

FALLEN LEAF LAKE - LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT REINTRODUCTION PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions:

1) Why is LCT being reintroduced into Fallen Leaf Lake?

- To restore and recover the lake form of LCT, the only trout native to the Tahoe basin
- Currently, only two self-reproducing lake populations exist in their native habitat, neither of which represents the original Tahoe/Truckee lacustrine strain of LCT
- Tahoe/Truckee lacustrine LCT are the largest and longest-lived of the lake forms (Record at Fallen Leaf Lake was 29 pounds)
- Discovery of the Pilot Peak strain, thought to be the original Tahoe/Truckee strain, occurred in the late 1970s and was confirmed through genetics in the mid-2000s.
- Began stocking this strain in 2002 to reintroduce a lacustrine population of this subspecies and create a native, near-shore fishery

2) What have we learned about the LCT reintroduction program from last year (2012)?

- LCT have been growing, feeding and over-wintering for the past several years
- Over-wintering LCT were verified while angling in the spring before the annual stocking of LCT occurred
- LCT have reached spawning age and are spawning in Glen Alpine Creek
- LCT reproduction was genetically identified from redds (a “trout nest”) located in the stream gravels
- Hybridization between LCT and rainbow trout was genetically verified in the fry from Glen Alpine Creek
- Angling is providing important growth and diet data that will be useful to successful LCT reintroduction into the basin

3) Why do all the rainbow trout have to be removed from Fallen Leaf Lake and Glen Alpine Creek?

- Rainbow trout are not native to the Tahoe basin
- LCT and rainbow trout are ecologically similar and will spawn together and hybridize
- Hybridization results in the loss of the native, lacustrine LCT delaying and creating additional challenges for the reintroduction and recovery program at Fallen Leaf Lake
- Rainbow trout currently occupy the same feeding level as LCT in Fallen Leaf Lake and their presence is slowing the growth rate of LCT
- Rainbows removed during the spawning season are donated to the food bank
- Data such as food habits, age, and reproductive maturity are also being collected to help us better understand LCT as both species occupy the same habitat.

4) Why are some of the LCT caught by fishermen “skinny “?

- The growth pattern of native Pilot Peak LCT is distinctive.
- Researchers working on Pyramid Lake have shown that Pilot Peak LCT grow length-wise very quickly and then add weight once they switch to piscivory at 16 inches.
- In 2012 Pilot Peak LCT caught by anglers in Pyramid Lake have been in excess of 20 pounds. The largest one caught so far was 24 pounds in November 2012.
- Overwintered LCT observed thus far in Fallen Leaf Lake are in excess of 14 inches with the expectation they will get much larger.
- The growing season in Fallen Leaf Lake is not as long as other lakes due to the Lake’s elevation, depth, and solar inclination. Thus it is likely LCT will require a few more seasons to reach a length where they switch to piscivory and start adding girth rapidly.

5) How long will the weirs remain in the creek?

- Both weirs will remain in Glen Alpine Creek until after the LCT spawning season ends and the out-migrating fry finish moving back to the lake.
- In a dry year like this one, we expect to have the weirs removed by end of July.
- Each year snowpack runoff will be different and the LCT response will change with the pattern of runoff.
- By using the weirs we are able to study and quantify the LCT spawning in Glen Alpine Creek and measure LCT reproductive success (timing of spawning, red selection, egg development, outmigration of fry).
- As these processes and time frames are evaluated the collected data will determine the length of time each year that the weirs need to be in the creek.



Please call (775) 861-6329 or (775) 750-0726 if you have any additional questions or would like more information.

Additional Frequently Asked Questions about our reintroduction program will be coming in the next few weeks.