MONTANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
FEDERAL AID IN FISH RESTORATION SECTION

JOB COMPLETION REPORT
INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS

State of Montana

Project No. F-7-R-3 Work Plan No. II Job No. II-B

Title of Job: Inventory of the Project Area's Waters from the Standpoint of Fish Response to Environment

Abstract:

Eighteen streams and two lakes were sampled for fish populations. Age-growth studies were made on all scale samples collected and this information is filed on lake and stream survey cards. Data on species composition of the waters surveyed is also recorded on the survey cards that are filed with the project leader and duplicate copies are filed in the Helena office.

Objectives:

There is little information on growth of fish in this area of the state and very little is known of the species composition. The purpose of this job is to gather data on the various kinds of fish in this area, together with their abundance and their growth.

Techniques Used:

Emphasis was again placed on the Kootenai River drainage above Pipe Creek. Scale samples of game fish were taken at every opportunity while in the field. The samples were sent to the Montana Fish and Game Laboratory at Bozeman for age-growth determinations. Species composition of the lake were taken by gill nets and of the streams by the electric shock method.

Findings:

Thirteen streams and two lakes in the Kootenai River drainage were sampled for fish populations. Fish were found in only five streams and one lake. The species of fish found were cutthroat, rainbow, eastern brook trout, whitefish, sculpins and suckers.

Five streams were sampled in the St. Regis River drainage. Population studies in these streams showed that eastern brook trout were dominant in two streams, cutthroat trout in two and rainbow in one. Other species found were brown trout, Dolly Varden trout, whitefish, fresh-water sculpin and an unidentified minnow. Age-growth studies have been completed on samples collected from 20 streams and lakes. These data are filed under streams and lakes and is too bulky and cumbersome to present in this report.

Analysis and Recommendations:

A number of streams have been sampled for populations and have helped tremendously in furnishing data for the state planting program and for determining regulations for a wise utilization of stream fish. In many cases, stream planting of trout have been eliminated. In other cases, the small size of eastern brook trout found in the streams were such that the regulation on the size of legal trout was eliminated thus making it possible to utilize the small fish.

It is recommended that this study be continued so that a complete file can be obtained on the stream populations in waters of the state in order to manage the waters wisely.

Summary:

Eighteen streams and two lakes were sampled for fish populations. Age-growth studies were made on all scale samples collected and information is filed on lake and stream survey cards for ready reference. Data collected thus far has been used in changing the fish planting program and fishing regulations for better utilization of game fish.

Data and Reports:

The original data and reports are with the project leader at Kalispell and duplicate reports are filed in the Helena office.

Prepared by Frank A. Stefanich Approved by _____

Date April 28, 1954