

Rainey Creek Gets Boost of Cutthroat Trout

By Brett High, Regional Fisheries Biologist

Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) stocked more than 30,000 Cutthroat Trout eggs in Rainey Creek. This was done as part of an experiment to determine if stocking eggs could be used to boost fish numbers. The eggs were obtained by spawning wild Cutthroat Trout from the South Fork Snake River.

Rainey Creek is one of four major South Fork Snake River spawning tributaries for native Cutthroat Trout. Unlike the other three tributaries, few adult Cutthroat return to Rainey Creek during spring spawning runs. IDFG is tracking the impact of stocking the 30,000 eggs on the number of Cutthroat fry produced this year and the number of Cutthroat fry swimming downstream to the main South Fork Snake River. IDFG hopes that stocking Cutthroat eggs will be an effective tool to boost the number of Cutthroat Trout in Rainey Creek that migrate to and from the main river.

Like salmon returning from the ocean, Cutthroat Trout returning from the main South Fork are larger fish and produce a lot more fry, because larger fish carry more eggs. Larger fish spawning in Rainey Creek means more Cutthroat Trout and better fishing in both Rainey Creek and the river. The experiment will continue through October, so stay tuned to hear results.



Eric Pankau and Malia Gallagher (Fish Hatchery managers from American Falls and Grace fish hatcheries) spawn Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Swan Valley near Rainey Creek.



Cutthroat Trout eggs from the South Fork Snake River were reared to the eyed-egg stage at Henrys Lake hatchery before being placed in Vibert boxes which were placed in Rainey Creek

Cutthroat Trout eggs in three Vibert boxes are buried in the Rainey Creek gravels where they will hatch and fry will soon emerge.

