



# Idaho Fish and Game Magic Valley Region Fisheries Newsletter Volume V Issue I February 2014

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Hello Sportsman,

Happy New Year. IDFG is celebrating 75 years this year. I feel privileged to be a fisheries biologist in such an awesome state, with incredible natural resource diversity. It was another busy year for the Magic Valley fisheries crew in 2013. We completed a couple habitat projects, a large fishery restoration project, and our standard trout and bass monitoring across the region. Our goal is to make fishing better, and we'd love to hear from you on that subject. Enjoy another fine issue of our newsletter, and if you have any questions or comments let me know. Visit us on Twitter: @MVFishery. Have fun out there!

Scott



IDFG Photo

## Hagerman WMA: Oster Lakes Fishery Restoration

In the spring of 2013, IDFG continued a multi-faceted approach to rebuilding the fisheries on the Hagerman WMA. One immediate goal was to remove carp to allow the bass and bluegill fisheries to thrive without competition from carp. In 2013, all water control structures were surveyed on the Oster Lakes complex to determine if they prevented upstream carp movement between individual ponds. By controlling carp movement, IDFG could then manage each fishery separately. In 2013, IDFG began a large common carp removal project on the Oster lakes 2-6 on the Hagerman WMA. Ponds were drained to a point where very little water remained. Over 5000 Bass and bluegill were salvaged and relocated, and common carp were left. In August 2013, IDFG applied rotenone to Oster lakes 2-6 to eliminate the remaining carp. Rotenone is a natural fish toxicant used by fisheries biologists to eradicate a fishery when warranted. Common carp were removed from the fishery. The ponds were then refilled and after recharge was achieved, bluegills were stocked into the fishery in late September 2013. Stocking rates of bass and bluegill are determined by surface acre of the ponds. Large-mouth bass will be stocked in the spring of 2014. Further rotenone treatments will be occurring on the Hagerman WMA in 2014.



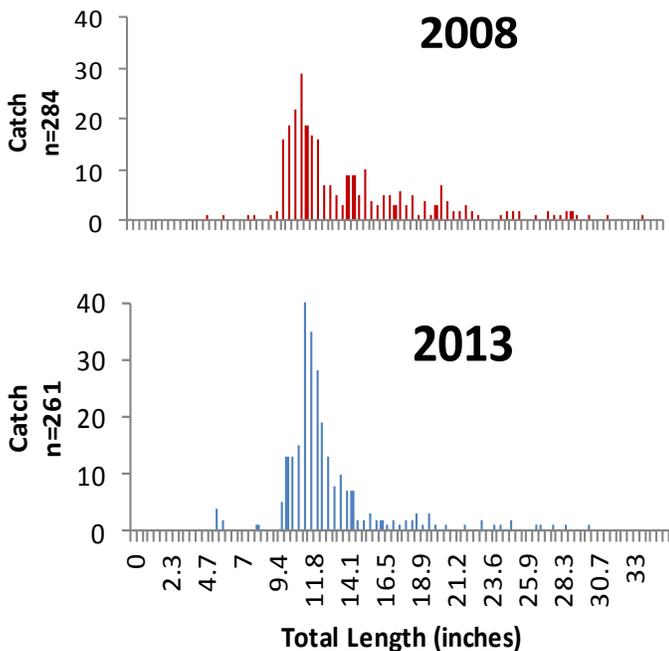
IDFG Photo

## White Sturgeon in the Magic Valley Region



The White Sturgeon, a true Idaho native, and a fishing gem in the “gem” state. White Sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) are the largest freshwater fish in North America, and the only member of the Acipenseridae family in Idaho. The Acipenseridae are a family of fish that first appeared some 400 million years ago. The white sturgeon has a slender, long body, head and mouth. The sturgeon has a cartilaginous backbone. With the construction of the dams, white sturgeon populations today are studied by biologists from both Idaho Power Company and Idaho Fish and Game, and managed by Idaho Department of Fish and Game. In 1943, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission recognized the need to regulate the take of White sturgeon, and at that time set daily possession limits. From that time sport fishing regulations for white sturgeon have continued to become more and more restricted, and catch and release regulations have been in place on the Snake river since 1970. White sturgeon provide a unique angling opportunity in the Magic valley region. Anglers enjoy about 50 miles of prime sturgeon fishing along the Snake river in the Magic valley. Both boat anglers and bank anglers can access the river between Shoshone falls and CJ Strike Reservoir. Both wild populations and hatchery supplemented populations exist in the Magic valley region. Sturgeon anglers use very heavy gear. Long rods and reels spooled with 50 pound test or more are common. Idaho law requires the use of barbless hooks for sturgeon fishing. Idaho law also requires the fish to not totally be removed from the water. Sturgeon oftentimes are hooked, gear is broken off, which in turn is ingested by the fish. Large amounts of gear and hooks are being detected internally in sturgeon. Oftentimes sturgeon death may result when “ghost gear”, which is hooks, line, and weight broken off or often discarded by anglers, which are then ingested by sturgeon. This may result in the sturgeon then being tethered to the river bottom. Many sturgeon are caught multiple times throughout their lifespan. Using the appropriate tackle for sturgeon fishing is critical to protecting the population. Biologist are studying the guts of White Sturgeon with x-ray machines to try and determine the contents of ingested gear by the fish, and how it affects the overall health of the fish.

## Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir Fall Walleye Index Netting



Fall Walleye Index Netting was completed on Salmon falls creek reservoir in 2013. Walleye index netting is completed every five years and provides biologists with information on the health of the walleye population in the reservoir. The last FWIN monitoring in SFCR was completed in 2008. Population abundance, growth, and condition indices are all parts of the FWIN monitoring. Equal sampling effort was applied in both the 2008 and 2013 sampling events. A total of 8 net nights were sampled in each event. Less walleye were sampled in 2013 than in 2008. (See Figure) Catch per unit effort in 2008 averaged 32 and ranged from 16 to 55 walleye per net. In 2013 Catch per unit effort averaged 33 and ranged from 12 to 60 walleye per net. Average length and average weight both decreased in the 2013 walleye sample as compared to the 2008 sample. In 2013 the average length in the sample was 12 inches, as compared to the average length of 14 inches in the 2008 sample. Average weight of sampled walleye in 2013 was 1 pound whereas average weight in the 2008 sample was 2 pounds. Less larger walleye were sampled in 2013 as well, and it appears that condition indices in the fishery are changing. Walleye fat content appears lower, possibly indicating a forage limited condition occurring in Salmon falls creek reservoir.

Fisheries managers and biologists use angler creel surveys to address management issues in certain fisheries. State and federal agencies conduct creel surveys to address various fisheries management and research issues. Creel surveys are often an appropriate sampling technique for assessing fisheries and evaluating management programs because they measure angling effort and success which are the ultimate goals of most management actions. There are many different creel survey designs that are used in fisheries. The most common survey design used is the roving creel survey. Roving creel surveys involve counting and interviewing anglers while traveling through a recreational fishery. Instantaneous counts and interview information may be used to estimate daily total angling effort, daily catch and harvest for each species. Daily estimates may be used to estimate total effort, catch, harvest, and catch and harvest rates over a sampling period. Creel clerks count anglers on a fishery, and then biologists use that count information to estimate use (effort), usually measured in hours. Clerks survey anglers and their catch to be used to estimate catch rates and harvest information for a fishery. The key to an accurate roving creel survey is obtaining accurate instantaneous counts and measurements of trip duration, catch, and harvest. To obtain harvest data during roving creel surveys, creel clerks have the option of asking anglers how many fish were harvested or counting their fish during interviews. Most creel surveys are designed to obtain information on certain fish in certain fisheries. Angler effort and catch information from a certain fishery gives fishery managers a better understanding of what is going on in the fishery, and an idea of angler satisfaction in the fishery as well. This allows fishery managers to make rules and regulations in the fishery based on use and catch information obtained in the creel survey. Next time you're out on your favorite fishery and you see a creel clerk collecting information, let them know how long you've been fishing, and what you've caught, its valuable information!

## Idaho Sportsman Receive Largemouth Bass Donation



IDFG Photo

James Reed is a farmer in Buhl, Idaho. Over the past three years, James has generously provided the sportsman of Idaho with over (500) 10-12 inch Largemouth Bass from his pond. The fish will be used to create new fisheries. He has never asked for compensation of any type. These fish, if purchased, would have cost the Sportsman of Idaho several thousand dollars. The fish were both electro fished and angled from the pond and transported. For his generous efforts to provide the Department with such a valuable resource, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game honored James by awarding him with the "Caught in the Act of Doing Good" honorary award.

## Expanding Warm Water Fishing In The Magic Valley Region

Providing more fishing opportunity, and making fishing better are two goals of IDFG. One of our goals here in the Magic valley region is to expand the warm fishing opportunities in the Magic Valley. Historically the Magic Valley provided excellent warm water fishing, and still does offer great fishing. Some of the fisheries have changed, and are being restored. New fisheries are also being built. Largemouth bass and bluegill fisheries, when managed properly through allowed harvest, provide wonderful fishing for families and kids alike. Both bass and bluegill are also excellent table fare as well. Nothing beats a summertime fish fry after a day at the bluegill pond! Existing warm water fisheries that have been restored are Oster Lakes and Anderson Ponds on the Hagerman WMA, Emerald lake, and Conner Pond near Burley, New warm water fisheries that are being built are the Large Filer Pond, and Bluegill lake near Twin Falls. Get out and enjoy these wonderful fishing opportunities in the magic valley.

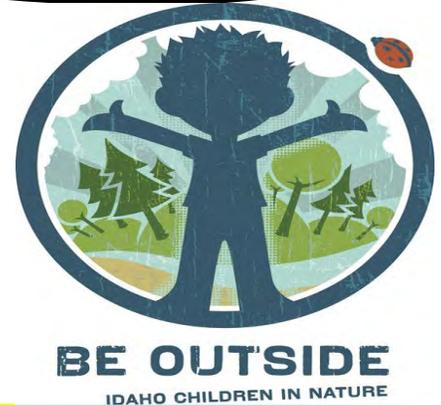


**" All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall be only captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping."**

<http://www.fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/fishingplanner/>



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Free Fishing  
Day is Satur-  
day June 14,  
2014  
Take a Kid  
Fishing

