

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS  
FISHERIES DIVISION  
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: Montana PROJECT NO. F-46-R-7  
PROJECT TITLE: Statewide Fisheries Investigations JOB NO. V-g  
JOB TITLE: Lewistown Area Fisheries Management

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1993<sup>\*</sup> through June 30, 1994  
<sup>\*</sup> Actual starting date April 4, 1994

ABSTRACT

During this period fisheries responsibilities in the Lewistown area were transferred from the Great Falls Regional Office to a field station. This transition meant extensive time was spent initiating the new biologist to the study area, planning future work, reviewing data and ordering equipment. Consequently limited field work was completed during the report period. The short time frame (3 months) magnified the lack fieldwork. Summer monitoring of Lewistown area ponds was continued and studies of tributaries to the Judith River were initiated. Further work was completed out of the Great Falls Office during 1993 - 1994. A proposal soliciting funds for the remaining FTE needed for this project was written in June 1994 and submitted to the BLM in early July.

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1. To protect and maintain or enhance fish populations and aquatic habitat in area waters.
2. To assist in implementation of a state Fishing Access program in the project area.
3. To serve as a local public contact and assist in providing information and education on state and BLM fisheries and aquatic habitat protection and enhancement programs in the area.
4. To assist in coordinating state, local and federal fisheries and aquatic habitat protection and enhancement programs in the project area.

Progress was made on most objectives. To provide seasonal continuity, data will be included in next years report.

## PROCEDURES

Fish populations were sampled using standard 125 x 6 foot multifilament experimental gill nets with 25 foot sections of 0.75, 1.0, 1.25, 1.5 and 2.0 inch square mesh. Nets were fished either sinking or floating. Ponds were beached-seined with a 50 foot x 4 foot deep 1/8 inch mesh seine. Limited creel surveys were conducted on the South Fork Judith River and Ackley Lake.

## FINDINGS

### Ponds and Lakes

Several ponds were evaluated during the report period. Gill nets were set in two coldwater (Upper and Lower Carter) and three warmwater ponds including Jakes, Holland and Catfish Reservoirs. Beach seining was also done in the warmwater ponds. Data will be included in next years report.

Preparations were made to rehabilitate (rotenone) Buffalo Wallow Reservoir in the fall of 1994. An Environmental Assessment for introducing spottail shiners into Petrolia Reservoir was completed and distributed. It is anticipated that spottail shiners will be introduced during the summer of 1995.

Construction was started on the Casino Creek Reservoir Fishing Access Site.

### Coldwater Streams

Due to the presence of pure westslope cutthroat trout, stocking of catchable rainbow trout was curtailed in Dry Wolf Creek during 1994. Evaluation of rainbow trout stocking in the South Fork of the Judith was initiated by tagging or marking of catchable rainbow trout stocked in 1994. Plans are to electrofish the stream in the fall of 1994 to evaluate numbers of stocked and wild fish in the stream. Three partial days of creel surveys on the South Fork of the Judith River indicated anglers caught limits of catchable hatchery trout within 1 - 2 weeks of release with catch rates declining greatly in succeeding weeks.

### Habitat protection

A total of 8 projects which would alter streambeds or banks, all in Fergus county, were processed under the 1975 Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310). Nine projects were reviewed under the Stream Preservation Act of 1963 (124). Site inspections were made on most but not all of these projects.

At the MDFWP's request, Inter-fluve of Bozeman submitted a proposal for a feasibility study for channel modification of Big Spring Creek in the Brewery Flats Fishing Access Site.

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Date: September 1994

Code numbers of waters referred to in report:

16-0310	Big Spring Creek, Sec. 2
16-1260	Dry Wolf Creek
16-3520	South Fork Judith River
16-4300	Ackley Lake
16-4620	Upper Carter Pond
16-4621	Lower Carter Pond
16-4628	Casino Creek Reservoir
16-6070	Jakes Reservoir
18-7340	Buffalo Wallow Reservoir
18-7395	Catfish Reservoir
18-7839	Holland Reservoir
18-8720	Petrolia Reservoir

