

# 2025

# FISHING

**MONTANA FWP** | Fishing Regulations



Photo by: Brent Taylor

For details on how to use regulations see page 4  
**TURN IN POACHERS: [tipmont.mt.gov](http://tipmont.mt.gov)**

## Letter from the Director

Montana continues to offer some of the most spectacular experiences for anglers of all types. From fly fishing to bait fishing to ice fishing and even spear fishing. These diverse opportunities reflect the variety of anglers we see across the state, both resident and non-resident.



You are holding this book of regulations because you appreciate the quality and abundance of fishing opportunities in Montana, and because you want to help protect those opportunities for future generations of anglers. This year, FWP changed the regulation process to give you a louder voice in developing proposals and changes to ensure we had ample public input before the Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the final set of regulations. These regulations are a key tool in protecting the health of fish populations and maintaining a quality angling experience, no matter where you are in the state.

A couple of things worth highlighting this year with our fisheries work. In southeast Montana, the Intake Bypass is allowing native species, like paddlefish and pallid sturgeon to migrate up the Yellowstone River and into its tributaries in the first time in decades. This herculean project, made possible by the collaboration of many partners, proves that conservation achievements happen when we come together.

Montana remains free of invasive mussels also due to the effort of the boating and fishing public. When you clean, drain and dry your boat and fishing gear and when you stop at an aquatic invasive species (AIS) check station, you are helping FWP protect our waters. Once AIS are established, they pose a threat to Montana's environment, economy, recreation, and human health. With your continued vigilance and participation, we can keep Montana's waters a safe and enjoyable resource.

In southwest Montana, FWP and partners are working diligently to understand and reverse trout declines in some of our most popular rivers. While our staff is busy with research in the field, success on this effort will only be possible with the help of anglers. More to come this year as this effort continues.

Help of the angling community is also important when the summers are hot and dry, as is too often the case. When FWP needs to post fishing restrictions and closures to respond to drought and other habitat concerns, we need your help in complying with the restrictions to ensure fish health. Your help here contributes a great deal to the sustainability of Montana's fisheries.

Good luck this year as you take to the water,

Handwritten signature of Christy Clark in black ink.

Christy Clark  
FWP Director

# THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL

## Highlights and Reminders

Over 50 fishing regulations were changed for the 2025 fishing season. Please check the regulations before your next outing. Some important changes to know are:

- Combined trout district standards have changed for the western and central districts. See pages 23 (western district standards) and 50 (central district standards) for changes and check all exceptions in these districts.
- Spearfishing regulations in the Western District have changed to include persons swimming or submerged in waters open to fishing, or as otherwise noted under District Exceptions. To ensure everyone's safety, please refer to page 21 of these regulations and page 6 of Montana Boating Laws found at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov).
- Flathead Lake regulation for lake whitefish has changed. See page 23.
- Any smallmouth bass caught on Placid Lake must be immediately killed, kept, and reported to FWP within 24 hours. For more information see page 39.
- Paddlefish seasons and regulations have changed significantly on pages 75-78.
- "Artificial lures only" exceptions are intended to mean no live or dead bait.

## Emergency Fishing Regulations/Closures

FWP may announce short-term emergency fishing restrictions or closures in response to biological or environmental conditions. Sport fishing regulations in this booklet for the designated waters will be suspended, and fishing may be curtailed or disallowed for the duration of the emergency period announced by the department. In recent years, many Montana streams have experienced drought conditions that have led to Hoot-owl fishing restrictions (2pm-Midnight) or closures. Low stream flows can force trout to congregate in pools, making them more susceptible to anglers. Warm water temperatures can cause considerable stress to trout and can be fatal to fish handled by anglers. Check the FWP website, your local newspaper, or call your regional FWP office to find out about emergency regulations/closures.

## Regulations Adopted by the F&W Commission

By order of the Fish and Wildlife Commission (commission), the seasons, limits, and regulations listed here shall govern the 2025 fishing seasons (a fishing season runs from March 1 through the following February). These regulations were adopted by the commission on Nov. 12, 2024, and will be valid March 1, 2025, through the end of Feb. 2026. The commission may formally adopt changes to these fishing regulations, including emergency regulations/closures or corrections. Any changes to these regulations will appear on the FWP website [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov). Emergency regulations/closures are posted at access sites. Anglers must check the website to make sure they are in compliance with fishing regulations. **Discrimination Prohibited**-This program receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you need more information, please write to: Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20260.

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## How To Use These Regulations

**Follow these easy steps:**

- 1) Determine the fishing district that you will be in and read the district's standard regulations. These are the regulations and limits that apply to a majority of waters in the district.

**WESTERN FISHING DISTRICT – page 23**

**CENTRAL FISHING DISTRICT – page 50**

**EASTERN FISHING DISTRICT – page 79**

Check if the specific water you will be fishing is listed in the District Exceptions to Standard Regulations (waters are listed alphabetically). If the water you plan to fish is identified, the exceptions take the place of the standard regulations for those items listed (i.e. season, daily limits, etc.). If not listed, the District Standard Regulations apply.

- 2) If you don't find the water you are looking for listed in the district exceptions, use the standard regulations for the district you are fishing in. If you don't find a species you are looking for in the exceptions for your water, use the standard regulations for the district.
- 3) Edits to the adopted 2025 regulations are available on the FWP website at: [fwp.mt.gov/fish/regulations/](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish/regulations/).

2025 GENERAL FISHING SEASON		
District	Rivers and Streams	Lakes and Reservoirs
<b>Western District</b>	Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30, unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	Open all year.
<b>Central District</b>	Open all year unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	
<b>Eastern District</b>	Open all year unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	
Fishing is allowed at all hours during open fishing seasons unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.		
If you don't find the water you are looking for listed in the district exceptions, use the standard regulations for the district you are fishing in.		

### Definitions

**ANGLING/FISHING:** Angling or fishing means to capture or attempt to capture fish, or the act of a person possessing any instrument, article, or substance for the purpose of taking fish in any location that a fish might inhabit.

**ARTIFICIAL LURE:** Any item designed to attract fish. These include, but are not limited to, flies, hard plastic or wood lures (stick baits and plugs), soft plastic imitations, metal spoons, lead head lures, bladed lures, spinners, and spinner baits. Artificial lures are considered single devices regardless of the number of hooks. A lure with multiple hooks may not be connected to another lure.

**ATTENDED LINE:** A line with/without a pole held in hand or under immediate control. When used through the ice, the angler need not be in immediate control but must be in the vicinity and in visual contact with the line.

**CALENDAR DAY:** A 24-hour period from midnight to midnight.

**DAILY LIMIT:** The number of fish that may be legally taken during a calendar day. A fish when landed and not immediately released becomes part of the bag limit of the person originally hooking the fish even if the fish is donated to another person.

you receive fish from another angler, those fish also become part of your daily limit.

**DRAINAGE:** All of the waters comprising a watershed, including tributary rivers, streams, sloughs, ponds, and lakes that contribute to the water supply of the watershed.

**DRESSED FISH:** A fish that has been cleaned by removing the entrails. Dressed fish also may be filleted and/or have their head, gills, and scales removed.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** Species in imminent danger of extinction throughout their range and listed by state or federal regulation.

**FISHING ACCESS SITE (FAS):** An area adjacent to a stream or lake that has been acquired by FWP to allow anglers access to a water body. Fishing access sites are funded in part by Fishing License fees, state park light weight vehicle registration fees, and Conservation License fees.

**FISHING FROM BOATS/VESSELS:** Fishing while on any boat or vessel. When a water is designated as closed to fishing from boats/vessels, anglers may not fish from a boat or vessel, but may use a boat or vessel to access wade fishing opportunities. An angler must be completely out of the boat or vessel while wade fishing.

**FLOAT FISHING:** Any fishing from a boat or vessel, or wade fishing when fishing access is gained by boat or vessel. When a water is designated as closed to float fishing, an angler may not fish from a boat, and may not wade fish in the river or stream, or from the bank or shoreline of the river or stream, when access is gained by boat or vessel.

**FLOAT OUTFITTING:** The operation of any boat or vessel for the commercial purpose of float fishing by a fishing outfitter or fishing guide.

**GAFF:** A hook attached directly to a pole (metal or wooden shaft) or other device. Use of gaffs is permitted only to help land a fish that was lawfully hooked.

**GAME FISH:** All species of the family Salmonidae (trout, salmon, arctic grayling, whitefish, cisco, and chars); all species of the genus *Sander* (sauger and walleye); all species of the genus *Esox* (northern pike and tiger muskie); all species of the genus *Micropterus* (bass); all species of the genus *Polyodon* (paddlefish); all species of the family Acipenseridae (sturgeon); the genus *Lota* (burbot or ling); the species *Perca flavescens* (yellow perch); all species of the genus *Pomoxis* (crappie); and the species *Ictalurus punctatus* (channel catfish).

Bull trout are defined as any trout with white leading margins on the lower fins and no markings on the dorsal fin. (Note: it is unlawful to intentionally fish for bull trout in any waters unless specifically authorized in the Western Fishing District Regulations.)

Cutthroat trout are defined as any trout with a red or orange stripe under its jaw. See the inside cover for an identification (ID) key (page 89).

Sauger are defined as any *Sander* (sauger/walleye) with multiple small, distinct black spots on the spiny (first) dorsal fin ray membranes.

**HOOK:** A hook is a single, double, or treble point attached to a single shank or an artificial lure.

**HOOP NET:** A cylindrical or conical net distended by a series of hoops or frames, covered by web netting. The net has one or more internal funnel-shaped throats whose tapered ends are directed inward from the mouth.

**LEGALLY TAKEN:** Any fish caught using legal methods and not immediately released alive.

**LENGTH:** Measure the greatest length from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. Place the fish on a flat surface and squeeze the lobes of the tail fin together so as to achieve the greatest length. Do not measure over the curve of the body.

**LIVE BAIT:** Live bait are animals such as meal worms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians, and insects, which may be used as live bait on all waters not restricted to artificial flies and lures. Live bait includes fish only as specified in Live Bait sections for the Central and Eastern Fishing Districts. No live fish can be used as live bait in the Western Fishing District. Sculpins may not be used as bait live or dead in the Western Fishing District.

**MAINSTEM:** In a drainage, the mainstem is the primary stream or river into which most tributaries flow.

**MOTORBOAT:** A vessel, including a personal watercraft or pontoon, propelled by any machinery/motor/engine of any description, whether or not the machinery/motor/engine is the principal source of propulsion. The term includes boats temporarily equipped with detachable motors/engines.

**Nongame FISH:** Any wild fish not otherwise legally classified by statute or regulation.

**NOODLING:** A technique for catching fish by hand. It is unlawful to catch fish by hand in any district.

**PERMANENT RESIDENCE:** The physical abode or structure you maintain as your principal, legal residence. A person may have only one permanent residence.

**POSSESSION LIMIT:** The number of fish that may be possessed at any time in any form: fresh, stored in freezers or lockers, salted, smoked, dried, canned, or preserved.

**RESERVOIR:** A body of water artificially impounded behind a man-made dam that extends upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s) or river. Reservoirs do not include waters incidentally impounded on a stream or river by a structure such as a check dam for irrigation, a headgate to divert water for irrigation, or similar structures. Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. An imaginary line connecting the reservoir shoreline across the mouth of the stream marks the boundary between reservoir and stream/river, and the boundary will move as reservoir levels change. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks. Stream regulations apply upstream from the mouth on the reservoir and often are managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations.

**SALMONIDAE:** Any species of trout, char, salmon, arctic grayling, cisco, or whitefish. Wild salmonids possess an adipose fin (small fleshy fin on the back near the tail); hatchery-reared fish sometimes have had this fin intentionally removed.

**SEINE:** A net, usually suspended between two poles, which is pulled through the water to capture fish for bait. Seines used for this purpose must not exceed 12 feet in length and 4 feet in width.

**SETLINE:** A line or lines with or without a pole set to catch fish without the angler being present or within immediate control. The angler's name, phone number, or an individual identifying number issued by the department must be attached. Setlines are not allowed in the Western Fishing District.

**SNAGGING:** A technique of angling in which a hook or hooks are cast into the water and manipulated to embed the hook or hooks into the body of the fish. You have snagged a fish if: (a) you are fishing in a manner that the fish does not voluntarily take the hook in its mouth, or (b) if you accidentally hook the fish in a part of the body other than the mouth.

**SPEAR:** Any sharp-pointed instrument, with or without barbs, used to capture and/or kill fish by penetrating the body. Usually a spear consists of a shaft with a sharp head or point. Spears may be hand-propelled or propelled with a spring or rubber band.

**SPECIES OF CONCERN:** Native Montana species with limited habitats and/or limited numbers in the state. Such species are at risk of becoming threatened.

**STREAM MOUTH:** The downstream point defined as a straight line running from the most downstream extremity on one stream bank to the most downstream extremity on the other stream bank or a point defined and marked by FWP (also see Reservoir definition).

**THREATENED SPECIES:** Species that may become endangered within the foreseeable future without conservation measures.

**TRIBUTARY:** Any watercourse that flows into a body of water, including tributaries to a tributary.

**VESSEL:** Every type of watercraft or boat capable of being used as a means of

transportation on water except devices that are propelled entirely by kicking fins and the floater sits in the water, such as inner tubes (motor vehicle type), float tubes (belly boats), air mattresses, and sailboards when used without mechanical propulsion by an individual. Contact your local warden for more information.

**WASTE OF FISH OR GAME:** To purposely waste any part of a game fish suitable for food by transporting, hanging, or storing the carcass or flesh in a manner that renders it unfit for human consumption; or, to abandon or dispose of, in the field or water, the carcass or flesh of any game fish suitable for food; or, to use the carcass or flesh of any game fish as bait except as authorized in the bait regulations.

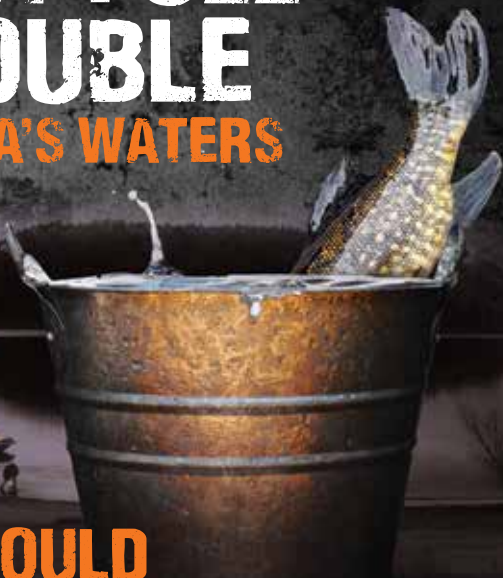
### DAM CLOSURES AND USE RESTRICTIONS

In the interest of public health and safety, certain areas above and below most dams are closed to the public. These restrictions include areas where no public access is allowed below the ordinary high-water mark. The restricted areas are identified and delineated by signs and/or boat restraining systems.

The following dams are closed to all boating, sailing, floating, swimming, fishing, or other recreational activity as marked by boat restraining systems or as posted to restrict access. Other dams not listed here may also be posted for restricted access. For more information, call FWP at 406-444-2449, or contact the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) 406-293-7751, x255, AVISTA 1-800-227-9187, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) 406-387-5241, CSKT 406-883-2888, NorthWestern Energy (NWE) 888-467-2669 or PacificCorp Energy 503-813-6666.

Western District	
Big Fork Dam (PacifiCorp, Lake County)	Libby Dam (ACOE, Lincoln County)
Hungry Horse Dam (BOR, Flathead County)	Noxon Rapids Dam (AVISTA, Sanders County)
Kerr Dam (CSKT, Lake County)	Thompson Falls Dam (NWE, Sanders County)
Central District	
Black Eagle Dam (NWE, Cascade County)	Morony Dam (NWE, Cascade County)
Canyon Ferry Dam (BOR, Lewis & Clark County)	Rainbow Dam (NWE, Cascade County)
Clark Canyon Dam (BOR, Beaverhead County)	Ruby Dam (DNRC, Madison County)
Cochrane Dam (NWE, Cascade County)	Ryan Dam (NWE, Cascade County)
Hauser Dam (NWE, Lewis & Clark County)	Tiber Dam (BOR, Liberty County)
Hebgen Dam (NWE, Gallatin County)	Yellowtail Dam (BOR, Bighorn County)
Holter Dam (NWE, Lewis & Clark County)	Yellowtail Afterbay Dam (BOR, Bighorn County)
Madison Dam (NWE, Madison County)	-
Eastern District	
Anita Dam (BOR, Yellowstone County)	Fresno Dam (BOR, Hill County)
Fort Peck Dam (ACOE, Valley County)	Tongue River Reservoir (DNRC, Big Horn County)

**THERE'S A**  
**BUCKET FULL**  
**OF TROUBLE**  
**IN MONTANA'S WATERS**



**AND IT COULD**  
**CHANGE MONTANA FISHING**  
**→ FOREVER**

★ **YOU HAVE A SAY!**

**REPORT OUTLAW FISH INTRODUCTIONS:**  
**TIPMONT.MT.GOV**

**YOUR IDENTITY WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL**

**REWARDS UP TO \$1000**  
**FROM TIP-MONT**

**ADDITIONAL REWARD**  
**UP TO \$13,850\***

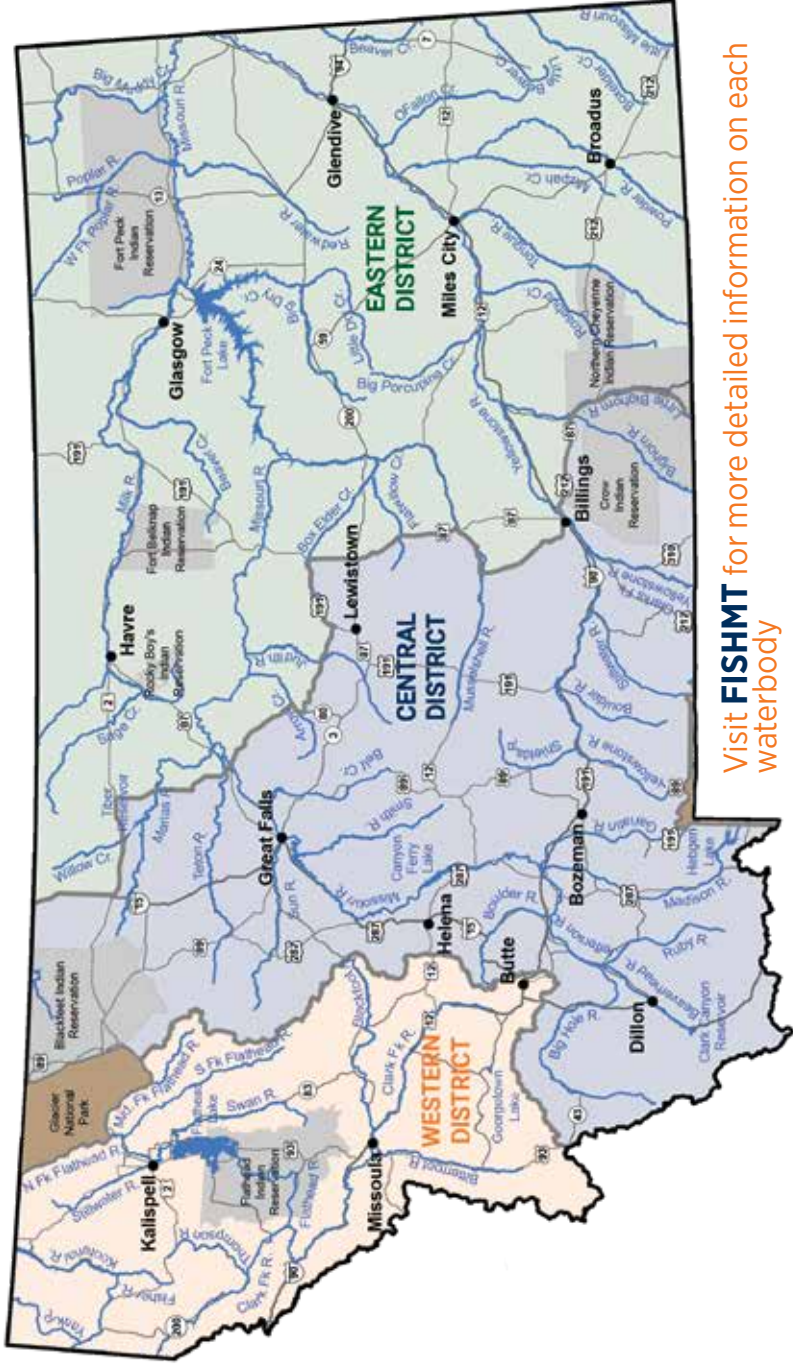
\*Additional rewards totaling up to \$13,850 are also offered by Montana Trout Unlimited, Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana, Walleyes Unlimited of Montana, Montana Wildlife Federation, Montana Pikemasters, Montana Catfish Association, Invasive Species Action Network, Montana Bass Federation Nation, and Montana Bass Federation.

**Protecting**  
**Montana's**  
**Waters:**  
**We're in this**  
**together.**





# Montana Waterways Map



Visit **FISHMT** for more detailed information on each waterbody

## Montana Fishing Access Sites

With over 350 fishing access sites to choose from across the state, anglers enjoy good access to the state's streams and rivers, lakes and reservoirs. You may download a field guide to fishing access sites located on Montana's streams, rivers, and lakes, or you may use the interactive FWP Fishing Access Site Search at [myfwp.mt.gov/fishMT/explore](http://myfwp.mt.gov/fishMT/explore) to find a fishing access site.



The field guide describes the fishing access sites FASes located on Montana's streams, rivers and lakes that vary in size from less than one acre to several hundred acres. Montana's FAS program provides public access to high quality waters for angling, boating, rafting, and other recreation opportunities. In addition, FASes are often popular areas for hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, bird watching, picnicking, etc. The funding to purchase, develop, and maintain these important sites comes from the sale of conservation licenses, fishing licenses, state motorboat and vehicle registrations, camping, commercial use, and federal sport fish restoration funds.

### Fees

A valid conservation license is required of every person aged 12 years and older using a fishing access site for any reason. Additional fees may be charged for camping where overnight camping is allowed, and for commercial activities. Groups of more than 30 using an FASes are required to obtain a Special Use Permit.

### Commercial Use

A Commercial Use Permit is required to conduct commercial activities at fishing access sites. Guides, assistants, or contractors working for a licensed outfitter or water-based service provider are required to have an FAS Permit when conducting commercial activities at fishing access sites. FAS Permits can be purchased on the online license system (OLS). Permits and special restrictions are in place on some rivers in Montana ([fwp.mt.gov/recreation/permits/floating/](http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/permits/floating/)). Please contact the Regional FWP administrative office or visit the FWP website for more information.

### Camping

Many of the FASes are managed as day-use only, but camping is allowed at 97 locations. An overnight camping fee is charged at many of the sites and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

FASes are primitive or semi-primitive sites. They do not have electricity, running water, or dump stations. Not all sites are designed for access by larger recreational vehicles. It may be necessary to physically inspect the facility before pulling in if the parking area is not visible from the access road.

Additional camping opportunities with higher levels of development are available at Montana's state parks and at other locations throughout the state. Please refer to the state parks brochure for a list of state parks with campgrounds.

# Protect the waters you love to fish!

## Stop the Transport of Aquatic Invasive Species

### When transporting watercraft **WITHIN** Montana:

- All watercraft are required to stop at all open watercraft inspection stations. Failure to stop could result in a fine of up to \$500.
- All watercraft crossing the Continental Divide into the Columbia River Basin or into the Flathead River Basin must be inspected before launching.
- Boats with ballasts or bladders, such as wakeboard or wake-surfing boats, crossing the Continental Divide into the Columbia River Basin must obtain a decontamination before launching.

### When transporting watercraft **INTO** Montana:

- All watercraft entering Montana are required to be inspected before launching, including residents returning to Montana.
- Boats with ballasts or bladders, such as wakeboard or wake-surfing boats, that intend to launch on Montana waters must obtain a decontamination before launching.
- Nonresident boats (motorized and non-motorized) launching on Montana waters must purchase the Vessel AIS Prevention Pass. Motorized fee = \$30. Non-motorized fee = \$10. Pass is valid thru Dec. 31. Learn more and purchase at [CleanDrainDryMT.com](http://CleanDrainDryMT.com).

### It is illegal to:

- Transport AIS into or within Montana.
- Transport live fish and bait fish into Montana.
- Transport surface water.
- Move live fish, aquatic plants or invertebrates from one waterbody to another without FWP authorization.
- Release unwanted bait fish into water.



To find a watercraft inspection station

Visit [CleanDrainDryMT.com](http://CleanDrainDryMT.com)

Call 406-444-2440

## What Do I Need to Fish in Montana?

Age	Conservation License	AIS Prevention Pass 16 & Older	License Fee	Total Cost
0-11	No license required. Must observe all limits and regulations.			
Resident 12 - 15	\$4.00	No Fee	\$5.00 for 2 consecutive calendar days	\$9.00
			\$10.50 for season	\$14.50
Resident 16 - 17, 62 and older	\$4.00	\$2.00	\$5.00 for 2 consecutive calendar days	\$11.00
			\$10.50 for season	\$16.50
Resident Disabled 18-61	\$8.00	\$2.00	\$10.50 for season	\$20.50
Resident 18-61	\$8.00	\$2.00	\$5.00 for 2 consecutive calendar days	\$15.00
			\$21.00 for season	\$31.00
Nonresident 12-15	\$10.00	No Fee	\$14.00 for 1 calendar day	\$24.00
			\$56.00 for 5 consecutive calendar days	\$66.00
			\$100.00 for season	\$110.00
Nonresident 16 and older	\$10.00	\$7.50	\$14.00 for 1 calendar day	\$31.50
			\$56.00 for 5 consecutive calendar days	\$73.50
			\$100.00 for season	\$117.50
Nonresident Motorized Vessel Prevention Pass		\$30 per vessel good through Dec. 31 of each year		
Nonresident Non-Motorized Vessel Prevention Pass		\$10 per vessel good through Dec. 31 of each year		
<b>Resident Sportsman and Nonresident Combination Licenses include a Season Fishing License.</b>				

A valid Fishing License (see license requirements table above) is required for all types of fishing on state waters. To fish in Montana, most anglers need a Conservation License and a Fishing License, and also an AIS Prevention Pass, see table above. You must have your Fishing License in your possession while fishing. A license on your smart phone is acceptable.

A Conservation License is needed before you can buy any fishing or hunting license. Conservation License applicants are required to provide the last four digits of their social security number in addition to the information usually requested. A valid driver's license or a valid photo ID is required to purchase a license.

A Fishing License allows a person to fish for and possess any fish or aquatic invertebrate authorized by the state's fishing regulations. It is nontransferable and nonrefundable. The license enables one to fish from March 1 through the end of February of the following year.

The AIS Prevention Pass is required for individuals 16 and over who fish in Montana.

**Resident Licenses:** To qualify for a resident license, a person must meet the criteria set out in MCA 87-2-102 and 202. To be a legal resident eligible to purchase a resident Fishing License, you must have physically been living in Montana for at least 180 consecutive days (six months) immediately before purchasing any resident license; you must file Montana state income tax returns as a resident, if you are required to file; you must have registered your vehicles in Montana; if you are registered to vote, you must be registered in Montana; and you may not possess or apply for any resident hunting, fishing or trapping privileges in another state or country. At the time of purchase, a person must present a valid Montana driver's license, a valid Montana driver's examiner's identification card, or a tribal identification card. If unsure of your residency status, contact a regional FWP office.

**Paddlefish:** All anglers must purchase a paddlefish tag to fish for paddlefish. To purchase a tag, all anglers must have a valid Conservation License, an AIS Prevention Pass and a Fishing License. Limit of one paddlefish tag (one fish) per person:

**Resident - \$6.50 each Nonresident - \$15 each**

Paddlefish harvest only tags will be available via lottery draw (\$5 drawing fee) for the Upper Missouri River paddlefish season (White Tag) only. Anglers need to apply individually or as a party (up to five people) before 5 p.m. March 22, 2025. See page 76 for specifics on the Upper Missouri paddlefish drawing.

**Bull Trout:** Lake Koocanusa, Hungry Horse Reservoir, and part of the South Fork Flathead River are open for a regulated and experimental bull trout angling season. When fishing for bull trout, each angler must have in possession a valid bull trout Catch Card for the specific water he/she is fishing. Anglers may select only one of the following areas: A) Lake Koocanusa, or B) Hungry Horse Reservoir and South Fork Flathead River. All other waters are closed to intentional angling for bull trout year around.

Catch Cards are free of charge and are available at the FWP Region 1 office in Kalispell and at the U.S. Forest Service Spotted Bear Ranger Station. Applications for a catch card are available at the FWP Region 1 office or online at [fwp.mt.gov/fish/license/](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish/license/). Completed applications must be presented at the regional headquarters or mailed to FWP Bull Trout Permit, 490 North Meridian, Kalispell MT 59901.

**Free Fishing Mother's Day and Father's Day Weekends  
May 10-11 and June 14-15, 2025**

By Montana law, each year on Mother's Day and Father's Day weekends any person (resident or nonresident) may fish for any fish within this state without obtaining a Fishing License as long as they abide by the seasons, restrictions, and bag limits listed in these Fishing Regulations. The two exceptions to this are paddlefish and bull trout fishing, both of which require the purchase of a Conservation, Fishing, and AIS Prevention Licenses. Fishing for paddlefish also requires a paddlefish tag. A catch card is required to fish for bull trout.

**Montana Resident With Disability:** Montana FWP seeks to ensure that its programs, services, and activities are accessible to persons with disabilities. Montana FWP provides many representative recreational opportunities. To learn more or to request modifications or accommodations relative to a disability, contact FWP at 406-444-2449.

- Resident Person With a Disability must purchase a **Conservation License - \$8**, an **AIS Prevention Pass - \$2** and a **Fishing License - \$10.50**. To qualify, a person must be permanently and substantially disabled. Applications are available on the FWP website, however, they can only be certified at a regional FWP office or by mail.
- Lifetime Fishing License for the Blind - **\$10 plus an annual \$2 AIS Prevention Pass**. Visit the FWP website for an application.

**Veterans Administration Patients:** Permits are available for patients residing at VA hospitals and residents of state institutions, except the state penitentiary. These free permits are available on-site at the VA hospital or state institution. Contact Enforcement at 406-444-2452.

**Legion of Valor:** A Conservation License allows both residents and nonresidents, regardless of age, to fish. Legion of Valor membership card required to qualify. Available only at FWP offices.

**Care Facility:** The manager or director of an eligible facility licensed in Montana may apply for permission to take supervised residents fishing during activities approved by the facility. Licensed facilities include long-term care, personal care, home for persons with developmental disabilities, and home for persons with severe disabilities. Contact Enforcement 406-444-2452.

**Education Exemptions:** Free Fishing License exemptions are available for qualified educational events and fishing clinics. For information on these free educational exemptions, call 406-444-9943.

**Purple Heart:** Residents who have been awarded a Purple Heart, regardless of age, may fish and hunt upland game birds with a Conservation License issued by the department.

- Nonresidents who have been awarded a Purple Heart, regardless of age, may fish and hunt upland game birds with a Conservation License issued by the Department during expeditions arranged by a nonprofit organization that uses fishing and hunting as part of rehabilitation.
- Verification of Purple Heart and DD 214 Form required to qualify. Residents only available at FWP offices. Nonresidents only available at FWP Headquarters in Helena.

### Other Statewide Permit Requirements

**State School Trust Lands:** Your Conservation License provides anglers, hunters, and trappers access to legally accessible State School Trust Lands for fishing and hunting. Other recreational activities such as hiking and bird watching still require a Conservation License. Additional information regarding the rules, regulations, and restrictions governing these activities is available or contact the DNRC at 406-444-2074.

- Overnight use must not exceed the following limits: two consecutive days on leased land, 16 consecutive days within designated campgrounds or on unleased land.
- Motorized travel is only allowed on public roads or on designated roads.
- No open fires are allowed except in designated campground fire pits. Contained mechanical heat sources are allowed.

**Aquatic Invertebrates - Crayfish/Mussels:** A valid Fishing License is required to harvest crayfish for personal use (see "License/Permit Requirements" for specific license requirements). Crayfish may be taken in traps no larger than 24x12x12 inches. Freshwater mussel harvest or possession is prohibited in the Western and Central Fishing Districts. Mussels may be harvested for personal use in the Eastern Fishing District only. No Fishing License is required to harvest mussels.

**Commercial Collection of Aquatic Invertebrates and Mussels:** Persons wishing to collect aquatic invertebrates (such as leeches and aquatic insects) for sale or commercial distribution should contact their regional FWP office for information. In accordance with the Administrative Rules of Montana, Section 12.2.501, it is unlawful to take or possess freshwater mussels or their shells for sale or commercial distribution.

### Commercial Fishing Licenses

#### Bait Fish Seining: Commercial Harvest, \$10 Fee

- Contact regional FWP offices for a Bait Fish Seining License and a list of waters open to commercial seining: \$10 fee per year.
- A Bait Fish Seining License is required:
  - For persons 15 years of age or older to seine for or trap and transport bait fish for commercial purposes in Montana;
  - For any person who seines or traps for or has in his/her possession more than 24 dozen nongame bait fish.
- Nongame bait fish (fathead minnow, flathead chub, western silvery minnow, plains minnow, emerald shiner, longnose dace, lake chub, creek chub, longnose sucker, and white sucker) may be harvested commercially and transported in accordance with Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Section 12.7.201-12.7.206. See pages 87-88 for live bait fish identification. Live bait fish or leeches may not be imported into Montana for commercial or other purposes unless authorized by FWP. Bait fish may not be exported without FWP authorization. Call 406-452-6181 or go online at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov) for more information.

**Commercial Whitefish Fishing: A permit is required to sell whitefish.**

- **Hook and Line Permits:** Whitefish may be taken by hook and line for sale in the following waters-Flathead Lake north of the Flathead Reservation boundary, Flathead River north of Flathead Lake, Fisher River, Kootenai River, and Whitefish Lake.
- **Net/Seine Permits:** Whitefish may be taken from the Kootenai River and tributaries (within 1 mile of the Kootenai River). Application required; fee is \$200 plus a \$1,000 bond per year.

**Fishing Contests:** A permit from FWP is required for most fishing contests. Contact your local FWP office for information and an application or download an application from the FWP website.

**Hoop Net Fishing Permit:** A permit is required to use hoop nets. Permits are only available in the Eastern Fishing District. Contact FWP offices in Billings, Glasgow, or Miles City for information.

**Import Permits for Fish:** A permit is required to import live fish into Montana. Contact the FWP Fish Health Lab in Great Falls at 406-452-6181 or download an application from the FWP website.

**Indian Reservations and Tribal Lands:** Certain waters on Indian reservations and tribal lands may have special rules and permits. Specific information should be obtained from Reservation headquarters.

- The State of Montana and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes have entered into a cooperative agreement on the Flathead Reservation. A tribal permit is required to fish on waters within the exterior boundary of the reservation. Call tribal headquarters at 406-675-2700 for information.
- The State of Montana and the Fort Peck Tribes have entered into a cooperative agreement on the Fort Peck Reservation. A tribal permit is required to fish on waters within the exterior boundary of the reservation. Call tribal headquarters at 406-768-5305 for information.
- A State of Montana Fishing License is required to fish on the Bighorn River inside the boundaries of the Crow Reservation. A tribal permit is not required.

**National Parks:** Certain waters within National Parks have special rules. Specific information may be obtained from the park headquarters. For Glacier National Park, call 406-888-7800 and for Yellowstone National Park, call 307-344-7381.

**Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)**

- **Residents** – OHVs (ATV, UTV, dirtbike) must be registered and display a current off-highway decal to be used for off-road recreation on public lands (trails, frozen lakes, reservoirs) and a two year \$20 Resident Trail Pass for use on designated roads and trails. To be used on roads (county, state highways, etc.), an OHV must have a license plate and street-legal modifications. Register your OHV with the county treasurer.
- **Nonresidents** – OHVs registered in another state must purchase a nonresident permit to operate (anywhere) in Montana. Permits are good for one calendar year, cost \$35, and can be purchased from local vendors ([fwp.mt.gov/activities/off-highway-vehicles](http://fwp.mt.gov/activities/off-highway-vehicles)) or online at [ols.fwp.mt.gov](http://ols.fwp.mt.gov). Contact Montana State Parks OHV Program at 406-444-3750 with questions.

**Private Fish Ponds – License Requirements, \$10 application fee:** A person who owns or lawfully controls a private fish or ornamental pond may obtain a license from FWP to stock the pond with fish. Only lawfully purchased fish may be planted. Contact your local FWP office for more information and an application or download the application from the FWP website. No Fishing License is required to fish on licensed, privately stocked fish ponds. Fishing License requirements apply to all other ponds and/or waters on private land.

**Koi and Goldfish Ponds:** Must be registered with FWP. Registration forms are available online at [myfwp.mt.gov/fwpPub/koiPond](http://myfwp.mt.gov/fwpPub/koiPond) or from all FWP offices. There is no fee for registering a pond.

**Unattended Fishing Devices:** Any unattended fishing device (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or an individual identifying number issued by the department attached to it.

## Laws and Rules

**Beaver Ponds:** Beaver ponds on streams are governed by the same regulations that govern the streams.

**Boat and Motor Restrictions:** A complete, updated, copy of Montana Boating Laws can be obtained from any FWP office or FWP license providers. All passengers under the age of 12 must wear a personal flotation device (PFD) at all times when the boat is in motion if the boat is less than 26 feet long. A wearable, U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD must be available for each occupant of any boat.

**Check Stations:** Anglers and hunters are required to stop as directed at all designated check stations on the way to and from fishing and hunting areas, even if they have no fish or game to be checked.

**Closed Waters:** Waters operated as fish hatcheries and rearing ponds by FWP and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service shall be closed to fishing at all times. Waters in which FWP operates fish traps and other structures are closed to fishing as posted. Certain water-supply lakes, streams, and hazardous areas are also closed as posted.

**Crossbows:** Unlawful.

**Disposal of Dead Fish and Fish Entrails:** When you are in a boat on the water and fishing, it is acceptable to dispose of fish entrails in deep water in the lake, reservoir or river. When you are near or on the shore or bank, it is recommended that you bag all fish remains and dispose of the bag in an appropriate garbage receptacle. Help keep the shoreline clean for others. It is unlawful to discard game fish; however, dead nongame fish may be treated like fish entrails for disposal purposes (puncture the bladder first so the fish will sink).

**Family Fishing Waters:** Numerous waters across the state provide excellent fishing opportunities for young anglers. A few waters have been set aside exclusively for the use of young anglers. Waters posted as Family Fishing Waters are open to fishing during the entire year to persons 14 years of age and younger only with the exception of Indian Road Pond near Townsend (see District Exceptions). One rod allowed per child. There are 70 Family Fishing Waters in Montana. All Family Fishing Waters are listed under the Fish tab on the FWP website (see Additional Angling Resources).

**Fishing From Boats/Vessels, Float Fishing and Float Outfitting:** Are regulated on some rivers and streams (see District Exceptions for regulated waters). These regulations apply as follows:

- When a water is closed to **Fishing From Boats/Vessels**, an angler may not fish while on any boat or vessel. However, an angler may use a boat or vessel to access wade fishing opportunities. The angler must be completely out of the boat or vessel while wade fishing.
- When a water is closed to **Float Fishing**, an angler may not fish from a boat or vessel, and may not wade fish in the river or stream, or from the bank or shoreline of the river or stream, when fishing access is gained by boat or vessel.
- When a water is closed to **Float Outfitting**, the operation of any boat or vessel for the commercial purpose of float fishing by a fishing outfitter or fishing guide is prohibited.

**Fishing Methods:** Fish may be taken only by hook and line or other approved methods. Regulations for the taking of fish are listed in the standard regulations for each fishing district (see pages 23, 50 & 79).

### Handling and Transporting Legally Taken Fish

#### It is required that before transporting legally taken fish:

While a person is fishing, or while on the water, or on the ice:

- All fish in possession must be visibly identifiable to species.
- Unless size limits apply, fish may be cleaned prior to transport, so long as the entire skin remains attached to the fish or fillet for identification (see Disposal of Dead Fish and Fish Entrails above). Two fillets will be counted as one fish.
- If the catch is frozen prior to transport, each fish or fillet must be packaged so it can be counted.
- This does not prohibit the consumption of fish on the ice or water. However, the fish consumed are part of your daily limit.

Once off the water, fish may be dressed, filleted, and skin removed for transport to your permanent residence, unless size limits apply, under the following conditions:



- All fish can be counted and identified. Two fillets will be counted as one fish. If the catch is frozen prior to transport, each fish or fillet must be packaged so it can be counted.
- Salmonids (trout, salmon, arctic grayling, char and whitefish): the entire skin must be attached to the fillet for identification.

Transport of any live fish or crayfish is unlawful in the Western Fishing District.

## Ice Fishing

### Size of Hole

- In waters not open to spearing, the maximum size hole that may be used for ice fishing is 144 square inches or 12 inches in diameter.
- There is no size limit for a hole used for fishing with a spear.

**Shelters:** It is unlawful to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules:

Waste and Rubbish Disposal: Owners and occupants of shelters are required to keep their shelters (and the area immediately around them) free from rubbish and trash. Anglers must remove waste materials before they leave for the day.

Removal: Daily removal of shelters is required on some waterbodies. See district exceptions.

Removal After the Season: The owner of an ice fishing shelter shall remove it from the ice before it becomes irretrievable at the end of the season, or within five days from receipt of notification from FWP to remove the shelter.

**Irrigation Canals and Ditches:** Man-made irrigation canals and ditches are open to fishing year round unless stated otherwise in exceptions to standard regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers/streams. Anglers need to be aware that the Montana Stream Access Law does not apply to canals and ditches. Under Montana's trespass law, permission to access these waters is implied if the land is not posted, but that implied permission may be revoked at any time. It is best to obtain the explicit permission of the landowner. Where ditches cross land belonging to others, rights of the ditch owner versus those of the landowner vary. Therefore, always obey any sign clearly marking the ditch as closed to public access or fishing.

## Methods of Taking Fish

- Spears and bows are counted as lines for purposes of determining line limits.
- When multiple lines are allowed on a body of water, the number of lines shall not exceed the combination of attended lines, setlines, or spears. For example, while spearing for northern pike on Tongue River Reservoir in the winter (where the limit is six lines through the ice), an angler may only have five setlines in use.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and an individual identifying number issued by the department attached.

**Nets and Traps:** Landing nets may be used for landing hooked fish. See Bait Regulations for use of nets to harvest bait fish.

**Penalties:** Most fish and game violations are misdemeanors that are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and imprisonment for not longer than six months. The court may also order the forfeiture of any current hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses and the privilege to hunt, fish and trap, or use state lands for recreational purposes for a period set by the court.

Taking an over limit of fish will result in a fine plus restitution to the state for each fish over the limit. Restitution for bull trout may be up to \$500 per fish and for river arctic grayling, white sturgeon, and paddlefish restitution is \$300 per fish.

## Setlines

- Number of lines is the same as for hook and line limits. Setlines may be used in all waters unless prohibited in the District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.
- Setlines (unattended lines) must be checked by the owner at least once every 24 hours.
- The angler's name and phone number or name and an individual identifying number issued by the department must be attached to each setline.
- Setlines shall not be attached to jugs or other floating devices.
- Setlines are not allowed in the Western Fishing District.

**Sloughs:** Sloughs with surface water connecting to a river at any time during the year fall under the river regulations for that river, unless listed under the exceptions. Sloughs with no surface water connecting to a river at any time during the year fall under standard lake limits unless listed under the exceptions.

**Stream Access Law:** Under the Montana Stream Access Law, the public may use rivers and streams for recreational purposes up to the ordinary high-water marks. Although the law gives recreationists the right to use rivers and streams for water-related recreation, it does not give them the right to enter private lands bordering those streams or to cross private lands to gain access to streams without landowner permission.

**Trespass Law:** Montana's trespass law states that a member of the public has the privilege to enter private land only:

- With the explicit permission of the landowner or his/her agent, or
- When the landowner has failed to post a no-trespassing notice or mark legal accesses with 50 square inches of orange.

**Use of Attractor:** A bead fixed on a line or leader 2 inches or less from the eye of a bare hook is considered an artificial lure. Fishing with a bead that serves as an attractor more than 2 inches from the eye of a bare hook or artificial fly is considered snagging and is unlawful.

**It is Unlawful and a Misdemeanor:**

- To violate any regulations listed in this booklet.
- To introduce any fish or viable fish eggs into any waters without FWP permission.
- To refuse to show one's Fishing License upon demand.
- To refuse to show one's fish upon demand.
- To loan or transfer your Fishing License or tags to any person.
- To sell game fish except as prescribed by commission regulations.
- To leave or dump any dead animal, fish, garbage or litter in or on any state, federal or private property where public recreation is permitted.
- To stun or kill fish by using any carbide, lime, giant powder, dynamite, or other explosive compounds, or any corrosive or narcotic poison. To possess these substances within 100 feet of any stream where fish are found is unlawful.
- To hire or retain an unlicensed outfitter or guide.

**Unlawful Introductions**

- Fines of \$2,000 up to \$10,000 and imprisonment for up to one year.
- Liability for all costs to eliminate or mitigate the effects of the violation.
- Loss of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for at least five years.

**Waste of Fish or Game:** To purposely waste any part of a game fish suitable for food by transporting, hanging, or storing the carcass or flesh in a manner that renders it unfit for human consumption; or, to abandon or dispose of, in the field or water, the carcass or flesh of any game fish suitable for food; or, to use the carcass or flesh of any game fish as bait except as authorized in the bait regulations.

## General Information For Anglers

**Landowner Permission:** FWP recommends that recreationists obtain landowner permission to cross private land to access a stream. Complete rules are available at any FWP office.

**Catch-and-Release Angling:** Waters designated catch-and-release for one or more species of fish require that those fish be released alive promptly, with little or no delay. Before you start fishing in these waters, consider the following in order to give the fish you release the best possible chance to survive: 1) Artificial lures are preferred over bait to reduce deep hooking and catch-and-release mortality; 2) Single hooks are preferred over treble or multiple hooks because they are easier and quicker to remove; 3) Barbless hooks are recommended over barbed hooks because they are easier to remove and reduce release time; 4) Heavier gear is preferred over lighter gear because it makes it easier to land fish; and 5) Rubber or neoprene nets are preferable because they are less likely than nylon nets to catch hooks which increases release time.

## River Etiquette

- Be aware that boat access areas can be busy places; you may wish to fish in a location that is less congested.
- Do not encroach on another angler's space. Use the "visual rule of crowding" and attempt to keep out of sight of other anglers, if at all possible.
- Try not to monopolize a good fishing spot on the river. Fish for awhile, then move on.
- Boats should always yield to wade anglers, however, there are instances when the wading angler should yield to floaters, such as when there is no other channel for the floaters to navigate.
- When possible, avoid using the streambed as a pathway. This type of foot traffic can cause damage to the fragile aquatic habitat. Anglers should use the shoreline to travel from one point to the other, if doing so does not violate trespass and stream access laws.

## Releasing Fish

### To ensure a released fish has the best chance for survival:

- Play the fish as rapidly as possible. Do not play it to total exhaustion.
- Keep the fish in water as much as possible when handling and removing the hook.
- Remove the hook gently. Do not squeeze the fish or put your fingers in its gills. There are release devices available from most sporting/fishing stores to assist you, and the use of barbless hooks makes releasing fish easier.
- Set the hook quickly to avoid deep hooking the fish. If the fish is deeply hooked and must be released by regulation, cut the line inside the mouth opening. Do not yank the hook out, as some fish will survive with hooks in them. Anglers should strongly consider keeping fish deeply-hooked in the throat or gills if allowed by regulations on that waterbody.
- Release the fish only after it has gained its equilibrium. If necessary, gently hold the fish upright in the current facing upstream and move it slowly back and forth.
- Release the fish in quiet water close to the area where it was hooked.

### Lake/Reservoir fishing from boats:

- Fish caught from deep water may be unable to vent their air bladder and may "bloat." Puncturing the air bladder or "fizzing" is not recommended because it may cause infections. A simple release tool will facilitate releasing the fish in deep water and recompressing it quickly. All you need is a 50-foot cord, a weight, and a hook. Dull the hook, flatten the barb and attach the hook inline just above the weight with knots at the hook eye and bend. The hook should be pointing down toward the weight. Place the hook over the lower jaw of the fish and let the weight drop, pulling the fish down rapidly. A tug on the cord will release the fish.

**Federal Wildlife Refuges:** Certain waters on Federal Wildlife Refuges may have special rules. Specific information may be obtained from the headquarters of the federal refuge involved.

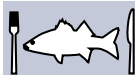
**Measuring Fish:** Measure the greatest length from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. Place the fish on a flat surface and squeeze the lobes of the tail fin together so as to achieve the greatest length. Do not measure over the curve of the body.

**Tagged Fish:** It is legal to harvest a radio-tagged fish, however, the radio tag must be returned to FWP. If you catch a tagged fish, please report the following information to any FWP office or online at [fwp.mt.gov/fish/report-your-catch](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish/report-your-catch)

1. The tag's number and color;
2. The date the fish was caught;
3. The species of the fish;
4. The fish's length and weight (close as possible);
5. Location of the catch (the body of water and distance from nearest landmark);
6. Whether the fish was kept or released; and
7. The name, address, and email address of the angler.

## Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has issued advisories for the consumption of fish from certain Montana waters. Fish from some Montana waters contain levels of chemicals that may be especially harmful to young children, nursing mothers, and childbearing women or persons frequently consuming fish. Information, advice, and additional details about fish consumption is available from the DPHHS, call 406-444-2837. This information is also available in a brochure titled "Montana Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines," which can be obtained at any FWP office and many license providers, or on the FWP website at: [fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish)



Waters with a fish consumption advisory and an exception to the standard fishing regulations are identified with a fish icon to help you identify places to pay special attention to when harvesting fish.

### General Guidelines to Reduce Your Health Risk

- **Keep smaller fish for eating.** They typically taste better and have had less time to accumulate contaminants than older, bigger fish.
- **Eat smaller meals when you eat big fish and eat them less often.**
- **Eat fish that are less likely to be contaminated.** Contaminants such as mercury and PCBs build up in large predatory fish such as walleye and lake trout. Their prey, such as yellow perch and rainbow trout, have less contaminants.
- **Clean and cook your fish properly.** Trim fish to remove fatty portions. Cook fish in a way that drains juices away from the meat.



The following waterbodies contain fish species with consumption advisories. More detailed information is available on the FWP website: [fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish)

Ackley Lake	Dailey Lake	Lake Helena	Rock Creek
Alder Gulch	Dry Fork Belt Creek	Lake Koocanusa	Seeley Lake
Bair Reservoir	East Fork Reservoir	Lake Marlin	Silver Creek
Basin Creek	Ennis Lake	Lake Mary Ronan	Snow Creek
Belt Creek	Firehole River	Lake McDonald	South Sandstone Reservoir
Big Spring Creek	Flathead Lake	Lee Metcalf Pond NWR	Spring Meadow Lake
Bighorn Lake and Afterbay Reservoir	Flint Creek	Leigh Lake	St. Mary Lake
Blacktail Creek	Fort Peck Reservoir	Libby ponds	Sun River
Boulder Creek	Fred Burr Creek	Lower Stillwater Lake	Swan Lake
Boulder River	Frenchman Reservoir	Lower Willow Creek Reservoir	Tenmile Creek
Bowman Lake (Glacier NP)	Fresno Reservoir	Madison River	Thompson Falls Reservoir
Browns Gulch	Georgetown Lake	Martinsdale Reservoir	Tongue River Reservoir
Bynum Reservoir	Gibbon River	Medicine Lake NWR	Upper Cold Lake
Cabinet Gorge Reservoir	Harrison Lake (Glacier NP)	Missouri River	Upper Two Medicine
Canyon Ferry Reservoir	Hauser Reservoir	Mountain View Lake	Waterton Lakes
Carpenter Creek	Hebgen Reservoir	Mystic Lake	West Fork Madison
Castlerock Lake	Holter Reservoir	Nelson Reservoir	Whitefish Lake
Cataract Creek	Hyalite Lake	Ninepipes Pond NWR	Yellowstone River
Chrome Lake	Island Lake	Noxon Rapids Reservoir	from Reed Point to
Clark Canyon Reservoir	Kootenai River	Petrolia Reservoir	Billings and near
Clark Fork River	Krieger Reservoir	Pishkun Reservoir	Powder River
Clear Lake	Lake Elwell aka Tiber Reservoir	Prickly Pear Creek	
Cliff Lake	Lake Frances		
Crystal Lake			

# Western Fishing District

**The Western Fishing District includes all waters in Montana west of the Continental Divide.**

**Columbia River Basin – Inspection Prior to Launch:** All watercraft crossing the Continental Divide into the Columbia River Basin are required to be inspected prior to launch.

## Western District Exceptions to the Standard Regulations

**Flathead Indian Reservation:** A tribal permit is required to fish on waters within the boundary of the Reservation. Call tribal headquarters at 406-675-2700 for information.

**Transporting Live Fish:** An import permit is required to bring live fish into Montana (see page 16). It is unlawful to possess or transport live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken except for transportation of fish for valid (approved) commercial purposes or as authorized by FWP.

## Methods of Taking Fish

### Hook and Line Limits

#### Open Water

##### Rivers and Streams

- 1 line with 2 hooks per line, with or without a rod. The rod or line must be attended and in the angler's immediate control.

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line, with or without a rod. Each line must be attended and in the angler's immediate control.

#### Ice Fishing

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line on all lakes and reservoirs open to fishing. When a line is used through the ice, the angler need not be in immediate control but must be in the vicinity and in visual contact with the line.

##### Shelters:

Identification: Attended shelters at Brown's Lake and Georgetown Lake must also be identified.

Daily Removal: Daily removal of shelters is required on: Browns Lake (near Ovando), Echo Lake (near Anaconda) and Georgetown Lake.

**Bow and Arrow:** All waters are closed to bow-and-arrow taking of game and nongame fish, except as noted under District Exceptions.

**Setlines:** Setlines (unattended lines) are not allowed in the Western Fishing District.

**Snagging:** All waters are closed to snagging of game and nongame fish, except as otherwise noted under District Exceptions.

**Spearing:** All waters are closed to spearing of game and nongame fish except open for spearing northern pike through the ice, and by person swimming or submerged in waters open to fishing, or as otherwise noted under District Exceptions.

## Bait Regulations

- No fish species may be used as live bait in the Western Fishing District. Possession of live bait fish or use of live bait fish is prohibited in the Western Fishing District.
- It is unlawful to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.

- Only nongame fish native to the Western Fishing District (large scale sucker, longnose sucker, northern pikeminnow, peamouth chub, redbreasted shiner, longnose dace) may be captured and used as dead bait and may be taken for use as dead bait in the following manner:
  - with hook and line; or
  - with seines no larger than 12 feet x 4 feet; or
  - with minnow traps (the dimensions shall not exceed 24 inches x 12 inches x 12 inches); or
  - with cast nets (maximum 6-foot radius) and dip nets (no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet).
- See Commercial Fishing License requirements (page 14) for information on commercial harvest permits.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and an individual identifying number issued by the department.

## Dead Bait

- No trout, salmon, whitefish, or sculpins may be used whole or in parts/pieces as dead bait.
- The eggs of char, cisco, arctic grayling, salmon or trout may be used as bait.
- Only nongame fish native to the Western Fishing District (large scale sucker, longnose sucker, northern pikeminnow, peamouth chub, redbreasted shiner, longnose dace) may be captured and used as dead bait. All other nongame fish caught or purchased must be preserved by freezing, salting or brining.
- Parts/pieces of bass or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- No amphibians or reptiles may be captured and used as dead bait.
- Dead crayfish (whole, parts, or pieces) and other invertebrates may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures only.

## Live Bait

- No fish species may be used as live bait in the Western Fishing District. Possession of live bait fish or use of live bait fish is prohibited in the Western Fishing District.
- No amphibians, reptiles, or crayfish may be used as live bait in the Western Fishing District.
- Live animals such as meal worms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, and insects may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures only.
- Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale (a receipt) from the approved out-of-state leech dealer when fishing with leeches in Montana. A list of approved out-of-state leech dealers may be obtained from FWP by calling 406-452-6181. Western District Standard Daily and Possession Limits

## Region 1 Kid's Trout Fishing Ponds

Buffalo Head Pond, Dry Bridge Pond, Pine Grove Pond, Shady Lane Pond (near Kalispell), Thompson Park Pond (near Thompson Falls), Frog Pond (near Trout Creek), Rivers Edge Pond (near Columbia Falls), Swan Pond (near Swan Lake), Eureka Pond, Libby Pond, Troy Pond, Nine Pipes Pond

- Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 trout daily and in possession, only 1 rod per angler.

## Western District Standard Daily and Possession Limits

Each angler may take all of the limits listed in the chart, unless otherwise noted in the Western District Exceptions. For species not listed, there are no limits on the number of fish that may be taken or possessed. Check for exceptions to the standard regulations in the following pages.

Anglers who move from one fishing water to another may possess the limit of fish allowed only for the water on which they are currently fishing.

	Species	Daily and Possession Limits
T R O U T	<b>Brook Trout</b>	20 daily and in possession.
	<b>Bull Trout</b>	All waters are closed to angling for bull trout and all fish must be released promptly, with little or no delay unless otherwise authorized in the Western District Exceptions. See bull trout on page 13. Note: Federal rules prohibit the attempted take of bull trout unless specifically authorized by state or tribal regulation.
	<b>Combined Trout</b> includes brown trout, rainbow trout, golden trout, and arctic grayling	Lakes/Reservoirs: 5 daily and 10 in possession, only 1 over 22 inches daily and in possession. Rivers/Streams: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.
	<b>Cutthroat Trout</b> (see page 89 for ID key)	Lakes/Reservoirs: 3 daily and in possession, no size limit. Rivers/Streams: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.
	<b>Lake Trout</b>	20 daily and 40 in possession.
	<b>Largemouth Bass</b>	5 daily and in possession, only 1 greater than 12 inches. Third Saturday in May through June 30: 1 daily and in possession, must be over 22 inches.
	<b>Smallmouth Bass</b>	15 daily and in possession, no size limit all year.
	<b>Burbot (Ling)</b>	2 daily and in possession.
	<b>Crappie</b>	No limit.
	<b>Kokanee Salmon</b>	20 daily and 40 in possession.
	<b>Northern Pike</b>	15 daily, no possession limit. All waters open for spearing through the ice or as otherwise noted in District Exceptions.
	<b>Sturgeon</b>	0 - All waters are closed to angling for sturgeon. Captured sturgeon must be released immediately.
	<b>Whitefish</b>	20 daily and 40 in possession.
	<b>Walleye</b>	All walleye caught must be killed immediately, kept and the entire fish presented to FWP. Anglers who catch walleye in the Western Fishing District are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-752-5501). Anglers will be asked to provide location, date, and time of capture and may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number, and phone number. Anglers are required to present the whole Walleye to a FWP office within 10 days of capture (frozen is allowed) during regular business hours. Edible portions of the fish are returned to the angler upon request. Does not include Clark Fork Reservoirs downstream of Thompson Falls Dam, see Exceptions for the Clark Fork River (page 29).

## Western District Exceptions To Standard Regulations

Check the following list of waters for the body of water you intend to fish in the Western District. If the body of water is not found in the listing of Exceptions, all of the Western District standard seasons, daily/possession limits, and standard regulations apply. Standard regulations apply for species not listed in the Exceptions.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
-------------------	------------------------------------

### ALICE CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River) -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.

### ANACONDA SETTLING POND SYSTEM -----

- See Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area.

### ASHLEY LAKE -----

#### Entire lake

- Salmon: 35 daily and 70 in possession.

#### Inlet tributaries

- Closed entire year.

### BEAR CREEK (tributary to Middle Fork Flathead River) -----

- Angling is closed within 150-yard radius of the stream mouth June 1 through Sept. 30.

### BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River) -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.

### BELMONT CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River) -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of mouth.

### BIG CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to North Fork Flathead River) --

- Closed entire year.

### BIG SALMON CREEK -----

- Closed to all angling within a 300-yard radius around the inlet (where the creek enters the lake) of Big Salmon Lake.

### BIG SALMON LAKE -----

- Closed to all angling within a 300-yard radius around the inlet (where the creek enters the lake) of Big Salmon Lake.

### BITTERROOT LAKE (see Little Bitterroot Lake) -----

### BITTERROOT RIVER (note: river flows south to north) -----

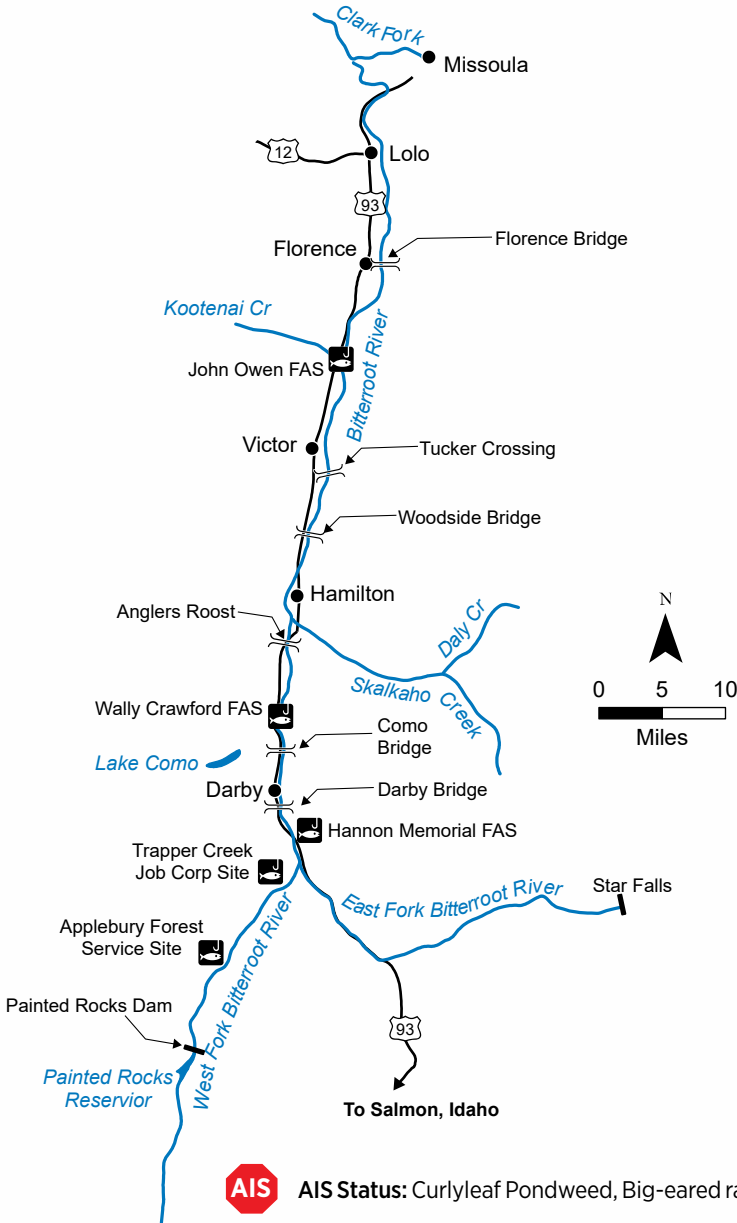
#### Fishing Regulations

**The ENTIRE Bitterroot River to include the East Fork (downstream from Star Falls) and the West Fork (downstream from Painted Rocks Dam) to the mouth of the river near Missoula. During the Extended Season (Dec. 1 to the third Saturday in May)**

- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for all trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May.
- Artificial lures, maggots and/or aquatic insects only. All other live/dead bait prohibited.



# Bitterroot River



**AIS Status:** Curlyleaf Pondweed, Big-eared radix

Note: The Bitterroot River flows from south to north; downstream is to the north.

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p.25.

## Waterbody/Section

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

**West Fork Bitterroot River downstream from Painted Rocks Dam. During General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30).**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout and rainbow trout.

**East Fork Bitterroot River downstream from Star Falls. During General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30).**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout and rainbow trout.
- Brown trout: 3 daily and in possession.

**Bitterroot River from confluence of East and West Forks to the north boundary of the Woodside Bridge FAS. During General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30).**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout daily and in possession, Rainbow or brown trout only 1 over 14 inches.

**North Boundary of Woodside Bridge FAS to Florence Bridge. During General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30).**

- Catch-and-release for all trout.
- Artificial lures only.
- Live/dead bait prohibited.

**Florence Bridge to mouth of Bitterroot River. During General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30).**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout daily and in possession, Rainbow or brown trout only 1 over 14 inches.

**Florence Bridge to mouth of Bitterroot River (Entire Year)**

- Smallmouth Bass: All Smallmouth Bass caught must be killed immediately, kept and the entire fish turned into FWP. Anglers who catch Smallmouth Bass in the lower Bitterroot River are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-542-5500). Anglers will be asked to provide location, date, and time of capture and may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number, and phone number. Anglers are required to turn in the whole Smallmouth Bass to a FWP office within 10 days of capture (frozen is allowed) during regular business hours

**Ditches, canals and sloughs between US 93 and east side highway, and between Hamilton and the Florence Bridge**

- Regulations are the same as the adjacent river section.

**Recreation Rules (see [fwp.mt.gov/recreation/permits/floating](http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/permits/floating))****West Fork Bitterroot River and upper Bitterroot River****No commercial floating or fishing June 1 to Sept. 15 from:**

- Painted Rocks Dam to Applebury Forest Service Site on Fridays.
- Applebury Forest Service Site to Trapper Creek Job Corps site on Saturdays.
- Trapper Creek Job Corps Site on to Hannon Memorial FAS on Sundays.
- Hannon Memorial FAS to Wally Crawford FAS on Mondays.

**No floating of any kind July 1 to Sept. 15 from:**

- Painted Rocks Dam to Applebury Forest Service Site on Fridays.

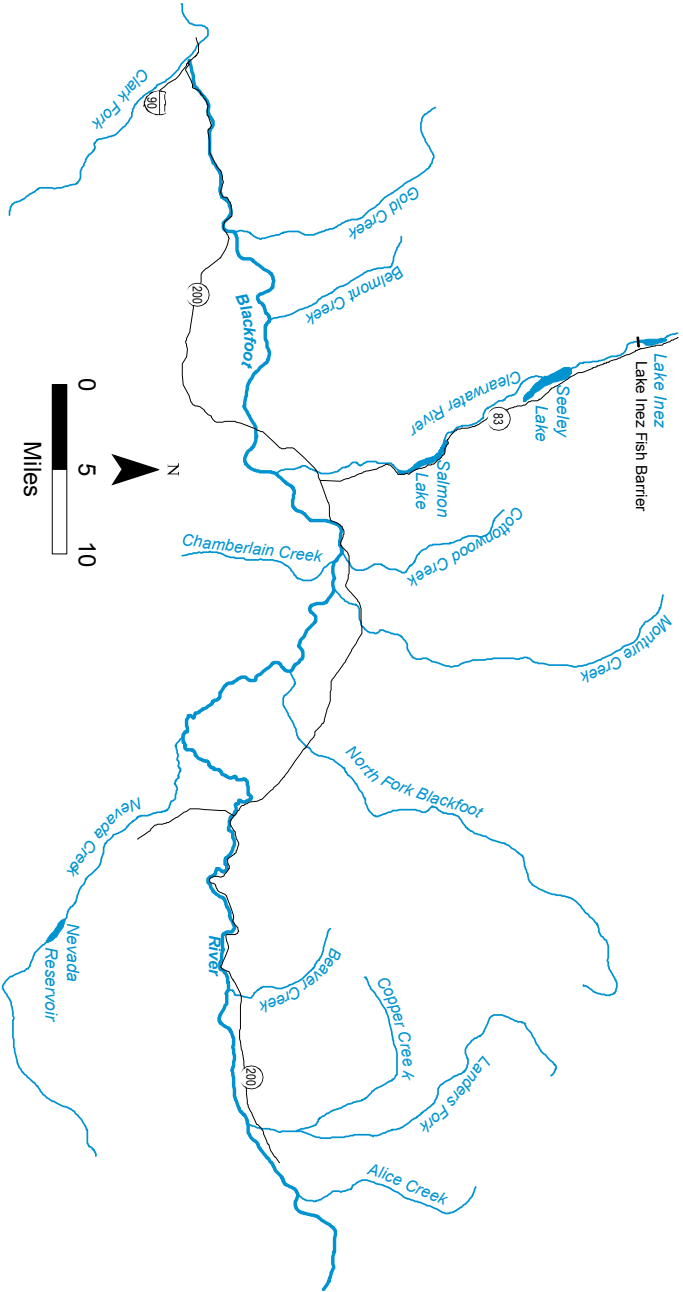
# Western District

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 25.



AIS Status: Curlyleaf Pondweed

## Blackfoot River



Waterbody/Section      Exceptions to Standard Regulations

**BLACKFOOT RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** (AIS) -----**Mainstem and all tributaries except the Clearwater River. During the General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30)**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches long, any size brown trout. (See Clearwater River Drainage for exception.)
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouths of Belmont Creek, Copper Creek, Gold Creek, Monture Creek and North Fork Blackfoot River.

**Mainstem only during the Extended Season (Dec. 1 to the third Saturday in May)**

- Extended season for mountain whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May. Tributaries are closed to fishing during the extended season.
- Artificial lures and/or maggots only.
- All other live/dead bait prohibited.

**Mainstem from Landers Fork mouth downstream to the confluence with the Clark Fork River**

- Catch-and-release for brook trout. (This regulation is a result of bull trout being misidentified and harvested as brook trout. Brook trout are very rare in this section of river whereas bull trout are common.)

**BLANCHARD LAKE (near Whitefish)** (AIS) -----

- Largemouth Bass: 1 daily and in possession, must be over 22 inches.

**BOOTJACK LAKE (near Whitefish)** -----

- Combined trout: 1 daily and in possession, 22 inch minimum.
- Artificial lures only.

**BULL River** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**CABINET GORGE RESERVOIR** (AIS) -----

- (See Clark Fork River Mouth of Thompson River to Idaho Border)

**CEDAR CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)** -----

- Artificial lures only, including within a 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**CHAMBERLAIN CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.

**CIBID LAKE** -----

- Combined trout: 4 under 12 inches and only 1 over 22 inches daily and in possession.

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 25.

## Waterbody/Section Exceptions to Standard Regulations

### CLARK FORK RIVER

#### Upstream from Perkins Lane Bridge, near Warm Springs

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release only.
- Artificial lures only.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

#### Perkins Lane Bridge, near Warm Springs, to mouth of the Flathead River

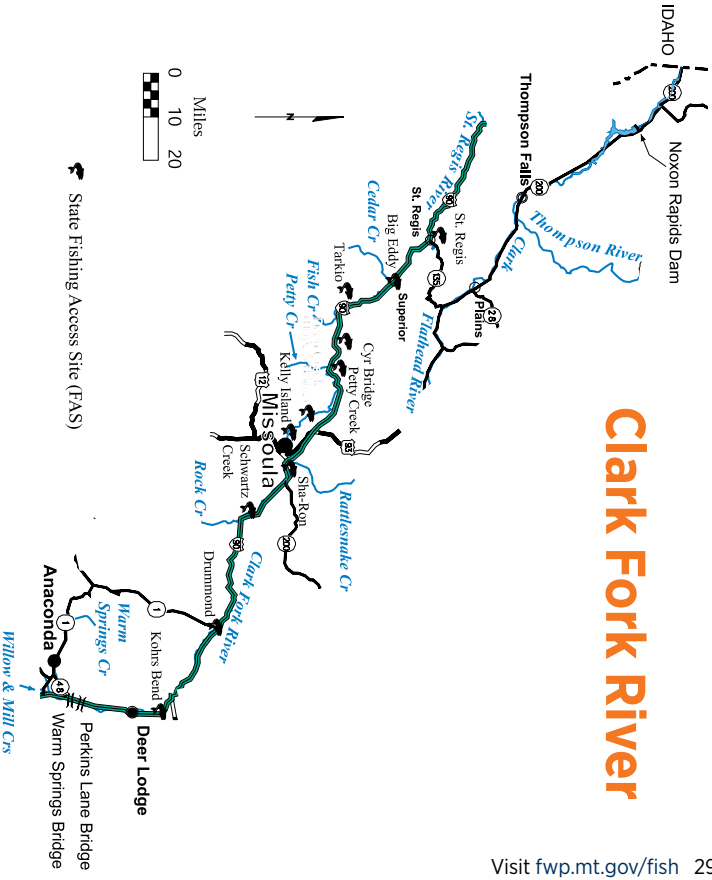
During the General Season (third Saturday in May through Nov. 30):

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 over 14 inches long.
- Artificial lures only within a 100-yard radius of the mouths of Rattlesnake Creek, Petty Creek, Fish Creek, Cedar Creek, Dry Creek, Trout Creek and St. Regis River.

During the Extended Season (Dec. 1 to the third Saturday in May):

- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May.
- Artificial lures and/or maggots only.
- All other live/dead bait prohibited.

# Clark Fork River



**AIS Status:** Curlyleaf Pondweed, Eurasian Watermilfoil, and Flowering Rush

## Waterbody/Section

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

**Mouth of Flathead River to Thompson Falls Dam**

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**Thompson Falls Dam to Idaho Border (includes Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs)**

- Open entire year.
- Combined trout: standard lake daily and possession limits apply.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Bass: 5 daily and in possession; except June 15 through July 15 only 1 daily and in possession, 22 inch minimum.
- Walleye: no limit. Catch, keep and report of walleye not required (see page 23).
- Hook and Line: 2 lines with up to 2 hooks or artificial lures per line all year.

**CLEARWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES (lakes not included, see exceptions for individual lakes elsewhere)** **Clearwater River upstream from the Salmon Lake inlet and all tributaries of the Clearwater River except the West Fork and Marshall Creek**

- Closed to fishing from Rainey Lake fish barrier downstream for 100 yards.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon from Lake Alva outlet to Lake Inez inlet and from Lake Inez outlet to Seeley Lake inlet from Sept. 15 through Nov. 30. Closed to snagging from Seeley Lake outlet to Salmon Lake inlet.

NOTE: Clearwater River sections between lakes are closed to fishing from Dec. 1 until the third Saturday in May. This includes the Clearwater River section from outlet of Seeley Lake at Riverview Drive Bridge ("Dogtown") downstream to inlet of Salmon Lake.

**Clearwater River from Salmon Lake outlet to mouth of the Clearwater River, including Blanchard Lake and Elbow Lake**

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches.
- Northern pike: no limit.

**COAL CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to North Fork Flathead River)**

- Closed entire year.

**COPPER CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only, including within a 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**COPPER MOUNTAIN PARK POND (in Butte)** -----

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger and senior citizens 62 years of age or older.
- One rod per angler.
- One trout daily and in possession.

**COTTONWOOD CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**DALY CREEK (tributary to Skalkaho Creek)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**DRY CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)** -----

- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**DUNHAM CREEK (tributary to Monture Creek, Blackfoot drainage)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only.

**EAST FORK BITTERROOT RIVER DOWNSTREAM FROM STAR FALLS** -----

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout and cutthroat trout.
- Brown trout: 3 daily and in possession.
- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with aquatic insects, maggots and/or artificial lures only.

**EAST FORK RESERVOIR** -----

- Cutthroat trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.

**ECHO LAKE (near Anaconda)** -----

- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession with only one fish over 14-inches, includes brook trout.

**ELK CREEK (tributary to Swan River)** -----

- Closed entire year.

**EMILY SPRINGS (tributary to Georgetown Lake)** -----

- Closed entire year.

**FISH CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Clark Fork River drainage)** -----

**Entire drainage**

- Artificial lures only, including within a 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**Mainstem downstream of the confluence of the South and West forks**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.

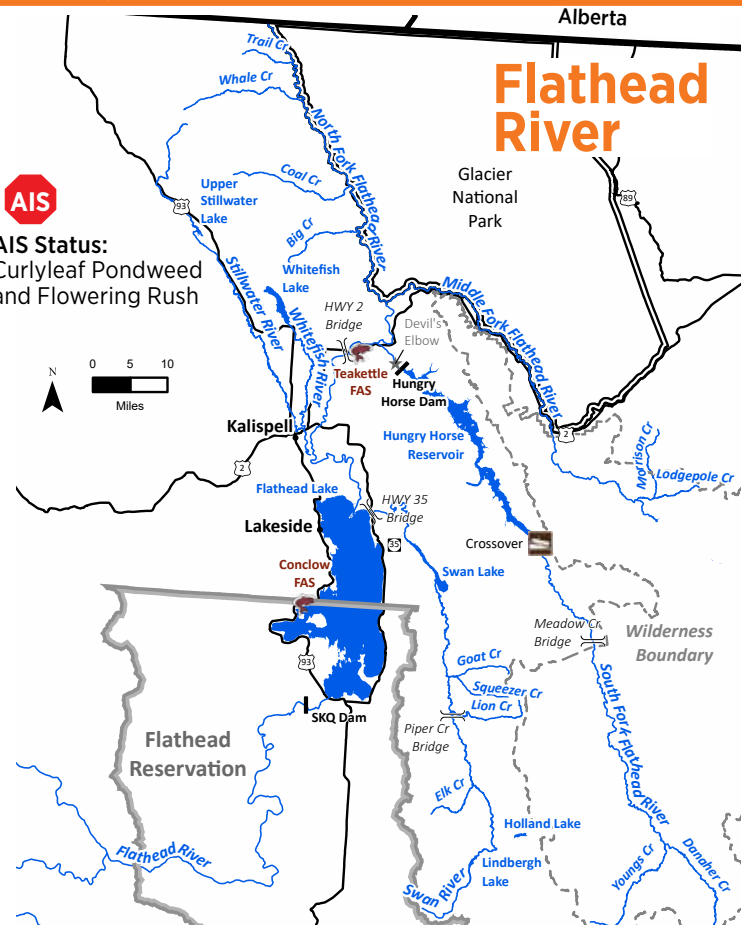
**FISHTRAP CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Thompson River drainage)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

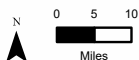
**FLATHEAD LAKE**   -----

**Flathead Lake north of Flathead Indian Reservation boundary**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Lake trout: 100 daily and in possession, only 1 over 36 inches, and all fish 30 to 36 inches must be released.
- Yellow perch: no limit, only 10 daily over 10 inches. No possession limit.
- NOTE: A Flathead Indian Reservation Tribal Permit is required to fish on the southern portion of the lake. Check Tribal Fishing regulations for the south portion of the lake.



**AIS**  
**AIS Status:**  
 Curlyleaf Pondweed  
 and Flowering Rush



If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 25.

**FLATHEAD RIVER**

**Mainstem Flathead River from confluence of North and Middle Forks to Flathead Lake**

- Single-pointed hooks only. See page 5 for description.
- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Rainbow trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- From Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May, maggots and artificial lures only, no artificial lures can be scented (infused, saturated, or applied).

**Flathead Indian Reservation boundary to mouth**

- Open entire year.



**Waterbody/Section**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**FLATHEAD RIVER SLOUGHS** (AIS)

**Brenneman, Church, Egan, Fennon, Half Moon, McWennegar, Mill, and Rose Creek**

- Open entire year.
- Rainbow trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Hook and Line: 2 rods and/or lines with up to 2 hooks per line; Western District bait regulations apply.

**FLINT CREEK**

**Downstream from Georgetown Lake**

- Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

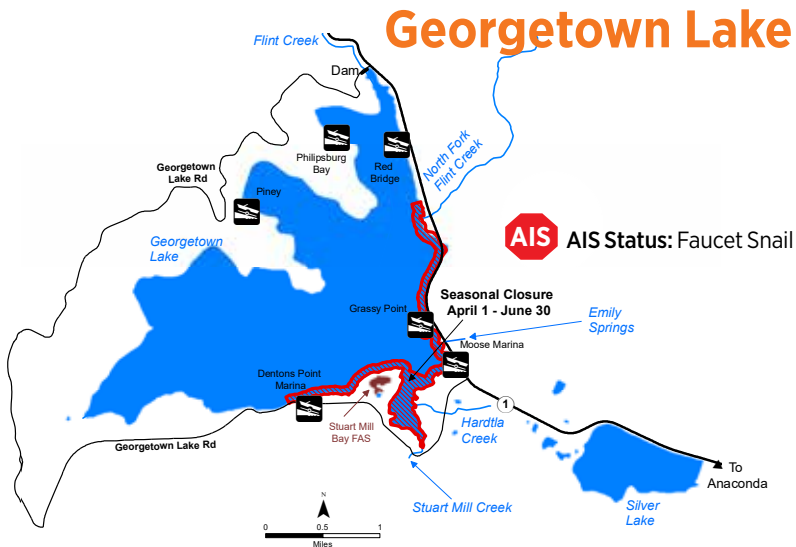
**FRED BURR LAKE (Granite County)**

**Philipsburg water supply**

- Closed entire year.

**FRENCHTOWN POND** (AIS)

- Catch-and-release for bass.



**GEORGETOWN LAKE** (AIS)

- Open third Saturday in May through March 31, except for the South and East shoreline area which is only open July 1 through March 31. South and East shoreline areas described as follows: all waters from the shore or within 100 yards of shore in the area extending from a point 200 yards west of Denton's Point Marina (along the shore, including all of Stuart Mill Bay) to a point 200 yards north from the mouth of North Fork Flint Creek.
- Combined trout, includes brook trout: 5 daily and in possession, of which only 1 may be a brook trout. Only brook trout over 16 inches can be kept.
- Kokanee salmon: no daily or possession limit

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>Emily Springs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>GERMAN GULCH</b> -----	
<b>Mainstem and tributaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout</li> </ul>
<b>GOAT CREEK (tributary to Swan River)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>GOLD CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>Combined trout: 3 daily, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.</li> <li>Artificial lures only, within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
<b>GRANITE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage) -</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>GRAVE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (near Eureka including Clarence Creek and Blue Sky Creek)</b> -----	
<b>Upstream of Highway 93 bridge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open third Saturday in May through Aug. 15.</li> </ul>
<b>Downstream of Highway 93 to mouth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snagging: open for kokanee salmon from Sept. 15 through Nov. 30.</li> <li>Kokanee salmon: 20 daily and 40 in possession.</li> </ul>
<b>HANDKERCHIEF LAKE</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.</li> </ul>
<b>HEIRONYMOUS POND</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, includes cutthroat trout and brook trout.</li> </ul>
<b>HERRIG CREEK (tributary to Little Bitterroot Lake)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>HOLLAND CREEK</b> -----	
<b>Mouth on Holland Lake upstream to the Falls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>HORSESHOE LAKE (near Ferndale)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for bass.</li> </ul>
<b>HORSESHOE LAKE (Thompson Chain of Lakes)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiger muskie : 1 daily and in possession, must be over 40 inches. There are no northern pike in the lake.</li> </ul>



**Waterbody/Section****Exceptions to Standard Regulations****HUNGRY HORSE RESERVOIR** -----**Dam to Crossover Boat Ramp**

- Bull trout: 1 fish per license year from the third Saturday in May through Aug. 15, Catch-and-release the rest of the year with a Hungry Horse/South Fork Flathead permit validation on Fishing License. A Hungry Horse/South Fork Flathead Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. See bull trout under "What do I Need to Fish in Montana" (page 12). All bull trout must be released immediately or killed and counted as your limit when harvest is allowed. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

**HUNGRY HORSE RESERVOIR TRIBUTARIES** -----

- See South Fork Flathead River Drainage regulations.

**JOB CORPS PONDS (Deer Lodge County)** -----

- see Warm Springs WMA map on page 44

- Open Aug. 15 through Sept. 30.
- Catch-and-release only.
- Artificial lures only.
- Motorized boats/vessels prohibited.

**KEELER CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES** -----

- Open third Saturday in May through July 15.

**KOOTENAI RIVER**   -----**Libby Dam to Idaho Border**

- Bull trout: As per the District Standard Regulations, the Kootenai River is closed to angling for bull trout; any bull trout caught must be released promptly, with little or no delay.
- Brown trout: No limit. All brown trout caught between Libby Dam and Kootenai Falls must be killed immediately, kept, and the entire fish presented to FWP. Anglers who catch brown trout upstream of Kootenai Falls are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-752-5501). Anglers may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number, phone number, date and time of capture, and location on the river. Anglers are required to present the whole brown trout to a FWP office during regular business hours and within 10 days of capture. Edible portions of the fish are returned to angler upon request.

**Libby Dam to Highway 37 Bridge, near Fisher River**

- Open June 1 through Feb. 28.
- Rainbow trout: 1 daily and in possession, 28 inch minimum length.
- Single-pointed hooks only.

**Highway 37 Bridge, near Fisher River, to Idaho Border**

- Open entire year.
- Rainbow trout: 4 daily and in possession, includes 3 under 13 inches and only 1 over 18 inches.
- Closed to angling June 1 through Sept. 30 within 150-yards upstream and downstream of the Quartz Creek stream mouth unless posted at a greater distance.

**Kootenai Falls to 0.8 miles downstream of Swinging Bridge**

- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon from Sept. 15 through Nov. 30.

**Waterbody/Section**                      **Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**LAKE ALVA** (AIS) -----

- Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Sparring: open for northern pike.

**LAKE CREEK (near Troy)** -----

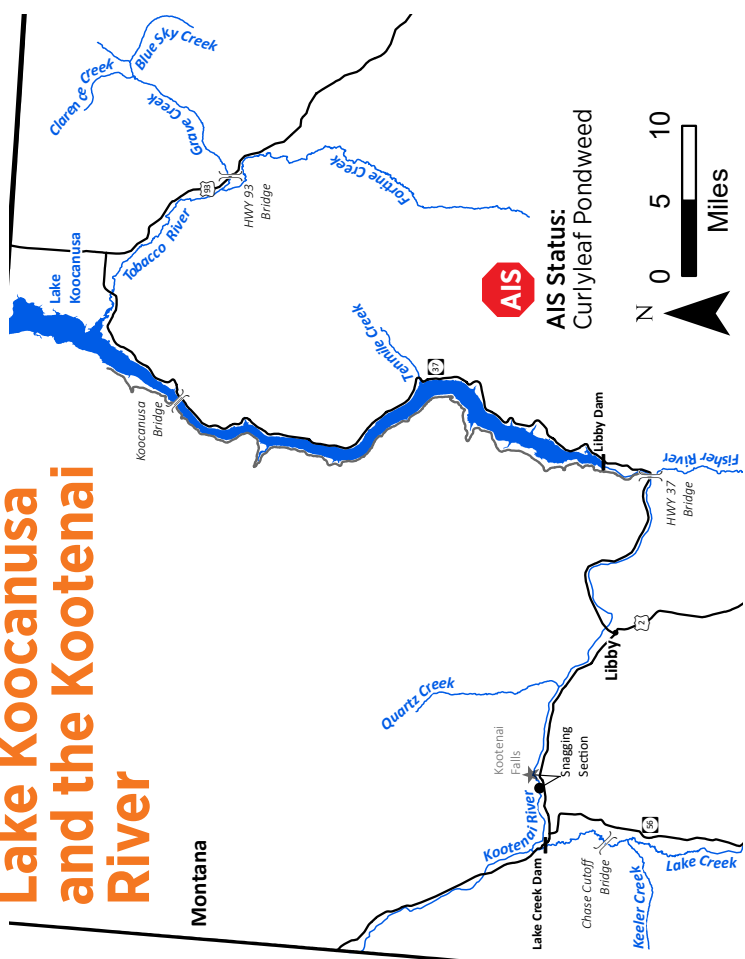
- Open to fishing all year, except 150-yards upstream of Keeler Creek to Chase Cutoff Bridge: Closed to angling from July 15 through Oct. 31.
- Brown trout: no limit.
- Snagging: Downstream of Troy Dam open for kokanee salmon from Sept. 15 through Nov. 30.

**LAKE INEZ** (AIS) -----

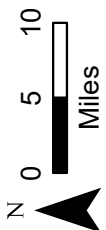
- Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Sparring: open for northern pike.


If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 25.

**Lake Kootenai and the Kootenai River**



**AIS Status:**  
Curlyleaf Pondweed



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>LAKE KOOCANUSA</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bull trout: Catch-and-release only (all bull trout must be released immediately). A Lake Kooconusa bull trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. See bull trout under obtain a license for application information. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.</li> <li>• Kokanee salmon: 50 daily and 100 in possession.</li> </ul>
<b>LAKE MARY RONAN</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> <li>• Spearing: open for northern pike.</li> </ul>
<b>LANDERS FORK (tributary to Blackfoot River)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.</li> <li>• Downstream from Silver King Falls: Artificial lures only, including within 100-yards of the mouth.</li> </ul>
<b>LION CREEK (tributary to Swan River)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>LITTLE BLACKFOOT RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES</b>	
<b>Mainstem River</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Extended whitefish season and catch-and-release for trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> </ul>
<b>Tributaries</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
<b>LODGEPOLE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES</b>	
<b>(Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>LONG CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>LOST LAKE (near Eureka)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined trout: 1 daily and in possession, 22-inch minimum.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>LOWER STILLWATER LAKE</b> 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellow perch: no limit, only 10 daily over 10 inches. No possession limit.</li> </ul>
<b>LOWER THOMPSON LAKE</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> </ul>
<b>MARSHALL CREEK (tributary to West Fork Clearwater River)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>MCCORMICK POND aka Silver's Lagoon (Missoula)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger, holders of a "Resident with a Disability Conservation License" and holders of a "Permit to Hunt from a Vehicle" with the proper prerequisite Fishing License. One rod per angler.</li> <li>• Open April 1 through Oct. 30.</li> <li>• Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.</li> </ul>

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>McGREGOR LAKE</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crayfish: 20 daily and in possession; females with egg clusters or attached juveniles must be released.</li> </ul>
<b>MEDICINE LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES (near Philipsburg)</b> -----	
<b>Medicine Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open July 1 through April 30.</li> </ul>
<b>Tributaries to Medicine Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open July 1 through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>
<b>MIDDLE FORK FLATHEAD RIVER</b> -----	
<b>Middle Fork Flathead River including headwaters to confluence with North Fork Flathead River (near Blankenship Bridge)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-pointed hooks only. See page 5 for description.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-wilderness portion</b>	
NOTE: Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the ordinary high-water mark on the park side of the river.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed to angling June 1 through Sept. 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Bear Creek stream mouth.</li> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>Rainbow trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> <li>Extended season open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> </ul>
<b>MIDDLE THOMPSON LAKE</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> </ul>
<b>MILL CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)</b> -----	
<b>Downstream from the Stewart Street Bridge in Opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release only.</li> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>MONTURE CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.</li> <li>Artificial lures only, including within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
<b>MORRELL CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to Clearwater River)</b> -----	
<b>Entire drainage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>Mainstem from Cottonwood Lakes Road (USFS Rd 477) bridge upstream to Pyramid Pass Road (USFS Rd 4381) bridge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>MORRISON CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>NEVADA CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.</li> </ul>

**Waterbody/Section****Exceptions to Standard Regulations****NORTH FORK BLACKFOOT RIVER (tributary to Blackfoot River) -----****Downstream from the North Fork Falls**

- Artificial lures only, including within a 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**From North Fork Falls downstream to Highway 200 bridge**

- Artificial lures with single point barbless hooks only.

**Entire river**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.

**NORTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER -----****North Fork Flathead River including headwaters to confluence with Middle Fork Flathead River (near Blankenship Bridge)**

NOTE: Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the middle of the river.

- Single-pointed hooks only. See page 5 for description.
- Closed to angling June 1 through Sept. 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Big Creek stream mouth unless posted at a greater distance.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Rainbow trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Extended season open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

**NORTH FORK FLINT CREEK (tributary to Georgetown Lake) -----**

- Open July 1 through Nov. 30.
- Catch-and-release for brook trout.

**NOXON RAPIDS RESERVOIR   -----****Birdland Bay Bridge to Noxon Rapids Dam**

- (See Clark Fork River Mouth of Thompson River to Idaho Border)

**PETTY CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River) -----**

- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**PLACID CREEK (tributary to Placid Lake) -----**

- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Oct. 15 through Dec. 31; 20 daily and 40 in possession.

**PLACID LAKE  -----**

- Catch-and-release for largemouth bass.
- Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Oct. 15 through Dec. 31; 20 daily and 40 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Smallmouth bass: no limit.
- All northern pike and smallmouth bass caught must be killed immediately, kept and the entire fish presented to FWP. Anglers who catch northern pike in Placid Lake are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-542-5500). Anglers must provide their full name, ALS Number, phone number, date and time of capture, and location on the lake. Anglers are required to present the whole northern pike or smallmouth bass to a FWP office within 10 days of capture during regular business hours. Edible portions of the fish may be returned to angler upon request.

## Waterbody/Section

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

**QUARTZ CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES****(Kootenai River drainage including West Fork)** -----

- Open third Saturday in May through Aug. 15.

**RACETRACK POND** -----

- Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 3 combined trout, including cutthroat trout, daily and in possession.
- Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may use bait.

**RATTLESNAKE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (near Missoula)** -----**Entire Creek**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only, including within 100-yard radius of mouth.

**Downstream of Beeskove Creek**

- Closed to fishing from the mouth of Beeskove Creek to the former location of the Mountain Water Company Dam, as posted.

**ROCK CREEK (near Missoula)** -----**From the confluence of the Middle and West forks, near Philipsburg, to the mouth**

- Combined trout: 3 brown trout daily and in possession. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout and cutthroat trout.
- Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may use bait during the general season.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels July 1 through Nov. 30.
- Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

**SALMON LAKE**  -----

- Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

**SEELEY LAKE**   -----

- Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Bass: no daily or possession limit for entire year.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.
- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Oct. 15 through Dec. 31; 20 daily and 40 in possession.

**SILVER LAKE (near Anaconda)** -----

- Closed to fishing July 1 through Sept. 30 within a 50-yard radius of the mouth of Storm Lake Creek.

**SILVER BOW CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES**  -----**Mainstem and Tributaries**

- Artificial lures only in Silver Bow Creek and German Gulch.
- Blacktail Creek is open all year from its mouth near Montana Street in Butte, upstream to Four Mile Road crossing.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**SILVER'S LAGOON aka McCormick Pond (Missoula)** -----

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger, holders of a "Resident with a Disability Conservation License" and holders of a "Permit to Hunt from a Vehicle" with the proper prerequisite Fishing License. One rod per angler.
- Open April 1 through Oct. 30.
- Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.

**SKALKAHO CREEK (tributary to Bitterroot River)** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout, includes Daly Creek.

**SKYLINE POND (in Butte)** -----

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger. One rod per child. 1 trout daily and in possession.

**SMITH LAKE (near Kalispell)** (AIS) -----

- Yellow perch: no limit, only 10 daily over 10 inches. No possession limit.
- Northern pike: no limit.

**SNOWBANK CREEK (tributary to Copper Creek, Blackfoot Drainage)** -----

- Artificial lures only.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**SOUTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER** -----**South Fork Flathead River and tributaries, including headwaters to confluence with Flathead River (does not include Hungry Horse Reservoir)**

- Single-pointed hooks only. See page 5 for description.

**South Fork Flathead River upstream from Hungry Horse Reservoir (from Crossover Boat Ramp south and upstream to the confluence of Youngs and Danaher creeks)**

- Bull trout: No intentional angling for bull trout except catch-and-release from July 1 through July 31. Angling is prohibited from the mouths of Gordon Creek and Little Salmon Creek downstream 300 yards from June 15 to September 30. A Hungry Horse/South Fork Flathead bull trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. See bull trout under "What do I Need to Fish in Montana" (page 12)" for application information. All bull trout must be released promptly, with little or no delay. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason. Angling for bull trout is not allowed in South Fork Flathead River tributaries or Big Salmon Lake.

**Meadow Creek Bridge to Spotted Bear foot bridge and tributaries**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**Hungry Horse Dam downstream to mouth and tributaries**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Rainbow trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Extended season open Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

**SQUEEZER CREEK (tributary to Swan River)** -----

- Closed entire year.

**ST REGIS COMMUNITY PARK POND** -----

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger; one rod per child.
- Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.

## Waterbody/Section

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

### ST REGIS RIVER -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, Only 1 rainbow trout over 14 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

### STILLWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES (Flathead River drainage) -----

- Open entire year from mouth of Sunday Creek to confluence with Flathead River.

### STORM LAKE CREEK (tributary to Silver Lake near Anaconda) -----

- Closed to fishing July 1 through Sept. 30 from the Silver Lake diversion structure located near the stream mouth down to where the stream enters Silver Lake.

### STUART MILL CREEK (tributary to Georgetown Lake) -----

- Open July 1 through Nov. 30.
- Catch-and-release for brook trout.

### SWAN RIVER -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat and rainbow trout.
- Closed to angling June 1 through Sept. 30 within a 300-yard radius of the Woodward Creek and Lion Creek stream mouths, unless posted at a greater distance.

#### **Piper Creek Bridge downstream to Swan Lake**

- Artificial lures only. Single-pointed hooks only. No treble or double hooks. Anglers may remove treble or double hooks from the lure and replace them with a single hook, or the shanks may be cut off the other hook points to leave a single hook. Lures with multiple hook attachments may still be used but any treble hook must be replaced by a single hook.

#### **Swan Lake outlet downstream to the Highway 35 Bridge**

- Open entire year.

### TALLY LAKE -----

- Lake trout: 1 daily and in possession, must be over 42 inches.

### THOMPSON FALLS RESERVOIR (AIS) -----

- (See Clark Fork River Mouth of Thompson River to Idaho Border)

### THOMPSON RIVER -----

#### **Entire river**

- Open to fishing entire year.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout and rainbow trout.
- Brown trout: 3 daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may use bait.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**TOBACCO RIVER** -----

- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Sept. 15 through Nov. 30.
- Kokanee salmon: 20 daily and 40 in possession.

**TRAIL CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Yakinikak, N. Fork Flathead River drainage)**

- Closed entire year downstream from mouth of Thoma Creek.

**TROUT CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)** -----

- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**UPPER THOMPSON LAKE** -----

- Kokanee salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.

**UPSATA LAKE** <sup>(AIS)</sup> -----

- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

**VERMILLION RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** -----

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**WARM SPRINGS CREEK (near Anaconda)** <sup>(AIS)</sup> -----**Upstream of Myers Dam**

- Open from the third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

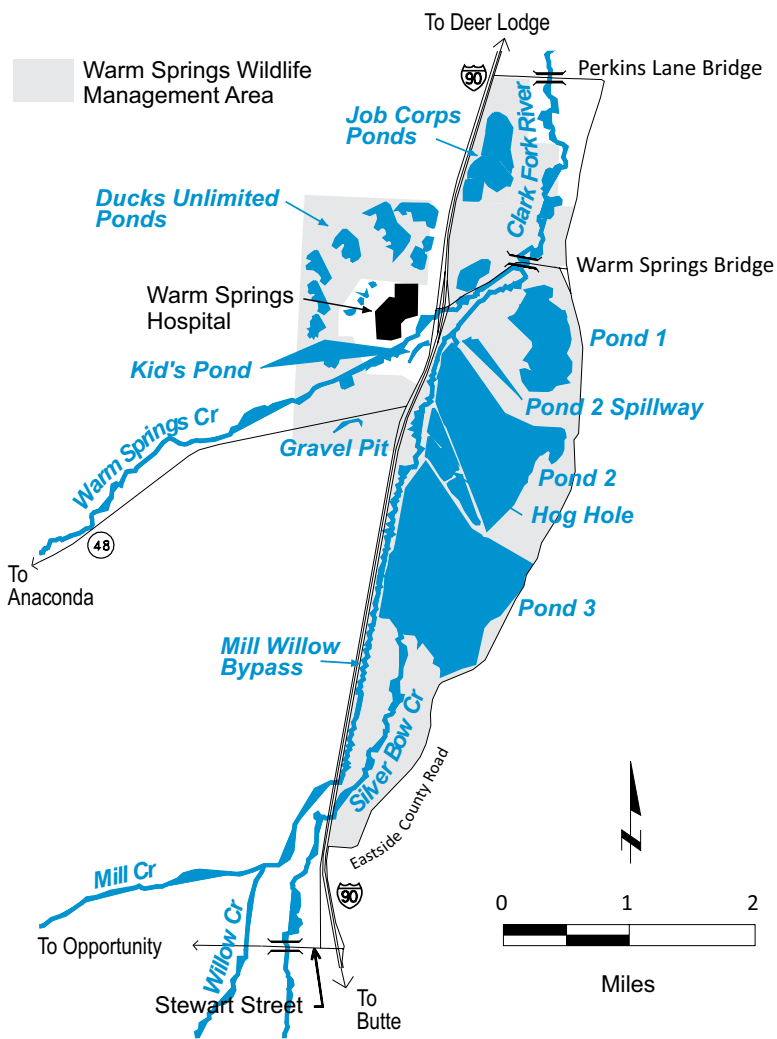
**Myers Dam to Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area (WMA)**

- Open from the third Saturday in May through Nov. 30 except for the section from Myers Dam downstream 50 yards which is closed to fishing July 1 through Sept. 30.
- Extended season: catch-and-release for trout Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures only.

**Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area (WMA)**

- Open entire year on Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area (WMA). (See Warm Springs WMA for additional regulations.)

# Warm Springs WMA



**AIS** AIS Status: New Zealand mudsnail

 If you see this icon, turn to page 20 for information on Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines.

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 25.

**Waterbody/Section****Exceptions to Standard Regulations****WARM SPRINGS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (WMA) -----****All waters**

- All ponds and canals open Aug. 15 through Sept. 30 including Job Corps Ponds and Ducks Unlimited Ponds.
- Catch-and-release only. (See Kid's Pond and Gravel Pit Pond for exceptions.)
- Artificial lures only. (See Kid's Pond and Gravel Pit Pond for exceptions.)
- Motorized boats/vessels prohibited.

**Job Corps Ponds (Deer Lodge County)**

- Open Aug. 15 through Sept. 30.
- Catch-and-release only.
- Artificial lures only.
- Motorized boats/vessels prohibited.

**Kids Pond at WSWMA Headquarters**

- Open entire year.
- Combined trout: 2 daily and in possession.
- Bait may be used.
- Open to fishing by anglers 14 years of age or younger only. One rod per child.

**Gravel Pit Pond adjacent to Highway 48**

- Open second Friday in June at 5 p.m. through Nov. 30.
- Combined trout: 2 daily and in possession.
- Bait may be used.

**Hog Hole**

- Open May 25 through Sept. 30. No trespassing on islands.

**Pond 3**

- Open May 25 through Nov. 30 to fishing from non-motorized vessels.

**Mill-Willow Bypass, Warm Springs Creek and Clark Fork River**

- Open entire year.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

**WEST FORK BITTERROOT RIVER DOWNSTREAM OF PAINTED ROCKS DAM****Fishing Regulations**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout and rainbow trout.
- Brown trout: 3 daily and in possession.
- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout from Dec. 1 to third Saturday in May with aquatic insects, maggots and/or artificial lures only.

**Recreation Rules (see [fwp.mt.gov/recreation/permits/floating/](http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/permits/floating/) and signs on site for more information)****West Fork Bitterroot River and Upper Bitterroot River (see map page 25)****No commercial floating or fishing June 1 to Sept. 15 from:**

- Painted Rocks Dam to Applebury Forest Service Site on Fridays.
- Applebury Forest Service Site to Trapper Creek Job Corps Site on Saturdays.
- Trapper Creek Job Corps Site on to Hannon Memorial FAS on Sundays.
- Hannon Memorial FAS to Wally Crawford FAS on Mondays.

**No floating of any kind July 1 to Sept. 15 from:**

- Painted Rocks Dam to Applebury Forest Service Site on Fridays.



If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 25.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**WEST FORK CLEARWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** -----

**Entire drainage**

- Artificial lures only.

**West Fork Clearwater River upstream of confluence with Marshall Creek**

- Closed entire year.

**WEST FORK THOMPSON RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** -----

- Artificial lures only.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**WHALE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (North Fork Flathead River drainage) -**

- Closed entire year downstream from Whale Creek Falls.

**WHITEFISH RIVER** -----

- Open entire year from Whitefish Lake to confluence with Stillwater River.

**WOODWARD CREEK** -----

- Closed entire year.

## Central Fishing District

**The Central Fishing District includes all waters in Montana east of the Continental Divide, (including the Belly and St Mary's River drainages) and west of the following described boundary:**

Interstate 15 from the Montana-Canada border south to its junction with Hwy 2 at Shelby, then east on Hwy 2 to Chester, then south on Hwy 223 to State Route 80 at Fort Benton, then southeasterly along State Route 80 to its junction with State Route 81, then easterly on State Route 81 to its junction with U.S. Hwy 191, then northeasterly along U.S. Hwy 191 to its junction with State Route 19, then south on State Route 19 to its junction with U.S. Hwy 87 at Grassrange, then south on U.S. Hwy 87 to its junction with U.S. Hwy 12 at Roundup, then west on U.S. Hwy 12 to its junction with State Route 3 at Lavina, then south on State Route 3 to its junction with Interstate 90 at Billings, then easterly and southerly on Interstate 90 to the first crossing of the Little Bighorn River, then southerly along the west bank of the Little Bighorn River to the Montana-Wyoming border.

**Note:** Roadways that are used as boundaries between the Central and Eastern Fishing Districts are interpreted to be in the Central Fishing District.

### Central District Exceptions to the Standard Regulations

**Transporting Live Fish:** An import permit is required to bring live fish of any kind into Montana (see page 15). It is unlawful to possess or transport any live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken with the following exceptions:

- 1) Possession and transport of live fish for authorized commercial purposes (e.g. Commercial Bait Seining Permit, Commercial Fish Ponds, Commercial Fishing, permitted Fishing Contests);
- 2) Use of live bait subject to restrictions for the taking, possession, transport and use of live bait (see "Bait Regulations" on page 48);
- 3) It is unlawful to possess or transport live fish, other than live nongame bait fish, on roadways that form the boundary between the Eastern and Central fishing districts.

### Methods of Taking Fish

#### Hook and Line Limits

##### Open Water

##### Rivers and Streams

- 1 line with 2 hooks per line, with or without a rod. The rod or line must be attended and in the angler's immediate control.

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line. All lines must be attended and in the angler's immediate control.

##### Ice Fishing

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice on lakes, reservoirs, or ponds open to fishing. When a line is used through the ice, the angler need not be in immediate control, but must be in the vicinity and in visual contact with the line.

##### Shelters:

**Daily Removal:** Daily removal of shelters is required on Fitzpatrick Lake, Deadmans Basin and Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir.

**Bow and Arrow:** Waters open to angling are open to taking nongame fish with bow and arrow unless otherwise noted in the exceptions to the standard regulations.

**Snagging:** Snagging of fish is allowed only on waters specified in District Exceptions.

**Submerged Spearfishing:** In all waters open to fishing, nongame fish may be taken with rubber or pneumatic-propelled spears by persons swimming or submerged. Game fish species may be taken with rubber or pneumatic-propelled spears by

persons swimming or submerged but only from designated waters.

**Ice Spearing:** Spearing may be used through the ice for designated species in designated waters.

## Bait Regulations

- Live fish may not be used as bait in the Central Fishing District unless the waterbody is listed under the “Live Bait” section below.
- Game fish, including yellow perch, may not be used as bait except as authorized below under “Dead Bait”. See “Game Fish” in definitions (page 5) for complete list of game species.
- It is unlawful to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.
- Collection methods: Nongame fish may be taken for use as live bait in the following manner:
  - with hook and line; or
  - with seines no larger than 12 feet x 4 feet; or
  - with minnow traps (the dimensions shall not exceed 24 inches x 12 inches x 12 inches); or
  - with cast nets (maximum 6-foot radius) and dip nets (no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet).
- See “Dead Bait” and “Live Bait” sections below for details on possession and use of nongame bait fish.
- Collection Locations: Nongame fish for use as live bait may be taken from waters where live fish may be used as bait (see water list under “Live Bait”). Nongame fish may be collected from water open to angling in the Central District but must be killed upon collection and may not be used as live bait.
- On waters in the Central Fishing District that do not allow the use of live bait fish, possession of live bait fish is prohibited, except for commercial bait seiners when using a commercial bait seining permit while collecting fish on approved commercial bait seining waters.
- On waters within the Central Fishing District that do not allow the use of live bait and are not restricted to artificial flies and lures, sculpins may be collected and used as dead bait. Collection screens or nets may not exceed four (4) feet in length on any side. Sculpins must be killed immediately upon collection and may not be used as live bait. [Note: sculpins may not be used for bait in the Western Fishing District.]
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler’s name and phone number or name and individual identifying number issued by the department attached.
- Areas within the Central Fishing District that have been identified as contaminated with Eurasian watermilfoil have additional bait restrictions as described below.

### Dead Bait

- Nongame fish (see “Collection methods” above) that are freshly killed or have been preserved by freezing, salting or pickling may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures only. Heads and entrails of nongame fish may also be used as bait.
- Whole game fish may not be used as bait. Parts/pieces of bass, burbot (ling), channel catfish, crappie, northern pike, paddlefish, sauger, shovelnose sturgeon, walleye, or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- The eggs of Salmonids (char, cisco, arctic grayling, salmon or trout) may be used as bait. Other parts/pieces of Salmonids may not be used as bait.

### Live Bait

- Live fish may not be used as bait in the Central Fishing District unless the waterbody is listed under the “Live Bait” section below.
- Live bait fish may not be imported into Montana, except by permit for use in Bighorn Lake and Afterbay Reservoir.



- Bait fish collected in the Bighorn River drainage of Wyoming may be imported under a permit issued by FWP for use only in Bighorn Lake. For a permit, contact the FWP Fisheries Division at 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, MT 59105 or call 406 247-2940.
- Live animals such as meal worms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians and insects may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures only. Transport of invasive species is unlawful.
- Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale (a receipt) from the approved out-of-state leech dealer when fishing with leeches in Montana. A list of approved out-of-state leech dealers may be obtained from FWP by calling 406-452-6181.
- Nongame fish species that may be collected and possessed and used as live bait in the Central Fishing District include only the following: fathead minnow, flathead chub, western silvery minnow, plains minnow, emerald shiner, longnose dace, lake chub, creek chub, longnose sucker, and white sucker. All other nongame fish species (not listed above) must be released immediately at the collection site or killed prior to transporting away from the collection site (see “Dead Bait” page 48). See pages 87-88 for live bait fish identification. Be proactive, bait fish that cannot be positively identified should not be used as live bait.
- The nongame fish species listed above may be used as live fish bait only in the following waters:
  - Bighorn Lake and Afterbay Reservoir
  - Bighorn River—Afterbay Dam to the cable 600 feet downstream, and downstream from the Bighorn FAS
  - Clarks Fork Yellowstone River and tributaries, except the Rock Creek drainage—downstream from the bridge at Bridger
  - Marias River and tributaries downstream from I-15
  - Missouri River downstream from Morony Dam
  - Muddy Creek Drainage near Vaughn, including all streams and drainage canals
  - Teton River and tributaries downstream from I-15
  - Tiber Reservoir (Lake Elwell), Toole and Liberty counties
  - Yellowstone River and all streams and ditches in the drainage downstream from the mouth of the Clarks Fork (except the section of the Bighorn River between the cable 600 feet downstream from Afterbay Dam and the Bighorn FAS).

**Bait restrictions in Eurasian watermilfoil contaminated areas**

Eurasian watermilfoil is an invasive aquatic plant that has become established in some Montana waters. This plant is easily spread from one body of water to another primarily by people transporting plant fragments. Anglers shall inspect all bait buckets, live wells, anchors and gear to ensure that NO PLANT FRAGMENTS are present when leaving a body of water. It takes only a small fragment of Eurasian watermilfoil to start a new plant and infest a body of water. Areas within the Central Fishing District that have been identified as contaminated with Eurasian watermilfoil are:

- Jefferson River
- Lower Madison River north of I-90
- Missouri River from the confluence of the three forks to the headwaters of Canyon Ferry Reservoir
- Nilan Reservoir
- Toston Reservoir (small Missouri River impoundment above Toston Dam)

Additional bait restrictions within the contaminated areas are:

- The collection of bait animals, including commercial seining is not permitted.
- Transport of live aquatic bait animals to and from these contaminated areas is allowed only in clean water (e.g. transport minnows and leeches in well water).

## Central District Standard Daily and Possession Limits

Each angler may take all of the limits listed in the chart, unless otherwise noted in the Central District Exceptions. For species not listed, there are no limits on the number of fish that may be taken or possessed.

Anglers who move from one fishing water to another may possess the limit of fish allowed only for the water on which they are currently fishing.

# Central District

	Species	Daily and Possession Limits
<b>T R O U T</b>	<b>Brook Trout</b>	20 daily and in possession.
	<b>Combined Trout</b> includes brown trout, rainbow trout, golden trout, cutthroat trout, and arctic grayling	Lakes/Reservoirs: 5 daily and 10 in possession, includes cutthroat trout.  Rivers/Streams: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches, only 1 can be a cutthroat trout. All arctic grayling must be released immediately.
	<b>Lake Trout</b>	3 daily and in possession.
	<b>Bass</b>	5 daily and in possession.
	<b>Burbot (Ling)</b>	5 daily and in possession.
	<b>Channel Catfish</b>	10 daily and in possession.
	<b>Crappie</b>	15 daily and 30 in possession.
	<b>Northern Pike</b>	10 daily and in possession.
	<b>Pallid Sturgeon</b>	None - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately. All waters are closed to fishing for pallid sturgeon.
	<b>Salmon (Kokanee &amp; Chinook)</b>	10 daily and in possession.
	<b>Sauger/Walleye</b>	5 daily, only 2 may be sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.
	<b>Shovelnose Sturgeon</b>	5 daily and in possession, none over 40 inches.
	<b>Tiger Muskie</b>	1 daily and in possession, must be over 40 inches.
	<b>Whitefish</b>	20 daily and 40 in possession.

 If you see this icon, turn to page 20 for information on Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines.

## Central District Exceptions To Standard Regulations

Check the following list of waters for the body of water you intend to fish in the Central District. If the body of water is not found in the listing of Exceptions, all of the Central District standard seasons, daily/possession limits, and standard regulations apply. Standard regulations apply for species not listed in the Exceptions.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**ABSAROKA-BEARTOOTH WILDERNESS LAKES** -----

- Combined trout: 10 daily and in possession.

**ANTELOPE BUTTE LAKE aka Ostle Reservoir (Teton County)** -----

- Open May 15 at 12:00 noon through Nov. 30.

**AROD LAKES aka Eyraud Lakes** -----

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for northern pike and nongame fish through the ice only.

**AXOLOTL LAKES** -----

- Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.

**BADGER CREEK DRAINAGE (near Heart Butte)** -----

**Downstream from confluence of North Badger and South Badger creeks within National Forest**

- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.

**BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)** -----

**Mouth to US Highway 12**

- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.

**BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Missouri River below Hauser Dam)** -----

- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.

**BEAVERHEAD RIVER (AIS)** -----

**Fishing Regulations**

**Entire river**

- Rainbow trout: Catch-and-release only.

**Clark Canyon Dam to Pipe Organ Bridge**

- Open third Saturday in May through Sept. 30.

**Clark Canyon Dam to High Bridge FAS**

- Catch-and-release for brown trout.
- Artificial lures and single-pointed hooks only. Anglers may remove treble or double hooks from the lure and replace them with a single hook, or the shanks may be cut off the other hook points to leave a single hook. Lures with multiple hook attachments may still be used but any treble hook must be replaced by a single hook.

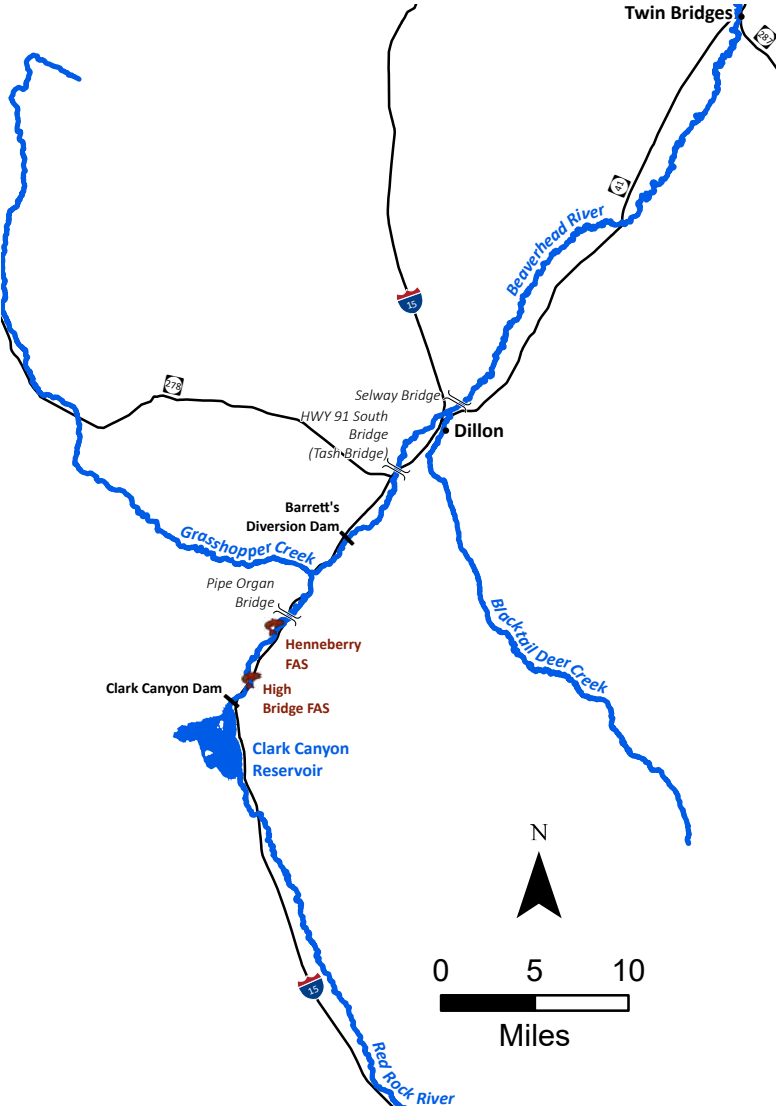
**Barretts Diversion to the Mouth**

- Open April 1 through Sept. 30.
- Brown trout: Catch-and-release only.

**High Bridge to Barretts Diversion**

- Brown trout: 5 fish daily and in possession. All fish must be less than 18".

# Beaverhead River



**AIS Status:** New Zealand Mudsnail, Curlyleaf Pondweed, Red-rim melania snail



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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<b>Recreation Rules</b>	
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<b>High Bridge FAS to Henneberry FAS</b>	
--	--

- Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Saturday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

<b>Henneberry FAS to Pipe Organ Bridge</b>	
--	--

- Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Sunday from the third Sunday in May through Labor Day

<b>Highway 91 South Bridge (Tash Bridge) to Selway Bridge</b>	
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- Closed to float outfitting from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

**BIG HOLE RIVER** -----

<b>Fishing Regulations</b>	
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<b>Entire river</b>	
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- Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.

<b>Headwaters to Dickie Bridge</b>	
------------------------------------	--

- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size restriction.

<b>Dickie Bridge to Brownes Bridge FAS</b>	
--	--

- Open April 1 through Sept. 30.
- Catch-and-release only.
- Artificial lures only.

<b>Brownes Bridge FAS to the Mouth</b>	
--	--

- Open April 1 through Sept. 30.
- Catch-and-release only.

<b>Recreation Rules</b>	
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<b>Entire river</b>	
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- All float users are limited to a total of 2 launches at or near each official access site each day. See Big Hole River map for official access sites

<b>Headwaters to Mudd Creek FAS</b>	
-------------------------------------	--

- Closed to float outfitting from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

<b>Mudd Creek FAS to Fishtrap FAS</b>	
---------------------------------------	--

- Closed to float outfitting on each Tuesday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

<b>Fishtrap FAS to East Bank BLM FAS</b>	
--	--

- Closed to float outfitting on each Thursday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

<b>East Bank BLM FAS to Jerry Creek FAS</b>	
---	--

- Closed to float outfitting on each Wednesday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

<b>Jerry Creek BLM FAS to Divide FAS</b>	
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- Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Saturday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

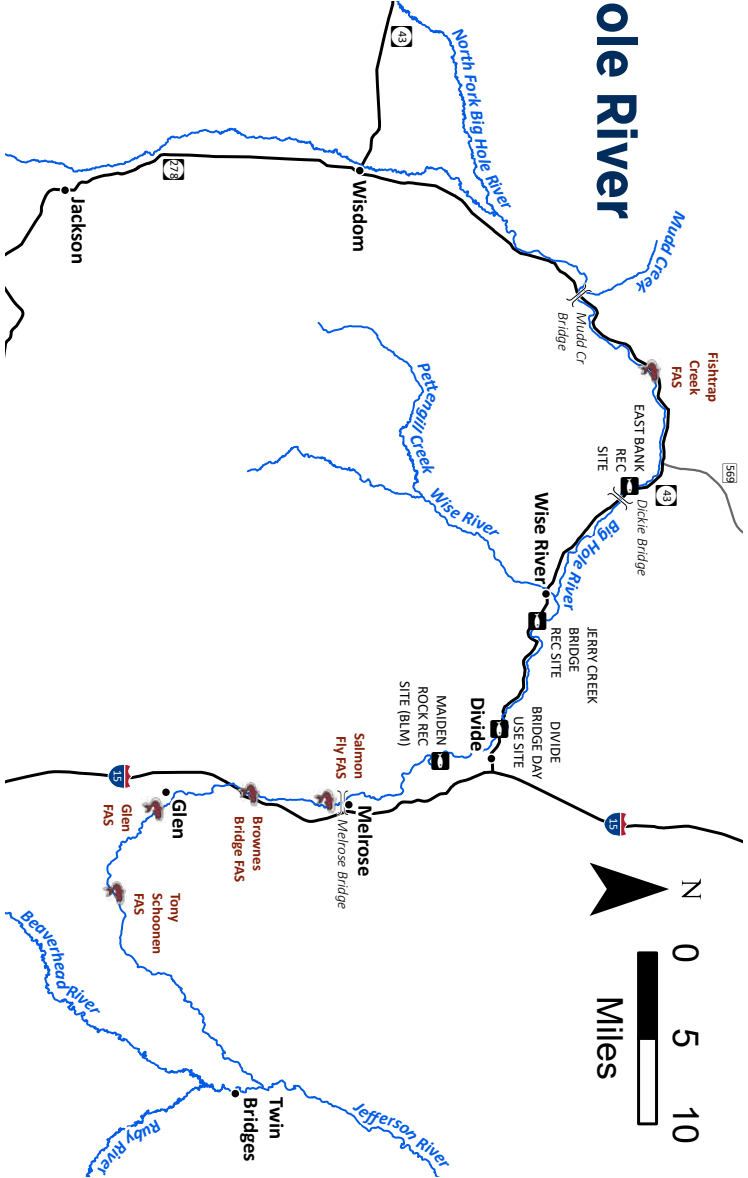
<b>Divide Bridge to Melrose Bridge (Salmon Fly FAS)</b>	
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- Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Sunday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p 52.

# Central District

## Big Hole River



## Waterbody/Section

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

### Melrose Bridge (Salmon Fly FAS) to Glen FAS (bridges)

- Closed to float outfitting on each Monday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

### Glen FAS (bridge) to Tony Schoonen FAS (Notch Bottom)

- Closed to float outfitting on each Friday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

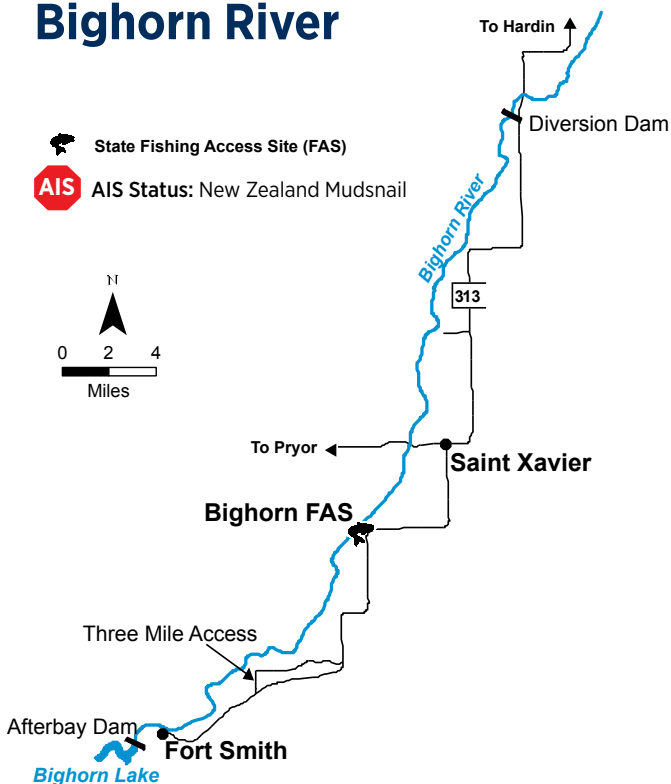
### BIG SHEEP CREEK (Beaverhead River drainage) AIS

- Combined trout: all may be cutthroat trout.

### BIGHORN LAKE

- Bass: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Shovelnose sturgeon: 2 daily and in possession.
- Sauger/walleye: 6 daily (only 3 may be sauger) and 12 in possession (only 3 may be sauger).
- Channel catfish: 6 daily and in possession.
- Burbot (ling): 3 daily and in possession.
- Hook and Line: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line on open water and 6 lines with 1 hook per line through the ice.
- Anglers obtaining live bait fish in Montana may use them only in the Montana portion of the lake.

# Bighorn River



**Waterbody/Section**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**BIGHORN RIVER** 

**Entire river**

- A State of Montana Fishing License is required for all anglers to fish on the Bighorn River within the boundaries of the Crow Reservation. A tribal permit is not required.

**Afterbay Dam to cable 600 feet downstream and downstream from Bighorn FAS**

- May use live nongame bait fish (as identified in Standard District Regulations).

**Cable 600 feet below Afterbay Dam to Bighorn FAS**

- Artificial lures only.

**BLACKTAIL DEER CREEK (Beaverhead River drainage)**

- Combined trout: all may be cutthroat trout.

**BLACKTAIL MEADOWS POND (Dillon)**

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger only. One rod per child.

**BOULDER RIVER (tributary to Jefferson River, near Cardwell)**

**Mouth upstream to the bridge on Boulder Cut-Off Road (mile 14.4)**

- Open Jan. 1 through Sept. 30.

**BYNUM RESERVOIR** 

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.

**CANYON FERRY RESERVOIR**  

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession any size.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 15 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Yellow perch: 10 daily and in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

**Magpie Bay**

- Closed (as posted) March 1 through June 14.

**CHESSMAN RESERVOIR (Tenmile Creek drainage, near Helena)**

- Closed to fishing (City of Helena water supply).

**CLARK CANYON RESERVOIR**  

- Burbot (Ling): 3 over 23 inches daily and in possession.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession.

**CLARK CANYON RESERVOIR UN-NAMED SPRING (S. END OF THE RESERVOIR)**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**CLARKS FORK YELLOWSTONE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES**

**Mainstem downstream from the bridge at Bridger**

- Hook and Line: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**CONFEDERATE GULCH (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)** -----

**Mouth to Highway 284**

- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.

**COTTONWOOD CREEK (10 miles SW of Martinsdale)** -----

- Combined trout: limit includes 2 cutthroat trout daily and in possession.

**CRYSTAL LAKE (Fergus County)** -----

- March 1 through Aug. 31 – Central District Standard Daily and Possession limits.
- Sept. 1 through Feb. 28 – Trout: no limit.

**CULVER POND (Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge)** -----

- Closed to angling from Nov. 30 to April 15.
- Artificial lures only.

**CUT BANK CREEK** -----

- Open entire year downstream of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation boundary in T33N, R6W, S2.

**DEADMANS BASIN RESERVOIR (AIS)** -----

- Combined trout: 10 daily and in possession.
- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Oct. 1 through Dec. 31, 35 daily and 70 in possession.

**DEARBORN RIVER** -----

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**DEEP CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)** -----

**Mouth to North Fork of Deep Creek**

- Open June 15 through Nov. 30.

**DICKENS LAKE (Sun River Wildlife Management Area)** -----

- Open May 15 at 12:00 noon through Nov. 30.

**DIVERSION LAKE (Sun River drainage)** -----

- Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.
- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession.

**DRY CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)** -----

**Mouth to Flynn Lane**

- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.

**DUCK CREEK (tributary to Hebgen Reservoir)** -----

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**EAST FORK HYALITE CREEK** -----


- Open July 15 through Nov. 30.

**EAST FORK RESERVOIR (near Lewistown)** -----

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.
- Spearing: open for nongame fish and northern pike through the ice and by persons swimming or submerged.

**EAST GALLATIN RIVER (AIS)** -----

- Northern pike: no limit.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>ELK LAKE (Beaverhead County)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Narrows Creek spawning channel is closed to angling.</li> <li>Catch-and-release for lake trout and arctic grayling.</li> </ul>
<b>ELK SPRINGS CREEK (Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open entire year except May 1 through June 14.</li> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>ELKS CLUB POND (Lewistown)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger only. One rod per child.</li> </ul>
<b>EYRAUD LAKES aka Arod Lakes</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through ice only.</li> <li>Spearing: open for northern pike and nongame fish through the ice only.</li> </ul>
<b>FAIRGROUNDS POND (Helena)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger only.</li> </ul>
<b>FERGUSON LAKE (Big Hole drainage)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined trout: 2 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
<b>GALLATIN RIVER</b> <sup>(AIS)</sup> -----	
<b>Entire river</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern pike: no limit.</li> </ul>	
<b>Yellowstone National Park to East Gallatin River</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.</li> </ul>	
<b>Porcupine Creek Road to West Fork Gallatin River</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>	
<b>GHENY POND (near Twin Bridges)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger only. One rod per child.</li> </ul>
<b>GIANT SPRINGS (near Great Falls)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year where enclosed by concrete walks and masonry work.</li> </ul>
<b>GIBSON RESERVOIR</b> -----	
<b>Gibson Dam upstream to the point where the North and South forks of the Sun River meet, regardless of reservoir level</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession. Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.</li> </ul>	
<b>GOOSE LAKE (Madison County)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open June 15 through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>
<b>GRAYLING CREEK (tributary to Hebgen Reservoir)</b> -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>
<b>HARRISON LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES</b>  <sup>(AIS)</sup> -----	
<b>Willow Creek arm, as posted</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.</li> </ul>	
<b>Tributaries to reservoir - North Willow, South Willow and Norwegian Creeks - from the Highway 287 bridges to reservoir</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open June 15 through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>	

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**HAUSER RESERVOIR**  

**Including Canyon Ferry Dam tailwater and Lake Helena**

- Combined trout and kokanee salmon: 5 trout and kokanee salmon daily and in combination and 10 trout and kokanee salmon in possession in any combination.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 15 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Yellow perch: 10 daily and in possession July 1 through March 31; 1 daily and in possession, 14 inch minimum, April 1 through June 30.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice.

**HAYMAKER CREEK**

- Cutthroat trout: 2 daily and in possession.

**HELENA VALLEY REGULATING RESERVOIR** 

**Including irrigation canal in the area from the discharge outlet to 400 yards downstream**

- Manually operated watercraft and watercraft powered by electric motors only.
- During ice cover: no fires, all-terrain vehicles, off highway vehicles, snowmobiles, or any other vehicles allowed on the ice. Powered ice augers are permitted.
- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Sept. 1 through Oct. 31; 35 daily and 70 in possession.

**HELLROARING CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)**

- Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, only one over 14 inches.

**HELLS CANYON CREEK (Jefferson River drainage)**

- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.
- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

**HIDDEN LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES (Madison County)**

- Open June 15 through Nov. 30.

**HOLTER RESERVOIR**  

**Up to American Bar Gulch (approximately 4.6 miles downstream from Hauser Dam)**

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 over 25 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Combined trout and kokanee salmon: 5 rainbow trout and kokanee salmon daily in any combination and 10 rainbow trout and kokanee salmon in possession in any combination.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and 50 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice.

**Waterbody/Section**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**HYALITE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES**

**Above Hyalite Reservoir including East Fork Hyalite Creek and West Fork Hyalite Creek**

- Open July 15 through Nov. 30.

**Below Hyalite Reservoir**

- Combined trout: all may be cutthroat trout.

**HYALITE RESERVOIR** 

- Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.

**INDIAN ROAD POND (Townsend)**

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger, holders of a "Resident Person with a Disability Conservation License" and holders of a "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" with the proper prerequisite Fishing License. One rod per angler.

**JEFFERSON RIVER** 

**Entire river**

- Northern pike: no limit.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches and only 1 may be a rainbow trout.

**Hells Canyon Creek and Willow Springs Creek**

- Seasonal spawning closure at tributary mouths: Closed to fishing 100 yards upstream and downstream from the creek mouths from April 1 through April 30 and from Sept. 30 through Nov. 30.

**LAKE ELWELL aka Tiber Reservoir**  

- Cisco and whitefish: all fish must be released immediately or killed and counted as part of your limit. It is unlawful to possess live cisco or whitefish for any reason.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for nongame fish, northern pike, and walleye through the ice and by persons swimming or submerged.

**LAKE FRANCES**  

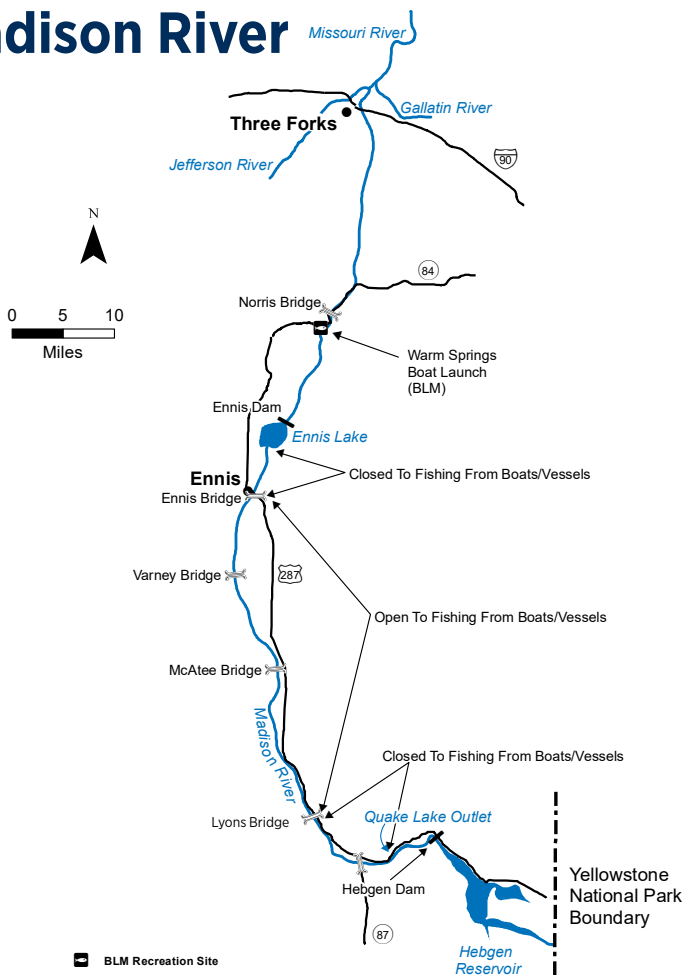
- Closed entire year around the water supply outlet as posted.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for nongame fish, northern pike, and walleye through the ice.

**LAKE HELENA**  

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Yellow perch: 10 daily and in possession July 1 through March 31; 1 daily and in possession, 14 inch minimum, April 1 through June 30.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 15 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Combined trout and kokanee salmon: 5 trout and kokanee salmon daily and in any combination and 10 trout and kokanee salmon in possession in any combination.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>LAKE SUTHERLIN</b>	
<b>Including inlet areas on state land</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Oct. 1 through Dec. 31, 35 daily and 70 in possession.</li> <li>• Burbot (ling): 3 daily and in possession. Only 1 over 30 inches.</li> </ul>	
<b>LITTLE PRICKLY PEAR CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to Missouri River) --</b>	
<b>Mouth to Big Sheep Creek</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>	
<b>LYMAN CREEK (near Bozeman)</b>	
<b>From the City water supply intake to a point 1,000 feet upstream</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year as posted.</li> </ul>	

# Madison River



**AIS Status:** Curlyleaf Pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, New Zealand mudsnail

Visit [fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish) 61

**Waterbody/Section**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**MADISON RIVER**  

**Yellowstone National Park boundary to Hebgen Reservoir**

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 rainbow trout daily and in possession, any size.

**Quake Lake outlet to Lyons Bridge**

- Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

**Lyons Bridge to Varney Bridge**

- Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only.

**Varney Bridge to Ennis Bridge**

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 rainbow trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only with barbless, single-pointed hooks. No treble or double hooks. Anglers may remove treble or double hooks from the lure and replace them with a single hook, or the shanks may be cut off the other hook points to leave a single hook. Lures with multiple hook attachments may still be used but any treble hook must be replaced by a single hook.

**Ennis Bridge to Ennis Lake**

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 rainbow trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only with barbless, single-pointed hooks. No treble or double hooks. Anglers may remove treble or double hooks from the lure and replace them with a single hook, or the shanks may be cut off the other hook points to leave a single hook. Lures with multiple hook attachments may still be used but any treble hook must be replaced by a single hook.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

**Ennis Dam to the mouth**

- Northern pike: no limit.

**MAGPIE CREEK (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)** -----

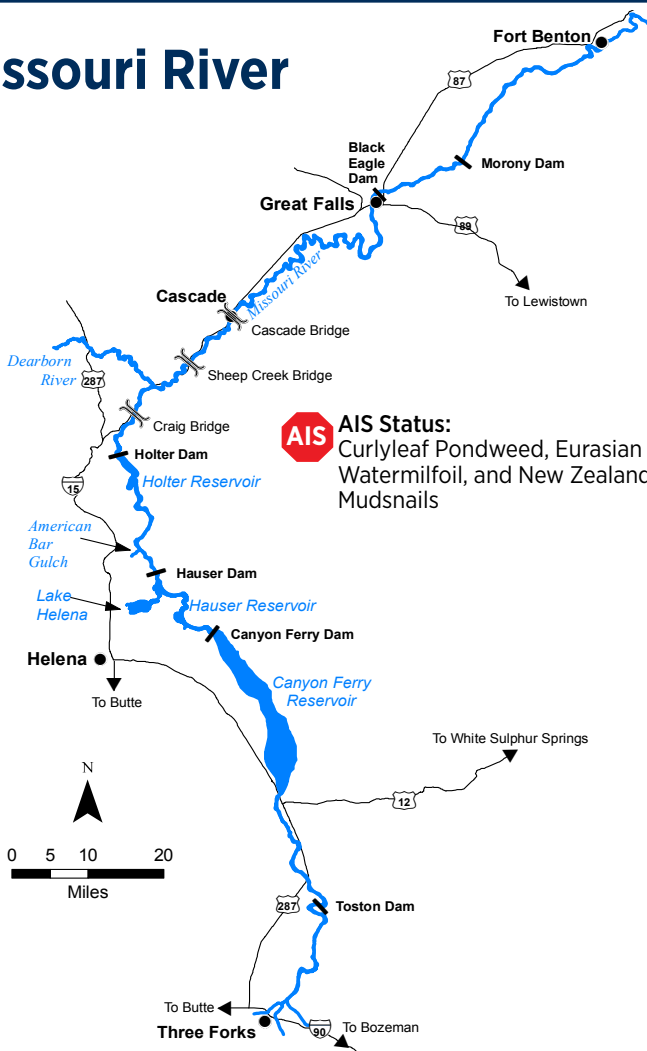
- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.

**MIDVALE CREEK (Blackfoot Reservation)** -----

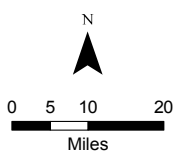
- Closed entire year from intake of Glacier Park Hotel Company water supply to the park boundary.

 If you see this icon, turn to page 20 for information on Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines.

# Missouri River



**AIS** AIS Status:  
Curlyleaf Pondweed, Eurasian Watermilfoil, and New Zealand Mudsnails



**MISSOURI RIVER**

**Confluence of Madison and Jefferson Rivers to Holter Dam**

- Northern pike: no limit.

**Toston Dam Reservoir (Toston Dam to approximately 1 mile upstream)**

- Northern pike: no limit. Sparring allowed through the ice only.

**Toston Dam to Canyon Ferry Reservoir**

- Big Springs spawning area closed as posted from March 1 through June 15.
- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 15 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: no limit.

## Waterbody/Section

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

### Canyon Ferry Reservoir

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Yellow perch: 10 daily and in possession.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 15 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: no limit. Spearing allowed through the ice only.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

### Canyon Ferry Dam to Hauser Dam (includes Hauser Reservoir, Lake Helena and Canyon Ferry Tailwaters)

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Combined trout and kokanee salmon: 5 trout and kokanee salmon daily and in combination and 10 trout and kokanee salmon in possession in any combination.
- Yellow perch: 10 daily and in possession, July 1 through March 31; 1 daily and in possession, 14 inch minimum, April 1 through June 30.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 15 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

### Hauser Dam to Holter Reservoir (Hauser Dam downstream to American Bar Gulch approximately 4.6 miles)

- Combined trout: standard river/stream limits apply, except catch-and-release for brown trout.
- Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 over 25 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: no limit.

### Holter Reservoir (American Bar Gulch downstream to Holter Dam)

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 over 25 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Combined trout and kokanee salmon: 5 rainbow trout and kokanee salmon daily in any combination and 10 rainbow trout and kokanee salmon in possession in any combination.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and 50 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice.

### Holter Dam to Black Eagle Dam

- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches, and only 1 may be a brown trout.
- Walleye: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Northern pike: no limit.

### Morony Dam to Fort Benton

- Smallmouth bass: 10 daily and in possession.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line all year.



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**NEWLAN CREEK RESERVOIR** AIS -----

**(Including a 400-yard reach of inlet stream from the mouth up to a concrete water weir)**

- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Oct. 1 through Dec. 31; 35 daily and 70 in possession.
- Burbot (ling): 3 daily and in possession. Only 1 over 30 inches.

**NORTH FORK SUN RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** -----

**Upstream from the point where the North and South Forks of the Sun River meet, regardless of reservoir level**

- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 12 inches, all may be cutthroat trout.

**NORTH FORK TETON RIVER DRAINAGE (near Choteau)** -----

**Within the National Forest**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**NORTH WILLOW CREEK (near Harrison)** -----

**Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir**

- Open June 15 through Nov. 30.

**NORWEGIAN CREEK (near Harrison)** -----

**Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir**

- Open June 15 through Nov. 30.

**O'BRIEN CREEK (near Neihart)** -----

**Above intake to the Neihart public water supply**

- Closed entire year.

**OSTLE RESERVOIR aka Antelope Butte Lake (Teton County)** -----

- Open May 15 at 12:00 noon through Nov. 30.

**OTTER LAKE (Madison County)** -----

- Open June 15 through Nov. 30.

**PARSONS SLOUGH** -----

**Downstream from Loomont Lane**

- Open June 15 through Sept. 30.

**PISHKUN RESERVOIR** -----

- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Snagging: open for kokanee salmon Sept. 1 through Dec. 31; 35 daily and 70 in possession.

**RAT LAKE (Gallatin River drainage)** -----

- The unnamed tributary to the lake, inlet and outlet, is closed all year.

**RATTLESNAKE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (near Dillon, Beaverhead County) -**

- Closed entire year from city water supply intake to a point 1,000 feet upstream as posted.
- Combined trout: all may be cutthroat trout.

**RED ROCK CREEK (Beaverhead River drainage)** -----

- Open entire year except May 1 through June 14.
- Artificial lures only.

**Waterbody/Section**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**RED ROCK RIVER** <sup>(AIS)</sup>

**Lima Dam to Clark Canyon Reservoir and all Un-named Spring Tributaries**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**ROCK CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES**

**(tributary to Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River)**

- West Fork Rock Creek is closed to fishing from the Red Lodge water intake to 1,000 feet upstream.

**ROCK CREEK RESERVOIRS (Robb-Ledford Game Range)**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**RUBY RIVER** <sup>(AIS)</sup>

**Upstream from Ruby Reservoir**

- Combined trout: all may be cutthroat trout.

**Confluence with Sweetwater Creek to Ruby Reservoir**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**Downstream from Ruby Dam**

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.
- Closed entire year just below Ruby Dam (that portion of the Ruby River from its confluence with the Ruby Dam outlet channel upstream to the dam, including the outlet channel).

**Ruby Dam to Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS)**

- Catch-and-release for brown trout.
- Open April 1 through Sept. 30.

**Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS) to the Mouth**

- Brown trout: 1 daily and in possession, must be less than 18".

**RUBY RIVER RESERVOIR**

**Tributaries (Garden, Peterson, Barton Gulch, and Davey creeks).**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**SAGE CREEK (Pryor Mountains)**

- Combined trout: all may be cutthroat trout.

**SCOTT RESERVOIR**

- Closed to fishing (City of Helena water supply).

**SHEEP CREEK (tributary to Missouri River south of Cascade)**

- Open third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

**SHIELDS RIVER** <sup>(AIS)</sup>

**Entire River**

- Smallmouth bass: All smallmouth bass caught must be killed immediately, kept and the entire fish presented to FWP. Anglers who catch smallmouth bass in the Shields River are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-577-7900). Anglers will be asked to provide location, date, and time of capture and may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number, and phone number. Anglers are required to present the whole smallmouth bass to a FWP office within 10 days of capture (frozen is allowed) during regular business hours. Edible portions of the fish are returned to the angler upon request.

**SILVER CREEK aka D2 Ditch (tributary to Prickly Pear Creek)**

**Downstream from the I-15 bridge near Helena**

- Open third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**SLOUGH CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)** -----

- Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.

**SMITH RIVER** (AIS) -----

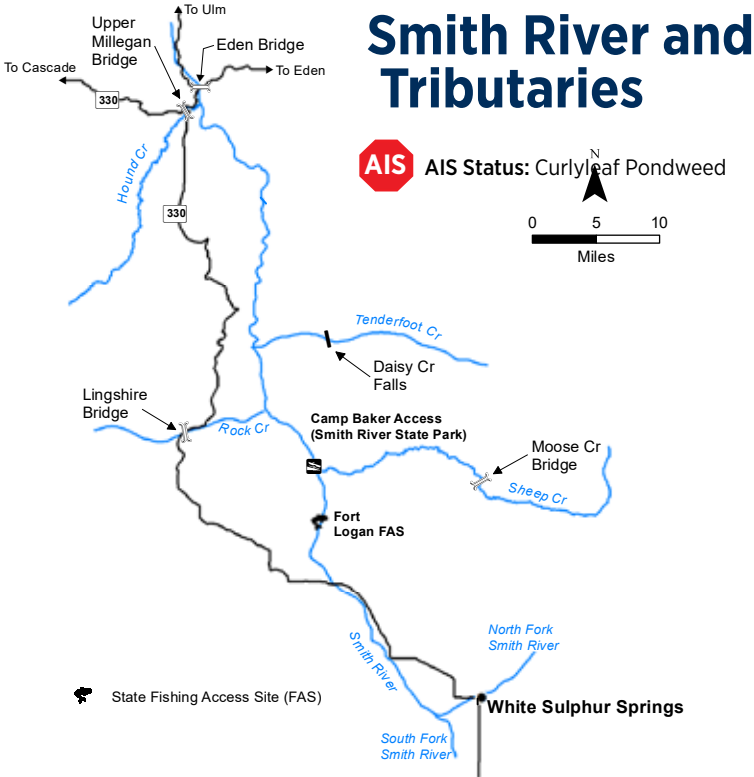
NOTE: Floating on the Smith River between Camp Baker and Eden Bridge is strictly limited. Mandatory registration, floater's fee and other regulations apply. A drawing for launch dates is held in February with remaining launches filled on a first-come basis. Contact the Great Falls FWP office at 406-454-5840 for more information.

**Sheep Creek from bridge upstream of Moose Creek to the mouth, Rock Creek from bridge at Lingshire Road to the mouth, Tenderfoot Creek from falls just upstream of Daisy Creek to the mouth, and Hound Creek from Upper Millegan Road bridge to the mouth.**

- Open third Saturday in May to Nov. 30.

**Camp Baker Bridge to Eden Bridge**

- Combined trout: 3 under 13 inches daily and in possession and only 1 over 22 inches daily and in possession.
- Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age or younger may use bait.



**Waterbody/Section**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**SODA BUTTE CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)**

- Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.

**SOUTH FORK MADISON RIVER (tributary to Hebgen Reservoir)**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**SOUTH FORK SUN RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES**

**Upstream from the point where the North and South Forks of the Sun River meet, regardless of reservoir level**

- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession only 1 over 12 inches.

**SOUTH FORK TETON RIVER (near Choteau)**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**SOUTH FORK TWO MEDICINE RIVER DRAINAGE**

**Within National Forest**

- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.

**SOUTH WILLOW CREEK (near Harrison)**

**Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir**

- Open June 15 through Nov. 30.

**SPLIT ROCK LAKE**

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.

**SPRING MEADOW LAKE**  

- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Bass: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.
- No spear fishing or bow fishing allowed.

**SUNNY SLOPE CANAL**

**Downstream from Pishkun Reservoir**

- Catch-and-release for arctic grayling.

**SWAZEE LAKE (Sun River Wildlife Management Area)**

- Open May 15 at 12:00 noon through Nov. 30.

**TIBER RESERVOIR aka Lake Elwell**  

- Cisco and whitefish: all fish must be released immediately or killed and counted as part of your limit. It is unlawful to possess live cisco or whitefish for any reason.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- Spearing: open for nongame fish, northern pike, and walleye through the ice and by persons swimming or submerged.

**TROUT CREEK (Tributary to Missouri River)**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**TUNNEL LAKE (Teton County)**

- Combined trout: includes 1 arctic grayling.

**TWIN LAKES (Big Hole River drainage)**

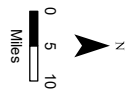
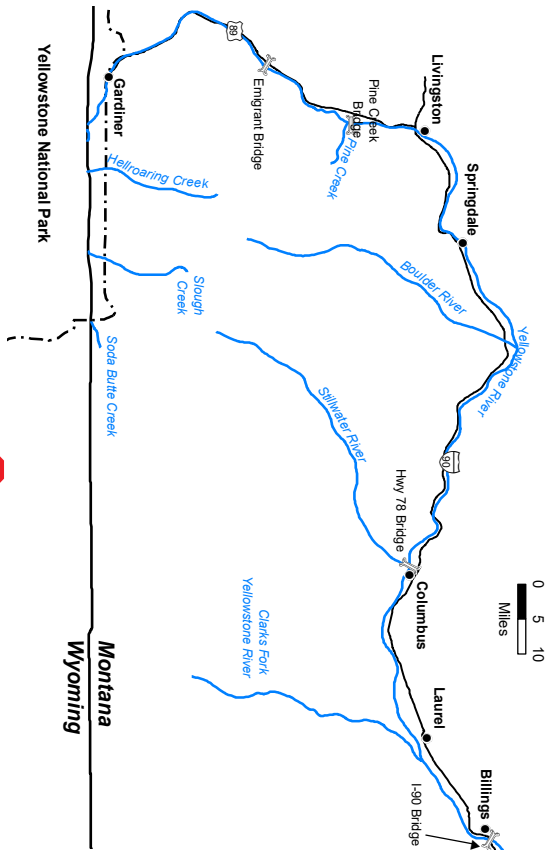
- Catch-and-release for lake trout.
- Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>VIGILANTE POND (near Virginia City)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger only. One rod per child.</li> </ul>
<b>WADE LAKE (Madison County)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spawning channel and channel inlet closed as posted.</li> </ul>
<b>WARM SPRINGS CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open June 15 through Sept. 30.</li> </ul>
<b>WEST FORK HYALITE CREEK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open July 15 through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>
<b>WEST FORK ROCK CREEK</b>	<p style="background-color: #cccccc;"><b>Red Lodge water intake to 1,000 feet upstream</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>WIDGEON POND (Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed to angling from Nov. 30 to April 15.</li> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>WILLOW CREEK (Meagher County, near White Sulphur Springs)</b>	<p style="background-color: #cccccc;"><b>White Sulphur Springs water intake to its source</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>WILLOW CREEK RESERVOIR (near Augusta)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 trout daily, only 1 over 20 inches.</li> </ul>
<b>WILLOW CREEK RESERVOIR AND TRIBUTARIES (near Harrison)</b>	<p style="background-color: #cccccc;"><b>Willow Creek arm, as posted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.</li> </ul> <p style="background-color: #cccccc;"><b>Tributaries to reservoir - North Willow, South Willow and Norwegian Creeks - from the Highway 287 bridges to reservoir</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open June 15 through Nov. 30.</li> </ul>
<b>WILLOW SPRINGS CREEK (tributary to Jefferson River)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open June 15 through Sept. 30.</li> <li>Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.</li> </ul>
<b>WISE RIVER</b>	<p style="background-color: #cccccc;"><b>Entire River</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for Arctic grayling.</li> <li>Combined trout: 2 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>

**AIS** AIS Status: New Zealand Mudsnail

**Waterbody/Section**      **Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

# Yellowstone River



**YELLOWSTONE RIVER**

**Yellowstone National Park Boundary to Pine Creek Bridge**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**Yellowstone National Park Boundary to Springdale Bridge FAS**

- Smallmouth bass: All smallmouth bass caught must be killed immediately, kept and the entire fish presented to FWP. Anglers who catch smallmouth bass in the Yellowstone River above Springdale Bridge FAS are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours 406 577-7900. Anglers will be asked to provide location, date and time of capture and may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number, and phone number. Anglers are required to present the whole smallmouth bass to a FWP office within 10 days of capture (frozen is allowed) during regular business hours. Edible portions of the fish are returned to angler upon request.

**Springdale Bridge FAS to the North Dakota border**

- Smallmouth bass: 10 daily and in possession.

**From HWY 212 Bridge Downstream to the I-90 Bridge**

- Hook and Line: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.

## Eastern Fishing District

**The Eastern Fishing District includes all waters lying east of the Central Fishing District. For the boundary description, see Central Fishing District, page 47.**

**Note:** Roadways that are used as boundaries between the Central and Eastern Fishing Districts are interpreted to be in the Central Fishing District. See description of the Central and Eastern Fishing District boundary on page 47.

### Eastern District Exceptions Standard Regulations

**Fort Peck Reservation - Tribal Boundary Water Regulations:** Non-tribal members licensed through the State of Montana and/or Fort Peck Tribes that are fishing in waters that form the exterior boundaries of the Reservation -- Big Muddy Creek, Missouri River and/or Milk River -- are permitted to harvest the following limits:

Burbot (Ling)	5 daily and in possession
Channel Catfish	10 daily and 20 in possession
Northern Pike	10 daily and in possession
Paddlefish	1 per season and in possession
Sauger/Walleye	5 daily and 10 in possession
Pallid Sturgeon	0 (all waters are closed to fishing for pallid sturgeon)
Shovelnose Sturgeon	5 daily and in possession

These harvest limits cannot be exceeded, even if the angler possesses both tribal and state licenses, and fishes on and/or off the reservation on the same day. Non-tribal members licensed through the State of Montana and/or the Fort Peck Tribes, that are fishing in exterior boundary waters — Big Muddy Creek, Missouri River and/or Milk River — are limited to a maximum of 6 lines with 6 hooks per line. Unattended lines are required to be identified with the angler's name and/or an individual identifying number issued by the department. Setlines shall not be attached to jugs or floating devices.

### Transporting Live Fish

An import permit is required to bring live fish of any kind into Montana (see page 15). It is unlawful to possess or transport any live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken with the following exceptions:

- 1) Possession and transport of live fish for authorized commercial purposes (e.g. Bait Seining Permit, Commercial Fish Ponds, Commercial Fishing, permitted Fishing Contests).
- 2) Use of live bait subject to restrictions for the taking, possession, transport and use of live baitfish (see "Bait Regulations" on page 73);
- 3) Within the boundaries of the Eastern Fishing District. It is unlawful to possess or transport live fish, other than live nongame bait fish, on roadways that form the boundary between the Eastern and Central fishing districts; or
- 4) Possession and transport of live nongame bait fish to and from areas contaminated with Eurasian watermilfoil (Fort Peck Reservoir, Fort Peck Dredge Cut Ponds, and the Missouri River from Fort Peck Dam to the mouth of the Milk River) is allowed ONLY in clean water (e.g. transport bait fish in well water).

### Methods of Taking Fish

#### Hook and Line Limits

##### Open Water

##### Rivers and Streams

- 6 lines with 6 hooks per line. The line(s) must be attended and in the angler's immediate control unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines on page 17.

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line or as noted under Exceptions to Standard Regulations. All lines must be attended and in the angler's immediate control unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines page 17.

##### Ice Fishing

##### Lakes, Reservoirs, Rivers and Streams

- 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice. When a line is used through the ice, the angler need not be in immediate control but must be in the vicinity and in visual contact with the line unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines.

##### Shelters:

Removal After the Season: The owner of an ice fishing shelter shall remove it from the ice before it becomes irretrievable at the end of the season or within five days from receipt of notification from FWP to remove the shelter. Shelters may remain on the ice after March 1 but must be removed daily if not occupied overnight. Exceptions may apply to specific waterbodies, see Exceptions below.

Exceptions: Arapooish Pond, Beaver Creek Reservoir, Bearpaw Lake, Bailey Reservoir, Fresno Reservoir, Dry Fork Reservoir, Faber Reservoir and Lake Elmo. These waterbodies will require removal of an ice fishing shelter from the ice before it becomes irretrievable at the end of the season, or by March 1. Shelters may remain on the ice after March 1 but must be removed daily if not occupied overnight.

**Bow and Arrow:** Unless otherwise noted in the exceptions to the standard regulations, all waters open to angling are open to taking nongame fish by bow and arrow. Paddlefish can be harvested by bow and arrow anglers with a valid paddlefish tag and during an open paddlefish harvest day (see General and Standard paddlefish Regulations).

##### Hoop Nets

- The use of hoop nets is permitted in certain areas of the Eastern Fishing District.
- The use of hoop nets is limited to licensed resident anglers.
- A permit is required. Permit applications and rules are available at FWP offices in Billings, Miles City and Glasgow.
- Closed statewide March 1 through May 15.

**Snagging Allowed for:** 1) chinook salmon on Fort Peck Reservoir only from Oct. 1 through Nov. 30; 2) paddlefish by anglers with a valid paddlefish tag/license during an open paddlefish season (see General and Standard paddlefish Regulations); and 3) nongame fish on all open waters in the Eastern District except on the Missouri River downstream from Fort Benton to the North Dakota border, the Yellowstone River downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River, and Powder River downstream of Highway 10 bridge.

**Spearing:** In all waters open to fishing, nongame fish, northern pike, burbot (ling), walleye and whitefish may be taken with rubber or spring-propelled spears by persons swimming or submerged. spears or gigs may be used through the ice for nongame fish, northern pike, walleye, sauger and burbot (ling).



## Bait Regulations

- Game fish, including yellow perch, may not be used as bait except as authorized below under Dead Bait. See “Game Fish” in definitions (page 5) for complete list of game species.
- It is unlawful to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.
- Collection Methods: Nongame fish may be taken for use as live bait in the following manner:
  - with hook and line; or
  - with seines no larger than 12 feet x 4 feet; or
  - with minnow traps (the dimensions shall not exceed 24 inches x 12 inches x 12 inches); or
  - with cast nets (maximum 6-foot radius) and dip nets (no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet).
- See “Dead Bait” and “Live Bait” sections below for details on possession and use of nongame bait fish.
- Nongame fish may be taken from:
  - waters where live fish may be used as bait (see water list on page 74);
  - all rivers and streams;
  - all irrigation ditches, canals and associated infrastructure; or
  - public and private ponds with fathead minnows.
- Landowner permission is required to capture live bait from privately owned ponds or irrigation systems for personal use. A Commercial Fishing License (page 14) and a Commercial Pond License is required to sell bait from a privately owned pond.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler’s name and phone number or name and an individual identifying number issued by the department attached.
- Areas within the Eastern Fishing District that have been identified as contaminated with Eurasian watermilfoil have additional bait restrictions as described below.

### Dead Bait

- Nongame fish (see “Collection Methods” above) that are freshly killed or have been preserved by freezing, salting or pickling may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures only. Heads and entrails of nongame fish may also be used as bait.
- Whole game fish may not be used as bait.
- Parts/pieces of bass, burbot (ling), channel catfish, crappie, northern pike, paddlefish, sauger, shovelnose sturgeon, walleye, or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- The eggs of Salmonids (char, cisco, arctic grayling, salmon or trout) may be used as bait. Other parts/pieces of Salmonids may not be used as bait unless noted under waterbody exception.

### Live Bait

- Live bait fish may not be imported into Montana.
- Live animals such as meal worms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians and insects may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures only. Transport of invasive species is unlawful.
- Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale (a receipt) from the approved out-of-state leech dealer when fishing with leeches in Montana. A list of approved out-of-state leech dealers may be obtained from FWP by calling 406-452-6181.

- Nongame fish species that may be collected, possessed, and used as live bait in the Eastern Fishing District include only the following: fathead minnow, flathead chub, western silvery minnow, plains minnow, emerald shiner, longnose dace, lake chub, creek chub, longnose sucker, and white sucker. All other nongame fish species (not listed above) must be released immediately at the collection site or killed prior to transporting away from the collection site (see “Dead Bait” on page 73). See pages 87-88 for live bait fish identification. Be proactive, bait fish that cannot be positively identified should not be used as live bait.
- The nongame fish species listed above may be used as live bait only in the following waters:

**Lakes, Reservoirs, Ponds and Impoundments (listed by County):**

Big Horn Co. – Tongue River Reservoir (see exceptions to standard regulations)  
 Blaine Co. – Cow Creek Reservoir, Dry Fork Reservoir, Anita Reservoir, Reser Reservoir  
 Carter Co. – Doug Gardner #2 Reservoir, Talcott Pond  
 Custer Co. – Spotted Eagle Pond, Haughan Pond  
 Daniels Co. – Whitetail Reservoir  
 Dawson Co. – Hollecker Pond, Johnson Reservoir, Lindsey Reservoir  
 Fallon Co. – Baker Lake, South Sandstone Reservoir  
 Garfield Co. – Fort Peck Reservoir, Whiteside Reservoir  
 Hill Co. – Beaver Creek Reservoir, Bailey Reservoir  
 McCone Co. – Flat Lake, Fort Peck Reservoir, Hedstrom Reservoir  
 Petroleum Co. – Fort Peck Reservoir, Petrolia Reservoir  
 Prairie Co. – Grants Reservoir, Homestead Reservoir  
 Phillips Co. – Bison Bone Reservoir, Big McNeil Slough, Cole Ponds, Ester Reservoir, Fort Peck Reservoir, Frenchman Reservoir, Little Warm Reservoir, McChesney Reservoir, Nelson Reservoir, Wildhorse Reservoir  
 Richland Co. – Buxbaum West Reservoir, Gartside Reservoir, Kuester Reservoir  
 Roosevelt Co. – Bainville Railroad Ponds  
 Rosebud Co. – Castle Rock Lake, Lee Pond  
 Sheridan Co. – Box Elder Reservoir, Engstrom Reservoir, Medicine Lake Nat. Wildlife Refuge, Raymond Reservoir  
 Valley Co. – Fort Peck Dredge Cut Trout Pond, Fort Peck Reservoir, Grub Reservoir, Gut Shot Reservoir, Shoot Reservoir, Triple Crossing Reservoir, Valley Reservoir, VR2 Reservoir, Wards Res., and all BLM reservoirs in the Willow Creek Drainage  
 Wibaux Co. – Wibaux Pond

**Rivers and Streams:** All streams and rivers in the Eastern Fishing District except:

Milk River and its tributaries upstream from Fresno Dam.  
 Beaver Creek upstream from Beaver Creek Reservoir.

- These waters are not open to the use of live bait but are open to the collection of legal baitfish for use where legal.

### Bait Restrictions in Eurasian Watermilfoil Contaminated Areas

Eurasian watermilfoil is an invasive aquatic plant species that has become established in some Montana waters. This water weed is easily spread from one body of water to another primarily by plant fragments. Areas within the Eastern Fishing District that have been identified as contaminated with Eurasian watermilfoil are:

- Fort Peck Reservoir
- Fort Peck Dredge Cut Ponds
- Missouri River from Fort Peck Dam to the mouth of the Milk River

The additional bait restrictions within the contaminated areas are:

- Commercial collection of bait animals is not permitted.
- Transport of live aquatic bait animals to and from these contaminated areas is allowed only in clean water (e.g. transport minnows and leeches in well water).

Anglers shall inspect all bait buckets and live wells to ensure that **NO PLANT FRAGMENTS** are present when leaving a body of water. It takes only a small fragment of Eurasian watermilfoil (less than 2 inches) to start a new plant and infest a body of water.

### 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
<b>FAS = Fishing Access Site</b>			<b>C&amp;R = Catch-and-Release</b>		

## 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 Harvest Reporting:** Anglers are required to report the harvest of any paddlefish according to the specific reporting time and methods listed under Standard Paddlefish Regulations for each tag area.
  - 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).
- 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 & Wildlife Commission.

### 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.



## Standard Paddlefish Regulations

**Daily and Possession Limits and Tags:** One paddlefish per season per angler. Anglers may select only one of the following four areas, and may only fish in the area selected:

### **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 on-line at [fwp.mt.gov](http://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 1st.
- 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.
- **Mandatory harvest reporting:** 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](http://myfwp.mt.gov).
  - Anglers are encouraged to submit paddlefish jaw sections at FWP self-check stations located at the following campgrounds (Rock Creek, Slippery Ann, Jones Island, and Kipp).

### **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.
- **Mandatory harvest reporting:** 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](http://myfwp.mt.gov).
  - Anglers are encouraged to submit paddlefish jaw sections at FWP self-check stations located at principal access locations.

### **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.
- **Mandatory harvest reporting:** 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”. See more details under General Paddlefish Regulations for All Areas.
  - Anglers also encouraged to submit paddlefish jaw sections for aging at FWP creel stations or self-check stations located at public access sites along the river.

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.
- **Mandatory Harvest Reporting:** 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”. See more details under General Paddlefish Regulations for All Areas.
  - Anglers also encouraged to submit paddlefish jaw sections for aging at FWP creel stations or self-check stations located at public access sites along the river.

 If you see this icon, turn to page 20 for information on Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines.

## Eastern District Standard Daily and Possession Limits

Each angler may take all of the limits listed in the chart, unless otherwise noted in the Eastern District Exceptions. For species not listed, there are no limits on the number of fish that may be taken or possessed.

Anglers who move from one fishing water to another may possess the limit of fish allowed only for the water on which they are currently fishing.

	<b>Species</b>	<b>Daily and Possession Limits</b>
<b>T R O U T</b>	<b>Brook Trout</b>	10 daily and in possession.
	<b>Combined Trout</b> includes brown trout, cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, golden trout, and arctic grayling	Lakes/Reservoirs: 5 daily and 10 in possession.  Rivers/Streams: 5 daily and in possession.
	<b>Lake Trout</b>	3 daily and 6 in possession.
	<b>Bass</b>	5 daily and in possession.
	<b>Burbot (Ling)</b>	5 daily and in possession.
	<b>Channel Catfish</b>	10 daily and 20 in possession.
	<b>Crappie</b>	15 daily and 30 in possession.
	<b>Northern Pike</b>	10 daily and in possession.
	<b>Paddlefish</b>	1 per season and in possession. Tag required.
	<b>Pallid Sturgeon</b>	None - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released promptly, with little or no delay. All waters are closed to fishing for pallid sturgeon. Any pallid sturgeon and all sturgeon over 40 inches must remain partially immersed in water at all times and released immediately!
	<b>Salmon (Kokanee &amp; Chinook)</b>	5 daily and 10 in possession.
	<b>Sauger/Walleye</b>	5 daily and 10 in possession.
	<b>Shortnose Gar</b>	3 per season and in possession. When bowfishing for shortnose gar each angler must have in possession a valid shortnose gar Catch Card. Catch Cards are available at the FWP Region 6 Office in Glasgow.
	<b>Shovelnose Sturgeon</b>	5 daily and in possession, none over 40 inches. All sturgeon over 40 inches must remain partially immersed in water at all times and released immediately.
	<b>Tiger Muskie</b>	1 daily and in possession, must be over 40 inches.
	<b>Whitefish</b>	20 daily and 40 in possession.

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p.80.

# Eastern District

## Eastern District Exceptions To Standard Regulations

Check the following list of waters for the body of water you intend to fish in the Eastern District. If the body of water is not found in the listing of Exceptions, all of the Eastern District standard seasons, daily/possession limits, and statewide regulations apply. Standard regulations apply for species not listed in the exceptions.

### Waterbody/Section

### Exceptions to Standard Regulations

#### BIGHORN RIVER (east of Billings)

##### Entire river

- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily, only 2 may be sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.

#### BOXELDER RESERVOIR aka Bolster Dam (Sheridan County)

- Yellow perch: 25 daily and 50 in possession.

#### FORT PECK DREDGE CUTS (west of Park Grove Bridge and Nelson Dredge)

- Bow and Arrow: open July 1 through Aug. 31 for paddlefish. 1 per season and in possession. An unused blue paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish.
- Shortnose gar: Legal take allowed year-round. Limit 3 per season (license year) and in possession. Release of gar shot while bowfishing prohibited. A shortnose gar Catch Card is required to harvest gar.
- Combined trout: 2 trout daily and in possession.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line on open water and 6 lines with 6 hooks per line through the ice.
- Snagging: no snagging allowed.

#### FORT PECK RESERVOIR

##### Fort Peck Dam to Beauchamp Creek and CMR Trail 837

- Dead cisco can be used as bait. Can only be collected from the Missouri River downstream of Fort Peck Dam (in Montana) or in Fort Peck Reservoir.
- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily, only 2 may be sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.
- Spearing: chinook salmon and lake trout may be taken by spear or gig through the ice Dec. 1 through March 31.
- Snagging: allowed only for chinook salmon from Oct. 1 through Nov. 30.
- Bow and Arrow: allowed for chinook salmon from Oct. 1 through Oct. 15.

#### HOME RUN POND (Glasgow)

- One rod only per angler.

#### JUDITH RIVER (from Hwy 81 downstream to mouth)

- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily, only 2 may be sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.

#### LAKE ELMO

- Bow-and-arrow fishing prohibited.

#### MARIAS RIVER

- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily only 2 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.
- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.

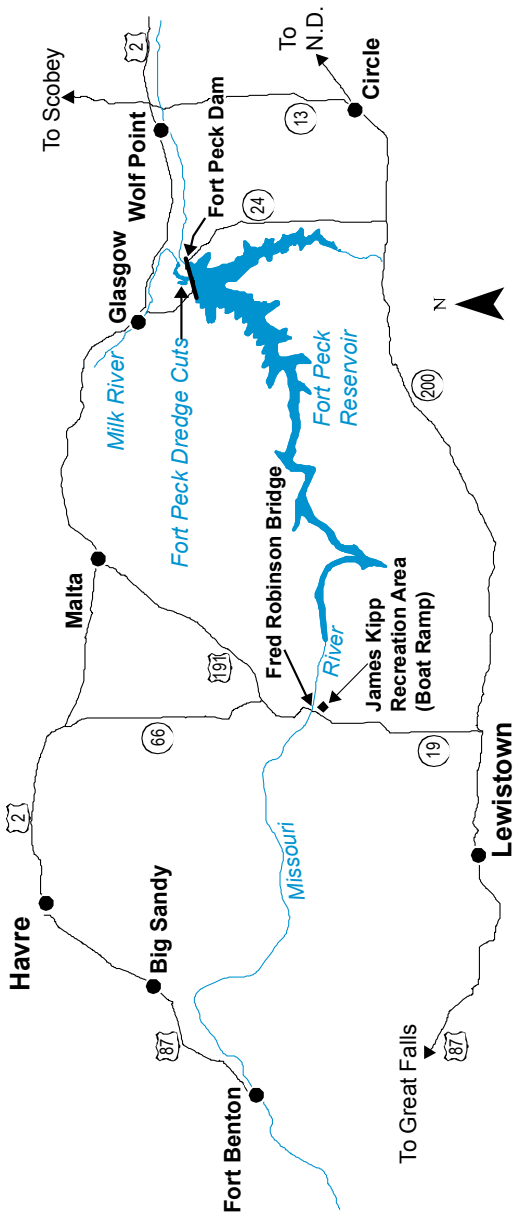
If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p. 80.



**MEDICINE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (Sheridan County)**  -----

- Refuge open to fishing year-round.
- Consult refuge specific regulations available at the office, informational kiosks, or online: [fws.gov/refuge/Medicine\\_Lake/visit/rules\\_and\\_regulations](http://fws.gov/refuge/Medicine_Lake/visit/rules_and_regulations)

# Missouri River Upstream from Fort Peck Dam



 AIS Status: Eurasian Watermilfoil (Fort Peck) and Curlyleaf Pondweed

## Eastern District

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p.80.

**MISSOURI RIVER**  **Entire river**

- Snagging: it is unlawful to snag for fish other than paddlefish on the Missouri River downstream from Fort Benton; any fish other than paddlefish must be immediately released alive.

**Upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton**

- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily, only 2 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.

**Fort Peck Dam to the mouth of the Milk River**

- Combined trout: 2 trout daily and in possession.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line on open water and 6 lines with 6 hooks per line through the ice.

**Downstream from Fort Peck Dam near Duck Island as posted**

- Closed from March 1 through July 31 to fishing and wading as posted.

**MUSSELSHELL RIVER** **Downstream from where North and South forks meet to confluence with Fort Peck**

- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily, only 2 may be sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 4 may be sauger.
- Channel catfish: 10 daily and in possession.

**ROSS RESERVOIR (Blaine County)**

- Open third Saturday in May through Nov. 30.

**SPOTTED EAGLE POND (Miles City)**

- 5 daily and in possession, any combination of species.

**TONGUE RIVER** **Tongue River Reservoir to Wyoming State Border**

- Fish species allowed for use as live bait are: fathead minnow, flathead chub, longnose dace, lake chub, creek chub, white sucker, and longnose sucker.
- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily only 1 may be sauger and 10 in possession only 2 may be sauger.

**Twelve Mile Dam Fishing Access Site (T&Y Dam)**

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.

**TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR**  

- Fish species allowed for use as live bait are: fathead minnow, flathead chub, longnose dace, lake chub, creek chub, white sucker, and longnose sucker.
- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily only 1 may be a sauger and 10 in possession only 2 may be sauger.
- Crappie: 5 daily and in possession.
- Smallmouth bass: 10 daily and in possession.

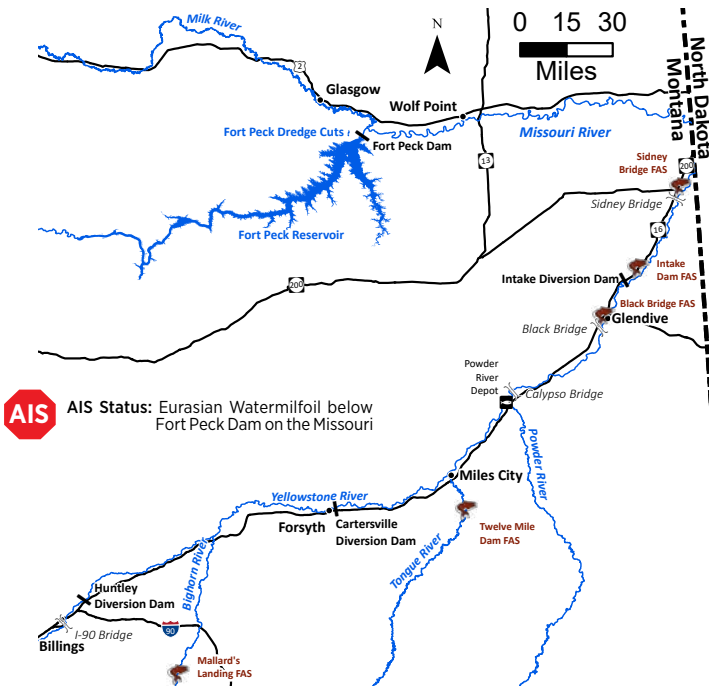
**WARM SPRINGS CREEK (Fergus County)**

- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.



If you see this icon, turn to page 20 for information on Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines.

# Yellowstone & Lower Missouri Rivers



**AIS Status:** Eurasian Watermilfoil below Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri

If you don't find the water you are looking for, use the Standard Daily & Possession Limits on p.80.

## YELLOWSTONE RIVER

### Springdale Bridge FAS to the North Dakota Border

- Smallmouth bass: 10 daily and in possession.

### I-90 Bridge at Billings to the mouth of the Bighorn River

- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches, all may be cutthroat trout.
- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily only 2 may be sauger and 10 in possession only 4 may be sauger.

### Mouth of the Bighorn River to Cartersville Diversion Dam at Forsyth

- Sauger/walleye: 5 daily only 2 may be sauger and 10 in possession only 4 may be sauger.

### Intake Fishing Access Site

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.

### Intake Bypass Channel

- 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).



AIS information: [fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species/about](http://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species/about)

Visit [fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish) 83

HAVE YOU  
CHECKED OUT

# FISHMT?

FWP's new site is a **"one-stop shop"**  
for all things fisheries related.



The new page contains recent fishing news, interactive maps, fishing access sites, waterbodies with photos, species information and so much more!

Regulations • Fish Stocking • Licenses  
Catch Reporting • Species Information  
Waterbodies • Fisheries Data

visit today  
**[fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish)**



## Contact FWP

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

### **STATE HEADQUARTERS MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

1420 East 6th Ave  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
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 Records

Visit [fwp.mt.gov/fish/report-your-catch/fish-records](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish/report-your-catch/fish-records) for a complete list of Montana fish records – or call 406-444-2449.

If you think you have legally caught a fish in Montana that may be a state record:

- To prevent loss of weight, don't clean or freeze the fish. Keep the fish cool – preferably on ice. Take a picture of the fish.
- Get the fish weighed as soon as possible on a certified scale (found in grocery or hardware stores, etc.) and witnessed by an observer. Get an affidavit from the store if no FWP fisheries biologist is present. Measure the length.
- Contact the nearest FWP fisheries office or fisheries biologist to have the fish positively identified and to determine if it is a state record.

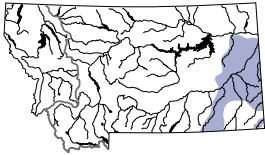
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# Bait Fish Species Identification

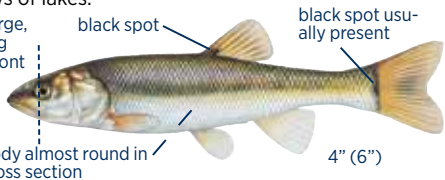
There are 10 species of fish that may be used for bait in the Central and Eastern Fishing Districts. The following images are for help in identification (for more details see the "Live Bait Fish Identification" brochure available online or at Regional offices). See the regulations concerning bait use in each Fishing District (pages 24, 50 and 75).

## CREEK CHUB

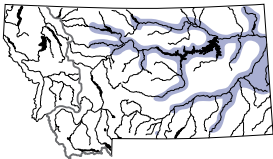


**HABITAT:** Typically creeks. Less common in rivers and shallows of lakes.

mouth large, extending behind front of eye

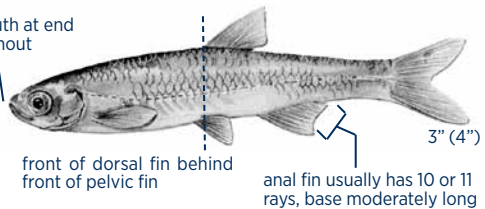


## EMERALD SHINER

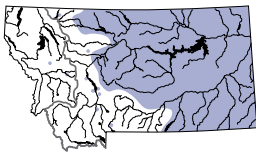


**HABITAT:** Open water of large streams, reservoirs and lakes.

mouth at end of snout

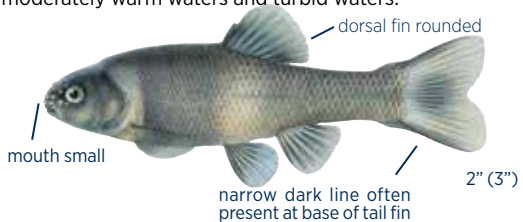


## FATHEAD MINNOW

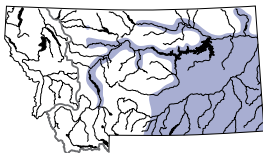


**HABITAT:** Clean cold streams and lakes; sometimes moderately warm waters and turbid waters.

mouth small



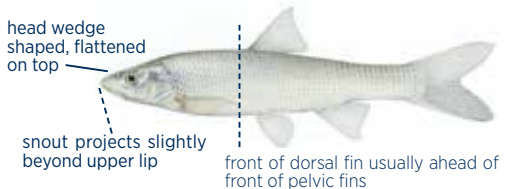
## FLATHEAD CHUB



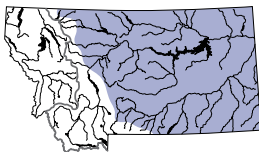
**HABITAT:** Mostly turbid rivers and streams.

head wedge shaped, flattened on top

snout projects slightly beyond upper lip



## LAKE CHUB



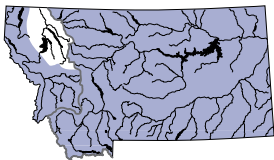
**HABITAT:** Mostly small streams at lower elevations; to a lesser extent, larger streams and lakes.

barbel

body almost round in cross section



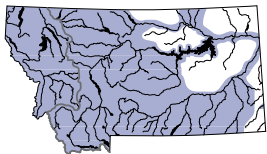
## LONGNOSE DACE



**HABITAT:** Riffle areas of streams and rivers; to a lesser extent, lakes.

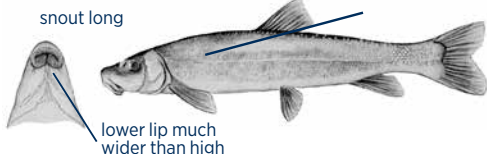


## LONGNOSE SUCKER



**HABITAT:** Clean cold streams and lakes; sometimes moderately warm waters and turbid waters.

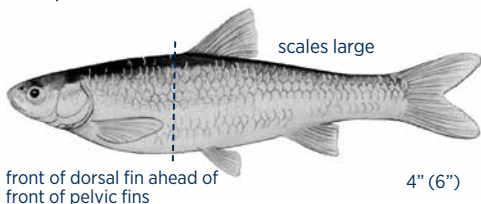
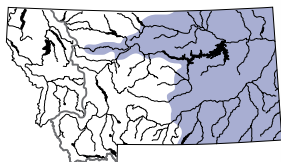
scales small, crowded toward front of body; 95-120 in lateral line



## WESTERN SILVERY MINNOW

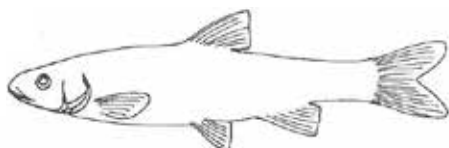
**HABITAT:** Slower portions of medium-sized to larger streams. Sometimes found in creeks and impoundments.

## PLAINS MINNOW



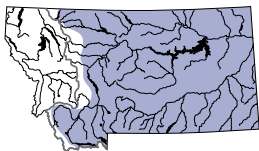
The **western silvery minnow** and the **plains minnow** are very similar. The western silvery minnow is more streamlined

Outline of Plains Minnow



(see outlines) and has larger scales than the plains minnow. Scale counts from lateral line to lateral line under the belly of the fish might be 11 to 17 on the western silvery minnow, and 15 to 22 on the plains minnow. Distinguishing these species when live is understood to be very difficult.

## WHITE SUCKER



**HABITAT:** All kinds of lakes and streams but avoids rapid current-very adaptable.

8-10 scales in oblique row above lateral line (not including lateral line scale)





# FISH IDENTIFICATION KEY *If you don't know, let it go!*

**CUTTHROAT TROUT** are frequently mistaken for Rainbow Trout (*see pictures below*):

1. Turn the fish over and look under the jaw. Does it have a red or orange stripe? If yes—the fish is a Cutthroat Trout. Carefully release all Cutthroat Trout that cannot be legally harvested (*see page 19, releasing fish*).

**BULL TROUT** are frequently mistaken for Brook Trout, Lake Trout or Brown Trout (*see below*):

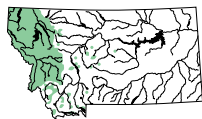
1. Look for white edges on the front of the lower fins. If yes—it may be a Bull Trout.
2. Check the shape of the tail. Bull Trout have only a slightly forked tail compared to the lake trout's deeply forked tail.
3. Is the dorsal (top) fin a clear olive color with no black spots or dark wavy lines? If yes—the fish is a Bull Trout. Carefully release Bull Trout (*see page 19, releasing fish*).

## MONTANA LAW REQUIRES:

- All Bull Trout must be released promptly, with little or no delay, in Montana unless authorized. See Western District regulations.
- Cutthroat Trout must be released promptly, with little or no delay, in many Montana waters. Check the district standard regulations and exceptions to know where you can harvest Cutthroat Trout.

## NATIVE FISH

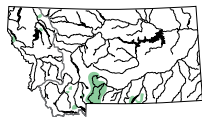
### Westslope Cutthroat Trout *Species of Concern*



Average Size: 6"–12"



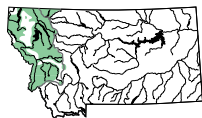
### Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout *Species of Concern*



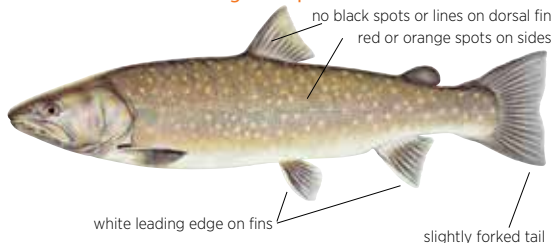
Average Size: 6"–12"



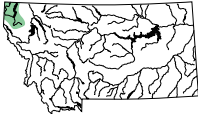
### Bull Trout *A Threatened Species listed under the Endangered Species Act*



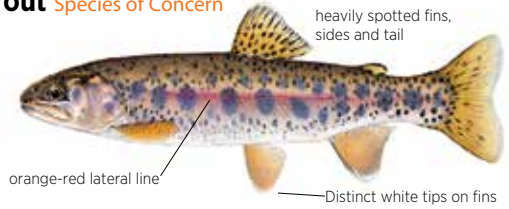
Average Size: 16"–22"



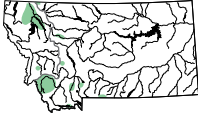
## Columbia River Redband Trout *Species of Concern*



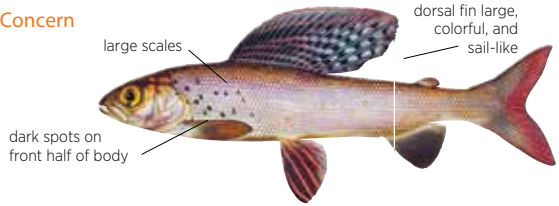
Average Size: 6"-10"



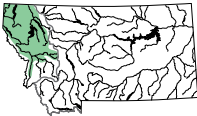
## Arctic Grayling *Species of Concern*



Average Size: 6"-12"



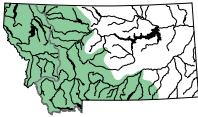
## Northern Pikeminnow



Average Size: 7"-14"



## Mountain Whitefish

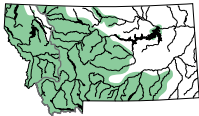


Average Size: 6"-12"



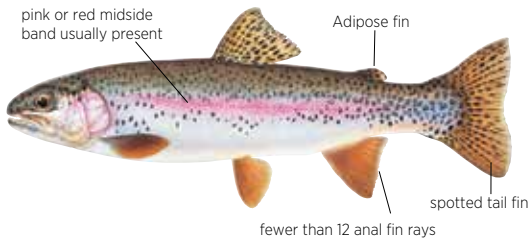
## NON-NATIVE FISH

### Rainbow Trout

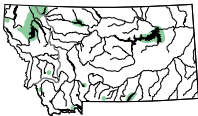


Note: Native populations of Columbia River Redband Trout exist in localized waters of northwestern Montana.

Average Size: 8"-16"

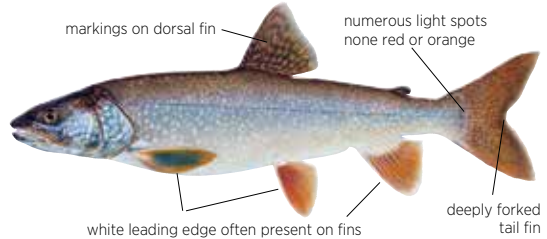


### Lake Trout



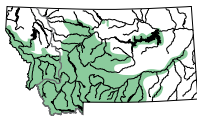
Note: Native populations of Lake trout exist in a few isolated waters of southwestern Montana.

Average Size: 14"-20"

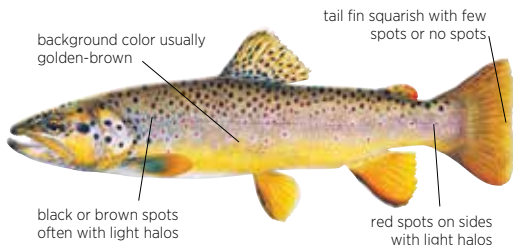


# NON-NATIVE FISH

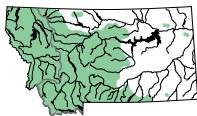
## Brown Trout



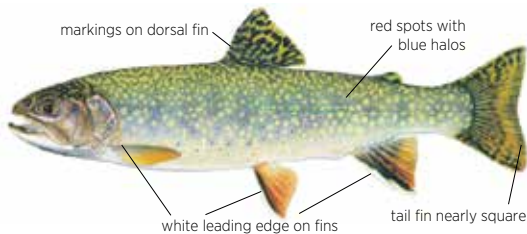
Average Size: 12"-16"



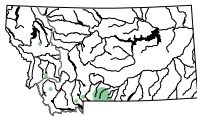
## Brook Trout



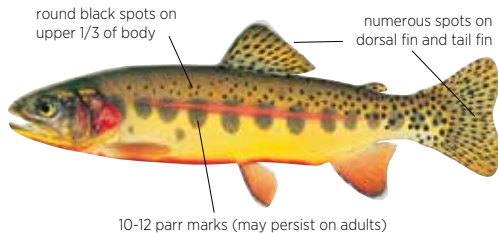
Average Size: 6"-12"



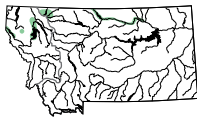
## Golden Trout



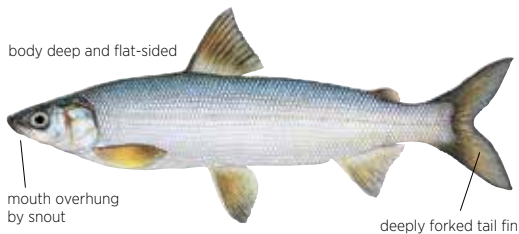
Average Size: 6"-12"



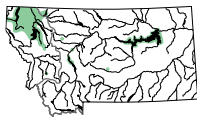
## Lake Whitefish



Average Size: 19"-27"

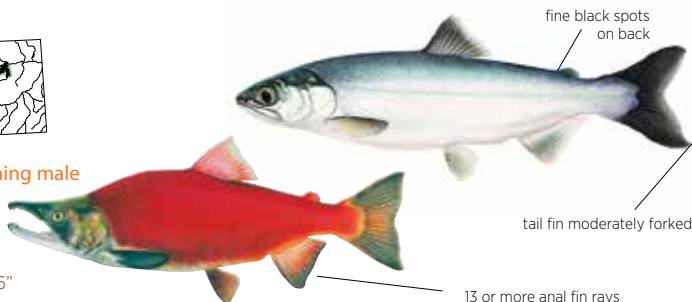


## Kokanee

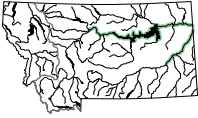


Average Size: 8"-16"

Spawning male

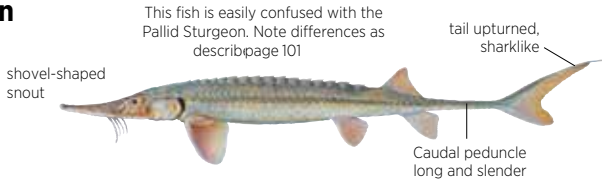
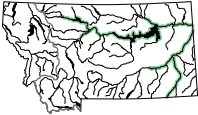


**Pallid Sturgeon** An Endangered Species listed under the Endangered Species Act



Average Size: 60"

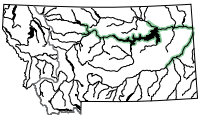
**Shovelnose Sturgeon**



This fish is easily confused with the Pallid Sturgeon. Note differences as described on page 101

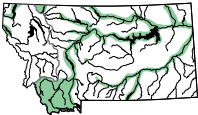
Average Size: 20"-32"

**Paddlefish** Species of Concern



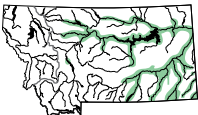
Average Size: 55"-65"

**Burbot**



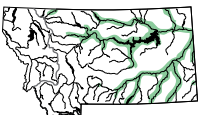
Average Size: 16"-24"

**Channel Catfish**



Average Size: 14"-20"

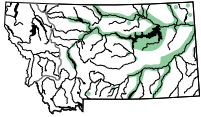
**Sauger** Species of Concern



Average Size: 10"-16"

# NON-NATIVE FISH

## Walleye

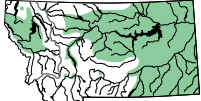


Average Size: 14"-18"

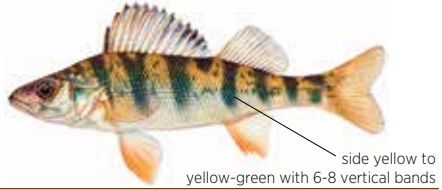
Know the difference between Sauger and Walleye



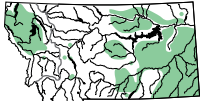
## Yellow Perch



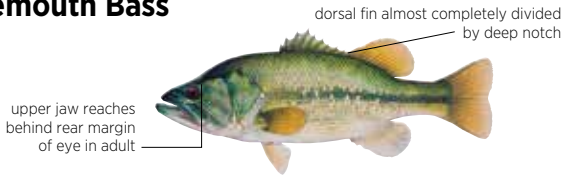
Average Size: 6"-10"



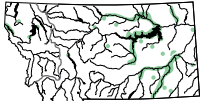
## Largemouth Bass



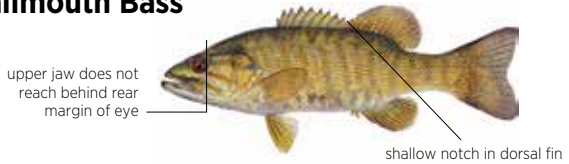
Average Size: 10"-16"



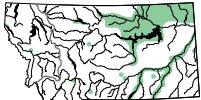
## Smallmouth Bass



Average Size: 8"-14"



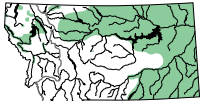
## Black Crappie



Average Size: 6"-12"

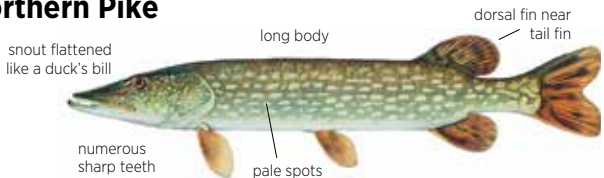


## Northern Pike

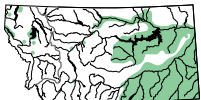


Note: Native populations of Northern Pike may exist in localized waters of north-central Montana.

Average Size: 18"-26"



## Black Bullhead



Average Size: 7"-10"



# Help protect native species

## If you don't know, let it go!



### Key to identification:

**PALLID STURGEON** are frequently mistaken for Shovelnose Sturgeon (see pictures below)

1. Look to see if the outer barbels are more than twice the length of the inner barbels. Are the barbels attached closer to the mouth than to the tip of the snout? If yes—the fish is a Pallid Sturgeon. Carefully release all Pallid Sturgeon (see page 19).
2. Sturgeon are difficult to distinguish. The Shovelnose Sturgeon is smaller and more common. Montana FWP recommends that all sturgeon be released if you are unsure of the species.

**SAUGER** are frequently mistaken for Walleye (see pictures below):

1. Look for multiple small, distinct black spots on the spiny dorsal fin (first fin on top). If yes—it is a Sauger.

### MONTANA LAW REQUIRES:

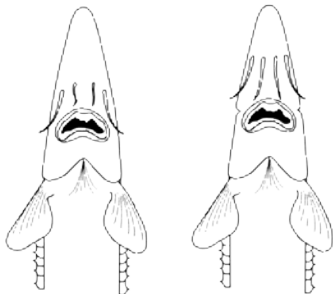
- All Pallid Sturgeon must be released immediately and all sturgeon longer than 40 inches must be released immediately.
- Only two Saugers may be kept on the Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Reservoir, on Fort Peck Reservoir, and on the Yellowstone River upstream from Forsyth at the Cartersville Diversion Dam.

## Know the difference between Pallid and Shovelnose Sturgeon:

### Pallid Sturgeon

Outer barbels 2 times the length of the inner barbels. (Be alert for broken barbels).

Barbels attached close to mouth, about 1/3 the distance between mouth and tip of snout.



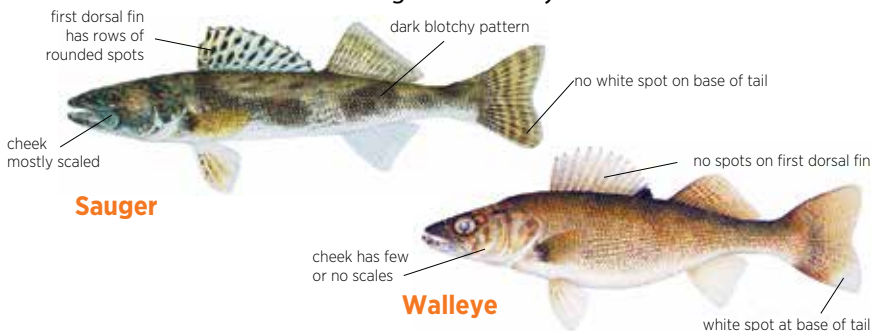
### Shovelnose Sturgeon

Outer barbels barely longer than inner barbels.

Barbels attached about 1/2 the distance between mouth and tip of snout.

The Pallid Sturgeon is a fish of concern in Montana and it is listed as an Endangered Species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Pallids are a bottom-dwelling fish of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, preferring strong currents flowing over a sandy or gravelly river bottom. Learn to distinguish the Pallid from the Shovelnose Sturgeon, a smaller and more common species. Because the sturgeon are hard to identify, Montana FWP recommends that all sturgeon be released if you're unsure of the species.

## Know the difference between Sauger and Walleye:



# CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.



Nonresident watercraft must have inspection and Vessel AIS Prevention Pass.

Pass is not transferable between vessels & expires Dec. 31.

**\$10 non-motorized vessels | \$30 motorized vessels**

Buy pass online at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov)

Protect the waters you love to fish!  
When leaving the water always:



**CLEAN** mud and plants off boat, trailer and fishing gear.



**DRAIN** all water. Drop motor. Pull drain plug.



**DRY** waders, fishing gear and watercraft.



**DISPOSE** unwanted bait in the trash, not in the water.

Learn more at [CleanDrainDryMT.com](http://CleanDrainDryMT.com). Ph: 406-444-2440

# ICE FISHING SAFETY

learn more at [fwp.mt.gov/ice-fishing](http://fwp.mt.gov/ice-fishing)

## BEFORE YOU GO



**WARM CLOTHES**

**BRING A FRIEND**  
for companionship  
and safety

**ICE PICKS**  
to grip the ice



**EMPTY BUCKET**  
to sit on



**CHECK THE WEATHER**



**THROW ROPE**  
be prepared



**TELL SOMEONE**  
where you  
are going



## ON THE ICE

**CHECK ICE THICKNESS**  
at least  
4 to 6 in.



**CLEAR ICE**  
is stronger  
than cloudy ice



**LOOK FOR HOLES**  
drilled or cut by others  
(and don't step in one)



**AVOID**  
open water

**AVOID**  
pressure  
ridges



**SPREAD OUT**  
if you have  
a big group



Anthony Licata

# Take a kid fishing.

**FREE FISHING!**

**May 10-11 &  
June 14-15, 2025**

On Mother's and Father's Day weekends anyone can fish without a fishing license. All other restrictions in these Fishing Regulations still apply. See page 13 for more details.

**LET'S GO  
CATCH  
SOME FISH!**

A basic guide to  
take kids fishing.



[fwp.mt.gov/fish/kids](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish/kids)

**Family Fishing Waters**  
Montana has 70 Family Fishing Waters managed exclusively for youth or family fishing. Check the **FishMT** tab on the FWP website for all Family Fishing Waters.

[fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish)