



G P T S C

Fishing lines

March 2008

CLUB HAPPENINGS

MARCH 15 - CHILI FEED
12:30 p.m. MOOSE CLUB

JULY 12 PICNIC

AUGUST 2-3 OUTING

AUGUST 16 DERBY

AUGUST 30-31 OUTING

MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ ...

Greetings to all. As of this writing, it is very cold and winter still seems to have a way of having its grip on us. I hope you are all keeping warm and thinking of those days of summer which are not that far off. When we had our last meeting, we found that we were still short of e-board members. I would like to personally thank some people for stepping forward and filling those positions. It is very hard in this busy world to also give up your free time on nights and weekends some times to help the club out. Colleen Nosbusch has agreed to be the newsletter chair and Kevin Sehr has agreed to be president elect for the year. I also would like to thank Al Nosbusch for all the work he did in getting people for the other board positions. It takes a lot of time and effort to do this for the club and it is very much appreciated.

As we look forward to the summer weather, fishing, outings, the annual salmon derby and the fun times, remember it takes a lot of people to make this all happen for the club. I am not just talking about the members who help with the hosting and working at these events but also the rest of the members who participate. It is very rewarding to those who put forth the effort of working

E-board

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these events when they see lots of people show up and enjoying themselves and having fun with the activities. I encourage all of you if you haven't taken part in some of the past outings etc., to make an effort to make it to at least one of the events this summer. I guarantee you that you will enjoy yourselves and hopefully you will want to come to more of them.

I am not a predictor of the future but sincerely hope that we get lots of snow out in Montana the rest of this winter and that the runoff is at an all time high. As we all know, the lake is low and the salmon outlook is not the greatest at this time. We can only hope that it is at least as good as last year and gets better in the near future. In the meantime, we need to adjust to what we have and make the most of it. Remember that the fishing is always great, it is just the catching that is sometimes a little tough.

Please take a good look through the newsletter and make a special note of the calendar of events that are scheduled for this year. The e-board is trying its best to keep the club alive and well and I hope you are looking forward to the salmon fishing this season as much as I am. I am probably not the best salmon fisherman out on the water but I certainly have as much fun as anyone else out there and some of the memories I have out there are the best. I would bet that there are not too many of you have a memory of falling out of the boat while netting a salmon---kind of scary at the time but afterward it did provide many hours of entertainment for people like the "Bald Eagle" ---to me this is what it is all about and that is fun and memories. Well, I have been rambling on here for a while and you are probably thinking---what

has he been saying other than that, rambling. I hope, if nothing else, this gets you to thinking about summer, fishing and fun on that lake again.

Until next time, stay warm and be sure to check out the activities coming up, especially the chili feed in March.

Terry Focke (Eliminator)

2008 Great Planers Derby (earlier date)

This year's club Derby will be the 22nd annual. This is a special event and the e-board is committed to making this another great opportunity to share our mission to enjoy our cold water fishery of ND. It will be held at Lake Sakakawea State Park at the main shelter on August 16th, 2008. That's right it will be a week earlier. We will be using the main boat ramp at the park.

Please consider helping in some way to promote this 22nd annual event. Monte Babeck will be co-chairman with me this year and as always we need several volunteers to run the derby and your help this year would be appreciated. Also you may have some ideas on how to make this year's derby special and I ask that you share them with myself or a club e-board member. I can be reached at 701-319-1267.

This year's low water will again make the derby management a challenge but with the help of John Tunge and the staff at the park we hope to make this year's event enjoyable.

As in past years we have great sponsors for this event and as we go out in to the community to ask for their kind donations

for this years derby I hope that you would take the opportunity to thank them every chance that you can.

Blair Ihmels (Tool Crib)
Derby Chairman

2007 SALMON REPORT RESULTS

In 2007, only 98 coupons were submitted, which was well below average, but that was to be expected as the number and size of salmon caught were also down from previous years. Because almost all of the coupons were submitted in the months, August and September, I decided to depart from my normal monthly summaries of the past and provide only a year-end summary.

As an incentive to encourage anglers to submit coupons, the Great Planers Trout and Salmon Club sponsored a prize drawing from all of the coupons submitted. The drawing, which was made at the Annual Winter Meeting of the Club, found **Tom Hamkins**, of Bismarck, fifty dollars richer for sending in his coupons. Congratulations to Tom and thanks to all of the anglers who took the time to fill out coupons and submit them.

Time of day for prime fish catching is always important to any angler. As in the past, the time between 9am and noon produced the greatest number of salmon, 35% or 33 fish. As I have speculated in the past, I am not sure if more people only fish during the cooler more comfortable hours of the day or maybe the boat traffic of the morning disperses the fish and makes catching more difficult in the afternoon but the odds continue to favor a morning bite. The hours of noon to 3pm produced 27 or 28% of the fish and 6am to 9am came in third at 24% or

23 salmon. The remaining hours of the day only produced 12 coupons.

Where were the majority of the fish caught because when there is a limited number of salmon in the system, an angler needs to really target areas where they have the best opportunity for success? In 2007, the anglers catching salmon fished north from Government Bay to Deadman's Bay. Seventy seven or 79% of the salmon were netted in that area. The Face of the Dam came in a distant second with 10 salmon or 10%.

The average lure depth was 71.4 feet and anglers were running these lures in an average of 98.4 feet of water.

The full-bodied squid was the best tackle producer and caught 36% or 35 salmon. The squish (needlefish) and cutbait came in second and third at 22 fish (23%) and 19 fish (20%). The other presentations of crankbaits, spoons, and flies took a total of 21 salmon between them.

Blue, green, and white, in that order, were the three most productive tackle colors. Blue was the choice of 49% or 42 salmon, while green caught 14 or 16% and white at 11 accounted for 13% of the salmon caught.

Seventy three of the salmon were caught on a set-up that included a flasher. The flasher color matched that of the tackle color with blue being the front runner at 41 or 60% and the green flasher was a very distant second with 11 or 16%, while white rounded out the top three attractor colors with nine for 13%.

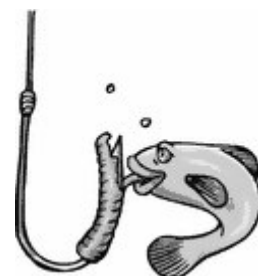
There was good news in the summer of 2007 in that the average salmon weighed 5.4 pounds which was up from last year's average weight of 3.7 pounds.

Just like the past years, when you compare data going back to 1989 for the months of August and September, the prime salmon fishing months for many anglers, it is somewhat discouraging to look at last year's numbers even though the average weight did rebound some. In 1989 the average size fish reported for the year was 6.0 pounds. 1990 saw this dip slightly to 5.8 pounds and then it spiraled downward to an all-time low of 4.3 pounds in 1991, the same year we saw Lake Sakakawea experience a record low of 1815.0 feet in May. For the next three years the salmon weight fluctuated between 4.4 and 4.6 pounds. This, in all likelihood, was the result of the massive smelt die-off the Lake experienced due to the loss of the cold water habitat. 1995 saw a reversal of the trend and because we saw a refilling of the reservoir and a return of the smelt, our average weight made almost a one pound increase in one year from 4.4 to 5.3 pounds. The good days returned and the annual weights continued to increase and finally peaked at a 10.0 pound average in the year 2000. But unfortunately as we have seen a return of diminishing water levels on Lake Sakakawea, the average catch weights are also diminishing. From 2000 to 2001 we saw a drop of more than two pounds and from 2001 to 2002 another drop of a pound and a half and from 2002 to 2003 a one pound drop. The 2000 peak of 10.0 pounds shrunk to 4.7 pounds in 2005 and 3.7 pounds in 2006. That's a reduction of almost 60% in just six years. Finally the most revealing indicator of the effect of the low lake levels as they relate to salmon development is the size of the fish caught. In year 2000, 78% of the salmon caught weighed eight or more pounds. As the lake level dropped so did the salmon size. 2001 saw only 53% of the salmon weighing eight or more pounds. In

2002 it was 21% and that percentage dropped from 78% in 2000 to just 10% in 2003 and a meager 3% in 2004. Years 2005 and 2006 did not have a report coupon with a salmon more than eight pounds. In 2007 we again saw eight pound salmon being caught. Last summer 17 salmon weighing more than eight pounds were reported and that is 17% of the total number of salmon caught. While it didn't match the 78% of 2000, it did represent the highest percentage since 2002. Even though the lake level is critically low and the primary forage base, smelt, for the salmon is almost nonexistent there was an increase in size of fish caught. Representatives from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department are speculating that the healthier sized fish might have been the result of the salmon converting from smelt to cisco as a forage base. Will next year's cisco's be off the right size and number to again bridge that forage gap? Only time will tell but let's hope so.

The 2008 season will be here before we know it and hopefully what has been provided will provide you with, at least, part of your game plan for the summer. Get out there and make the most of it, enjoy your times outdoors, watch for tagged salmon and turn the heads into the Game and Fish and finally fill out those coupons and continue sending them in.

Jack Long (Skip Jack)



PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Well Folks 2007 is behind us and we are looking ahead, the arrival of 2008 means the Salmon clubs annual meeting, the election of officers, and a new soft water fishing season. As you might remember in past years when I was the program chairman I had a tendency to ramble on about stuff. Now that I have been re-elected you will have to bare with me again. I'll start off by telling about up coming club events. First to start things off will be the spring Chili feed. This will be held Saturday March 15th at the Bismarck Moose Lodge starting about 12:30, we will hopefully have a short program and a couple

of speakers but nothing too serious. Next, new this year the weekend of July 12th we are going to try a Family potluck, picnic, BBQ, there will be no weigh in or prizes just an afternoon/evening of games and fun. Rumor has it that there might even be some stiff competition with " MINNOW RACES ". More details will follow later. Following on August 2nd and 3rd then August 30th and 31st will be the dates for this summers picnic boils and weigh ins. As always new and help are always welcome. Thanks for now and hope to see you at these events. Think Spring.

Bryce Andersen (Captain Carp)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ryan Persoon of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks will join us at the chili feed for an update on the salmon fishery in South Dakota.

NEWSLETTER NEWS

It's no secret that fisher peoples have long been keenly attuned to advances in the technologies dedicated to fishing. Well, GPTSC has now taken another step into the modern world. For the first time many of you are now looking at the first Club newsletter delivered via the internet.

Last year the Club spent nearly \$600 on newsletter printing, postage and the like. This is money that could be put to better uses, besides which many of our members have expressed a preference for an

electronic newsletter. Those of you who are still getting your newsletter in paper form via snail mail, it's probably because we haven't yet gotten an email address for you. You can help this process by sending us your name and e-mail address at acnosbusch@hotmail.com. Any of you who have address changes etc, or would like to submit articles for the newsletter can use the same address.

Al Nosbusch (Bald Eagle)

I wish to register my family in the Great Planers Trout and Salmon Club
\$15 is enclosed for annual membership dues.

Total Enclosed:\$_____

Date:_____

Name:_____

Spouse:_____

Street:_____

Phone:_____

City:_____

State/Zip:_____

Marine Radio Handle:_____

Email Address:_____

Mail To: Great Planers Trout and Salmon Club—P.O. Box 1972 Bismarck, ND 58502-1972