

Idaho Fish & Game News

June 2013



Volume 25, Number 6

Fishing Around the State:



The Boise River is a popular spot for urban anglers to wet a fly.

IDFG photo by N.S. Nokkented

What's Noteworthy in the Southwest?

In late May, the **South Fork Boise** reopens to angling as the spawning season concludes for most rainbow trout. It also marks some of the best insect hatches of the year, including the legendary salmon fly. Trout aggressively grab well-placed flies and the fight is on.

Early June without a doubt is the best time of year to take a young angler fishing for one simple reason - bluegill. Bluegills are colonial nesters that make dish shaped nest in shallow gravel. Excavated ponds provide the best habitat for bluegill, bass, and other panfish. Search the shallows with polarized glasses. Where there's one, there's a couple of dozen. Young and old alike enjoy watching a bobber with a small chunk of worm disappear under the water's surface.

As the water temperatures start to rise in **Lucky Peak** and **Arrowrock** reservoirs, kokanee suddenly become very predictable. Boat anglers rejoice in the opportunity to catch these chrome-sided fish, not only for their appearance and for the fight, but also for their tremendous qualities on the grill or in a smoker.

As high water recedes in June, anglers in Southwest Idaho head to the rivers. Can anything be better than wet wading,

mountain scenery and catching a couple trout? The **Middle** and **North forks** of the **Boise River** offer miles of wild trout fishing, where anglers use small silver spinners or small dry flies.

By mid-July, all but the highest alpine lakes have lost their ice. After eight or nine months of being covered by hard water, trout relish the opportunity to eat something different. It is at this time that patterns such as ants, beetles and grasshoppers shine. The hard part is picking one of more than 3,000 alpine lakes Idaho has to offer.

The secluded, picturesque setting of **Deadwood Reservoir** is a great place to experience nature and to catch fish. Open water anglers catch kokanee by trolling flashers and squids or pop gear. Fall Chinook salmon – 8 to 12 pounds – have caused quite a stir requiring anglers to use stout gear or pay the consequences. Tributary mouths especially at dawn and dusk offer a good chance to catch resident trout species including rainbow, cutthroat trout, and hybrids with an outside chance at a trophy class individual.

But anglers can't keep the bull trout; for identification go to <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/fish/rules/fishIdentification.pdf>.

What's Noteworthy in the Clearwater Region?

The **Clearwater Region** provides some of the most diverse fishing opportunities in the state – from large rivers like the **Snake, Clearwater** and **Salmon**; flat water like **Dworshak Reservoir** or newly constructed **Deyo Pond**; to mountain lakes at more than 9,000 feet.

Dworshak Reservoir near Orofino is renowned for its summer kokanee fishery and is recognized as one of the best smallmouth bass fisheries in the United States. Fish rocky shores and contour areas with crank baits, jigs or worms for the best opportunity to land respectable bass. Kokanee are found in deeper water, almost exclusive by boat anglers.

During the summer, fly-fishing for westslope cutthroat in the **Lochsa** and **North Fork Clearwater** rivers provides outstanding fishing and scenery. Insect hatches change through the seasons.

Access to high mountain lakes is often limited by snow until early July, but the fishing is worth the wait. Deeper lakes have stocked and naturally reproducing cutthroat, brook and rainbow trout. Some have exotic fish, such as California golden trout and Arctic grayling.

Salmon and steelhead opportunities can be found almost year round. From August through March, the **Clearwater** and **Snake** rivers hold steelhead that can be caught on a variety of gear. During warmer water periods, flies and lures are effective at attracting 8- to 15-pound fish. Most anglers use bait when water cools.

Chinook salmon are found in the main **Salmon** and **Little Salmon** rivers.

Fishing is best in late May and June – depending on river flows. Check with local bait shops for gear. Fall Chinook are abundant in the **Snake River**. Anglers are most effective with lures from a boat.

The **Snake River** offers some of the best sturgeon fishing in the west. These 6- to 8-foot behemoths, weighing in excess of 200 pounds, require specialized gear and knowledge of the river.



Fishing on Dworshak Reservoir.

IDFG photo

What's Noteworthy in the Southeast Region?

Most of the recreational fisheries in the Southeast Region are supported by the release of hatchery produced rainbow trout.

The top four stocking sites include the **Snake River, American Falls, Blackfoot** and **Chesterfield** reservoirs. About 60 percent of the fish stocked in the region go to those waters, which account for more than 250,000 angler visits annually.

Hatchery rainbow trout are stocked in

another 51 locations in the region. Most of the stocking locations are in reservoirs and ponds. Fish and Game also stocked a large number of fish in the **Bear** and **Portneuf** rivers.

Other species of fish stocked in the

region include kokanee salmon, lake trout and Bonneville cutthroat trout. The conservation hatchery program for Bonneville cutthroat trout has been a real highlight for the region the past two years.

About 40,000 cutthroat trout have been released from the Grace hatchery. The program is funded by PacifiCorp as mitigation for four hydroelectric power dams on the **Bear River**. The conservation hatchery program is responsible for restoring native cutthroat trout to several streams where the species has been missing for decades.

Edson Fichter Pond continues to be popular with Pocatello residents. Rainbow trout are stocked to maintain this local fishing hole.



Daniels Reservoir

IDFG photo

Idaho Fish and Game News

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Published by Idaho Fish and Game

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What's Noteworthy in the Panhandle?

These are exciting times on **Lake Pend Oreille** where the lake trout removal efforts and an improving kokanee population have made it possible to restore a limited kokanee fishery.

For the first time since 1999, anglers will be allowed to keep a limit of six kokanee on the lake that once supported a commercial fishery for the small, landlocked salmon.

In addition to kokanee harvest, the new rules are designed to begin rebuilding the trophy rainbow trout population. This includes a reduction in rainbow trout harvest from unlimited to a six-trout daily limit, with only one rainbow trout more than 20 inches allowed.

Though the **Clark Fork River** and most Pend Oreille tributaries will remain open year-round, anglers will no longer be able to harvest rainbow from December 1 until Memorial Day weekend. The **Lake Pend Oreille** lake trout harvest incentive program will continue through 2013; but the program ended for rainbows on January 1.

Elsewhere in the region, anglers in the **Coeur d'Alene** and **St. Joe** river drainages will now be required to release any trout with red-orange slashes under the jaw. The new rule will relieve the difficulty anglers were having properly distinguishing cutthroat from rainbow-cutthroat hybrid trout.



Leah fishing on Lake Pend Oreille. *IDFG photo by Bill Harryman*

Idaho Fish and Game Policy

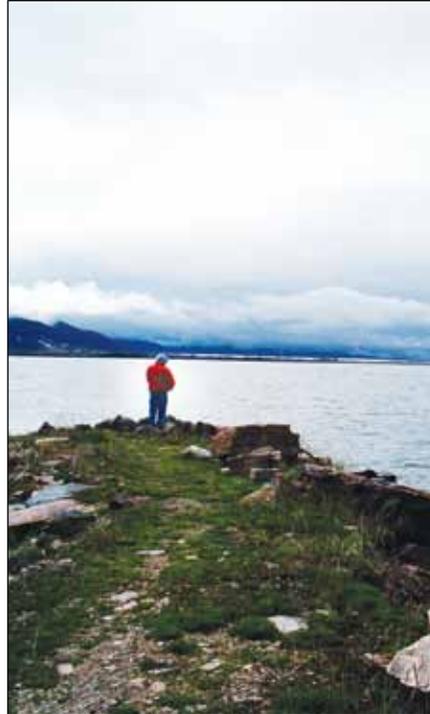
Idaho wildlife management policy is set by seven volunteer commissioners. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission's policy decisions are based on research and recommendations by the professional staff of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and with input from the governor's office, the state Legislature, hunters, anglers and the public.

What's Noteworthy in the Upper Snake?

The **Henry's Fork drainage** provides one of the most important trout fisheries in the state and attracts anglers from across the globe.

An economic survey in 2011 estimated that anglers spent nearly 100,000 angler-days in the **Henry's Fork drainage**, and that the fishery generated nearly \$45 million in the Idaho economy.

The exceptional rainbow trout fishery, combined with brown trout in the lower reaches, makes for a quality trout fishing experience. Combined with the quality fishing, the stellar scenery make this a year around destination for anglers.



Henry's Lake *IDFG photo*

Henry's Lake, the highest lake or reservoir on the **Henry's Fork** is managed to produce angler catch rates of at least one fish per 1.5 hours of fishing, and is renowned for its trophy fish potential. It is recognized as a stronghold for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout, which provide the bulk of anglers' catch, but sterile hybrid trout and

sterile brook trout are stocked to diversify the catch.

Habitat restoration projects completed over the past decade have improved cutthroat trout spawning, and natural reproduction is now adding to the population.

Island Park Reservoir, which is also found on the Henry's Fork, is managed to provide slightly higher catch rates than Henry's, but generally has fewer trophy fish. Rainbow trout are the dominant species, though kokanee and a few cutthroat trout are present as well.

Ashton Reservoir is the lowest reservoir on the Henry's Fork, and is not as well-known for its fishery as the other reservoirs. But it has produced the current state record brown trout, more than 27 pounds, and is largely overlooked by anglers. Fish and Game stocks about 30,000 catchable rainbow trout in Ashton Reservoir each year as mitigation for **Ashton Dam**.

The **Big Lost River** and **Mackay Reservoir** fisheries are outstanding for rainbow trout and can provide quality fishing experiences in a more secluded setting.

Saturday, June 8, is Free Fishing Day statewide



What's Noteworthy in the Magic Valley Region?

Reservoirs throughout the region rely on good snowmelt to provide water for irrigation and the fishery.

Magic, Lake Walcott, Milner, Upper Salmon, Lower Salmon and Dog Creek reservoirs provide fisheries for rainbow trout and other unique species, including tiger muskie, bass and rainbow-cutthroat hybrid trout. For best results, fish early in the day while water temperatures are cool.

Salmon Falls Creek and Oakley reservoirs have become known throughout the west as quality walleye fisheries. Fish shallow in late May-June for spawning fish. Night fishing in August and September yields the largest walleye.

Anderson Ranch Reservoir should fish well for kokanee, bass as well as rainbow trout.



Fishing Trailer draws anglers in Hagerman *IDFG photo*

The Big Wood River continues to provide some of the best rainbow trout fishing in the west. Abundant insect hatches create the perfect environment for fly-fishing the scenic river valley. **The South Fork of the Boise River,**

Silver Creek, Billingsley Creek and other local stream fisheries should also fish very well this year.

Bass fishing across the Magic Valley should again remain strong in **Milner and Lake Walcott.**

Lake Walcott remains one of the best smallmouth bass fisheries in the region. Fish rocky shores and near woody debris or shoreline vegetation. Rainbow trout fishing from a boat is also excellent in the spring and fall.

Urban pond fisheries are great places to take kids to enjoy a day of fishing close to home.

Places such as **Riley Pond, Filer Ponds, Oster Lakes, Camas Kids Pond, Dierkes Lake and Gavers Lagoon** will all provide good fishing, for anglers using bait and bobbers.

What's Noteworthy in the Salmon Region?

Some of the regions' popular drive-to mountain lakes should be open and accessible by early June.

But call ahead to check on road conditions. **Wallace, Iron, Meadow, Big and Little Bayhorse, Josephus and Cape Horn** provide fishing for rainbow, cutthroat, or brook trout.

An alternative the family can enjoy is **Mosquito Flat Reservoir** near Challis. This reservoir is known for beautiful scenery, great camping, and plentiful rainbow trout, and luckily not so much for those pesky mosquitoes.

Mostquito Flat is a high elevation irrigation reservoir created by an earthen dam. It is now filling with water, and it will be stocked with 5,500 catchable sized rainbow trout once road conditions allow.

Got the kids? Give **Hayden Creek Pond, Kids Creek Pond or Blue Mountain Pond** a try for a few hours. These ponds are stocked throughout the summer and usually maintain reasonable catch rates.

Williams Lake provides good summer fishing. Excellent quality rainbows in the 12- to 15-inch range can often be caught



Anglers line the upper Salmon River near Stanley *IDFG photo*

with the occasional fish in 20-inch range. 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.

The main stem of the **Salmon River** is open all year to trout fishing. Only adipose-fin-clipped rainbow trout may be harvested. Try fishing some of the deeper pools and pocket water along the river's edge for rainbow and cutthroat trout.

The region also offers a variety of

stream fishing opportunities.

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 on tributaries to the **Lemhi, Pahsimeroi, East Fork Salmon River, Yankee Fork and upper Salmon rivers.**

In most stream locations fishing will be difficult in high water. But things will improve throughout the summer.