2012

MONTANA
FISHING REGULATIONS

Photo by G. Allen Hay

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

For details on how to use these regulations, see page 2

fwp.mt.gov/fishing

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 9).

BULL TROUT are frequently mistaken for brook trout, lake trout or brown trout (see pictures below):

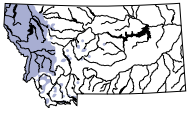
1. Look for white edges on the front of the lower fins. If yes– it may be a bull trout.
2. Check the shape of the tail. Bull trout have only a slightly forked tail compared to the lake trout's deeply forked tail.
3. Is the dorsal (top) fin a clear olive color with no black spots or dark wavy lines? If yes—the fish is a bull trout. Carefully release bull trout (see page 9).

MONTANA LAW REQUIRES:

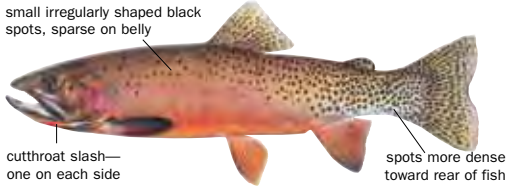
- All bull trout must be released immediately in Montana unless authorized. See Western District regulations.
- Cutthroat trout must be released immediately in many Montana waters. Check the district standard regulations and exceptions to know where you can harvest cutthroat trout.

Native Fish

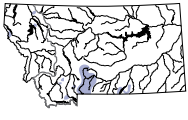
Westslope Cutthroat Trout — *Species of Special Concern*



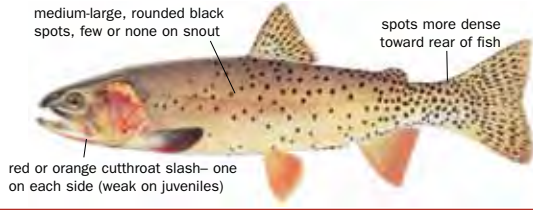
Average Size: 6"–12"



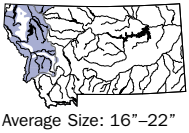
Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout — *Species of Special Concern*



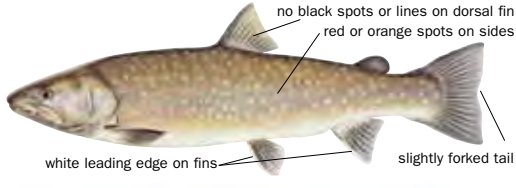
Average Size: 6"–12"



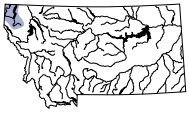
Bull Trout — *A Threatened Species listed under the Endangered Species Act*



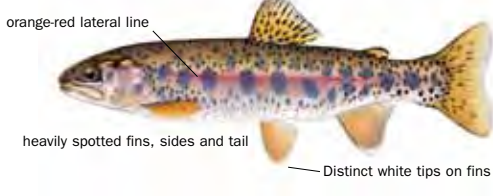
Average Size: 16"–22"



Columbia River Redband Trout — *Species of Species of Special Concern*

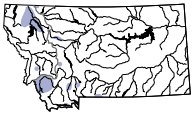


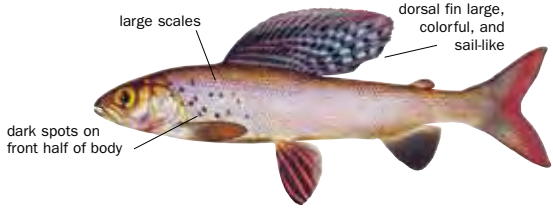
Average Size: 6"–10"



Arctic Grayling

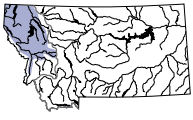
Species of Special Concern





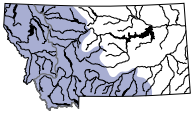
Average Size: 6”-12”

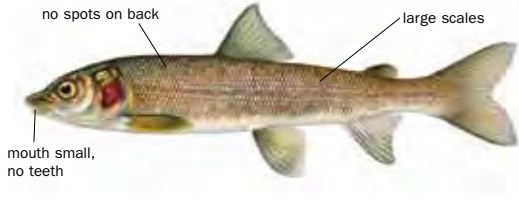
Northern Pikeminnow



Average Size: 7”–14”

Mountain Whitefish

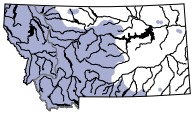


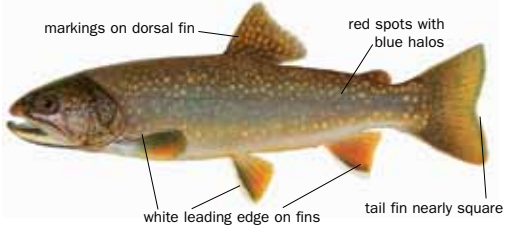


Average Size: 6”–12”

Non-Native Fish

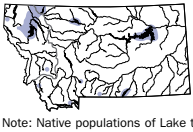
Brook Trout



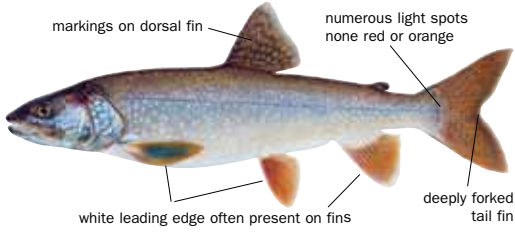


Average Size: 6”–12”

Lake Trout

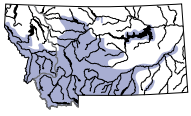


Note: Native populations of Lake trout exist in a few isolated waters of southwestern Montana.

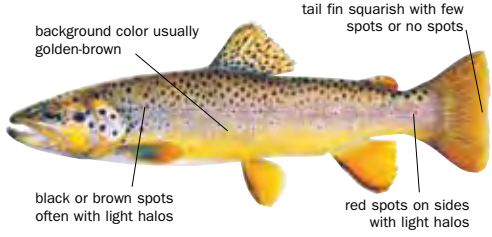


Average Size: 14”–20”

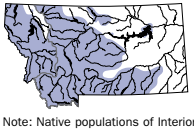
Brown Trout



Average Size: 12”–16”

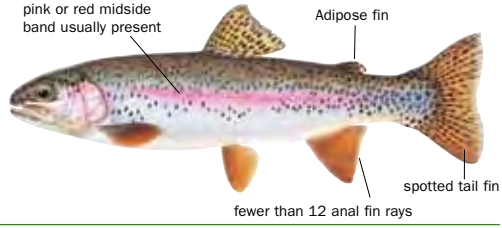


Rainbow Trout

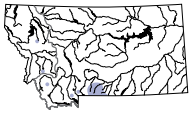


Note: Native populations of Interior Redband trout exist in localized waters of northwestern Montana.

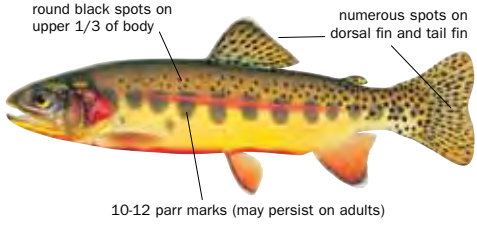
Average Size: 8”–16”



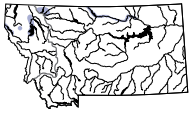
Golden Trout



Average Size: 6”–12”

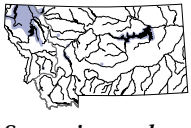


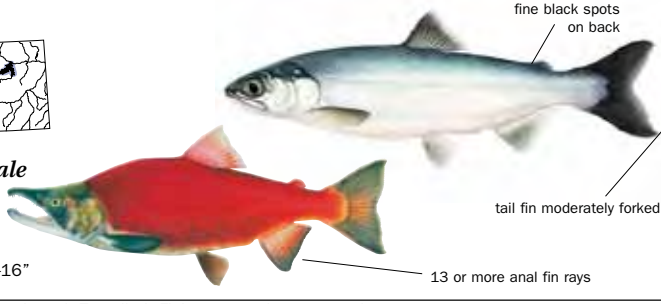
Lake Whitefish



Average Size: 19”–27”

Kokanee



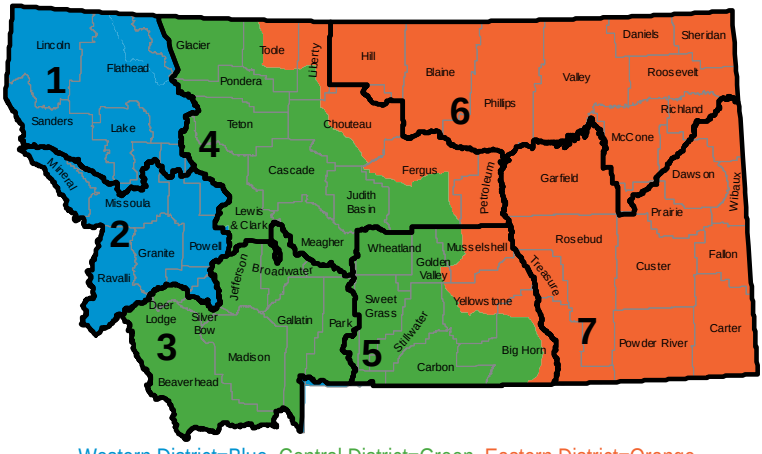


Spawning male

Average Size: 8”–16”

Fish illustrations by Joseph Tomelleri. Fish are not shown to scale.
Species of Special Concern: see definitions.

FWP Administrative Regions with Fishing Districts in Color



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

Contact FWP

TELEPHONE DEVICE FOR THE DEAF – 406-444-1200

STATE HEADQUARTERS
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1420 East 6th Avenue
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
406-444-2535
FAX: 406-444-4952

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

INTERNET—fwp.mt.gov
A variety of information is available from FWP's award winning World Wide website. Fishing, Hunting, State Parks, Recreation, Wild Things, Habitat, Education, Montana Outdoors magazine and Inside FWP are just a few of the areas filled with helpful information. The site also provides links to various agencies, organizations, and news and weather services.

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 website, 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 2012 fishing season (a fishing season runs from March 1 through the following February). These regulations were adopted by the Commission on October 13, 2011 and will be valid March 1, 2012 through the end of February 2013. The FWP Commission may formally adopt changes to these fishing regulations, including emergency regulations/closures or corrections. Any changes to these regulations for the 2012 season will appear in an addendum sheet available at all Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) offices and from FWP license agents, and on the FWP website. Emergency regulations/closures are posted at access sites. Anglers must obtain an addendum sheet to make sure they are in compliance with fishing regulations.

How To Use These Regulations

Follow these easy steps:

1) Read the first 18 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 17
   CENTRAL FISHING DISTRICT – page 44
   EASTERN FISHING DISTRICT – page 74

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

   EXAMPLE:

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

   - **Eastern District Standard Regulations:** Pages 74 to 83 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.
   - **Eastern District Exceptions to Standard Regulations:** Page 85 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.
3) If you don't find the water you are looking for listed in the district exceptions, use the standard regulations for the district you are fishing in. If you don't find a species you are looking for in the exceptions for your water, use the standard regulations for the district.
4) ***New or changed 2012 regulations are displayed in bold italics.***

Or: Check the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) website at **fwp.mt.gov**.

Subject Index

A
Aquatic Invertebrates....6
Artificial Lures....14

B
Bait Regulations....20, 48, 78
Beaverhead River Map....53
Beaver Ponds....18, 45, 75
Big Hole River Map....55
Bighorn River Map....56
Bitterroot River Map....25
Blackfoot River Map....26
Boating and Motor Restrictions....12
Bow and Arrow....19, 47, 77

C
Catch–And–Release Angling....9
Central Fishing District....44
Children's Fishing Waters....9
Clark Fork River Map....28
Clinch Knot....73
Closed Waters....18, 45, 75

D
Dam Closures....18, 45, 75
Definitions....14
Disposal of Fish....10

E
Eastern Fishing District....74
Exceptions to Standard Regulations....23, 51, 84

F
Federal Wildlife Refuges....10
Fish Consumption Advisory....13
Fishing Hours....21, 49, 80
Fishing Knots....73
Float Fishing....10
Future Fisheries Program....13
FWP Foundation....73

G
General Information for Anglers....8

H
Hook and Line Limits....19, 46, 76
Hoop Nets....7,15, 77

I
Ice Fishing....19, 46, 76
Ice Fishing Shelter....77
Illegal Introductions....11
Indian Reservations....11, 18
Irrigation Canals and Ditches....18, 45, 75

L
Licenses and Fees....4-6

M
Madison River Map....63
Missouri River Map....65
Missouri River Upstream from Fort Peck Dam Map....85
Montana Fishing Access Sites....43
Montana Fish Records....88
Montana FWP Foundation....73

N
Nets and Traps....20, 47, 77

O
Off–Highway Vehicles....10

P
Paddlefish....5, 80-82
Permits....6-7
Private Fish Ponds....7

R
River Etiquette....8

S
Seasons and Fishing Hours....21, 49, 80
Setlines....19, 47, 77
Smith River Map....69
Snagging....20, 47, 77
Spearing....20, 47, 77
Special Fishing Licenses....5
Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines....13
Sport Fish Restoration....73
Standard Daily and Possession Limits....22, 50, 83
Standard Fishing Regulations....18, 45, 75, 76
State Fish Records....88
Stream Access Law....8

T
Tagged Fish....10, 80-82
Transporting Live Fish....18, 45, 76
Trespass Law....8

W
Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area Map....41
Warm Water Game Fish Stamp....5
Western Fishing District....17
Wilderness Limits....22

Y
Yellowstone & Lower Missouri Rivers Map....86
Yellowstone River Map....72

Important Regulation Changes For 2012

Western District		Central District
Bitterroot River Buffalohead Pond Dry Bridge Pond Eureka Pond Flathead River Frenchtown Pond Georgetown Lake German Gulch Kootenai River Lake Koocanusa Lake Mary Ronan	Little Bitterroot Lake Ninepipes Pond Pine Grove Pond Racetrack Pond Rock Creek Shady Lane Pond Silverbow Creek and Tributaries Swan Lake Swan River Troy Pond Warm Springs Creek	Beaverhead River Bighorn Lake and Afterbay Reservoir Clacrk Canyon Reservoir Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir Missouri River Rock Creek Reservoirs Yellowstone River **Eastern District** Boxelder Reservoir Tongue River Tongue River Reservoir

License/Permit Requirements

Purchase your fishing license, hunting license(s) and special drawing items online https://app.mt.gov/Als/index

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. *You must have your fishing license in your possession while fishing.*

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.

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 IF 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 licensed 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	
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 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 include a season fishing license.
62+	Conservation License Only	

Resident Licenses

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

Special Fishing Licenses

Warm Water Game Fish Stamp

Beginning with the 2012 license year, a Warm Water Game Fish Stamp is no longer required to fish in certain designated waters. Money collected through sales of the stamp were used for the operation, maintenance and personnel costs of the Fort Peck multi-species fish hatchery. There are still two other ways to voluntarily contribute money to help cover the costs of the hatchery and support efforts to improve warm water fish habitat: 1) the Warm Water Fort Peck Donation; and 2) the Warm Water Fish Habitat Contribution. Both require a $5 minimum contribution, and the Fort Peck Donation has the extra stipulation that donations must be made in $5 increments. To make donations, visit the FWP licensing website https://app.mt.gov/Als/index or through an FWP license provider.

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 one tag (one fish) 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. Anglers may select only one of the following areas: A) Lake Koocanusa, or B) Hungry Horse Reservoir and South Fork Flathead River. Swan Lake is open to angling for bull trout without a special permit. All other waters are closed to intentional angling for bull trout year around.

Catch Cards are free of charge and are available at the FWP Region One office in Kalispell. Applications for a catch card are available at the FWP Region One office or online at 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.

Montana Resident With Disability

Montana FWP seeks to ensure that its programs, services and activities are accessible to persons with disabilities. Montana FWP provides many representative recreational opportunities. To learn more or to request modifications or accommodations relative to a disability, contact the FWP Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, Shelley Juvan, at 406-444-2602.

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

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 residing at VA Hospitals and residents of State institutions, except the State penitentiary. These free permits are available on-site at the VA hospital or State institution.

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. Available only at FWP offices.

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

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.

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

Other Permit Requirements and Laws

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 lands 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.

Aquatic Invertebrates - Crayfish/Mussels
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 or mussels is prohibited.

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, Fisher River, Kootenai River, 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.

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

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.

Bait Fish Seining: Commercial Harvest, $10 Fee
- Contact regional FWP offices for a Bait Fish Seining License and a list of waters open to commercial seining: $10 fee per year.
- A bait fish seining license is required:
  - For persons 15 years of age and older to seine for and transport bait fish for commercial purposes in Montana;
  - For any person who seines for and has in his/her possession more than 24 dozen non-game bait fish.
- Non-game 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 for more information.

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

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

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

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

Koi and goldfish ponds must be registered with FWP. Registration forms are available online at **http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/regulations/koiGoldfishPondRegistrationForm.html** or from all FWP offices. There is no fee for registering a pond.

Unattended Fishing Devices
Any unattended fishing device (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or ALS# attached to it.

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.

...continued on next page

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 on page 16).

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.

FWP recommends that anglers 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 give them the right to enter private lands bordering those streams or to cross private lands to gain access to streams without landowner permission. FWP recommends that recreationists obtain landowner permission to cross private land to access a stream. Complete rules are available at any FWP office.

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.

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.

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). One rod allowed per child.

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.

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.
- Set the hook quickly to avoid deep hooking the fish. If the fish is deeply hooked and must be released by regulation, cut the line inside the mouth opening. Do not yank the hook out, as some fish will survive with hooks in them. Anglers should strongly consider keeping fish deeply-hooked in the throat or gills if allowed by regulations on that waterbody.
- Release the fish only after it has gained its equilibrium. If necessary, gently hold the fish upright in the current facing upstream and move it slowly back and forth.
- Release the fish in quiet water close to the area where it was hooked.

Lake/Reservoir fishing from boats:

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

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

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

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).

Measuring Fish

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

Tagged Fish

It is legal to harvest a radio tagged fish, however, the radio tag must be returned to FWP. If you catch a tagged fish, please report the following information to any 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.

Fishing Log Program

If you fish regularly in Montana, help us gather fishing information by keeping a fishing log. Call, write or email for a Fishing Log. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Fisheries Division, PO Box 200701, Helena, Montana 59620-0701; email requests to fwpfsh@mt.gov; 406-444-7815. Include your name, address and phone number with all requests.

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.

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.

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.
- The State of Montana and the Fort Peck Tribes have entered into a cooperative agreement on the Fort Peck Reservation. A tribal permit is required to fish on waters within the exterior boundary of the reservation. Call tribal headquarters at 406-768-5305 for information.
- A State of Montana fishing license is required to fish on the Bighorn River within the exterior boundaries of the Crow Reservation. A tribal permit is not required.

Natural Shorelines are Good for Fishing

By keeping shorelines natural, you can help protect water quality and improve fish habitat. A shoreline without trees and shrubs can get washed away, making the water muddy and unsuitable for fish. If you live near a lake or a river, plant a buffer strip along the water's edge using trees, shrubs, wildflowers or other native plants. Trees and other vegetation filter pollution and provide shade, shelter, habitat, and food critical for bass, trout, and other fish to thrive and reproduce. Keep your favorite fishing spots well vegetated! For more tips and information, visit http://water.epa.gov/type/lakes/index.cfm

Good Fishing Depends on Clean Water

Many of our rivers, lakes, and coastal areas are experiencing algae blooms that cover our favorite fishing spots with green slime and cause fish kills and "dead zones" where no aquatic life can survive. The cause is usually nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that comes from farm and lawn fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste, and sewage treatment plants. Everyone can do their part for clean water by reducing fertilizer use, preserving plants along shorelines, and picking up pet waste. Supporting water quality protection supports great fishing! Learn more at: www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/.

STOP! Aquatic Hitchhikers & Illegal Introductions

Our fisheries are under attack by invasive creatures. These exotic species are not native to Montana, and cause damage by threatening the diversity and abundance of native species, and disrupting the ecological stability of our aquatic habitats. For more information on aquatic hitchhikers and illegal introductions, contact your local FWP office.

Illegal Introductions: FWP has documented over 500 illegal fish introductions. Introduced fish, aquatic invertebrates (insects, crayfish, etc.) and noxious weeds pose a threat to our valuable natural fish and aquatic resources. These introduced species:

- compete with native or other desired species for food and space;
- interbreed with established species or disrupt spawning;
- carry and spread diseases and parasites;
- reduce overall fishing opportunity;
- increase the need for special fishing regulations; and
- increase the cost of fish management and hatchery operations.

It is unlawful to:

- move live fish, aquatic invertebrates or plants from one body of water to another without FWP authorization;
- use parts of trout, salmon or whitefish for bait; and
- release any live aquarium fish or bait fish.

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 (jet skis, water bikes, etc. that use a motor or engine to power a water jet pump as the primary source of propulsion and that is designed to be operated by a person standing or kneeling on the vessel) 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.

Sailboats 12 feet long and longer, and all motorboats and personal watercraft must be registered and numbered. Non-motorized sailboats less than 12 feet long and manually propelled boats, regardless of length, are exempt from registration and taxation. Also exempt are a vessel's lifeboat, government-owned boats, and 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. 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 (DPHHS) has issued advisories for the consumption of fish from certain Montana waters. Fish from some Montana waters contain levels of chemicals that may be especially harmful to young children, nursing mothers, and childbearing women or persons frequently consuming fish. Information, advice and additional details about fish consumption is available from the DPHHS, telephone 406-444-5306. 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 website at:

http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/Food-consumer/pdf/fish2005.pdf

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

General Guidelines to Reduce Your Health Risk

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

The following waterbodies contain fish species with consumption advisories. More detailed information is available on the FWP website:

http://fwp.mt.gov/fwpDoc.html?id=28187

Alder Gulch	East Fork Reservoir	Lake Frances	Noxon Rapids Reservoir
Bair Reservoir	Flathead Lake	Lake Koocanusa Lake	Petrolia Reservoir
Big Spring Creek	Flint Creek	Mary Ronan	Seeley Lake
Bighorn Lake and Afterbay Reservoir	Fort Peck Reservoir	Lake McDonald	Silver Creek
Bynum Reservoir	Fred Burr Creek	Leigh Lake	South Sandstone Reservoir
Cabinet Gorge Reservoir	Fresno Reservoir	Lower Stillwater Lake	St. Mary Lake
Canyon Ferry Reservoir	Georgetown Lake	Madison River	Swan Lake
Castlerock Lake	Hauser Reservoir	Martinsdale Reservoir	Thompson Falls Reservoir
Clark Canyon Reservoir	Hebgen Reservoir	Medicine Lake NWR	Tongue River Reservoir
Clark Fork River	Holter Reservoir	Missouri River	Upper Cold Lake
Clear Lake	Island Lake	Mystic Lake	Upper Two Medicine
Cooney Reservoir	Lake Elwell aka Tiber Reservoir	Nelson Reservoir	Waterton Lakes
Crystal Lake		Ninepipes Pond	Whitefish Lake

Future Fisheries Program

For the last 15 years, FWP's Future Fisheries Improvement Program has provided funding to restore rivers, streams and lakes to improve and protect Montana's wild fish habitats. About $650,000 are available each year for habitat projects that revitalize wild fish populations. Any entity with a good habitat project that would benefit Montana's wild fish will be considered for funding. Applications are considered twice a year and are due December 1 and June 1. An independent review panel reviews program applications and recommends funding to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission for final decisions. Future Fisheries applications and additional information about the program can be found on FWP's webpage:

http://fwp.mt.gov/habitat/futureFisheries

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 man-made 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 with/without a pole held in hand or under immediate control. When used through the ice, the angler need not be in immediate control but must be in the vicinity and in visual contact with the line.

CALENDAR DAY

A 24-hour period from midnight to midnight.

DAILY LIMIT

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

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

FLOAT FISHING

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

FLOAT OUTFITTING

Means the operation of any boat or vessel for the commercial purpose of float fishing by a fishing outfitter or fishing guide.

GAFF

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

GAME FISH

All species of the family Salmonidae (trout, salmon, 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.

HOOP NET

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

LEGALLY TAKEN

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

LENGTH

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

LIVE BAIT

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.

NOODLING

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

PERMANENT RESIDENCE

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

POSSESSION LIMIT

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

RESERVOIR

A body of water artificially impounded behind a man-made dam that extends upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s) or river. Reservoirs do not include waters incidentally impounded on a stream or river by a structure such as a check dam for irrigation, a headgate to divert water for irrigation, or similar structures.

.....*continued on page 16*

Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. An imaginary line connecting the reservoir shoreline across the mouth of the stream marks the boundary between reservoir and stream/river, and the boundary will move as reservoir levels change. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks. Stream regulations apply upstream from the mouth on the reservoir and often are managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations.

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, 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 (also see Reservoir definition).

THREATENED SPECIES

Species that may become endangered within the foreseeable future without conservation measures.

TRIBUTARY

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

VESSEL

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

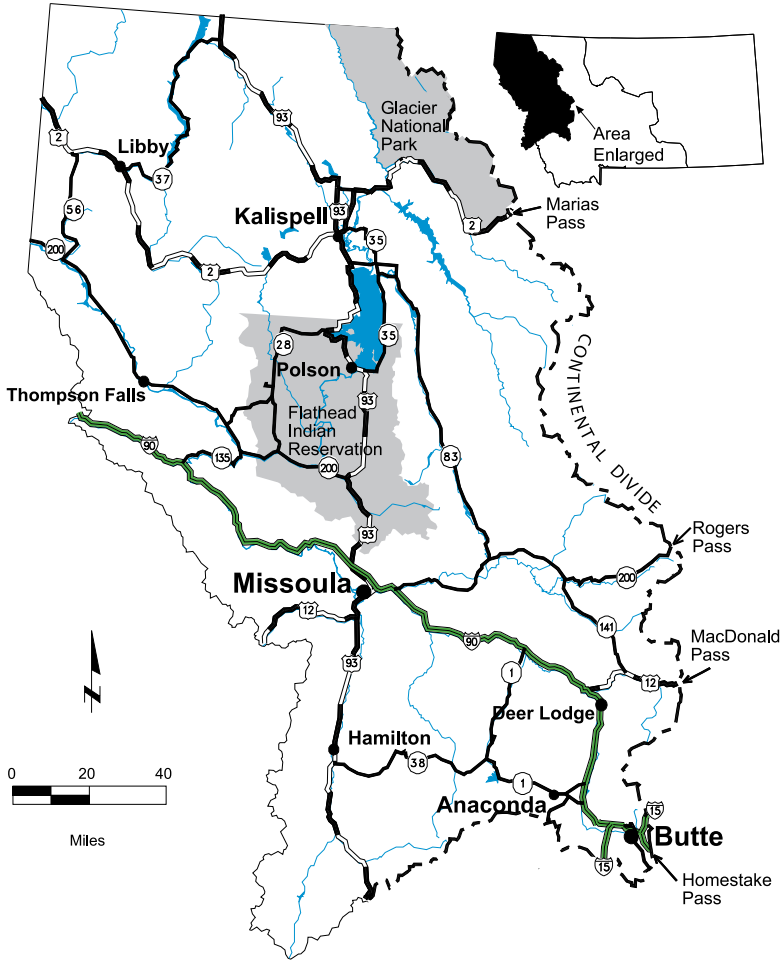
WARM WATER GAME FISH

Largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, sauger, black crappie, white crappie, channel catfish, yellow perch, northern pike, pallid sturgeon, paddlefish and tiger muskie.

WASTE OF FISH OR GAME

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

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), 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 exceptions to standard regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers/streams.

Reservoirs
Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. An imaginary line connecting the reservoir shoreline across the mouth of the stream marks the boundary between reservoir and stream/river, and the boundary will move as reservoir levels change. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks. Stream regulations apply upstream from the mouth of the reservoir and often are managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations.

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 personal floatation device (PFD) at all times when the boat is in motion if the boat is less than 26 feet long. A wearable, U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD must be available for each occupant of any boat.

Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows count as lines for purposes of determining line limits.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and ALS# attached.

Hook and Line Limits

Open Water

Rivers and Streams

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

Lakes and Reservoirs

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

Ice Fishing

Lakes and Reservoirs

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

Size of Hole

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

Shelters - It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules:

- Definition/use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing.
- 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.
- Removal: Daily removal of shelters is required on:
  Browns Lake (near Ovando)
  Echo Lake (near Anaconda)
  Georgetown Lake
- 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

- 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 non-game fish, except as otherwise noted under District Exceptions.

Spearing

- All waters are closed to spearing of game and non-game 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.
- Non-game 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 commercial harvest permits.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and ALS# attached.

Dead Bait

- Non-game 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 lures only. 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 bait may not be imported into Montana without authorization from FWP.
- 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. 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.

General Regulations

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 immediately 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.
- 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 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.

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.

Enough is Enough!

Help Protect Montana's Fisheries ...

Turn In Poachers by calling TIP-MONT – 1-800-847-6668

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
TROUT	**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 5. 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	Lakes/Reservoirs: 5 daily and 10 in possession, only 1 over 22 inches and in possession. Rivers/Streams: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.
	Combined Trout in Bob Marshall Complex Wilderness Areas[1] and **South Fork Flathead** includes rainbow trout, grayling and cutthroat trout	Lakes/Reservoirs: 3 daily and in possession, no size limit. Rivers/Streams: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches. [1]Applies to all rivers, streams and lakes 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 District Exceptions.
	Cutthroat trout	Lakes/Reservoirs: 3 daily and in possession, no size limit. Rivers/Streams: 3 daily and in possession, none over 10 inches.
	Lake trout	10 daily and in possession.
	Bass	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.
	Burbot (ling)	5 daily and in possession.
	Kokanee salmon	20 daily and 40 in possession.
	Northern pike	15 daily and in possession.
	White sturgeon	0 - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately. All waters are closed to angling for white sturgeon.
	Whitefish	20 daily and 40 in possession.

2012 GENERAL FISHING SEASON		
	Rivers and Streams	Lakes and Reservoirs
Western District	Open third Saturday in May through November 30, unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	Open all year

If you don't find the water you are looking for listed in the district exceptions, use the standard regulations for the district you are fishing in.

Western District Exceptions To Standard Regulations

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

ABBOT LAKE

- 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.

ALICE 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.

ANACONDA SETTLING POND SYSTEM

- See Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area.

ASHLEY LAKE

Entire lake

- Salmon: 35 daily and 70 in possession.

Inlet tributaries

- Closed entire year.

BASIN CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to East Fork Yaak River)

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

BEAR CREEK (tributary to Middle Fork Flathead River)

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

BEAVER 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.

BELMONT 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 mouth.

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

- Closed entire year.

Mouth of Big Creek

- Angling is closed within 150-yard radius of the stream mouth June 1 through September 30 unless posted at a greater distance.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BITTERROOT LAKE (see Little Bitterroot Lake)

BITTERROOT RIVER (note: river flows south to north)

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.

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

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

West Fork Bitterroot River downstream from Painted Rocks Dam

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

East Fork Bitterroot River downstream from Star Falls

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

Bitterroot River from confluence of East and West Forks to Woodside Bridge

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

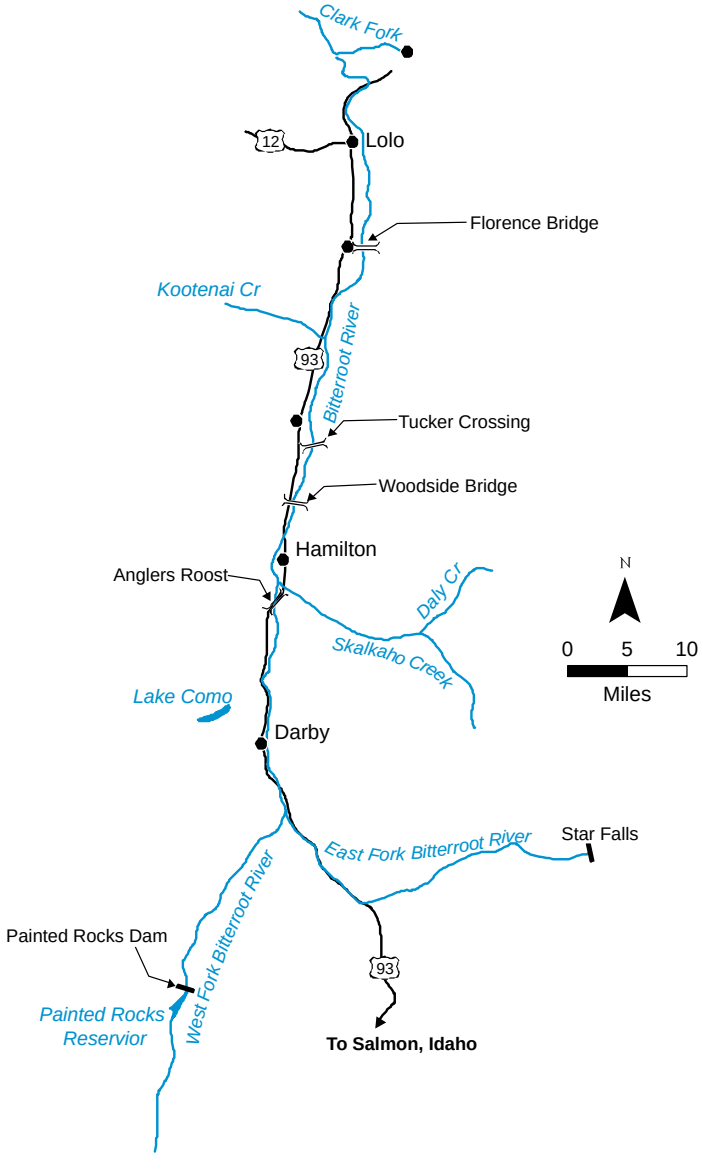
Woodside Bridge to Florence Bridge

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

Florence Bridge to mouth of Bitterroot River

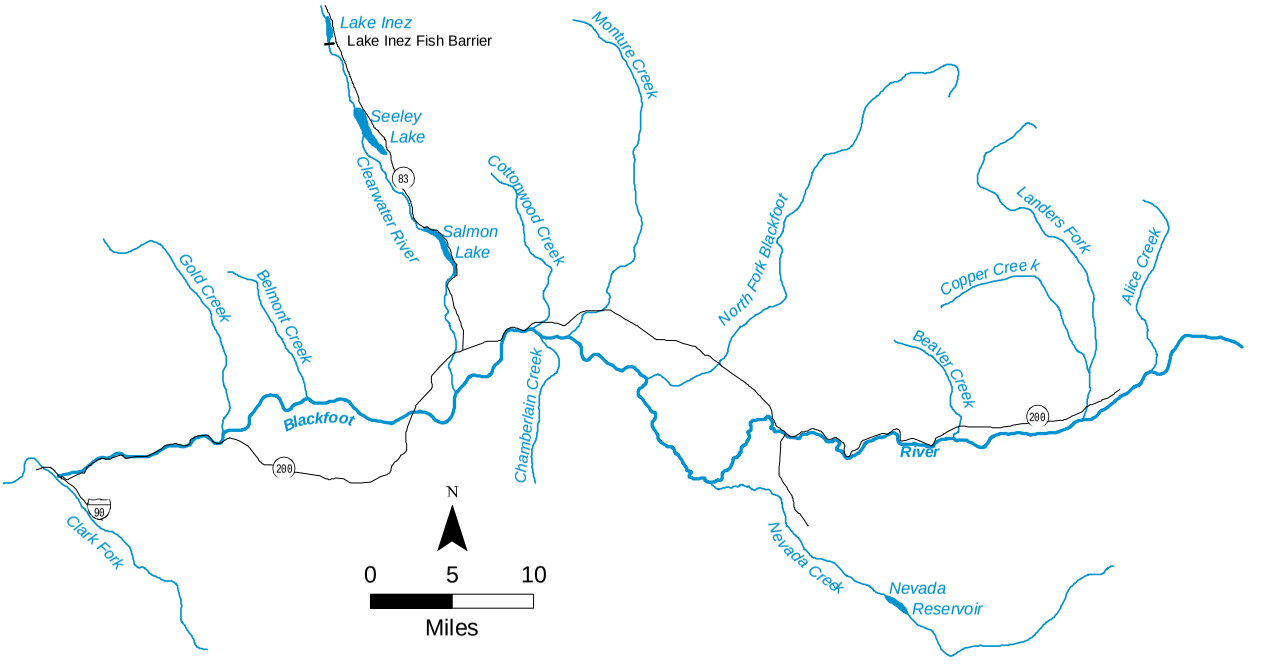
- Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.

Bitterroot River



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

Blackfoot River



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BLACKFOOT RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

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

- Closed to fishing from the confluence with the Clark Fork River to about 1 1/2 miles upstream, as posted.
- Catch-and-release for brook trout. (This regulation is a result of bull trout being misidentified and harvested as brook trout. Brook trout are very rare in this section of river whereas bull trout are common.)

BLANCHARD LAKE (near Whitefish)

- Northern pike: 5 daily and in possession, 4 less than 28 inches and 1 greater than 36 inches.
- Bass: 1 daily and in possession, must be over 22 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.

BUFFALOHEAD POND

- ***Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 5 trout daily, 10 in possession.***

CEDAR CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)

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

CHAMBERLAIN CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)

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

CHURCH SLOUGH

- 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.
- Hook and Line: 2 rods and/or lines with up to 2 hooks per line all year.

CIBID LAKE

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

CLARENCE CREEK (near Eureka)

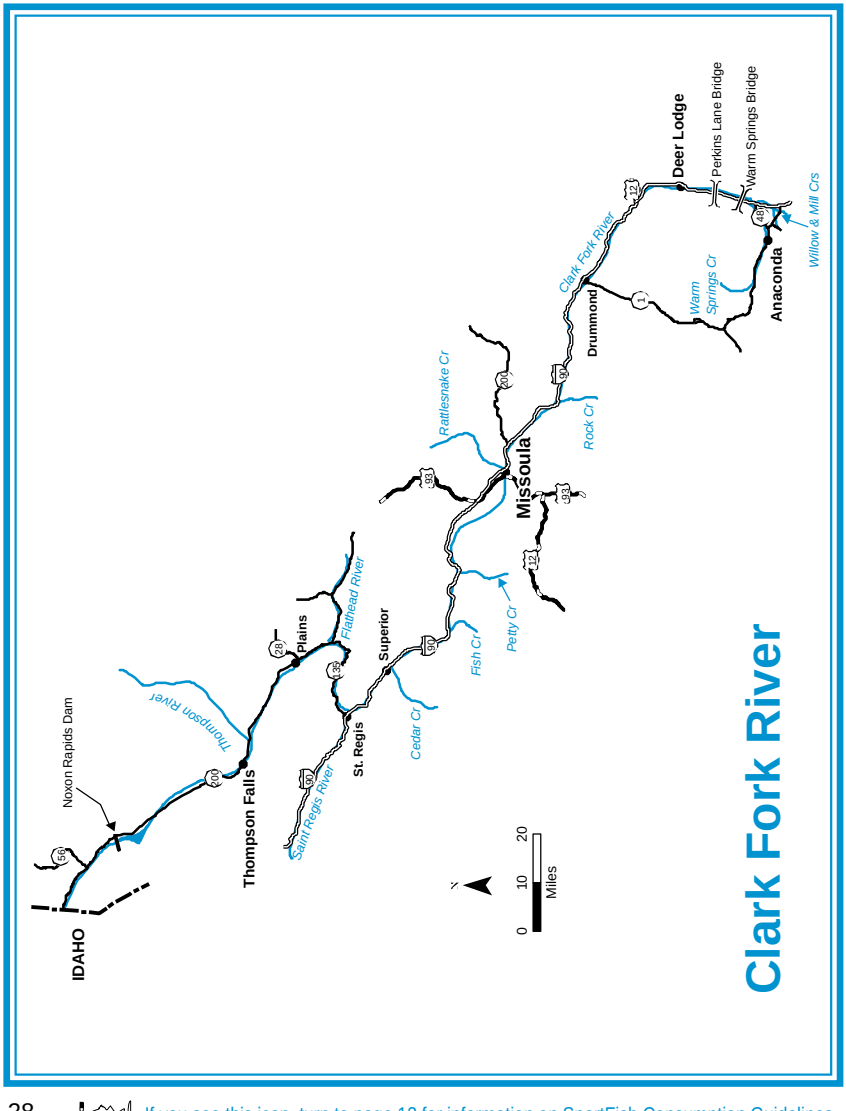
- Closed entire year.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

CLARK FORK RIVER

Upstream from Perkins Lane Bridge, near Warm Springs

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



If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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

- Closed to fishing from about 2 1/2 miles upstream from the confluence of the Blackfoot River to about 1/2 mile downstream, as posted.
- 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.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.
- Northern pike: no limit.
- 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.

Mouth of Flathead River to mouth of Thompson River

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Whitefish: open entire year with maggots or lures.
- Northern pike: open entire year with bait or lures.

Mouth of Thompson River to Idaho Border

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and 10 in possession, only 1 over 22 inches.
- Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, no size limit.
- Hook and Line: 2 lines with up to 2 hooks per line all year.

CLEARWATER RIVER DRAINAGE

Clearwater River upstream from Lake Inez Fish Barrier and all tributaries of the Clearwater River except the West Fork and Marshall Creek

- Closed to fishing from Rainey Lake fish barrier downstream for 100 yards.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Catch-and-release for bass.
- Northern Pike: no limit.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.

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

- Closed to fishing from Lake Inez fish barrier downstream for 100 yards.
- 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 cutthroat trout.
- Catch-and-release for bass.
- 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.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard 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.
- Artificial lures only, including within a 100-yard radius of the mouth.
- 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.

DALY CREEK (tributary to Skalkaho Creek)

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

DRY BRIDGE POND

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

DRY CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)

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

DUNHAM CREEK (tributary to Monture Creek, Blackfoot drainage)

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

ECHO LAKE (near Anaconda)

- Open third Saturday in May through March 31.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, includes brook trout.

ECHO LAKE (near Bigfork)

- 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.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only, daily limit of 2.

ELK CREEK (tributary to Swan River)

- Closed entire year.

EMILY SPRINGS (tributary to Georgetown Lake)

- Closed entire year.

EUREKA POND

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

FENNON SLOUGH

- 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.
- Hook and Line: 2 rods and/or lines with up to 2 hooks per line all year.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

FISH CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Clark Fork River drainage)

Entire drainage

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

Mainstem downstream of the confluence of the South and West forks

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout in any combination daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.

FISHTRAP CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Thompson River drainage)

Excluding Fish Trap Lake

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

FLATHEAD LAKE

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Whitefish: 100 daily and in possession.
- Lake trout: 100 daily and in possession, only 1 over 36 inches, and all fish 30 to 36 inches must be released.
- 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 (near Blankenship Bridge) downstream to Flathead Lake

- Extended season for whitefish and lake trout, and catch-and-release for other game fish, except northern pike, from December 1 through the third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only. From the mouth of the Stillwater River downstream to Flathead Lake, no maggots and no scented artificial liures (infused, saturated or applied).
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Northern pike: extended season for northern pike from December 1 through February 28, artificial lures only.
- Whitefish: 100 daily and in possession.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Lake trout: 15 daily and in possession.

Flathead Indian Reservation boundary to mouth

- Open entire year.
- ***Bass: Open entire year, 5 daily and in possession, no size limit.***

FLATHEAD RIVER SLOUGHS

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

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 22 inches.
- Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, no size limit.
- Hook and Line: 2 rods and/or lines with up to 2 hooks per line all year.

Church and Fennon

- 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 3rd 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 third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

FRANK LAKE

Northwest 1/4 of the lake, as posted

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout from March 15 to May 1.

FRED BURR LAKE (Granite County)

Philipsburg water supply

- Closed entire year.

FRENCHTOWN POND

- ***Catch-and-release for bass.***

GEORGETOWN LAKE

- Open third Saturday in May through March 31, except for the South and East shoreline area which is only open July 1 through March 31. South and East shorelines area described as follows: all waters from the shore or within 100 yards of shore in the area extending from a point 200 yards west of Denton's Point Marina (along the shore, including all of Stuart Mill Bay) to a point 200 yards north from the mouth of North Fork Flint Creek.
- Salmon: no daily or possession limit.
- Combined Trout, includes brook trout: 5 daily and in possession, of which no more than 2 may be brook trout.

Tributaries to Georgetown Lake (Hardtla, North Fork Flint, and Stuart Mill creeks)

- Open July 1 through November 30.
- Catch-and-release for brook trout.
- ***Emily Springs: Closed entire year.***

GERMAN GULCH

Mainstem and tributaries

- ***Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout***

GOAT CREEK (tributary to Swan River)

- Closed entire year.

GOLD CREEK (tributary to Blackfoot River)

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

GRANITE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)

- Closed entire year.

GRAVE CREEK (near Eureka)

- Snagging: open for salmon from Highway 93 bridge downstream to mouth September 15 through November 30. Standard limits apply.

HARDTLA CREEK (tributary to Georgetown Lake)

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

HEIRONYMOUS POND

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, includes cutthroat trout and brook trout.

HERRIG CREEK (tributary to Little Bitterroot Lake)

- Closed entire year.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

HOLLAND CREEK

Mouth on Holland Lake upstream to the Falls

- Closed entire year.

HORSESHOE LAKE (near Ferndale)

- Catch-and-release for bass.

HORSESHOE LAKE (Thompson Chain of Lakes)

- Tiger muskellunge: 1 daily and in possession, must be over 40 inches.

HUNGRY HORSE RESERVOIR

Dam to Crossover Boat Ramp

- 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 with a Hungry Horse/South Fork Flathead permit validation on fishing license. A Hungry **Horse/South Fork Flathead Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout**. See 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.
- Combined Trout: Western District Wilderness Limits apply.

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

- ***As per the District Standard, the Kootenai River is closed to angling for bull trout; any bull trout caught must be immediately released.***

Libby Dam to Highway 37 Bridge, near Fisher River

- Open June 1 through ***February 28.***
- ***Combined Trout: 1 daily and in possession, 28 inch minimum length.***

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 only 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/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

LAKE CREEK (near Troy)

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

LAKE INEZ

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

LAKE KOOCANUSA

- Closed to burbot (ling) fishing January 15 to March 1.
- Salmon: 50 daily and 100 in possession.
- ***Rainbow trout: Adipose clipped fish less than 22 inches must be released (see location of adipose fin on the rainbow trout color plate at the front of this booklet).***
- Bull trout: ***Catch-and-release only.*** 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. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

LAKE MARY RONAN

- Open March 1 to third Saturday in May: yellow perch only.
- Open third Saturday in May through the end of February.
- Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Bass: open third Saturday in May through June 30: only 1 over 22 inches. Open July 1 through the end of February: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 12 inches. Closed March 1 to the third Saturday in May.

LANDERS FORK (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.

LION CREEK (tributary to Swan River)

- Closed entire year.

Mouth of Lion Creek

- ***Closed to angling June 1 through September 30 within a 150-yard radius of the stream mouth, unless posted at a greater distance.***

LITTLE BITTERROOT LAKE aka Bitterroot Lake

- ***Salmon: 20 daily and 40 in possession, no more than 2 daily and 4 in possession over 12 inches.***

LITTLE BLACKFOOT RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

Mainstem river

- Extended whitefish season 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.

Tributaries

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

LODGEPOLE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)

- Closed entire year.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

LONG CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (Middle Fork Flathead River drainage)

- Closed entire year.

LOON LAKE (near Ferndale)

- Combined Trout: 4 less than 12 inches and only 1 over 22 inches daily and in possession.

LOST LAKE (Eureka)

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

LOWER STILLWATER LAKE

- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.

LOWER THOMPSON LAKE

- Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.

MARSHALL CREEK (tributary to West Fork Clearwater River)

- Artificial lures only.

McCormick Pond aka Silver's Lagoon (Missoula)

- Open April 1 through October 30.
- 3 fish daily and in possession, any species.
- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger.

MEDICINE LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES (near Philipsburg)

Lake

- Open July 1 through April 30.

Tributaries to lake

- Open July 1 through November 30.

MIDDLE FORK FLATHEAD RIVER DRAINAGE

All streams within the wilderness

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches in rivers and streams, no size limit in lakes. Includes rainbow trout, cutthroat trout and grayling.

Non-wilderness portion

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Closed to angling June 1 through September 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Bear Creek stream mouth.
- Extended whitefish season 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.
- Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the ordinary high water mark on the park side of the river.

MIDDLE THOMPSON LAKE

- Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.

MILL CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)

Downstream from the Stewart Street Bridge in Opportunity

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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, including within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

MORRELL CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (tributary to Clearwater River)

Entire drainage

- Artificial lures only.

Mainstem from Cottonwood Lakes Road (USFS Rd 477) bridge upstream to Pyramid Pass Road (USFS Rd 4381) bridge

- Closed entire year.

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.

NINEPIPES POND

- ***Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 5 trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches. A Flathead Indian Tribal Permit is required to fish on Ninepipes Pond.***

NORTH FORK BLACKFOOT RIVER (tributary to Blackfoot River)

Entire river

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

Downstream from the North Fork Falls

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

NORTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- ***Closed to angling June 1 through September 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Big Creek stream mouth unless posted at a greater distance.***
- 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.
- 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

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.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

PETERSON LAKE

- 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.

PETTY CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

PINE GROVE POND

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

PLACID CREEK (tributary to Placid Lake)

- Salmon: 5 daily and 10 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike.
- Snagging: open for salmon October 15 through December 31, 20 salmon daily and 40 in possession.

PLACID LAKE

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

RACETRACK POND

- ***Catch-and-release for trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 3 trout daily and in possession.***

RATTLESNAKE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (near Missoula)

Entire river

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.
- Artificial lures only, including within 100-yard radius of mouth.

Downstream from the mouth of Beeskove Creek

- Closed to fishing from the mouth of Beeskove Creek to 100 yards downstream of Mountain Water Company Dam.

ROCK CREEK (near Missoula)

From the confluence of the East and West forks, near Phillipsburg, to the mouth

- 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 brown trout daily and in possession. Catch-and-release for rainbow trout and cutthroat trout.
- Artificial lures only, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may use bait during the general season.
- Closed to fishing from boats/vessels July 1 through November 30.

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.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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.

SHADY LANE POND

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

SILVERBOW CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES

Mainstem and Tributaries

- ***Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout***

SILVER'S LAGOON aka McCormick Pond (Missoula)

- Open April 1 through October 30.
- 3 fish daily and in possession, any species.
- Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age and younger.

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, no size limit in lakes. 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 July 31. A Hungry Horse/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.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

ST REGIS RIVER

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout in any combination daily and in possession, none over 15 inches.
- Artificial lures only within 100-yard radius of the mouth.

STILLWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES (Flathead River drainage)

- Open entire year from mouth of Sunday Creek to lower Stillwater Lake.

STUART MILL CREEK (tributary to Georgetown Lake)

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

SWAN LAKE

- Bull trout: ***Catch-and-release only.*** All bull trout must be released immediately. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

SWAN RIVER

- ***Closed to angling June 1 through September 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Woodward Creek and Lion Creek stream mouths, unless posted at a greater distance.***

Piper Creek Bridge downstream to Swan Lake

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

Swan Lake downstream to the Highway 35 Bridge

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

TALLY LAKE

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

THOMPSON RIVER

Entire river

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

Upstream from mouth of Little Thompson River

- Closed to fishing December 1 to third Saturday in May.

Mouth of Little Thompson River to the confluence with the Clark Fork 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.

TOBACCO RIVER

- Snagging: open for salmon September 15 through November 30. Standard limits apply.

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

- Closed entire year downstream from mouth of Thoma Creek.

TROUT CREEK (tributary to Clark Fork River)

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

TROY POND

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

UPPER STILLWATER LAKE

- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.

UPPER THOMPSON LAKE

- Salmon: 10 daily and 20 in possession.
- Spearing: open for northern pike through the ice only.

UPSATA LAKE

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

WARM SPRINGS CREEK (near Anaconda)

- Open entire year on Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area (WMA). See Warm Springs WMA for additional regulations.
- Open from the third Saturday in May through November 30 outside the Warm Springs WMA.
- ***Extended season downstream of Meyers Dam: catch-and-release for trout December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures only.***

WARM SPRINGS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (WMA)

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

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

Gravel Pit Pond adjacent to Highway 48

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

Hog Hole

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

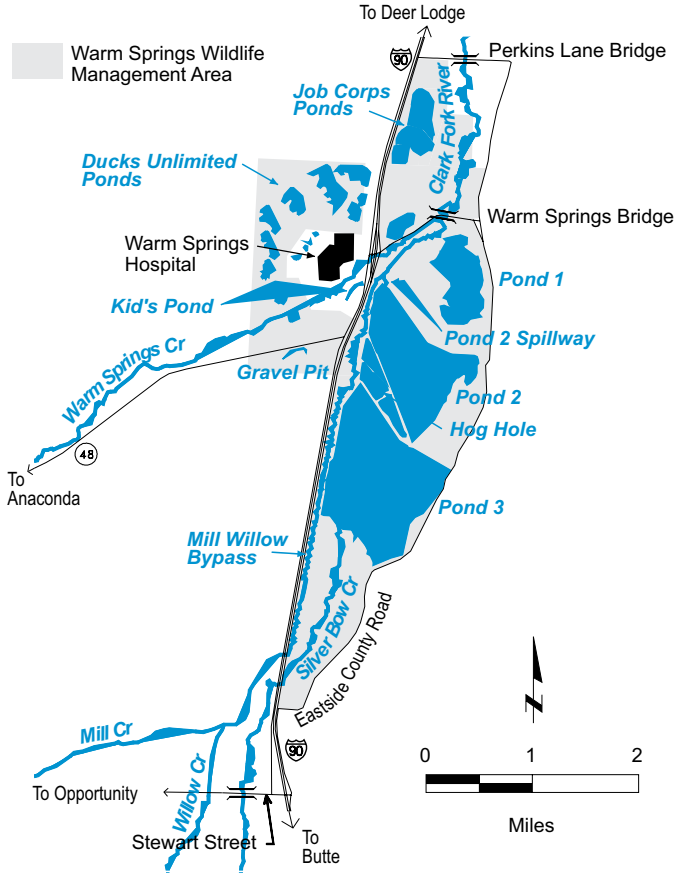
Pond 3

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

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

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

Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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 only.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Combined Trout: 3 rainbow or brown trout daily and in possession, any size.

WEST FORK CLEARWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

Entire drainage

- Artificial lures only.

West Fork Clearwater River upstream of confluence with Marshall Creek

- Closed entire year.

WEST FORK QUARTZ CREEK (Kootenai River drainage)

- Open third Saturday in May through July 15.

WEST FORK THOMPSON RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

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

WHALE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES (North Fork Flathead River drainage)

- Closed entire year downstream from Whale Creek Falls.

WHITEFISH LAKE

- Lake trout: 20 daily and in possession, only 1 over 36 inches. All fish 30 to 36 inches must be released.

WHITEFISH RIVER

- Open entire year from Whitefish Lake to State Highway 40 Bridge.

WILLOW CREEK (near Warm Springs)

From Stewart Street Bridge to the Warm Springs WMA

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

WOODWARD CREEK

- Closed to angling within a 150-yard radius of the stream mouth June 1 through September 30, unless posted at a greater distance.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Montana Fishing Access Sites

Nearly every angler in Montana has a favorite fishing access site. With over 300 fishing access sites to choose from across the state, anglers enjoy good access to the state's blue ribbon streams and rivers, lakes and reservoirs. You may download a field guide to fishing access sites located on Montana's streams, rivers, and lakes, or you may use the interactive Montana Fishing Guide at **fwp.mt.gov/fishing/guide** to find a fishing access site.

The field guide describes 328 Fishing Access Sites (FASs) located on Montana's streams, rivers, and lakes that vary in size from less than one acre to several hundred acres. All Fishing Access Sites available to the public as of July 1, 2011 are included. New sites are added to the FAS program each year. These sites will be added to the next reprinting of this brochure. Montana's FAS Program provides public access to high quality waters for angling, boating, rafting, and other recreation opportunities. In addition, FAS's are often popular areas for hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, bird watching, picnicking, etc. The funding to purchase, develop, and maintain these important sites comes from the sale of sportsman's licenses, state motorboat registration fees, and federal Sport Fish Restoration fees.

Fees

There are no day use fees for Montana's FAS program; however, where overnight camping is allowed, a camping fee may be charged. The revenue from the camping fees is used to offset the additional expenses involved in operating and maintaining these higher use sites.

Commercial Use

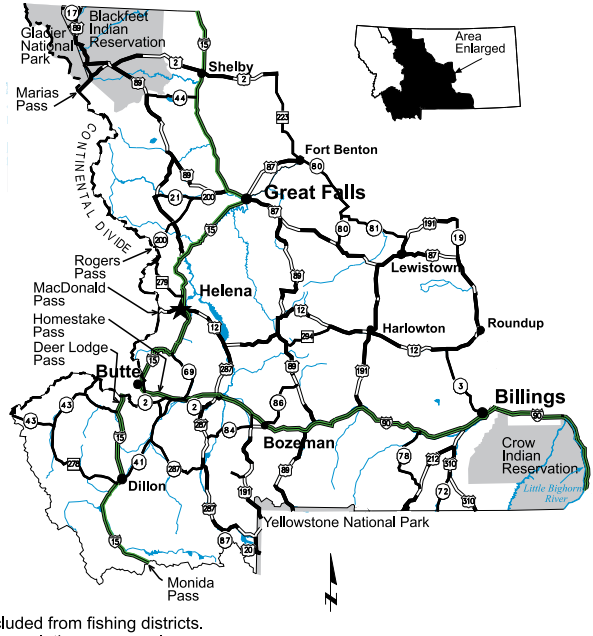
A permit is required to conduct commercial activities at fishing access sites. Please contact the Regional FWP administrative office or the FWP website for more information.

Camping

Many of the FASs are managed as day use only, but camping is allowed at 103 locations. An overnight camping fee is charged at many of the sites.

- FASs are primitive or semi-primitive sites. They do not have electricity, running water, or dump stations. Not all sites are designed for access by larger recreational vehicles. It may be necessary to physically inspect the facility before pulling in if the parking area is not visible from the access road.
- Additional camping opportunities with higher levels of development are available at Montana's state parks and at other locations throughout the state. Please refer to the State Parks brochure for a list of state parks with campgrounds.

Central Fishing District



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

0 20 40
Miles

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 (Telephone device for the deaf) 406-444-1200

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 (Bighorn County)
Yellowtail Afterbay Dam (Bighorn 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 exceptions to standard regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers/streams.

Reservoirs

Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. An imaginary line connecting the reservoir shoreline across the mouth of the stream marks the boundary between reservoir and stream/river, and the boundary will move as reservoir levels change. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks. Stream regulations apply upstream from the mouth on the reservoir and often are managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations.

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 providers. 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.

Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows are counted as 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.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and ALS# attached.

Hook and Line Limits

Open Water

Rivers and Streams

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

Lakes and Reservoirs

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

Ice Fishing

Lakes and Reservoirs

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

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.

Help Protect Montana's Fisheries ...
Turn In Poachers by calling TIP-MONT – 1-800-847-6668

Shelters - It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules:

- Definition/use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing.
- 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.
- Daily Removal: Daily removal of shelters is required on:
  - Fitzpatrick Lake
  - Deadmans Basin
  - Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir
- Sunrise-Sunset Removal: 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.
- 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 angler's name and phone number or name and 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 non-game fish with bow and arrow.

Crossbows

- 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, non-game 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 non-game 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 non-game 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 non-game fish, except sculpins (genus *Cottus*) which must be killed prior to transport, may only be transported live to or from:
  - waters where live non-game 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.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and ALS# attached.

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. 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.
- Non-game fish that may be used as live bait in the Central Fishing District include all non-game species except black bullheads, bluegill, carp, goldfish, green sunfish, pumpkinseed, rainbow smelt, sculpins, stonecats and yellow bullheads.
- Live non-game 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

- Non-game 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 lures only. 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.

General Regulations

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 immediately 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.
- 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 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.

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 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
TROUT	Brook trout	20 daily and in possession.
	Combined Trout includes brown trout, rainbow trout, golden trout and grayling	Lakes/Reservoirs: 5 daily and 10 in possession, includes cutthroat trout. Rivers/Streams: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. All grayling must be released immediately.
	Cutthroat trout	Lakes/Reservoirs: included in Combined Trout daily and possession limit. 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	***10 daily and 20 in possession.***
	Northern pike	10 daily and in possession.
	Pallid sturgeon	0 - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately. All waters are closed to fishing for pallid sturgeon.
	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	20 daily and 40 in possession.

2012 GENERAL FISHING SEASON		
Central District	Rivers and Streams	Lakes and Reservoirs
	Open third Saturday in May through November 30, unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	Open all year
If you don't find the water you are looking for listed in the district exceptions, use the standard regulations for the district you are fishing in.		

 If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Central District Exceptions To Standard Regulations

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

ABSAROKA-BEARTOOTH WILDERNESS LAKES

- Combined Trout: 10 daily and in possession.

ALDER GULCH CREEK AND DREDGE PONDS

Virginia City to mouth

- Open entire year.

ANTELOPE BUTTE LAKE aka Ostle Reservoir (Teton County)

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

ARMSTRONG SPRING CREEK

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

AROD LAKES aka Eyraud Lakes

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

AXOLOTL LAKES

- Catch-and-release for grayling.

BAD CANYON CREEK

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

BADGER CREEK DRAINAGE (near Heart Butte)

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

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

BEAN LAKE

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

BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)

Mouth to US Highway 12

- Open June 15 through September 30.

BEAVER CREEK (tributary to Missouri River below Hauser Dam)

- Open June 15 through November 30.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BEAVERHEAD RIVER

E*ntire River*

- ***Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, 1 over 18 inches, only 1 may be a rainbow trout.***

Clark Canyon Dam to Pipe Organ Bridge

- Open third Saturday in May through November 30.

High Bridge FAS to Henneberry FAS

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

Henneberry FAS to Pipe Organ Bridge

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

Downstream from Pipe Organ Bridge

- Open entire year.

Highway 91 South Bridge (Tash Bridge) to Selway Bridge

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

BELT CREEK

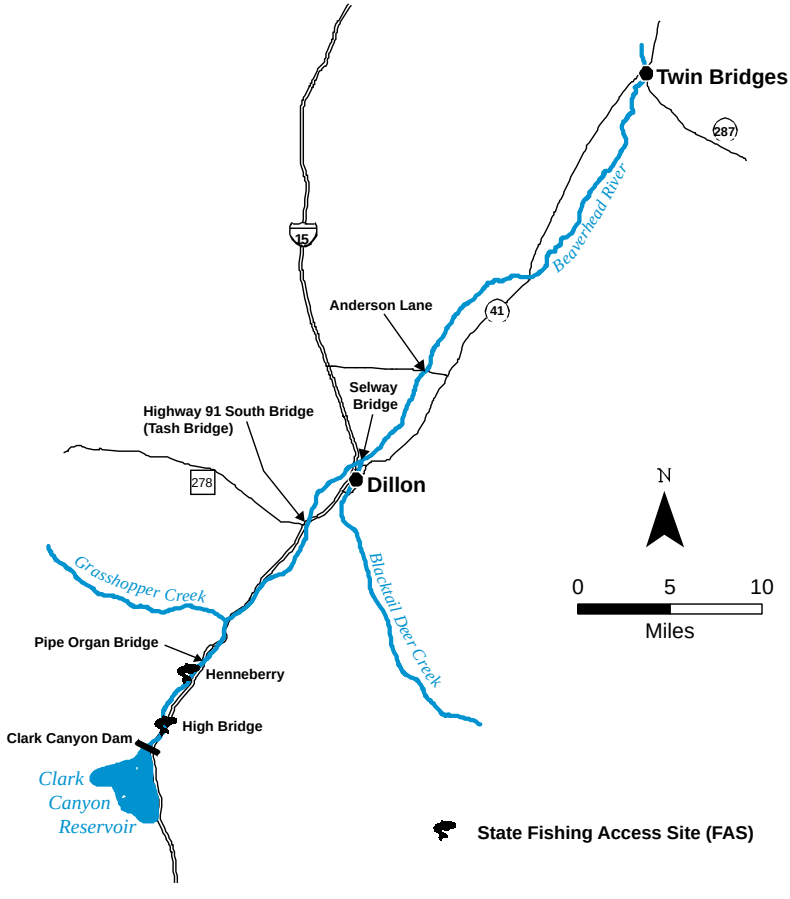
Downstream from the Riceville Bridge

- Open entire year.

BIG COULEE CREEK (tributary to Highwood Creek, near Great Falls)

- Closed entire year.

Beaverhead River



Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BIG HOLE RIVER

Entire river

- 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.
- 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.

Headwaters to North Fork Big Hole River

- Brook trout: open entire year.

Headwaters to Mudd Creek FAS

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

Headwaters to Dickie Bridge

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

Mudd Creek FAS to Fishtrap FAS

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

Fishtrap FAS to East Bank BLM FAS

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

East Bank BLM FAS to Jerry Creek FAS

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

Dickie Bridge to Divide Bridge (Divide FAS)

- Artificial lures only.

Jerry Creek FAS to Divide FAS

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

Divide Bridge (Divide FAS) to Melrose Bridges (Salmon Fly FAS)

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

Melrose Bridges (Salmon Fly FAS) to Glen FAS (bridges)

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

Glen FAS (bridges) to Notch Bottom FAS

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

BIG HOLE RIVER TRIBUTARIES

Tributaries upstream from Divide Bridge (Divide FAS)

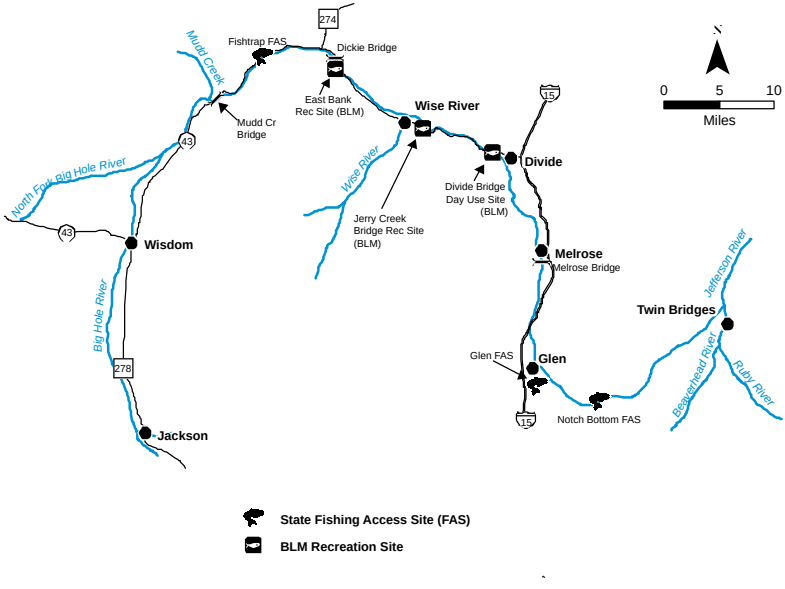
- Brook trout: open entire year.
- Catch-and-release for grayling and cutthroat trout.

BIG SHEEP CREEK (Beaverhead River drainage)

- ***Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.***

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Big Hole River



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

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BIGHORN RIVER

Entire river

- Open entire year
- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.
- A State of Montana fishing license is required for all anglers to fish on the Bighorn River within the boundaries of the Crow Reservation. A tribal permit is not required.

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

- May use live non-game bait fish (as identified in standard district regulations).

Cable 600 feet below Afterbay Dam to Bighorn FAS

- Artificial lures only.

BLACKTAIL DEER CREEK (Beaverhead River drainage)

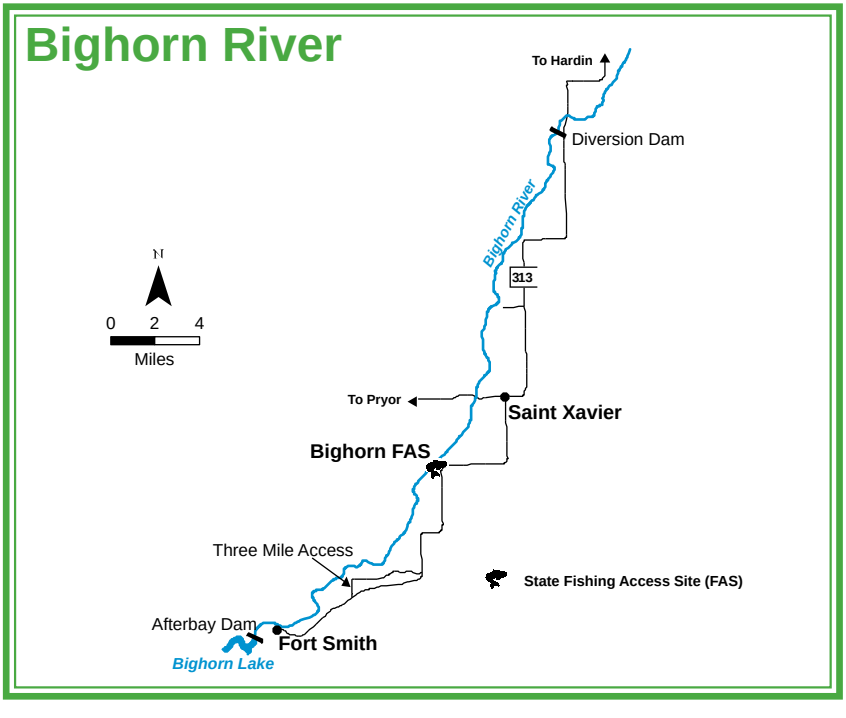
- ***Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.***

BLACKTAIL MEADOWS POND (Dillon)

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

BLUEWATER CREEK

- Open entire year.



If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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, includes cutthroat trout.

BYNUM RESERVOIR

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

CANYON FERRY RESERVOIR

- Catch-and-release for brown trout, except anglers 14 years of age and younger may take 1 brown trout daily and in posession any size.
- Yellow perch: 15 daily and in possession.
- Walleye: 10 daily, no more than 4 over 16 inches, and only 1 over 28 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limit
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.

Magpie Bay

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

CHESSMAN RESERVOIR (Tenmile Creek drainage, near Helena)

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

CLARK CANYON RESERVOIR

- Burbot (ling): 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 28 inches.
- ***Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.***

CLARKS FORK YELLOWSTONE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

Entire river and tributaries

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

Mainstem downstream from the bridge at Bridger

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

CONFEDERATE GULCH (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)

Mouth to Highway 284

- Open June 15 through September 30.

COTTONWOOD CREEK (10 miles SW of Martinsdale)

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

CROOKED CREEK (Pryor Mountains)

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

CUT BANK CREEK

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

DARLINGTON SPRING CREEK aka Darlington Ditch (near Three Forks)

On Cobblestone FAS

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

Outside of Cobblestone FAS boundaries

- Open entire year.
- Standard limits apply.

DEADMANS BASIN RESERVOIR

- Combined Trout: 10 daily and in possession.
- Snagging: open for salmon through the ice only, 35 daily and 70 in possession.

DEARBORN RIVER

Upstream from Highway 434 Bridge in T18N R6W, Section 29

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 12 inches, includes cutthroat trout.

DEEP CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)

Mouth to North Fork of Deep Creek

- Open June 15 through September 30.

DICKENS LAKE (Sun River Wildlife Management Area)

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

DIVERSION LAKE (Sun River drainage)

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

DRY CREEK (tributary to Missouri River, near Townsend)

Mouth to Flynn Lane

- Open June 15 through September 30.

EAST BOULDER RIVER (Yellowstone River drainage)

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

EAST FORK BIG SPRING CREEK (near Lewistown)

Downstream from the Reservoir

- Catch-and-release only for all fish species.

EAST FORK BOULDER RIVER (near Big Timber)

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

EAST FORK HYALITE CREEK

Above Hyalite Reservoir

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

EAST GALLATIN RIVER

- Open entire year downstream from the mouth of Bozeman (Sourdough) Creek.
- Northern pike: No limit

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

EAST ROSEBUD CREEK

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

ELK LAKE (Beaverhead County)

- Catch-and-release for lake trout.

ELKS CLUB POND (Lewistown)

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

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 non-game 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, includes cutthroat trout.

FOOLHEN LAKE (Big Hole River drainage)

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

GALLATIN RIVER

Entire river

- Open entire year.
- Northern pike: No limit

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. One rod per child.

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 LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES

- See Willow Creek Reservoir and Tributaries.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

HAUSER RESERVOIR

Including Canyon Ferry Dam tailwater and Lake Helena

- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 trout and salmon in possession in any combination.
- Walleye: 20 daily, only 1 over 28 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and no possession limit.
- Northern pike: No limit
- 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.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

HAYMAKER CREEK

- Cutthroat trout: 2 daily and in possession.

HELENA VALLEY REGULATING RESERVOIR

- Snagging: open for salmon September 1 through October 31, 35 salmon daily and 70 in possession.
- ***Snagging limits also apply to the irrigation canal in the area from the discharge outlet to 400 yards downstream.***

HELLROARING CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

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

HELLS CANYON CREEK (Jefferson River drainage)

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

HIDDEN LAKE aka Our Lake (Teton County)

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.

HIDDEN LAKE AND TRIBUTARIES (Madison County)

- Open June 15 through November 30.

HOLTER RESERVOIR

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

- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 rainbow trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 rainbow trout and salmon in posession in any combination.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and no possession limit.
- Walleye: 10 daily, only 1 over 28 inches, and all fish between 20 and 28 inches must be released. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limit
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- ***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.***

HYALITE CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES

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

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

Below Hyalite Reservoir

- Open third Saturday in May through November 30.
- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

HYALITE RESERVOIR

- Catch-and-release for grayling.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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. One rod per angler.

JEFFERSON RIVER

Entire river

- Open entire year.
- Northern pike: No limit

Confluence of Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers to Williams Bridge FAS

- Combined Trout: 3 brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.
- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

Williams Bridge FAS to confluence with Missouri River

- Combined Trout: 5 brown trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.
- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

Seasonal spawning closure at tributary mouths: Hells Canyon Creek and Willow Springs Creek

- 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.

LAKE ELWELL aka Tiber Reservoir

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

LAKE HELENA

- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 trout and salmon in possession in any combination.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and no possession limit.
- Walleye: 20 daily, only 1 over 28 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limit
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.
- ***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.***

LIGHTNING CREEK (Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness)

- Open August 1 through November 30.

LITTLE PRICKLY PEAR CREEK (tributary to Missouri River)

Downstream from the most southerly I-15 Bridge over Little Prickly Pear Creek (1.9 miles north of Sieben Interchange, Exit 216)

- Open third Saturday in May through Labor Day.

LYMAN CREEK (near Bozeman)

From the City water supply intake to a point 1,000 feet upstream

- Closed entire year as posted.

MADISON RIVER

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.
- Artifical 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.
- Artifical 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.
- Northern pike: No Limit

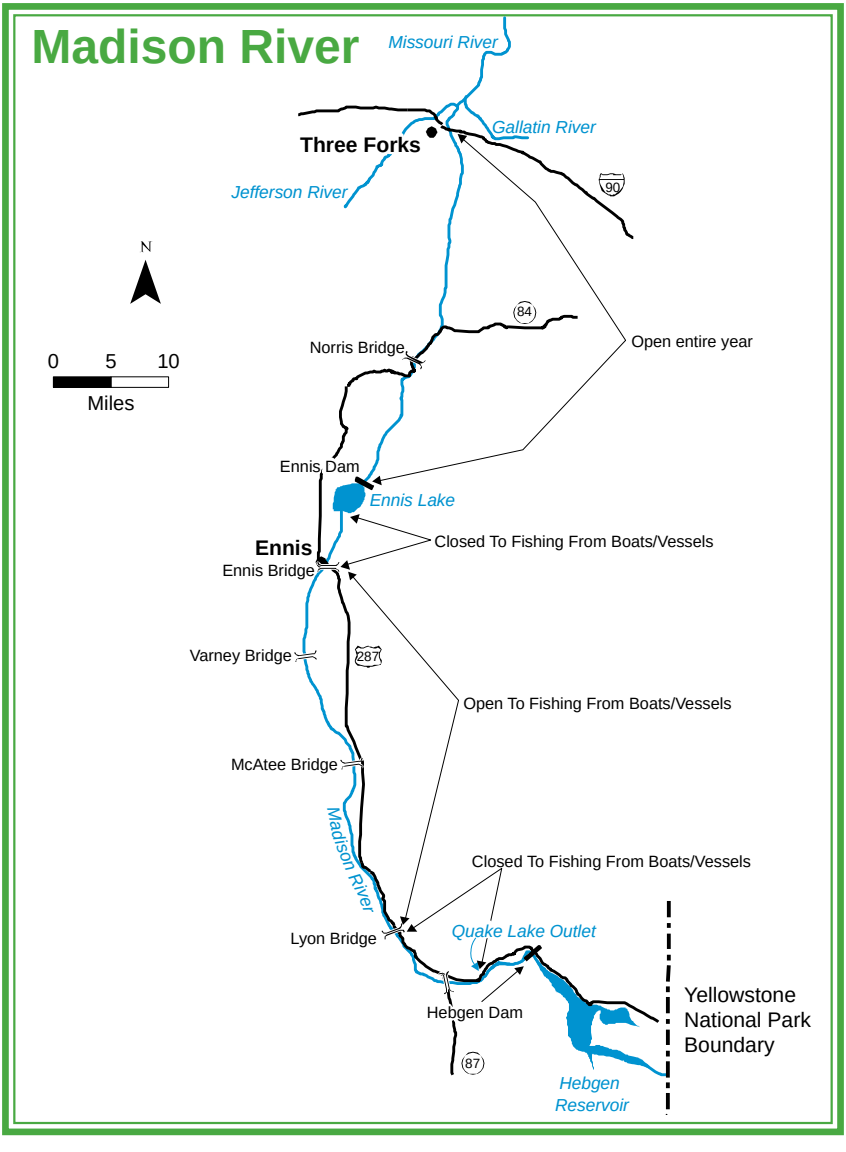
MAGPIE CREEK (tributary to Canyon Ferry Reservoir)

- Open June 15 through September 30.

MARIAS RIVER

- Open entire year downstream from the I-15 Bridge.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.
- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.
- Whitefish: 35 daily and in possession.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with up to 2 hooks per line all year.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.



MIDVALE CREEK (Blackfeet Reservation)

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

MILL CREEK (near Sheridan)

- Open entire year.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

MISSOURI RIVER

Entire river

- Open entire year.

Confluence to Madison and Jefferson Rivers to Toston Dam

- Northern pike: No limit.

Toston Dam to Canyon Ferry Reservoir

- Localized spawning areas closed as posted from March 1 through June 15.
- 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 no more than 4 over 16 inches, and only 1 over 28 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limit

Canyon Ferry Reservoir

- 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: 15 daily and in possession.
- Walleye: 10 daily, no more than 4 over 16 inches, and only 1 over 28 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limt.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice.

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

- 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: 20 daily, only 1 over 28 inches. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and no possession limit.
- Northern pike: No limit
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

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

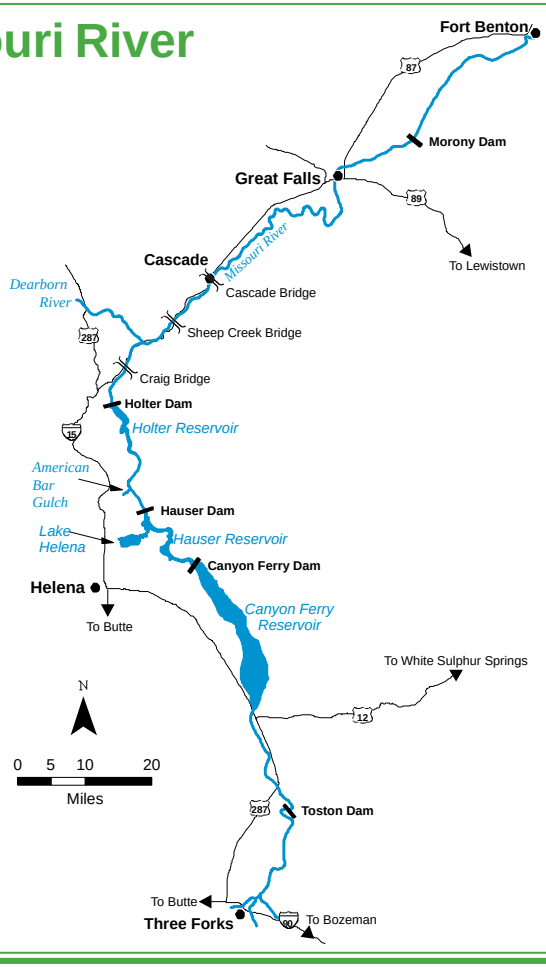
- Combined Trout: Standard river/stream limits apply, except catch-and-release for brown trout.
- Walleye: 10 daily only 1 over 28 inches, and all fish between 20 and 28 inches must be released. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limit

Holter Reservoir (American Bar Gulch downstream to Holter Dam)

- Combined Trout and Salmon: 5 rainbow trout and salmon daily in any combination and 10 rainbow 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.
- Yellow perch: 25 daily and no possession limit.
- Walleye: 10 daily and only 1 over 28 inches and all fish between 20 and 28 inches must be released. Possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Northern pike: No limit
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice only.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Missouri River



Central District

Holter Dam to Cascade Bridge

- ***Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches, and only 1 may be a brown trout.***
- Walleye: No limit.

Cascade Bridge to Black Eagle Dam

- Walleye: 20 daily and 40 in possession.

Morony Dam to Fort Benton

- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line all year.

Waterbody/Section	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 May 15 at 12:00 noon 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 (Pryor Mountains)

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

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.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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.

ROCK CREEK RESERVOIRS (Robb-Ledford Game Range)

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

RUBY RIVER

Upstream from Ruby Reservoir

- ***Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.***

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.

SAGE CREEK (Pryor Mountains)

- Open entire year.
- Standard trout limit includes cutthroat trout.

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.

SCOTT RESERVOIR

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

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.

SLOUGH CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

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

SMITH RIVER

- 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 (Huntsberger Bridge)

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

SODA BUTTE CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

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

SOUTH FORK SUN RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

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

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession only 1 over 12 inches, includes cutthroat trout.

SOUTH FORK TWO MEDICINE RIVER DRAINAGE

Within National Forest

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

SOUTH WILLOW CREEK (near Harrison)

Highway 287 Bridge to Harrison Reservoir

- Open June 15 through November 30.

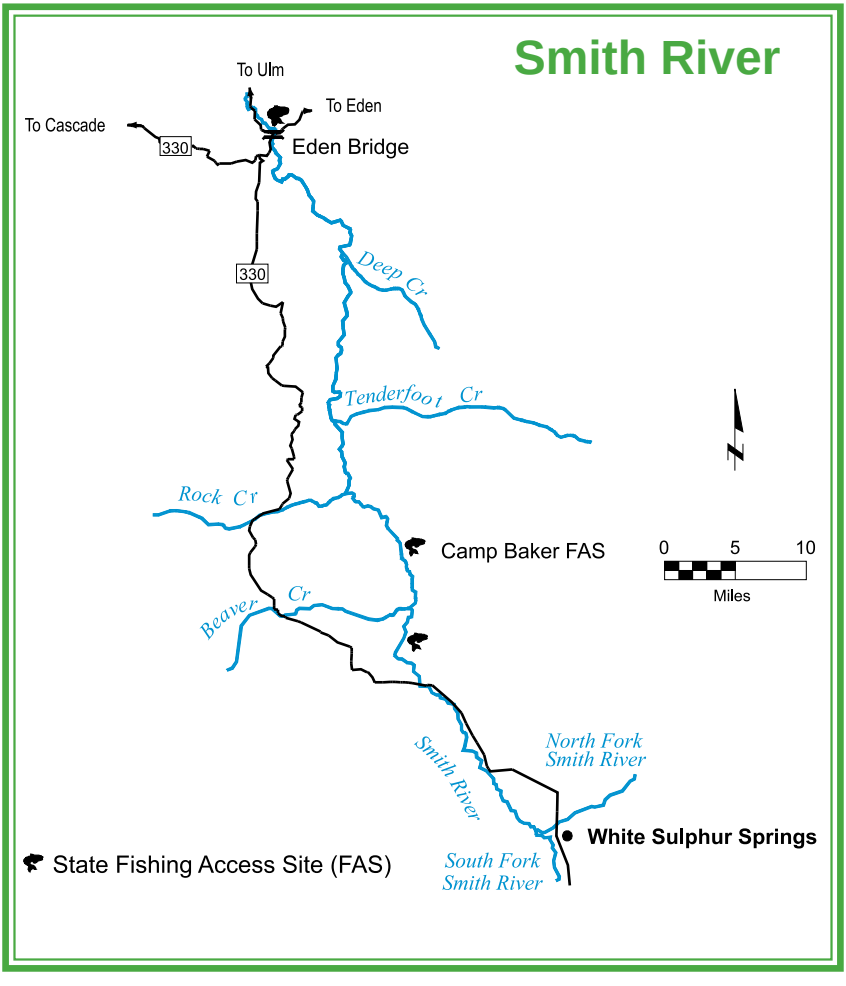
SPLIT ROCK LAKE

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

SPRING MEADOW LAKE

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

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.



STILLWATER RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES (Yellowstone River drainage)

Entire River and tributaries.

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

SUN RIVER

- Open entire year downstream from Gibson Dam.

SUNNY SLOPE CANAL

Downstream from Pishkun Reservoir

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

SWAZEE LAKE (Sun River Wildlife Management Area)

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

TAHEPIA LAKE (Wise River drainage)

- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession.

TETON RIVER

Downstream from Highway 89 Bridge

- Open entire year.

TIBER RESERVOIR aka Lake Elwell

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

TRAIL CREEK (Beaverhead River drainage)

- ***Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout.***

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. One rod per child.

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, includes cutthroat trout.

WEST FORK HYALITE CREEK aka Hyalite Creek

Above Hyalite Reservoir

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

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

WEST FORK MADISON RIVER

- Catch-and-release for rainbow trout.

WEST FORK ROCK CREEK

Red Lodge water intake to 1,000 feet upstream

- Closed entire year.

WEST FORK STILLWATER RIVER

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

WEST ROSEBUD CREEK

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

WILLOW CREEK (Meagher County, near White Sulpur Springs)

White Sulphur Springs water intake to its source

- Closed entire year.

WILLOW CREEK RESERVOIR AND TRIBUTARIES (near Harrison)

Willow Creek arm, as posted

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

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.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

YELLOWSTONE RIVER

Yellowstone National Park Boundary to I-90 Bridge at Billings

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: 4 brown trout and/or rainbow trout daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches. Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Hook and Line: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year from the mouth of the Clarks Fork River to the I-90 Bridge at Billings.

YELLOWSTONE RIVER TRIBUTARIES

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

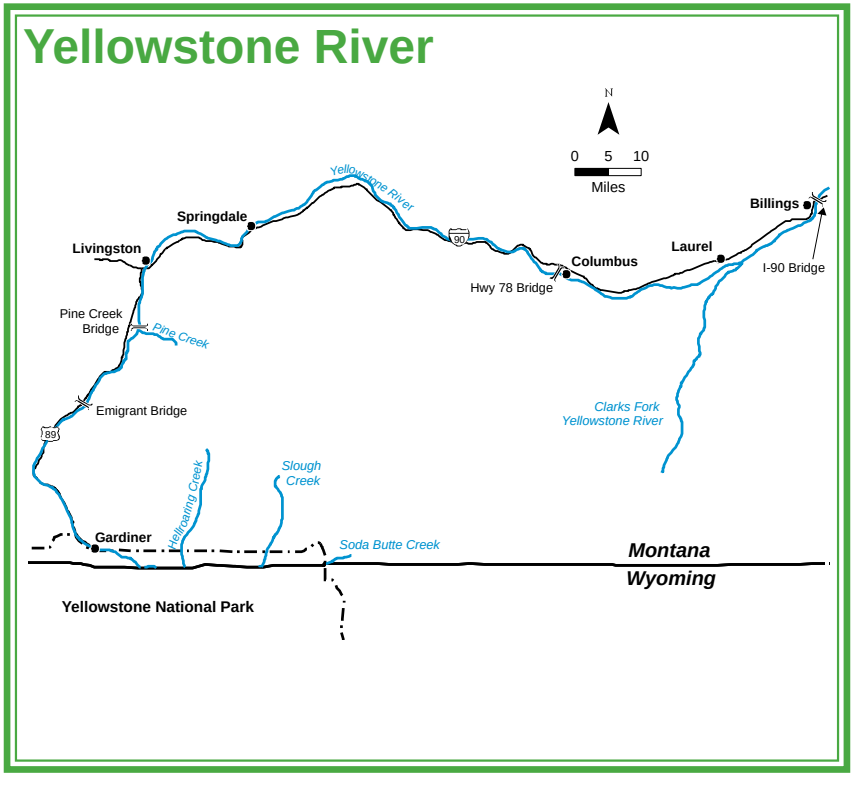
- Cutthroat trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches.

All tributaries between YNP Boundary and Springdale

- Catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.

All tributaries downstream from Springdale

- Open entire year.
- Combined Trout: includes cutthroat trout (unless indicated otherwise in tributary exceptions)



Thank You Anglers And Motorboaters!

The Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) Program provides grant funding to all state fish and wildlife agencies for fishery projects, boating access, and aquatic education. The Program is authorized by the Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act in recognition of the original bill sponsors. Annually, FWP receives in excess of $8 million in SFR funds.

The SFR Program was created to assist states with restoration and management of our nations fisheries, and was modeled after the successful Wildlife restoration Program of 1937. Funding for the Program comes from tax revenues collected from the sale of fishing equipment, motorboat, and small engine fuels.

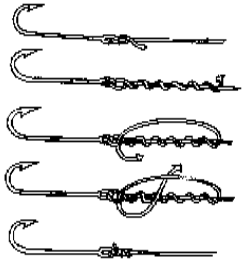
Every time you purchase fishing equipment or fuel for your boat, you are supporting fisheries management and motorboat access programs in Montana.
The SFR Program represents one of the most successful user-pay, user-benefit programs in the nation.

Montana FWP Foundation

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

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. 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.

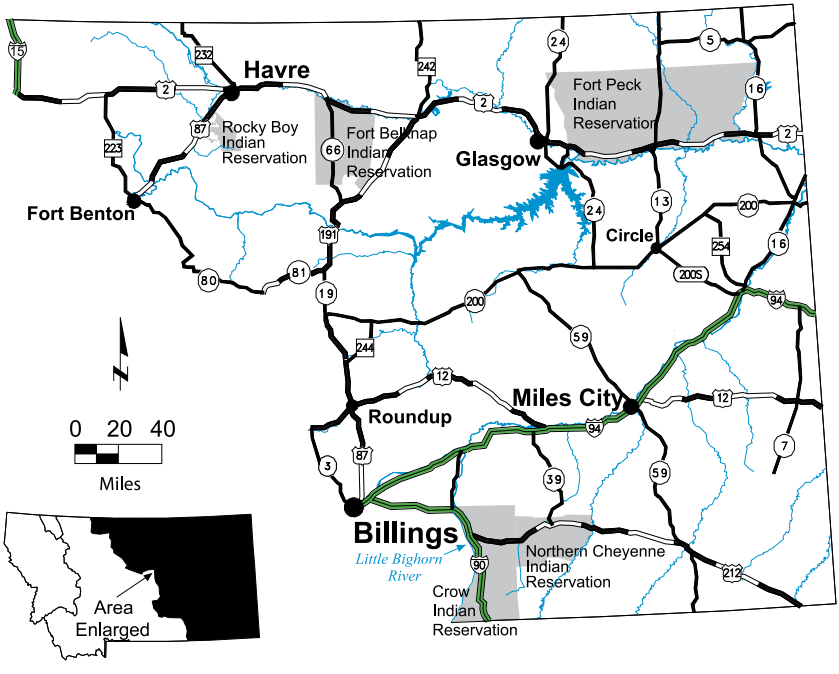
Modified Clinch Knot



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.

Help Protect Montana's Fisheries ...
Turn In Poachers by calling TIP-MONT – 1-800-847-6668

Eastern Fishing District



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

Eastern District

The Eastern Fishing District includes all waters lying east of the Central Fishing District. For the boundary description, see Central Fishing District, page 44.

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 (Telephone device for the deaf).....406-444-1200

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.

Fort Peck Reservation - Tribal Boundary Water Regulations

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

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

These harvest limits cannot be exceeded, even if the angler possesses both tribal and state licenses, and fishes on and/or off the reservation on the same day.

Non-tribal members licensed through the State of Montana and/or the Fort Peck Tribes, that are fishing in exterior boundary waters -- Big Muddy Creek, Missouri River and/or Milk River -- are limited to a maximum of 6 lines with 6 hooks per line. Unattended lines are required to be identified with the angler's name and/or license number. Setlines shall not be attached to jugs or floating devices.

Irrigation Canals and Ditches

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

Reservoirs

Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. An imaginary line connecting the reservoir shoreline across the mouth of the stream marks the boundary between reservoir and stream/river, and the boundary will move as reservoir levels change. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks. Stream regulations apply upstream from the mouth on the reservoir and often are managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations.

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"** for Eastern Fishing District); 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.

Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows are counted as 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 5 setlines in use while snagging with one attended line, for a total of 6 lines.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and ALS# attached.

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 - It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules:

- Definition/Use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing.
- 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 hours.
- The angler's name and phone number or name and 9/10-digit ALS# must be attached to each setline.
- 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 non-game fish by bow and arrow.

Crossbows

- 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

- Snagging non-game fish is allowed on all open waters in the Eastern District except on the Missouri River downstream from Fort Benton to the North Dakota border, and on the Yellowstone River downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River, where only paddlefish may be snagged by anglers with a valid paddlefish tag. All waters open to angling are open to snagging paddlefish during the open paddlefish season by anglers with a valid tag (see Special Paddlefish Regulations for additional important paddlefish information). Snagging chinook salmon is allowed on Fort Peck Reservoir only from October 1 through November 30.

Spearing

- In all waters open to fishing, non-game fish, northern pike, burbot (ling), walleye and whitefish may be taken with rubber or spring-propelled spears by persons swimming or submerged. Spears or gigs may be used through the ice for non-game 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.
- Where live fish may be used as bait (see list below under Live Bait), legal non-game 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 non-game 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.
- All unattended fishing devices (crayfish traps, minnow traps, fish traps, setlines, etc.) must have the angler's name and phone number or name and ALS# attached.

Dead Bait

- Non-game 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 lures only. 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.

Live Bait

- Live bait fish may not be imported into Montana.
- Live animals such as meal worms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians and insects may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures. Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale 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.
- Non-game fish that may be used as live bait in the Eastern District include all non-game species except black bullheads, bluegill, carp, goldfish, green sunfish, pumpkinseed, rainbow smelt, sculpins, stonecats, yellow bullheads, shortnose gar, sturgeon chub, sicklefin chub, Northern redbelly dace, blue sucker and pearl dace.
- Live non-game 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 (listed by County):

Big Horn Co. - Tongue River Reservoir
Blaine Co. - Cow Creek Reservoir, Dry Fork Reservoir, and all BLM reservoirs
Carter Co. - Doug Gardner #2 Reservoir, Talcott Pond
Custer Co. - Spotted Eagle Pond, Haughan Pond
Daniels Co. - Whitetail Reservoir
Dawson Co. - Johnson 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
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. - Wibaux Pond
Yellowstone Co. - Anita Reservoir

General Regulations

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 immediately 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.
- 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 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.

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.

Special Paddlefish Regulations

All paddlefish anglers, regardless of age, must purchase the proper prerequisite conservation license, fishing license and paddlefish tag (see License Requirements). All licenses must be in the angler's immediate possession while fishing.

Daily and Possession Limits and Tags: 1 paddlefish per season per angler. Anglers may select only one of the following areas, and may only fish in the area selected:

- Upper Missouri River, upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton - **WHITE TAG**
- Yellowstone River and Missouri River downstream from Fort Peck Dam – **YELLOW TAG**
- Fort Peck Dredge Cuts (west of Park Grove Bridge and Nelson Dredge) on the Missouri River - **BLUE TAG**

General Paddlefish Regulations for ALL Areas

- All waters open to angling are open to snagging paddlefish during the open paddlefish season by anglers with a valid tag, except the Ft Peck Dredge Cuts Archery section.
- Snagging non-game fish is allowed on all open waters in the Eastern District except on the Missouri River downstream from Fort Benton to the North Dakota border and on the Yellowstone River downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River.
- Each angler must cast for, hook and reel in his or her own paddlefish. It is unlawful for another person to do so. It is illegal to loan tags or use another angler's tag.
- Hook size is limited to 8/0 and smaller for all paddlefish snagging.
- Gaffs, no longer than 4.5 feet in length, may be used to land a paddlefish that will be tagged. Gaffs may not be used to land a paddlefish that will be released.
- 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. **Voided or lost tags are not replaceable**.
- Paddlefish must be tagged immediately upon harvest.
- It is unlawful to possess an untagged paddlefish or 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.
- When a paddlefish is captured and tagged, the fish must be removed from the river by the end of the day (9:00 PM, MST).

Paddlefish Season Summary by River and River Section

River	River Section	Tag Color	Season Dates	Harvest Days	C&R Days
Missouri River	Ft Peck Dam to Ft Benton	white	May 1 - Jun 15	all	all
	Ft Peck Dredge Cuts **Note**: bow & arrow harvest only; snagging not allowed!	blue	July 1 - Aug 31	all - bow & arrow harvest only	none
	Ft Peck Dam to ND Line	yellow	May 15 - Jun 30	Tue,Wed,Fri,Sat	none
Yellowstone River	Big Horn R to Intake Dam	yellow	May 15 - Jun 30	Tue,Wed,Fri,Sat	none
	Intake FAS	yellow	May 15 - Jun 30	Tue,Wed,Fri,Sat	Sun, Mon, Thur
	Downstream of Intake FAS to ND Line	yellow	May 15 - Jun 30	Tue,Wed,Fri,Sat	none

ND = North Dakota **FAS = Fishing Access Site** **C&R = Catch and Release**

Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton

- The paddlefish fishery is managed under an annual harvest target not to exceed 500 fish. FWP may close the harvest season within 24 hours notice in any year if it appears the harvest target may be exceeded. Catch-and-release fishing would continue for the duration of the season. For current information on harvest status call the Glasgow FWP office at 406-228-3700. A paddlefish harvest hotline is available with up-to-date harvest counts and Missouri River flow information.
- Paddlefish snagging: open to harvesting paddlefish from May 1 to June 15 (unless closed earlier by FWP) from 6 AM to 9 PM (MST) daily. An unused white paddlefish tag is required. All paddlefish captured must either be tagged and kept, or released immediately.
- Catch-and-release snagging for paddlefish is open from May 1 to June 15. Proof of purchase of a white paddlefish tag on your fishing license is required for catch-and-release fishing. All paddlefish must be released immediately and may not be gaffed or lifted out of the water. Captured fish must remain at least partially submerged in water at all times (to avoid injury to the fish).

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

- Bow and Arrow: open July 1 through August 31 for paddlefish. 1 paddlefish per angler. An unused blue paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish.
- Snagging: no snagging allowed, this is an **archery only** season.

Missouri River downstream from Fort Peck Dam and the 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 24 hours notice in any year if it appears the harvest target may be exceeded, and immediately at the Intake FAS and downstream to Cottonwood Creek, when it is estimated that the target has been reached. For current information on harvest status call the Miles City FWP office at 406-234-0900.
- 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 Memorandum of Understanding (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.

Missouri River downstream from Fort Peck Dam

- Paddlefish snagging:
  - **open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays** from May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM (MST) daily, unless closed to harvest earlier by FWP.
  - **closed Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays.**
- An unused yellow paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish. The tag must be properly placed on the first paddlefish caught and landed.
- Catch-and-release snagging for paddlefish is not permitted.

Yellowstone River from the mouth of the Bighorn River to Intake Dam (not including Intake Fishing Access Site) and downstream of Intake Fishing Access Site to North Dakota State Line

- Paddlefish Snagging:
  - **open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays** from May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM (MST) daily, unless closed to harvest earlier by FWP.
  - **closed Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays**.
- An unused yellow paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish. The tag must be properly placed on the first paddlefish caught and landed.
- Catch-and-release snagging for paddlefish is not permitted.

Intake Fishing Access Site

- Paddlefish Snagging:
  - **open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays** from May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM (MST) daily, unless closed to harvest earlier by FWP.
- An unused yellow paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish. The tag must be properly placed on the first paddlefish caught and landed. It is unlawful to release a paddlefish except on designated catch-and-release days during the open season for paddlefish.
- Catch-and-release snagging:
  - **open Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays** from May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM (MST) daily, unless closed earlier by FWP.
- Evidence of a current year yellow paddlefish tag must be in possession to fish for paddlefish. All paddlefish must be released immediately and may not be gaffed or lifted out of the water. Captured fish must remain at least partially submerged in water at all times (to avoid injury to the fish). Following the harvest closure, catch-and-release snagging will be allowed, at Intake Fishing Access Site only, for 10 consecutive days or through June 30, whichever comes first.

Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted

- Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.

Tagging 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. Any fish not tagged in accordance with these instructions shall be considered to be untagged. You must have your conservation and paddlefish license in your possession to fish for or/and take paddlefish.

Eastern District Standard Daily and Possession Limits

- Each angler may take all of the limits listed in the chart, unless otherwise noted in the Eastern District Exceptions. For species not listed, there are no limits on the number of fish that may be taken or possessed.
- Anglers who move from one fishing water to another may possess the limit of fish allowed only for the water on which they are currently fishing.

Species		Daily and Possession Limits
TROUT	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, includes cutthroat trout. Rivers/Streams: 5 daily and in possession.
	Cutthroat trout	Lakes/Reservoirs: included in the "Combined Trout" daily and possession limit. 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	***10 daily and 20 in possession.***
	Crappie	15 daily and 30 in possession.
	Northern pike	10 daily and in possession.
	Paddlefish	1 daily and in possession. Tag required.
	Pallid sturgeon	0 - this is an endangered species and all fish must be released immediately. All waters are closed to fishing for pallid sturgeon.
	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	20 daily and 40 in possession.

2012 GENERAL FISHING SEASON		
	Rivers and Streams	Lakes and Reservoirs
Eastern District	Open all year	Open all year

If you don't find the water you are looking for listed in the district exceptions, use the standard regulations for the district you are fishing in.

Eastern District Exceptions To Standard Regulations

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

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

BEARPAW LAKE

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.

BEAVER CREEK RESERVOIR

- Combined Trout: 3 daily and in possession.

BIGHORN RIVER (east of Billings)

Entire river

- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.

BOXELDER RESERVOIR

- ***Yellow Perch: 25 daily and 50 in possession.***

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

- Bow and Arrow: open July 1 through August 31 for paddlefish. 1 paddlefish per angler. An unused blue paddlefish tag is required to fish for paddlefish.
- Combined Trout: 2 rainbow trout daily and in possession.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line on open water and 6 lines with 6 hooks per line through the ice.
- Snagging: no snagging allowed.

FORT PECK KIDS POND (near Downstream Campground)

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

FORT PECK RESERVOIR

Fort Peck Dam to Beauchamp Creek and CMR Trail 837

- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.
- Spearing: in addition to the standard regulations, chinook salmon and lake trout may be taken by spear or gig through the ice December 1 through March 31.
- Snagging: allowed only for chinook salmon from October 1 through November 30.

HOLLECKER LAKE

- Bass: only 1 over 15 inches daily and in possession.

HOME RUN POND (Glasgow)

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

MARIAS RIVER

- Open entire year downstream from the Hwy 223 Bridge.
- Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches.
- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.

MEDICINE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (Sheridan County)

All lakes

- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line during the applicable open season.

Medicine Lake

- Open November 15 through September 15.

Gaffney Lake and Lake 10

- Open August 15 through March 31.

Lake 12

- Open November 15 through March 31.

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

MISSOURI RIVER

Entire river

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

Upstream from Fort Peck Dam to Fort Benton

- Paddlefish snagging: open for harvesting paddlefish from May 1 to June 15 from 6 AM to 9 PM, MST, daily unless closed earlier by FWP.
- Catch-and-release snagging for paddlefish is open from May 1 to June 15 from 6 AM to 9 PM, MST, daily. See Special Paddlefish Regulations (pages 80-82) for additional important paddlefish information.
- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.

Downstream from Fort Peck Dam

- Paddlefish snagging: open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM, MST, unless closed to harvest earlier by FWP. Paddlefish snagging is closed on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. See Special Paddlefish Regulations (pages 80-82) for additional important paddlefish information.
- Catch-and-release snagging for paddlefish is not permitted.

Fort Peck Dam to the mouth of the Milk River

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

Downstream from Fort Peck Dam near Duck Island as posted

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

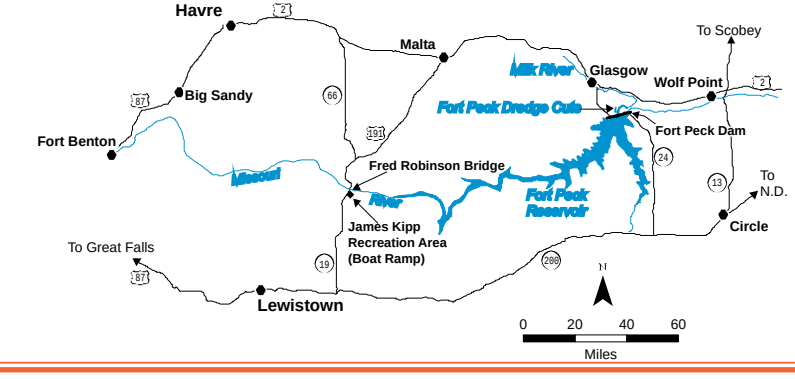
ROSS RESERVOIR (Blaine County)

- Open third Saturday in May through November 30.

SPOTTED EAGLE POND (Miles City)

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

Missouri River Upstream from Fort Peck Dam



Eastern District

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

TONGUE RIVER

Tongue River Reservoir to Wyoming State Border

- ***Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily (only 1 may be a sauger) and 10 in possession (only 2 may be sauger).***

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

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

TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR

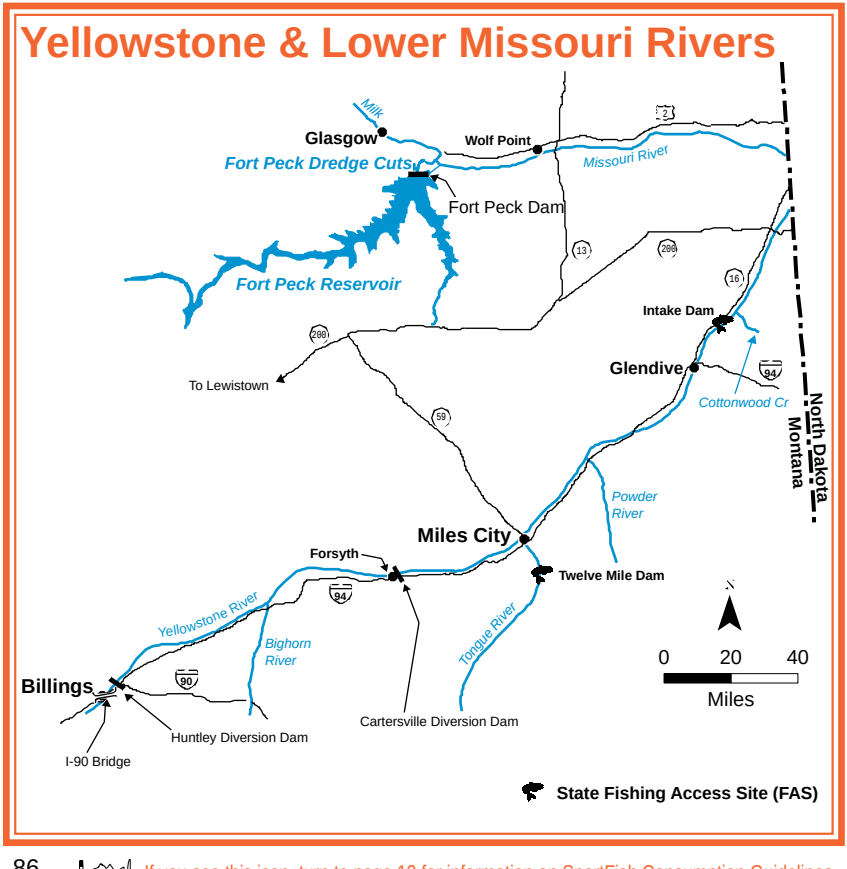
- Crappie: 30 daily and 60 in possession.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 6 lines with 6 hooks per line through the ice.
- ***Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily (only 1 may be a sauger) and 10 in possession (only 2 may be sauger).***

WARM SPRINGS CREEK (Fergus County)

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

WIND CREEK (Blaine County)

- Closed entire year from Clear Creek road crossing to Ross Reservoir Dam.



Eastern District

If you see this icon, turn to page 13 for information on SportFish Consumption Guidelines.

Waterbody/Section	Exceptions to Standard Regulations

YELLOWSTONE RIVER

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

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

I-90 Bridge at Billings to Cartersville Diversion Dam at Forsyth

- Sauger/Walleye: 5 daily, only 1 may be a sauger. Possession limit is 10, only 2 may be sauger.

Downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River, not including Intake Fishing Access Site

- Paddlefish snagging: Open for harvesting paddlefish May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM, MST, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays only, unless closed to harvest earlier by FWP. Paddlefish snagging is closed on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. See Special Paddlefish Regulations (pages 80-82) for additional important information.
- Catch-and-release snagging for paddlefish is not permitted.
- Snagging: It is illegal to snag for fish, other than paddlefish.

Intake Fishing Access Site

- Paddlefish Snagging: open for harvesting paddlefish May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM, MST, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays or Saturdays unless closed earlier by FWP.
- Catch-and-release snagging is allowed May 15 through June 30 from 6 AM to 9 PM, MST, on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. Following the harvest closure, catch-and-release snagging will be allowed for 10 consecutive days or through June 30, whichever comes first. See Special Paddlefish Regulations (pages 80-82) for additional important information.
- Snagging: It is illegal to snag for fish other than paddlefish.
- Hook and Line/Setlines: 2 lines with 2 hooks per line all year.

Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted

- Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.
- Snagging: It is illegal to snag for fish other than paddlefish.

Montana Fish Records

For a complete list of Montana fish records, please visit fwp.mt.gov, call 406-444-7815, or email: begiddings@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 species are shaded in blue.

Records as of January 1, 2012.

FISH	LENGTH	WEIGHT	SITE	ANGLER	DATE
Arctic Grayling	20	3.63 lbs.	Washtub Lake	Glenn Owens	6/28/03
Black Bullhead	14.37	2.60 lbs.	Smiley Slough	Birrell White	6/20/09
Black Crappie	16.7	3.13 lbs.	Tongue River Reservoir	Al Elser	1973
Bluegill	11	2.64 lbs.	Peterson's Stock Dam	Brent Fladmo	6/3/83
Brook Trout		9.06 lbs.	Lower Two Medicine Lake	John R. Cook	1940
Brown Trout		29 lbs.	Wade Lake	E.H. "Peck" Bacon	1966
Bull Trout	37	25.63 lbs.		James Hyer	1916
Burbot	39	17.08 lbs.	Missouri River	Jeff Eugene Iwen	4/18/89
Channel Catfish	37.6	30.12 lbs	Missouri River	Jessey Perry	5/08/09
Chinook Salmon	38	31.13 lbs.	Fort Peck Reservoir	Carl L. Niles	10/2/91
Cisco	17.25	1.75 lbs.	Below Ft Peck Powerhouse	Curt Zimmerman	5/19/01
Coho Salmon	25.5	4.88 lbs.	Fort Peck Reservoir	Irven F. Stohl	5/29/73
Common Carp	38	40.2 lbs.	Nelson Reservoir	Jared S. Albus	5/24/98
Cutthroat Trout		16 lbs.	Red Eagle Lake	Wm. D. Sands	1955
Golden Trout	23.5	5.43 lbs.	Cave Lake	Mike Malixi	7/16/00
Goldeye		3.18 lbs.	Nelson Reservoir	Don Nevrivy	7/4/00
Green Sunfish	9.0	0.84 lbs.	Hickson's Pond	Bette Schmieding	5/25/09
Kokanee Salmon	26. 8	7.85 lbs	Hauser Lake	John Bomar	9/23/03
Lake Trout	42.5	42.69 lbs.	Flathead Lake	Ruth Barber	6/23/04
Lake Whitefish	27	10.46 lbs.	Flathead Lake	Swan McDonald V	8/26/06
Largemouth Bass	22.5	8.80 lbs.	Noxon Rapids Reservoir	Darin Williams	5/2/09
Mountain Whitefish	23	5.11 lbs.	Hauser Reservoir	Walt Goodman	10/10/07
Northern Pikeminnow	27.125	7.88 lbs.	Noxon Rapids Reservoir	Darrel Torgrimson	5/28/91
Northern Pike		37.5 lbs.	Tongue River Reservoir	Lance Moyer	1972
Paddlefish	77	142.5 lbs.	Missouri River	Larry Branstetter	5/20/73
Pallid Sturgeon		60 lbs.	Yellowstone River	Gene Sattler	5/13/79
Rainbow Trout	38.62	33.1 lbs.	Kootenai River	Jack G. Housel, Jr.	8/11/97
Sauger	28.2	8.805 lbs.	Fort Peck Reservoir	Gene Moore	12/12/94
Shovelnose Sturgeon	39.75	14.125 lbs.	Missouri River	Chad Buck	5/21/10
Smallmouth Bass	21	6.66 lbs.	Fort Peck Reservoir	Mike Otten	7/30/02
Tiger Muskellunge	49	31.3	Deadman's Basin Reservoir	Dan Weil	7/6/11
Walleye	35	17.75 lbs.	Tiber Reservoir	Robert Hart	11/18/07
White Bass	17	2.80 lbs.	Missouri River	Vernon Pacovsky	10/13/07
White Crappie	18.5	3.68 lbs.	Tongue River	Gene Bassett	5/10/96
White Sturgeon	75	96 lbs.	Kootenai River	Herb Stout	1968
Yellow Bullhead	12.2	1.01 lbs.	Ninepipe Reservoir	Max Bernt	7/19/11
Yellow Perch	14.375	2.39 lbs.	Lower Stillwater Lake	Josh Emmert	2/19/06

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:

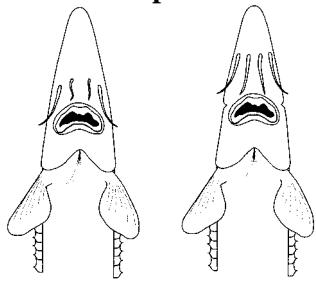
- All pallid sturgeon must be released immediately and all sturgeon longer than 40 inches must be released immediately.
- Only one sauger may be kept on the Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Reservoir, on Fort Peck Reservoir, and on the Yellowstone River upstream from Forsyth at the Cartersville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

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.

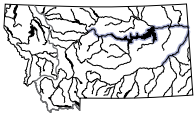
The pallid sturgeon is a fish of special concern in Montana and it is listed as an Endangered Species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Pallids are a bottom-dwelling fish of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, preferring strong currents flowing over a sandy or gravely river bottom. Learn to distinguish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

Know the difference between sauger and walleye:

Native Fish

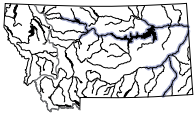
Pallid Sturgeon

An endangered Species listed under the Endangered Species Act



Average Size: 60”

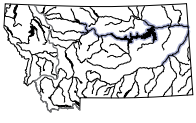
Shovelnose Sturgeon

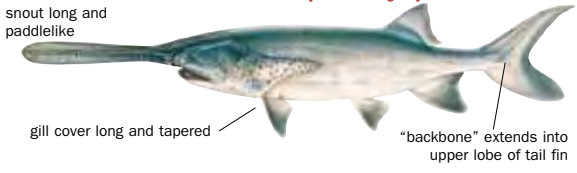


Average Size: 20”–32”

Paddlefish

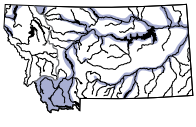
Species of Special Concern





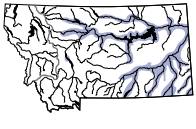
Average Size: 55”–65”

Burbot



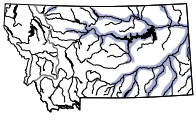
Average Size: 16”–24”

Channel Catfish



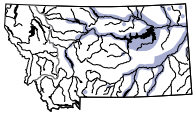
Average Size: 14”–20”

Sauger

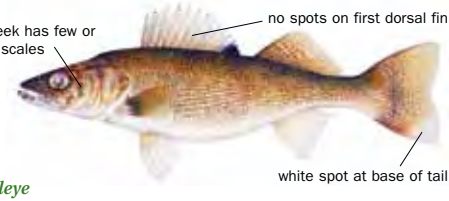


Average Size: 10”–16”

Non-Native Fish

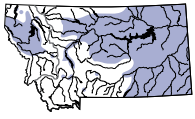


Walleye

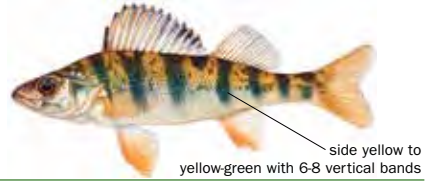


Average Size: 14”–18”

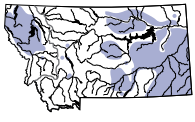
Know the difference between sauger and walleye



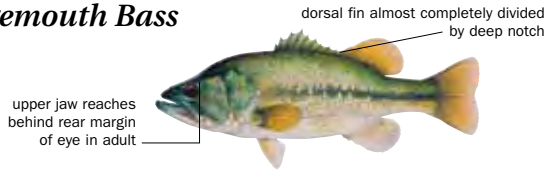
Yellow Perch



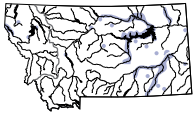
Average Size: 6”–10”



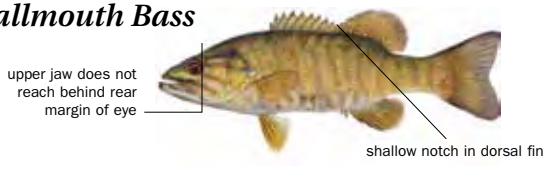
Largemouth Bass



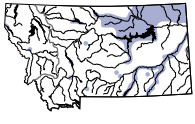
Average Size: 10”–16”



Smallmouth Bass

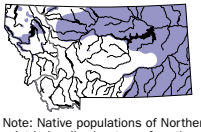


Average Size: 8”–14”

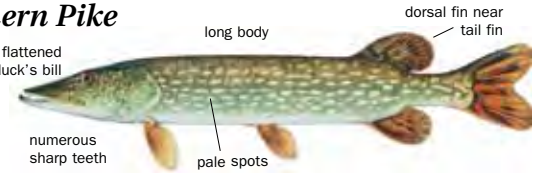


Black Crappie

Average Size: 6”–12”

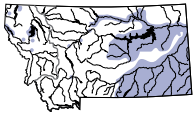


Northern Pike

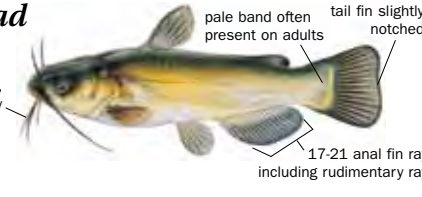


Note: Native populations of Northern pike may exist in localized waters of north-central Montana.

Average Size: 18”–26”



Black Bullhead



Average Size: 7”–10”

We need your help: Please do your part to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species like plants, mussels and whirling disease:

INSPECT. CLEAN. DRY.

1. INSPECT. After leaving a lake or stream, inspect your boat, engine, trailer, anchor, waders, and other fishing and boating gear for mud, water, and vegetation that could carry aquatic invasive species.

2. CLEAN. Completely remove all mud, water, and vegetation you find. Boaters should use a pressurized power sprayer, found at most do-it-yourself car washes. The hot water helps kill organisms and the pressure removes mud and vegetation. No need to use soap or chemicals.

3. DRY. Aquatic invaders can survive only in water and wet areas. By draining and drying your boat and fishing equipment thoroughly, you will kill most invasive species. The longer you keep your boat, trailer, waders, and other gear outside in the hot sun between trips, the better.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

2012 GENERAL FISHING SEASON

	Rivers and Streams	Lakes and Reservoirs
Western District and Central District	Open third Saturday in May through November 30, unless otherwise specified in Exceptions to Standard Regulations.	Open all year
Eastern District	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, 2012 through February 28, 2013