



Summer 2004

HENRY'S FORK FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

Telemetry Study Yields Promising Data

by Dan Garren

Regional Fisheries Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

In the fall of 2003, the Henry's Fork Foundation started a telemetry project in the river reach between Island Park Dam and Osborne Bridge. The goal of the project was to determine whether or not the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) Box Canyon population estimates, which are conducted in May, were representative of the resident population or a migrating component of a far longer river reach stretching all the way downstream to Mesa Falls. This was no idle exercise. If estimates are influenced by migrating, spawning fish they may incorrectly identify population trends, lead to false conclusions about the fishery and ultimately have a negative influence on management decisions.

Forty adult rainbow trout were collected throughout the reach from Island Park Dam to Osborne Bridge and implanted with radio tags. Tracking occurs once or twice a month in non-spawning months, and every fourth day during the spawning period from March through May. Each fish was individually identified, and a precise record of each individual's location was obtained on each tracking day. Tracking involved canoeing, skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, hiking and biking, depending on the season and weather conditions. The study is still underway (we plan to complete the study after the 2005 spawning season) but in the aftermath of this year's spawn some fascinating information has begun to emerge.

Eight of the 40 radio transmitters signaled the mortality code (built-in sensors send signals at a faster

rate when motion stops for a prolonged period of time) and were recovered. Several other tags ended up outside the study reach, indicating movement downstream of Harriman State Park, the removal of a missing fish from the system by an osprey or a similar predator, or that the tags may have malfunctioned.

The IDFG estimate of mortality for rainbow trout in Box Canyon is about 35 percent annually from ages three to five. We would expect the majority of this to be related to spawning stresses, and to occur during the spring. The 20 percent mortality found in our transmitters is about what we would expect over this short period of time.

We floated the Buffalo River on two occasions in the hopes of finding radio-tagged fish that we were unable to find in the mainstem Henry's Fork.

Although some trout do use the Buffalo for spawning we were unable to find any of our tagged fish above the hydroelectric facility just above the confluence of the Buffalo and the Henry's Fork. We did occasionally locate a tagged fish or two in the lowest reach of the Buffalo River, suggesting that the fish would like to move upstream of the dam. Improved fish passage may aid fish in using the Buffalo. (*Editor's note: The HFF, the U.S. Forest Service, the IDFG and other organizations are currently working with the Buffalo dam licensee to design a significantly improved fish ladder for this site.*)

(Continued on page 3)



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A Note From the Chair —

The recent weather has added a touch of fall to the air. My favorite time of year: cold mornings and crisp days with eager steelhead and trout just waiting for the right presentation. I get excited just thinking about it!

As I look back on the summer season, I am thankful for those afternoon thunder showers that we experienced frequently. The high country is still green and covered with wildflowers of all varieties. As a result of this precious precipitation and cooler weather our streams continue to fish well, indicating less stress on the fish. The reservoirs, while still low, are at higher levels than this time last year. Hopefully, the wetter and cooler weather is a harbinger of a wet winter to come.

In June, we also experienced a wonderful event on the banks of "our river." The 20th anniversary of the Henry's Fork Foundation brought together about 300 people to celebrate the Foundation's successes in working toward our common goal to preserve and protect this precious resource known as the Henry's Fork. It was an inspiring, fun day *and* the biggest fundraising event in the history of the Foundation. We raised nearly \$100,000, which will be used to continue the good work we are doing on the river.

We look forward with renewed enthusiasm and confidence to our work of the next year: upper river restoration, lower river access, telemetry and the economic analysis of recreational river use. And, we cannot forget the ongoing concerns and programs handled on a daily basis by our committed staff and interns including monitoring, flows, fencing and a host of others.

I cannot say enough about our board of directors, as well as those members and friends of the Foundation who have supported us through the years. Thank you and keep up the good work!

—Marty McLellan



Board Chair Marty McLellan served up pancakes to breakfast eaters at Henry's Fork Day in June.

New Staff Member to Join HFF

In September we welcome Jim DeRito as the HFF's new Conservation Director. Jim comes to us from Montana State University, where he has just received his master's degree in fisheries management. His research focused on assessing reproductive isolation between Yellowstone cutthroat trout and rainbow trout in the Yellowstone River. Prior to starting graduate school Jim spent seven years with the Nez Perce National Forest in northern Idaho, working at jobs ranging from volunteer technician to District Fisheries Biologist and gaining extraordinary experience across a broad range of fisheries management projects and challenges. Throughout his time both in graduate school and in the Forest Service Jim has been actively involved with the American Fisheries Society. Jim received his bachelor's degree in environmental studies from Hobart College in Geneva, New York. He is an avid outdoorsman. Please stop by the office and say hello to Jim when you are in the area.



The recipient of the 2004 Manlove Award was Hugo Melvojn, who retired as board chair in 2003. Hugo has been a long-time benefactor of the HFF, and served on the board for two terms. He and his wife Lois have a summer home at Last Chance; they reside permanently in Highland Park, IL. The Manlove Award is presented in the name of HFF founder Bill Manlove to an individual who carries on Manlove's affection for the Henry's Fork and its surroundings and his efforts to preserve and protect it.

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The partners of TroutHunter — Rene Harrop, John Stiehl, and Rich Paini — were the recipients of the 2004 Conservation Award. They were cited for their extraordinary effort at the fish rescue operation below Island Park Dam in October 2003. The rescue saved thousands of rainbows from being stranded when the dam was closed for repairs. The Conservation Award is presented to persons or groups who have made a significant contribution to maintaining the integrity and restoring the productivity of the Henry's Fork.

(Telemetry...continued from page 1)

Numerous areas outside of the famed “Redd Alley”—which has been thought to be the primary, if not the only, spawning site in the Box Canyon reach —were used by rainbows for spawning. In fact, during the 2004 spawning period, we found significant numbers of redds from the dam downstream through the Box Canyon and in Harriman State Park. Radio tagged fish were located throughout these shallow gravel areas. Again, the study data clearly indicate that spawning is not limited to a distinct, small area.

Flows during the late winter/early spring period may play a significant role in the presence or absence of available spawning habitat. Several areas used by rainbows for spawning in 2004 may not have been available if flows had not been at or above the levels seen this year. At least one (but probably more) heavily-used areas was barely deep enough to cover the backs of spawning fish. With lower flows, I would suspect fish would have to choose other areas to spawn. The negotiated winter flows from Island Park Dam for 2003-2004 (*see the Winter 2004 HFF newsletter*) likely improved the 2004 spawn by providing more desirable areas for trout to spawn.

In general, this year's data suggest that the timing and direction of movements of trout would not historically have influenced IDFG population estimates for the Box Canyon reach. We did not see a

mass exodus of trout from downstream reaches up into the Box Canyon. It appeared that some fish did move up, but others remained in standard locations. Fish that spawned early (March, April) typically redistributed to their “home” reaches after spawning. The same occurred for fish that spawned later. As a result, the Box Canyon was never overpopulated with a run of spawning fish. Further, the majority of the spawning movements that did occur were completed prior to the timing of the IDFG's typical population estimates. Thus, we believe that the IDFG's historical work in the Box Canyon is, in fact, representative of the actual resident population found there.

Overall, the telemetry study in the Box has been an overwhelming success. Information on spawning areas used, the timing of runs, and specific movements of fish has validated the IDFG's 20 year data set, and will aid in managing this quality fishery now and into the future. Additional information collected in the 2005 spawning season will help strengthen our conclusions.

Thanks go to the Marine Ventures Foundation for its generous support of this project, and to all of our members who sponsored tagged trout. A final tally of each surviving trout's movements will be made at the end of the year, and the winner (and its sponsor) announced in the new year. A final report on this study will be written after the 2005 spawning season.

JUNE 19, 2004: A GALA DAY FOR THE HENRY'S FORK FOUNDATION



Henry's Fork Day 2004 was a spectacular success, and a fitting celebration of 20 years of hard work by the Foundation. We are greatly indebted to everyone who helped to make that day possible: cash donors, merchandise donors, corporate sponsors, raffle and auction participants, volunteers of all stripes, and of course everyone who showed up in the course of that long day to help us celebrate the occasion. On behalf of the staff and board of directors, not to mention the entire membership of the Henry's Fork Foundation, thank you. The next decade is off to a fine start.

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These gentlemen were responsible for leading the HFF over the better part of the past 20 years. From the left: Jim Greene, chair 1995-99; Jim Lansche, chair 1991-93; Ralph Moon, chair 1988-91; Hugo Melvoin, chair 2000-02; and Mick Mickelson, president 1986-92. We owe them a debt of thanks for the many hours they freely contributed on behalf of the river and the Foundation.



Director Gene Quinn gathered this collection of HFF directors, officers and staff together for a group portrait during the evening festivities at Henry's Fork Day. Standing from left to right: Jim Mathias (*current board*), Bob Rosenberg (*current board*), Dan Todd (*board 2000-04, vice-chair 2002-04*), Jim Greene (*board 1994-99, chair 1995-99*), Gene Quinn (*current board*), Mike Aldrich (*board 1993-98*), Doug McClelland (*board 1995-2000*), Jim Lansche (*board 1985-1994, chair 1991-93*), Ann Murray (*current board*), Rick Hansen (*current board*), Mick Mickelson (*board 1985-1993, president 1986-92*), John McCosker (*board 1995-2001*), Ralph Moon (*board 1986-1994, chair 1998-91*), Paul Ginsburg (*current board*), Hugo Melvojn (*board 1996-2002, chair 2000-02*), John Champion (*current board*), Herb Meyer (*board 1992-95, chair 1993-94*), Brent Cameron (*board 1995-2001*), Mike Lawson (*board 1986-1993, vice-president 1986-1991*), Sheralee Lawson (*board 1999-2000*), Henry Ellis (*current board*), Paul Dremann (*current board*), Jerry Pulley (*board 1993-1999*). Kneeling from left to right: Steve Trafton (*executive director*), Marty McLellan (*current board chair*), Barbara Todd (*board 1997-98*), Jan Brown (*executive director 1991-2000*), Bob Lamm (*current board*), Jimmy Gabettas (*committee member 1986-91*), Jack Robison (*secretary 1986-89*), Bill Hackett (*current board and board 1993-98*).



The book signing table proved to be a popular attraction at Henry's Fork Day 2004.

Authors seated at the signing table are (from the left): Rene Harrop, Craig Mathews, Jack Dennis, Mike Lawson and Bruce Staples.



Effects of Hydrologic Alteration Studied on the Henry's Fork

The HFF and several other sponsors funded an analysis, conducted by Rob Van Kirk and Boyd Burnett (both of Idaho State University), of hydrologic alteration in the Henry's Fork. The following is the abstract of the study results. The June 2004 project completion report, "Hydrologic Alteration and Its Ecological Effects in the Henry's Fork Watershed Upstream of St. Anthony," is available in the HFF library. Rob Van Kirk was staff research director for the HFF for several years in the 1990s.

Stream flow in the Henry's Fork watershed is altered by three storage reservoirs and numerous diversions. We assessed hydrologic alteration and its ecological consequences on the main stem Henry's Fork upstream of St. Anthony and on the entire length of its largest tributary, Fall River, over water years 1972 through 2002. We divided the study streams into 10 reaches based on the location of reservoirs, major diversions, return flow, and unregulated tributaries. Hydrologic conditions in each reach were represented by one of the 10 stream gage stations currently operating in the watershed. We calculated natural flow by adding upstream change in storage, diversions, and reservoir evaporation to regulated flow. We then compared regulated and natural flow using the Indicators of Hydrologic Alteration methodology and the percent deviation of regulated daily flow from natural. We defined annual alteration as the water-year mean of the absolute value of daily alterations and watershed-averaged alteration as the mean of annual alteration over all stream reaches, weighted by reach length. The degree of alteration was assessed by determining deviations from median natural flow that fell within observed ranges of natural flow.

Regulation at all three storage reservoirs resulted in lower winter flows and higher late season flows downstream than under natural conditions. These effects were greatest in Henry's Lake Outlet, where winter flows were often less than 20 percent of natural and late summer flows could be two orders of magnitude greater than natural. Unregulated inflow from groundwater-dominated tributaries moderated the effect of alteration due to Henry's Lake and Island Park dams with distance downstream. Flows in the lowest reach of Fall River and the Henry's Fork below Fall River were affected primarily by irrigation diversion, which resulted in low late summer flows but not in

substantial alteration of peak flow characteristics and overall hydrograph shape. A short reach of Fall River affected by the Marysville hydroelectric plant diversion experienced significantly decreased flows throughout the water year.

Average annual alterations ranged from less than 10 percent on most of Fall River and in the Henry's Fork upstream of Island Park Reservoir to 100 percent on Henry's Lake Outlet. Natural range of variability in the watershed averaged about 25 percent during the winter, 65 percent during early summer, and 40 percent during late summer. Based on these observed ranges of variability in natural flow, we determined that alteration was extreme in Henry's Lake Outlet and high between Island Park Dam and the Buffalo River and in the Marysville power plant reach. Alteration was moderate between the Buffalo and Warm rivers and below Fall River and low everywhere else. Alteration in most reaches and in the watershed as a whole was a decreasing function of annual watershed discharge. Watershed-average alteration was low in 14 of the 31 water years studied and high or extreme in 11 of the 31 years.

Hydrologic alteration negatively affects winter survival of juvenile rainbow trout between Island Park Dam and Warm River and probably also in the power plant reach of Fall River. Low late summer flows may result in warm water temperatures and associated effects in lower Fall River and in the St. Anthony area. Where riparian areas naturally exist in the watershed, hydrologic regimes are sufficiently close to natural to maintain riparian and floodplain processes except on Henry's Lake Outlet. The hydrologic regime in the Outlet was altered sufficiently to negatively affect nearly every aspect of aquatic, riparian and floodplain ecology. Although desirable resources could benefit from hydrologic restoration below Henry's Lake and Island Park dams, meaningful reductions in hydrologic alterations cannot be made under existing legal and physical infrastructures. Although not optimal for all aquatic and riparian resources in the watershed, current management provides numerous benefits to diverse users while maintaining floodplain and riparian processes in the lower watershed and low hydrologic alteration throughout most of the watershed in average to wet years.



Visit the HFF Web site at www.henrysfork.org



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Raffle Winners Announced at HF Day

The HFF offers a big thank-you to all of the participants in our Henry's Fork Day fundraising raffles. The lucky winners, whose names were drawn during the Saturday evening festivities, are:

Jim Utterbeck of Helena, MT. Jim and his guest will be the guests of Paul Roos of Paul Roos Outfitters, Missoula, MT for six days of guided fishing on western Montana's great streams while staying at a fabulous resort.

Scott Patton, San Rafael, CA. Scott, who ordered his tickets on-line, won the ClackaCraft LP15 drift boat and deluxe trailer. The boat was provided by ClackaCraft of Idaho Falls.

Paul Dremann, Salt Lake City, UT. Paul was present to pick up this dream package from The Orvis Company, a complete fly fishing outfit that includes a T-3 rod, CFO reel, Pro-guide vest and waders, Henry's Fork wading shoes, line, leader and tippet material.

Congratulations to the winners, and again thanks to all donors and to those who participated in our raffle drawings.

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Yes, I support the work of the Henry's Fork Foundation. Accept my contribution for your efforts to understand, restore and protect the outstanding aesthetic, fishery and wildlife qualities of the Henry's Fork River basin.

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Ashton, ID 83420

Memorial contributions were received in honor of Pat Mataisz, Louis Trager and Bud Gonja.

HFF Board News

Three new members have been appointed to the HFF board of directors. They are Bill Hackett, Ogden, UT; Jim Mathias, Blackfoot, ID; and Bob Rosenberg, Kentfield, CA.

Bill Hackett is returning to the board after having served from 1993-98. During his previous tenure he was chair of the research committee. Bill is a professional geologist, now mostly retired. He is a former ISU professor and INEEL scientist. He and his wife Debbie, a physician, are returning to the Intermountain West after several years in Hershey, PA.

Jim Mathias is retired from Basic American Foods in Blackfoot. He is currently president of the Snake River Cutthroats Trout Unlimited chapter and serves on the board of the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Jim is an active organizer for the Eastern Idaho Fly Tying and Fly Fishing Expo in Idaho Falls every year.

Bob Rosenberg is an associate clinical professor at the University of California, San Francisco School of Dentistry, and an active member of numerous professional organizations. He also volunteers for several nonprofit organizations in the Bay Area, and is the co-author of a book on volunteerism. He and his wife Susan have a summer home in Island Park.

Board members approved for a second term include Henry B. Ellis, El Paso, TX; Ann P. Murray, Nashville, TN; and Gene Quinn, Weston, CT.

Four members ended their terms of service this year: Alan Bridwell, Rexburg, ID; Dr. Edwin House, Pocatello, ID; Bob Springmeyer, Salt Lake City, UT; and Hank Swan, Lyme NH. Retiring members were recognized at the annual meeting on June 19 at Elk Creek Ranch.

HFF 20th Anniversary Merchandise Celebrate with us and receive a gift in return...

Donors who give a cumulative total of \$2,000 or more during calendar year 2004 will receive a Sage 590-4 SLT rod: This nine foot, five weight, four piece rod is perfect for the Henry's Fork. It is inscribed and numbered in honor of the Foundation's 20th anniversary — *Henry's Fork Foundation 20th Anniversary (1984-2004)*. There are many reasons to be, or to become, a major donor to the HFF; in this anniversary year we are providing a little extra incentive to you to give. Thank you for your generosity.

Increase your giving or sign up a friend and receive a 20th anniversary ceramic camp mug. This is a good way to show your commitment to the Henry's Fork and receive something in return. If you currently contribute at the \$35 level (individual membership), step up to the next level (\$50) or higher to receive one of these mugs, OR send a contribution at the individual level along with the name of a friend you know will enjoy a HFF membership and we will send you a mug.



The Patagonia R2 vest is an anniversary present you may want to reward yourself or a special someone with.



The vest is embroidered with a special 20th anniversary HFF logo, and is available in a variety of colors and in both men's and women's models. As part of our 20th anniversary special we are charging \$75 for a vest, a substantial savings over the usual retail price for this item. Please call the HFF office or visit our website for available sizes and colors, and remember that we can order any size or color listed in the current Patagonia catalog.

**See all of the HFF retail items on our Web site
www.henrysfork.org.**

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