

# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

QUARTERLY COORDINATION REPORT

DINGELL-JOHNSON PROJECTS



1 June - 31 August 1976

by

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averaged 258.5 mm (10.2 in) compared to 226.3 mm (8.9 in) in 1975. The percent of cutthroat estimated to be over (12 in) in our snorkel transects increased from 13% in 1975 to 21% in 1976.

On 11 August, we snorkeled five transects in the Selway from White Cap Creek to Running Creek and counted 20 wild rainbow, 36 cutthroat trout, 4 juvenile chinook, 0 Dolly Varden and 89 whitefish. We also fished 2.5 hours and caught 2 rainbow, 12 cutthroat and 2 whitefish. Twenty-two percent of the cutthroat seen were over (12 in).

On 12 August, we snorkeled two transects in the Selway from Deep Creek to White Cap Creek and counted 8 wild rainbow, 8 cutthroat, 58 juvenile chinook, 2 Dolly Varden and 27 whitefish. None of the cutthroat seen were over (12 in).

On 13 August, we snorkeled four transects in the Selway from Cascade Creek to Race Creek and counted 49 wild rainbow, 21 cutthroat and 18 whitefish.

On 19 August, we snorkeled six transects in the Selway from Thompson Flat to Magruder and counted 15 wild rainbow, 27 cutthroat, 1 Dolly Varden and 1 whitefish. Between 18 and 20 August, we fished a total of 9 hours in this section of the Selway and caught 91 wild rainbow, 46 cutthroat, 1 Dolly Varden and 2 whitefish.

Job 3-b. Silver Creeks Fisheries Investigations-Fish Distribution and Abundance Survey

and

Job 3-d. Silver Creek Fisheries Investigations-Food Availability and Utilization by Trout

In continuing our food habit and food availability study, we collected 48 benthos samples from 8 stations on Silver Creek and its tributaries and five 24-hour drift samples to determine food availability. We also collected rainbow trout stomachs from the 8 stations to determine food consumption. We are now analyzing these and other samples collected from Silver Creek and its tributaries Loving, Grove and Stalker creeks.

During our April-May sampling period we captured 7 hatchery trout from Silver Creek and 2 hatchery trout from Loving Creek that were tagged and planted in 1975. These fish were poor in condition, averaging .94 K factor, but were equal to or better conditioned than the captured wild trout. A low body condition is expected on trout that have overwintered, but in 1977 we plan to investigate if the ice cover and ice melt, as sometimes occur on Silver Creek, decreased the available fish food to very low levels during late winter.

We electrosampled our five study areas on Silver Creek and also Stalker, Grove (and its tributary Wilson Cr.) and Loving creeks. We have not completed

analysis of our data yet, but we feel most differences in numbers of adult fish from our spring sample is related to shocking efficiency. We found few fish in the area from Kilpatrick Bridge downstream to Highway 68 bridge in the spring, but found many rainbow here during the July sample period. We believe we were more efficient shocking in July with the aquatic vegetation than in the spring when little vegetation was present. We continued to find few trout from Lower Priest Campground downstream to Silver Falls.

Our summer assessment of the fish populations in the tributaries of Silver Creek indicate that Grove, Wilson and Loving creeks are important and successful as spring spawning grounds and nursery areas. We found large numbers of young-of-the-year fry and fingerlings in these tributaries. We do not know if these young eventually drift down to Silver Creek, but we should investigate this possibility.

During August we collected 48 surber samples from 8 stations on Silver Creek and its major tributaries, and seven 24-hour drift samples to determine food availability. Rainbow trout stomachs were also collected to determine food consumption.

We continued working on field data and preparing for the fishery personnel meeting. In summarizing our spring and summer sampling periods, we captured nine fish species from Silver Creek and the three study tributaries.

A large percentage of our wild rainbow samples in the three tributaries were young-of-the-year fry. Grove Creek, in particular, containing large numbers of trout fry and has good spawning gravel and excellent rearing areas. We captured fewer numbers of young trout in Silver Creek proper, particularly the sections below Kilpatrick Bridge.

#### Job 4. Lochsa River Fisheries Investigations

A combination of rainy weather and high stream flows kept fishing pressure very light on the Lochsa River during June. Weekday counts ranged from 0 to 6 anglers and weekend day counts 0 to 22 anglers for the entire 75 miles of stream. During June we interviewed 81 anglers who had fished 97 hours for 16 wild rainbow, 3 hatchery rainbow, 0 cutthroat, 8 Dolly Varden 14 whitefish and 2 suckers. Catch rates were 0.41 and 0.68 fish per hour for all species combined during the first two census intervals. Idaho residents comprised 87.6% of the anglers interviewed on the Lochsa in June. Of the anglers interviewed, 51.8% used bait, 32.1% lures' and 16.% flies. When asked to rate fishing on the Lochsa, 6.1% rated it good, 20.4% fair and 73.5% poor. Fifty-two percent of the anglers interviewed preferred to catch a few large fish, while 48% preferred many small fish. Over 70% were in favor of some type of restrictive limit to restore cutthroat on the Lochsa. Sixty-two percent were in favor of an 8-inch minimum size limit to protect juvenile steelhead in the Lochsa.

Better weather and lower flows on the Lochsa River during July resulted in much improved fishing as compared to June. The overall average catch rate for all species was 0.87 fish per hour on the Lochsa in July compared to 0.44