Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The Idaho Cooperative Research Unit (IDCRU) of the U.S. Geological Survey was established in 1947 to train graduate students in wildlife and fisheries science and to conduct research on the production, utilization, management, protection and restoration of fish and wildlife resources in Idaho and the habitat and ecosystems on which they depend. Unit scientists, in collaboration with state and federal managers, conduct field research addressing management questions, ecological processes and policy implications.

Accomplishments.

The Idaho Unit is among the most productive in the nationwide program in terms of graduate education, research, and contributions to resource management. It has generated \$40 in research funding for every dollar of funding it receives from the University of Idaho and the State of Idaho. Over the past three years, the Idaho Unit generated \$7.5 million in extramural research funding and granted 13 advanced degrees, directed 54 research projects, and employed 20 graduate students and 20 post-docs, research associates, technicians and administrative assistants.

Research projects and their applications include:

- Improved approaches for management of native cutthroat populations. Resulted in the establishment of Blue Ribbon catch-and-release fisheries for native cutthroat in many Idaho rivers. These fisheries attract thousands of anglers from around the country to Idaho.
- Survival of adult and juvenile salmon and steelhead during migration which prompted changes in the operation of hydrodams and improved fish passage efficiency and survival for migrating juvenile and adult fish.
- Status for key game species which prompted changes in the management status of the mountain lion in Idaho, from vermin to wild game and subsequent increases in license sales.
- Development of decision analysis tools for controlling New Zealand mud snails in fish hatcheries. Managers of commercial and agency hatcheries used results to reduce impacts of mud snails on hatchery fish and to develop guidelines for new state regulations regarding control of invasive species.
- Research, monitoring and evaluation of measures to recover the Snake River fall Chinook. The project identified habitat features that affect juvenile survival and successful downstream migration of threatened fall Chinook.
- Assessing the risks and benefits of barrier removal to native fish populations in Idaho. Researchers conducted a decision analysis to estimate risks from three invasive species (a mollusk, fish, and parasite) to native fish populations if culvert barriers are removed to improve gene flow and migration corridors.



• Gap Analysis for preservation of species and ecosystems; an effective analytical tool to identify species at risk before they became endangered. Used throughout the U.S. by state governments to develop Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans and in dozens of other countries to conduct conservation assessments of their natural resources.

Consequences of Reduced Funding.

Failure to maintain funding could damage Idaho in the following ways:

- Reduced assistance for managers of hatcheries, fisheries and game animals in Idaho
- Reduction in scientific data available to inform resource management decisions of concern to the state of Idaho
- Loss of research expertise available to assist state, tribal and federal agencies in Idaho
- Reduced number of graduate students and graduate courses at University of Idaho
- Decreased coordination among state, tribal and federal resource agencies operating in Idaho
- Diminished support for successful program that trains Native Americans to become natural resource professionals in Idaho
- Reduction in competitive grant dollars brought into University of Idaho
- Reduction in national and international reputation of the University of Idaho as a leader in fisheries and wildlife sciences

For more information, please contact: