

DRAFT - B. Michels

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Effects of Fishing on Spawning Cutthroat Trout in
Hidden Lake and Old Man Lake, Glacier National Park

This analysis was done to see if fishsing was having a negative impact on the spawning, non-native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Hidden and Old Man Lakes in Glacier National Park.

Both lakes lie near the Continental Divide with Hidden Lake on the west side at approximately 6375 feet and Old Man Lake on the east side of the Divide at approximately 6640. Hidden Lake and its main inlet stream are easily accessed via a 2 mile hike from Logan Pass while Old Man Lake is a 7 mile hike with an inlet stream that is difficult to reach due to brushy terrain.

Both lakes are accessible and open to fishing during the spawning season, however, at Hidden Lake the inlet where most fish spawn is closed to fishing. The inlet is posted closed to fishing during the spawning season as per Glacier National Park regulations.

Hidden Lake

In 1988 the Hidden Lake area was closed from 6/17 to 6/24 and 7/7 to 7/13 due to grizzly bears frequenting the area. Although these dates corresponded to the spawning season, the area was open from 6/24 to 7/7 which relates to peak spawning.

The following is an actual count of spawning Cutthroat at the main inlet stream of Hidden Lake:

<u>Date</u>	<u># of spawning Cutthroat</u>
6/20	1
6/22	46
6/24	114
7/6	119 (partial)
7/8	202
7/13	12

As noted, the main inlet at Hidden Lake is posted with signs noting the closure to protect spawning fish. Although some people were confused by the signing (they thought the entire lake was closed) it appeared to be very effective. Rangers indicated few problems with some fishermen doing some self regulating by telling others to keep out, the area is closed.

Old Man Lake

As noted, the hike into Old Man Lake is much more arduous than the walk into Hidden Lake. This fact alone reduces the number of fishermen at Old Man Lake significantly. In discussion with

rangers, who in 1988 talked with people going to Old Man Lake, found the following:

Due to the brushy terrain, most people do not fish the inlet area.

Most fishermen (local) wait until after the spawn and fish the south shore where fishing is excellent.

Most fishermen are day users.

Most overnight campers are hikers.

Although some locals and visitors keep fish, most fishing is catch and release.

Summer temperatures, bears, and the long hike out promote catch and release fishing.

Conclusion

Cutthroat trout populations in Hidden and Old Man Lakes are not being affected by fishing during the spawning season.

Adherence to regulations, namely a limit of 2 cutthroat trout, closed areas, (such as the inlet at Hidden Lake) and no snagging which are already a part of Glacier's fishing regulations will permit adequate numbers of cutthroat trout to spawn and regenerate the lakes.

It is recommended that the sign closing fishing at the inlet to Hidden Lake be put in place as soon as the area is accessible to fisherman. This will ensure safety for the spawning fish and will eliminate problems associated with mid season closures.