



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

NEWS

490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT. 59901

CONTACT: John Fraley 406-751-4564 (office)

EMAIL: jfraley@mt.gov

REGION ONE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 29, 2011

BULL TROUT COUNTS DOWN IN MOST KOOTENAI INDEX STREAMS, KOOCANUSA COUNTS SLIGHTLY UP BUT NOT ENOUGH TO CONTINUE HARVEST FISHERY

Biologists have completed index counts of bull trout redds (nests) in nine standard stream index sections for the Kootenai River drainage populations for the 16th consecutive year. Bull trout spawn in the fall, building nests in tributaries during September and October. These counts serve as an index of how many migratory adult bull trout successfully spawn. Crews also helped British Columbia biologists to survey index streams for the Kooconusa population in the Wigwam drainage. The same stream sections are surveyed annually and represent a known portion of the total bull trout spawning runs in each of the drainages. The 2011 count of 148 redds for non-Kooconusa index streams was less than in 2010 (187) and 78 percent of the 10 year average (Table 1).

The Wigwam/Grave Creek counts are indices of spawners migrating upstream from Lake Kooconusa. This count was 1270 redds, which is slightly higher than 2010 (1238) but 68 percent of the average for the past decade (Table 2).

The decline in bull trout redds in the Lake Kooconusa portion of the Kootenai drainage over the past several years caused Montana biologists to recommend changes in fishing harvest. Lake Kooconusa had been managed with a two bull trout per year fishing regulation from 2004 through 2009; the steady decline in redd numbers between 2006 and 2010 led to a reduction to one bull trout per year for the 2010 season. The continued lower than average redd counts and unknown impact of recreational angling in the British Columbia portion of the drainage led MFWP to recommend a shift to catch-and-release regulations (no harvest) starting in 2012 which was approved by the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission at their meeting on November 10.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT MIKE HENSLER, FWP FISHERIES BIOLOGIST
IN LIBBY AT: 293-4161 (EXT 204); email: mhensler@mt.gov

Detailed redd count tables in the attachment...

---fwp---

Table 1. Bull trout redd counts 1995 – 2011 for index streams in the Kootenai River drainage downstream of Libby Dam, Montana.

Stream	1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011																	10 Year average	Most recent year Percent of 10 year average
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011		
O'Brien Creek	22	12	36	47	37	34	47	45	46	51	86	65	77	79	40	27	32	55	58.4
Pipe Creek	5	17	26	34	36	30	6	11	10	8	2	6	0	4	9	16	2	7	29.4
Bear Creek	6	10	13	22	36	23	4	17	14	6	3	14	9	14	6	8	3	9	31.9
West Fisher Creek	3	4	0	8	18	23	1	1	1	13	27	4	18	6	8	12	3	9	32.3
Quartz Creek	41	9	30	33	14	52	45	52	29	8	25	23	20	14	18	12	7	17	40.4
West Fork Quartz Creek	26	42	39	72	88	39	109	10	26	41	46	28	15	32	13	27	30	27	111.9
Quartz Drainage Total	67	47	69	105	102	91	154	62	55	49	71	51	35	46	31	39	37	48	77.7
Keeler Creek		74	25	39	42	3	11	27	61	53	85	52	50	32	24	45	29	46	63.3
North Fork Keeler Creek			18	43	52	82	4	75	26	30	45	59	30	22	0	19	29	34	86.6
South Fork Keeler Creek			16	10	5	5	0	0	0	43	40	31	4	8	0	11	10	15	68.0
Keeler Drainage Total		74	59	92	99	90	15	102	87	126	170	142	84	62	24	75	68	94	72.3
North Callahan Creek									30	17	12	29	0	14	10	9	1	14	7.4
South Callahan Creek									10	8	8	4	3	1	0	1	2	4	48.6
Callahan Drainage Total									40	25	20	33	3	15	18	10	3	19	16.2
Kootenai other than Kooconusa	103	164	203	308	328	291	227	238	253	278	379	315	226	226	136	187	148	239	78.4

Table 2. Bull trout redd counts 1995 – 2011 for Grave Creek and Wigwam River, tributaries to Lake Kooconusa, Montana.

Stream	1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011																	10 Year average	Most recent year Percent of 10 year average
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011		
Grave Creek		24	42	52	85	87	131	156	173	102	153	118	166	170	55	102	51	125	40.9
Clarence Creek		5	6	13	39	9	29	38	52	29	32	22	42	27	24	9	10	29	35.0
Blue sky Creek		6	1	1	10	1	13	5	20	10	9	8	0	10	8	9	3	8	36.6
Grave Drainage Total		35	49	66	134	97	173	199	245	141	194	148	208	207	87	120	64	161	39.7
Wigwam River (B.C.)	247	500	581	673	838	1186	1477	1881	2043	2106	635	2285	1850	1827	1567	1114	1198	1651	72.6
Wigwam River (U.S.)		12	17	6	21	9	19	11	10	27	7	13	33	6	8	4	8	13	63.0
Wigwam Drainage Total	247	512	598	679	849	1195	1496	1892	2053	2133	642	2298	1883	1833	1575	1118	1206	1663	72.5
Wigwam and Grave Creek	247	547	647	745	983	1292	1669	2091	2298	2274	836	2446	2091	2040	1662	1238	1270	1825	67.9