I have spent a great deal of time asking for, receiving, and compiling data from Texas Parks and Wildlife on the issue of the health of trout and whether science does or does not call for limit reductions. The pdf at the below link has all you need to know on the issue and it is backed up 100% by TPWD data and slides they created, hearing transcripts, and newspaper articles. There are slides we created but they rely on Excel data provided by TPWD or are adaptions of TPWD slides and their data. It is long but I encourage sticking to the end as many popular myths are dispelled towards the end. The short version is it is crystal clear trout are doing fine and this is especially true since the last time this issue was raised. There is much much more good news in the paper but here is the last slide presented by TPWD scientists to the commissioners right before they voted to scope for limit reductions.

http://rdonato.com/uploads/Slide35.jpg

If you stick to the end you will learn a big mistake was made in the data that serves as the basis for newspaper quotes about the success of trout reductions in the Lower Laguna where limits have been reduced to 5 since 2007. You have all probably heard or read in the LLM where proponents tout that only 4% of the fishermen in the LLM caught 5 fish when limits were 10 but now 10% catch 5 fish. In our opinion a mistake in how the numbers were added was made and it has since perpetuated itself.

In 2012 you will learn 7.2% of the non-guided fishermen in the LLM caught 5 fish which is BELOW the 8% average when limits were 10 fish AND for the rest of the coast in that same year 14.7% of the guys got 5…nearly twice as many as in the mecca LLM. You will learn in the LLM 8.2% of the guides in 2012 caught five and elsewhere 38% of the guides did that and better. You will learn bag seine studies show zero improvement.

You will learn they are catching bigger fish in the LLM is a “Story” as well. The mean length data shows no gain and while 2011 creel studies that did show bigger fish that has now disappeared in 2012 data. You will learn of the practice called “high grading” that is frankly undesirable.

My position on TPWD and trout limits is simple. If the science says for true conservation reasons we need to do it then don’t even ask, just do it. If the science is crystal clear for conservation purposes we don’t need it then quit listening to whoever keeps pushing this issue.

Please Please if you are going to respond in this thread read the paper and arm yourself with facts. The anecdotal stuff doesn’t cut in in the real world of any business and doesn’t belong in a true debate about science and conservation.

Next week TPWD will announce scoping times and places and will provide an online place for comments. If you want right now you can be heard by emailing to

SWFishComments@tpwd.texas.gov

Link to PDF of paper

http://rdonato.com/public/trout/TroutTruths.pdf