

# CHANCE TO WIN REWARD FOR HOOKING A GERRARD

NELSON — As if fishing for the largest rainbow trout species on earth — in one the most beautiful spots on earth — isn't enough! Here is one final lure to tempt you to drop your line into the cool waters of Kootenay Lake this summer: if you reel in a Gerrard rainbow trout with a specially marked tag you will walk away with a cash reward.

You don't even have to "roll up the fin" to win. A total of 20 Gerrard rainbow trout, each with a fork length of more than half a metre, have been given bright orange, easy-to-see, tags bearing the text "\$100 REWARD."

The goal of the project, which is being spearheaded by the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) in cooperation with the B.C. Ministry of Environment (MOE), is to better understand the population dynamics of the mighty Gerrard rainbow trout of Kootenay Lake. More specifically it will help biologists determine population levels as well as fishing and natural mortality rates.

"The success of the project relies on anglers returning the numbered, colour-coded, plastic spaghetti tags," says Joe Thorley, of Poisson Consulting Ltd, who is co-managing the project with Greg Andrusak of Redfish Consulting Ltd. Whether or not the fish is released anglers are asked to clip off the tag(s) with scissors or a knife. The orange tag must be returned to the Nelson MOE office to claim the \$100, courtesy of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC).

"We have also placed blue standard spaghetti tags on many other smaller rainbow trout," added Thorley. "It is important that anglers



— PHOTO COURTESY JAMES BAXTER, FWCP

**Here's one to look for! Joe Thorley with a Gerrard rainbow trout displaying a \$100 reward tag.**

return the tags to the Ministry of Environment office in Nelson." They can either be mailed in or dropped off in person.

The 20 reward-tagged fish have also been fitted with sonic transmitters, so when they swim past an array of buoys in the lake biologists will be able to track their movements.

Anglers are reminded that they must have a valid B.C. freshwater fishing license plus the special conservation surcharge to fish for Kootenay Lake rainbow trout.

Anglers (as well as hunters, trap-

pers and guides) provide direct financial support to the Kootenay Lake Large Rainbow Tagging Project and hundreds of other projects funded by the HCTF through the purchase of their licenses and permits. Additional support to this project is provided by the MOE, FFSBC and the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program.

If the pilot project is successful, reward tags will be placed on more Kootenay Lake rainbow trout in the next three to five years. For more information anglers should contact Jeff Burrows at MOE, (250) 354 6333.