

Meeting Date: January 25, 2024

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Kokanee Management

Bureau Chief Approval: LH

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Background:

In many lakes and reservoirs throughout Idaho, naturally produced or hatchery stocked kokanee support high use and economically important fisheries. Maintaining consistent fisheries for kokanee is challenging as a wide variety of factors such as food availability, water management, predation, harvest, natural spawning success, or availability of hatchery kokanee for stocking all affect kokanee populations.

The Department collects and uses a wide variety of data to manage kokanee populations and fisheries. Data collection focuses on understanding population density, growth rates, age of populations, as well as the effects of predation and harvest. With this information, fisheries managers are tasked with evaluating and implementing appropriate strategies. The range of management strategies employed to improve kokanee populations may include managing adults in spawning tributaries, suppressing or enhancing predator populations, adding nutrients to bolster food availability, working with water managers to shape reservoir inflows or outflows, or adjusting hatchery release strategies or harvest regulations.

This presentation will provide an overview of research, hatchery production, and management used to manage kokanee fisheries in Idaho and to discuss future challenges and opportunities.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104).

Public Involvement Process:

The angling public is very interested in the status of kokanee populations and the Department's efforts to maintain or improve fishing opportunities for this species and species that rely on kokanee as prey. The Commission and Department receive input from the public on kokanee management throughout the year via social media, email, phone calls, public meetings, workshops, and other events. The Department expects to receive additional public input on kokanee management and harvest regulation later this year during scheduled updates to the statewide fisheries management plan as well as the fishing seasons and limits brochure.

Justification:

This agenda item is for Commission information. Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, recommendations, or other input from the public.

Staff Recommendation:

Not applicable as no action is required.