

## **HEBGEN RESERVOIR ACTIVITIES UPDATE: STILL LOOKING AT FACTORS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY BE LIMITING WILD RAINBOW TROUT RECRUITMENT TO THE HEBGEN FISHERY**

Travis Lohrenz, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 100 Prairie Way # 6, Ennis, MT 59729,  
tlohrenz@mt.gov

Seldom does a lake or reservoir environment contain sufficient spawning and rearing habitat to support a self-sustaining fishery and maintenance of the sport fishery is achieved through stocking. Hebgen Reservoir, however, is rare among reservoir systems. Numerous tributaries within the Hebgen system provide high quality spawning and rearing habitat. Brown trout *Salmo trutta* have been self-sustaining since 1956, and spawning runs of wild rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) occur in nine Hebgen tributaries. In 2002 a graduate research project

investigated tributary potential for recruitment of wild rainbow trout. Results of the study suggested that quantity and quality of spawning and rearing habitat was not likely limiting wild rainbow trout production, but other factors in the tributaries and reservoir may be affecting recruitment to the adult population. Therefore, upon recommendations of the 2002 study, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in conjunction with the Gallatin National Forest initiated investigations to identify other factors within tributaries and the reservoir that may be influencing wild rainbow trout survival and recruitment to the adult population in the Hebgen Basin.