



2018

Bighorn River and Reservoir Update



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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



FWP Fisheries Management Objective

- Provide for the Stewardship of the Bighorn River and Reservoir fisheries while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations.
- ❑ Bighorn River World-Class Wild Trout Fishery.
 - ❑ Goal maintain fishery as a world-class fishery
 - ❑ Flow recommendations
 - ❑ Habitat enhancing activities
 - ❑ Regulations
- ❑ Bighorn Reservoir
 - ❑ Goal maintain diverse fishery
 - ❑ Stock walleye and rainbow trout
 - ❑ Substantial wild sauger fishery
 - ❑ Wild bass, brown trout, ling, catfish, crappie, perch

FWP Fisheries Tools



Bighorn River Electrofishing

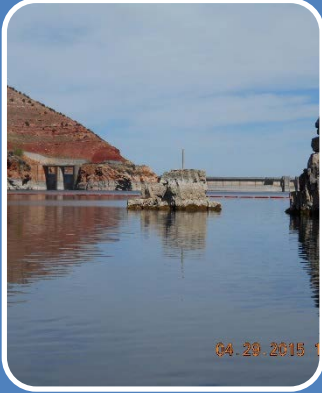
- Bighorn FAS (Upper) Spring
- Mallards FAS (Lower) Fall



Products

- Fish per mile (abundance)
- Size Structure (recruitment)
- Body Condition
- Fish health

FWP Fisheries Tools



Bighorn Reservoir Electrofishing and Netting

- Ok-A-Beh spring walleye sampling
- Reservoir-wide gill netting



Products

- Fish per net (abundance)
- Size Structure (recruitment)
- Body Condition
- Fish health

Bighorn River



Side Channel at 1,500 CFS
DROUGHT

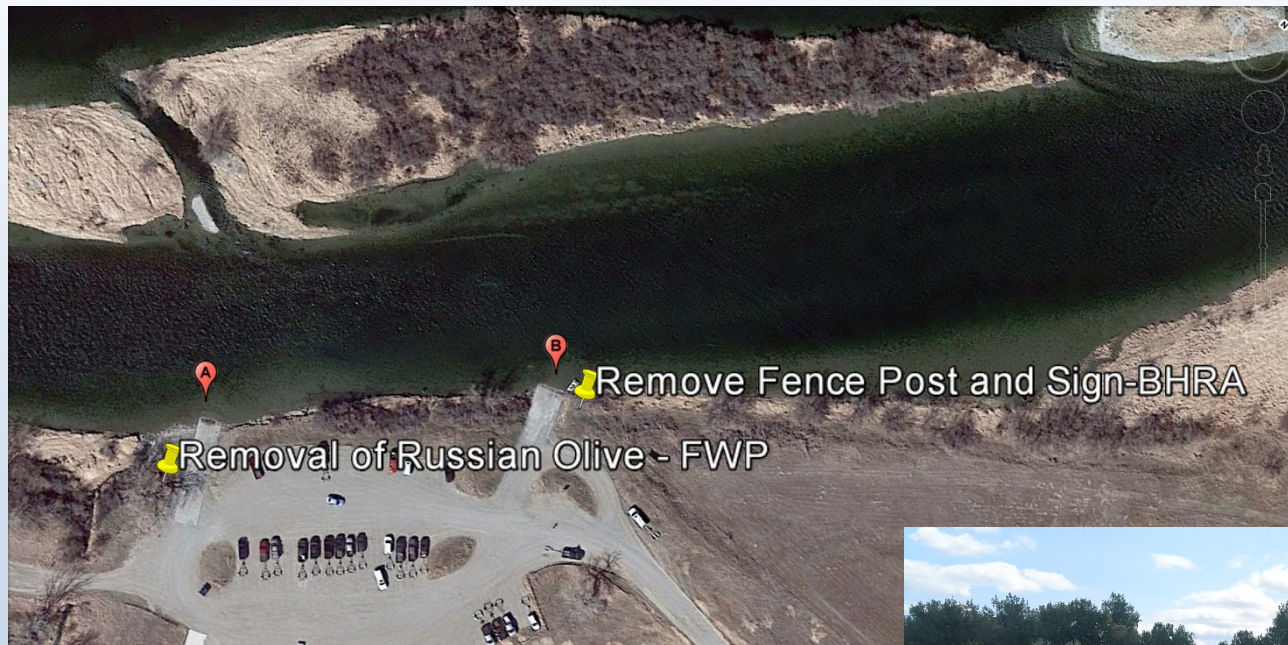
Side Channel at 1,900 CFS
LESS DROUGHT





BIGHORN FLOW RECOMENDATIONS

- Flushing flows 6,000 to 8,000 CFS
- Best Fisheries Flow - Greater than 2,500 cfs
- Preferred Minimum Fisheries Flow – 2,500 cfs has maintained the strong Bighorn Fishery
- Water Savings Minimum Flow – 2,000 to 2,500 cfs
- Absolute Minimum Flow - 1,500 to 2,000 cfs



Removed Tree and opened up a bay

/19/2016 lat 45.417225



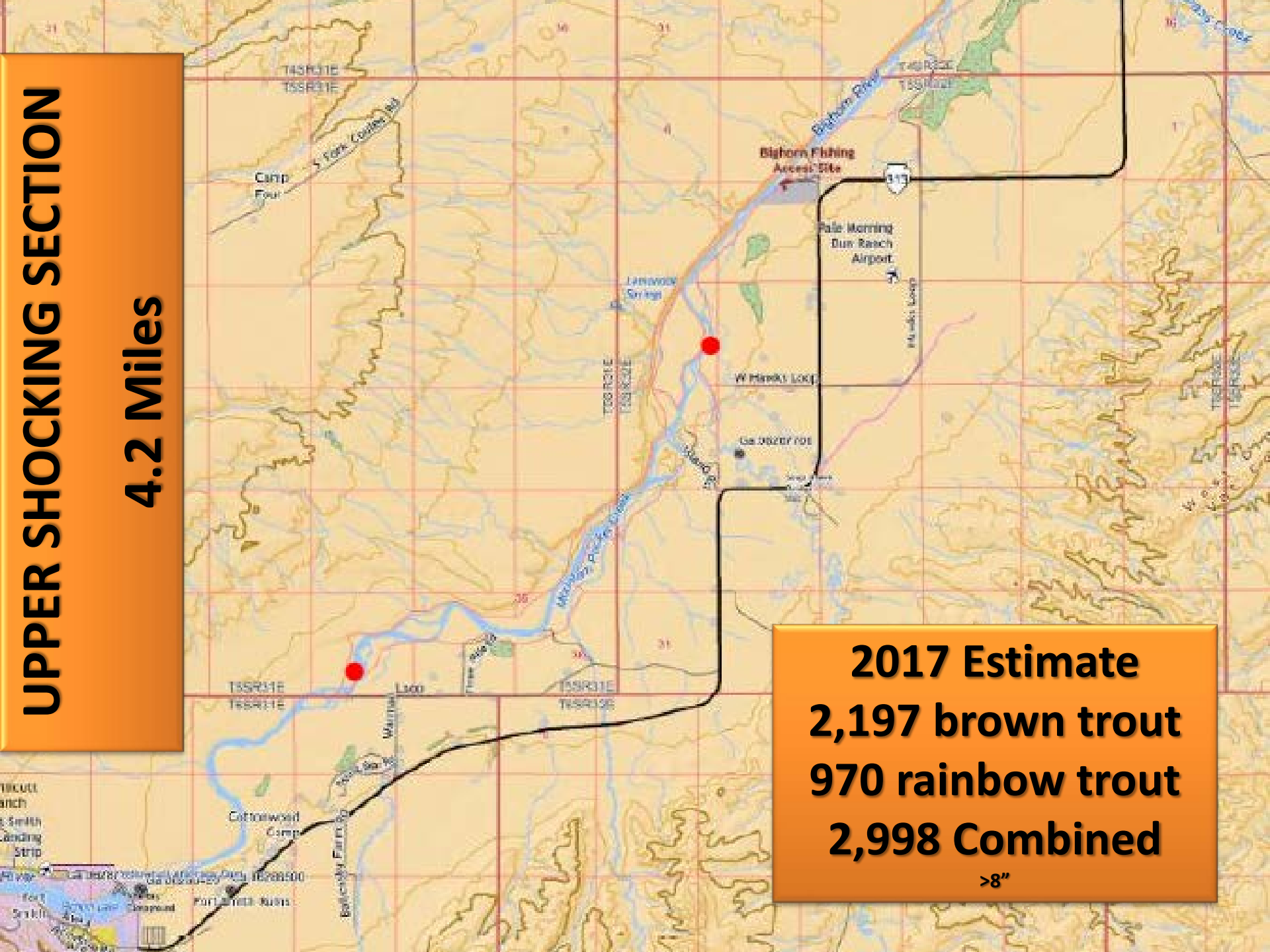


River Population Estimates



UPPER SHOCKING SECTION

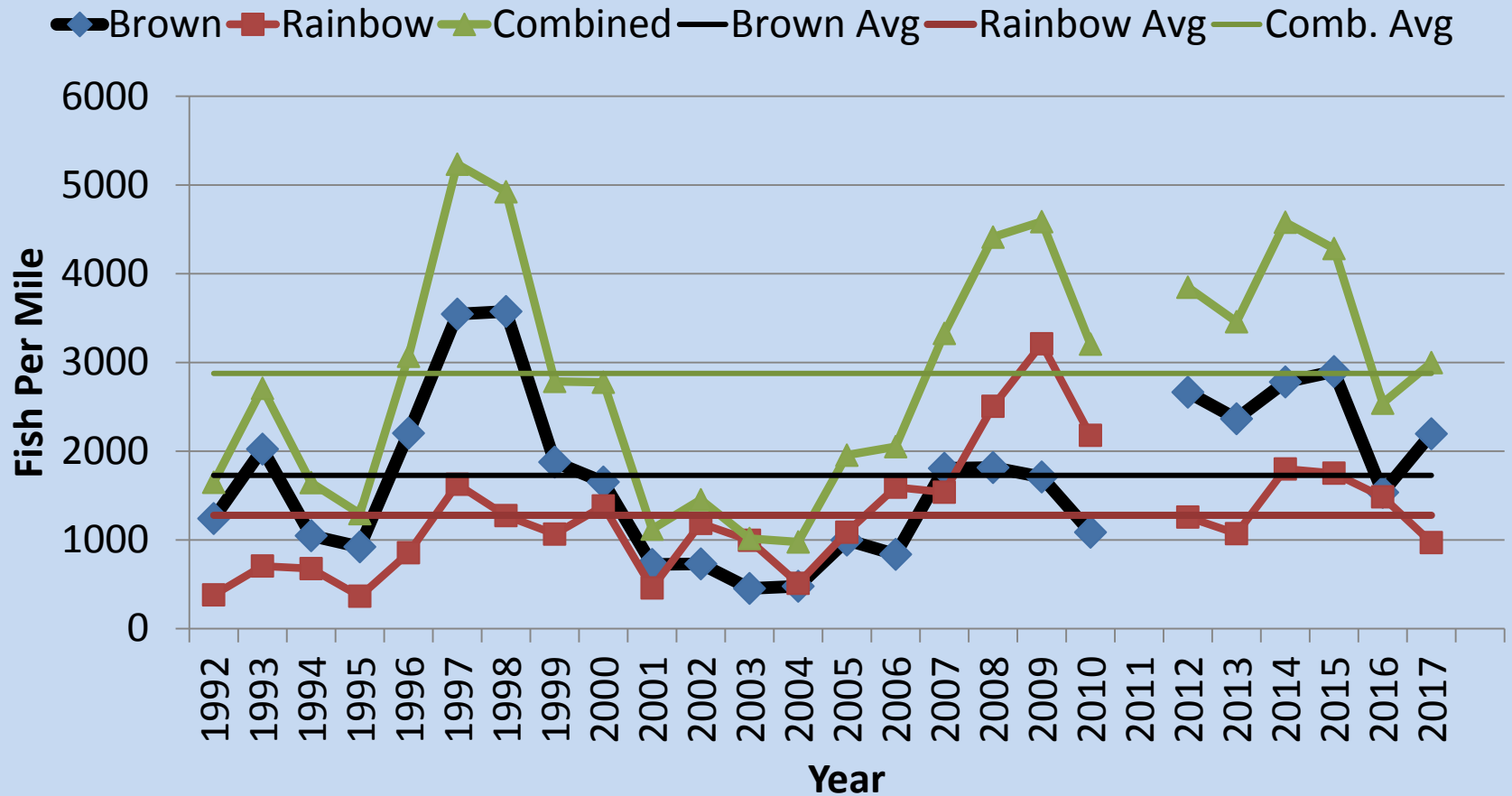
4.2 Miles

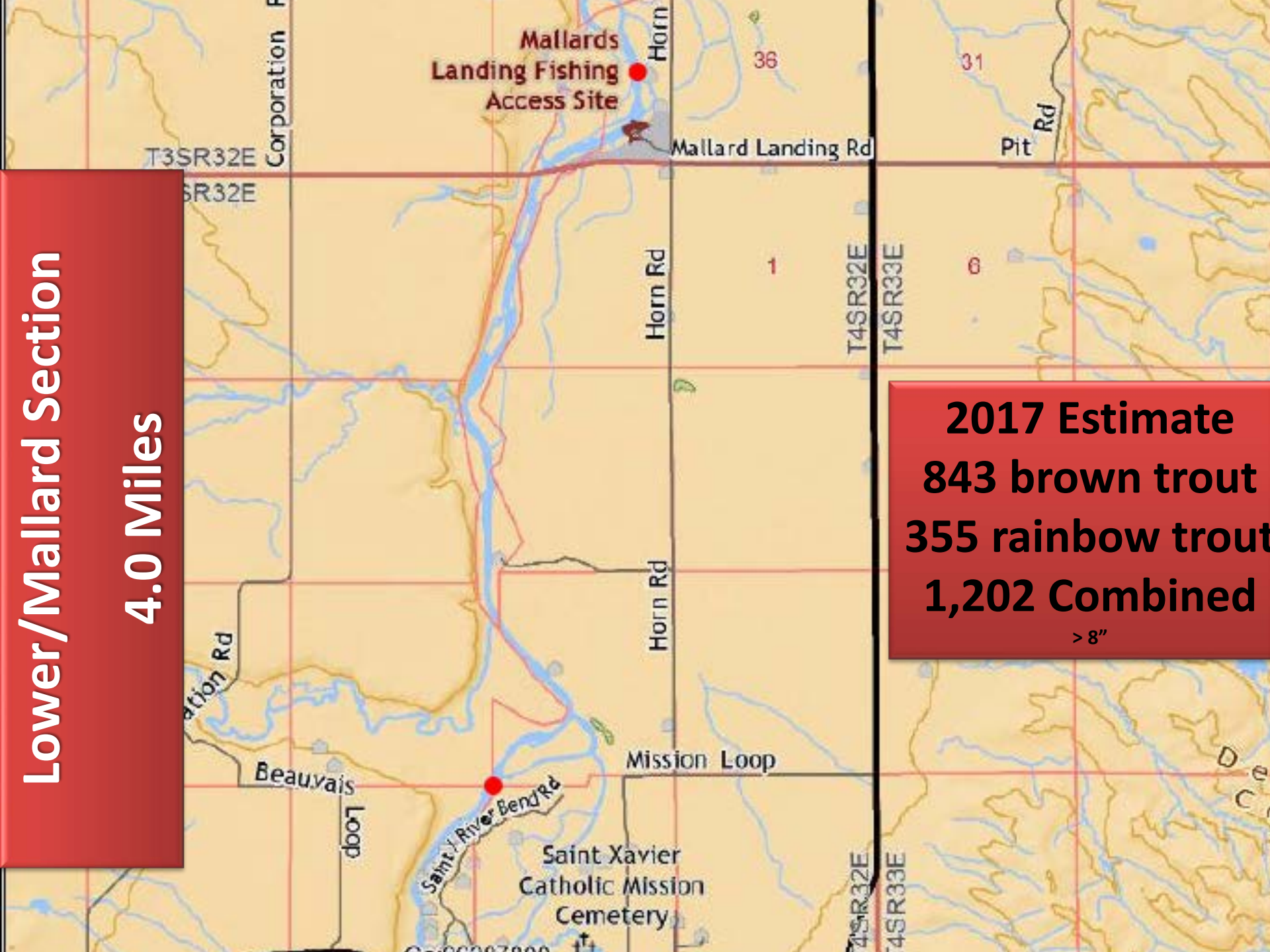


2017 Estimate
2,197 brown trout
970 rainbow trout
2,998 Combined
>8"



Bighorn River **Upper** Trout Section Population Estimate for Trout Greater Than Eight Inches





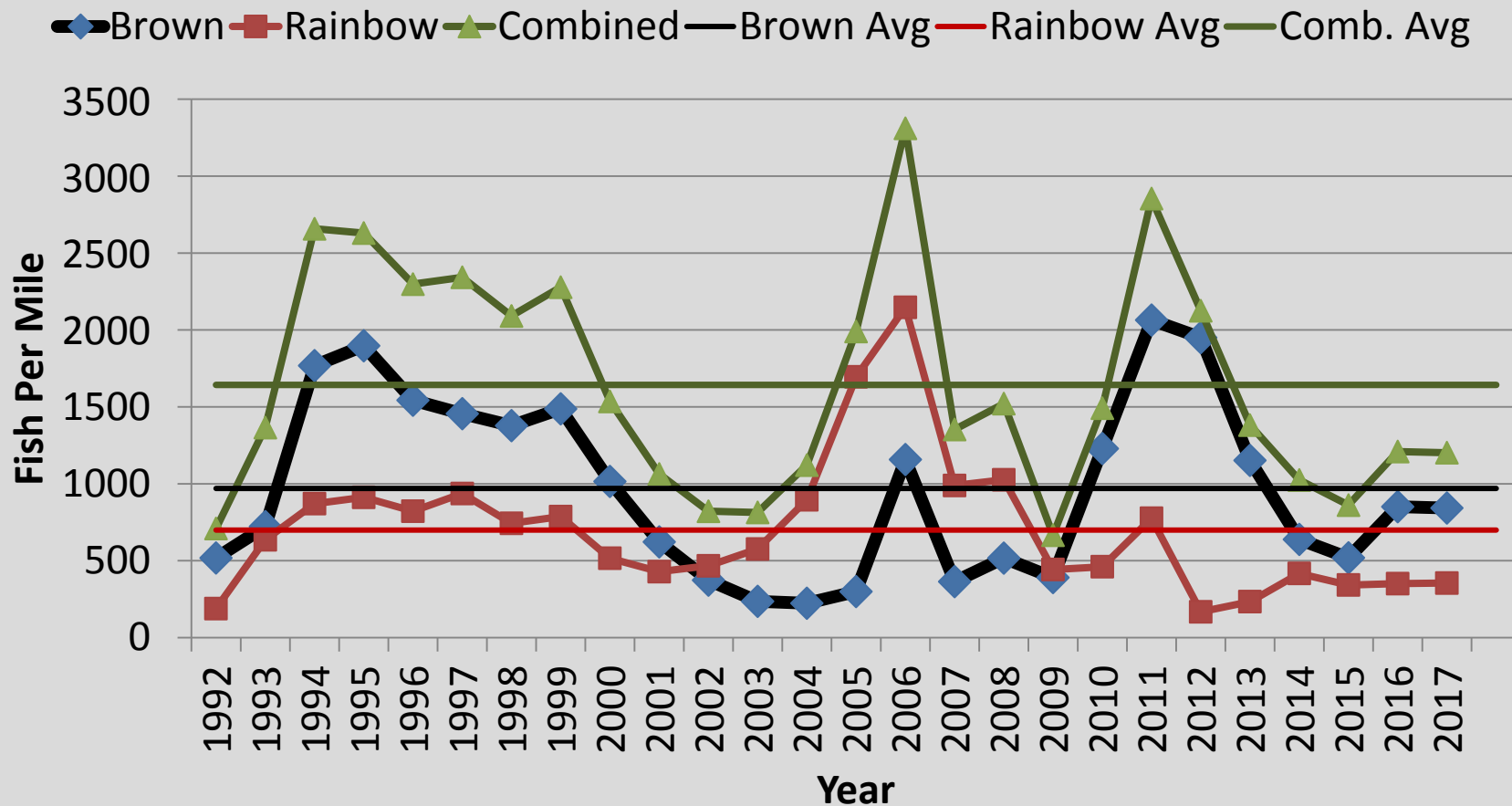
Lower/Mallard Section

4.0 Miles

2017 Estimate
843 brown trout
355 rainbow trout
1,202 Combined
> 8"



Bighorn River **Mallards** Trout Section Population Estimate for Trout Greater Than Eight Inches





Bighorn Reservoir Fishery

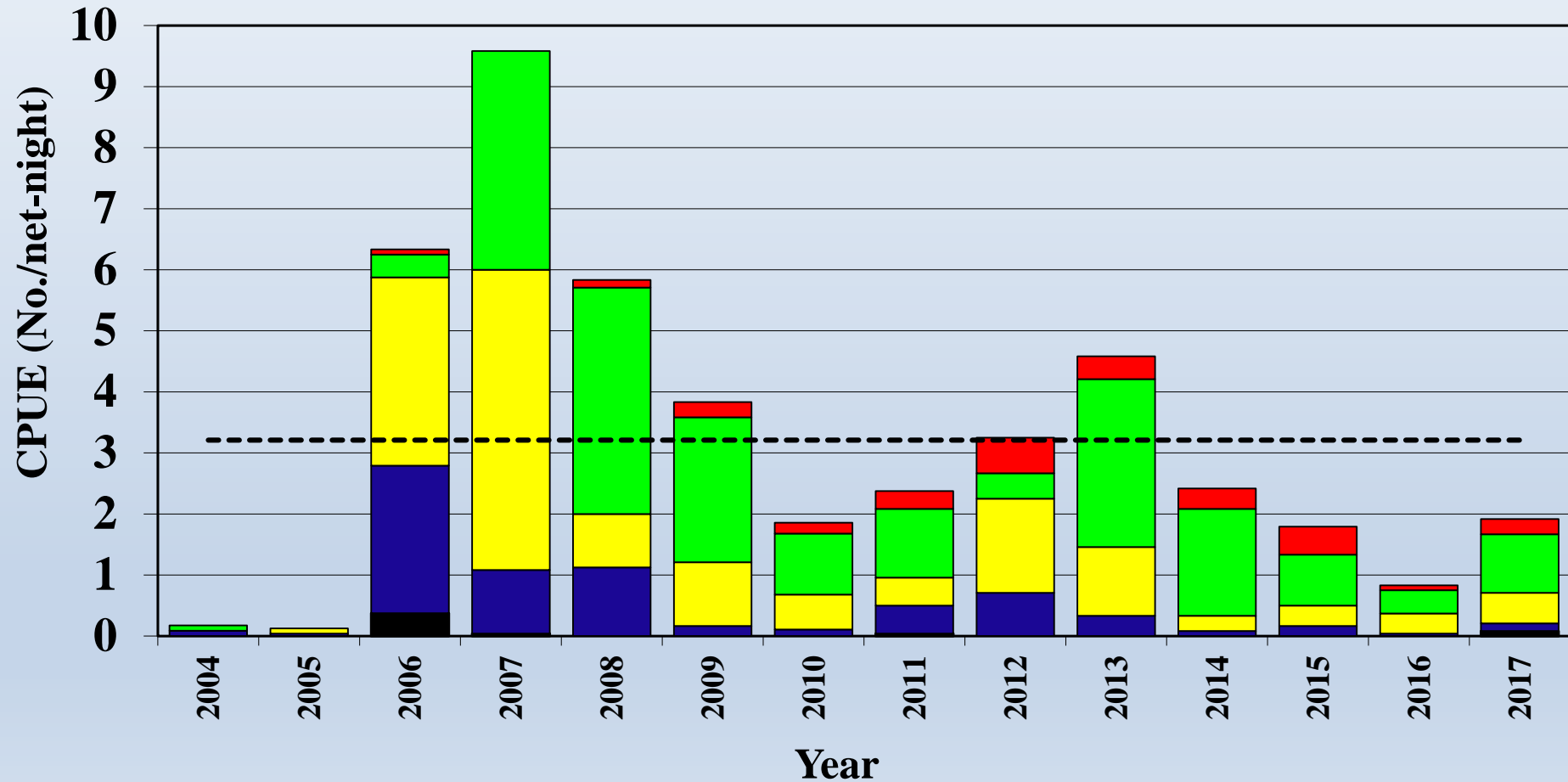


Sauger Catch Rate by Size Category

■ Sub Stock < 8"
■ Quality 12" to 15"
■ Memorable 20" to 25"

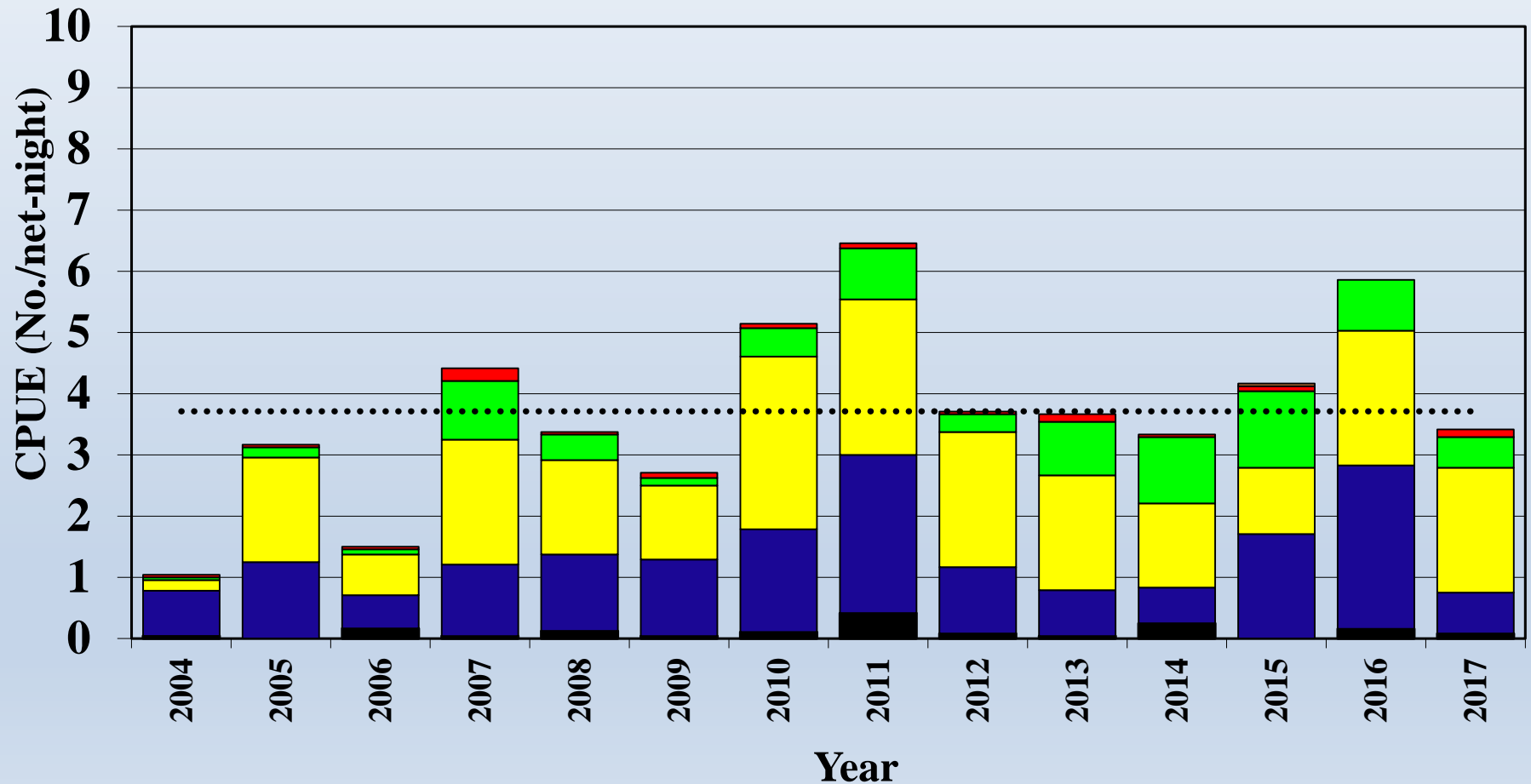
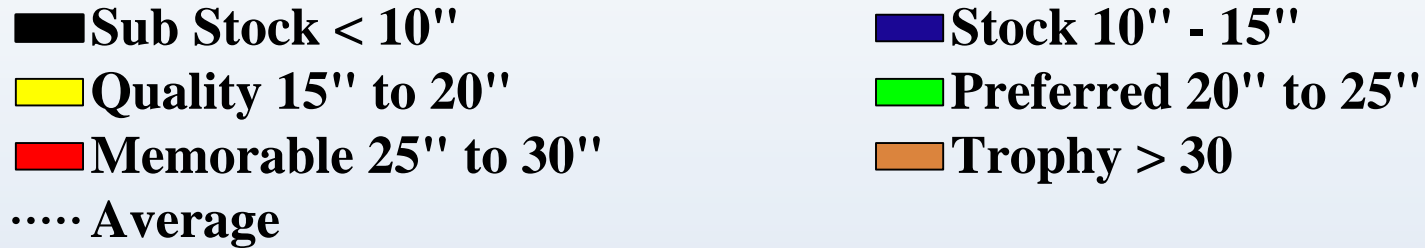
■ Stock 8" to 12"
■ Preferred 15" to 20"
■ Trophy > 25"

--- Avg.





Walleye Catch Rate by Size Category



A man wearing a white cowboy hat, sunglasses, and a white t-shirt is holding a large catfish in a river. The background shows a river with trees and a clear blue sky.

Thank-you Happy Fishing

Ken Frazer

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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 5



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Earl Radonski

Fisheries Crew Leader

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 5



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