

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AMENDMENT

FWP proposal to be amended: 2025-2026 Fishing Regulations/*Big Salmon Lake*

Commissioner: Vice Chair Pat Tabor (Commissioner, Region 1)

Date Received by Commission: October 15, 2024

Proposed amendment:

I move the Commission amend the 2025-2026 Fishing Regulations for Big Salmon Lake to read as follows:

- Closed to all angling within a 300-yard radius around the inlet (where the creek enters the lake) of Big Salmon Lake.

Requested by FWP (YES/NO): YES

If YES, then FWP's Rationale: See attached.

If NO, then FWP Response: NA



FISHING REGULATIONS PROPOSAL FORM

Waterbody or Fishing District: Big Salmon Lake

Proposed change, addition, or deletion (for existing regs, include District Standard or Exception to the District Standard. Indicate new language in *italics*, deleted language with a ~~strikethrough~~):

Page 26 **add/change/delete:**

Big Salmon Lake

- Closed to all angling within a 300-yard radius around the inlet (where the creek enters the lake) of Big Salmon Lake.

Rationale (biological justification for proposing this change. Include how this change addresses a fisheries management problem): Adult bull trout numbers for the Big Salmon Lake population are monitored by counting the redds (spawning nests) in Big Salmon Creek. Redd counts in 2024 revealed very low numbers. Redd count totals in 2023 and 2024 were the lowest on record (1993-2024) and were 42% of the long-term average (Figure 1). While intentional angling for bull trout is already illegal in Big Salmon Creek, reports of anglers targeting bull trout at the inlet of Big Salmon Lake exist. FWP suspects that illegal angling could be partially responsible for the decline in redd numbers. Reducing the amount of angler-induced handling stress may help stabilize the downward trend in adult bull trout numbers for the Big Salmon population.

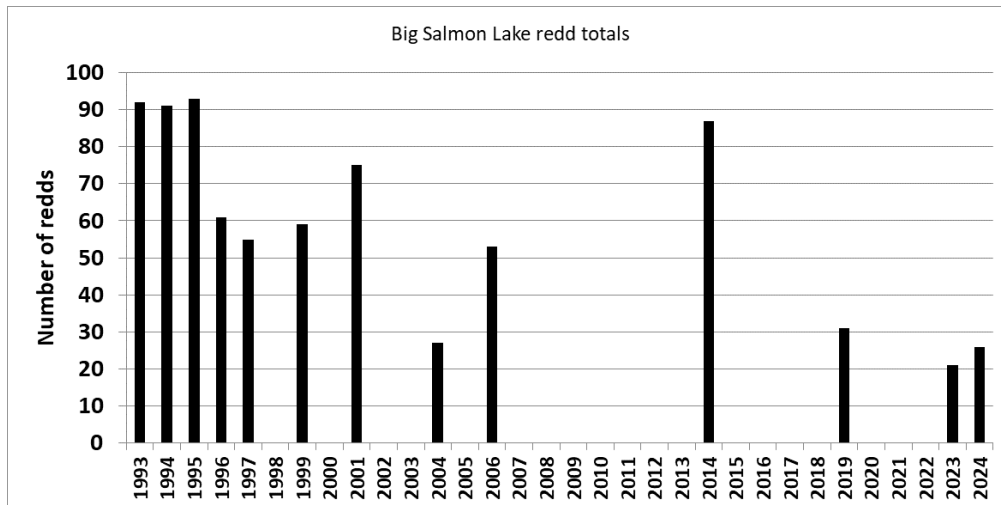


Figure 1: Bull trout redd counts for the Big Salmon Lake population 1993-2024.

Management Plan Reference (drainage, waterbody, language directly from the plan):

South Fork Flathead River drainage, section 2.02, page 7.

Regulation Type (clarification, enforcement, conservation, relevancy, management plan, other):

Conservation

Public Engagement (summary of any public scoping or outreach that has been completed as it relates to this change. Includes public meetings, sporting group meetings, surveys, etc.):

Interdivisional Review (most likely input from Enforcement, but input from Com Ed, Legal, Wildlife may also be appropriate. Multiple divisions will review in Helena via RRAM):

R-1 Enforcement has reviewed and concurred with the proposal.

Nonbiological Information (is there an organized advocacy for this change, controversy, other information that decision makers should be aware, relevant MCA or ARM to justify this change):