

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <[commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 23, 2024 12:37 PM  
**To:** [commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org)  
**Subject:** Re: Hi!

Will do.

On Thu, Apr 18, 2024 at 3:19 PM FWP Commissioner Region 3 <[commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org)> wrote:  
I just tried to leave you a voicemail but your voicemail is full. Give me a call when you get a chance, I wanted to visit about an issue that is not on the agenda.

Susan Kirby Brooke  
Region 3 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0460 [commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org)

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2024 8:29 PM  
**To:** Wickman, Erik  
**Subject:** Re: FW: [EXTERNAL] Re: Legal Update Meetings  
**Attachments:** image001.png; image002.png; image003.png; image004.png; image005.png;  
image004.png; image003.png; image001.png; image002.png; image005.png

I'll be available on the 16th

On Fri, Apr 26, 2024, 5:14 PM Wickman, Erik <[Erik.Wickman@mt.gov](mailto:Erik.Wickman@mt.gov)> wrote:

As of tonight, the May 13<sup>th</sup> legal update now is full (Brooke, Tabor, and Burrows attending).

May 7<sup>th</sup> has one more slot (currently Cebull and Robinson) and May 16<sup>th</sup> is still wide open for takers.

Another reminder.....the work session via Zoom involving Fishing Regulations on the Missouri River between Toston and Canyon Ferry Reservoir is still scheduled for 5-7pm on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully,

~E

**Erik Wickman** | *Executive Office Manager*

Headquarters | Director's Office

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Office: (406) 444-7826 | Cell: (406) 594-8921





**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 2 <[commissionerregion2@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion2@mtfwp.org)>

**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2024 5:09 PM

**To:** [commissionerregion1@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion1@mtfwp.org)

**Cc:** Wickman, Erik <[Erik.Wickman@mt.gov](mailto:Erik.Wickman@mt.gov)>; FWP COMMISSIONERS <[FWP\\_COMMISSIONERS@mt.gov](mailto:FWP_COMMISSIONERS@mt.gov)>; Clerget, Sarah <[sclerget@mt.gov](mailto:sclerget@mt.gov)>; Rechkoff, Kevin <[Kevin.Rechkoff@mt.gov](mailto:Kevin.Rechkoff@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Legal Update Meetings

May 13th works for me.

Jeff

**Jeff Burrows**

*Region 2 Commissioner*

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

P.O. Box 200701

Helena, MT 59620-0701

Ph: (406) 438-1148

[commissionerregion2@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion2@mtfwp.org)

On Apr 25, 2024, at 11:23 AM, FWP Commissioner Region 1 <[commissionerregion1@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion1@mtfwp.org)> wrote:

Erik

Of those choices I can only do May 13

Pat Tabor

Vice Chairman

FWP Commission

On Thu, Apr 25, 2024, 5:16 AM Wickman, Erik <[Erik.Wickman@mt.gov](mailto:Erik.Wickman@mt.gov)> wrote:

Good morning, commissioners,

I have scheduled 3 one-hour Legal Update Meetings for the month of May, in preparation for the June 20 Commission Meeting.

These are the dates available:

**Tuesday, May 7      10:30 am**

**Monday, May 13     9:30 am**

**Thursday, May 16    11:00 am**

These will be via Zoom, and those links will be added to the invites once I have the meeting slots filled.

Please advise if you are available for any and/or all of these dates and I will get you into the meeting of your choice.

Festival seating on these...first come, first served. 😊

Respectfully,

~E

**Erik Wickman** | *Executive Office Manager*

Headquarters | Director's Office

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[\[facebook.com\]](#) [\[instagram.com\]](#) [\[youtube.com\]](#) [\[twitter.com\]](#)

<image001.png>

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 6:35 PM  
**To:** O'Connor, Erin  
**Subject:** Re: R7 May staff notes  
**Attachments:** image005.png; image004.png; image002.png; image006.png; image003.png; image001.jpg

Thank you for the update!

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Tue, May 14, 2024 at 8:49 AM O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)> wrote:

Good morning,

Attached is the latest news from Region 7's May management staff meeting.

Have a great week!



# MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR



**Erin O'Connor** | *Regional Office Manager*

Operations & Fiscal Services Division

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Region 7

Office: (406) 234-0912

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** Salvador Scrano <[sscrano@icloud.com](mailto:sscrano@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 2, 2024 8:12 AM  
**To:** [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)  
**Subject:** Re: Season structure proposal

Sorry I was vague. I was referring to the proposal that changes the season dates of mule deer, whitetail deer, and elk. It separates mule deer and whitetail seasons and elk seasons such that archery for all three species start Aug. 25th and end Sept. 30, mule deer rifle is Oct. 1-31, whitetail deer rifle is Nov. 1-30. The elk rifle season is Nov.1-30. No whitetail or elk hunting in Oct.

Sent from my iPhone

On May 1, 2024, at 7:04 PM, FWP Commissioner Region 7 <[commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)> wrote:

Can you tell which proposal you are referring to? Thank you.

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
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Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Sat, Apr 27, 2024 at 8:37 PM Salvador Scrano <[sscrano@icloud.com](mailto:sscrano@icloud.com)> wrote:

Dear Commissioner Lane,

I recently became aware of a proposal from a private group of individuals that has been submitted to FWP and the commission for consideration for the 2026-2028 season setting. I am writing you this email because I have concerns with this proposal and I was hoping for your prospective on the proposal.

Thank you,  
Sal Scrano  
Forsyth, MT

Sent from my iPhone



## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** Karrie Kahle <karrie@pcecmt.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 13, 2024 2:06 PM  
**To:** commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org  
**Subject:** Re: Wolf hunting and trapping season setting

Great, thank you so much Commissioner Lane! Let me get back to the group and see what might work.

Karrie

On Thu, Jun 13, 2024 at 1:04 PM FWP Commissioner Region 7 <[commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)> wrote:  
I might be able to make July 10-12 work.

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Thu, Jun 13, 2024 at 9:48 AM Karrie Kahle <[karrie@pcecmt.org](mailto:karrie@pcecmt.org)> wrote:  
Hello Commissioner Lane,

My name is Karrie Kahle and I am with Park County Environmental Council in Livingston. You have met with a group of us a few times before from over here in Region 3. We are a small coalition from PCEC, The Greater Yellowstone Coalition, National Parks Conservation Association and Bear Creek Council.

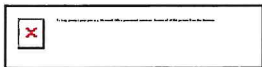
In preparation of the wolf hunting and trapping season setting coming up in August we wondered if you might have some time in July to sit down with us. We know summer gets busy for everyone so we thought that we would try to get something on the calendar early.

We can set up a Zoom meeting as we have done in the past if that would work for you. If you could give us some days in July that might work I can coordinate schedules on our end.

Thank you so much for your consideration,

Karrie Kahle

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**Karrie Kahle**  
Business & Community Partnerships  
Director



[406-222-0723](tel:406-222-0723) | [352-214-7646](tel:352-214-7646)  
[karrie@pcecmt.org](mailto:karrie@pcecmt.org)

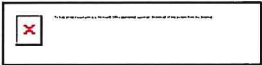
Park County Environmental Council  
she/her/hers



[www.pcecmnt.org](http://www.pcecmnt.org) [[pcecmnt.org](http://www.pcecmnt.org)]

[215 E. Lewis St #306, Livingston, MT 59047](#)  
[[google.com](http://google.com)]

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**Karrie Kahle**

Business & Community Partnerships Director  
Park County Environmental Council  
she/her/hers



[406-222-0723](tel:4062220723) | [352-214-7646](tel:3522147646)

[karrie@pcecmnt.org](mailto:karrie@pcecmnt.org)

[www.pcecmnt.org](http://www.pcecmnt.org) [[pcecmnt.org](http://www.pcecmnt.org)]

[215 E. Lewis St #306, Livingston, MT 59047](#)

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## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 17, 2024 10:52 AM  
**To:** Schmitz, Brad  
**Subject:** Re: Commission report for June meeting

Thank you, Brad!

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
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Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Mon, Jun 17, 2024 at 10:26 AM Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)> wrote:

Bill:

Here are a few items you can use in your report for next week's meeting. Use what you want.

BJS

Admin

- Working on zero-based budgeting process and fiscal year end details.
- Lots of calls/enquiries about paddlefish season. Updates on harvest numbers can be found on the FWP Region 7 Facebook page.
- Trying to finalize this fiscal year's Game Damage processes. Overall a lighter year for GD needs.

Access

- About 90% complete with Block Management re-enrollment: over 330 total contracts, 6 new so far, 5 have dropped.

- Had 9 Public Access Land Agreement projects/applications this spring (8 re-enrollments and 1 new). Including multi-year agreements there are a total of 15 PALA projects in the Region, 7 Elk Hunting Access Agreement applications forwarded to the Commission.
- Region 7 had 54 public submissions in the 'Thank a Landowner' online portal last fall.

## Enforcement

- Enforcement has been busy with paddlefish patrols and checking fishermen. No major issues to report.
- Continue to work with out of state wardens on return of evidence from numerous license fraud investigations.
- Wardens reported a lot of turkey hunters this spring.
- Taking a lot of calls on licensing questions and access with the license deadlines.

## Fisheries

- Eleven telemetered pallid sturgeon passed through the Intake Bypass Channel.
  - On June 12<sup>th</sup>, five pallid sturgeon within the Powder River, one near Locate (Hwy 12 Bridge), one between Powderville Bridge and Broadus (approximate Powder River mile 125), and three upstream of Broadus (river mile 150). One was within 10 river miles of Moorehead Bridge (river mile 180).
  - One male pallid sturgeon (code 276) that spawned in the Tongue River in 2023, entered the Tongue River June 13, 2024.
  - On June 13<sup>th</sup>, field capture and assessment of female pallid sturgeon (code 313), located at Powder River mile 125, has spawned.
  - Crews are beginning to see scaphirhynchus larvae (Genus for North American sturgeons) in both the Tongue and Powder Rivers June 10. Lab analysis later this year will identify the larvae as shovelnose sturgeon, pallid sturgeon, or paddlefish.
- The paddlefish harvest estimate after June 12, 2023, for the yellow tag season was 704 fish. The largest caught in Montana this year was 109 pounds. Fish are being caught anywhere between the North Dakota-Montana State Line and Tongue-Yellowstone River confluence. The season ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## Wildlife

- Wildlife biologists finished their spring green up flights for mule and white-tailed deer across Region 7. Mule deer saw an increase in fawn ratios from 2023 numbers as well as an increase by 20% in the total deer observed compared to 2023 observations. Unfortunately, mule deer numbers are still below long-termed average so there are no proposed changes to license quotas. White-tailed deer numbers saw a decrease in survey areas and so there was reduction from 8,500 antlerless B license down to 6,000 licenses for this year.
- Nongame survey efforts are ramping up for summer field season. Wildlife staff just recently completed many nights of bat mist netting in the Hay Creek and Boxelder area. Many bats were captured and there was lots of observed wing scarring observed under fluorescence.
- Wildlife staff are currently meeting with landowners all across the region on Block Management and Upland Game Bird Enhancement contracts.
- Many areas across the region have received good spring moisture and so far habitat conditions are looking very good in many areas!

POR

- Park use is steady to up in R7 so far this summer.
- Providing popular spring programing for school groups - geology, paleontology, birding – all very well attended
- Public programing – Rosebud Battlefield history, game night, paleontology, full moon hike, Medicine Rocks-night sky viewing – well attended
- New telescopes donated by Makoshika SP ‘Friends’ group and State Parks Foundation is a hit. Thank you!
- Intake Campground full (plus plus) for paddlefish season
- Tongue River Reservoir very.
- New cabins at Tongue River Reservoir SP arrive on site on 6/15/24
- MOU with Miles City and Walleye Unlimited is signed for a new boat ramp near in Miles City

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 10, 2024 1:12 PM  
**To:** Backes, Mike  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - June 10, 2024 at 10:00 am  
**Attachments:** image015.jpg; image003.png

Ok. Sounds good. Thank you for the update.

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Mon, Jun 10, 2024 at 11:44 AM Backes, Mike <[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)> wrote:

FYI – despite increased river flows over the weekend and similar number of anglers both Friday and Saturday, angler success was good Friday but dropped off Saturday. Unless something significant changes, I expect angler participation to fall sharply over the next three and final weeks of the paddlefish season. Time will tell if closing early before June 30 is necessary, at this point it doesn't appear so.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, June 10, 2024 11:38 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - June 10, 2024 at 10:00 am

After four weeks of the yellow paddlefish season, the estimated harvest is 652 fish. See the following table for more details.

Anglers are reminded of a few key topics:

1. **The last day for the paddlefish cleaning services at Intake Fishing Access Site will be Saturday June 15, 2024.**
2. Mandatory harvest reporting required within 48 hours of harvest (see fishing regulations for more details).
3. Please submit paddlefish jaw sections at self-reporting boxes (Sidney Bridge, Powder Confluence, and Tongue Confluence) which are used for aging fish.
4. Any fish other than a paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately.
5. Handle all sturgeon with extra care, don't use a gaff, keep fish in the water, and release immediately because it could be an endangered pallid sturgeon.

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup></b>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	44
Saturday May 25	85
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Day)	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 28	29
Wednesday May 29	21
Thursday June 30	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 31	55
Saturday June 1	60
Sunday June 2	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday June 3	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday June 4	25
Wednesday June 5	19
Thursday June 6	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 7	50
Saturday June 8	<b>39</b>
Sunday June 9	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday June 10	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (10:00 am June 10)</b>	<b>652</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

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Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)





THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

## Wickman, Erik

---

**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 17, 2024 12:14 PM  
**To:** Backes, Mike  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - June 17, 2024 at 10:00 am  
**Attachments:** image005.png; image004.jpg; image001.png; image002.png

Sounds good.

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Mon, Jun 17, 2024 at 11:56 AM Backes, Mike <[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)> wrote:

FYI – angler participation is slowing significantly. I do not expect a need to close the paddlefish season early. About the only place anglers are participating is at the Powder-Yellowstone River confluence.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, June 17, 2024 11:54 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - June 17, 2024 at 10:00 am

After five weeks of the yellow tag paddlefish season, the estimated harvest is 746 paddlefish. See the following table for more details.

Following are a couple reminders for paddlefish anglers for the remaining two weeks of paddlefish season (ending Sunday June 30):

- The last day for the paddlefish cleaning station at Intake Fishing Access Site was Saturday June 15.
- Anglers must continue to report harvested paddlefish (within 48 hours) via the phone hotline, online at MyFWP, or a self-check station (Sidney Bridge, Powder Confluence, or Tongue Confluence).

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

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Wednesday May 15	34
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Saturday June 1	60
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Monday June 3	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday June 4	25
Wednesday June 5	19
Thursday June 6	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 7	50
Saturday June 8	43
Sunday June 9	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>

Monday June 10	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday June 11	35
Wednesday June 12	14
Thursday June 13	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 14	20
Saturday June 15	21
Sunday June 16	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday June 17	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (10:00 am June 17)</b>	<b>746</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



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**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, June 10, 2024 11:38 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - June 10, 2024 at 10:00 am

After four weeks of the yellow paddlefish season, the estimated harvest is 652 fish. See the following table for more details.

Anglers are reminded of a few key topics:

1. **The last day for the paddlefish cleaning services at Intake Fishing Access Site will be Saturday June 15, 2024.**
2. Mandatory harvest reporting required within 48 hours of harvest (see fishing regulations for more details).
3. Please submit paddlefish jaw sections at self-reporting boxes (Sidney Bridge, Powder Confluence, and Tongue Confluence) which are used for aging fish.
4. Any fish other than a paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately.
5. Handle all sturgeon with extra care, don't use a gaff, keep fish in the water, and release immediately because it could be an endangered pallid sturgeon.

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup></b>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	44
Saturday May 25	85
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Da	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 28	29
Wednesday May 29	21
Thursday June 30	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 31	55
Saturday June 1	60
Sunday June 2	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday June 3	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday June 4	25
Wednesday June 5	19
Thursday June 6	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 7	50
Saturday June 8	<b>39</b>
Sunday June 9	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday June 10	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (10:00 am June 10)</b>	<b>652</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 4:48 PM  
**To:** Backes, Mike  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024  
**Attachments:** image003.jpg; image004.png; image007.png

Thank you, Mike! Always appreciate the updates!

Bill

On Thu, May 16, 2024 at 3:21 PM Backes, Mike <[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)> wrote:

Hello Bill,

See the following email summarizing the first harvest day of the 2024 paddlefish season. More updates will follow, at least once a week targeted for Wednesdays. They will become public if we approach the 600+ fish category.

The North Dakota season closed yesterday at days end. See the attached email summarizing their season.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information or have questions as the season unfolds.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



**From:** Backes, Mike  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 8:35 AM  
**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>  
**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>  
**Subject:** Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

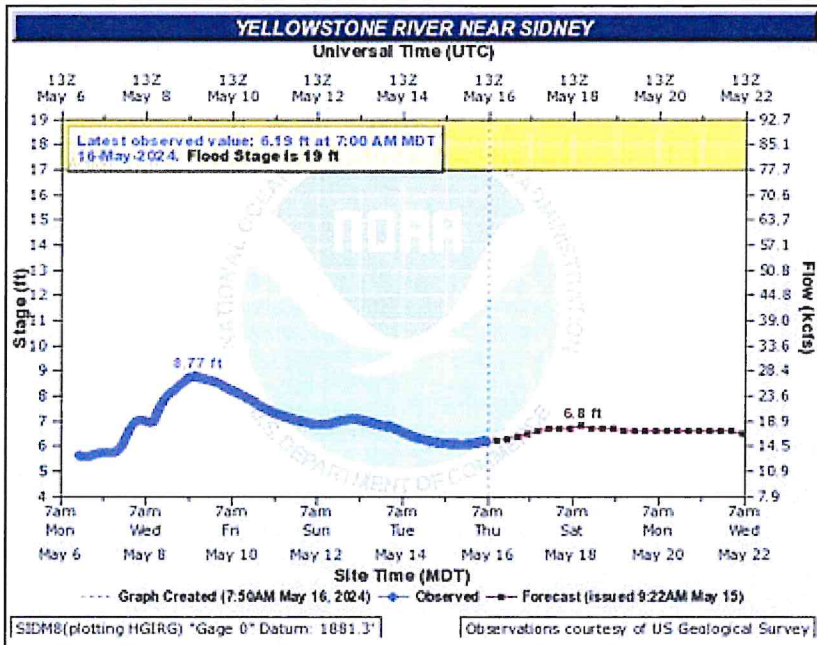
Opening day of the 2024 yellow tag paddlefish season is in the books. The total estimated harvest was 30 paddlefish (see table below). In general terms, angler participation was relatively low, but harvest rates were decent. River flows dropped from the peak of 25,000 cubic feet per second at Sidney six days ago which encouraged some paddlefish to migrate upstream. The recent declines in river flow and relatively flat projection for the next six days will likely cause fish to hang around but in relatively low numbers. Another significant increase in river flows beyond 20,000 cfs is needed from rain showers or mountain snow melt to stimulate additional fish to migrate upstream into Montana. Anglers can use the following link to follow river flow projections at Sidney <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=ggw&gage=sidm8> [water.weather.gov]

Anglers are encouraged to read the paddlefish regulations every year – changes occur frequently! A few important 2024 fishing regulation details to highlight are:

- Any fish other than paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately. Additional caution handling any sturgeon snagged is advised in case it is an endangered pallid sturgeon!
- Paddlefish harvest days are every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.
- Paddlefish catch and release days are Sunday, Monday, and Thursday and is only allowed at Intake Fishing Access Site. All other sites of the yellow tag area are closed to snagging these three days.
- Mandatory harvest reporting within 48 hours of harvest via a fisheries in-person check station, self-reporting box (Sidney Bridge, Powder River Depot, Tongue-Yellowstone Confluence), phone hotline (1-877-FWP-WILD or 406-444-0356), or online at [myfwp.mt.gov](http://myfwp.mt.gov). Scales to weigh fish are now available at the self-reporting boxes.
- Anglers are encouraged to use the Intake fish cleaning station or a self-reporting box to submit paddlefish jaw sections that are used to age fish. This age data, particularly from young-smaller fish is fundamental data to manage the paddlefish population and maintain future fishing opportunities.
- Harvest updates like the following can be viewed at the R7 FWP Facebook page or by calling the region 7 office in Miles City (406-234-0900).

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	30
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>30</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.  
<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.



**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

## Wickman, Erik

---

**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 12:10 PM  
**To:** Backes, Mike  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: FW: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 28, 2024 at 8:00 am  
**Attachments:** image002.png; image006.png; image005.png; image003.png; image004.png; image007.png; image008.png; image009.png; image001.jpg

Thank you for the information!

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Tue, May 28, 2024 at 11:23 AM Backes, Mike <[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)> wrote:

Yes, but historically angler interest drops quickly following Memorial Day Weekend. Time will tell if this holds true now with a dispersed fishery. There is plenty of snowpack and river flow to come (Powder and Tongue basins are over 200% snowpack), so paddlefish will certainly be available to anglers through the entire month of June.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <[commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 10:38 AM  
**To:** Backes, Mike <[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: FW: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 28, 2024 at 8:00 am

Looks like success is picking up!

Bill Lane  
Region 7 Commissioner  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | [commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org](mailto:commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org)

On Tue, May 28, 2024 at 10:25 AM Backes, Mike <[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)> wrote:

FYI.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 10:25 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 28, 2024 at 8:00 am

After two full weeks of the yellow tag paddlefish season the estimated total harvest is 347 fish (see following table for more details). Paddlefish are widely distributed and being caught from the Tongue River Confluence to the North Dakota State Line.

Now is a good time to remind paddlefish anglers of a few important topics:

1. Harvest days are limited to every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturdays (in all yellow tag areas).
2. Catch and release days are every Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays (only allowed at Intake Fishing Access Site – all other yellow tag areas are closed on catch and release days).
3. Mandatory harvest reporting required within 48 hours of harvest (see fishing regulations for more details).
4. Free paddlefish cleaning services provided at Intake Fishing Access Site on harvest days through at least June 15.
5. Please submit paddlefish jaw sections at self-reporting boxes (Sidney Bridge, Powder Confluence, and Tongue Confluence) which are used for aging fish.
6. Any fish other than a paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately.
7. Handle all sturgeon with extra care, don't use a gaff, keep fish in the water, and release immediately because it could be an endangered pallid sturgeon.

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	42
Saturday May 25	80
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Da	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 pm May 28)</b>	<b>347</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddelfishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 2:22 PM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho (<[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)> <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>); Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody

<[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 23, 2024 at 2:00 pm

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	20
Wednesday May 22	24
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (2:00 pm May 23)</b>	<b>223</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.  
<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 22, 2024 7:56 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey

<Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov>; Prell, Marla <MPrell@mt.gov>

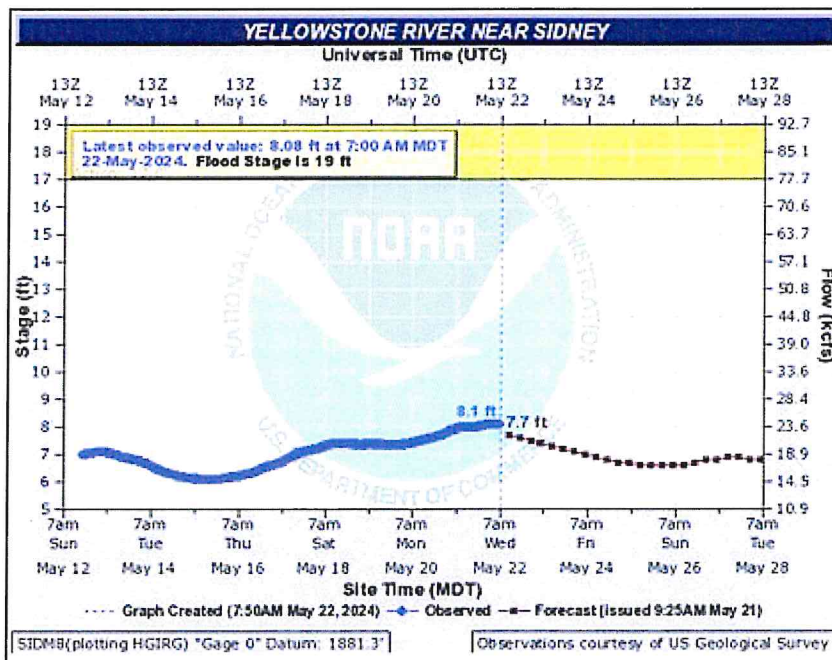
Cc: Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho (<scar@uidaho.edu> <scar@uidaho.edu>); Slominski, Aaron P. <aslominski@nd.gov>; Gangl, Scott <sgangl@nd.gov>; Dalbey, Steve <sdalbey@mt.gov>; Krebs, Jared <Jared.Krebs@mt.gov>; Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>; Henry, Drew <DHenry@mt.gov>; Nagel, Cody <cnagel@mt.gov>

Subject: RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 22, 2024 at 8:00 am

Angler participation and fish catch rates were low Tuesday May 21. Harvest rates for the holiday weekend may be light considering river flow projections show a decrease between now and the weekend.

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	58
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	17
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am May 22)</b>	<b>189</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.  
<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.



Kenneth M Backes



Region 7 Fisheries Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 2:01 PM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

Sorry, overlooked a few fish in the prior estimate. Following is an accurate harvest estimate.

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	<b>58</b>
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>172</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 11:26 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho (<[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)> <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>); Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

Following is the estimated paddlefish harvest after the first three days of the 2024 yellow tag season.

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	35
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	69
Saturday May 18	<b>58</b>
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>162</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 8:35 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

Opening day of the 2024 yellow tag paddlefish season is in the books. The total estimated harvest was 30 paddlefish (see table below). In general terms, angler participation was relatively low, but harvest rates were decent. River flows dropped from the peak of 25,000 cubic feet per second at Sidney six days ago which encouraged some paddlefish to migrate upstream. The recent declines in river flow and relatively flat projection for the next six days will likely cause fish to hang around but in relatively low numbers. Another significant increase in river flows beyond 20,000 cfs is needed from rain showers or mountain snow melt to stimulate additional fish to migrate upstream into Montana. Anglers can use the following link to follow river flow projections at Sidney  
<https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=ggw&gage=sidm8> [water.weather.gov]

Anglers are encouraged to read the paddlefish regulations every year – changes occur frequently! A few important 2024 fishing regulation details to highlight are:

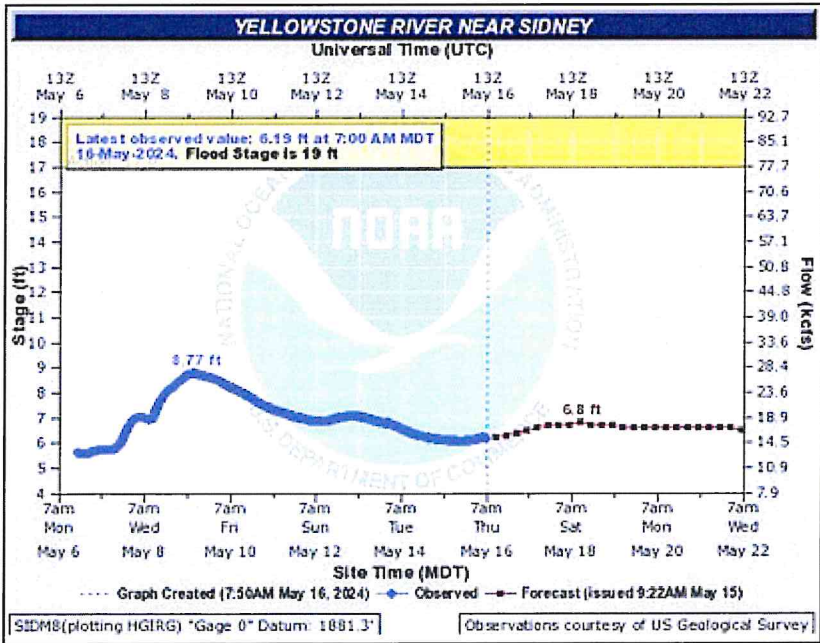
- Any fish other than paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately. Additional caution handling any sturgeon snagged is advised in case it is an endangered pallid sturgeon!

- Paddlefish harvest days are every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.
- Paddlefish catch and release days are Sunday, Monday, and Thursday and is only allowed at Intake Fishing Access Site. All other sites of the yellow tag area are closed to snagging these three days.
- Mandatory harvest reporting within 48 hours of harvest via a fisheries in-person check station, self-reporting box (Sidney Bridge, Powder River Depot, Tongue-Yellowstone Confluence), phone hotline (1-877-FWP-WILD or 406-444-0356), or online at [myfwp.mt.gov](http://myfwp.mt.gov). Scales to weigh fish are now available at the self-reporting boxes.
- Anglers are encouraged to use the Intake fish cleaning station or a self-reporting box to submit paddlefish jaw sections that are used to age fish. This age data, particularly from young-smaller fish is fundamental data to manage the paddlefish population and maintain future fishing opportunities.
- Harvest updates like the following can be viewed at the R7 FWP Facebook page or by calling the region 7 office in Miles City (406-234-0900).

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	30
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>30</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.  
<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddelfishing.



**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

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[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 6, 2024 9:54 AM  
**To:** Backes, Mike  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 30, 2024 at 8:00 am  
**Attachments:** image003.jpg; image004.png; image005.png; image006.png; image007.png; image008.png; image009.png; image010.png; image011.png; image012.png; image013.png; image002.png

Good morning, Mike.

Thank you for the update. Just let me know when we are getting close to having to close the season. Thank you. Also, I watched the catch and release data collection video that the department put out. Well done and very interesting!

Bill

On Tue, Jun 4, 2024 at 10:28 AM Backes, Mike <mibackes@mt.gov> wrote:

FYI – see prior email for updated paddlefish harvest estimate after Saturday June 1. In summary, 513 fish have been harvested over the first three weeks of a potential seven weeklong season.

Snowpack projections indicate plenty of river flow over at least the next month, likely keeping paddlefish within the Yellowstone River through the month of June. If angler participation holds, it's probable we will need to discuss a potential early closure of the paddlefish season to stay below the 1,000 fish harvest cap.

I'll keep you posted and will increase correspondence frequency if we need to discuss closure.

**Kenneth M Backes**

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, June 3, 2024 8:14 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 30, 2024 at 8:00 am

After three weeks of the yellow tag paddlefish season, the estimated total harvest is 513 fish.

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	44
Saturday May 25	84
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Da	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 28	29
Wednesday May 29	19
Thursday June 30	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday June 31	54
Saturday June 1	58
Sunday June 2	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday June 3	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am May 30)</b>	<b>513</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

Kenneth M Backes

Region 7 Fisheries Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2024 9:48 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 30, 2024 at 8:00 am



**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	42
Saturday May 25	80
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Da	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 28	29
Wednesday May 29	21
Thursday June 30	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am May 30)</b>	<b>397</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 8:24 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 29, 2024 at 8:00 am

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	42
Saturday May 25	80
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Da	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 28	<b>28</b>
Wednesday May 29	<b>3</b>
Thursday June 30	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am May 29)</b>	<b>378</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 10:25 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 28, 2024 at 8:00 am

After two full weeks of the yellow tag paddlefish season the estimated total harvest is 347 fish (see following table for more details). Paddlefish are widely distributed and being caught from the Tongue River Confluence to the North Dakota State Line.

Now is a good time to remind paddlefish anglers of a few important topics:

1. Harvest days are limited to every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturdays (in all yellow tag areas).
2. Catch and release days are every Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays (only allowed at Intake Fishing Access Site – all other yellow tag areas are closed on catch and release days).
3. Mandatory harvest reporting required within 48 hours of harvest (see fishing regulations for more details).
4. Free paddlefish cleaning services provided at Intake Fishing Access Site on harvest days through at least June 15.
5. Please submit paddlefish jaw sections at self-reporting boxes (Sidney Bridge, Powder Confluence, and Tongue Confluence) which are used for aging fish.
6. Any fish other than a paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately.
7. Handle all sturgeon with extra care, don't use a gaff, keep fish in the water, and release immediately because it could be an endangered pallid sturgeon.

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	25
Wednesday May 22	21
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Friday May 24	42
Saturday May 25	80
Sunday May 26	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 27 (Memorial Da	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 pm May 28)</b>	<b>347</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

Kenneth M Backes

Region 7 Fisheries Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Ph: (406) 234-0925

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 2:22 PM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 23, 2024 at 2:00 pm

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	65
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	20
Wednesday May 22	24
Thursday May 23	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (2:00 pm May 23)</b>	<b>223</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 22, 2024 7:56 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 22, 2024 at 8:00 am

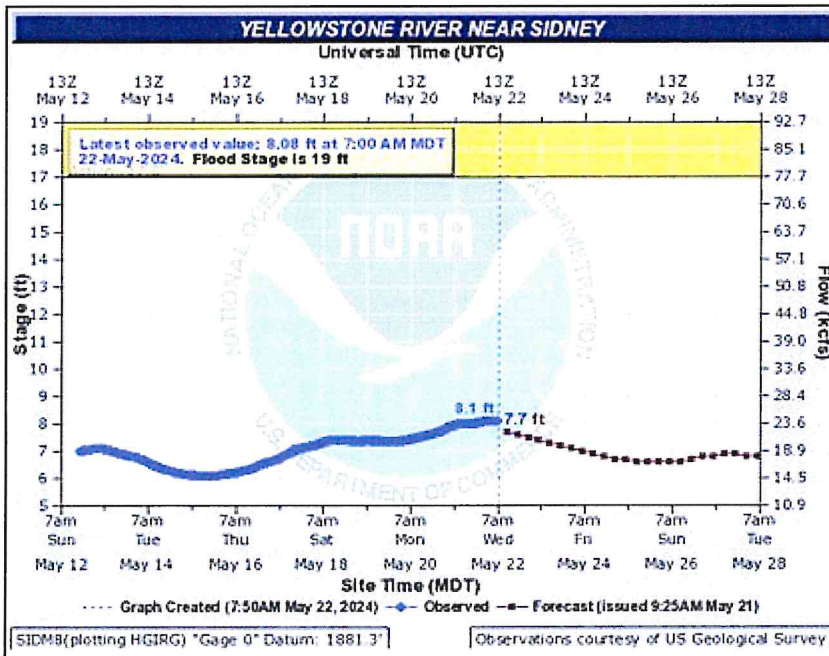
Angler participation and fish catch rates were low Tuesday May 21. Harvest rates for the holiday weekend may be light considering river flow projections show a decrease between now and the weekend.

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	58
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Tuesday May 21	17
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am May 22)</b>	<b>189</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.



**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 2:01 PM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

Sorry, overlooked a few fish in the prior estimate. Following is an accurate harvest estimate.

2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area (Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)	
Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	34
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	80
Saturday May 18	58
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>172</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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[mibackes@mt.gov](mailto:mibackes@mt.gov)



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 11:26 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

**Cc:** Dennis Scarnecchia - University of Idaho ([scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)) <[scar@uidaho.edu](mailto:scar@uidaho.edu)>; Slominski, Aaron P. <[aslominski@nd.gov](mailto:aslominski@nd.gov)>; Gangl, Scott <[sgangl@nd.gov](mailto:sgangl@nd.gov)>; Dalbey, Steve <[sdalbey@mt.gov](mailto:sdalbey@mt.gov)>; Krebs, Jared <[Jared.Krebs@mt.gov](mailto:Jared.Krebs@mt.gov)>; Schmitz, Brad <[brschmitz@mt.gov](mailto:brschmitz@mt.gov)>; Henry, Drew <[DHenry@mt.gov](mailto:DHenry@mt.gov)>; Nagel, Cody <[cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

Following is the estimated paddlefish harvest after the first three days of the 2024 yellow tag season.

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	35
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
Friday May 17	69
Saturday May 18	<b>58</b>
Sunday May 19	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
Monday May 20	<i>catch &amp; release - Intake FAS only</i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>162</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.  
<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.

**Kenneth M Backes**

*Region 7 Fisheries Manager*

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**From:** Backes, Mike

**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 8:35 AM

**To:** O'Connor, Erin <[eoconnor@mt.gov](mailto:eoconnor@mt.gov)>; Zeitner, Vanessa <[VZeitner@mt.gov](mailto:VZeitner@mt.gov)>; Peterson, Tracey <[Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov](mailto:Tracey.Peterson@mt.gov)>; Prell, Marla <[MPrell@mt.gov](mailto:MPrell@mt.gov)>

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**Subject:** Yellow Paddlefish Tag Harvest Estimate - May 15, 2024

Opening day of the 2024 yellow tag paddlefish season is in the books. The total estimated harvest was 30 paddlefish (see table below). In general terms, angler participation was relatively low, but harvest rates were decent. River flows dropped from the peak of 25,000 cubic feet per second at Sidney six days ago which encouraged some paddlefish to migrate upstream. The recent declines in river flow and relatively flat projection for the next six days will likely cause fish to hang around but in relatively low numbers. Another significant increase in river flows beyond 20,000 cfs is needed from rain showers or mountain snow melt to stimulate additional fish to migrate upstream into Montana. Anglers can use the following link to follow river flow projections at Sidney  
<https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=ggw&gage=sidm8> [water.weather.gov]

Anglers are encouraged to read the paddlefish regulations every year – changes occur frequently! A few important 2024 fishing regulation details to highlight are:

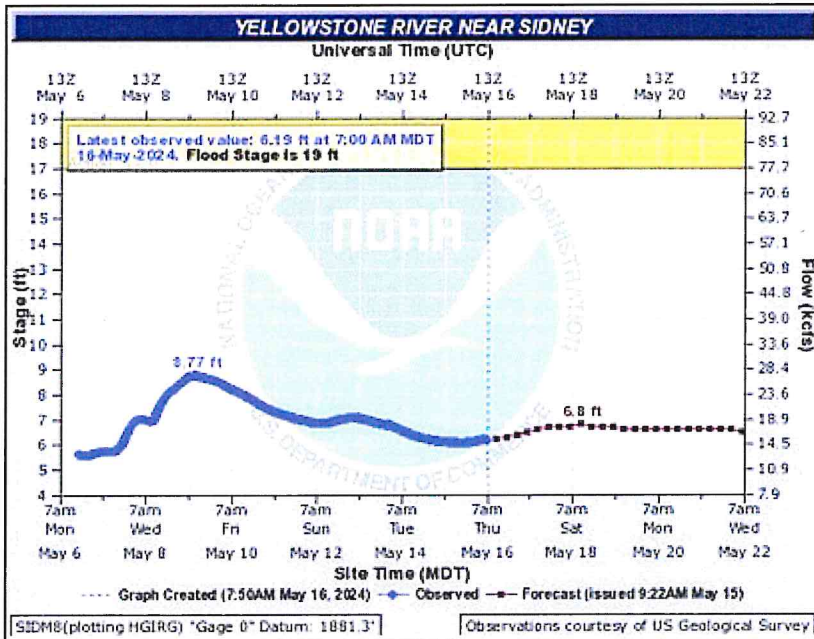
- Any fish other than paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be released immediately. Additional caution handling any sturgeon snagged is advised in case it is an endangered pallid sturgeon!
- Paddlefish harvest days are every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.
- Paddlefish catch and release days are Sunday, Monday, and Thursday and is only allowed at Intake Fishing Access Site. All other sites of the yellow tag area are closed to snagging these three days.
- Mandatory harvest reporting within 48 hours of harvest via a fisheries in-person check station, self-reporting box (Sidney Bridge, Powder River Depot, Tongue-Yellowstone Confluence), phone hotline (1-877-FWP-WILD or 406-444-0356), or online at [myfwp.mt.gov](http://myfwp.mt.gov). Scales to weigh fish are now available at the self-reporting boxes.
- Anglers are encouraged to use the Intake fish cleaning station or a self-reporting box to submit paddlefish jaw sections that are used to age fish. This age data, particularly from young-smaller fish is fundamental data to manage the paddlefish population and maintain future fishing opportunities.
- Harvest updates like the following can be viewed at the R7 FWP Facebook page or by calling the region 7 office in Miles City (406-234-0900).

**2024 Paddlefish Harvest Estimate - Yellow Tag Area  
(Yellowstone & Lower Missouri rivers)**

Date	Estimated Fish Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Wednesday May 15	30
Thursday May 16	<i>catch &amp; release day - Intake only <sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Subtotal (8:00 am June 16)</b>	<b>30</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red numbers are provisional, numbers may increase.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday, Monday, and Thursdays are designated catch and release only days restricted to Intake only, all other areas closed to paddlefishing.



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