typically located in and around the weed beds. There is a no boat wake law on the lake so no water skiing is allowed. There are several access points around the lake

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Magic Valley

Low Water But Still Good Prospects

By Doug Megargle
Fisheries Manager
Magic Valley Region

Snowpack drives stream and reservoir conditions in the region. Generally speaking, things could be worse.

We have about 70 percent of average snow water equivalent in the northern part of the region (Boise, Big Wood, Little Wood, Fish Creek drainages) and about 110 percent in the southern mountains (Oakley and Salmon Falls Creek basins).

The below average snow pack in the northern mountains will likely result in relatively low reservoir conditions in Magic Reservoir, Mormon Reservoir, and Little Camas Reservoirs as well as low summer stream flows in the Boise, Big Wood, Little Wood and Fish Creek drainages. Irrigation companies are still forecasting drought conditions for these reservoirs, which means they will likely become low in late summer months. The exceptions in the north include Anderson Ranch Reservoir and Little Wood Reservoir, which will likely hold decent water levels into late summer and fall months. The above average snow pack in the southern mountains bodes well for Oakley, Salmon Falls Creek, and Roseworth Reservoirs.

What's Hot

If you're new to the area, wanting to come for a visit, or just wanting to know what's going to be the hot spot this year then you should consider the following.

Lakes and Reservoirs

Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir has been producing a great opportunity over the past few years. Most boat anglers access the fishery at Lud Drexler Park (at the dam) or the unimproved launch at Greys Landing (about half-way down the reservoir on the east



A Silver Creek brown trout shows the potential of the famous spring-fed stream.

IDFG photo

side). Anglers can find themselves hooked up with crappie, smallmouth bass, walleye, rainbow trout, steelhead, cutthroat trout X rainbow trout hybrids and the occasional kokanee and yellow perch. Trout fishing has been great with folks catching 16- to 20-inch trout since the ice came off. The ice-out walleye bite was pretty good with folks catching a lot of fish in the 14- to 17-inch range and a few over 20 inches. Walleye spawn around 48 degrees (April-May) and then the bite comes on strong when the water reaches about 56-58 degrees.

Magic Reservoir should be good despite the repeated low water years. Magic Reservoir is not expected to fill, but it will likely hold water slightly longer than last year. Anticipate low water conditions around the end of July or early August. Magic is expected to have good catch rates of hatchery rainbow trout and wild brown trout. Fish and Game documented increased

numbers of spawning brown trout (16 to 25 inches) in the lower Big Wood River which means they're available in Magic Reservoir this summer. Smallmouth bass numbers have been increasing with many in the 14- to 16-inch range.

Anderson Ranch Reservoir should produce decent catch rates of 10- to 13-inch kokanee. Fish relatively shallow (top 15 feet) until the dog days of summer when they can be found much deeper (20-35 feet) – down riggers of weighted lines are best during that time. The use of snubbers will greatly increase your chance of landing the kokanee.

Bass fishing can be productive, particularly in the spring months along the shoreline in the Lime Creek and Falls Creek area (known as the narrows).

Milner Reservoir has produced a great smallmouth bass fishery for years and is one of the three most

popular tournament fisheries in Idaho. This busy fishery is mainly available to boaters. Three to four public ramps are available. Don't forget to try for some of the channel catfish stocked annually.

Lake Walcott reportedly has been producing a great spring fishery with many anglers catching 18-inch trout from the shoreline. Bass fishing in the main reservoir produces high catch rates of smaller bass, mainly on the north shoreline. Small boats and float tube bass anglers should definitely explore the upper area of the lake (Gifford and Smith springs) during the spring and early summer months. Sixteen- to 18-inch bass are common. Be aware of the Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge boating restrictions.

Rivers and Streams

The Big Wood River always produces. This highly accessible freestone trout

continued on next page

McCall Area Fisheries

continued from previous page

and there is a maintained gravel road alongside half the lake. Fish and Game also has several hosted campgrounds at the lake.

Lost Valley Reservoir: This reservoir is typically good fishing for trout from nine to 16 inches in the spring. The lake is stocked before Memorial Day with thousands of 9- to 10-inch rainbow trout, which keeps fishing good through the summer months. Trolling for trout with pop gear and a worm can be quite productive as well as the standard bank fishing.

There is lots of camping in the

area on National Forest lands and an improved campground about a mile away.

Cascade Reservoir: Shore fishing for rainbow trout from three quarter to five pounds is usually good to excellent in the spring. Anglers typically fish the beaches south of the Cascade city boat ramp all the way down to the Blue Heron Campground.

Another good area is from the Sugarloaf boat ramp north to the point closest to Sugarloaf Island. Many people park at the old abandoned highway that goes into the water (half mile or so before you get to Sugarloaf boat

ramp) and walk up over the hill to the west and fish these beaches. These areas can be productive during and just after ice out. The typical baits include marshmallows and worms, Powerbait, salmon eggs, cured egg clusters, etc.

Trolling with pop gear and worms can be very productive in the spring for trout and coho salmon. Anglers need to experiment with different baits, depths and trolling speeds.

The yellow perch fishery is still in the restoration phase. Fish and Game personnel stocked more than 850,000 adult yellow perch from 2004 to 2006 in an effort to overcome predation problems on young juvenile perch. These adult perch will hopefully produce enough young fish to feed all the

predators in the lake with enough left over to provide a good fishery.

We have documented good production of juvenile yellow perch for the last three springs. Also during this time, Fish and Game reduced the adult northern pikeminnow population by three quarters, which has lessened predation.

Smallmouth bass angling can be good in the spring and summer months for fish up to 18 inches. Rubber grubs and perch-patterned crank baits can be very effective. Fish the rocky shorelines around boat ramps, points and other areas that have some type of bottom structure.

So, get out and fish, and try some of these spots. Tight lines.

Southeast

Smallmouth Bass Popular in Trout Waters

By Dave Teuscher
Fisheries Manager
Southeast Region

Most anglers are well aware of the great trout fishing offered in the productive rivers and reservoirs of southern Idaho. Cutthroat, rainbow, and brown trout provide most of the fishing in the region.

However, another fish is gaining in popularity, and deservedly so. Smallmouth bass are a hard-fighting fish that can be caught using all kinds of fishing tackle and many anglers find them exceptional table fare. Here is some general advice on where and how to catch smallmouth bass in the southeast region.

The Snake River and its reservoirs provide the best angling for smallmouth bass in southern Idaho—if not the entire state. Catch rates for anglers

Smallmouth bass can be caught on just about any type of fishing gear

are generally good and plenty of three-pound bass are available. American Falls Reservoir maintains a healthy number of smallmouth bass that concentrate in the rocky shoreline areas near the dam and along the northwest shoreline. Good smallmouth bass fishing continues in the river below American Falls Dam. Some of the best catches come from Massacre Rocks State Park downriver to Lake Walcott. Smallmouth bass are also found in Alexander and Oneida reservoirs on the Bear River.

May and June can be the best months to fish for smallmouth bass. As the water warms to 55°F, bass begin migrating to spawning loca-

tions, where they use their tails to dig spawning nests in water generally less than 10 feet deep. Once the eggs are deposited and fertilized, males aggressively defend the young bass hidden in the nest for several weeks. Fishing for bass during this period is lots of fun. During the spawning period, keeping a few for dinner is great and releasing the rest will help maintain quality fishing in the future.

Probably the most important thing to remember while fishing for smallmouth bass is that they spend considerable amount of time in shallow water. It doesn't matter if you're fishing from a boat, bank, or float tube; fish the shoreline.

Smallmouth bass can be caught on just about any type of fishing gear. In the spring, try crayfish-looking crankbaits. The early season bite can be aggressive. The larger smallmouth bass

living in the Snake River are pushing four pounds and they really mean it when they strike, so hang on to your fishing rod.

For summer and fall fishing, try soft plastic jigs. Slowly retrieve the jig by lifting it 6 to 8 inches off the bottom and then let it slowly drift back down. As the jigs drops back to the bottom, reel it back toward you the same 6 to 8 inches. On calm mornings, casting topwater plugs can be productive. Topwater fishing has the added excitement of seeing the fish lunge out of the water to attack the lure. While most anglers fishing for bass use spinning rods, fly fishing with poppers or streamers is



Smallmouth bass caught using a crayfish imitation crankbait. These lures work great in the spring when bass are aggressively guarding nest. Practicing catch-and-release in June will ensure good bass production.

IDFG photo

also a great method. A couple years ago, an angler called the office to report he couldn't keep smallmouth off his line fishing with a #2 silver Mepps spinner.

There is a smallmouth fishing opportunity for just about every type of angler. For a family outing, try Alexander Reservoir or the Massacre Rock State Park reach of the Snake River. Bank anglers can try Gifford Springs on the Snake River or fish six miles

of open public access located in the Oneida Narrows reach of the Bear River. For a different and more complex outing, combine bird watching and angling by hiking a float tube into the closed boating zone of the Snake River located within the boundaries of the Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge. For more information on smallmouth fishing opportunities southeast Idaho call the regional office at 208-232-4703.

Magic Valley

continued from previous page

stream is great for the learner as well as the pro. A relatively cool and wet spring so far may allow better stream flows into early summer months. There are camping options north of Ketchum which makes it real convenient to spend some time on the river.

Silver Creek is perhaps the most renowned fishery in the region. This spring-fed wild trout fishery allows an angler to target rainbow and large brown trout. The unique atmosphere of the area is worth the trip. Be prepared, as these fish are well-educated and easily spooked.

It's not uncommon to see an angler leave for the day with his wool patch covered in flies that failed to produce. The regulations are fairly complicated, so review them carefully before fishing.

Anglers who desire small, isolated trout streams might consider the upper Goose Creek drainage (and its tributaries), upper Little Wood River (above the Reservoir), Big Cottonwood Creek, and the upper Big Wood

River. These areas require a bit more effort to find and access, but the small streams can make for a great day of fishing. Anglers can target the native Yellowstone Cutthroat trout in the Goose and Big Cottonwood drainages.

What's Not

Some fisheries that rely on hatchery stocking did not carry over trout stocked the previous year. All fisheries will be stocked this spring but numbers will likely be reduced based on storage forecasts. Little Camas and Mormon Reservoir will be stocked this year, but don't expect to find many trout over 12 inches. Low water and poor over-winter survival essentially eliminated fish stocked in previous years. Thorn Creek Reservoir did not fill this spring and likely didn't carry many trout over the winter. Dog Creek Reservoir dam is under repair and may not hold as much water as in years past. Trout fishing may be slower due to warmer water temperatures but the bass and tiger muskellunge can be fun to catch.

Fish Consumption Advisories

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare issues [fish consumption advisories](#) for various fish, including bass, in various bodies of water around Idaho. Contact Health and Welfare at www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov or call 208-334-0668.

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Upper Snake

By Dan Garren
Fisheries Manager
Upper Snake Region

Going fishing means different things to different people.

For some, a fishing trip might entail driving to the water's edge and working the fish haunts from the bank with different lures, others might want to hike to a secluded spot and baitfish, others might define a fishing trip as a float where the banks and side-channels are worked with the fly rod, and still others might want to wet a line after using a motor boat to jet upstream to a deep eddy or run. While all of the above can be classified as fishing trips, they are distinct opportunities that are sometimes restricted at lakes and rivers for various reasons.

The South Fork Snake River in eastern Idaho, however, can accommodate all of the above fishing trips, and these opportunities are some of the reasons the South Fork Snake River is a great fishing destination. The South Fork Snake is a 60-mile stretch of river flowing westerly from Palisades Reservoir at the Idaho-Wyoming border to the South Menan Butte where it meets the Henrys Fork.

The South Fork is commonly split into three sections. The upper section from Palisades Dam down through Swan Valley runs 15 miles through a mountain valley. The middle section enters a 25-mile long canyon and is referred to as the canyon section. The upper 10 miles of the canyon section is roadless, but has a hiking trail on

South Fork Snake River: A Great Fishery

the north bank. The remaining 20 miles is referred to as the lower river, and stretches from Heise down to the confluence with the Henrys Fork. The entire South Fork is bordered by one of the largest cottonwood galleries in Idaho, and the cottonwood riparian area along the lower river can be miles wide.

The South Fork provides excellent habitat for four species of salmonids, including Yellowstone cutthroat trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, and mountain whitefish. Cool water releases from Palisades Reservoir and the productive nature of Eastern Idaho streams combine to support excellent growth rates for all trout species in the river, which is likely the reason why most of the previous state record brown trout are from the South Fork. The South Fork currently supports one of the last strongholds in Idaho for migratory Yellowstone cutthroat trout. These large cutthroat migrate between the main river and tributaries and are the native fish the South Fork fishery became famous for. Recently, non-native rainbow trout have threatened the persistence of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the South Fork, which has translated into more fishing opportunity for the angling public as limits on South Fork rainbow trout have been removed.

Access along the South Fork is excellent. There are 10 developed access areas with boat ramps along the South Fork and at least two undeveloped boat access sites. In addition to these sites there are two campgrounds on the

banks of the South Fork and numerous dispersed camping sites. In the roadless part of the canyon section, the Bureau of Land Management has 13 undeveloped camp sites identified for boaters wishing to spend multiple days on the river, and the abundant public land along the South Fork further downstream provide ample dispersed camping opportunities. Boating opportunities also abound on the South Fork. Motorboats are allowed on the South Fork as well as driftboats, rafts, kayaks, and pontoon boats.



This Henrys Lake hybrid trout is almost as big as its handler.

IDFG photo

The fishing season is open all year. Harvest of Yellowstone cutthroat trout is not allowed, but there is no limit on rainbow trout. Brown trout can be harvested but must exceed 16 inches, and two brown trout is the daily limit on the river.

The upper river was historically dominated by Yellowstone cutthroat trout. From the late 1990s through 2004, cutthroat trout numbers declined while rainbow trout numbers increased. Since 2004, Fish and Game has instigated a new strategy to help cutthroat, and this strategy appears to be working. Yellowstone cutthroat trout numbers have shown an increasing trend from 2004 through 2008. The current estimate is more than 1,700 cutthroat per mile at this upper site with 900 rainbow trout per mile, and 600 brown trout per mile adding to the catch opportunity. These fish are not slouches either. With over 2,700 trout captured during the 2008 surveys, the *average* size for trout was nearly 14 inches.

Idaho's South Fork Snake River supports a great fishery. One of the reasons why it is great is because there is opportunity for anglers to fish using numerous types of terminal tackle from several public access points, and from different types of watercraft. All of these opportunities are supported by healthy trout populations. Now add the amazing scenic qualities the South Fork offers and the wildlife that call the river home, and this makes for a great fishing experience no matter how you define it.

Salmon

By Tom Curet
Fisheries Manager
Salmon Region

Lemhi and Pahsimeroi

For the second consecutive year, river conditions for both these watersheds looks positive. The population of rainbow trout in both the Pahsimeroi and Lemhi rivers is still dampened by the long-term effect of multiple-year drought conditions. The quality of fishing will likely be influenced for several years to come. Early fishing will likely be difficult because of high and turbid water, however, it should improve throughout the summer. Late in the summer when temperatures get warmer, fish and fishing will be most active early in the morning when water temperatures are coolest. Remember that both of these rivers are largely private and most locations require permission for access. Consult your fishing rules book prior to fishing the Lemhi or Pahsimeroi as size and species restrictions apply.

Williams Lake

Fishing in Williams Lake should be excellent until temperatures increase late in the summer. Results from sampling last fall suggest there is an abundance of fish in the lake. Excellent quality rainbows in the 12- to 15-inch

Water Levels Look Good Again This Year

range should be readily caught. Float tubes and boats provide anglers access throughout the lake and are recommended but not necessary. Good bank angling and easy angler access can be found on the northwest portions of the lake near the public boat dock.

Middle Fork Salmon River and tributaries

Once turbid runoff conditions subside, the upper and mid portions of the Middle Fork and tributaries should provide good to excellent catch and release fishing for cutthroat trout and rainbow trout. Recent fires in the Middle Fork will cause the system to be unstable for the near future so muddy runoff events will likely be commonplace during periods of rain. Anglers venturing into the Middle Fork must be properly prepared as the country is rugged and remote.

Upper Salmon River – Headwaters to Salmon

The big news this year is that a Chinook salmon fishery may be offered for the whole upper Salmon River from the town of Salmon to the Sawtooth Hatchery in the Stanley Basin. If predictions hold true, more than 8000 excess hatchery Chinook salmon will arrive in the upper river beginning in late June or early July.

In the Stanley Basin hatchery rainbow trout support good fishing in the deeper pools and runs along Highway 75. Be aware that the only legal trout in the main-stem Salmon River are hatchery raised, adipose fin clipped rainbow trout. Stocking in this reach will begin in mid-June or when high water recedes.

Decent to good catch-and-release fishing for cutthroat and wild rainbows can be found on the mainstem Salmon River from the East Fork Salmon River to Pahsimeroi River stretch. Fishing in this reach should remain ideal throughout the summer if temperatures remain moderate.

Jimmy Smith, Herd, and Carlson lakes

Some hiking is required to access all of these lakes, so anglers should take proper hiking equipment and carry water and lunches. All of these lakes typically provide good catch rates and exciting fishing. These lakes will be good bets this spring when river and stream fishing conditions are poor due to muddy conditions.

Bayhorse, Iron, Meadow, and Wallace lakes

These lakes will remain inaccessible until snow melts and road conditions improve. However, later in the season they are excellent choices for weekend excursions. These lakes are stocked throughout the summer to provide decent angler opportunity.

Stream Fishing Regionwide

Stream fishing offers a variety of opportunities throughout the region. Many streams in the Salmon Region, excluding the Middle Fork Salmon River, offer great fishing and harvest opportunity for rainbow trout, cutthroat, and brook trout. There are literally hundreds of miles of fishing opportunity that can be found on tributaries to the Lemhi, Pahsimeroi, East Fork Salmon River, Yankee Fork, and upper Salmon River. In most locations, anglers should check local conditions early in the season before they go because of high water. However things will improve throughout the summer and fishing should be excellent throughout the summer and fall.

Check region pages, fishing reports and the Idaho Fish Planner at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov> for more angling information.