

# 2006

## MONTANA FISHING REGULATIONS



Successful catch at  
Tongue River Reservoir.  
Photo by Craig & Liz Larcom

For detail information on how to use  
these regulations, see page 2

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



*Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks*

Turn in Poachers: 1-800-TIP-MONT (847-6668)

# Help Protect Native Species

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



## Key to identification

**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 may not be legally harvested (see page 8).

**BULL TROUT** are frequently mistaken for brook trout or lake trout (see pictures 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 8).

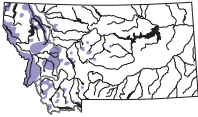
## MONTANA LAW REQUIRES:

- All bull trout must be released immediately in Montana waters unless authorized. See Western District regulations.
- Cutthroat trout must be released immediately in many Montana waters. Check the district standard regulations and exceptions to know where you can harvest cutthroat trout.

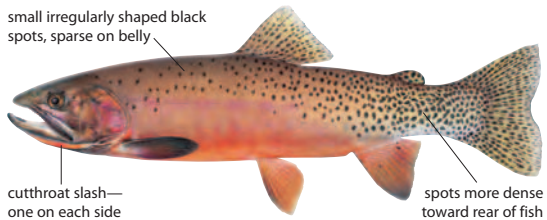
## Native Fish

### Westlope Cutthroat Trout

*Species of Special Concern*

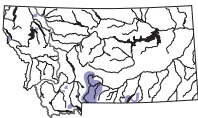


Average Size: 6"–12"

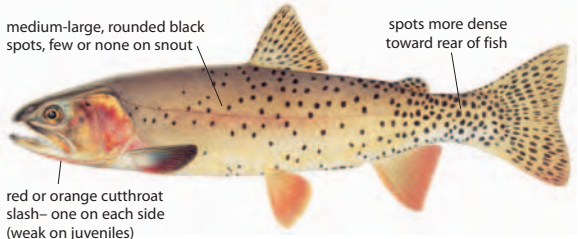


### Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout

*Species of Special Concern*



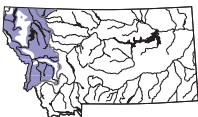
Average Size: 6"–12"



### Bull Trout

*Species of Special Concern*

▲ *This is a Threatened Species listed under the Endangered Species Act*

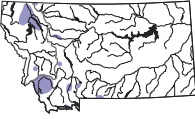


Average Size: 16"–22"

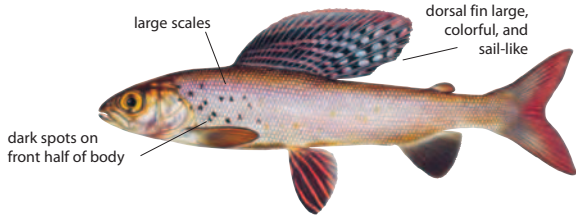


## Arctic Grayling

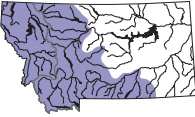
*Species of Special Concern*



Average Size: 6"-12"



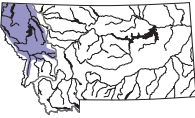
## Mountain Whitefish



Average Size: 6"-12"



## Northern Pikeminnow

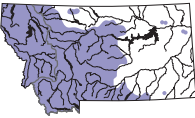


Average Size: 7"-14"

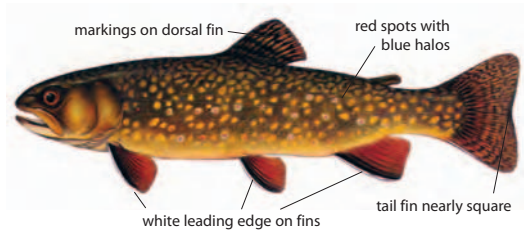


## Non-Native Fish

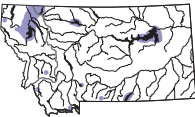
### Brook Trout



Average Size: 6"-12"

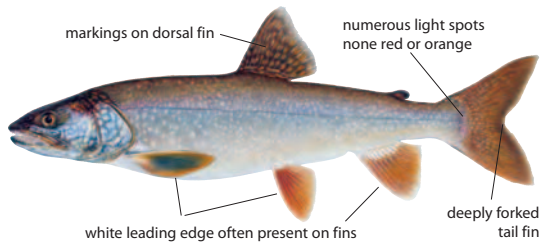


### Lake Trout

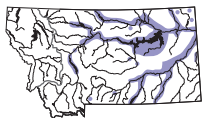


Note: Native populations of Lake trout exist in a few isolated waters of southwestern Montana.

Average Size: 14"-20"



# Non-Native Fish



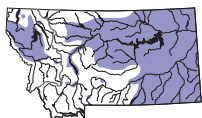
Average Size: 14"–18"

## Walleye

cheek has few or no scales



*Know the difference between sauger and walleye*

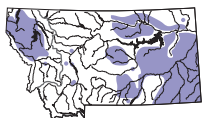


Average Size: 6"–10"

## Yellow Perch



side yellow to yellow-green with 6-8 vertical bands



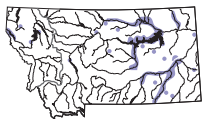
Average Size: 10"–16"

## Largemouth Bass

upper jaw reaches behind rear margin of eye in adult



dorsal fin almost completely divided by deep notch



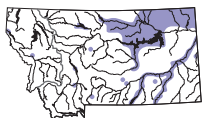
Average Size: 8"–14"

## Smallmouth Bass

upper jaw does not reach behind rear margin of eye



shallow notch in dorsal fin



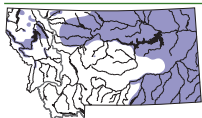
Average Size: 6"–12"

## Black Crappie

side has dark blotches in irregular pattern



dorsal fin has 7 or 8 spines

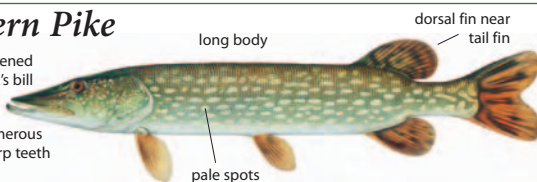


Note: Native populations of Northern pike may exist in localized waters of north-central Montana.  
Average Size: 18"–26"

## Northern Pike

snout flattened like a duck's bill

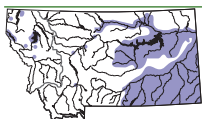
numerous sharp teeth



long body

dorsal fin near tail fin

pale spots



Average Size: 18"–26"

## Black Bullhead

chin barbels black, black spotted, or gray

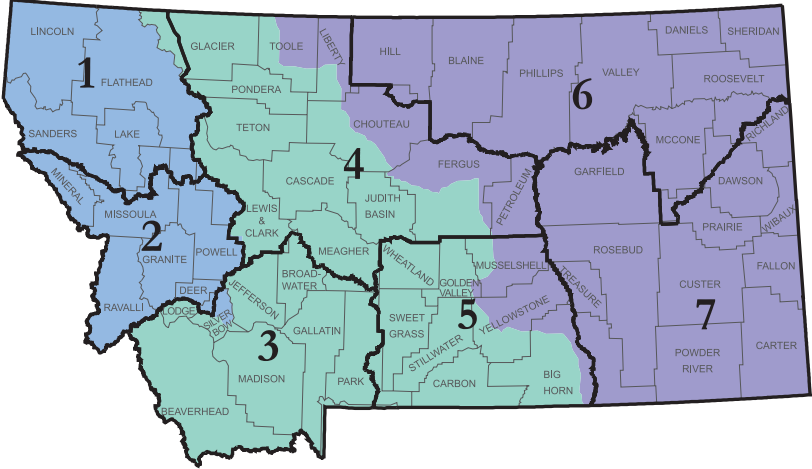


pale band often present on adults

tail fin slightly notched

17-21 anal fin rays including rudimentary rays

# FWP Administrative Regions with Fishing Districts in Color



Western District=Blue, Central District=Green, Eastern District=Violet

## Contact FWP

**STATE HEADQUARTERS**  
 MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
 1420 East 6th Avenue  
 PO Box 200701  
 Helena, MT 59620-0701  
 406-444-2535

**TELEPHONE DEVICE FOR THE DEAF**  
 406-444-1200

**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  
 406-994-4042

**HELENA Area Resource Office (HARO)**  
 930 Custer Ave W  
 Helena, MT 59620  
 406-495-3260

**BUTTE Area Office Resource (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)**  
 2358 Airport Rd  
 Lewistown, MT 59457  
 406-538-4658

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

**REGION 6**  
 54078 US Hwy 2 W  
 Glasgow, MT 59230  
 406-228-3700

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

**REGION 7**  
 PO Box 1630  
 Miles City, MT 59301  
 406-234-0900

## Fax and Customer Service

Customers can send a fax to FWP at 406-444-4952 or call 406-444-2535 for general information.

## Internet—<http://fwp.mt.gov>

Internet surfers can catch a wave of information from FWP's award winning World Wide Web site. Eight areas are covered—Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife, Parks, News, Education, *Montana Outdoors* magazine and Inside FWP. Within these areas are FWP hunting and fishing regulations, FWP Talk, parks information and comment areas. The site provides links to various agencies, organizations, and news and weather services.

Visit Our Web Page [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov) 1

## HOW TO USE THESE REGULATIONS

Follow these easy steps:

1. Read the first 14 pages of this booklet for general regulations and helpful information.
2. 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 15**  
**CENTRAL FISHING DISTRICT – page 43**  
**EASTERN FISHING DISTRICT – page 74**
3. Check if the specific water you'll be fishing is listed in the District Exceptions to Standard Regulations (waters are listed alphabetically). Any exceptions listed apply in place of the standard regulations. If not listed, the District Standard Regulations apply.

### EXAMPLE:

To fish for sauger on the Missouri River downstream from Fort Benton:

- **Eastern District Standard Regulations:** Pages 75 to 80 tell you when you can fish, standard limits, methods of angling allowed, and special permits that may be needed. The standard regulations also explain the daily and possession limits, including handling and transporting your catch, and provide basic information concerning fishing hours, bait and fishing methods. To transport sauger and walleye fillets, a square-inch shoulder patch of skin must remain attached to each fillet.
- **Eastern District Exceptions to Standard Regulations:** Page 82 identifies exceptions for the Missouri River and says that you are limited to one sauger per day with a possession limit of two upstream from Fort Peck Reservoir. All sauger and walleye must remain whole until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. Daily and possession limits for all other species are standard for the Eastern District.

Or: Check the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Web Page ([www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov)). You select the river, stream, lake, reservoir or pond you wish to fish and the regulations specific to this water will be provided.

## Emergency Fishing Regulations/Closures

FWP may announce short-term emergency fishing 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. 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 Web Page, your local newspaper or call your regional FWP office to find out about emergency regulations/closures.

## Regulations Adopted by FWP Commission

By order of the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission (FWPC), the seasons, limits, and regulations listed here shall govern the 2006 fishing season (a fishing season runs from March 1 through the following February). These regulations were adopted by the FWP Commission on November 3, 2005, and will be valid March 1, 2006 through the end of February 2008 unless changes are adopted in the interim.

The FWP Commission may formally adopt changes to these fishing regulations, including emergency regulations/closures. Any changes to these regulations for the 2006 season will appear in an addendum sheet available at all Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) offices and from FWP license agents, on the FWP Web Page, and in subsequent printings of the regulation booklet. Emergency regulations/closures are posted at access sites. Anglers must obtain an addendum sheet or a reprinted booklet to make sure they are in compliance with fishing regulations.

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## IMPORTANT REGULATION CHANGES SINCE 2004 Know the Law and Avoid Violations

There are too many changes to list them all and many exceptions to standard regulations were eliminated, so be sure to check your district regulations before you go fishing. Following is a list of important changes that you should read more about in the district regulations:

### WESTERN DISTRICT

Beavertail Pond  
Noxon Rapids Reservoir (Birdland Bay  
Bridge to Noxon Rapids Dam)

### EASTERN DISTRICT

Bighorn River

### CENTRAL DISTRICT

Big Hole River  
Bighorn River  
Canyon Ferry Reservoir (yellow perch limits)  
Jefferson River (seasonal spawning closures)  
Tiber Reservoir (aka Lake Elwell)

### 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 a while, then move on.
- Boats should always yield to wade anglers, however, there are going to be instances when the wading angler should yield to floaters, because 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 doesn't violate trespass and stream access laws.

### Tagged Fish

If you catch a tagged fish, please report the following information to any Fish, Wildlife & Parks office:

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 and address of the angler.

### Safer Fishing Tackle

Loons, swans, cranes and other waterbirds can die from lead poisoning after swallowing lead fishing sinkers and jigs lost by anglers. Sinkers and jigs do not have to be made of lead. To help protect waterbirds from getting lead poisoning, anglers can use sinkers and jigs made from non-poisonous materials such as tin, bismuth, steel and recycled glass.

#### What You Can Do

- Ask your local sporting goods store to stock non-lead fishing tackle.
- Use non-lead fishing weights.
- Discard old lead sinkers and jigs properly.
- Spread the word. Tell other anglers about the problem with lead and encourage them to switch to non-lead sinkers and jigs.

### Fishing Log Program

If you fish regularly in Montana, help us gather fishing information by keeping a fishing log. Write or email for a Fishing Log. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Fisheries Division, PO Box 200701, Helena, Montana 59620-0701; email requests to [fwp@mt.gov](mailto:fwp@mt.gov). Include your name, address and phone number with all requests.



## License/Permit Requirements

**A VALID FISHING LICENSE (SEE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS TABLE BELOW) IS REQUIRED FOR ALL TYPES OF FISHING ON STATE WATERS.** To fish in Montana, most anglers need two licenses: a Conservation License and a Fishing License, see table below.

A Conservation License is needed before you can buy any fishing or hunting license that Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) issues. Conservation license applicants are required to provide 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.

### 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 or a valid Montana driver's examiner's identification card. If unsure of your residency status, contact a regional FWP office.

### 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 the \$10 state ands recreational use permit. These activities cannot, by Federal statute, be covered by the conservation license. Additional information regarding the rules, regulations, and restrictions governing these activities is available from FWP or contact DNRC at 406-444-2074.

- On lands outside designated campgrounds there is a 2-day camping limit.
- 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.

What License(s) Do I Need to Fish in Montana?		
Age	Resident	Nonresident
1-11	No license required. Must observe all limits and regulations.	No license required <b>IF</b> accompanied by an adult who holds a valid Montana fishing license. The combined daily and possession limit for the two (or more) anglers cannot exceed the legal limit for one licenses angler. To catch his or her own legal limit, the youth must purchase a fishing license. See nonresident licenses 15-62+ years of age.
12-14	Conservation License Only - \$8	
15-61	Conservation License (\$8) + Fishing License (\$5 for 2 consecutive days or \$18 for season, \$8 for season for anglers ages 15-17 years). Resident Sportsman and Youth Sportsman (12-17 years) licenses also include a season fishing license.	Conservation License (\$10) + Montana Fishing License (\$15 for 2 consecutive days, \$43.50 for 10 consecutive days or \$60 for season). Nonresident Deer A Combo or Nonresident Big Game Combo licenses also include a season fishing license.
62+	Conservation License Only - \$8	

## Special Fishing Licenses

### Warm Water Game Fish Stamp

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed a bill to require the purchase of a Warm Water Game Fish Stamp to help fund construction of a warm water game fish hatchery near Fort Peck. The stamp is required for anglers to possess any warm water fish caught in designated waters. An angler who is required to be licensed to fish in Montana and who possesses any warm water game fish (including, but not limited to, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, burbot, walleye, sauger, black crappie, white crappie, channel catfish, yellow perch, northern pike, and tiger muskellunge) on waters listed in each district must purchase a warm water game fish stamp. The stamp is not required just to fish if none of these species will be harvested. Resident youth under 15 years of age, residents 62 years of age and older, and resident disabled anglers are exempt.

Resident and Nonresident \$5.00

District regulations list the waters that require this stamp.

### Paddlefish

All anglers must purchase a paddlefish tag to fish for paddlefish. To purchase a tag: Residents aged 15-61 must have a valid Conservation License and Fishing License. Resident youth 14 and younger and resident anglers over 62 must have a Conservation License. Nonresidents of any age, including youth 14 and younger, must have a valid Conservation License and a Fishing License. Limit of two tags per person.

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

### Bull Trout

Hungry Horse Reservoir, Lake Koocanusa 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. **Catch Cards are free of charge, but must be acquired by application from the FWP Region One office in Kalispell or online at [www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov). Completed applications must be presented at the regional headquarters or mailed to FWP Bull Trout Permit, 490 North Meridian, Kalispell MT 59901. Your 2005 Catch Card must be turned in to the Kalispell FWP office before you will be issued a 2006 Catch Card.**

### Montana Resident With Disability

Resident Person With a Disability Conservation License - \$8  
Must be permanently and substantially disabled. Applications and licenses available only at regional FWP offices. These licenses are not available to nonresidents. Allows the holder to fish.

Lifetime Fishing License for the Blind - \$10

Contact the Helena FWP Licensing office for information and an application.

### Veterans Administration Patients

Permits are available for patients of 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.

### Legion of Valor

A Conservation License allows both residents and non-residents, regardless of age, to fish. Legion of Valor membership card required to qualify.

### 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.

### Education Exemptions

Free fishing license exemptions are available to qualified educational events and fishing clinics. For information on these free educational exemptions, call 406-444-9736.

## Other Permit Requirements and Laws

### 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 Web Page.

### Aquatic Invertebrates

#### Crayfish

A valid fishing license is required to harvest crayfish for personal use (see "Licenses to Fish in Montana" for specific license requirements). Crayfish may be taken in traps no larger than 24x12x12 inches. Commercial harvest of crayfish for any purpose is prohibited.

#### Mussels

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.

#### Collecting Aquatic Invertebrates Commercially

Persons wishing to collect other aquatic invertebrates (such as leeches and aquatic insects) for sale or commercial distribution should contact their regional FWP office for information.

### Commercial Fishing Licenses

#### 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, and Whitefish Lake.

**Net/Seine Permits:** Whitefish may be taken from the Kootenai River and tributaries (within one mile of the Kootenai River). Application required; fee is \$200 plus a \$1,000 bond per year.

#### Bait Fish Seining: Commercial Harvest

Contact regional FWP offices for a Bait Fish Seining License and a list of waters open to commercial seining; \$10 fee.

A bait fish seining license is required:

- For persons 15 years of age and older to seine for and transport bait fish for commercial purposes in Montana;
- For any person who seines for and has in her/her possession more than 24 dozen nongame bait fish.

Nongame bait fish (except carp, goldfish and rainbow smelt) may be harvested commercially and transported in accordance with Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM), Section 12.7.201.-12.7.206. 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.

### Fish Import Permits

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 Web Page.

### Private Fish Ponds – License Requirements

A person who owns or lawfully controls a private fish 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 Web Page. 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.

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ANGLERS

### Montana 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.

The recreationist must obtain permission from the landowner before entering private lands. Recreationists are urged to obtain complete rules about this law from any FWP office.

### Montana 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 allow them to enter private lands bordering those streams or to cross private lands to gain access to streams. Complete rules are available at any FWP office.

### Children's 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 Children's 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 (see District Exceptions). Children's Fishing Waters are:

Blacktail Meadows Pond, Dillon	Home Run Pond, Glasgow
Elks Club Pond near Lewistown	Indian Road Pond near Townsend
Fairground Pond, Helena	Kid's Pond in the Warm Springs Wildlife
Fort Peck Kids Pond near Fort Peck	Management Area near Warm Springs
Gheny Pond near Twin Bridges	Vigilante Pond near Virginia City

### Catch-And-Release Angling

Waters designated catch-and-release for one or more species of fish require that those fish be immediately released alive. Use of proper handling techniques will improve the chance of survival for any fish released. A fish that is released may still die from: deep hooking injury; internal organ damage from being squeezed; bacterial infections resulting from loss of slime in the handling process; effects of physical stress from being played too long; low dissolved oxygen in live wells; and heat shock from being held in shallow water or live wells.

#### • 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, use of barbless hooks makes releasing fish easier.
- If the fish is deeply hooked, cut the line. Do not yank the hook out. Most fish survive with hooks left in them.
- 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.

## 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. A valid fishing license (or equivalent authorization) is required for all types of fishing on state waters.

## Fishing From a Boat and Float Outfitting

Fishing from a boat and float outfitting is prohibited on some rivers or streams (see District Exceptions for regulated waters) in the following ways:

- **"Float fishing"** prohibits fishing from a boat or wade fishing when fishing access is gained by boat.
- **"Fishing from a boat"** prohibits only fishing while on the boat. Using a boat to access wade fishing opportunities is allowed.
- **"Float outfitting"** is the operation of any boat for the commercial purpose of float fishing by a fishing outfitter or fishing guide.

## Illegal Introductions

It is illegal to import and release any wildlife in Montana without FWP authorization. Introduced fish, aquatic invertebrates (insects, crayfish, etc.) and noxious weeds pose a threat to our valuable natural fish and aquatic resources because they:

- Compete with native or other desired species for food and space.
- Interbreed with established species or disrupt spawning.
- Carry and spread diseases and parasites.

### Save Montana from Aquatic Nuisance Species

Before launching.....Before leaving:

**REMOVE** all aquatic plants and animals;  
**DRAIN** lake or river water;  
**DISPOSE** of unwanted live bait on land;  
**WASH** your boat, tackle, downriggers,  
lines and trailer; and  
**DRY** everything.

Help prevent the spread of nuisance species like New Zealand mudsnails. For more information contact your local FWP office.

- **It is unlawful to** move live fish, aquatic invertebrates or plants from one body of water to another without FWP authorization.
- **It is unlawful to** release any live aquarium fish or bait fish.

## Help Prevent the Spread of Whirling Disease

- Remove all mud and aquatic plants from your vehicle, boat, anchor, trailer and axles, waders, boots and fishing gear before departing a fishing access site or boat dock.
- Drain all water from your boat and equipment—including coolers, buckets and live wells—before departing a fishing access site or boat dock.
- Dry your boat and equipment between river trips.
- **It is unlawful to** transport fish from one body of water to another.
- **It is unlawful to** use parts of trout, salmon or whitefish for bait.

## Prevent the Spread of Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds are everyone's problem. Weed infestations cause increased runoff to our rivers and streams, and threaten critical habitat for trout and other fish. Please do your part to help prevent the spread of weeds.

To prevent the spread of harmful species:

- Learn to identify noxious weeds.
- Avoid parking, walking or driving through weed infestations.
- Wash vehicles before and after trips afield.
- Feed weed-free forage to livestock before and during backcountry trips.
- Keep clothing, equipment and pets weed-free.

## 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 non-game fish may be treated like fish entrails for disposal purposes (puncture the bladder first so the fish will sink).

## 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.

## Off-Highway Vehicles

An off-highway vehicle must have a current Off-Highway decal displayed in a conspicuous place to be used for off-road recreation on public lands in Montana (including frozen lakes and reservoirs). Decals are available from county treasurers. Owners of unregistered and unlicensed OHVs from other states must purchase a temporary use permit through FWP regional offices in person or by mail through the Helena FWP office. Nonresidents who operate licensed machines for more than 30 days in Montana must obtain the temporary use permit also.

## Indian Reservations

- Certain waters on Indian Reservations 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.

## 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.
- Commercial bait regulations are not valid on Indian Reservation waters. For information, contact local tribal officials.

## 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.

## Motorboat and Vessel Restrictions

The use of vessels and motors may be restricted on some waters. A complete, updated, copy of the Montana Boating Laws is available from any FWP office, or by calling 406-444-2535. Additional restrictions may be posted at access points to specific waters. Contact the County Sheriff's office or federal agency where you will be boating to find out if additional restrictions are in effect.

All passengers under the age of 12 must wear a PFD at all times when the motorboat or vessel is in motion if the motorboat or vessel is less than 26 feet long. A wearable, U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD must be available for each occupant. Children 12 years of age or younger may not operate a motorboat or a personal watercraft powered by a motor rated at more than 10 horsepower unless accompanied by someone 18 years of age or older. Youths 13 and 14 may not operate those vessels without possessing a valid Montana motorboat operator's safety certificate or evidence of completing an approved water safety course, unless accompanied by someone 18 years of age or older. A home-study boating course is available from FWP.

All motorboats, sailboats 12 feet long and longer, and personal watercraft must be registered and numbered. Manually propelled boats and non-motorized sailboats less than 12 feet long are exempt from registration and taxation. Also exempt are properly registered boats from out of state or country that will not be in Montana for more than 90 consecutive days.

## No-Wake Zones on Lakes – Western Fishing District Only

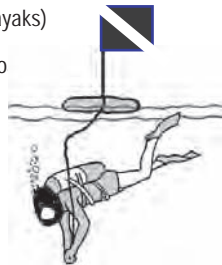
All watercraft operating on public lakes and reservoirs of 35 surface acres or less within the Western Fishing District are limited to no-wake speed. The Montana Boating Laws booklet contains a complete list of these lakes. Contact your local FWP office for a copy.

All watercraft operating on public lakes and reservoirs greater than 35 surface acres within the Western Fishing District are limited to no-wake speed from the shoreline to 200 feet from the shoreline. See the Montana Boating Laws for exceptions.

No-wake speed is defined as a speed whereby there is no "white" water in the track or path of the vessel or in created waves immediate to the vessel.

### General Boating Restrictions

- Do not anchor a vessel in a position that obstructs a passageway ordinarily used by others.
- Do not operate a vessel within:
  - 20 feet of a designated swimming area marked by white and orange buoys.
  - 50 feet of a swimmer in the water except for boats towing water skiers.
  - 75 feet of an angler or a waterfowl hunter unless it is unavoidable. If unavoidable, travel at no wake speed or at the minimum speed necessary to maintain upstream progress.
  - 200 feet of a diver's flag.
- Motorboats and vessels 16 feet and longer (except canoes and kayaks) must also have a throwable type IV PFD on board.
- It is unlawful to operate or be in actual physical control of a motorboat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- All motorboats and vessels must carry equipment as required by the Montana Boating Laws.



### Boaters: This flag means there are scuba divers in the area.

Montana law requires that motorboats stay at least 200 feet away from a **DIVER DOWN** flag. Violators may be subject to a fine of \$500 or 6 months imprisonment, or both. MCA 23-2-525.

## Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services 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 Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Food and Consumer Safety Section, Helena, Montana, 59620; telephone 406-444-5306 or on the internet at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov>. This information is also available in a brochure titled "Montana Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines" which can be obtained at any FWP office or license provider, or on the FWP Web Page.

### General Guidelines to Reduce Your Health Risk

- **Keep smaller fish for eating.** They 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 Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services has issued advisories for the consumption of fish from certain Montana waters where testing has confirmed elevated levels of contaminants harmful to human health; however, most waters in the state have not been tested for contaminants.

Bair Reservoir

Big Spring Creek

Bighorn Lake

Bynum Reservoir

Canyon Ferry Reservoir

Clark Canyon Reservoir

Clear Lake (south of Alburton)

Cooney Reservoir

Crystal Lake (east of Twin Bridges)

Dailey Lake

East Fork Reservoir

Flathead Lake

Fort Peck Reservoir

Fresno Reservoir

Georgetown Lake

Hauser Reservoir

Hebgen Reservoir

Holter Reservoir

Island Lake (SE of Libby)

Lake Francis

Lake Koocanusa

Lake Mary Ronan

Leigh Lake (S of Libby)

Lower Stillwater Lake

Martinsdale Reservoir

Milltown Reservoir

Mystic Lake (S of Bozeman)

Nelson Reservoir

Noxon Rapids Reservoir

Park Lake (SW of Helena)

Petrolia Reservoir

Prickly Pear Creek

Seeley Lake

Silver Creek

Swan Lake

Tenmile Creek (near Helena)

Tiber Reservoir

Tongue River Reservoir

Upper Cold Lake (Mission Mtns)

Whitefish Lake

Willow Creek Reservoir

## Penalties for Violations of the Law

Most fish and game violations are misdemeanors that are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and imprisonment in 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 grayling, white sturgeon, and paddlefish restitution is \$300 per fish.

A person who intentionally imports, introduces, or transplants fish in violation of state law is guilty of an offense punishable by a fine of not more \$5,000 and imprisonment for up to one year. The person is also liable for the amount necessary to eliminate or mitigate the effects of the violation. Upon conviction or forfeiture of bond or bail the person shall forfeit any current hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and the privilege to hunt, fish and trap in this state for a minimum of 24 months. If the effects of the violation cannot be eliminated or mitigated, a person may be required to forfeit the privilege to hunt, fish or trap in Montana for the rest of his/her life.

### 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 FWP 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.
- To waste any part of game fish suitable for food (see Waste of Fish or Game definition at the end of this booklet).

## MONTANA FWP FOUNDATION

The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Foundation is a non-profit corporation, created in 1999, to provide private financial support for the critical efforts of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and to take a leadership role in preserving and enhancing Montana's natural, cultural and recreational resources for future generations.

Hunters, anglers and park users have and will continue to pay their fair share. The Foundation was created to help support new work. It will build an endowment of corporate donations and individual gifts to fund programs that conserve wild places, restore imperiled species, maintain access, protect unique cultural and historic parks and educate kids about the wonders of our world. Please consider becoming a partner in keeping the "Magic of Montana" alive for future generations.

For more information or if you would like to make a contribution, call (406) 444-6759, or write Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Foundation at PO Box 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701.

## 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 manmade lure(including flies) that imitates natural bait. Artificial lures may have a scent infused or applied. Artificial lures do not include fish eggs, any natural or artificial food such as corn and marshmallows, any products that are derivatives of natural foods, any chemically treated or processed natural bait such as salted minnows, nor any artificial dough, paste or edible baits.

### ATTENDED LINE

A line or lines with or 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. If 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 which 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 which has been acquired by FWP to allow anglers access to a water body. Fishing access sites are funded in part by fishing license fees.

### FISHING FROM A BOAT

Fishing while on the boat may be prohibited but access by boat to wade fishing is allowed.

### FLOAT FISHING

Any fishing from a boat or wade fishing when fishing access is gained by boat.

### FLOAT OUTFITTING

The operation of any boat 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, grayling, whitefish, cisco and chars); all species of the genus *Sander* (sauger and walleye); all species of the genus *Esox* (northern pike and tiger muskellunge); 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.)
- 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. A lure with multiple hooks is still considered a single hook.

### LEGALLY TAKEN

Any fish caught using legal methods and not immediately released alive.

### LENGTH

Fish length is measured from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail fin.

**LIVE BAIT**

All non-game fish may be used as live bait except black bullheads, carp, goldfish, rainbow smelt, sculpins, stonecats and yellow bullheads. Sculpins may not be used as bait live or dead in the Western Fishing District. 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 flies and lures.

**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.

**NON-GAME FISH**

Any wild fish not otherwise legally classified by statute or regulation of this state.

**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**

An artificially impounded body of water behind a man-made dam extending upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s).

**SALMONID**

Any species of trout, char, salmon, grayling, cisco, or whitefish. All salmonid fish have an adipose fin (small, fleshy fin on the back near the tail).

**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 four 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 and phone number, or 9 or 10 digit ALS # must be attached.

**SNAGGING**

A technique of angling in which a hook or hooks are cast, trolled or lowered 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 SPECIAL 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.

**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.

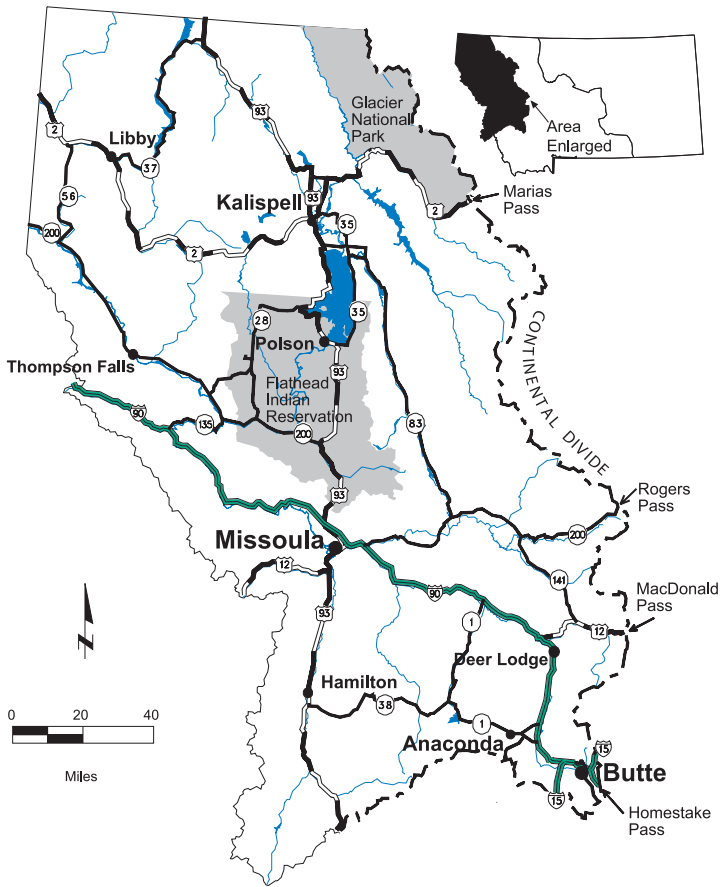
**VESSEL**

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.

# Western Fishing District



Areas excluded from fishing districts.  
 Additional regulations may apply.  
 Other federal or tribal permits may be required.

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

For additional information about fishing in this district, please call the following regional headquarters Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.:

- Kalispell ..... 406-752-5501
- Missoula ..... 406-542-5500
- TDD (Telephone Device for the Deaf) ..... 406-444-1200

## WESTERN DISTRICT STANDARD REGULATIONS

### Closed Waters

Waters operated as fish hatcheries and rearing ponds by FWP and the US Fish and 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.

### 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 the FWP Fishing Access Coordinator at 406-444-7885, or contact the Army Corp of Engineers 406-293-7751, x255, AVISTA 406-847-2729, Bureau of Reclamation 406-387-5241, DNRC 406-444-2932, Northwest Energy 406-258-6348, or PPL Montana 406-533-3415.

- Big Fork Dam (Lake County), Hungry Horse Dam (Flathead County), Kerr Dam (Lake County), Libby Dam (Lincoln County), Milltown Dam (Missoula County), Noxon Rapids Dam (Sanders County), Thompson Falls Dam (Sanders County)

### Beaver Ponds

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

### Irrigation Canals and Ditches

Man-made irrigation canals and ditches are open year round unless stated otherwise in district regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers and streams.

### Reservoirs

Reservoirs are artificially impounded water behind a man-made dam extending upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s). Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage, and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. The inlet stream(s) is often managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations. Stream regulations apply to water upstream from the mouth on the reservoir. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks.

### Flathead Indian 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.

### Transporting Live Fish

An import permit is required to bring live fish into Montana. 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.

### Boat and Motor Restrictions

All passengers under the age of 12 must wear a 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.

### Warm Water Game Fish Stamp

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed a bill to require the purchase of a warm water game fish stamp. The warm water game fish stamp is required to possess warm water fish on the following waters in the Western District:

Blanchard Lake, Flathead County	Loon Lake (Happy's Inn), Lincoln Cnty
Echo Lake, Flathead County	Lower Thompson Lake, Lincoln Cnty
Half Moon Lake, Flathead County	Murphy Lake, Lincoln County
Island Lake (Happy's Inn), Lincoln Cnty	Savage Lake, Lincoln County
Loon Lake (Ferndale), Lake County	Spencer Lake, Flathead County

### Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows are considered lines for purposes of determining line limits.

### Hook and Line Limits

#### Open Water

##### Rivers and Streams

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

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 1 line with 2 hooks per line, with or without a pole (see Flathead Lake exception). The pole or line must be attended and in the angler's immediate control.

### Ice Fishing (Lakes and Reservoirs)

#### Number of Rods/Lines

- 2 rods and/or 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.

#### 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

- Shelter definition/use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing. It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules:
- Shelter identification: Identification must be painted on or otherwise affixed to all unattended shelters in legible, 2-inch letters plainly visible at a distance of 100 feet. Identification must include the owner's name and address, name and phone number, or 9/10-digit ALS number. Attended shelters at Brown's Lake and Georgetown Lake must also be identified.
- Inspection: Each closed shelter shall have a door that an officer may readily open from the outside for inspection when it is occupied.
- 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.
- Shelter removal: Daily removal of shelters is required on:
  - Browns Lake (near Ovando)
  - Echo Lake (near Anaconda)
  - Georgetown Lake
- Shelter 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.

### Setlines

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

**Bow and Arrow**

- All waters are closed to bow-and-arrow taking of fish, except as noted under special regulations. Crossbows are illegal.

**Nets and Traps**

- Landing nets may be used for landing hooked fish. See Bait Regulations for use of nets to harvest bait fish.

**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 as noted under special regulations. Rubber or spring-propelled spears may be used only by persons swimming or submerged in the water and may be used only for designated species in designated waters. Only hand-propelled spears may be used through the ice.

**Bait Regulations**

- Game fish, including yellow perch, may not be used as bait except as authorized below under Dead Bait.
- Possession of live fish or use of live fish as bait is prohibited in the Western Fishing District.
- It is illegal to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.
- Nongame fish except sculpins (genus *Cottus*), carp, goldfish and rainbow smelt may be taken for use as dead bait in the following manner:
  - with hook and line; or
  - with seines no larger than 12 feet by 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 for information on commercail harvest permits.

**Dead Bait**

- Nongame fish that are freshly killed or have been preserved by freezing, salting or pickling may be used whole or in pieces as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial flies and lures. Sculpins (genus *Cottus*) may not be used as bait, live or dead, in the Western Fishing District.
- Whole game fish may not be used as bait.
- Parts/pieces of bass, burbot (ling), black crappie, northern pike, or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- The eggs of char, cisco, grayling, salmon or trout may be used as bait. Other parts/pieces of salmonids may not be used as bait.

**Live Bait**

- 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 flies and lures. Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers and may be aquired from approved bait dealers in Montana. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale 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.

## Daily and Possession Limits

**Possession limit** means the number of fish that you may possess at any time in any form: fresh, stored in freezers or lockers, salted, smoked, dried, canned or otherwise preserved. It is illegal to preserve fish (salted, smoked, dried, canned, or otherwise preserved) before taking them to your permanent residence (the physical abode or structure you maintain as your principal, legal residence) unless those fish can be counted. Mobile recreational vehicles, travel trailers, tents or storage/freezer lockers do not qualify as permanent residences. No person may sell or take for the purpose of sale any fish except as authorized in commercial fishing regulations.

**Daily limit** means the number of fish you may legally take during a calendar day. It is unlawful to exceed the standard daily limit unless the regulations for the water body where you are fishing specify a different limit. "Legally taken" means fish caught and not immediately released alive. Where catch-and-release is allowed, fish released alive are considered not taken. A fish when landed and not immediately released becomes part of the daily limit of the person originally hooking the fish, even if the fish is donated to another person. If you receive fish from another angler, those fish also become part of your daily limit. You may possess the daily limit allowed only for the body of water on which you are fishing.

### Handling and 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.
- For a species of fish where size limits apply, all fish in possession must be whole with head, skin, fins and tail attached. Gills and entrails may be removed.

Fish may be dressed and filleted for immediate consumption.

Fish may be dressed and filleted 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, grayling, char and whitefish): the entire skin must be attached to the fillet for identification.
- Non-salmonids: a minimum of one inch by one inch square shoulder patch of skin with scales must remain attached to each fillet for identification.

**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.
- 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
<b>Trout</b>	
Brook trout	20 daily and in possession.
Bull trout	All waters are closed to angling for bull trout and all fish must be immediately released unless otherwise authorized in the Western District Exceptions. See Special License requirements on page 6. Note: Federal rules prohibit the attempted take of bull trout unless specifically authorized by state or tribal regulation.
Combined Trout includes brown trout, rainbow trout, golden trout, and grayling	<b>Lakes/Reservoirs:</b> 5 daily and 10 in possession, only 1 over 22 inches. <b>Rivers/Streams:</b> 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.
Combined Trout in Bob Marshall Complex Wilderness Areas <sup>1</sup> and South Fork Flathead includes rainbow trout, grayling and cutthroat trout	<b>Lakes/Reservoirs:</b> 3 daily and in possession, no size limit. <b>Rivers/Streams:</b> 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches. <sup>1</sup> Applies to all rivers, streams and lakes within the Western Fishing District in the South Fork Flathead river drainage from Hungry Horse Dam to the wilderness boundary and all waters within the boundaries of the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wilderness areas, unless otherwise specified in the Western District Exceptions.
Cutthroat trout	<b>Lakes/Reservoirs:</b> 3 daily and in possession, no size limits. <b>Rivers/Streams:</b> 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.
Lake trout	10 daily and in possession.
<b>Bass</b>	5 daily and in possession, no size limit. Third Saturday in May through June 30: 1 daily and in possession, must be over 22 inches.
<b>Burbot (ling)</b>	5 daily and in possession.
<b>Kokanee salmon</b>	20 daily and 40 in possession.
<b>Northern pike</b>	15 daily and in possession.
<b>White sturgeon</b>	0 - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately.
<b>Whitefish</b>	100 daily and in possession.

**General Fishing Seasons and Hours**

**Fishing Hours**

- Fishing is allowed at all hours during open fishing seasons unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

**Fishing Season: Rivers and Streams**

- Open third Saturday in May through November 30 unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

**Fishing Season: Lakes and Reservoirs**

- Open entire year unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

## 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/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
ABBOT LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bass: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May to July 1, must be over 22 inches. 5 daily and in possession from July 1 to the third Saturday in May, only 1 over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
ALICE CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.</li> </ul>
ANACONDA SETTLING POND SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area.</li> </ul>
ASHLEY LAKE entire lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salmon: 35 daily and 70 in possession.</li> </ul>
inlet tributaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
BASIN CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to East Fork Yaak River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.</li> </ul>
BEAR CREEK (tributary to Middle Fork Flathead River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angling is closed within 100-yard radius of the stream mouth June 1 through August 30.</li> </ul>
BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.</li> </ul>
<b>BEAVERTAIL POND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bass: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.</b></li> </ul>
BELMONT CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of mouth.</li> </ul>
BIG CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to North Fork Flathead River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
mouth of Big Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angling is closed within 100-yard radius of the stream mouth or as posted June 1 through August 30.</li> </ul>

## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BITTERROOT RIVER (note: river flows south to north) map page 23

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.

Note: regulations begin at the headwaters and work downstream to the mouth of the river.

Bitterroot River to the mouth, West Fork Bitterroot River downstream from Painted Rocks Dam, and East Fork Bitterroot River downstream from Star Falls

- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with aquatic insects, maggots and/or artificial lures

West Fork Bitterroot River above Painted Rocks Reservoir

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

Painted Rocks Dam to mouth of West Fork Bitterroot River

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout Limit: 3 rainbow or brown trout daily and in possession.

one mile downstream of Darby Bridge to Star Falls on the East Fork

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

one mile downstream from Darby to Como Bridge

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

Como Bridge to Tucker Crossing

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

Tucker Crossing to Florence Bridge

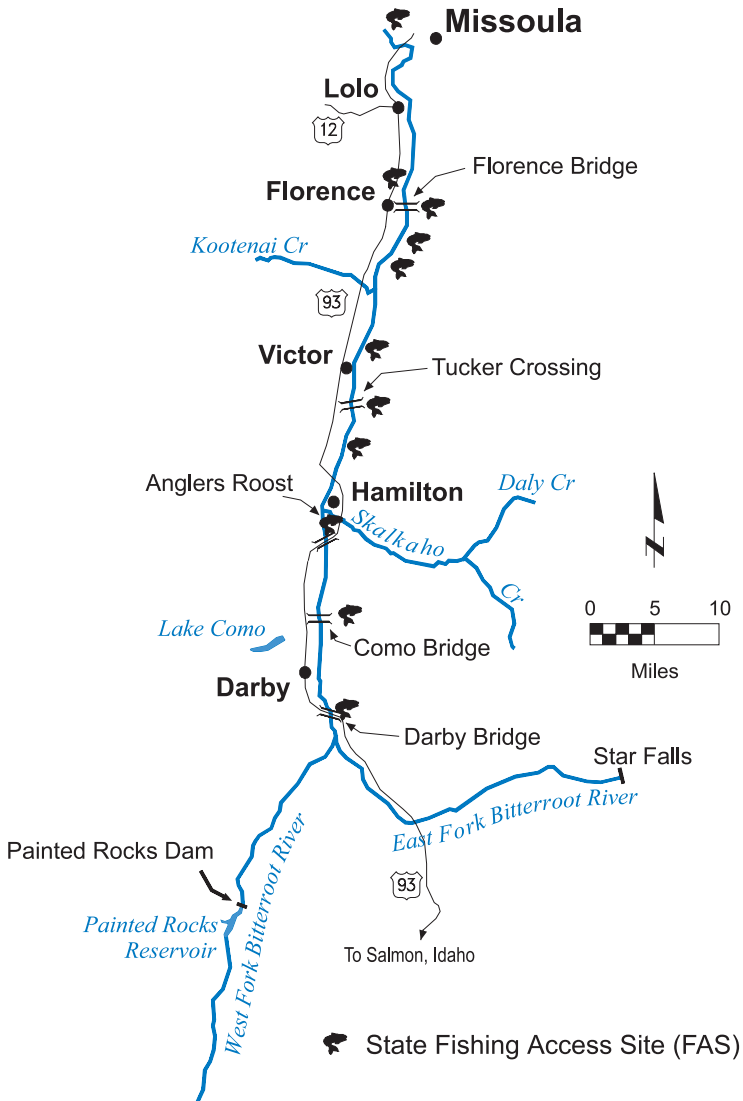
- Catch-and-release for all trout.
- Artificial lures only.

Florence Bridge to mouth of Bitterroot River

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



# Bitterroot River



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

## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

**BLACKFOOT RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** [map page 25](#)

river and all tributaries except the Clearwater River

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout. (See Clearwater River Drainage for exception.)
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouths of Belmont Creek, Gold Creek, Monture Creek and North Fork Blackfoot River.

mainstem only

- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only. Tributaries are closed to fishing.

mainstem, Landers Fork mouth to Stimson Lumber Dam (Milltown Reservoir)

- 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.)

Stimson Lumber Dam downstream to Milltown Reservoir (Clark Fork River)

- Extended season for northern pike from December 1 to third Saturday in May, with artificial lures only.
- Northern pike: no limit

**BLANCHARD LAKE** (near Whitefish)

- Catch-and-release for bass
- Northern pike: 5 daily and in possession, 4 less than 28 inches and 1 greater than 36 inches.

**BLUE SKY CREEK**

- Closed entire year.

**BOOTJACK LAKE** (near Whitefish)

- Open April 1 through November 30.
- Combined Trout: 1 daily and in possession, 22-inch minimum.
- Artificial lures only.

**CALLAHAN CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES** (Kootenai River drainage)

includes North Callahan and South Callahan creeks

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.

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

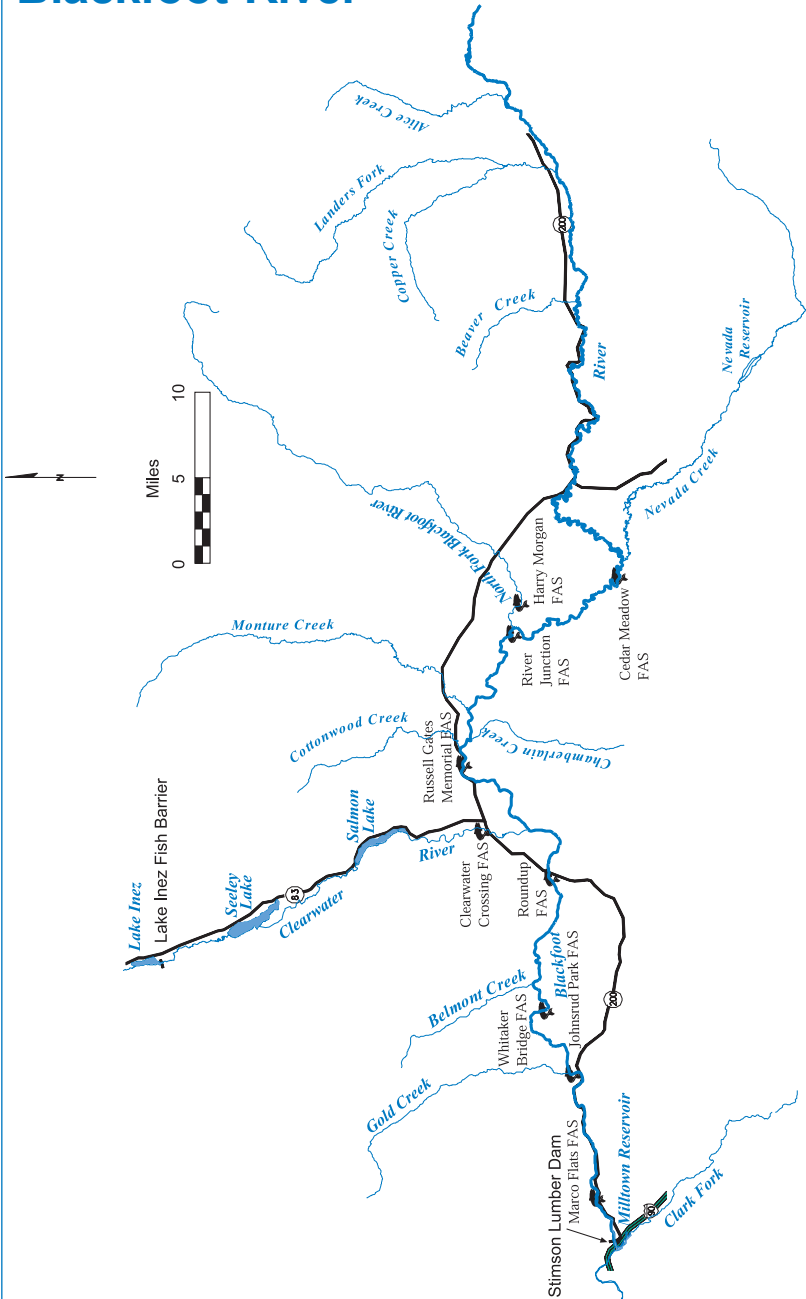
- Artificial lures only within a 100-yard radius of the mouth.

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

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.



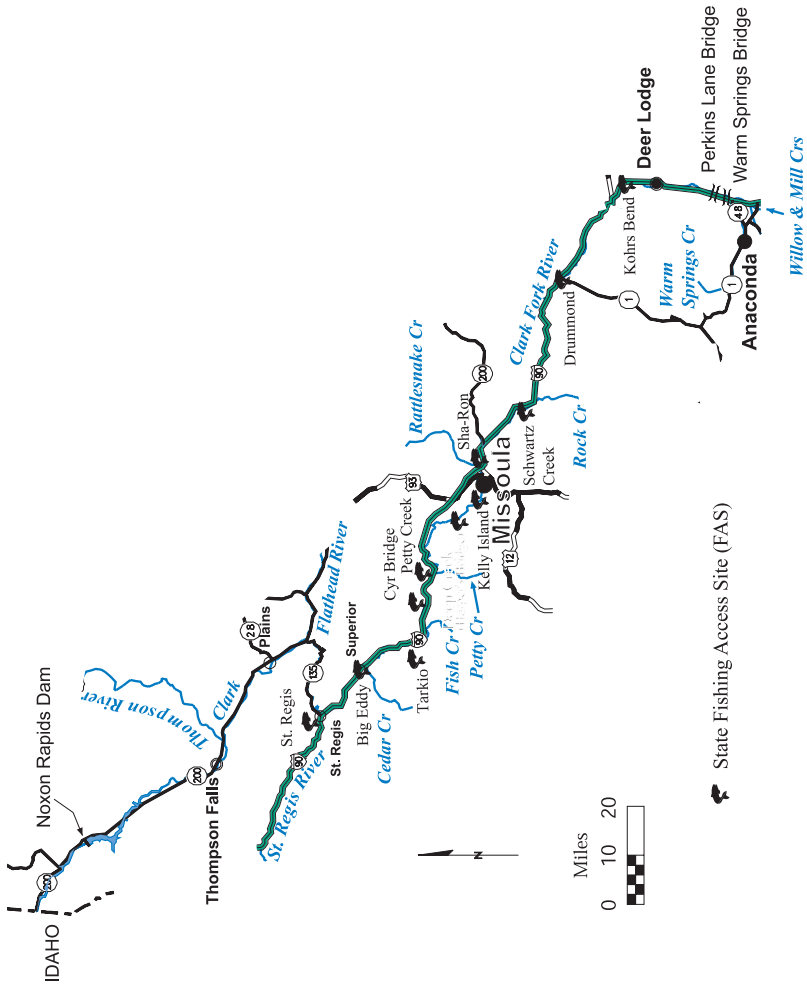
# Blackfoot River



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
CHURCH SLOUGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Bass: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May to July 1, must be over 22 inches. 5 daily and in possession from July 1 to the third Saturday in May, only 1 over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
CIBID LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 4 under 12 inches and 1 over 22 inches daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
CLARENCE CREEK (near Eureka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
CLARK FORK RIVER <a href="#">map page 27</a> upstream from Perkins Lane Bridge, near Warm Springs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release only.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> <li>• Closed to fishing from boats.</li> </ul>
Perkins Lane Bridge, near Warm Springs, to mouth of Flathead River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.</li> <li>• Northern pike: no limit.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
mouth of Flathead River to mouth of Thompson River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Whitefish: open entire year with maggots or lures.</li> <li>• Northern pike: open entire year with bait or lures.</li> </ul>
mouth of Thompson River to Idaho Border	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Western District Standard Limits apply to entire reach.</li> </ul>



# Clark Fork River



## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

## CLEARWATER RIVER DRAINAGE

Clearwater River upstream from Lake Inez Fish Barrier and tributaries of Clearwater River

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.
- Northern Pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

Clearwater River from Lake Inez fish barrier downstream to Salmon Lake outlet

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Northern Pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.
- Snagging: open for salmon from Lake Inez Fish Barrier to Seeley Lake from September 15 through November 30. Closed to snagging from Seeley Lake to Salmon Lake.

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

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Northern Pike: no limit.
- Combined Trout Limit: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

lakes (Lake Alva, Lake Inez, Placid Lake, Salmon Lake and Seeley Lake)

- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Northern Pike: no limit.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.
- Salmon: see individual waters for special regulations.

## 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, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.

## COTTONWOOD CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)

- Catch and release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
DALY CREEK (tributary to Skalkaho Creek)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
DRY CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
<b>EAST FORK YAAK RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.</li> </ul>
ECHO LAKE (near Anaconda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open third Saturday in May through March 31.</li> <li>Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, includes brook trout.</li> </ul>
ECHO LAKE (near Bigfork)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bass: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May to July 1, must be over 22 inches. 5 daily and in possession from July 1 to the third Saturday in May, only 1 over 12 inches.</li> <li>Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only, daily limit of 2.</li> </ul>
ELK CREEK (tributary to Swan River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
EMILY SPRINGS (tributary to Georgetown Lake)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>FENNON SLOUGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open entire year.</li> <li>Bass: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May to July 1, must be over 22 inches. 5 daily and in possession from July 1 to the third Saturday in May, only 1 over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
FISH CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River) mainstem downstream of the confluence of the South and West forks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout in any combination daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.</li> <li>Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
<b>FISHER RIVER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extended whitefish season and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> </ul>
<b>FISHTRAP CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Thompson River drainage)</b> excluding Fish Trap Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.</li> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>

## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

## FLATHEAD LAKE



- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Lake trout: 20 daily and in possession, only 1 over 36 inches, and all fish 30 to 36 inches must be released.
- Hook and Line: up to 2 attended lines with no more than 2 hooks per line.
- A Flathead Indian Tribal Permit is required to fish on the southern half of the lake.

## FLATHEAD RIVER

confluence of the North and Middle forks to Flathead Lake

- Extended season for whitefish and lake trout, and catch-and-release for other game fish open December 1 through the third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Lake trout: 15 daily and in possession.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

Flathead Indian Reservation boundary to mouth

- Open entire year.
- Northern pike: 5 daily and in possession, must be over 24 inches.

## FLATHEAD RIVER SLOUGHS

Brenneman, Egan, McWenegar, Rose Creek and Half Moon

- Open entire year. Standard Lake Limits apply.

Church and Fennon

- Open entire year.
- Bass: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May to July 1, must be over 22 inches. 5 daily and in possession from July 1 to the third Saturday in May, only 1 over 12 inches.

## FLINT CREEK

downstream from Georgetown Lake

- Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to 3rd Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

## FOY LAKE


- Snagging: open for salmon from September 15 through November 30.

## FRED BURR LAKE (Granite County)

Philipsburg water supply

- Closed entire year.



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
FRENCHTOWN POND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bass: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
GEORGETOWN LAKE   (see special season exception for the South and East shorelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through March 31.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for brook trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> <li>• Salmon: no daily or possession limit.</li> </ul>
South and East shorelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to fishing from the shore or within 100 yards of the shore April 1 through June 30. The closed area extends 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.</li> </ul>
tributaries to Georgetown Lake (Hardtla, North Fork Flint, and Stuart Mill creeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 1 through November 30.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for brook trout.</li> </ul>
GOAT CREEK (tributary to Swan River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
GOLD CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
GRANITE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
GRAVE CREEK (near Eureka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: open for salmon from Highway 93 bridge downstream to mouth September 15 through November 30.</li> </ul>
HARDTLA CREEK (tributary to Georgetown Lake)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 1 through November 30.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for brook trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
HERRIG CREEK (tributary to Little Bitterroot Lake)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
HORSESHOE LAKE (near Fermdale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for bass.</li> </ul>

**Waterbody/Description**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**HORSESHOE LAKE (Thompson Chain of Lakes)**

- Spearing: open for nongame fish.

**HUNGRY HORSE RESERVOIR**

Dam to Crossover Boat Ramp

- Combined Trout: Western District Wilderness Limits apply.
- Bull trout: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May through August 15, maximum of 2 fish per license year. Catch-and-release the rest of the year. [A Hungry Horse Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout; see Special Licenses requirements for application information.](#) 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. Wounded Buck Bay is closed to fishing for bull trout.

Wounded Buck Bay

- Closed to fishing for bull trout.

**HUNGRY HORSE RESERVOIR TRIBUTARIES**

- Combined Trout: Western District Wilderness Limits apply.
- Also see South Fork Flathead River regulations.

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

see Warm Springs WMA map

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

**KEELER CREEK**

- Open third Saturday in May through July 15.

**KOOTENAI RIVER**

Libby Dam to Highway 37 Bridge, near Fisher River

- Open June 1 through March 31.
- Combined Trout: 4 daily and in possession, includes 3 under 13 inches and 1 over 24 inches.

Highway 37 Bridge, near Fisher River, to Idaho Border

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 4 daily and in possession, includes 3 under 13 inches and 1 over 18 inches.

Kootenai Falls to 0.8 miles downstream of Swinging Bridge

- Snagging: open for salmon from September 15 through November 30.


**LAKE ALVA**

- Catch and release for bass.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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LAKE CREEK (near Troy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: open for salmon from September 15 through November 30.</li> </ul>
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LAKE INEZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch and release for bass.</li> <li>• Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.</li> <li>• Northern pike: no limit.</li> <li>• Spearing: open for northern pike.</li> </ul>
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LAKE KOOCANUSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to burbot (ling) fishing January 15 to March 1.</li> <li>• Salmon: 35 daily and 70 in possession.</li> <li>• Bull trout: 1 daily and in possession from June 1 through February 28, maximum of 2 fish per license year. Catch-and-release the rest of the year. A Lake Koocanusa Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout; see Special Licenses requirements for application information. 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.</li> </ul>
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LAKE MARY RONAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to fishing from midnight to 3 a.m.</li> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.</li> <li>• Open March 1 to third Saturday in May: yellow perch only.</li> <li>• Bass: closed March 1 to the third Saturday in May.</li> <li>• Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> </ul>
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LANDERS FORK (tributary to Blackfoot River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.</li> </ul>
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LIBBY CREEK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended whitefish season and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> </ul>
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LION CREEK (tributary to Swan River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
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LITTLE BLACKFOOT RIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended whitefish season and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> </ul>
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LODGEPOLE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
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Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
LONG CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
LOON LAKE (near Ferndale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined Trout: 4 less than 12 inches and 1 over 22 inches daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
LOST LAKE (Eureka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open April 1 through November 30.</li> <li>Combined Trout: 1 daily and in possession, 22-inch minimum.</li> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
LOWER STILLWATER LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.</li> </ul>
LOWER THOMPSON LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> <li>Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.</li> </ul>
MEDICINE LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES (near Philipsburg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lake               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open July 1 through April 30.</li> </ul> </li> <li>tributaries to lake               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open July 1 through November 30.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
MIDDLE FORK FLATHEAD RIVER DRAINAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all streams within the wilderness               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches. Includes rainbow trout, cutthroat trout and grayling.</li> </ul> </li> <li>non-wilderness portion               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angling is closed within 100-yard radius of the Bear Creek stream mouth June 1 through August 31.</li> <li>Extended whitefish season and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> <li>Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the ordinary high water mark on the park side of the river.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
MIDDLE THOMPSON LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> <li>Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.</li> </ul>
MILL CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>downstream from the Stewart Street Bridge in Opportunity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-and-release only.</li> <li>Artificial lures only.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**MILLTOWN RESERVOIR** 

Milltown Dam to Stimson Lumber weir (Blackfoot arm) and Milltown Dam to Milwaukee Bridge abutments (Clark Fork arm)

- Northern pike: no limit, extended season open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures only.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.

**MONTURE CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**MORRISON CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)**

- Closed entire year.

**NEVADA CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.

**NORTH FORK BLACKFOOT RIVER (tributary to Blackfoot River)**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no rainbow trout over 12 inches, any size brown trout.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

**NORTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER**

- Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.
- June 1 through August 31: Closed to angling within 100-yard radius of the Big Creek stream mouth.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the middle of the river.

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

- Open July 1 through November 30.
- Catch-and-release for brook trout.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

**NOXON RAPIDS RESERVOIR** 

- Bass: 5 daily and in possession except 1 daily and in possession, 22-inch minimum, from June 15 to July 15.

***Birdland Bay Bridge to Noxon Rapids Dam***

- ***Bass: 5 daily and in possession except 1 daily and in possession, 22-inch minimum, from June 15 to July 15.***

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
PETERSON LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bass: 1 daily and in possession from the third Saturday in May to July 1, must be over 22 inches. 5 daily and in possession from July 1 to the third Saturday in May, only 1 over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
PETTY CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
PLACID CREEK (tributary to Placid Lake)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.</li> <li>• Snagging: open for salmon October 15 through December 31, 20 salmon daily and 40 in possession.</li> <li>• Sparring: open for northern pike.</li> </ul>
PLACID LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for bass.</li> <li>• Northern pike: no limit</li> <li>• Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.</li> <li>• Snagging: open for salmon October 15 through December 31, 20 salmon daily and 40 in possession.</li> <li>• Sparring: open for northern pike.</li> </ul>
RATTLESNAKE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (near Missoula) entire river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only, including within 100-yard radius of mouth.</li> </ul>
downstream from the mouth of Beeskove Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to fishing from the mouth of Beeskove Creek to 100 yards downstream of Mountain Water Company Dam.</li> </ul>
ROCK CREEK (near Missoula) from the confluence of the East and West forks, near Phillipsburg, to the mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 brown trout daily and in possession, none over 12 inches. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout and cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may use bait during the general season.</li> <li>• Closed to fishing from boats/vessels July 1 through November 30.</li> </ul>
ROGERS LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only one may be a grayling.</li> </ul>
spawning inlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to angling entire year.</li> </ul>

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**SALMON LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES**

- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

**SEELEY LAKE** 

- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.
- Snagging: open for salmon October 15 through December 31, 20 salmon daily and 40 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

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

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

**SOUTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER DRAINAGE**

all waters upstream from Hungry Horse Dam, including Hungry Horse Reservoir and tributaries except Meadow Creek section (see below)

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, no fish over 12 inches in rivers and streams. Includes rainbow trout, cutthroat trout and grayling.

mainstem upstream from Hungry Horse Reservoir (from Crossover Boat Ramp south and upstream to the confluence of Youngs and Danaher creeks)

- Bull trout: catch-and-release from the third Saturday in May through August 15. [A South Fork Flathead Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. See Special License requirements for application information.](#) All bull trout must be released immediately. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

Meadow Creek Bridge to Spotted Bear foot bridge and tributaries

- Catch-and-release only.
- Artificial lures only.

Hungry Horse Dam downstream to Devil's Elbow and tributaries


- Closed entire year.

Devil's Elbow downstream to mouth and tributaries

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

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

- Closed entire year.

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
ST REGIS RIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout in any combination daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
STILLWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES (Flathead River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year from mouth of Sunday Creek to lower Stillwater Lake.</li> </ul>
STUART MILL CREEK (tributary to Georgetown Lake)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 1 through November 30.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for brook trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
SWAN LAKE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bull trout: 1 daily and in possession. All bull trout must be released immediately or killed and counted as your limit. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.</li> </ul>
<b>SWAN RIVER</b> Piper Creek Bridge downstream to Swan Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout and rainbow trout.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
Swan Lake downstream to the Highway 35 Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
<b>THOMPSON RIVER</b> entire river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 less than 10 inches or 2 less than 10 inches and 1 over 18 inches daily and in possession.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may use bait.</li> </ul>
upstream from mouth of Little Thompson River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to fishing December 1 to third Saturday in May.</li> </ul>
mouth of Little Thompson River to the confluence with the Clark Fork River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> </ul>

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
TOBACCO RIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: open for salmon September 15 through November 30.</li> </ul>
TRAIL CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Yakinikak, N. Fork Flathead River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year downstream from mouth of Thoma Creek.</li> </ul>
TROUT CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.</li> </ul>
UPPER STILLWATER LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.</li> </ul>
UPPER THOMPSON LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.</li> <li>• Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.</li> </ul>
UPSATA LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for bass.</li> <li>• Northern pike: no limit.</li> <li>• Spearing: open for northern pike.</li> </ul>

**Waterbody/Description****Exceptions to Standard Regulations****WARM SPRINGS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA** [map page 41](#)

all waters

- Also see Job Corps Ponds.
- All ponds and canals open August 15 through September 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.

Kids pond at WSWMA headquarters

- Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession.
- Bait may be used.
- Open to fishing by anglers 14 years of age and younger only.

Gravel Pit Pond adjacent to Highway 48

- Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession.
- Bait may be used.

Hog Hole

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

Pond 3

- Open May 25 through September 30 to fishing from non-motorized vessels and from north and west dikes except where posted closed.

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

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

**WEST FORK BITTERROOT RIVER**

above Painted Rocks Reservoir

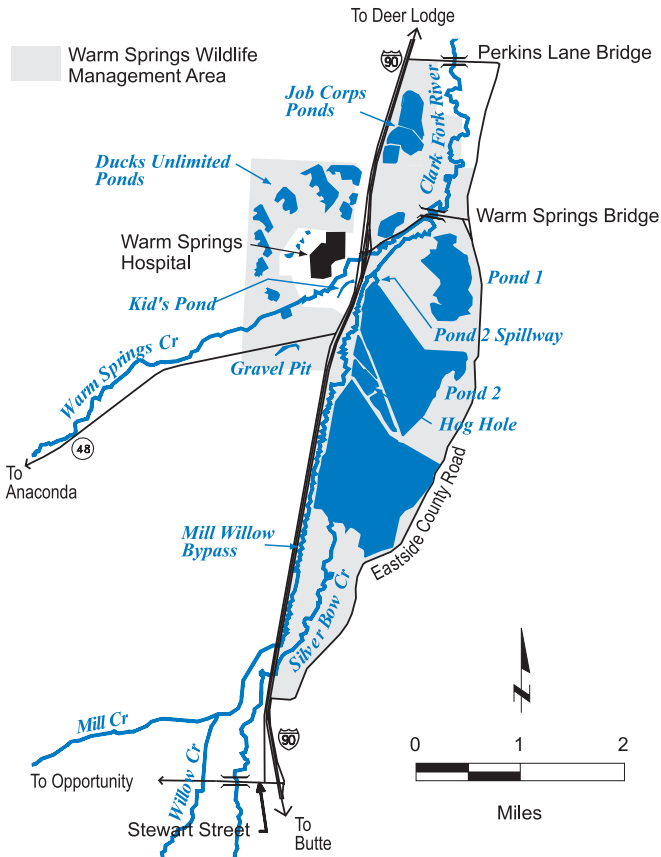
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.


Painted Rocks Dam to mouth of West Fork Bitterroot River

- Extended season for northern pike and whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with aquatic insects, maggots and/or artificial lures
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout daily and in possession, any size.



# Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
WEST FORK QUARTZ CREEK (Kootenai River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through July 15.</li> </ul>
WEST FORK THOMPSON RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
WHALE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (North Fork Flathead River drainage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year downstream from Whale Creek Falls.</li> </ul>
WHITEFISH LAKE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake trout: 20 daily and in possession, only 1 over 36 inches. All fish 30 to 36 inches must be released.</li> </ul>
WHITEFISH RIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year from Whitefish Lake to State Highway 40 Bridge.</li> </ul>
WILLOW CREEK (near Warm Springs) from Stewart Street Bridge to the Warm Springs WMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release only.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
WOODWARD CREEK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to angling within a 100-yard radius of the stream mouth June 1 through August 31.</li> </ul>



# Central Fishing District



Central 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.

For additional information regarding the boundaries in this fishing district, please call the following regional headquarters Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.:

Billings .....	406-247-2940
Bozeman .....	406-994-4042
Butte Area Office .....	406-494-1953
Great Falls .....	406-454-5840
Helena Area Office .....	406-495-3260
Lewistown Area Office .....	406-538-4658
TDD .....	406-444-1200
(Telephone device for the deaf)	

## CENTRAL DISTRICT STANDARD REGULATIONS

### Closed Waters

Waters operated as fish hatcheries and rearing ponds by FWP and the US Fish and 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.

### 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 the FWP Fishing Access Coordinator at 406-444-7885, or contact the Bureau of Reclamation 406-247-7298, DNRC 406-444-2932 or PPL Montana 406-533-3415.

- Black Eagle Dam (Cascade County), Canyon Ferry Dam (Lewis & Clark County), Clark Canyon Dam (Beaverhead County), Cochrane Dam (Cascade County), Hauser Dam (Lewis & Clark County), Hebgen Dam (Gallatin County), Holter Dam (Lewis & Clark County), Madison Dam (Madison County), Morony Dam (Chouteau County), Rainbow Dam (Cascade County), Ruby Dam (Madison County), Ryan Dam (Cascade County), Tiber Dam (Liberty County), Yellowtail Dam (Big Horn County), Yellowtail Afterbay Dam (Big Horn County)

### Beaver Ponds

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

### Irrigation Canals and Ditches

Man-made irrigation canals and ditches are open year round unless stated otherwise in district regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers and streams.

### Reservoirs

Reservoirs are artificially impounded water behind a man-made dam extending upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s). Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage, and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. The inlet stream(s) is often managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations. Stream regulations apply to water upstream from the mouth on the reservoir. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks.

### Transporting Live Fish

An import permit is required to bring live fish of any kind into Montana. It is unlawful to possess or transport any live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken without authorization from FWP with the following exceptions:

- 1) transportation of fish for authorized commercial purposes (eg. Baitfish Seining Permit, Commercial Fish Ponds, Commercial Fishing, etc.);
- 2) use as live bait subject to restrictions imposed by the FWP Commission for the taking, transport and use of live baitfish (see **"Bait Regulations"** below); or
- 3) it is unlawful to possess or transport live fish, other than authorized baitfish, on roadways that form the boundary between the Eastern and Central fishing districts.

### Boat and Motor Restrictions

A complete, updated, copy of Montana Boating Laws can be obtained from any FWP office or FWP license agent. All passengers under the age of 12 must wear a 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.

## Warm Water Game Fish Stamp

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed a bill to require the purchase of a warm water game fish stamp. The warm water game fish stamp is required to possess warm water fish on the following waters in the Central District:

Big Casino Creek Reservoir, Fergus County	Lake Frances, Pondera County
Bighorn Lake, Carbon & Big Horn Counties	Lake Josephine, Yellowstone County
Bynum Reservoir, Teton County	Lower Carter Pond, Fergus County
Cooney Reservoir, Carbon County	Morony Dam Lake, Cascade County
Dailey Lake, Park County	Tunis Reservoir, Chouteau County
Deadmans Basin Reservoir, Wheatland County	Wadsworth Reservoir, Cascade County
Kolar Reservoir #1, Judith Basin County	Warm Springs Creek, Fergus County
Kolar Reservoir #2, Judith Basin County	
Kolar Reservoir #8, Judith Basin County	

## Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows are considered lines for purposes of determining line limits.
- When multiple lines are allowed on a body of water, the maximum number of lines allowed shall not exceed the greater of either the attended lines or the setlines. For example, if an angler wants to spear for northern pike on Lake Frances in the winter (where the limit is 2 attended lines all year or 6 setlines through the ice), he/she may have a maximum of only 5 setlines in use if he/she is using one spear, for a total of 6 lines.

### Hook and Line Limits

#### Open Water

##### Rivers and Streams

- 1 line with 2 hooks per line, with or without a pole. The pole 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.

##### 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

- Shelter definition/use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing.
- It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules.
  - Shelter identification: Identification must be painted on or otherwise affixed to all unattended shelters in legible, 2-inch letters plainly visible at a distance of 100 feet. or 9/10-digit ALS number. Attended shelters at Clark Canyon Reservoir, Deadman's Basin, Hauser Reservoir, Lake Francis and Lake Helena must also be identified.
  - Inspection: Each closed shelter shall have a door that an officer may readily open from the outside for inspection when it is occupied.
  - Waste and rubbish disposal: Owners and occupants of shelters are required to keep their shelters (and the area immediately around them) free from rubbish. Anglers must remove waste materials before they leave for the day.
  - Shelter removal: Daily removal of shelters is required on
    - Fitzpatrick Lake
    - Deadmans Basin
    - Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir
- Shelters may not be placed on the ice prior to sunrise and must be removed prior to sunset each day on Hauser Reservoir and Lake Helena.

- Shelter 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.

### Setlines

- Setlines may be used only on waters specified in District Exceptions.
- Setlines must be checked by the fisherman at least once every 24 hours.
- The fisherman's name and phone number or 9/10-digit ALS# must be attached to each setline.
- Setlines shall not be attached to jugs or other floating devices.

### Bow and Arrow

- Waters open to angling are open to taking nongame fish with bow and arrow. Crossbows are illegal.

### Nets and Traps

- Landing nets may be used for landing hooked fish. See Bait Regulations for use of nets to harvest bait fish.

### Snagging

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

### Spearing

- In all waters open to fishing, nongame fish may be taken with rubber or spring-propelled spears by persons swimming or submerged. Rubber or spring-propelled spears may be used only by persons swimming or submerged in the water and may be used only for designated species in designated waters.

## Bait Regulations

- Game fish, including yellow perch, may not be used as bait (live or dead) except as authorized below under Dead Bait.
- Possession of live nongame fish is prohibited on waters closed to using live fish as bait.
- It is illegal to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.
- Where live fish may be used as bait (see list below under Live Bait), legal nongame fish may be taken for use as bait in the following manner:
  - with hook and line; or
  - with seines no larger than 12 feet by 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).
- Legal nongame fish, except sculpins (genus *Cottus*) which must be killed prior to transport, may only be transported live to or from:
  - waters where live nongame fish may be used as bait in the Central Fishing District, or
  - anywhere within the boundaries of the Eastern Fishing District.
- 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 (genus *Cottus*) 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 (genus Cottus) may not be used for bait in the Western Fishing District.]*
- See Commercial Fishing License requirements for information on commercial harvest permits.

### Live Bait

- 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 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 flies and lures. Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers and may be acquired from approved bait dealers in Montana. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale 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 that may be used as live bait in the Central Fishing District include all nongame species except black bullheads, bluegill, carp, goldfish, green sunfish, pumpkinseed, rainbow smelt, sculpins, stonecats and yellow bullheads.

- Live nongame fish may be used as 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—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).

### Dead Bait

- Nongame fish 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 flies and lures. Heads and entrails of non-game 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, tiger muskellunge, walleye, or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- The eggs of char, cisco, grayling, salmon or trout may be used as bait. Parts/pieces of salmonids may not be used as bait.

## Daily and Possession Limits

**Possession limit** means the number of fish that you may possess at any time in any form: fresh, stored in freezers or lockers, salted, smoked, dried, canned or otherwise preserved. It is illegal to preserve fish (salted, smoked, dried, canned, or otherwise preserved) before taking them to your permanent residence (the physical abode or structure you maintain as your principal, legal residence) unless those fish can be counted. Mobile recreational vehicles, travel trailers, tents or storage/freezer lockers do not qualify as permanent residences. No person may sell or take for the purpose of sale any fish except as authorized in commercial fishing regulations.

**Daily limit** means the number of fish you may legally take during a calendar day. It is unlawful to exceed the standard daily limit unless the regulations for the water body where you are fishing specify a different limit. "Legally taken" means fish caught and not immediately released alive. Where catch and release is allowed, fish released alive are considered not taken. A fish when landed and not immediately released becomes part of the daily limit of the person originally hooking the fish, even if the fish is donated to another person. If you receive fish from another angler, those fish also become part of your daily limit. You may possess the daily limit allowed only for the body of water on which you are fishing.

### Handling and 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.
- For a species of fish where size limits apply, all fish in possession must be whole with head, skin, fins and tail attached. Gills and entrails may be removed.
- Fish may be dressed and filleted for immediate consumption.
- Fish may be dressed and filleted 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, grayling, char and whitefish): the entire skin must be attached to the fillet for identification.
  - Non-salmonids: a minimum of one inch by one inch square shoulder patch of skin with scales must remain attached to each fillet for identification.
  - In areas where it is necessary to distinguish between sauger and walleye, fish must be kept whole for identification while on the water (see District Exceptions). Gills and entrails may be removed. Sauger and walleye may be filleted (unless size limits apply) only when you are off the water and done fishing for the day.

## 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.

Species	Daily and Possession Limits
<b>Trout</b>	
Brook trout	20 daily and in possession.
Combined Trout includes brown trout, rainbow trout, golden trout, and grayling	<b>Lakes/Reservoirs:</b> 5 daily and 10 in possession, includes cutthroat trout. <b>Rivers/Streams:</b> 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. All grayling must be released immediately.
Cutthroat trout	<b>Lakes/Reservoirs:</b> included in Combined Trout daily and possession limit. <b>Rivers/Streams:</b> all cutthroat trout must be released immediately.
Lake trout	3 daily and in possession.
Bass	5 daily and in possession.
Burbot (ling)	5 daily and in possession.
Catfish	20 daily and in possession.
Northern pike	10 daily and in possession.
Pallid sturgeon	0 - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately.
Salmon (Kokanee & Chinook)	10 daily and in possession.
Sauger/Walleye	5 daily and 10 in possession.
Shovelnose sturgeon	5 daily and in possession, none over 40 inches.
Tiger muskellunge	1 daily and in possession, must be over 40 inches.
Whitefish	100 daily and in possession.

### GENERAL FISHING SEASONS AND HOURS

#### Fishing Hours

Fishing is allowed at all hours during open fishing seasons unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

#### Fishing Season: Lakes and Reservoirs

Open entire year unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

#### Fishing Season: Rivers and Streams

Open third Saturday in May through November 30 unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

## 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/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
<b>ABSAROKA-BEARTOOTH WILDERNESS LAKES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 10 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
<b>ALDER GULCH CREEK AND DREDGE PONDS</b> Virginia City to mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul>
<b>ANTELOPE BUTTE LAKE aka Ostle Reservoir (Teton County)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through November 30.</li> </ul>
<b>ARMSTRONG SPRING CREEK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release only.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
<b>AROD LAKES aka Eyraud Lakes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>Spearing: open for northern pike and nongame fish through the ice only.</p>
<b>AXOLOTL LAKES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for grayling.</li> </ul>
<b>BAD CANYON CREEK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
<b>BADGER CREEK DRAINAGE (near Heart Butte)</b> downstream from confluence of North Badger and South Badger creeks within National Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches, includes cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
<b>BEAN LAKE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.</li> </ul>
<b>BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)</b> mouth to US Highway 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open June 15 through September 30.</li> </ul>
<b>BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Missouri River below Hauser Dam)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open June 15 through November 30.</li> </ul>

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**BEAVERHEAD RIVER** [map page 51](#)

Clark Canyon Dam to Anderson Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches and only 1 rainbow trout.</li> </ul>
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Clark Canyon Dam to Pipe Organ Bridge downstream from Pipe Organ Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through November 30.</li> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul>
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High Bridge FAS to Henneberry FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Saturday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>
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Henneberry FAS to Pipe Organ Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Sunday from the third Sunday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>
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downstream from Pipe Organ Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul>
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Highway 91 South Bridge (Tash Bridge) to Selway Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to float outfitting from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>
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Anderson Lane downstream to mouth (near Twin Bridges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, 1 over 18 inches, only 1 may be a rainbow trout.</li> </ul>
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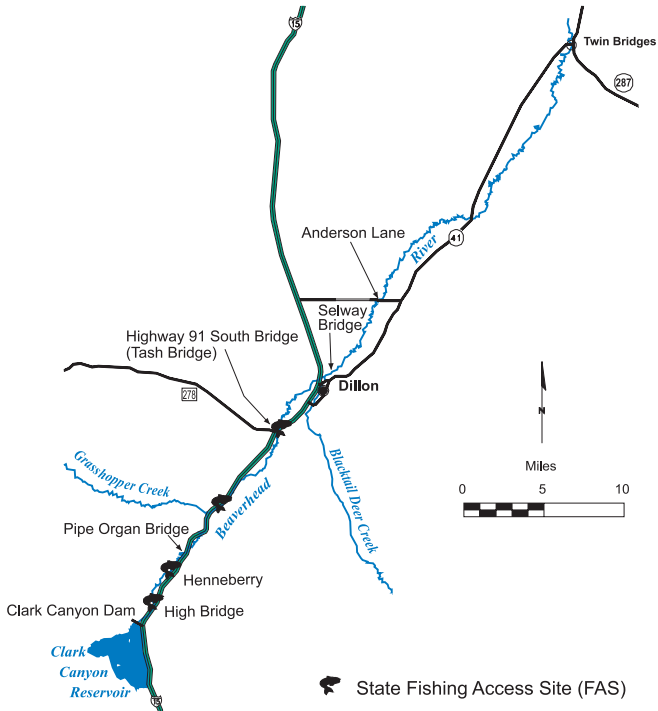
**BELT CREEK**

downstream from the Riceville Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul>
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**BIG COULEE CREEK** (tributary to Highwood Creek, near Great Falls)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
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# Beaverhead River



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**BIG HOLE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** [map page 53](#)

entire river and tributaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for grayling and cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
entire river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to the third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Headwaters to Mudd Creek FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closed to float outfitting from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</b></li> </ul>
Mudd Creek FAS to Fishtrap FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closed to float outfitting on each Tuesday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</b></li> </ul>
Fishtrap FAS to East Bank BLM FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closed to float outfitting on each Thursday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</b></li> </ul>
East Bank BLM FAS to Jerry Creek FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closed to float outfitting on each Wednesday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</b></li> </ul>
tributaries upstream from Divide Dam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brook trout: open entire year.</li> </ul>
Dickie Bridge to Divide Bridge (Divide FAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
Jerry Creek FAS to Divide FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Saturday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>
Divide Bridge (Divide FAS) to Melrose Bridges (Salmon Fly FAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 4 daily and in possession, includes 3 under 13 inches and 1 over 22 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> <li>• Closed to float fishing by nonresidents and float outfitting on each Sunday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>
Melrose Bridges (Salmon Fly FAS) to Glen FAS (bridges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to float outfitting on each Monday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>
Glen FAS (bridges) to Notch Bottom FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to float outfitting on each Friday from the third Saturday in May through Labor Day.</li> </ul>

**BIG SHEEP CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES** ([Beaverhead River drainage](#))

- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout except it is catch-and-release for cutthroat trout in Meadow, Muddy and Simpson creeks.

**BIG SPRING CREEK (near Lewistown)**



entire creek

- Open entire year.

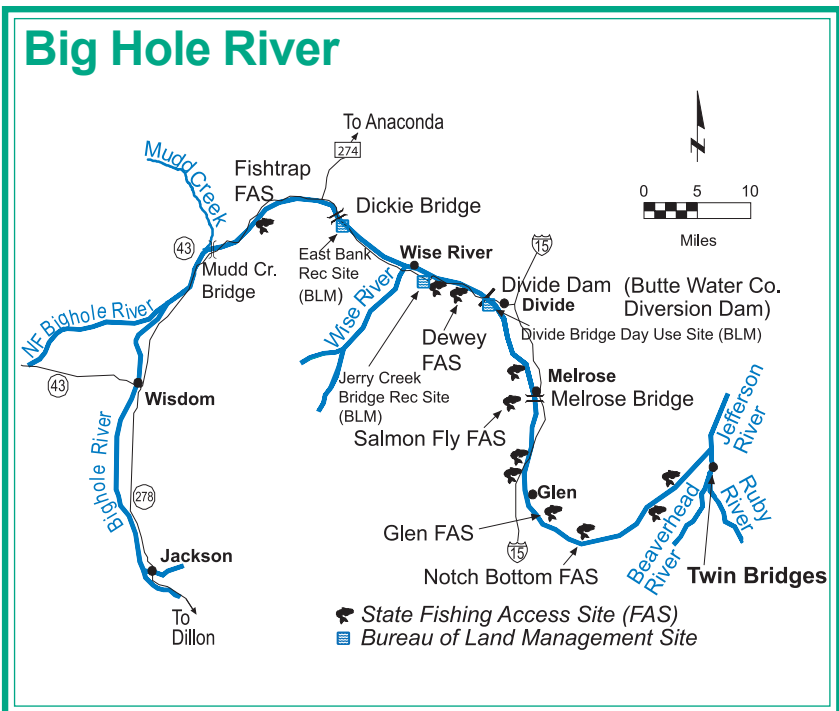
upstream of the US Highway 191 bridge, including East Fork Big Spring Creek downstream from the Reservoir

- Catch-and-release only for all fish species. Fish consumption advisory in effect for this section of river.

**BIGHORN LAKE AND AFTERBAY RESERVOIR**



- Catfish: 6 daily and in possession.
- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily and 10 in possession (only 5 may be sauger). All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See District Regulations for transport requirements.
- Shovelnose sturgeon: 2 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.



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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BIGHORN RIVER map below  
entire river

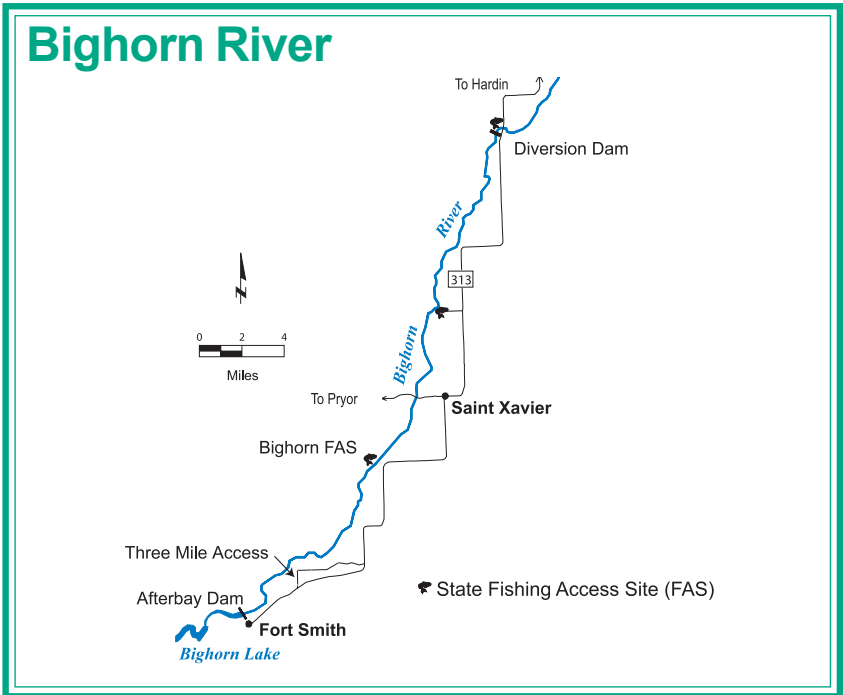
- **Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Standard Regulations for transport requirements.**

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

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches and only 1 rainbow trout.
- May use live nongame bait fish (as identified in standard district regulations).

cable 600 feet below Afterbay Dam to Bighorn FAS

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 5 brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 rainbow trout daily and in
- Artificial lures only.



**Waterbody/Description**                      **Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

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


- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout except it is catch-and-release for cutthroat trout in Cottonwood, Jake and Rock creeks, and the two Rock Creek reservoirs on Robb-Ledford WMA.

**BLACKTAIL MEADOWS POND** (Dillon)

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.

**BLUEWATER CREEK**

- Open entire year.

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

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

- Open third Saturday in May through September 30.

**BOULDER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES** (near Big Timber)

entire river and tributaries

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.

Natural Bridge to Two-Mile Bridge (first crossing, 5 road miles upstream from Natural


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

**BUFFALO CREEK** (fork of Slough Creek)

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, includes up to 3 cutthroat trout (none over 12 inches), only 1 rainbow trout over 18 inches.

**BYNUM RESERVOIR** 

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

**CANYON FERRY RESERVOIR** 

- Walleye: 20 daily and 40 in possession, only 1 over 28 inches.
- **Yellow perch: 15 daily and in possession.**
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.

Magpie Bay

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

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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<p><b>CLARK CANYON RESERVOIR</b> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, any size.</li> <li>• Burbot (ling): 2 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
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<p>springs entering the reservoir at its south end, near Red Rock River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed as posted.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>CLARKS FORK YELLOWSTONE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES</b> entire river and tributaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul>
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<p>mainstem downstream from the bridge at Bridger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook and Line: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>CONFEDERATE GULCH (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)</b> mouth to Highway 284</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open June 15 through September 30.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>COTTONWOOD CREEK (10 miles SW of Martinsdale)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: limit includes 2 cutthroat trout daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>CROOKED CREEK (near Red Lodge, Carbon County)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>CULVER POND aka Widow's Pool (Beaverhead County)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 15 through September 30.</li> <li>• Brook trout: 5 daily and in possession, 4 under 12 inches and 1 over 18 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>CUT BANK CREEK</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year downstream of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation boundary in T33N, R6W, S2.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DARLINGTON DITCH (near Three Forks)</b> aka Darlington Spring Creek, on Cobblestone FAS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed to fishing from a point 500 yards above the northern boundary of Cobblestone FAS, as posted, downstream approximately 1.5 miles, as posted.</li> <li>• Open entire year except the section closed to fishing at Cobblestone FAS.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for trout.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
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<p>entire ditch outside of Cobblestone FAS boundaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Standard limits apply.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DEADMANS BASIN RESERVOIR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 10 daily and in possession.</li> <li>• Snagging: open for salmon through the ice only, 35 daily and 70 in possession.</li> </ul>
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Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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<p><b>DEARBORN RIVER</b> upstream from Highway 434 Bridge in T18N R6W, Section 29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 12 inches, includes cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DEEP CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)</b> mouth to North Fork of Deep Creek</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open June 15 through September 30.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DICKENS LAKE (Sun River Wildlife Management Area)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through November 30.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DIVERSION LAKE (Sun River drainage)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession. Catch-and-release for grayling.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DRY CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)</b> mouth to Flynn Lane</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open June 15 through September 30.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>EAST BOULDER RIVER (Yellowstone River drainage)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>EAST FORK BIG SPRING CREEK (near Lewistown)</b> downstream from the Reservoir</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release only for all fish species.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>EAST FORK BOULDER RIVER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>EAST FORK HYALITE CREEK</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 15 through November 30.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>EAST GALLATIN RIVER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year downstream from the mouth of Bozeman (Sourdough) Creek.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>EAST ROSEBUD CREEK</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>ELK LAKE (Beaverhead County)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for lake trout.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>ELKS CLUB POND (Lewistown)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.</li> </ul>
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Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**ENNIS RESERVOIR** aka Ennis Lake

- Catch-and-release for grayling.

**EYRAUD LAKES** aka Arod Lakes

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

**FAIRGROUNDS POND** (Helena)

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.

**FERGUSON LAKE** (Big Hole River drainage)

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

**FISHTAIL CREEK**

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.

**FOOLHEN LAKE** (Big Hole River drainage)

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

**GALLATIN RIVER**  
entire river

- Open entire year.

Yellowstone National Park  
to East Gallatin River

- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

**GHENY POND** (near Twin Bridges)

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.

**GIANT SPRINGS** (near Great Falls)

- Closed entire year where enclosed by concrete walks and masonry work.

**GIBSON RESERVOIR**

Gibson Dam upstream to the point where the North and South forks of the Sun River meet, regardless of reservoir level

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

**GOOSE LAKE** (Madison County)


- Open June 15 through November 30.

**HARRISON RESERVOIR AND TRIBUTARIES**

- See Willow Creek Reservoir and Tributaries.

## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

**HAUSER RESERVOIR**   
including Canyon Ferry  
Dam tailwater and Lake  
Helena

- Closed to fishing from midnight to 3 a.m.
- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 trout and salmon in possession in any combination. Catch and release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 28 inches.
- Yellow perch: 50 daily and no possession limit.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

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### HAYMAKER CREEK

- Cutthroat trout: 2 daily and in possession.

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### HELENA VALLEY REGULATING RESERVOIR

- Snagging: open for salmon September 1 through October 31, 35 salmon daily and 70 in possession.

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### HELLROARING CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

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

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### HELLS CANYON CREEK (Jefferson River drainage)

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

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### HIDDEN LAKE aka Our Lake (Teton County)


- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.

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### HIDDEN LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES (Madison County)

- Open June 15 through November 30.

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**HOLTER RESERVOIR**   
up to American Bar Gulch  
(approx. 4.6 miles  
downstream from Hauser  
Dam)

- Closed to fishing from midnight to 3 a.m.
- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Yellow perch: 50 daily and no possession limit.
- Walleye: 6 daily and in possession, includes 5 under 20 inches and 1 over 28 inches.
- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 rainbow trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 rainbow trout and salmon in possession in any combination.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**HYALITE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| above Hyalite Reservoir including East Fork Hyalite Creek and West Fork Hyalite Creek | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 15 through November 30.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| below Hyalite Reservoir | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through November 30.</li> <li>• Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------|---|

**HYALITE RESERVOIR**

- Catch-and-release for grayling.

**INDIAN ROAD POND (Townsend)**

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and 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.

**JEFFERSON RIVER**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| entire river | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul> |
|--------------|---|

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| confluence of Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers to Williams Bridge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Williams Bridge FAS to confluence with Missouri River | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| seasonal spawning closure at tributary mouths: Hells Canyon Creek and Willow Springs Creek | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closed to fishing 100 yards upstream and downstream from the creek mouths from April 1 through April 30 and from October 15 through November 30.</b></li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**LAKE ELWELL aka Tiber Reservoir**

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.
- Spearing: open for nongame fish, northern pike, walleye, sauger and burbot (ling) 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.
- Spearing: open for nongame fish, northern pike, walleye, sauger and burbot (ling) through the ice.

**Waterbody/Description**

**Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**LAKE HELENA**

- Closed to fishing from midnight to 3 a.m.
- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 28 inches.
- Yellow perch: 50 daily and no possession limit.
- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 trout and salmon in possession in any combination.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

**LIGHTNING CREEK (Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness)**

- Open August 1 through November 30.

**LITTLE PRICKLY PEAR CREEK (tributary to Missouri River)**

downstream from the I-15 Bridge (10 miles south of Wolf Creek)

- Open third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

**LYMAN CREEK (near Bozeman)**

- Closed entire year from the city water supply intake to a point 1,000 feet upstream as posted.

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
-----------------------	------------------------------------

**MADISON RIVER** [map](#) [page 63](#)

Yellowstone National Park boundary to Hebgen Reservoir

- Combined Trout: 5 brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 rainbow trout daily and in possession, any size.

Hebgen Dam to Quake Lake

- Open entire year.

Quake Lake outlet to Lyons Bridge

- Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.
- Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

Lyons Bridge to McAtee Bridge

- Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.
- Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Artificial lures only.

McAtee Bridge to Varney Bridge

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

Varney Bridge to Ennis Bridge

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

Ennis Bridge to Ennis Lake

- Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.
- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 rainbow trout daily and in possession, any size.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels.

Ennis Dam to the mouth

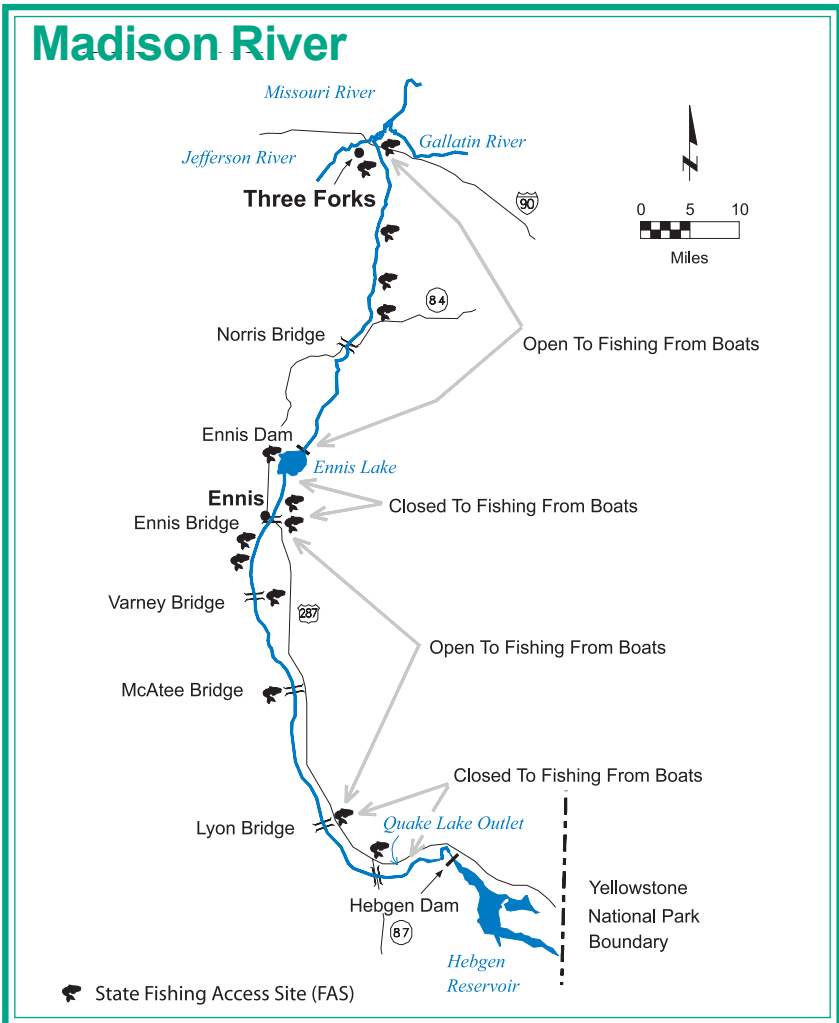
- Open entire year.

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

- Open June 15 through September 30.

MARIAS RIVER

- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Statewide Regulations for transport requirements.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with up to 2 hooks per line all year.
- Whitefish: 35 daily and in possession.



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**MCDONALDS POND (Beaverhead County)**

- Open July 15 through September 30.
- Artificial lures only.

**MIDVALE CREEK (Blackfoot Reservation)**

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

**MILL CREEK (near Sheridan)**

- Open entire year.

**MISSOURI RIVER** [map page 65](#)  
entire river

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

Toston Dam to Canyon Ferry Reservoir

- Localized spawning areas closed as posted from March 1 through June 15.
- Walleye: 20 daily and 40 in possession.
- Combined Trout: catch-and-release for brown trout between 18 and 24 inches.

Canyon Ferry Reservoir

- See Canyon Ferry Reservoir regulations.

downstream from Canyon Ferry Dam to Hauser Reservoir

- See Hauser Reservoir regulations.

Hauser Dam to American Bar Gulch (approx. 4.6 miles downstream from Hauser Dam)

- Combined Trout: Standard river/stream limits apply, except catch-and-release for brown trout.
- Walleye: 6 daily and in possession, includes 5 under 20 inches and 1 over 28 inches.

downstream from American Bar Gulch to Holter Reservoir

- See Holter Reservoir regulations.

Holter Dam to mouth of Dearborn River

- Combined Trout: 1 rainbow trout (any size) daily and in possession and 1 brown trout (22-inch minimum) daily and in possession.

Craig Bridge to Sheep Creek Bridge

- Spearing: open for up to 5 whitefish daily with rubber or pring-propelled spears by persons swimming or submerged.

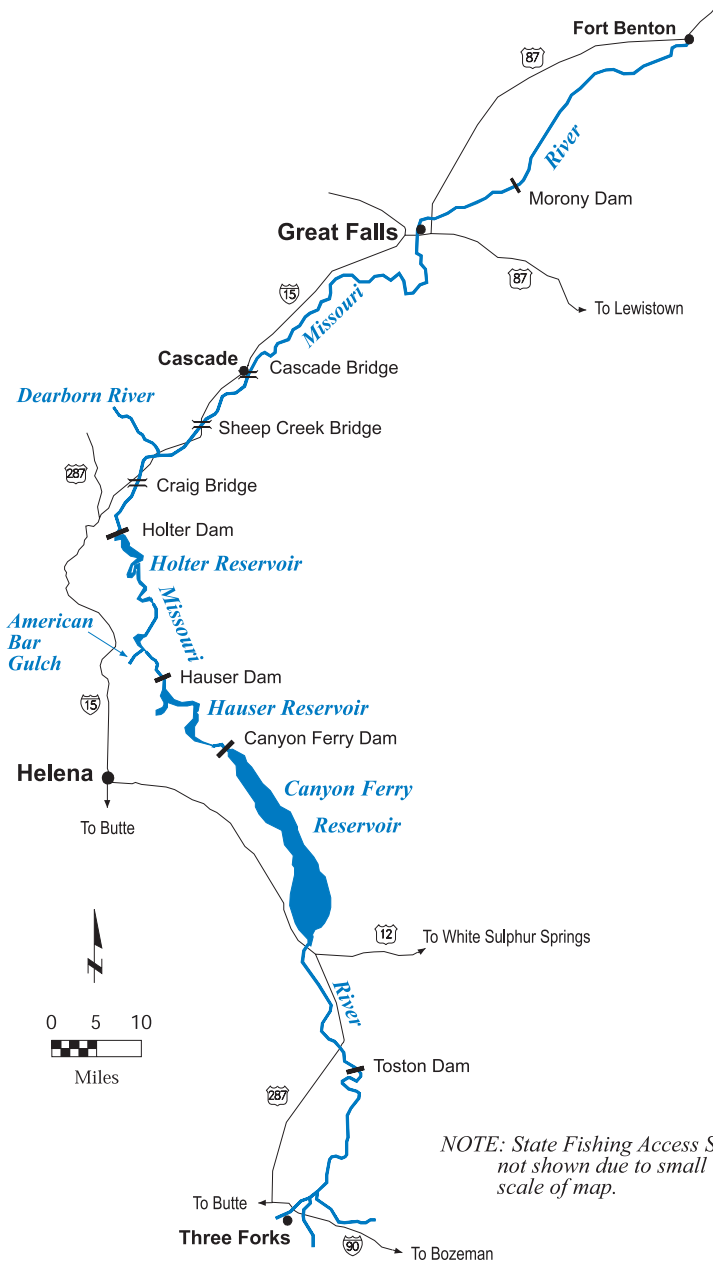
mouth of Dearborn River to Cascade Bridge

- Combined Trout: 3 rainbow trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 16 inches and 1 brown trout daily and in possession, 22-inch minimum.

Morony Dam to Fort Benton

- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Standard Regulations for transport requirements.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line all year.

# Missouri River



**Waterbody/Description**                      **Exceptions to Standard Regulations**

**MUSSELSHELL RIVER**  
 downstream from where North and South forks meet

- Open entire year.

**NELSON SPRING CREEK**

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release only.
- Artificial lures only.

**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, includes cutthroat trout.

**NORTH FORK TETON RIVER DRAINAGE (near Choteau)**  
 within the National Forest

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

**NORTH WILLOW CREEK (near Harrison)**  
 Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir

- Open June 15 through November 30.

**NORWEGIAN CREEK (near Harrison)**  
 Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir

- Open June 15 through November 30.

**O'BRIEN CREEK (near Neihart)**  
 above intake to the Neihart public water supply

- Closed entire year.

**ODELL CREEK (Red Rock River drainage)**

- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.

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

- Open third Saturday in May through November 30.

**OTTER LAKE (Madison County)**

- Open June 15 through November 30.
- Combined Trout: 1 rainbow trout daily and in possession.

**OUR LAKE aka Hidden Lake (Teton County)**

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.

**PINEY CREEK**

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

**Waterbody/Description****Exceptions to Standard Regulations****PISHKUN RESERVOIR**

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

**POINDEXTER SLOUGH**

- Open entire year.
- Catch-and-release: December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures only.

**PRIEST BUTTE LAKE**

- Open June 15 through September 15.
- Open December 1 through the end of February.

**PRYOR CREEK**

downstream from the  
Reservation line

- Open entire year.

**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: includes cutthroat trout, except catch-and-release for cutthroat trout on Cat Creek.

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

- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.

**RED ROCK RIVER**

Lima Dam to Clark  
Canyon Reservoir

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.

**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.
- Open entire year.

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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**RUBY RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES**

upstream from Ruby Reservoir

- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout except catch-and-release for cutthroat trout in Cottonwood (near Cottonwood Camp), Geyser, Idaho, Robb, Sweetwater and Whitebear creeks.

downstream from Ruby Dam

- 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).
- Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 15 inches.

**SAGE CREEK (Pryor Mountains)**

- Open entire year.

**SAWTOOTH LAKE (Beaverhead River drainage)**

- Combined Trout: 1 golden trout daily and in possession.

**SCOTT LAKE (Beaverhead River drainage)**

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

**SHIELDS RIVER**

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

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

downstream from I-15 bridge near Helena

- Open third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

from Gold Sil Mine to Green Meadow Drive, near Marysville

- Catch-and-release for all fish species. Fish consumption advisory in effect for this section of Silver Creek.

**SLOUGH CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)**

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

## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

SMITH RIVER map below

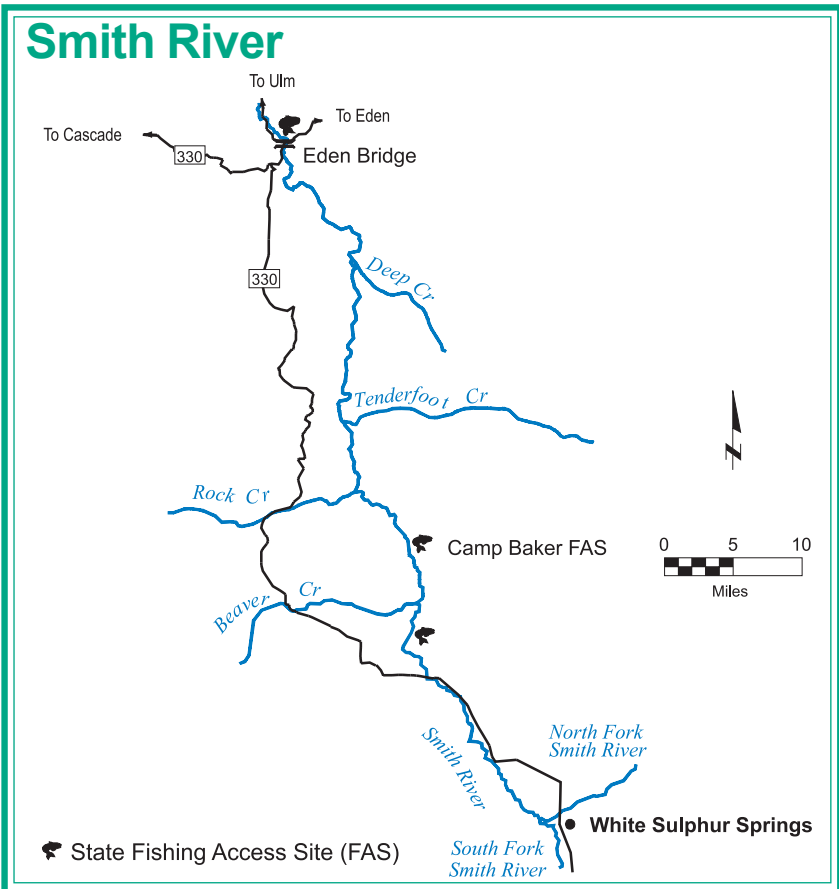
- Floating on the Smith River between Camp Baker and Eden Bridge is strictly limited. Mandatory registration, floater's fee and other regulations apply. A drawing for launch dates is held in February with remaining launches filled on a first-come basis. Contact the Great Falls FWP office at 406-454-5840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

downstream from confluence of North and South forks

- Open entire year.

Camp Baker Bridge to Eden Bridge (aka Huntsberger Bridge)

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



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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<p><b>SODA BUTTE CREEK</b> (Yellowstone River drainage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SOUTH FORK SUN RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES</b> upstream from the point where the North and South forks of the Sun River meet, regardless of reservoir level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession only 1 over 12 inches, includes cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SOUTH FORK TWO MEDICINE RIVER DRAINAGE</b> within National Forest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SOUTH WILLOW CREEK</b> (near Harrison) Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open June 15 through November 30.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SPLIT ROCK LAKE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.</li> <li>• Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SPRING MEADOW LAKE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> <li>• Bass: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.</li> <li>• No spear fishing or bow fishing allowed.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>STILLWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES</b> (Yellowstone River drainage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SUN RIVER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year downstream from Gibson Dam.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SUNNY SLOPE CANAL</b> downstream from Pishkun Reservoir</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch-and-release for grayling.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SWAZEE LAKE</b> (Sun River Wildlife Management Area)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through November 30.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>TAHEPIA LAKE</b> (Wise River drainage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>TETON RIVER</b> downstream from Highway 89 Bridge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> </ul>
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## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

### TIBER RESERVOIR aka Lake Elwell



- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.
- Sparring: open for nongame fish, northern pike, walleye, sauger and burbot (ling) through the ice and by persons swimming or submerged.
- **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.**

### TRAIL CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Beaverhead River drainage)

- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout, except catch-and-release for cutthroat trout on Bear Creek.

### TUNNEL LAKE (Teton County)

- Combined Trout: includes 1 grayling.

### TWIN LAKES (Big Hole River drainage)

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

### VIGILANTE POND (near Virginia City)

- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.

### WADE LAKE (Madison County)

- Spawning channel and channel inlet closed as posted.

### WARM SPRINGS CREEK (near Lewistown)

- Open entire year.

### WARM SPRINGS CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)

- Open June 15 through September 30.

### WAUKENA LAKE (Big Hole River drainage)

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

### WEST BOULDER RIVER (near Big Timber)

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.

### WEST FORK HYALITE CREEK aka Hyalite Creek

above Hyalite Reservoir

- Open July 15 through November 30.
- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.

### WEST FORK MADISON RIVER

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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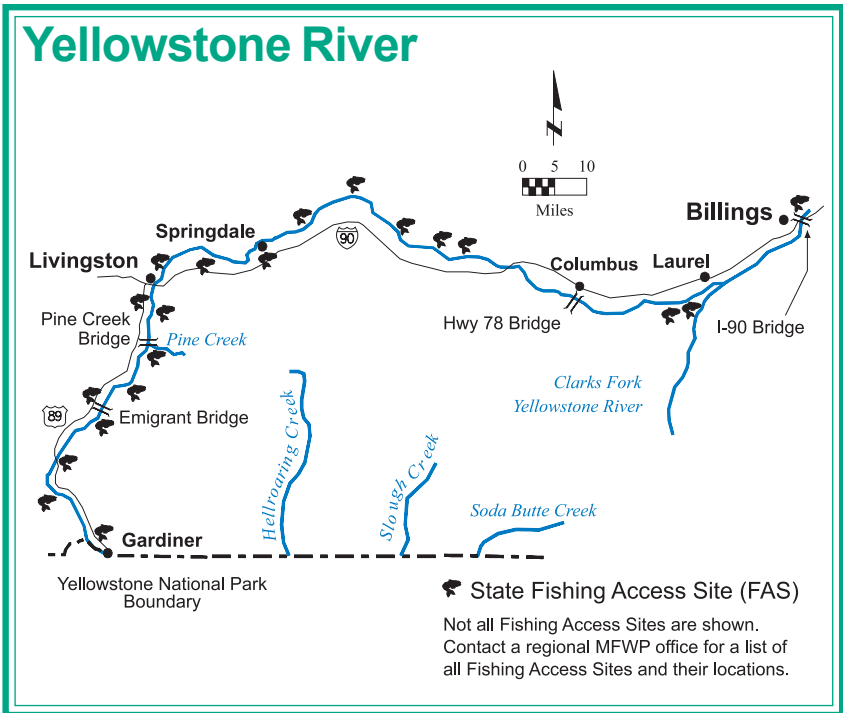
<b>WEST FORK ROCK CREEK</b> Red Lodge water intake to 1,000 feet upstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
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<b>WEST FORK STILLWATER RIVER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.</li> </ul>
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<b>WEST ROSEBUD CREEK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open entire year.</li> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 daily and in possession, only 1 over 13 inches.</li> </ul>
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<b>WIDOW'S POOL aka Culver Pond (Beaverhead County)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open July 15 through September 30.</li> <li>• Brook trout: 5 daily and in possession, includes 4 under 12 inches and 1 over 18 inches.</li> <li>• Artificial lures only.</li> </ul>
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<b>WILLOW CREEK (Meagher County, near White Sulphur Springs)</b> White Sulphur Springs water intake to its source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year.</li> </ul>
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## Waterbody/Description

## Exceptions to Standard Regulations

### WILLOW CREEK RESERVOIR AND TRIBUTARIES (near Harrison)

Willow Creek arm, as posted

- Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.

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tributaries to Reservoir - North Willow, South Willow and Norwegian Creeks - from the Highway 287 Bridges to Reservoir

- Open June 15 through November 30.

### WILLOW SPRINGS CREEK (tributary to Jefferson River)

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

### YELLOWSTONE RIVER [map page 72](#)

Yellowstone National Park Boundary to I-90 Bridge at Billings

- Open entire year.

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Yellowstone National Park boundary to Highway 78 Bridge at Columbus

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

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Emigrant Bridge to Pine Creek Bridge

- Extended season for whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.
- Combined Trout: 5 brown and/or rainbow trout daily and in possession, includes 4 under 13 inches and 1 over 22 inches.
- Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may use bait.

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Highway 78 Bridge at Columbus to I-90 Bridge at Billings

- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.

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mouth of Clarks Fork River to I-90 Bridge at Billings

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

### YELLOWSTONE RIVER TRIBUTARIES

Buffalo Fork, Hellroaring, Slough and Soda Butte creeks upstream from YNP Boundary

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

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all tributaries between YNP Boundary and Springdale

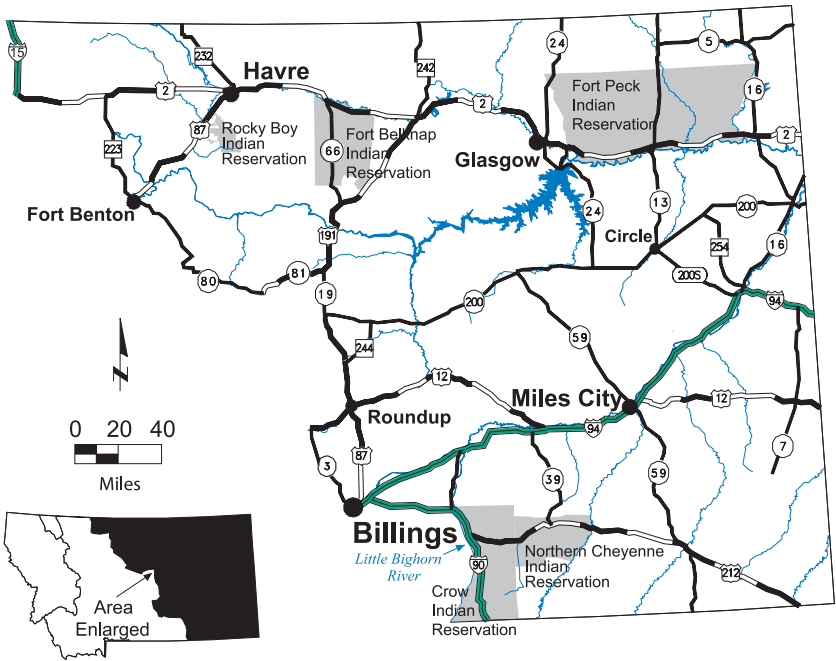
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

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all tributaries downstream from Springdale

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.

# Eastern Fishing District



Areas excluded from fishing districts. Additional regulations may apply. Other federal or tribal permits may be required.

**The Eastern Fishing District includes all waters lying east of the Central Fishing District. For the boundary description, see Central Fishing District, page 41.**

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

For additional information regarding the boundaries of this district, please call the following regional headquarters Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.:

Billings .....	406-247-2940
Glasgow .....	406-228-3700
Great Falls .....	406-454-5840
Havre Area Resource Office .....	406-265-6177
Lewistown Area Office .....	406-538-4658
Miles City .....	406-234-0900
TDD .....	406-444-1200

**(Telephone device for the deaf)**

## EASTERN DISTRICT STANDARD REGULATIONS

### Closed Waters

Waters operated as fish hatcheries and rearing ponds by FWP and the US Fish and 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.

### Dam Closures and 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 the FWP Fishing Access Coordinator at 406-444-7885, or contact the Bureau of Reclamation at 406-247-7296, Army Corp of Engineers, or PPL Montana at 406-533-3415.

- Anita Dam (Yellowstone County)
- Fort Peck Dam (Valley County)
- Fresno Dam (Hill County)

### Beaver Ponds

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

### Irrigation Canals and Ditches

Man-made irrigation canals and ditches are open year round unless stated otherwise in district regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers and streams.

### Reservoirs

Reservoirs are artificially impounded water behind a man-made dam extending upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s). Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage, and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. The inlet stream(s) is often managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations. Stream regulations apply to water upstream from the mouth on the reservoir. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks.

### Transporting Live Fish

An import permit is required to bring live fish of any kind into Montana. It is unlawful to possess or transport any live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken without authorization from FWP with the following exceptions:

- 1) transportation of fish for authorized commercial purposes (eg. Baitfish Seining Permit, Commercial Fish Ponds, Commercial Fishing, etc.);
- 2) use as live bait subject to restrictions imposed by the FWP Commission for the taking, transport and use of live baitfish (see "**Bait Regulations**" below); or
- 3) within the boundaries of the Eastern Fishing District. It is unlawful to possess or transport live fish, other than authorized baitfish, on roadways that form the boundary between the Eastern and Central fishing districts.

### Boat and Motor Restrictions

A complete, updated, copy of the Montana Boating Laws may be obtained by contacting any FWP office or any FWP license agent. All passengers under the age of 12 must wear a 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.

## Warm Water Game Fish Stamp

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed a bill to require the purchase of a warm water game fish stamp. The warm water game fish stamp is required to possess warm water fish on the following waters in the Eastern Fishing District:

- Anita Reservoir, Yellowstone Co.
- Arapooish Pond, Big Horn Co.
- Bailey Reservoir, Hill Co.
- Baker Lake, Fallon Co.
- Bearpaw Lake, Hill Co.
- Beaver Creek, Wibaux Co.
- Beaver Creek Reservoir, Hill Co.
- Box Elder Creek Reservoir, Sheridan Co.
- Castle Rock Lake, Rosebud Co.
- Catfish Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Conter's Bass Pond, Yellowstone Co.
- Cow Creek Reservoir, Blaine Co.
- Dry Fork Reservoir, Blaine Co.
- Engdahl Cottonwood Reservoir, Garfield Co.
- Ester Lake, Phillips Co.
- Fort Peck Reservoir
- Fort Peck Dredge Cut Pond, Valley Co.
- Fresno Reservoir, Hill Co.
- Gartside Lake, Richland Co.
- Haughian (Dan Haughian) Reservoir, Custer Co.
- Hollands Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Homestead Reservoir, Prairie Co.
- Hopalong Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Iliad Reservoir, Chouteau Co.
- Johnson Dam, Dawson Co.
- Lake Elmo, Yellowstone Co.
- Little Warm Reservoir, Phillips Co.
- Maier Reservoir, Fallon Co.
- Nelson Reservoir, Phillips Co.
- Payola Reservoir, Petroleum Co.
- Petrolia Reservoir, Petroleum Co.
- Schlesinger Reservoir #1, Rosebud Co.
- Schoonover Reservoir #1, Chouteau Co.
- Silvan Pond, Chouteau Co.
- Silvertip Reservoir, Prairie Co.
- South Fork Dry Blood Reservoir, Petroleum Co.
- South Sandstone Reservoir, Fallon Co.
- Talcott Pond, Carter Co.
- Tongue River Reservoir, Big Horn Co.
- Trumbo Pond, Garfield Co.
- Upper Wolf Coulee Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Wapiti Reservoir, Phillips Co.
- Warm Springs Creek, Fergus Co.

## Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows are considered lines for purposes of determining line limits.
- When multiple lines are allowed on a body of water, the maximum number of lines allowed shall not exceed the greater of either the attended lines or the setlines. For example, if an angler is snagging for paddlefish on the Yellowstone River (where the limit is 2 attended lines or 6 setlines), he/she may only have 4 setlines in use if he/she is using two attended lines, for a total of 6 lines.

### 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 below.

##### Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line. All lines must be attended and in the angler's immediate control unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines below.

#### 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 below.

##### Size of Hole

- There is no size limit for a hole used for ice fishing or with a spear.

##### Shelters

- Shelter definition/use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing.

- It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules.
- Shelter identification: Identification must be painted on or otherwise affixed to all unattended shelters in legible, 2-inch letters plainly visible at a distance of 100 feet. Identification must include the owner's name and address, name and phone number, or 9/10-digit ALS number. Attended shelters at Bearpaw Lake and Beaver Creek Reservoir must also be identified.
- Inspection: Each closed shelter shall have a door that an officer may readily open from the outside for inspection when it is occupied.
- 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.
- Shelter 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.

### 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 hrs.
- The fisherman's name and phone number or 9/10-digit ALS# must be attached to each line.
- Setlines shall not be attached to jugs or other floating devices.

### Bow and Arrow

All waters open to angling are open to taking paddlefish and nongame fish by bow and arrow. Crossbows are illegal.

### Nets and Traps

Landing nets may be used for landing hooked fish. See Bait Regulations for use of nets to harvest bait fish.

### 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.

### Snagging

All waters open to angling are open to snagging paddlefish (see special paddlefish regulations). Snagging chinook salmon is allowed on Fort Peck Reservoir only from October 1 through November 30. Snagging nongame fish is allowed on all open waters except on portions of the Missouri River and on portions of the Yellowstone River downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River, as specified under the District Exceptions.

### 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 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.
- Possession of live bait fish is prohibited on waters closed to using live bait.
- It is illegal to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.

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Continued from page 77

- Where live fish may be used as bait (see list below under Live Bait), legal nongame fish may be taken for use as bait in the following manner:
  - with hook and line; or
  - with seines no larger than 12 feet by 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).
- Legal nongame fish, except sculpins (genus *Cottus*) which must be killed prior to transport, may only be transported live:
  - to or from waters where live fish may be used as bait in the Central Fishing District, or
  - anywhere within the boundaries of the Eastern Fishing District.

*[Note: Sculpins (genus Cottus) may not be used for bait in the Western District.]*
- Landowner permission is required to capture live bait from privately owned ponds.
- See Commercial Fishing License requirements for information on commercial harvest permits.

### Dead Bait

- Nongame fish 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 flies and lures. 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, tiger muskellunge, walleye, or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- The eggs of char, cisco, grayling, salmon or trout may be used as bait. Parts/pieces of salmonids may not be used as bait.

### Live Bait

- Live bait fish may not be imported into Montana, except by permit for use in the Tongue River Reservoir. Bait fish collected in the Tongue River drainage of Wyoming may be imported under a permit issued by FWP. For a permit, contact the FWP Fisheries Division at Box 1630, Miles City MT 59301 or call (406)234-0900.
- 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. Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers and may be acquired from approved bait dealers in Montana. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale 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 that may be used as live bait in the Eastern District include all nongame species except black bullheads, bluegill, carp, goldfish, green sunfish, pumpkinseed, rainbow smelt, sculpins, stonecats and yellow bullheads.
- Live nongame fish may be used as bait only in the following waters:

### 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.

### Lakes, Reservoirs, Ponds and Impoundments

- Big Horn Co. - Tongue River Reservoir
- Blaine Co. - Cow Creek Reservoir, Dry Fork Reservoir, Lyons Reservoir, and all BLM reservoirs
- Carter Co. - Doug Gardner #2 Reservoir, Talcott Pond
- Custer Co. - Spotted Eagle Pond
- Daniels Co. - Whitetail Reservoir
- Dawson Co. - Johnson Reservoir, Lee (Sam) Reservoir, Lindsay Reservoir

- Fallon Co. - Baker Lake, South Sandstone Reservoir
- Fort Peck Reservoir
- Garfield Co. - Whiteside Reservoir
- Hill Co. - Beaver Creek Reservoir, Bailey Reservoir
- McCone Co. - Flat Lake, Hedstrom Reservoir
- Milk River impoundments downstream of Fresno Dam
- Petroleum Co. - Petrolia Reservoir
- Phillips Co. - Cole Ponds, Ester Reservoir, Frenchman Reservoir, Little Warm Reservoir, McChesney Reservoir, Nelson Reservoir, and all BLM reservoirs
- Richland Co. - Buxbaum West Reservoir, Gartside Reservoir, Kuester Reservoir
- Roosevelt Co.- Bainville Railroad Ponds
- Rosebud Co. - Castle Rock Lake, Schlesinger Perch Pond
- Sheridan Co. - Box Elder Reservoir, Engstrom Reservoir, Medicine Lake Nat. Wildlife Refuge, Raymond Reservoir
- Valley Co. - Fort Peck Dredge Cut Trout Pond, 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. - Lame Steer Reservoir
- Yellowstone Co. - Anita Reservoir

## Daily and Possession Limits

**Possession limit** means the number of fish that you may possess at any time in any form: fresh, stored in freezers or lockers, salted, smoked, dried, canned or otherwise preserved. It is illegal to preserve fish (salted, smoked, dried, canned, or otherwise preserved) before taking them to your permanent residence (the physical abode or structure you maintain as your principal, legal residence) unless those fish can be counted. Mobile recreational vehicles, travel trailers, tents or storage/freezer lockers do not qualify as permanent residences. No person may sell or take for the purpose of sale any fish except as authorized in commercial fishing regulations.

**Daily limit** means the number of fish you may legally take during a calendar day. It is unlawful to exceed the standard daily limit unless the regulations for the water body where you are fishing specify a different limit. "Legally taken" means fish caught and not immediately released alive. Where catch and release is allowed, fish released alive are considered not taken. A fish when landed and not immediately released becomes part of the daily limit of the person originally hooking the fish, even if the fish is donated to another person. If you receive fish from another angler, those fish also become part of your daily limit. You may possess the daily limit allowed only for the body of water on which you are fishing.

### Handling and 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.
  - For a species of fish where size limits apply, all fish in possession must be whole with head, skin, fins and tail attached. Gills and entrails may be removed.
- Fish may be dressed and filleted for immediate consumption.
- Fish may be dressed and filleted 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, grayling, char and whitefish): the entire skin must be attached to the fillet for identification.
  - Non-salmonids: a minimum of one inch by one inch square shoulder patch of skin with scales must remain attached to each fillet for identification.
  - In areas where it is necessary to distinguish between sauger and walleye, fish must be kept whole for identification while on the water (see District Exceptions). Gills and entrails may be removed. Sauger and walleye may be filleted unless size limits apply, only when you are off the water and done fishing for the day.

## Eastern District Standard and Daily 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.

Species	Daily and Possession Limits
<b>Trout</b>	
Brook trout	10 daily and in possession.
Combined Trout includes brown trout, rainbow trout, golden trout, and grayling	Lakes/Reservoirs: 5 daily and 10 in possession. Rivers/Streams: 5 daily and in possession.
Cutthroat trout	Lakes/Reservoirs: included in Combined Trout daily and possession Rivers/Streams: all cutthroat trout must be released immediately.
Lake trout	3 daily and in possession.
Bass	5 daily and in possession.
Burbot (ling)	5 daily and in possession.
Catfish	20 daily and in possession.
Crappie	15 daily and 30 in possession.
Northern pike	10 daily and in possession.
Paddlefish	maximum of 2, see page 86 for detailed regulations.
Pallid sturgeon	0 - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately.
Salmon (Kokanee & Chinook)	5 daily and 10 in possession.
Sauger/Walleye	5 daily and 10 in possession.
Shovelnose sturgeon	5 daily and in possession, none over 40 inches.
Tiger muskellunge	1 daily and in possession, must be over 40 inches.
Whitefish	100 daily and in possession.

### GENERAL FISHING SEASONS AND HOURS

#### Fishing Hours

- Fishing is allowed at all hours during open fishing seasons unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

#### Fishing Season: Lakes/Reservoirs and Rivers/Streams

- All waters open entire year unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.

## 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/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
BEARPAW LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
BEAVER CREEK RESERVOIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.</li> </ul>
BIGHORN RIVER entire river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Standard Regulations for transport requirements.</b></li> </ul>
FORT PECK DREDGE CUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line on open water.</li> </ul>
FORT PECK KIDS POND (near Downstream Campground)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.</li> </ul>
FORT PECK RESERVOIR Fort Peck Dam to Beauchamp Creek and CMR Trail 837	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Standard Regulations for transport requirements.</li> <li>• Spearing: in addition to the standard regulations, chinook salmon and lake trout may be taken by spear or gig December 1 through March 31.</li> </ul> </div>
HOME RUN POND (Glasgow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger only.</li> </ul>

Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
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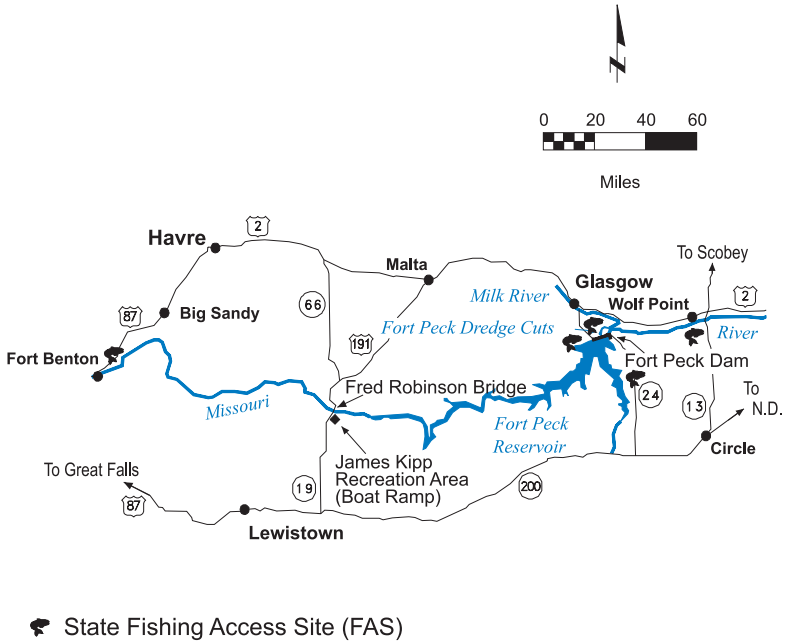
<b>MEDICINE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (Sheridan County)</b>	
all lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line during the applicable open season.</li> </ul>
Medicine Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open November 15 through September 15.</li> </ul>
Gaffney Lake and Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open August 15 through March 31.</li> </ul>
Lake 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open November 15 through March 31.</li> </ul>


<b>MISSOURI RIVER <a href="#">map page 83</a></b>	
entire river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: it is illegal to snag for nongame fish from Fort Benton downstream to the North Dakota border.</li> </ul>
upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddlefish: open entire year. See Eastern District standard regulations for limits and important information.</li> <li>• Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Standard Regulations for transport requirements.</li> </ul>
downstream from Fort Peck Dam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddlefish: open entire year or until closed by FWP. See Eastern District standard regulations for more information.</li> </ul>
Fort Peck Dam to the mouth of the Milk River (includes Dredge Cuts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 2 rainbow trout daily and in possession.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
downstream from Fort Peck Dam near Duck Island as posted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed from March 1 through July 31 to fishing and wading as posted.</li> </ul>

<b>ROSS RESERVOIR (Blaine County)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open third Saturday in May through November 30.</li> </ul>

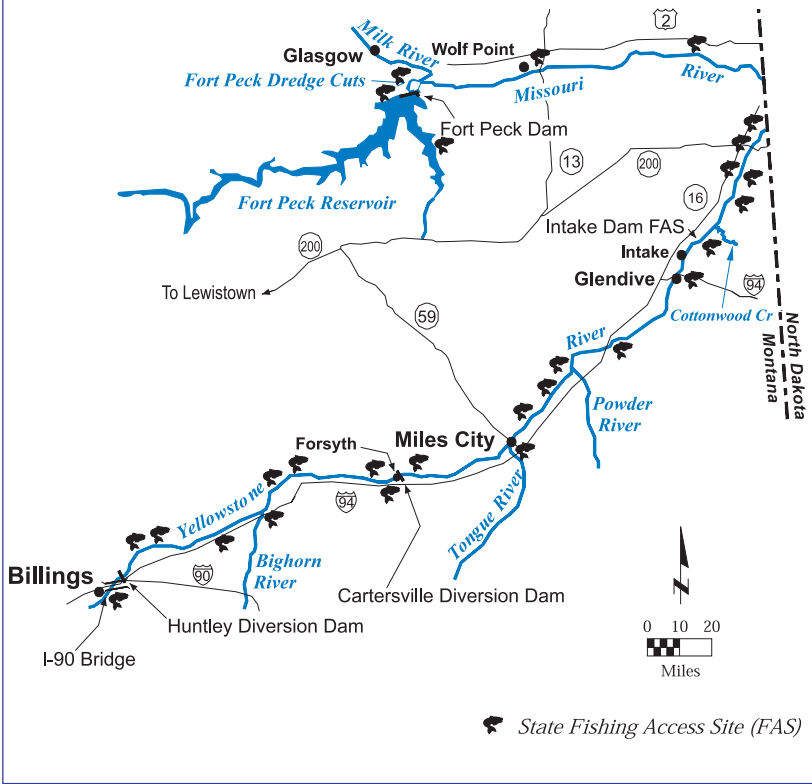
<b>TONGUE RIVER</b>	
12-Mile Dam Fishing Access Site (T&Y Dam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.</li> </ul>

# Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Dam



Waterbody/Description	Exceptions to Standard Regulations
TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crappie: 30 daily and 60 in possession.</li> <li>• Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line through the ice.</li> </ul>
WARM SPRINGS CREEK (Fergus County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.</li> </ul>
WIND CREEK (Blaine County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed entire year from Clear Creek road crossing to Ross Reservoir Dam.</li> </ul>
YELLOWSTONE RIVER <a href="#">map page 85</a>	
I-90 Bridge at Billings to the mouth of the Bighorn River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches, includes cutthroat trout.</li> </ul>
I-90 Bridge at Billings to Huntley Diversion Dam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook and Line: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.</li> </ul>
I-90 Bridge at Billings to Cartersville Diversion Dam at Forsyth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger. All fish must be kept whole, gills and entrails may be removed, until you are off the water and done fishing for the day. See Statewide Regulations for transport requirements.</li> </ul>
downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: open for paddlefish May 15 through June 30 or as posted if closed earlier. See Special Paddlefish Regulations for more information. It is illegal to snag for nongame fish.</li> </ul>
Intake Fishing Access Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snagging: open for paddlefish May 15 through June 30 or as posted if closed earlier. See Special Paddlefish Regulations for more information.</li> <li>• Paddlefish: all fish caught on Wednesdays and Sundays between 3 PM and 9 PM (Mountain Daylight Time) must be released. Anglers must show evidence of current year paddlefish tag to fish. Use of gaffs is prohibited during the catch-and-release periods.</li> <li>• Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.</li> </ul>
Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.</li> </ul>

# Yellowstone & Lower Missouri Rivers



## Special Paddlefish Regulations

### Daily and Possession Limits

- Not to exceed a total of 2 paddlefish per season per angler. Tags required.
  - 1 paddlefish for Yellowstone River or Missouri River downstream from Fort Peck Dam, (yellow tag required) or
  - up to 2 paddlefish for Missouri River upstream of Fort Peck Dam (one yellow tag and one white tag).
- Anglers who move from one fishing water to another may possess the limit of fish allowed for only the water on which they are currently fishing.
- The Montana nonprofit corporation designated to accept paddlefish egg donations for the caviar market is authorized to transport lawfully taken and tagged paddlefish donated by the angler in accordance with guidelines developed and implemented through the annual MOU. Paddlefish taken on the Yellowstone River between the Burlington Northern Railroad Bridge at Glendive and the North Dakota state line and donated by the angler at the Intake FAS or at the Sidney Bridge FAS are eligible for transport by designated individuals.

### General Paddlefish Regulations for ALL Areas

- All paddlefish anglers, regardless of age, must purchase the proper prerequisite conservation license, fishing license and paddlefish tags (see License Requirements). All licenses must be in the angler's immediate possession while fishing. It is illegal to loan tags or use another angler's tags.
- Each angler must cast for, hook and reel in his or her own paddlefish. It is unlawful for another person to do so.
- Any tag locked shut prior to attachment to a paddlefish shall be void and is not replaceable. Any altered or modified tag shall be void.
- It is unlawful to possess an untagged paddlefish or a part of one. If anglers cut up a paddlefish, they must keep the part of the back and dorsal fin (back fin) where the tag is attached and sealed to the fish.
- Tags must remain with processed fish until consumption.

### Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Dam

- Anglers must either tag or release a paddlefish immediately.
- Anglers must have a valid (unused) paddlefish tag to snag for paddlefish. Once the tag(s) has been validated, anglers may not snag for paddlefish.
- It is illegal to snag for nongame fish downstream from Fort Benton.

### Missouri River downstream from Fort Peck Dam and Yellowstone River

- The paddlefish fishery is managed under a harvest target in conjunction with North Dakota. Montana has set regulations so that annual harvest will not exceed 1000 fish. FWP may close the season within 48 hours notice in any year if it appears that the harvest target may otherwise be significantly exceeded. Call the Miles City FWP office at 406-234-0900 for current information on harvest status.
- Anglers must immediately tag paddlefish with their own tag.
- It is illegal to snag for non-game fish downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River.
- It is unlawful to release paddlefish except in accordance with the catch-and-release regulations on the Yellowstone River at the Intake Dam Fishing Access Site: all fish caught on Wednesdays and Sundays between 3 PM and 9 PM (Mountain Daylight Time) during the open paddlefish season must be released. Evidence of a current year paddlefish tag must be in possession.



### To Tag a Paddlefish—

- Cut a small hole in the base of the dorsal fin (see illustration).
- Insert the metal loop portion of the plastic self-locking tag through this hole and seal tag.
- The metal loop must penetrate the fish so as to make the plastic self-locking tag non-removable when tag is sealed.
- The plastic self-locking tag must be completely sealed so it cannot be reopened.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not seal your plastic self-locking tag prior to attachment to fish. They cannot be reopened and will be void if sealed prior to attachment. Voided self-locking tags cannot be replaced. Any fish not tagged in accordance with these instructions shall be considered to be untagged. You must have your conservation license and paddlefish tag(s) in your possession to fish for or/and take paddlefish.



## THANK YOU, ANGLERS AND MOTORBOATERS!

Every time you purchase a fishing rod, reel, tackle box, lure, fishing line, an electronic fish finder, or boat gasoline, you are financially assisting many fisheries programs and motorboat access in Montana. This support is in addition to what FWP receives when you purchase a fishing license.

In 1950, the U.S. Congress passed a bill creating the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program. The legislation, supported by conservationists, anglers, tackle manufacturers, and many others throughout the nation, was modeled after the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1939.

The Sport Fish Restoration Act created a 10 percent federal excise tax on certain fishing equipment, with proceeds to be used at the state level to improve sport fisheries. Sponsored by Senator Dingell from Michigan and Representative Johnson from Colorado, the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program came to be known as the "Dingell-Johnson" Act.

In 1984, Congress passed significant amendments to the bill, adding motorboat fuel, fish finders and other products to the list of taxed goods. These amendments more than tripled the funding for state sport fisheries programs. Sponsored by Senator Wallop from Wyoming and then-Representative Breaux from Louisiana, the Federal Aid program is now referred to as "Wallop-Breaux" or "W-B". Amendments have added more money and provided for more motor boat project funding.

The "user pay" concept is very important: as a condition of receiving the Federal Aid funds, states cannot use their state license dollars for any purpose other than sport fisheries or wildlife management. The penalty for "diverting" license dollars to other uses is severe — any state doing so would lose its Federal Aid funds! This is one reason why state legislatures have not used license dollars to fund other government functions.

Forty percent of the funds collected each year are allocated to states based on the land and water area of the state, and sixty percent is based on the number of people who have purchased one or more fishing licenses. So, FWP receives about \$5 in Federal Aid funds per paid fishing license holder, which currently amounts to over \$5 million a year. Since 1952, Montana has received more than \$110 million in Sport Fish Restoration funds.

Most of FWP's field biologists performing fisheries management work are funded with Sport Fish Restoration funds. Most of Montana's fish hatchery personnel, along with many of the major hatchery renovation projects, are also funded with Federal Aid. Other important projects include aquatic education, research, habitat protection, and angler surveys. In addition, over 130 Fishing Access Sites throughout Montana have been maintained, improved, or originally purchased with Federal Aid. So far, 14 of Montana's water-based State Parks and many of the Fishing Access Sites have been improved or maintained with Federal Aid motorboat access funds.

So, remember, each time you purchase that rod, reel, or other piece of fishing equipment, or put gas in your boat, you are contributing toward the conservation of sport fisheries in Montana.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, FWP joins the U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex (in educational programs). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility please write to FWP, Personnel Office, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620 or to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Diversity and Civil Rights-External Programs, 4040 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203.

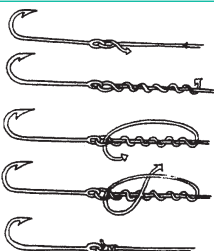
## MONTANA FISH RECORDS

For a complete list of Montana fish records, please visit the FWP Web Page at [www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov), call 406-444-3188, or email: [lkarwaski@mt.gov](mailto:lkarwaski@mt.gov). 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 official is present. Measure the length.
- Contact the nearest FWP office to have the fish positively identified and to determine if it is a state record.

**Note: Native fish are highlighted in blue. Records as of March 4, 2005**

FISH	LENGTH	WEIGHT	DATE	SITE	ANGLER
Arctic Grayling	20"	3.63 lbs.	6/28/03	Washtub Lake	Glenn Owens
Black Bullhead	15.5"	2.33 lbs.	4/4/94	Lower Flathead River	D. Zemple, Jr.
Black Crappie	16.7"	3.13 lbs.	1973	Tongue River Reservoir	Al Elser
Bluegill	11"	2.64 lbs.	6/3/83	Peterson's Stock Dam	Brent Fladmo
Brook Trout		9.06 lbs.	1940	Lower Two Medicine Lk	John R. Cook
Brown Trout		29 lbs.	1966	Wade Lake	E.H. Bacon
Bull Trout	37"	25.63 lbs.	1916		James Hyer
Burbot	39"	17.08 lbs.	4/18/89	Missouri River, Wolf Pt	Jeff E. Iwen
Channel Catfish	34.2"	27.17 lbs.	4/26/98	Castle Rock Lake	Ed Ellertson
Chinook Salmon	38"	31.13 lbs.	10/2/91	F Peck Reservoir, Dam	Carl L. Niles
Cisco	17.25"	1.75 lbs.	5/19/01	Below Ft Peck Pwrhouse	C. Zimmerman
Coho Salmon	25.5"	4.88 lbs.	5/29/73	Ft Peck Reservoir, Dam	Irven F. Stohl
Common Carp	38"	40.2 lbs.	5/24/98	Nelson Reservoir	Jared S. Albus
Cutthroat Trout		16 lbs.	1955	Red Eagle Lake	Wm. D. Sands
Golden Trout	23.5"	5.43 lbs.	7/16/00	Cave Lake	Mike Malixi
Goldeye		3.18 lbs.	7/4/00	Nelson Reservoir	Don Nevriyv
Green Sunfish	8.6"	0.56 lbs.	6/19/91	Castle Rock Reservoir	Roger Fliger
Kokanee Salmon	25 1/8"	7.52 lbs	7/24/01	Hauser Lake	Deed DeGolier
Lake Trout	42"	42.69 lbs.	6/23/04	Flathead Lake	Ruth Barber
Lake Whitefish	26 3/8"	10.08 lbs.	6/24/95	Lower St. Mary Lake	Theo Hamby
Largemouth Bass	22"	8.29 lbs.	6/11/99	Many Lakes	Adam Nelson
Mountain Whitefish	21.14"	5.09 lbs.	9/15/87	Kootenai River, Dam	M. Fenimore
Northern Pike		37.5 lbs.	1972	Tongue River Reservoir	Lance Moyer
North. Pikeminnow	27 1/8"	7.88 lbs.	5/28/91	Noxon Rapids Reservoir	D. Torgrimson
Paddlefish	6'5"	142.5 lbs.	5/20/73	Missouri River, Kipp Park	L. Branstetter
Pallid Sturgeon		60 lbs.	5/13/79	Lower Yellowstone River	Gene Sattler
Rainbow Trout	38.62"	33.1 lbs.	8/11/97	Kootenai River	J. Housel Jr.
Sauger	28.2"	8.805 lbs.	12/12/94	Fort Peck Reservoir	Gene Moore
Shovelnose Sturgeon	39.5"	13.72 lbs.	4/19/86	Missouri River, Virgelle	Sidney Storm
Smallmouth Bass	21"	6.66 lbs.	7/30/02	Fort Peck Reservoir	Mike Otten
Tiger Muskellunge	45.25"	27 lbs.	10/2/94	Lebo Lake	Dan Dupea
Walleye	31.5"	16.63 lbs.	1/21/00	Fort Peck Reservoir	Danny Spence
White Bass	16.25"	2.25 lbs.	9/23/98	Missouri River	V. Pacovsky
White Crappie	18.5"	3.68 lbs.	5/10/96	Tongue River	Gene Bassett
White Sturgeon		96 lbs.	1968	Kootenai River	Herb Stout
Yellow Bullhead	11.8"	0.93 lbs.	5/24/98	Tongue River Reservoir	Carl Radonski
Yellow Perch	14.5"	2.37 lbs.	3/31/88	Ashley Lake	Vernon Schmid



### Modified Clinch Knot

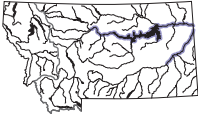
1. Put the end of the line through the eye of the hook and bring it back toward the line.
2. Make five "S" twists around the line.
3. Take the end back toward the hook and push it through the first loop nearest the eye.
4. Bring the end back through the big loop.
5. Hold the hook and the line, pull the knot tight until it looks like the knot shown.

# Native Fish

## Pallid Sturgeon

*Species of Special Concern*

▲ *This is an endangered Species listed under the Endangered Species Act*

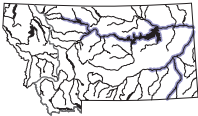


Average Size: 60"



## Shovelnose Sturgeon

*This fish is easily confused with the Pallid Sturgeon*

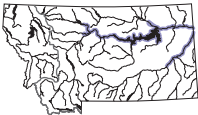


Average Size: 20"-32"

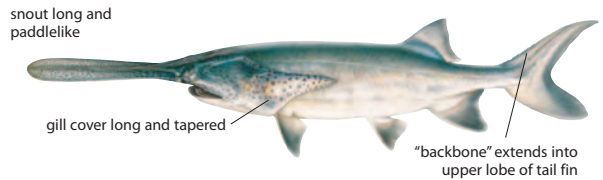


## Paddlefish

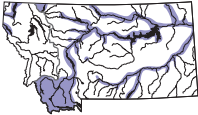
*Species of Special Concern*



Average Size: 55"-65"



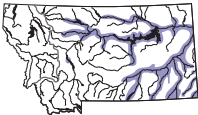
## Burbot



Average Size: 16"-24"



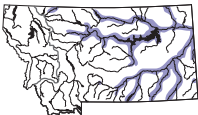
## Channel Catfish



Average Size: 14"-20"



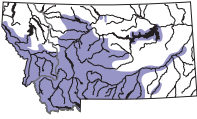
## Sauger



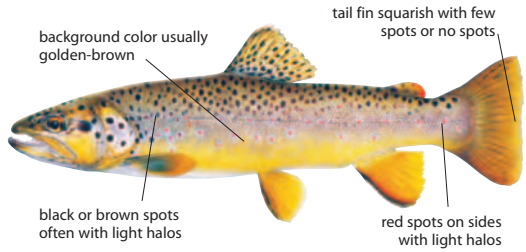
Average Size: 10"-16"



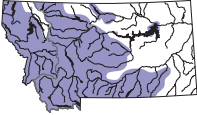
## Brown Trout



Average Size: 12"–16"

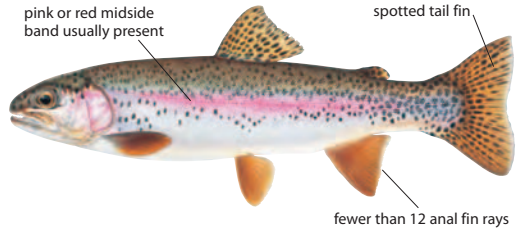


## Rainbow Trout

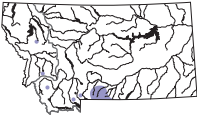


Note: Native populations of Interior Redband trout exist in localized waters of northwestern Montana.

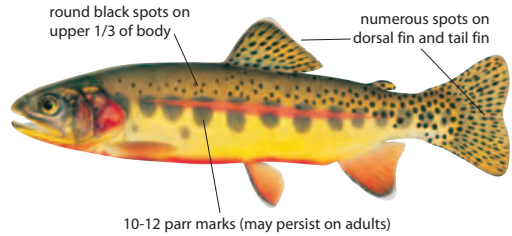
Average Size: 8"–16"



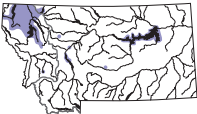
## Golden Trout



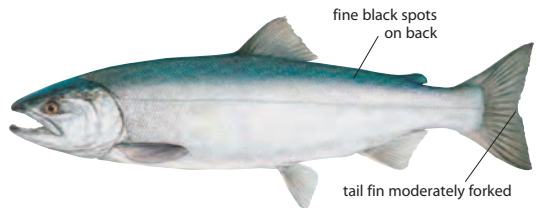
Average Size: 6"–12"



## Kokanee



Average Size: 8"–16"



## Kokanee— spawning male



# 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 and on next two pages):

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 8).
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 one sauger 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.

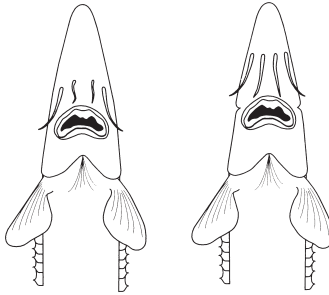
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## Know the difference between pallid and shovelnose sturgeon:

### 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

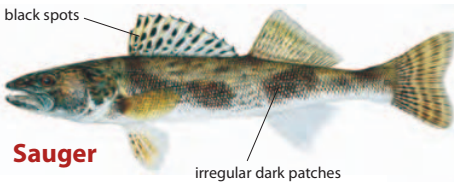
Outer barbels barely longer than inner barbels.

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

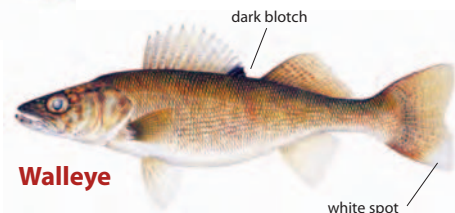
The pallid sturgeon is a fish of special concern in Montana and it is listed as an Endangered Species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Pallids are a bottom-dwelling fish of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, preferring strong currents flowing over a sandy or gravelly river bottom. Learn to distinguish 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.

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## Know the difference between sauger and walleye:



**Sauger**



**Walleye**

**PROFILE**

**Arctic Grayling**

*Thymallus arcticus*



The Arctic grayling is a member of the trout family best known for its large, iridescent and sail-like dorsal fin. Montana's Arctic grayling inhabited the Missouri River drainage for more than 10,000 years but today's last remaining population of this unique native fish exists only in the Big Hole River in southwestern Montana. FWP, with help from landowners, anglers, local communities and others, works to conserve Arctic grayling in the Big Hole River and to establish other river-dwelling populations in Montana. For more information, visit FWP's website at [fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/concern/grayling.html](http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/concern/grayling.html). For catch-and-release techniques to further help protect Arctic grayling, see page 8.

For more information on-line, visit: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fieldguide>, and click on "fish"



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

**2006 GENERAL FISHING SEASON**

	<b>Rivers and Streams</b>	<b>Lakes and Reservoirs</b>
<b>Western District and Central District</b>	Open third Saturday in May through November 30, unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	Open all year
<b>Eastern District</b>	Open all year	

- Fishing is allowed at all hours during open fishing seasons unless otherwise specified in District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.
- Fishing regulations valid March 1, 2006 – February 28, 2007