

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Fisheries Division

Job Progress Report

STATE: Montana PROJECT: Statewide Fisheries Investigations

PROJECT NO. F-78-R-1 STUDY TITLE: Survey and Inventory of  
Warmwater Lakes

JOB NO: IV-D JOB TITLE: Southeast Montana Warmwater Lakes  
Investigations

PROJECT PERIOD: July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

REPORT PERIOD: April 1, 1995 through March 32, 1996

ABSTRACT

Small fishing reservoirs in 10 counties were sampled to obtain fisheries information in 1995. A total of 50 reservoirs were sampled. Nine of these had never been planted or had not been planted in recent years. They were visited to determine fisheries potential. Five of these were determined to have sufficient potential that a fish plant was warranted. Of the remaining 41 reservoirs nine were found to be devoid of fish, probably from lack of water or winterkill. Thirty-two reservoirs had fishable populations of target fish species.

## **PROCEDURES**

Pond depths were determined by sounding with a calibrated, weighted rope. Fish populations were sampled with 125 feet long sinking experimental gill nets and a 1/4 inch bag seine of 100 feet length.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Survey of New Ponds**

Eight new ponds were surveyed to determine suitability for producing fish (Table 1). The two Garber ponds were considered to shallow to dependably winter fish. The Newman pond was to inaccessible and the Grebe pond has had several failed plants in the past. The Smith Cattle Trail Creek and the two Murnion ponds were planted with rainbow trout. The Fitzgerald pond was planted one time only with rainbow trout to provide fishing until largemouth bass are of catchable size. The Buxbaum pond was planted with largemouth and smallmouth bass.

### **Survey of Previously Planted Reservoirs**

#### **Carter County**

Sampling at the Pat LaBree Reservoir showed rainbow trout to be abundant (Table 2). No fish were collected at West Plum Reservoir. This pond is marginal in depth and likely winterkilled but this years rainbow trout plant should be there. Rainbow trout are doing well in Gardner Trout Reservoir and no green sunfish were sampled this year. Sampling at Gardner Reservoir #2 produced yellow perch, largemouth and smallmouth bass and white and black crappie. Bucholtz Reservoir, a small Forest Service pond near the South Dakota boarder, was found to have black bullheads up to one pound.

#### **Custer County**

Young-of-the-year largemouth bass were observed at Holmes Reservoir and three adults were sampled. Owner states that bass are not growing well.

#### **Dawson County**

Hollecker Reservoir was rehabed in 1994 to remove rough fish and replanted with rainbow trout. Sampling in 1995 produced rainbow trout but river carpsuckers, sauger and creek chubs are also present. Trangmoe Pond has a variety of game and rough fish (Table 2) with white crappie, channel catfish and northern pike worth fishing for.

### Fallon County

Yellow perch are small but abundant in South Sandstone Reservoir (Table 2), but large walleye and northern pike are present. Bass and crappie are not abundant. The average weight of black bullheads in Baker Lake increased to 300 grams in 1995 from 191 grams in 1994. Northern pike, yellow perch and white crappie are scarce. The McKay Ranch and Pinnow #3 Reservoirs have largemouth bass present that are providing fishing. Management of Meccage Reservoir was switched from rainbow trout to yellow perch. Perch have grown to seven inches since being transplanted. Rainbow trout are doing well at Rush Hall Reservoir.

### Garfield County

Rainbow trout are doing well at Chamberlain #3 and Helm reservoirs and getting large at Childer's Reservoir (Table 2). Yellow perch approaching one pound were sampled from Chamberlain #2 Reservoir. Largemouth bass in Chamberlain #1 Reservoir have not grown as well as hoped but are abundant. Smallmouth bass are not numerous. Jarden #1 Reservoir was restocked with largemouth bass in 1994 after winterkilling and 1995 sampling showed growth to be about average. Largemouth bass continue to do well in Saylor Reservoir. Few yellow perch were sampled from Trumbo Reservoir, the walleye sampled averaged 590 grams and while no adult largemouth bass were sampled, young-of-the-year bass were present. Engdahl Cottonwood Reservoir stays turbid probably due to carp being present and yellow perch, largemouth and smallmouth bass do not grow well. No game fish were sampled from Hofla and Stanton reservoirs and these pounds will not be replanted.

### Powder River County

Williams #1, #2 and #3 reservoirs were found to have no fish except for fathead minnows in #2. Pond #1 and #2 had good depth and will be replanted with largemouth bass in 1996. Pond #3 lacks adequate depth and will not be replanted. No fish were sampled from Yankee Reservoir. For some unknown reason rainbow trout have failed to survive here in recent years.

### Prairie County

Ayers Trout Reservoir should have been planted with rainbow trout for the first time in 1994, but sampling in 1995 found only a few channel catfish present. Sampling of Ayers Bass Reservoir found largemouth bass displaying good growth as well as trout. The trout had been planted in the wrong reservoir and steps have been taken to correct this problem. Clark Reservoir was rehabed in 1988 and 1993 to eliminate green sunfish without success. Since rainbow trout do not grow well in this reservoir with sunfish present

management effort will shift to largemouth bass in 1996. Rainbow trout were present in South Fork Reservoir when sampled but water level was low and winter survival is unlikely. No fish were sampled at Singleton Reservoir likely due to winterkill. This reservoir will be replanted with largemouth bass in 1996.

### Richland County

Sampling at Gartside Reservoir found seven fish species present (Table 2). The average weight of Northern pike in 1995 was more than double that of 1994. Fewer Crappie and yellow perch were seen in 1995 perhaps due to a severe accidental winter draw down which occurred when the drain gate stuck open. Smallmouth bass and walleye planted in 1994 and 1995 were not sampled and will be replanted in 1996.

### Rosebud County

Walleye averaging two pounds were the most abundant fish in gill net catches at Castle Rock Reservoir (Table 2). Large bluegill continue to be the mainstay of the fishery but northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass are also doing well. Bluegill are present in Lee Pit #2 and northern pike and yellow perch are present in Schlesinger #1 Reservoir. Schlesinger #2 Reservoir was dry and will not be replanted. Blacks Pond on the Custer National Forest has rainbow trout.

### Wibaux County

Largemouth bass are displaying good growth in Banister Reservoir since being restocked in 1994 following winterkill.

Prepared by: Phillip A. Stewart

Date: February 13, 1996

### Water referred to:

Baker Lake	21-1778
South Sandstone Res.	21-8775
Gartside Reservoir	21-3250
Castle Rock Lake	21-2527

### Keywords

Small reservoirs	yellow perch
largemouth bass	crappie
smallmouth bass	northern pike
rainbow trout	

Table 1. Results of new pond surveys in 1995.

Pond Name	County	Location		Max. Fish Depth (ft.)	Species Present	Management Plan
		T	R			
Garber, Gene #1	Custer	9N, 54E,	04	9	None	Don't plant
Garber, Gene #2	Custer	9N, 54E,	03	5	None	Don't plant
Smith Cattle Trl Crk #1	Custer	5N, 54E,	31	16	None	Plant RBT
FitzGerald, Tom	Garfield	17N, 34E,	30	15	None	Plant RBT & LMB
Murnion, Fred #1	Garfield	15N, 42E,	32	11	None	Plant RBT
Murnion, Fred #2	Garfield	14N, 41E,	12	17	None	Plant RBT
Newman, Albert #3	Garfield	14N, 33E,	23	12	None	Don't plant
Buxbaum, Darrell	Richland	21N, 60E,	31	11	Sticklebacks	Plant LMB & SMB
*Grebe, Ed #3	Rosebud	12N, 32E,	33	12	None	Don't plant

\* Pond has been planted in the past but has history of not holding water.

Table 2. Results of sampling previously planted reservoirs, 1995.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught <sup>1</sup>	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>CARTER COUNTY</u>							
Pat LaBree	2 gill nets	RBT	40(99)	278	360	165-417	60-800
Bucholtz	1 gill net	BBH	8	296	391	270-310	300-450
West Plum	1 gill net	No fish collected					
Gardiner #1	2 gill nets	RBT	40(54)	282	365	138-475	30-1070
Gardiner #2	2 seine hauls	YP	4	157	-	127-240	-
		YPYOY	22(86)	75	-	33-94	-
	2 gill nets	YP	25(110)	219	139	148-284	40-300
		LMB	2	242	260	172-312	70-450
		SMB	11	299	344	216-398	270-410
		WCR	2	236	175	227-245	160-190
		BCR	1	223	170	-	-
<u>CUSTER COUNTY</u>							
Holmes	2 gill nets	LMB	3	243	207	218-275	140-280
<u>DAWSON COUNTY</u>							
Hollecker	2 seine hauls	RBT	4	143	25	130-155	20-30
	2 gill nets	RBT	14	173	66	147-313	30-320
		RCSU	16	243	182	195-337	150-220
		SAUG	1	335	360	-	-
		CK CHUB	1	190	70	-	-

Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)	
DAWSON COUNTY CONTINUED								
Trangmoe	1 seine haul	WCR	15	144	-	106-173	-	
		CCAT	1	113	-	-	-	
		GS	2	68	-	63-72	-	
		CARP	1	-	-	-	-	
	1 gill net	BH YOY	Observed swimming					
		WCR	20(24)	164	75	120-345	20-650	
		BBH	20(36)	179	66	165-193	50-90	
		CCAT	4(5)	287	155	267-320	90-220	
		NP	1	530	3680	-	-	
		FHC	3(10)	167	50	161-175	40-60	
South Sandstone	3 seine hauls	CARP	3(4)	429	937	426-435	850-1000	
		WSU	1	390	600	-	-	
		RHSU	1	475	980	-	-	
FALLON COUNTY								
South Sandstone	3 seine hauls	YP	90	Counted only	-	40-50	-	
		YP YOY	650	-	-	25-35	-	
		CR YOY	200	-	-	-	-	
		LMB YOY	1	50	-	-	-	
	3 gill nets	YP	20(190)	177	71	148-204	40-110	
		BBH	20	265	297	223-290	210-380	
		NP	10	572	1481	320-723	420-2750	
		WE	3(4)	491	1210	295-656	200-1880	

Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>FALLON COUNTY CONTINUED</u>							
Baker Lake	2 seine hauls	YP	1	215	170	-	-
		BBH	1	273	320	-	-
	2 gill nets	BBH YOY	100	Counted only			
		BBH	20 (151)	272	300	232-382	210-430
		NP	2	413	220	370-455	130-310
		YP	1	244	230	-	-
Meccage	2 seine hauls 1 gill net	WCR	1	133	30	-	-
		No fish collected					
		YP	6	170	80	158-182	60-100
Pinnow #3	1 seine haul 1 gill net	RBT	1	245	160	-	-
		No fish collected					
Rush Hall	1 seine haul	LMB	20 (45)	225	198	203-255	130-360
		FHM	10	-	-	-	-
Mackay Ranch	4 gill nets 1 seine haul	Stickleback	1	-	-	-	-
		RBT	18 (30)	268	253	150-352	50-480
		LMB YOY	6	57	-	34-75	-



Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>GARFIELD COUNTY</u>							
Chamberlain #1	2 gill nets	LMB	20(32)	233	162	156-295	30-260
		SMB	2	192	105	187-197	100-110
Chamberlain #2	2 gill nets	YP	25(30)	245	203	155-326	40-420
Chamberlain #3	1 seine haul	No fish collected					
	2 gill nets	RBT	11(14)	197	111	151-314	40-330
Childer's Trout	2 gill nets	RBT	23	299	531	167-453	70-1270
Jarden #1	2 gill nets	LMB	14	196	125	164-244	70-270
Hafla	Nearly dry - did not sample						
Saylor	1 seine haul	No fish collected					
	1 gill net	LMB	15	227	214	203-251	150-300
Helm	1 gill net	RBT	14	216	156	133-318	30-360
Stanton	1 seine haul	FHM	100	-	-	-	-
	2 gill nets	No fish collected					
Trumbo	1 seine haul	YP YOY	6	60	-	55-64	-
		LMB YOY	20(52)	53	-	41-77	-
	1 gill net	WE	5	384	590	286-495	210-1130
		YP	2	173	60	172-173	-

Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>GARFIELD COUNTY CONTINUED</u>							
Engdahl, Cottonwood	1 seine haul	YP	1	137	20	-	-
		YP YOY	20 (111)	59	-	33-72	-
		LMB YOY	20 (34)	55	-	45-66	-
		SMB	1	227	20	-	-
	2 gill nets	YP	5	193	72	157-208	30-90
		CARP	6	280	223	245-348	180-320
		WSU	5	285	236	278-294	220-260

POWDER RIVER COUNTY

Williams #1	1 seine haul	No fish collected					
	1 gill net	No fish collected					
Williams #2	1 seine haul	FHM	100	-	-	-	-
Williams #3	1 seine haul	No fish collected					
	1 gill net	No fish collected					
Yonkee	1 gill net	No fish collected					

Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type Of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>PRAIRIE COUNTY</u>							
Ayer's Bass	1 gill net	LMB	2	207	130	203-210	120-140
		RBT	27(65)	245	169	165-310	50-300
		GS	8(10)	131	48	127-138	40-60
Ayer's Trout	1 gill net	CCAT	4	414	835	385-432	620-1000
Clark	1 seine haul	FHM	100	-	-	-	-
		RBT	1	125	-	-	-
		GS	12	47	-	35-64	-
	2 gill nets	RBT	22(29)	319	330	280-353	210-460
		GS	7(8)	116	41	102-188	15-160
South Fork	1 seine haul	RBT	3	202	123	150-285	40-280
Singleton	1 gill net	No fish collected					
<u>RICHLAND COUNTY</u>							
Gartside	3 seine hauls	BCR	8	172	60	155-190	40-80
		WCR	2	174	55	170-178	50-60
		CR YOY	19	43	-	40-47	-
		LMB YOY	3	55	-	50-65	-
		YP	9	193	79	178-208	60-110
		NP	5	587	1378	457-694	420-2270
	2 gill nets	YP	20(29)	184	72	160-200	50-90
		BCR	4	173	70	160-193	50-100
		WCR	1	175	60	-	-
		CCAT	1	464	980	-	-
		LMB	1	274	290	-	-
		WSU	2	426	865	425-427	840-890

Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>ROSEBUD COUNTY</u>							
Castle Rock	3 seine hauls	BG	28(353)	119	52	73-213	5-250
		BG YOY	20	51	-	40-65	-
		LMB	2	178	100	166-190	70-130
		LMB YOY	22(223)	59	-	42-97	-
		NP YOY	7	111	-	97-128	-
		SMB	2	168	65	163-172	60-70
		SMB YOY	2	53	-	52-55	-
		BCR	2(3)	137	35	133-140	30-40
		SUNFISH YOY	5(200)	26	-	25-27	-
		GS	4	62	-	52-72	-
	3 gill nets	WE	21(24)	415	958	190-711	30-3580
		NP	6(7)	495	900	375-742	300-2800
		BG	19	165	109	95-240	10-280
		SMB	2	224	175	182-266	50-300
		LMB	1	200	140	-	-
		BCR	1	125	20	-	-
Lee Pit #2	1 seine haul	BG	3	192	186	170-222	130-280
		BG YOY	20(420)	44	-	19-62	-
		FHM	50	Counted only	-	-	-
		GS	1	140	60	-	-
Schlesinger #1	1 gill net	NP	5	478	748	385-735	280-2240
		YP	1	235	190	-	-
Schlesinger #2		Nearly dry. Did not sample.					
Black's Pond	1 seine haul	RBT	1	202	100	-	-
	2 gill nets	RBT	20(38)	180	69	143-222	30-120

Table 2. Continued.

Pond Name	Type of Sample	Species	No. Caught	Mean Length (mm)	Mean Weight (gm)	Length Range (mm)	Weight Range (gm)
<u>WIBAUX COUNTRY</u>							
Banister	2 gill nets	LMB	12	196	114	160-250	60-180
		RHSU	1	-	-	-	-

1. ( ) Indicates total number of fish sampled.

