

MONTANA UNAUTHORIZED FISH INTRODUCTION DATABASE

February, 2005

This database was created to document the presence of unauthorized fish species in Montana waters. The database is based on reliable reports from agency and university personnel and anglers. Unauthorized introductions may occur from illegal movement of fish, bait bucket transfers, and unwanted movement from legal sources such as private ponds and other states. This database documents only those introductions that persisted long enough to be detected at least once but cannot document the probable large number of introductions that failed quickly or have not yet been detected.

This database generally documents introductions since 1980. In the first half of the century anglers were generally encouraged to move fish around. Unfortunately, that pioneer spirit still persists. When a date is given for an introduction, it is the year the introduction was documented or the year the status was changed.

Copies of this database can be obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Contact Region 1 Fishery Manager Jim Vashro, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901 (406-751-4550) or e-mail jvashro@state.mt.us or FWP Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator Eileen Ryce, 4801 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, MT 59405 (406-453-2275) or e-mail eryce@state.mt.us. New observations can be reported to the same addresses. GIS mapping is available on request.

Unauthorized fish introductions are an extremely serious activity that can spread disease and parasites, cause genetic hybridization, impact or displace sportfish and native fish populations, and create water quality problems. Unauthorized introductions can increase fish management costs or cause a loss of fishing opportunities, many times permanently. Although the date of introduction often cannot be determined, this is undoubtedly an ongoing problem. In recent years MFWP has stepped up educational efforts and statutes and penalties have been strengthened. Enforcement efforts have also increased, resulting in several convictions. Rewards have been offered for information on specific illegal introductions through the TIPMONT program (1-800-847-6668).

The summary below details the number of waters and associated unauthorized species introductions regionally and statewide. Specific details by region, drainage, and water are in the database.

	Region							Statewide
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
# Waters	146	25	25	26	15	30	17	284
# Unauthorized Introductions	267	49	44	46	24	41	29	500