

EXPANDING MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES WITH BASELINE SURVEYS— YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT, BUT... YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROAT TROUT VS. FINESPOTTED CUTTHROAT TROUT IN THE SNAKE RIVER HEADWATERS

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A multi-year survey of the Snake River headwaters attempted to delineate the distribution of Yellowstone cutthroat trout and the closely-related Snake River fine-spotted cutthroat trout in the watershed by assigning individual fish to their respective subspecies based on their spotting patterns. Although most of the specimens had typical Yellowstone cutthroat trout features and a few trout appeared to be the classic fine-spotted form, numerous individuals exhibited an intermediate pattern that yielded equivocal classification. Results suggest that either the fine-spotted form is extremely rare upstream from Jackson Lake, or the predefined field classification criteria do not consistently distinguish between the two subspecies. However, several results unrelated to the original study objectives were obtained during the survey. Among these were: persistence of a Yellowstone cutthroat trout isolate population in

an intensely burned watershed; widespread distribution of mottled sculpins upstream from apparent barriers; and restricted distribution of non-native species, including brown trout and brook trout, despite the absence of barriers to upstream movement. Only limited anecdotal historical information exists with which to compare the current survey; yet these results indicate that systematic inventories of the occupied length of stream may yield additional management considerations beyond the scope of the original survey objectives.