

Special Regulations for Wild Trout



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Objectives

- Biological
 - Increase population size
 - Improve size structure
 - Maintain a strong population
- Social
 - Meet angler and landowner interests



What do special regulations do?

- Regulate anglers and fishing mortality
- **Not a panacea**
- Important management tool when used properly



When do special regulations have the most benefit?

- Instream habitat and water temperatures good for trout
- Fishing mortality is a major limiting factor
 - Harvest
 - Hooking / handling
- Recovering populations



Dr. Robert Behnke - 1972

- “Even anglers most knowledgeable in the ways of trout seldom comprehend the severe and unrelenting leveling role played by natural mortality in regulating a population.”



Challenge

- Is angling mortality on a stream of interest a major limiting factor to the trout population?
- Why?
 - Requires angler use and harvest surveys
 - Time consuming and expensive



Special Regulation

Pros

vs

Cons

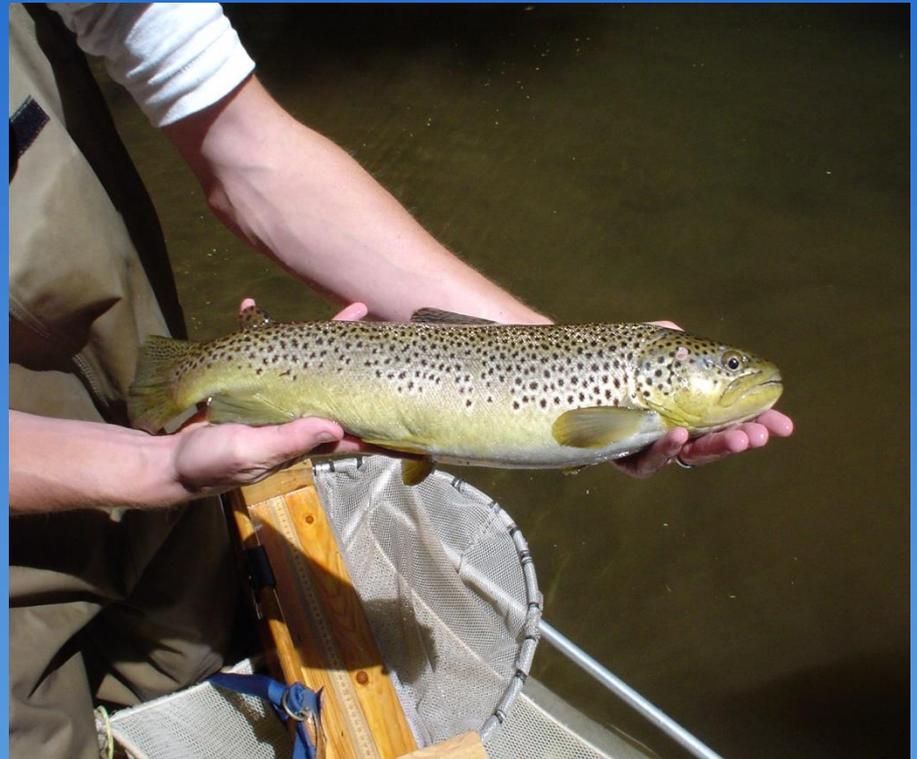
- Angling mortality high - likely to have a biological benefit
- Help to increase population size and size structure
- Can benefit recovering populations
- Often increase angler use

- Angling mortality low - likely to not have a biological benefit
- Can result in overpopulation and reduced size structure
- Often increase angler use



6 Special Regulation Programs

- Catch and Release
 - C&R Fly Fishing Only
 - C&R Artificial Lures Only
 - C&R All-Tackle
- Trophy Trout (14" min size and 2 trout/day)
 - TT Artificial Lures Only
 - TT All-Tackle
- Miscellaneous Special Regulations
 - e.g., Harvest Slot Limit on Penns Creek

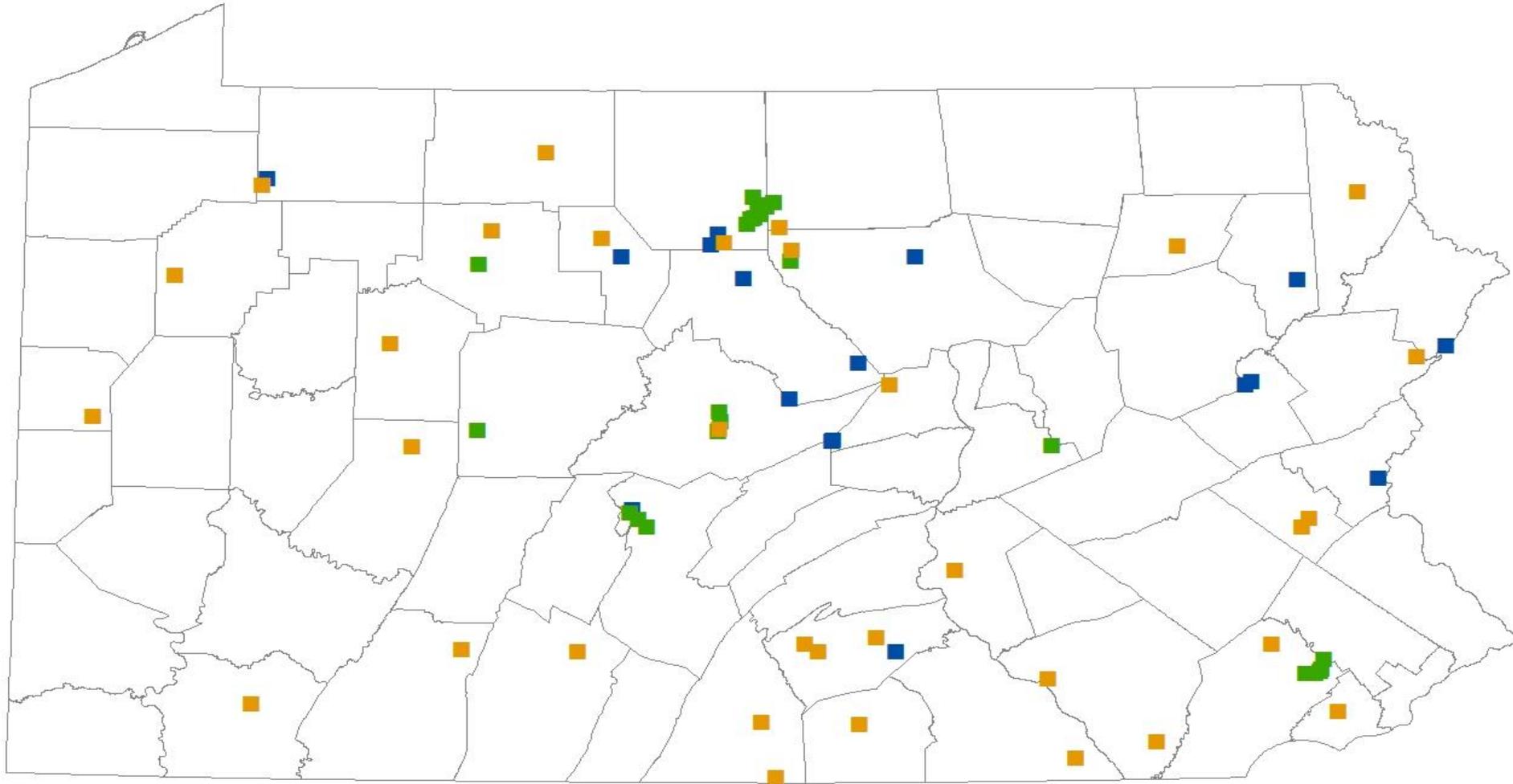


Special Regulation Waters

Special Regulation	Stream Sections	Stream Miles
Catch & Release Artificial Lures Only	17	41
Catch & Release Fly-Fishing Only	33	63
Catch & Release All-Tackle	26	119
Trophy Trout All-Tackle	1	9
Trophy Trout Artificial Lures Only	10	26
Miscellaneous Special Regulations	5	89
Total	92	347



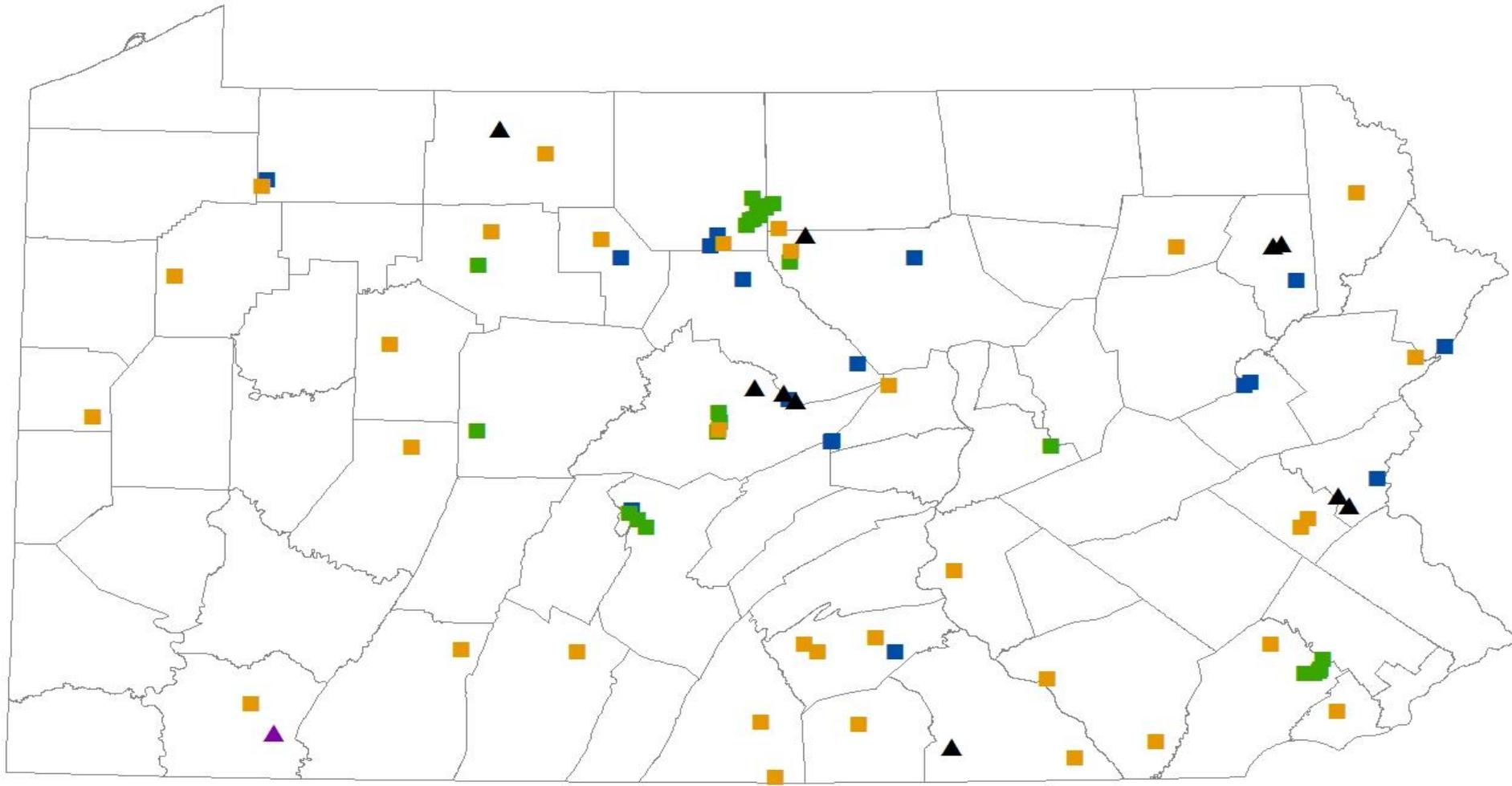
Special Regulation Waters



- Catch & Release Artificial Lures Only
- Catch & Release Fly-Fishing Only
- Catch & Release All Tackle



Special Regulation Waters

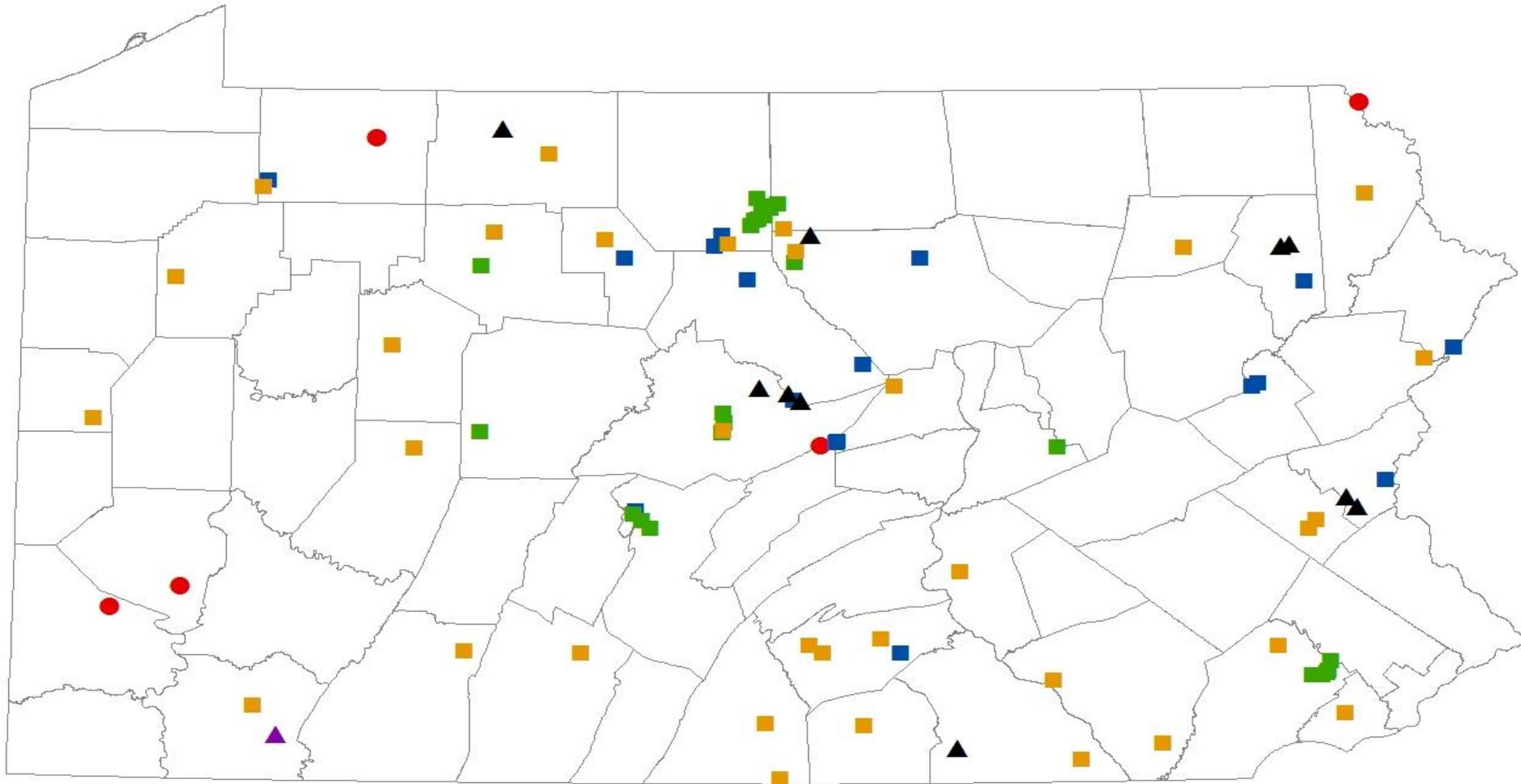


- Catch & Release Artificial Lures Only
- Catch & Release Fly-Fishing Only
- Catch & Release All Tackle

- ▲ All Tackle Trophy Trout
- ▲ Trophy Trout Artificial Lures Only



Special Regulation Waters



- Catch & Release Artificial Lures Only
- Catch & Release Fly-Fishing Only
- Catch & Release All Tackle

- ▲ All Tackle Trophy Trout
- ▲ Trophy Trout Artificial Lures Only
- Miscellaneous Regulations



Catch and Release Regulations

- Opportunity to fish for wild trout so that harvest is not a major factor in determining population structure or abundance



Trophy Trout Regulations

- Opportunity to fish for wild trout in streams that support fish >14”
- Maintain high densities of wild trout in streams where 5% or more of the adult trout population is composed of trout >14”
- Opportunity to harvest a large trout



Miscellaneous Special Regulations

- Used on a case by case basis for waters that are not a good fit for existing special regulation programs but warrant a special regulation or to test a new regulation
- Used infrequently and each of the regulations is unique



Special Regulation Objectives

- Minimize fishing mortality
- Maintain high trout population densities to provide for high angler catch rates
- Provide protection to the wild trout population (or a portion of the population) from harvest



Tackle Types

- Can provide an additional tool for reducing angling mortality
- Trout species present and amount of angler use important factors when considering tackle types



Tackle Types

1. Fly Fishing Only

- Low mortality (<10%)
- Limits opportunities to fly anglers

2. Artificial Lures Only

- Low mortality (<10%)
- Provides opportunity to both fly anglers and spin anglers

3. All-Tackle (includes bait)

- Variable mortality (can be similar to or higher than artificial lures and flies)
- Trout species and angler use important
- Maximizes participation of anglers, including youth and families



Moving Forward

- How do we handle special regulations in the future?
 - Special Regulation Guidelines
- Angler sentiment
 - not all harvest is bad
- Introduce youth or a friend to wild trout fishing



Special Regulation Guidelines

- Developed as part of 2016-2017 Trout Management Plan
- Provide consistent review and application of special regulations moving forward



Special Regulation Considerations

1. Necessary and supported biologically
2. Harvest and/or tackle types are limiting factors
3. Angler opinions and potential impact on angler participation
4. Does regulation exclude segments of the angling public, especially families and children
5. Landowner support
6. Geographic distribution and availability of other special regulation waters



Special Regulation Criteria

1. $\geq 85\%$ open to public angling with majority landowner support
2. Water temperatures do not regularly exceed 68° F during summer
3. Wild trout population has the potential to significantly improve, or remain at its existing high
4. Angler support for the new regulation
5. Waters added to the Catch-and-Release or Trophy Trout programs will be managed for wild trout with no stocking
6. Stream sections will be a minimum of 2 miles



Looking Back and Moving Forward

- Looking back through time C&R certainly filled a biologically necessary management need
- Today's wild trout anglers strongly embrace the catch and release concept



Changes in Angler Sentiment- Top 3 reasons for fishing

1980^a

VS

1999^b

1. Catch food to eat
2. Fishing for sport
3. Being with family and friends

1. Relaxation
2. Being with family and friends
3. Being close to nature

^aKellert, 1980

^bResponsive Management, 1999



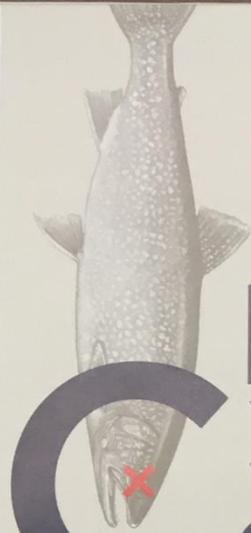
Angler Use and Harvest Surveys

Stream	Survey year	% Brown Trout caught & released	Exploitation rate
Penns Ck	1994	61%	-
Fishing Ck*	1996	99%	-
Honey Ck	2001	88%	3%
Statewide WT (200 sections)	2004	93% (all wild trout)	4%
Penns Ck*	2013	99%	12%
Statewide ST (30 sections)	2005	63% (all trout)	-

* Trophy Trout Regulations



Not all harvest is bad



Keeping YOUR Catch:

A Benefit to Certain Trout Species?

BY DAN GARREN
Regional Fisheries Manager,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Upper Snake Regional Office

One of the greatest aspects of fishing is the freedom to make your own choices. These choices often directly affect your personal level of fishing success and satisfaction. Whether choosing a place to fish or fly pattern, your options matter! If you choose wisely, you might just land a fish, and that invariably leads to another choice—possibly the most important and potentially difficult one for the modern day angler.

Should the trout be released, or are there other conservation alternatives to consider? For decades, many anglers have defaulted to catch and release as the best, if not only, option of preserving the quality of our fisheries. But in some cases, releasing a wild trout is not the best way to conserve our valuable coldwater resources, and that may actually run counter to the conservation needs on specific waters.

Although catch and release is not specifically defined, it is the practice of letting fish go after they're landed... in a manner that minimizes mortality, to conserve a valuable and finite resource. The century-old concept has origins in Europe, where it was used to prevent overharvest of fish. In the U.S., the discussion of catch and release started as early as the 1930s, when esteemed fly angler and conservationist Lee Wulff was credited with saying, "Game fish are too valuable to be caught only once." Michigan was the first state to implement catch and release rules back in the 1950s, although proponents of the concept had been discussing the strategy for a couple decades prior.

During the first half of the 20th century, fishing was viewed primarily as a means of obtaining protein (fish were *food*, foremost). With limited free time, many anglers focused on local waters, but as the U.S. developed economically and citizens had more mobility, angling effort increased across the country. Increased effort combined with a "harvest" mindset put new stresses on resources that were once lightly fished. Anglers and biologists recognized that fish populations could decline if harvest numbers continued to increase.



Benefits of Selective Harvest

- Species Specific Harvest
 - Can reduce interspecific competition and benefit native species
- Harvest of intermediate-size fish:
 - Can increase growth rates / improve size structure if anglers harvest enough fish
 - Largest trout often come from areas where there are reduced densities of trout
- Provides an opportunity to harvest a few trout if anglers choose to do so



Introduce Youth or a Friend to Wild Trout Fishing

- Special regulation streams include many of the best wild trout fisheries in Pennsylvania
- Anglers are often the best advocates for wild trout conservation



Summary

- The future of wild trout conservation requires cooperative efforts between anglers and fishery managers
- Special regulations are an important management tool when used properly
- Special regulations do not always equate to improved wild trout populations
 - Must identify and address the limiting factors!
- On the majority of streams and rivers, today's most pressing conservation needs include restoring degraded habitat, dealing with a changing environment, and managing introduced and invasive species



Questions?

