

GEOGRAPHY AND FISHES OF THE SINKS DRAINAGES OF SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

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The Sinks Drainages are a collection of closed surface drainage basins in southeast Idaho consisting of five U.S. Geological Survey hydrologic cataloging units: Beaver-Camas (17040214), Medicine Lodge (17040215), Birch (17040216), Little Lost (17040217), and Big Lost (17040218), in order from east to west. The streams of these basins originate in the Pioneer, Lost River, Lemhi, and Centennial mountain ranges and flow generally east and south, eventually sinking into the fractured basalts of the Snake River Plain. Adjacent drainages with surface connections to major river systems are the Big and Little Wood, Salmon, and Henrys Fork in the Snake River basin, and the Red Rock in the upper Missouri River basin. Twenty-seven fish species and three hybrids have been documented in the Sinks Drainages. However, because the Sinks Drainage streams are isolated from these major river basins, the origin of their aquatic fauna is not clear. Stocking of nonnative fish species into Sinks Drainage streams began in the 19th century, further confounding the problem of determining the native fish assemblages of these streams. It is possible that bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), a federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act, and cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*), a state species of special concern, are native to at least some of the Sinks streams. Thus, refined knowledge of historical and current presence/absence of these species has important implications for management of fish and related resources in the Sinks Drainages.