



## Arctic Grayling

### Another sampling season concluded:

In late-May, Montana FWCO concluded its second year of a five-year study to assess the response of Arctic Grayling to intensive removal of a non-native trout species. Unseasonably high flows resulted in the trap being removed a bit earlier than planned as Red Rock Creek discharges reached 150 cubic feet per second.

At the conclusion of this year's efforts, a total of 1,026 Arctic Grayling were collected on their upstream spawning migration. Additionally, 1,108 non-native trout were ultimately removed as a result of trapping efforts (907 were distributed to area food banks and 201 males were relocated to Widgeon Pond). For comparison, approximately 1,866 were processed for distribution to area food banks and 142 male fish were relocated to Widgeon Pond for recreational angling opportunities in 2013.

In addition to operating the fish trap, Jason Marsh and Andrew Gilham assisted Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and Refuge staff with installation and maintaining remote site incubators (RSI) on Elk Springs Creek. The fry produced from these RSIs will be used to evaluate larval drift rates and to assess connectivity between Elk Springs Creek and Upper Red Rock Lake.

Montana FWCO staff had the opportunity to give an overview of this project to Regional Director Walsh during her tour of the Centennial Valley.



The Red Rock Creek fish trap holding steady during late season runoff. (Photo credit, Jason Marsh, USFWS, Montana FWCO)



Non-native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Fish trap on Red Rock Creek, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. (Photo credit, Andrew Gilham, USFWS, Montana FWCO)

### Project Outreach:

[Study works to boost scarce Arctic grayling in Red Rock Lakes NWR](#)

<http://instagram.com/p/ny2AzrRucj/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/51986662@N05/14006898333>



## MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OFFICE



### **Other items related to Arctic Grayling:**

MT FWCO staff provided technical assistance to Ecological Services by reviewing and providing comments on the preliminary Draft Finding for

Arctic Grayling in Montana, as well as, met with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to review recent Grayling and Cutthroat monitoring efforts at Red Rock Lakes and discuss/coordinate future plans and objectives.



Arctic Grayling collected in our fish trap located in Red Rock Creek, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Montana, is one of the sampling and monitoring methods utilized by Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office personnel to assess fish population trends. These fish provide pertinent data prior to being released upstream of the trap so they can continue their spawning migration. (Photo credit, Michael (Josh) Melton, USFWS, Montana FWCO)



## **Bull Trout**

Jim Mogen continued to work with the 2013 Bull Trout survey data, analyze and interpret information, and worked on updating the St. Mary project annual report. Jim also continues to lead the St. Mary Biological Review Team to provide biological input to engineers working on designing the St. Mary Diversion Passage and Screening facility. Currently, Reclamation is at approximately the 60% design phase for planned fish passage and entrainment prevention modifications for this project.

Jim continued to coordinate efforts with Pat DeHann and Lynn Kaeding, retired USFWS, on drafting their St. Mary Bull Trout genetics and migration paper.

## **Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and the Crow Tribe**

The Crow Tribe has management authority for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) within the Crow Reservation and their Tribal Legislature passed a law in 2002 designating YCT as a species of special concern to the Tribe. The Montana FWCO, as part of our trust responsibility described under Secretarial Order 3206 and the USFWS Native American Policy, continues to support the Tribe with their YCT conservation efforts.

As part of our continued support to Tribes and native trout conservation, MTFWCO staff and volunteer, Keifer Fisk, stocked approximately 1,200 and 1,300 Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Lost Creek and in Black Canyon's East Basin Creek, respectively.

## **Yellowstone River:**

George participated in several meetings related to providing fish passage at Reclamation's Intake Dam on the Yellowstone River; specifically coordinating the Intake Dam Biological Review Team's discussion and comments on the design transition from 30% to 60%, as well as, attended technical advisory team meetings for the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council.

## **Sikes Act:**

Our new Malmstrom Air Force Base liaison biologist, Dr. Elin Pierce, reported for duty May 19<sup>th</sup>. She brings a variety of skills that will allow us to fulfill our obligations to the Air Force, balance natural resource issues with the Malmstrom AFB mission, provide onsite expertise for the Base, as well as, the Montana FWCO, and coordinate responsibilities under the Sikes Act. During Elin's first month, much time was spent obtaining required training for both the USFWS and Air Force to gain access to requisite email/network/computer systems. Subsequently, there have been numerous meetings with Air Force personnel in preparation for the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan update.

In addition to the technical work, our office continues to support Malmstrom personnel with hosting an annual Kids Fishing Day event to help connect youth with the outdoors. This year's event was held in



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OFFICE



early June with support from Ennis National Fish Hatchery that provided and arranged for stocking retired rainbow trout broodstock.

Finally, MTFWCO staff continue ongoing efforts to monitor and remove invasive fish from Powwow Pond.



It's been said, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

However, when you take a child fishing, see their excitement, and get to spend quality time with your son, daughter, niece, nephew, or neighbor, it simply nourishes one's soul.

The first week in June is national fishing and boating week. As part of events across the nation, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office helped host a kid's fishing event at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana.

Photo: Elin Pierce/USFWS

## **Safety:**

The joint CDSO for Montana and Northern Rockies FWCOs, Robbin Wagner, continues updating existing Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) to ensure compliance with DOI and FWS safety requirements, developing SAF01s for staff, and assisting with coordinating our Station Safety Audit scheduling with Jim Behrmann, July 14, 2014.

## **Miscellaneous:**

Jim, Andrew, Josh, and Jason assisted Bozeman Fish Technology Center staff with the Annual Watershed Fest; primarily with various activities related to the extremely popular Kid's Fishing Derby.

George provided a peer review for two USGS pending publications related to Pallid Sturgeon, and began responding to a litigation hold.

Judy KobusFisk, as always, kept the office running (even while on an extended vacation).