



HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

June, 2008

President's Message

Water, water everywhere! Henrys Lake is full and Targhee Creek has just started its runoff. The reservoirs on the Henrys Fork side are all full and most of the rivers are at least full to their banks. In Yellowstone Park the Madison, Gibbons and Firehole are out of their banks and on the east side there is still five foot snow banks with ice still on Yellowstone and Lewis lakes. The weather in Island Park has been cool and rainy and much of the snowpack on the plateaus and mountains remains. This spring is reminiscent of bygone years with all the wetlands filled with water, tree frogs, and soon.... mosquitoes.

Ice off at Henrys was on May 21 compared to April 23 last year. Typically the later the ice out the better the opener and this year was no exception. Fishermen were having good success with bait, lures and flies like pheasant tail nymphs and leeches. The fish were in excellent condition. Several large fish in the 8-9 pound range were landed. All the tributaries along the North shore had large pods of fish hanging out and Buckshot Bay was the best it has been in several years. There were also numbers of fish congregated in the Howard Creek bay and by the State Park dock. All creeks of any size have spawning cutthroat in them and the Targhee run is just about to begin. The water in Targhee is roiling and discolored making it difficult to see the fish. The water temperature the first week in June was 39 degrees. It appears to be a great start for a much improved fishing season! There is a considerable effort underway, lead by the Dept of Agriculture, to thwart the introduction of Eurasian Watermilfoil into Henrys Lake. This invasive noxious weed would be devastating to the fishery. High pressure washers are available at all the key launch points on the lake. Everyone must take responsibility for ensuring that their watercraft, waders, boots, etc. are thoroughly rinsed prior to entering Henrys Lake. The Foundation endorses all the efforts of the Dept of Agriculture and has worked to install signs around the lake informing fisherman of the threat. It will be the combined efforts of everyone that will allow us to protect the fishery. Please do your part!

Please mark your calendars for a new and improved July 5th Foundation Picnic with a completely revised auction format. This year's event will take place at the Henrys Lake State Park(entrance free for the picnic) with lots of baked goods-items to purchase and a silent auction and 'buy-it-now' with many fly boxes, fishing equipment and outdoor apparel. Also, we are going to provide ballots for voting for new directors this year. The Foundation is seeking your support, so look for the big tents at the State Park and come on over to join us.

We are planning a 2nd Annual Patrons' Dinner for late summer. Last year's dinner was a great success and raised over \$6000 for conservation projects. A signup and update will be available at the July 5th picnic. The dinner is open to all those interested in the betterment of Henrys Lake. We will have many auction items and feature several guided fishing trips on local waters.

Please try to attend and bring some friends. See you all July 5th.

Ron Slocum, President



Jordan Porter and his opening day catch.

IDAHO FISH AND GAME REPORT by Damon Keen, Hatchery Specialist

With the best water conditions in several years, optimistic thoughts are easily gathered. The 2008 year at Henrys Lake has been good so far.

From the spawning run that totaled the best run numbers since 2001, a surplus of fish and decent egg quality to the Memorial Day opener that saw a light turnout but great fishing, the 2008 season is starting great.

Spawn Take

Over 5,100 cutthroat ascended the ladder at Henrys this spring (I mean winter and lots of it). Although the long winter depleted oxygen to

levels of concern, the lake began oxygen recharge prior to a winterkill event. Given environmental conditions, the egg quality was good and egg requests were satisfied. We had enough eggs to meet our 1.3 million cutthroat fingerling request, as well as our 200,000-hybrid request. The brook trout are already growing rapidly and we will be planting half of our request in June and the other half in September.

Gillnetting

Due to late ice off, only 12 nets were set this year as compared to our 50 net objective. Although the numbers of nets set this year is a relatively small sample size, all indicators point to strong numbers of all three game fish. Once again, good age class representation was observed. The gillnet data for

the last two years points to strong populations, good age class breakdown, and healthy fish. We did observe chubs again this year and they will probably continue to be part of our fish population at Henrys. Fortunately, we have not noted curtailed growth rates in the trout due to the chubs. The trout in Henrys are still growing at rates that we seldom see in other stillwaters.

Memorial Opener

As per traditional thought, the late ice out provided excellent angling opportunities for the Memorial opener. Shoreline angling was especially good. Comments such as the “best opener in years” were not uncommon. Given the good fishing start, good lake levels, and good inflow predicted for the year, the anglers that venture to Henrys could be in for a terrific year.

One note, with the fish close to shoreline given the late ice out conditions, IDFG enforcement dedicated a tremendous amount of effort over Memorial Day weekend to make sure that regulation breakers had a “price to pay”. Nine officers worked the lake on Saturday and eight officers worked the lake on Sunday. Several other non-enforcement personnel were at the lake over the weekend as well. Seventeen citations were issued. Know your regulations and do not violate F&G laws on Henrys (or anywhere else for that matter). With a combination of excellent enforcement personnel and conscientious anglers, violators are often apprehended at Henrys. The limit at Henrys Lake is two trout and

REMEMBER: ANNUAL PICNIC; NEW LOCATION, NEW EVERYTHING. JULY 5, HENRYS LAKE STATE PARK. BAKE SALE, BALLOT ELECTION OF OFFICERS, LIVE MUSIC, GREAT FOOD AND LOTS OF FISHING LIES!!!



Preston Kline with his opener-whopper hybrid.

Henrys Lake Foundation Project Updates

By Phil Barker, Project Director

The projects sponsored by the foundation are focused on maintaining and improving the fish habitat of Henrys Lake. Our project work efforts, prioritization and funding are closely coordinated with Damon Keen from the IDFG.

New Jensorter Egg Sorter

In February 2008, a new egg sorter was donated by the foundation to the IDFG. This \$7600 device was successfully used as part of the winter 2008 spawning efforts. IDFG personnel were able to sort 250,000 eggs per hour which is significantly more than what could be done with the old single wheel device that was replaced. This resulted in a significant savings of labor in the spawning effort. The Jensorter is engineered to last for more than 20 years so the ongoing benefits will be significant.

Self-Cleaning Screens on Targhee and Howard Creeks

The installation of these screen on Ray Clement's and Tom Cole's properties will ensure that the last lateral diversions on each of these creeks are screened from fish and fry passage. This represents a significant achievement milestone in protecting these important tributaries to the lake. In conjunction with the \$4000 committed for each screen by the HLF, our requests to FRIMA (Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Program) for co-funding were approved in the fall of 2007. FRIMA is a US Fish and Wildlife Services program that provides federal co-funding for projects such as these. The manufacturing of the screens was just recently completed and installation of the screens is now planned for this summer.

Fencing and Stream bottom Hardening for Lower Duck Creek

The focus of this work will protect the stream bed of Duck Creek from cattle grazing on the Empey property. The HLF funded \$5000 for this project so that a portion of the creek bottom can be hardened allowing cattle to pass without damage to the bottom. This approach was deemed more viable and in lieu of an off-site water facility for the cattle. This project was funded in 2006 but the work effort was delayed until approval from the Army Corp of Engineers. That approval was finally received in the fall of 2007 and as such the work effort can now proceed. The HLF budgeted an additional \$2500 to assist with the construction of a rock weir below the Taft diversion. This weir will increase the water level below this diversion so fish can pass. The fencing portion of the project will be completed this summer. The hardening of the stream bottom and the rock weir construction is scheduled for the fall of 2008 in conjunction with lower water flows.

Re-circulation Pump for the Hatchery Facility



Duck Creek diversion weir. The site of new self cleaning screens to prevent loss of fry.

This project involves the installation of a pump to take water from the lake and circulate it back into the hatchery shed. This will provide a consistent flow of water into the hatchery in low water years if the flows of the Hatchery Creek are insufficient. With the recent housing developments near Hatchery Creek and ground aquifer, the HLF took this extra step to ensure no loss of egg production if the flows from the creek prove insufficient. Although the HLF budgeted \$10,000 in July 2007 for the re-circulation pump and facility, the work effort will not commence until water rights have been secured. That process is currently in work.

New Self-Cleaning Screen on Lower Duck Creek

A \$4000 commitment in funds by the HLF will replace the old wooden screen structure on this diversion. Preliminary land owner approval has been received from John Taft. Our request to FRIMA for co-funding will be submitted in May. With an approval by FRIMA we anticipate that the screen can be installed in the summer of 2009. It is important to recognize that this project represents a commitment by the HLF to maintain or upgrade prior completed projects. Several of these types of projects will be planned in the future as these screens and facilities degrade with age or environmental conditions.

In addition to the projects that are initiated and sponsored directly by the foundation, there are other projects that the HLF supports that are mutually beneficial. Most recently the HLF supports the efforts of Thomas Woolf, the Aquatic Plants Program Manager from the Idaho Department of Agriculture, to thwart the introduction of Eurasian Water milfoil into Henrys Lake. This project will provide wash stations for boats to be cleaned prior to launching. Additionally, the HLF has offered support to the management of Henrys Lake State Park for the improvement of the boat docks and dredging of the boat ramp.

26th Annual Picnic and Auction

July 5th, 2008 NEW and IMPROVED!

What's new?

- The location this year will be the Henrys Lake State Park, at the west end: free admission to the park for attendees of picnic
- Booth with information on the latest projects by the foundation
- Live music

Improvements

- More tents to provide cover
- Lunch will be from 11am to 1pm
- Home-made baked goods -Buy it now items
- Sale of foundation logo shirts, hats and mugs
- Fly tying demonstrations
- Fast checkout

Annual meeting at 12:00

- Report by Damon Keene, Henrys Lake Hatchery Manager, Idaho Fish and Game
- Report by Phil Barker, Project Director on status of projects
- Elect foundation Board of Directors

