

Tagging a Paddlefish

- Cut a small hole in the base of the dorsal fin.
- Insert metal loop of plastic self-locking tag through hole and seal tag.
- The plastic tag must be completely sealed so it cannot be reopened or removed from the fish. Any fish not tagged in accordance with these instructions shall be considered untagged.



Paddlefish Season Summary by River and River Section

River	River Section	Color	Season Dates	Harvest Days	C&R Days
Missouri River	Ft Peck Dam to Ft Benton	white	May 1 - Jun 15	all	all
	Ft Peck Dredge Cuts - no snagging	blue	July 1 - Aug 31	all - bow & arrow harvest only	none
	Ft Peck Dam to ND Line	green	May 15 - Jun 15	all	none
Yellowstone River	Tongue R. to Sullivan Cr. near Calypso Bridge	yellow	May 15 - Jun 15	Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat	Sun, Mon, Thur
	Glendive Black Bridge to ND Line	yellow	May 15 - Jun 15	Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat	Sun, Mon, Thur

FAS = Fishing Access Site C&R = Catch-and-Release

Contact FWP

TELEPHONE DEVICE FOR THE DEAF – 711 or 1-800-253-4091

STATE HEADQUARTERS MTFWP

1420 East 6th Ave
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-2535

REGION 1
490 North Meridian Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501

REGION 2
3201 Spurgin Rd
Missoula, MT 59804
406-542-5500

REGION 3
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-577-7900

HELENA Area Resource Office (HARO)
930 Custer Ave W
Helena, MT 59602
406-495-3260

BUTTE Area Resource Office (BARO)
1820 Meadowlark Ln
Butte, MT 59701
406-494-1953

REGION 4
4600 Giant Springs Rd
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-454-5840

LEWISTOWN Area Resource Office (LARO)
190 Terminal Dr.
PO Box 938
Lewistown, MT 59457
406-538-4658

REGION 5
2300 Lake Elmo Dr
Billings, MT 59105
406-247-2940

REGION 6
1 Airport Rd
Glasgow, MT 59230
406-228-3700

HAVRE Area Resource Office (HvARO)
2165 Hwy 2 East
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-6177

REGION 7
352 I-94 Business Loop
PO Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
406-234-0900



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

2025 Paddlefish Regulations

General Paddlefish Regulations for ALL Areas

- Each angler must cast for, hook and reel in their own paddlefish. It is unlawful for another person to do so. It is unlawful to loan or use another angler's tag.
- Unlawful to snag paddlefish via boat trolling; casting from an anchored or drifting boat is lawful in white and green tag area (see exception under yellow tag area).
- Any fish other than paddlefish caught while paddlefish snagging must be immediately released alive.
- Bow and Arrow: lawful on harvest days in sections of river open to harvest or in a bow-fishing-only area; unlawful for catch-and-release.
- Hooks: 8/0 or smaller size, barbless or pinched barbs required, and only one treble hook per line for all paddlefish snagging.
- Gaffs, no longer than 4.5 feet in length, may be used to land a paddlefish that will be harvested. Gaffs are unlawful to land a paddlefish or other fish species that will be released.
- Forward Facing Sonar: The use of forward-facing sonar (to include Garmin Livescope™, Humminbird MEGA Live Imaging™, Lowrance ActiveTarget Live Sonar®, and all other live sonar technology) is illegal in the state of Montana to aid in snagging paddlefish. Side-imaging sonar, down-imaging sonar, and 2D sonar is allowed.
- Any tag inadvertently locked shut or electronically validated prior to attachment to a paddlefish shall be void and is not replaceable. Any altered or modified tag is void. **Voided or lost tags are not replaceable.**
- Harvested paddlefish must be tagged or e-tagged immediately and removed from the river by the end of the day (9 p.m. MST).

Mandatory Paddlefish Harvest Reporting

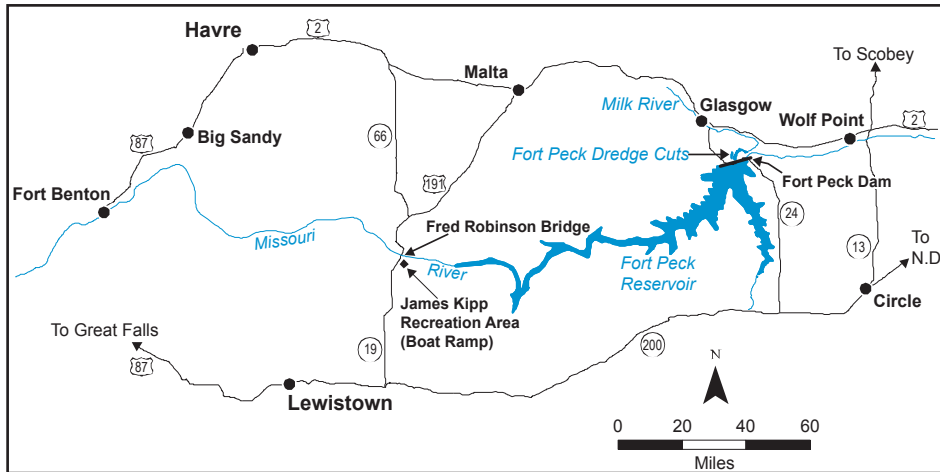
- Anglers are required to report the harvest of any paddlefish according to the specific reporting time and methods for each tag area.
 - **White Tag:** Within 48 hours of harvest, options include on-site at fisheries check station, phone hotline (1-877-FWP-WILD or 406-444-0356), or online at myfwp.mt.gov.
 - **Blue Tag:** Within 48 hours of harvest, options include on-site at fisheries check station or roving crews, phone hotline (1-877-FWP-WILD or 406-444-0356), or online at myfwp.mt.gov.
 - **Yellow & Green Tag:** by 9 p.m. the day of harvest or prior to transporting a paddlefish or fillets from the harvest location (by vehicle or boat). Reporting limited to the phone hotline (1-877-FWP-WILD or 406-444-0356) or online at myfwp.mt.gov. Anglers must obtain and retain the "reference number" provided by the phone hotline as a transport authorization number. Unlawful to possess an untagged paddlefish or fillets and unlawful to transport a paddlefish without a "reference number."
- For all tag areas (white, blue, yellow, green), anglers may transport an unreported paddlefish harvest due to lack of cell phone communication services, once in communication services a person shall have 48 hours to report the paddlefish harvest.
- Anglers reporting a harvested paddlefish will provide the following information: Angler tag number, jaw tag number (if present), length (eye-tail fork), sex, date of harvest and harvest location. Additional information that may be collected on-site includes weight and age structure (jaw section).

Standard Paddlefish Regulations

- All paddlefish anglers must purchase a paddlefish tag, a conservation license, and the required fishing license (see license requirements pages 14-15 in the 2025 MT Fishing Regulations). All licenses must be in the angler's immediate possession while fishing.
- **Daily and Possession Limits and Tags:** One paddlefish per season per angler. Anglers may select only one of the following areas, and may only fish in the area selected:
 - Upper Missouri River, upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton - **White Tag**
 - Fort Peck Dredge Cuts (west of Park Grove Bridge and Nelson Dredge) on the Missouri River - **Blue Tag**
 - Yellowstone River from upstream edge of Tongue River confluence to Sullivan Creek (downstream of Calypso Bridge, west of Terry) and Glendive Black Bridge to North Dakota Line - **Yellow Tag**
 - Missouri River downstream of Fort Peck Dam to ND Line - **Green Tag**
- Unlawful to possess an untagged paddlefish or part of one. If anglers fillet a paddlefish, they must retain the fish back and dorsal fin (top fin) where the tag is attached and sealed to the fish.
- Angler tag must remain with processed fish until consumed.
- Unlawful for an individual to sell any portion of a paddlefish including eggs (processed or unprocessed) as prescribed by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

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Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Dam



1) Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton (White Tag)

Upper Missouri paddlefish drawing; paddlefish harvest tags are awarded through a drawing with 1,000 licenses available. Anglers must apply individually and may apply as a party (up to five people). Applications can be submitted either online at fwp.mt.gov or at an FWP office.

- Bonus Points: An applicant may purchase one bonus point per year; either at the time of application or between July 1 and Sept. 30 of the current year if you did not apply. Applications must be received by FWP no later than 5 p.m. April 1.
- Applicants unsuccessful in the drawing are issued a Catch-and-Release Paddlefish License.
- Paddlefish Snagging: open May 1 to June 15 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. (MST) daily.
- Catch-and-release snagging: open May 1 to June 15 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. A Catch-and-Release License is required for snag and release fishing.
- All paddlefish caught while snag-and-release fishing must be released immediately, not gaffed, and must remain partially submerged in water at all times to avoid injury to the fish.

2) Fort Peck Dredge Cuts (west of Park Grove Bridge and Nelson Dredge) (Blue Tag)

- Bow and Arrow: open July 1 through Aug. 31 for paddlefish. One paddlefish harvested per angler.
- Archery only. Snagging prohibited.
- Blue Tags are available via electronic tag (e-tag) only. No clip will be issued.

3) Yellowstone River from upstream edge of Tongue River confluence to Sullivan Creek (downstream of Calypso Bridge, west of Terry) and Glendive Black Bridge to North Dakota Line (Yellow Tag)

- Fishery is managed under a harvest target, in combination with the green tag, so annual harvest will not exceed 1,000 paddlefish. FWP will announce a 24-hour closure of the harvest season through a public news release. Closure can be immediate at Intake FAS (Intake Dam to ½ mile downstream) or Sidney Bridge FAS to prevent exceeding the estimated harvest target. Other yellow tag areas will close as noted in the 24-hour notice. For current information on harvest status call the Miles City FWP office at 406-234-0900.
- Paddlefish snagging within a boat is lawful only while boat is beached (parked) on shore or exposed island; once a paddlefish is hooked, boats can be used to follow and land paddlefish.
- Paddlefish Harvest Snagging: open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from May 15 through June 15 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. (MST), unless closed earlier by FWP.
- Unlawful to release a paddlefish on a harvest day.

- **Paddlefish Catch-and-Release Snagging:** open Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays from May 15 through June 15 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. (MST) daily, unless closed earlier by FWP.
 - Participation restricted to anglers with an unused current year paddlefish tag.
 - All paddlefish caught on catch-and-release days must be released immediately, not gaffed, and must remain partially submerged in water at all times (including fish landed by boat), to avoid injury to the fish.

Paddlefish snagging is prohibited within entire length (2.0 miles) of the Intake Bypass Channel (closure defined as sections of the bypass channel with streambanks on both sides).

4) Missouri River downstream of Fort Peck Dam to ND Line (Green Tag)*

*Paddlefish movement up the Missouri River is limited to years with high flow; large concentrations of fish may not be available every year.

- Paddlefish Snagging: open May 15 to June 15 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. (MST) daily.
- Fishery is managed under a harvest target in combination with the Yellow Tag so annual harvest will not exceed 1,000 paddlefish. FWP will announce a 24-hour closure of the harvest season through a public news release. For current information on harvest status, call the Miles City FWP office at 406-234-0900 or Glasgow FWP office at 406-228-3700.
- An unused green paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish. The tag must be properly placed on the first paddlefish caught and landed.
- Catch and release is not permitted.
- Snagging in the Milk River is not permitted.

Yellowstone and Lower Missouri Rivers

