

Proposal to change fishing rules at Pass Lake (Skagit Co.)



Edward Eleazer
Fish Program Manager

Justin Spinelli
Fisheries Biologist

Region 4 Fish Program



Overview

- Pass Lake is managed as a “quality” trout water by stocking fry and fingerling size trout
- Yellow Perch were recently introduced into Pass Lake
- Developed management strategy for Pass Lake
- Proposed to change sport fishing rules (filed CR-102, January 2019) to maintain fly fishing only, but allow statewide minimum length and daily limit of gamefish, except trout must be released

Acknowledgements

- Fidalgo Fly Fishers
 - Bruce Freet
- Evergreen Fly Fishing Club
 - Jake Jacobson
- Whidbey Island Fly Fishing Club



Pass Lake (Skagit Co.)



- Surface area: 98 acres
- Catch-and-release
- Fly Fishing Only
- Stocked annually: Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout
- Resident: Green Sunfish (early-1990s), Fathead Minnow (early-1980s)

History – Considered “quality” fishery since 1920s

Regulations

- 1941 & 1963 – Gear restricted to fly fishing only
- Through the 1970’s – managed for harvest similar to other productive lowland lakes
- 1980s-early-90s – increasing restrictions: bag limit and fish size
- 1998 – Catch and release only

Enhancement

- Historically stocked annually with Rainbow and Cutthroat fry
- Periodic rotenone treatments (1946 & 1969 for Yellow Perch)
- 1986-1991 – supplemented with predatory Atlantic Salmon and Brown Trout
- 1995-present – stocked Rainbow Trout (spring-fry) & Brown Trout (fall-fingerling)

Steps to improve fishing at Pass Lake 2015-2018

- Recent changes in stocking allotments to increase length and condition of trout to improve fishing
 - Reduced stocking allotments by ~50%
- Cooperative Fishery Assessment
 - Rainbow Trout length and condition improved, angler catch rates declined
 - Detected introduced Yellow Perch



Photo Credit: Deception Pass Foundation

Management Strategy for Pass Lake

- All Yellow Perch from gill nets in 2018 were 1 year old
- Likely to inhibit the survival and growth of hatchery trout fry and fingerlings and compete with juvenile and adult fish for food

Action Items

1. Continue cooperative annual fishery assessments
2. Modify sport fishing rules to allow Yellow Perch harvest
3. If necessary, future actions may include modifying trout stocking strategies

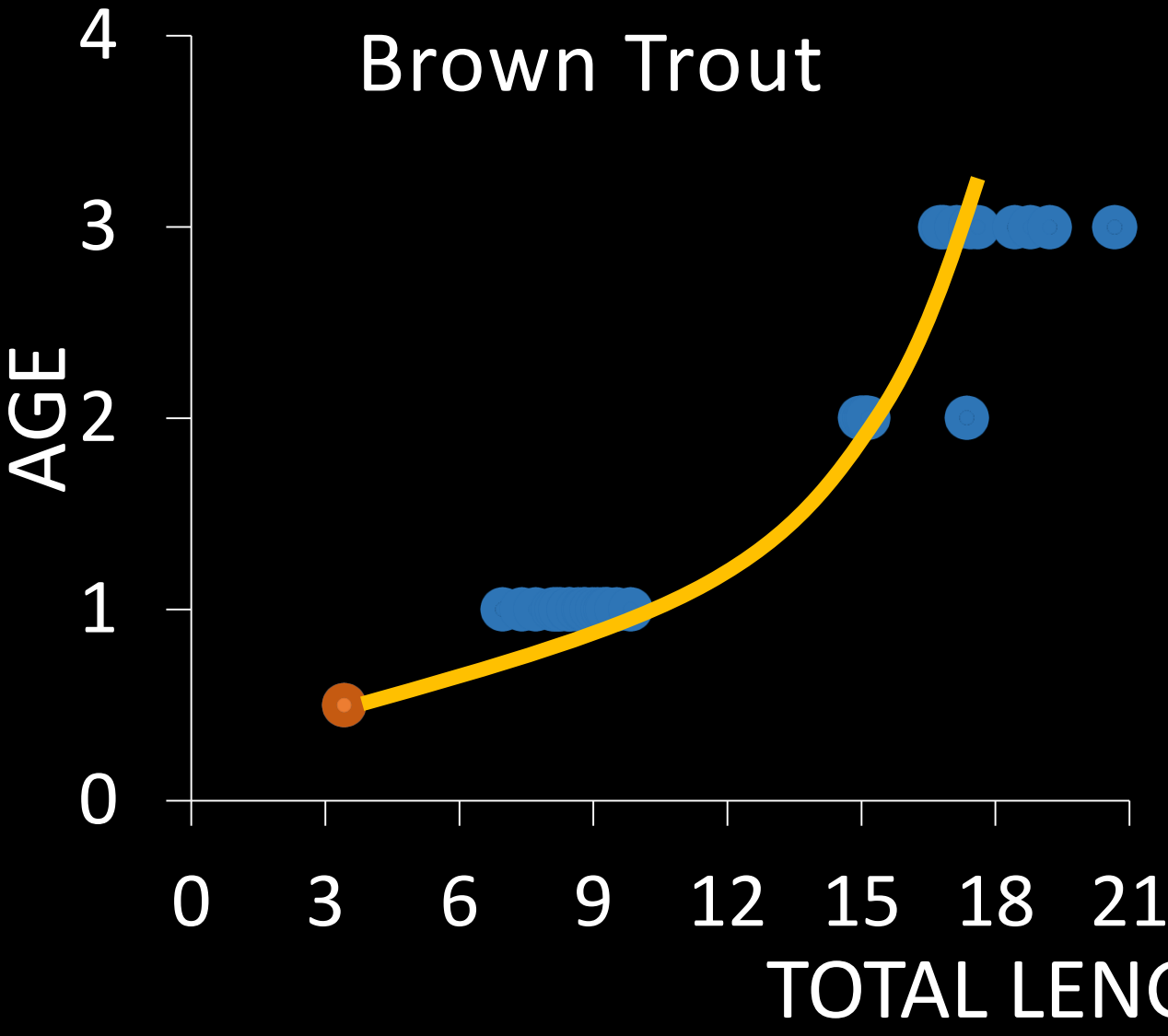
1. Cooperative Fishery Assessments

- Angler Fishing & WDFW Gill Netting
- Assess how size, condition, growth, catch rate of trout and Yellow Perch change
- Lethally remove Yellow Perch caught in nets and angling.

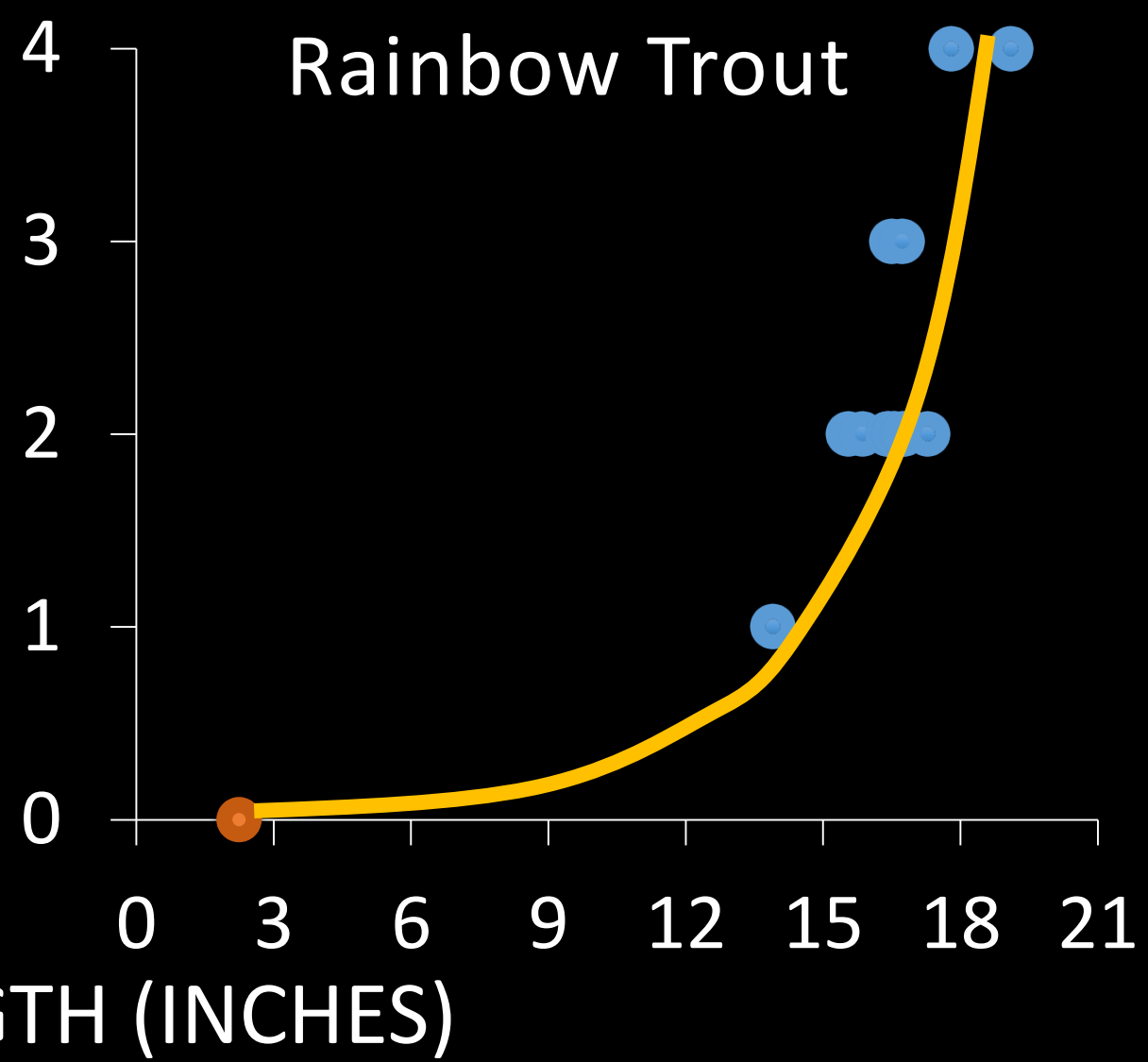


Growth Stocked Trout – Pass Lake

Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout



2. Modify sport fishing rules

- Maintain fly fishing only
- Maintain catch-and-release for trout
- Allow statewide size and daily limit for all other gamefish
- Allow anglers to help suppress Yellow Perch



3. Adjust stocking strategy

- Use existing programs



Timeline/Next Steps

- Yellow Perch detected, May 2018
- Developed management strategy, December 2018
- Club Outreach, February-March 2019
- Annual Cooperative Fishery Assessment, March-May 2019
- Rule Proposal Briefing on April 5, 2019
- Final decision on rule proposal, June 2019