

Yuba Habitat Meeting

Thursday, May 9, 2002, 1 p.m., Room 2130 Salt Lake DWR Office.

In attendance:

Ron Colby, B.A.S.S.; Don Archer, Salt Lake DWR; Wes Schneider, Rocky Mountain Anglers; Charlie Thompson; DWR Retired; Mike Slater, DWR Central Region; Don Wiley, DWR Central Region; Randy Radant, DWR Salt Lake; Tom Pettengill, DWR Salt Lake; John Tomich B.A.S.S.; Ray Schelble, Rocky Mountain Anglers.

Wes reported on Yuba tournament: some walleyes healthy, some skinny; some smaller fish. Most fishing near the dam. Tom reports 28-inch fish that are fat. Few perch caught. Tom reports a 25-pound northern this spring caught in Yuba that is a new state record.

Mike reports that anglers have been dropping off at the reservoir.

Mike: IPP tried several times to get fish. Got about 5,000 (although it could be as many as 200,000) eggs from Aquamats at IPP and planted them in a floating cage in Yuba. Haven't yet been able to see fish in cage. Eggs are now gone. Yuba is dropping about a foot a week now. Some eggs hatched out in a week. Eggs disappeared about 2-1/2 weeks after they were planted.

Don: Could pursue live perch at IPP. Experienced problems with pressure adjustment for fish caught deep, even with fish caught from 8 feet. Hook and line worked great to catch them but they couldn't overcome pressure. Charlie collected fish in spring (prespawn) before and didn't have the same problem. Solution could be to collect fish in warmer water. Fish from 8 feet didn't have protruding swim bladder but acted the same way as fish that did. Keep sack might work or maybe cages that could be sunk. Average skein of perch eggs is 23,000 eggs. Normally they hatch in 8 to 10 days. Could go back later this summer and angle for fish.

Mike: Dropped a camera and video taped rope structures. Pulled them up. Knots were tight and very clean. Different from others that have been used in that the strands have floats tied to them. Strands float 6 feet above the bottom and are anchored with Tracy Meyers's concrete anchors.

Berms are still out of the water as water levels are dropping. Pine trees are increasingly exposed. Soon they will be out of water.

Yuba is scheduled to be drained next year (2003). Tamarisks should take hold along shoreline while water is low.

Electroshocked around trees yesterday. Found one small fish but couldn't identify it. Approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of all trees underwater now.

Couldn't pull up Aquacribs. Will go down the week of May 20 to check.

Utah State will do hydroacoustics and midwater trawl at Yuba in mid July.

2001: captured 686 fish; Estimate that 7,600 in the reservoir are over 14 inches.

2002: captured 241 this year and netted two weeks longer. 2,500 estimate this year.

Anglers were catching more fish than nets.

Could catch small perch in open water using meter net.
Not one perch in any nets.

Signage and buoys for habitat area. Consistent signage would standardize markings for boaters. Marked "Fish habitat area." Could talk to Ted Wooley about possibility of buoys.

Tracy Meyers (Western Star Construction) has new system for making weights that reduces costs.

Should count on continuing Christmas tree planting.

Should be good opportunity create more berms in the fall.

Evaluation of polypropylene structures continue.

Suggestion to buy shares of water to help fund Yuba dam by buying shares to contribute to situation. Money should be available to buy a conservation pool. Need to demonstrate benefit to fishery to justify spending money for pool. Ability to be in on decision process may not be enough.

Charlie pointed out that after Yuba was drained in 1978 perch came back good by 1980.

Could take 2 – 3years for perch to come back when conditions improve.

Discussed possibility of purchasing perch to plant in Yuba. Could cost a lot. Could not afford to buy enough to feed fish and not sure if spawning fish are available.

Deer Creek discussed. Lots of perch in Deer Creek but risk hurting fishery if we take them out. Both Deer Creek and Pineview have whirling disease.

Discussed emergency closure of Yuba to taking of perch. If the reservoir is going to be drained we need to find out.

Disease testing on IPP perch good for 1 year. Good until February, 2003.

Possibility of getting perch from the river below Yuba. Perch below reservoir would have to be disease tested to move them into the reservoir.

Lots of pelicans, cormorants and herons. They seem to be eating well.

Should try to catch more perch this July to see if this spring's problems persist.