

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

- FISHERIES DIVISION
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATION

PROJECT NO: F-46-R-5 STUDY TITLE: SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF COLDWATER
AND WARMWATER ECOSYSTEMS

JOB NO: V-g JOB TITLE: BEARPAW MOUNTAINS CREEL CENSUS

PROJECT PERIOD JULY 1, 1991 THROUGH JUNE 30 1992

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1. Determine angler use and harvest of all sport fish species at Beaver Creek Reservoir, Bear Paw Lake and Faber Reservoir.

Creel census was completed on each reservoir. Estimated numbers of anglers, angling hours and harvest rates were calculated for each reservoir.

2. Determine relative susceptibility for managing with various trout strains and species.

Data on the relative survival, growth and harvest of Arlee and Eagle Lake strains of rainbow trout were obtained.

3. Determine minimum acceptable size for trout and species preference for warm water species.

Angler surveys indicate anglers prefer to catch larger trout even if it means fewer trout. Anglers have expressed interest in smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike.

4. Determine the impact of creel restrictions imposed on Bear Paw Lake

Creel data indicate a substantial reduction of fishing pressure due to the small size and poor condition of trout in the reservoir. The data do not reflect an effect of creel restrictions but rather the effect of the imbalanced fish population. The extreme abundance of suckers in the lake has affected trout growth and survival.

INVESTIGATOR KENT GILGE

DATE OCTOBER 9, 1992