Idaho Fish and Game Magic Valley Region Fisheries Newsletter Volume IV Issue I February 2013

Regional Staff

Regional Supervisor

H. Jerome Hansen

Regional Fisheries Manager

Doug Megargle

doug.megargle@idfg.idaho.gov

Regional Fisheries Biologist

Scott Stanton

scott.stanton@idfg.idaho.gov

Fisheries Technician

Elizabeth Valdez

Inside this issue:

Hello Sportsman,

2012 was another exciting year in Magic Valley Region fisheries. Fishing throughout the region remained strong even though most of the year was unseasonably dry. Reservoir levels held strong and our rivers and streams fished incredibly well. I managed to make a couple outings to Salmon Falls Creek reservoir where the walleye fishing was spectacular. I also enjoyed some bass and bluegill fishing with my family on some local fisheries. With two little boys, my fishing outings have become very exciting. It's as if you become a kid again yourself. Enjoy our annual newsletter, and contact me anytime with questions or concerns about fisheries in the Magic Valley region. Have fun out there!

Scott

IDFG Photo

Hagerman WMA Project Continues in 2012

In the spring of 2011, IDFG started a multi-faceted approach rebuilding the fisheries on the Hagerman WMA . One immediate goal was to remove carp to allow the bass and bluegill fisheries to thrive without competition from carp. In 2011, all water control structures were surveyed to determine if they prevented upstream carp movement between individual ponds on the WMA. By controlling carp movement, IDFG could then manage each fishery separately. Also in 2011, each fishery was surveyed to determine what species were present and how many were there In order for the fisheries to be restored, we determined common carp would need to be removed from the fishery. In 2012, IDFG began a large common carp removal project on the Hagerman WMA. Anderson ponds 1 and 2 were drained to a point where very little water remained. Bass and bluegill were salvaged and relocated, and common carp were left. In August 2012 , IDFG applied rotenone to Anderson ponds 1 and 2 to eliminate the remaining carp . Rotenone is a fish toxicant used by fisheries biologists to eradicate a fishery when warranted. Common carp were removed from the fishery. The ponds were then refilled and after recharge was achieved, bluegills were re stocked into the fishery in late September 2012. Largemouth bass will be re stocked in the spring of 2013. Further rotenone treatments will be occurring on the Hagerman WMA in 2013.

IDFG Photo

Christmas Trees Donated for Fish Habitat

Have you ever wondered what to do with your Christmas tree after Christmas is over? Christmas trees make great fish habitat. Costco Corp. of Twin Falls, Idaho donated all of their unsold Christmas trees to the Magic Valley Region for fisheries habitat in 2012. Some folks from the public also donated trees as well. The donated Christmas trees will be used to improve fish habitat on the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area as part of the fishery rebuild effort. Trees will be sunk in various ponds on the WMA for improving habitat for Largemouth Bass and Bluegill. So how do the Christmas trees work as fish habitat? Generally speaking, Christmas tree structures are primarily used to concentrate fish for angling. Members of the sunfish family, such as largemouth bass, and bluegill are attracted to submerged trees (i.e. the reef effect). Small fish hide there for protection. Larger fishes may seek protection, or may chase the small fish that are attracted by the trees. The trees also provide cover for fish, as well as edges, which is very important to fish habitat. Trees also provide cover and habitat for food such as insects and algae for juvenile fish. Trees are submerged using weight at the bottom and can either be stood straight up or also placed at an angle. Often times trees are placed in groups to provide areas of dense cover. How long do sunken Christmas trees last? Research indicates that there are many misconceptions about rate of decay for waterlogged submerged trees. Most important is to completely submerge trees. Trees that are submerged, exposed, then submerged, etc., will decay MUCH faster than a tree that remains continually under water. After 3 years, needles will be gone, but branches will still remain intact. After 5 years, a few smaller branches will be gone, but the trees are still providing much habitat. After 10 years, all but the largest branches will be decayed; however, the main trunk and larger branches still function as a useful fish attractor. When constantly submerged, sunken Christmas trees will last much longer than generally believed and provide great fish habitat and great fishing for the future.


IDFG Photo


TN DNR Photo

Collaborative Yellowstone Cutthroat Sampling in 2012

Yellowstone cutthroat trout are native to Idaho. Some genetically pure and isolated populations of Yellowstone cutthroat trout exist right here in the Magic Valley Region of Idaho. The Magic Valley Region supports the southern most distribution of Yellowstone Cutthroat trout in the whole world. Nearly all of the Yellowstone cutthroat populations in the Magic Valley Region are isolated from the original connection to the Snake River. Over time, waterways, irrigation practices, and other land uses have altered the watersheds where Yellowstone cutthroat trout historically existed. These populations are now isolated in very remote areas and have continued to remain strong. Monitoring of Yellowstone cutthroat populations is very important because of the continuing change to the overall distribution area and land use practices associated with their habitat range. Efforts to monitor their habitat and populations are ongoing, to prevent them from being listed under the Endangered Species Act. Efforts are also being taken to restore populations in areas where they are struggling. Idaho Fish and Game along with the US Forest Service, BLM, and Idaho DEQ, collaborated in 2012 to sample various streams in the Sawtooth National Forest in the southern Magic Valley for Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Crews spent multiple days in the field backpacking into very remote streams to sample over 40 streams. Streams were electrofished and sampled for species diversity, Yellowstone cutthroat presence, water quality, and also habitat variables. Results indicated that fisheries are doing well, and recruitment in the populations was observed. Monitoring is ongoing and will continue in years to come.

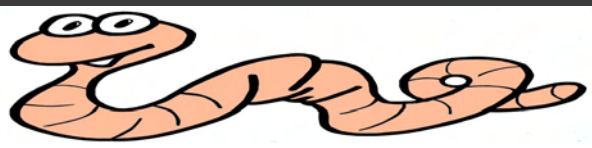

IDFG Photo


IDFG Photo


IDFG Photo

What is Electrofishing and How is it Used in Fisheries?

Water and electricity do not usually mix, but in the world of fisheries biology, they are closely related. Electrofishing is a very important tool used by fisheries biologists to sample fish. Electrofishing gear comes in a variety of types depending on the nature of the fishery being sampled, but the overall principle is the same. Electrofishing equipment for fish sampling requires a power source which is normally a generator or a battery. A control unit, also called a pulsator or electrofisher, is required to change or create waveforms other than the standard 60 Hz AC produced by most generators. The electrofisher is also able to create both AC and DC power.. With a power source and a control unit, a circuit can be generated using a positive and negative, much like a lightbulb. Once a circuit is generated the electrical current can be introduced into the water through positive (anodes) and returned to the electrofisher through the negative electrodes (cathodes) . This "circuit" creates a high-voltage potential. When a fish encounters a large enough potential gradient, it becomes affected by the electricity. Usually pulsed-DC (direct current) is applied, which causes galvanotaxis in the fish. Galvanotaxis is invluntary muscular convulsion that results in the fish swimming toward the anode. Once fish reach an anode, they may stop swim-ming and go into narcosis (stunned) which only lasts for a few seconds. Biologists must net quickly to collect the fish. The effectiveness of electrofishing is influenced by a variety of biological, technical, logistical, and environmental factors. We often fine tune the type of electric field produced to adjust to water conditions, fish size variations, and even for different fish species. There are three types of electrofishers: Backpack electrofishers employ a transformer to pulse the current before it is delivered into the water. The anode is located at the end of a long 2 meter pole and is usually in the form of a ring. The cathode is a long 3 meter braided steel cable that trails behind the operator, often called a "rat tail." . When boat electrofishing, the boat itself is the cathode, and the anode(s) are generally mounted off the bow. Backpack units are used in small, remote streams where their relatively low power is effective. Totes, rafts, and canoe setups are used in medium sized streams where backpacks would be underpowered but manned boats wouldn't be practical. The boat mounted systems are used in large rivers, ponds, and lakes where we're covering large distances and need the additional power to sample. The catch is often selectively biased as to fish size and species composition. When using pulsed DC for fishing, the pulse rate and the intensity of the electric field strongly influence the size and nature of the catch. Conductivity and temperature also affect the efficiency of the electrofishing and catch.



2013 Magic Valley Region Fishing Forecast

When we talk about fish and fishing in the Magic Valley Region, one very important variable comes into play, **water.** Reservoirs throughout the region rely on good recharge to fill providing water for irrigation and also the fishery. Looking forward to 2013, we should see normal reservoir levels provided we receive good winter snowpack. Rivers and streams throughout the region should fish quite well too. Big Wood River surveys completed by IDFG in 2012 indicate that the fishery remains strong and healthy with good recruitment in the population and a steady increasing trend in abundance of fish in all reaches sampled. The South Fork of the Boise River, Silver creek, Billingsley Creek, and other local stream fisheries should also fish very well in 2013. Reservoir fisheries in the region including Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir, Little Camas Reservoir, and Mormon Reservoir should all fish very well again in 2013 because of decent water carryover and fall out plant trout stockings. Magic Reservoir on the other hand may not fish as well in 2013 because of extremely low water in 2012 due to repairs needed on the dam. Dog Creek reservoir is another place to catch a variety of fish, and often you will have the place to yourself for an enjoyable day on the water. Walleye fishing in the region in both Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir and Oakley Reservoir should again be strong in 2013. Bass fishing across the Magic Valley should again remain strong in Anderson Ranch Reservoir, Milner Reservoir, and Lake Walcott. IDFG bass monitoring on Lake Walcott in 2012 showed an increasing trend of quality size bass across the entire reservoir as compared to 2009 sampling. This should provide great bass angling there in 2013. Kokanee Salmon fishing on Anderson Ranch Reservoir should provide good angling in 2013. Fish will be on the smaller side due to above average densities in the reservoir. Urban pond fisheries are a great place to take kids to enjoy a day of fishing close to home. Urban pond fishing in the Magic Valley should again be very good with solid stocking throughout the season. Places such as Riley Pond, Filer Ponds, Oster Lakes, Camas Kids Pond, Dierkes Lake, and Gavers Lagoon will all provide good fishing. Remember to treat these fisheries with respect and pack out what you pack in to provide a good experience for everyone in the future.

" All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall be only captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping."

http://www.fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/fishingplanner/

IDAHO FISHING PLANNER

Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Magic Valley Region
324 S 417 E Suite 1
Hwy 93 Business Park
Jerome, Idaho 83338
(208) 324-4359
(208) 324-1160 Fax
http://fishandgame.idaho.gov

BE OUTSIDE
IDAHO CHILDREN IN NATURE


IDFG Photo

Free Fishing Day is Saturday June 8, 2013
Take a Kid Fishing


Scott Stanton Photo