

# Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

BILLINGS–BOZEMAN–LEWISTOWN, MT

February 2020



## Tribal Fisheries:

Biologist Andrew Gilham focused on developing a new Blackfeet sport fishery management plan to update the existing management plan from the early 1990s. Jason Marsh has been assisting Andrew with data analyses. Analyses include size structure (i.e., length-frequency, PSD) and condition (relative weight, L-W relationships) metrics on 20 different lakes on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

Biologist Michael (Josh) Melton assisted a Blackfeet tribal warden with identifying a parasite present on angler-caught fish. The parasites, identified by the Bozeman Fish Health Center, were leeches in the phylum Annelida, Family Hirudinea and Genus Piscicola—a common parasite that does little harm unless the infestation is excessive.

Additionally, Josh spent most of the month organizing digitized tribal data and prepared it for statistical analysis in R. These data are used to for creating figures and tables for stock assessment reports for Rainbow and Brown Trout on Tribal waters.

## St. Mary Bull Trout:

Jim Mogen spent considerable time continuing to assist the Reclamation's Montana Area Office by providing biological information for their Biological Assessment and other consultation documents required for project operations in the St. Mary River basin of northwestern Montana. Working closely with Reclamation's Natural Resource personnel and FWS-ES biologists, this process has consisted of summarizing findings from our extensive, on-going, 23-year investigation of St. Mary Bull Trout and incorporating that information into various sections of the formal documents required by the Section 7 process.

Jim and Jason also continue to spend considerable time preparing for the installation of several additional PIT-Tag detection stations set to be deployed this spring in tributaries to the St. Mary Basin before Reclamation's annual water manipulation begins in mid- to late March. This process includes purchasing supplies and equipment, and building and testing various antenna designs.



MTFWCO Technician Jason Marsh taking advantage of nice weather to test PIT array antanae. *Photo USFWS/Jim Mogen).*

## *Sikes Act work, Malmstrom Air Force Base, MT.*

### **Game Camera Project—**

This month, 1,099 video files equating to 9.5 cumulative hours of footage were reviewed as part of our game camera project. This concludes the data analysis portion of the project for CY 19. All in all, 10,649 image files (88.7 hours) were collected and reviewed during CY 19.



Mountain lion observed on a game camera. This is the second observation of a big cat at this particular site since the project was initiated in 2017. *Photo USFWS/Game Camera).*

### Other happenings:

February could be dubbed “Safety Month” at the various FWS-FAC offices in Bozeman. Jim Mogen (MFWCO Collateral Duty Safety Officer) and George Jordan worked with the various Bozeman-located FAC offices and established a Bozeman-wide FAC Safety Committee consisting of representatives, CDSOs and Project Leaders from the various FAC offices, including the Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (MFWCO), Bozeman Fish Technology Center (BFTC), Bozeman Fish Health Center (BFHC), Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership (AADAP), USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the Montana Outdoor Science School (MOSS). With Jim acting as Committee Chair, the group also worked to develop a FAC Committee Charter that was subsequently shared at a staff-wide campus safety meeting in mid-February. Following that meeting the committee conducted a required annual walkthrough of all Bozeman-based FAC facilities, formally documenting all safety hazards and concerns prior to the March 20 deadline. Jim has been addressing those concerns identified at MFWCO and updating the MFWCO Safety Plan.

Andrew revised a previously submitted manuscript to become an Arctic Grayling standard weight and lengths management brief. The Arctic Grayling standard weight and lengths management brief was submitted for review to the North American Journal of Fisheries Management on February 21st.



**Proposed Modification of the Standard Weight (Ws) Equation and Standard Length Categories for Arctic Grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*)**

Journal:	North American Journal of Fisheries Management
Manuscript ID:	UJFM-2020-0068
Manuscript Type:	Management Brief
Keywords:	Arctic Grayling, Standard Weight, Standard Length, Fish Condition

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

George began serving as the acting Director of the Bozeman Fish Technology and Health Centers complex on Feb 18. The detail is expected to last up to 120 days.

For more information, click on the following logos  
Or feel free to contact any of the Montana FWCO  
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