

## Fisheries Historical Perspective

- 1864** First Montana Territorial Legislature passes a law limiting the means of taking trout to "a rod or pole, line and hook."
- 1876** Use of explosives to kill fish is outlawed.
- 1889** Federal government introduces brown, rainbow, and brook trout into streams in Yellowstone National Park that drained into Montana.  
Montana's first game wardens are hired.  
The first warm water hatchery is constructed at Miles City.
- 1895** The first Fish and Game Commission in Montana is established.
- 1907** Washoe Park Trout Hatchery built in Anaconda.
- 1912** Flathead Lake Salmon Hatchery built in Somers.
- 1921** Big Springs Trout Hatchery built in Lewistown.  
Yellowstone River Trout Hatchery built in Big Timber.
- 1922** Giant Springs Trout Hatchery built in Great Falls.
- 1924** Resident hunting and fishing license sales reach 56,113.
- 1928** The Fish and Game Commission establishes a daily limit of 40 fish. No more than five fish can be less than seven inches long, and the limits applied to all species combined. The season is closed from March 15 to May 20.
- 1939** Commission reduces the limit for trout to 15 fish.
- 1940** Fish and Game develops its first five-year stocking program for each hatchery.
- 1947** Jocko River Trout Hatchery in Arlee is obtained.  
First fish biologist is hired.
- 1949** Bluewater Springs Trout Hatchery built in Bridger.
- 1955** Montana Water Pollution Control Law is passed.
- 1958** Biologists from Fish and Game, Montana State College (now Montana State University), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service develop the nation's first stream rating map.
- 1959** The Commission reduces the daily limit to 10 trout or 10 pounds and one fish.
- 1963** Stream Protection Act is passed.
- 1970s** Number of hatcheries decrease from 13 to 8.
- 1973** Fish and Game Commission changes the stocking policy. FWP no longer stocks catchable-sized trout in streams with healthy wild trout populations.  
The Montana Water Use Act is passed.
- 1974** Fish and Game stops stocking trout in rivers and streams.

- 1975** The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act is passed.
- 1976** Murray Springs Fish Hatchery constructed.
- 1977** Expansion of the Fishing Access Site Program; portion of anglers license fee is earmarked to purchase new sites.
- 1978** The Fish and Game Commission establishes the first special management area by adopting a catch-and-release regulation on a portion of the Madison River.  
Yellowstone River in-stream flow reservations adopted by Board of Natural Resources and Conservation.
- 1980** Computer files were built to catalogue lake and stream names and locations, survey information, fish planting records, data from fisherman logs and data from fishing pressure surveys.
- 1981** Concern over the Yellowstone River paddlefish population prompted dramatic regulation changes for that fishery. Economic sanctions against Iran brought paddlefish roe to the surface as a viable alternative to Caspian Sea sturgeon roe.
- 1983** FWP assumed management of the warm-water fish hatchery in Miles City from the federal government.  
The Department of Health and Environmental Sciences and FWP filed a lawsuit against ARCO, under federal and state Superfund laws, to recover damages for injuries to natural resources in the Upper Clark Fork River Basin caused by the release of hazardous substances from decades of mining and smelting.
- 1984** In a precedent setting decision, the Montana Supreme Court declared the waters of the Beaverhead and Dearborn rivers open to public recreational use. These decisions were based on the state constitution that stated waters could be used for recreation without regard to whether the state or a private person owns the bed of the stream.
- 1985** Protection of public access to Montana's streams and rivers was achieved through legislative action.  
FWP Fisheries Division initiated a comprehensive two-year study to determine the economic value of fishing in Montana.
- 1991** Montana signs a five-year agreement designed to ensure the survival of the last river-dwelling population of Arctic grayling in the lower 48 states. The pact is centered on the recovery of grayling in southwestern Montana's Big Hole River.
- 1992** The Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission approves an emergency closure on bull trout fishing west of the Continental Divide to stem a dramatic decline in native bull trout populations.
- 1993** FWP institutes an Aquatic Education Program.
- 1994** Whirling Disease is found in the Upper Madison River.  
Montana enters into a cooperative paddlefish management plan with North Dakota to coordinate management and research efforts in both states and ensure recreational fishing for the species can continue.
- 1995** Governor Racicot appoints a Whirling Disease Task Force to advise the state on how it should address threats presented by the disease.  
Future Fisheries Improvement Program established to enhance stream rehabilitation efforts.
- 1996** Family Fishing Adventures begins to train anglers, loan equipment, create a free fishing day, and increase accessibility.  
Three schools in Montana begin pilot testing the national "Hooked on Fishing-Not Drugs" program.
- 1997** White sturgeon found in the Kootenai River listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Arctic grayling and bull trout federally categorized as candidate species for listing.  
The second statewide warm-water fish management plan was adopted. The 10-year plan covers 1997-2006.