Important Regulation Changes For 2017

Western District	Central District	Eastern District
Lake Creek Middle Fork Flathead River South Fork Flathead River McCormick Pond	Duck Creek Grayling Creek Slough Creek Soda Butte Creek South Fork Madison River	Intake Diversion Dam Paddlefish mandatory reporting phone number has changed

What License(s) Do I Need to Fish in Montana?

Age	License Specifics	Conser-vation License	AIS Prevention Pass	License Fee	Total Cost
0-11	No license required. Must observe all limits and regulations.				
Resident 12 - 17, 62 and older, or disabled	Resident Sportsman license includes a season fishing license.	$8	$2	$5 for 2 consecutive calendar days	$15
				$10.50 for season	$20.50
Resident 18-61	Resident Sportsman license includes a season fishing license.	$8	$2	$5 for 2 consecutive calendar days	$15
				$21 for season	$31
Nonresident 12 and older	Nonresident Combination license includes a season fishing license.	$10	$15	$25 for 2 consecutive calendar days	$50
				$56 for 10 consecutive calendar days	$81
				$86 for season	$111

Free fishing weekend on June 17-18, 2017.
By Montana law, each year on Father's Day weekend any person (resident or non-resident) may fish for any fish within this state without obtaining a fishing license as long as they abide by the seasons, restrictions and bag limits listed in these Fishing Regulations. The two exceptions to this are Paddlefish and Bull Trout fishing, both of which require the purchase of a Conservation and Fishing License. Fishing for Paddlefish also requires a Paddlefish tag. A catch card is required to fish for Bull Trout as described on page 5.

License/Permit Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paddlefish harvest only tags will be available via lottery draw ($5 drawing fee) for the Upper Missouri River Paddlefish season (White Tag) only. Anglers need to apply individually or as a party (up to five people) before 5pm March 30, 2017. See page 86 for specifics on the Upper Missouri Paddlefish drawing.

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 but no harvest is allowed. 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 http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/license/. 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 Human Resources office at 406-444-1289.

- Resident Person With a Disability must purchase a **Conservation License** - $8, an **AIS Prevention Pass** - $2 and a **Fishing License** - $10.50. To qualify a person must be permanently and substantially disabled. Applications and licenses available to residents only at regional FWP offices.
- Lifetime Fishing License for the Blind - $10 plus an annual $2 AIS Prevention Pass. 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. Contact 406-444-2452.

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. Contact 406-444-2452.

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

Purple Heart

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

Other 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 "License/Permit Requirements" for specific license requirements). Crayfish may be taken in traps no larger than 24x12x12 inches. Commercial harvest of crayfish or mussels is prohibited.

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

Commercial Fishing Licenses

Bait Fish Seining: Commercial Harvest, $10 Fee

- Contact regional FWP offices for a Bait Fish Seining License and a list of waters open to commercial seining: $10 fee per year.
- A bait fish seining license is required:
  - For persons 15 years of age or older to seine for or trap and transport bait fish for commercial purposes in Montana;
  - For any person who seines or traps for and has in his/her possession more than 24 dozen non-game bait fish.
- Non-game bait fish (Fathead Minnow, Flathead Chub, Western Silvery Minnow, Plains Minnow, Emerald Shiner, Longnose Dace, Lake Chub, Creek Chub, Longnose, Sucker, and White Sucker.) may be harvested commercially and transported in accordance with Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Section 12.7.201-12.7.206. 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 **http://fwp.mt.gov** for more information.

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

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

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

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

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

Private Fish Ponds – License Requirements, $10 application fee

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

Koi and goldfish ponds must be registered with FWP. Registration forms are available online at 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 for not longer than six months. The court may also order the forfeiture of any current hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and the privilege to hunt, fish and trap, or use state lands for recreational purposes for a period set by the court.

Taking an over limit of fish will result in a fine **plus** restitution to the state for each fish over the limit. Restitution for Bull Trout may be up to $500 per fish and for river Arctic Grayling, White Sturgeon, and Paddlefish restitution is $300 per fish.

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 F&W 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 22).

General Information For Anglers

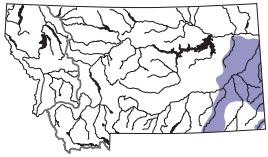
Bait Fish Species Identification: there are 10 species of fish that may be used for

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

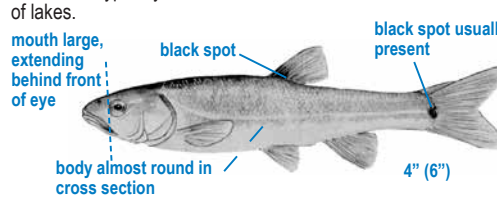
bait. The following images are for help in identification (for more details see the "Live Bait Fish Identification" brochure available online or at Regional offices). See the regulations concerning bait use in each District (pages 26, 54 and 82).

Catch–and–Release Angling: Waters designated catch-and-release for one or more species of fish require that those fish be immediately released alive. Before you start fishing in

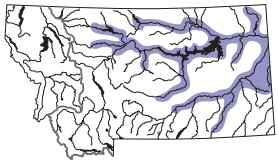
Creek Chub



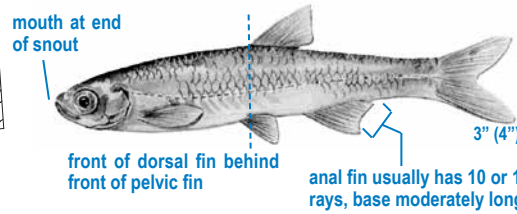
HABITAT: Typically creeks. Less common in rivers and shallows of lakes.



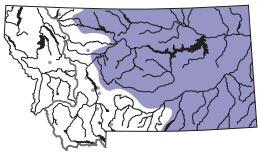
Emerald Shiner



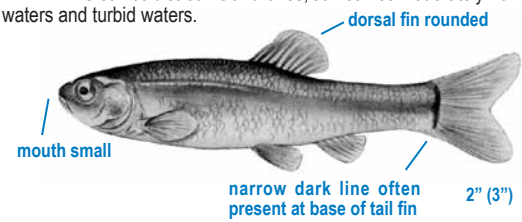
HABITAT: Open water of large streams, reservoirs and lakes.



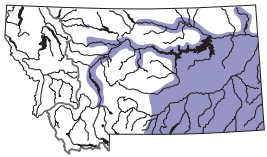
Fathead Minnow



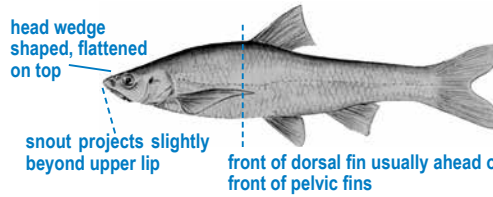
HABITAT: Clean cold streams and lakes; sometimes moderately warm waters and turbid waters.



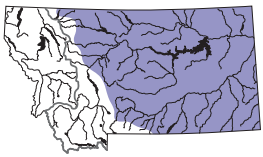
Flathead Chub



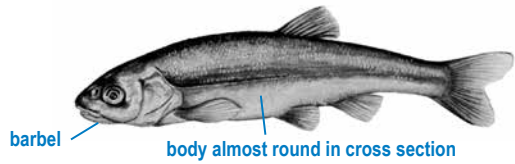
HABITAT: Mostly turbid rivers and streams.



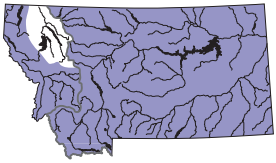
Lake Chub



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

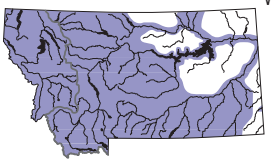


Longnose Dace

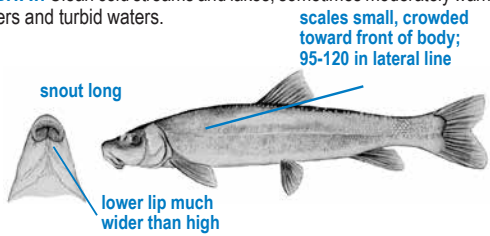


HABITAT: Riffle areas of streams and rivers; to a lesser extent, lakes.

Longnose Sucker

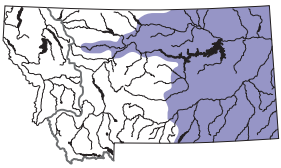


HABITAT: Clean cold streams and lakes; sometimes moderately warm waters and turbid waters.

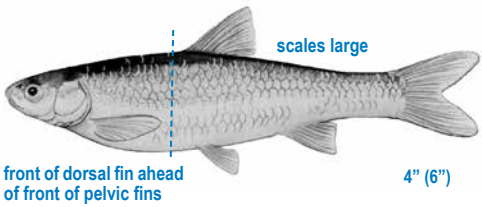


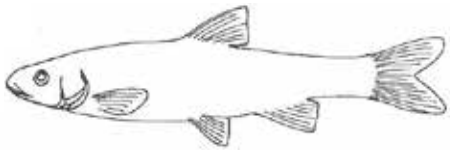
Western Silvery Minnow

Plains Minnow



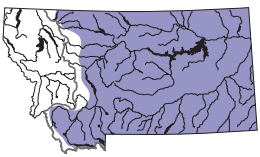
HABITAT: Slower portions of medium-sized to larger streams. Sometimes found in creeks and impoundments.



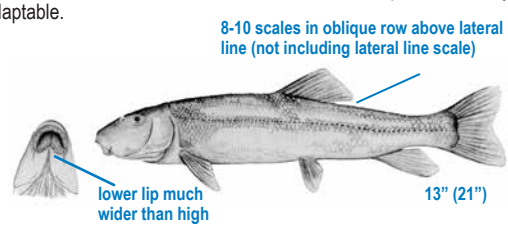


The **Western Silvery Minnow** and the **Plains Minnow** are very similar. The Western Silvery Minnow is more streamlined (see outlines) and has larger scales than the Plains Minnow. Scale counts from lateral line to lateral line under the belly of the fish might be 11 to 17 on the Western Silvery Minnow, and 15 to 22 on the Plains Minnow. Distinguishing these species when live is understood to be very difficult.

White Sucker



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



these waters, consider the following in order to give the fish you release the best possible chance to survive: 1) Artificial lures are preferred over bait to reduce deep hooking and catch-and-release mortality; 2) Single hooks are preferred over treble or multiple hooks because they are easier and quicker to remove; 3) Barbless hooks are recommended over barbed hooks because they are easier to remove and reduce release time; 4) Heavier gear is preferred over lighter gear because it makes it easier to land fish; and 5) Rubber or neoprene nets are preferable because they are less likely than nylon nets to catch hooks which increases release time.

Releasing Fish

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

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

Lake/Reservoir fishing from boats:

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

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

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).

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.

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

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

Fishing Log Program: If you fish regularly in Montana, help us gather fishing information by keeping a fishing log. Call or write for a Fishing Log. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Fisheries Division, PO Box 200701, Helena, Montana 59620-0701; 406-444-7815. Include your name, address and phone number with all requests. You may also enroll online at http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/anglingData/fishingLog/.

Fishing Methods: Fish may be taken only by hook and line or other approved methods. Regulations for the taking of fish are listed in the standard regulations for each fishing district (see pages 25, 53 & 80).

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. Here's what you can do to keep the water clean:

- Take care not to over fertilize and closely follow package instructions
- Pick up pet waste and properly manage waste from livestock
- Use green practices such as rain barrels, rain gardens, and permeable pavements
- Maintain septic systems
- Encourage your community to invest in its wastewater infrastructure

Supporting water quality protection supports great fishing! Learn more at:

www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/

Indian Reservations: Certain waters on Indian Reservations may have special rules

Purchase your fishing license, hunting license(s) and special drawing items online

https://app.mt.gov/als/index/index.html

and permits. Specific information should be obtained from Reservation headquarters.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Off–Highway Vehicles (OHVs): **Residents** – OHVs (ATV, UTV, Dirtbike) must be registered and display a current Off-Highway decal to be used for off-road recreation on public lands (trails, frozen lakes, reservoirs). To be used on roads (County, Forest Service, etc.), an OHV must have a license plate and street-legal modifications. Register your OHV with the County Treasurer. ***NEW*** **Nonresidents** – OHVs registered in another state must purchase a nonresident permit to operate (anywhere) in Montana. Idaho and North Dakota residents are exempt. Permits are good for one calendar year, cost $27 and can be purchased from local vendors (**stateparks.mt.gov**, OHV Program) or online at **app.mt.gov/als**. Contact Montana State Parks OHV Program at 406-444-7642 or **eproctor@mt.gov** with questions.

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 instances when the wading angler should yield to floaters, such as when there is no other channel for the floaters to navigate.
- When possible, avoid using the streambed as a pathway. This type of foot traffic can cause damage to the fragile aquatic habitat. Anglers should use the shoreline to travel from one point to the other, if doing so doesn't violate trespass and stream access laws.

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.

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 or online at http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/anglingData/taggedFish.html

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.

HELP STOP THE SCOURGE OF ILLEGAL FISH INTRODUCTIONS

ILLEGAL INTRODUCTIONS HURT THE RESOURCE AND YOU THE ANGLER

- Illegal introductions of fish can displace existing fisheries, resulting in a loss of fishing opportunity.
- Illegal introductions can lead to the spread of diseases which can kill fish.
- Illegal introductions can lead to the genetic contamination of native or other important fish species.
- Illegal introductions can raise fish management costs, and therefore costs to anglers, through increased hatchery operations and chemical treatments.
- Illegal introductions are made without proper biological analysis and public input meaning that you the angler had no say in an ill-informed action by self-serving individuals.

PENALTIES

- Fines of $2,000 up to $10,000 and imprisonment for up to one year.
- Liability for all costs to eliminate or mitigate the effects of the violation.
- Loss of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for at least 5 years.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Be aware that without FWP authorization, the release of any live fish into any Montana pond, lake, stream or river is strictly illegal. Anyone who appears to be dumping fish (including bait fish) should be reported immediately by calling 1-800-TIP-MONT — 1-800-847-6668. Anyone providing information leading to a conviction for illegal fish introductions is eligible for up to a $1,000 reward. In addition, rewards in excess of $10,000 may be available from various angling organizations.

Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines

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 personal floatation device (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.

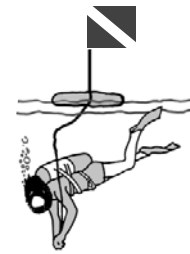
No-Wake Zones on Lakes – Western Fishing District Only

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 waves created next 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.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic Invasive Species are mainly transported by human activities.

CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

With just three easy steps, you can help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species that can damage Montana waters and diminish your fishing opportunities.
If you're transporting watercraft or equipment—or coming from another state or province—you must ensure they're free of AIS before launching (Montana law).

Clean: Completely remove all mud, water, and vegetation before leaving the access area.

- Inspect your boat, trailer, and all gear. Pay attention to crevices and hidden areas.
- Remove all vegetation (by hand or sprayer).
- Remove all mud (use a pressurized power sprayer, found at most do-it-yourself car washes). The hot water kills organisms and the pressure removes mud and vegetation. No need to use chemicals or soap.
- Dispose of debris in trash or on dry land away from water or ramp.

Drain: Drain all water from watercraft and equipment.

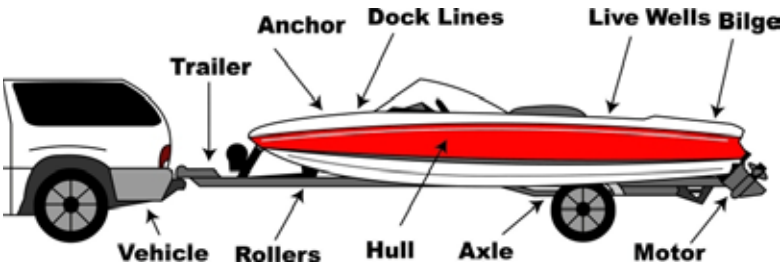
- Drain or remove water from boat, bilge, live well, engine, internal compartments and bait buckets by removing drain plugs before leaving the access area.

Dry: Aquatic invaders can survive only in water and wet areas.

- Dry your watercraft and fishing equipment thoroughly; this will kill most invasive species. The longer you keep your watercraft, trailer, waders and other equipment outside in the hot sun between fishing trips, the better.
- Dry the watercraft and gear completely between trips and allow the wet areas of your watercraft to air dry.

A message from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS !



New Law: Upon removing a vessel from any surface waters and before leaving the associated boat launch or parking area, all aquatic vegetation must be removed from the vessel, trailer, and equipment AND any drain plug, bailer, valves or other device that prevents water drainage from bilges, ballasts, or livewells must be removed as per MCA 12.11.342.

AIS — Find out if the waterbody you are visiting is infested by looking for this symbol on the maps.

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 406-444-2837. This information is also available in a brochure titled "Montana Sport Fish Consumption Guidelines" which can be obtained at any FWP office and many license providers, or on the FWP website at:

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

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.

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

Future Fisheries Program

For many 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 Commission for final decisions. Future Fisheries applications and

additional information about the program can be found on FWP's webpage:

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

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.

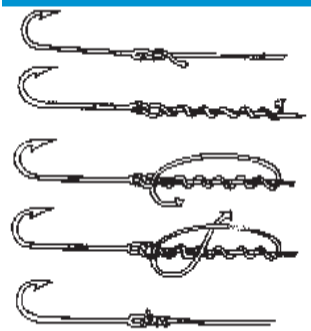
The SFR Program represents one of the most successful user-pay, user-benefit programs in the nation.

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.

Montana Fishing Access Sites

With over 303 fishing access sites to choose from across the state, anglers enjoy good access to the state's streams and rivers, lakes and reservoirs. You may download a field guide to fishing access sites located on Montana's streams, rivers, and lakes, or you may use the interactive "Visit a Fishing Access Site" at **http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/whereToFish/searchFas.html** to find a fishing access site.

The field guide describes the 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. Montana's FAS program provides public access to high quality waters for angling, boating, rafting, and other recreation opportunities. In addition, FASs 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 99 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.

EPA's new How's My Waterway app and website helps users quickly find information on the condition of their local waters using a smart phone, tablet, or desktop computer. This tool provides results within seconds using EPA's water quality assessment data. Check out the condition of your local waterbody today!

Visit http://www.epa.gov/mywaterway

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Catch-and-Release Techniques for Trout

Don't Forget: Keep Them Wet!

The species of fish, water temperature, and angler behavior affect the success of catch-and-release fishing. Trout species are susceptible to angling mortality. Warm water stresses fish more than cold water. How an angler fishes, choice of gear, and how the angler handles the fish affect survival of released fish. Here is what anglers can do to maximize fish survival:

1. **Land the fish quickly and do not play it to exhaustion.**
2. **Wet your hands before handling the fish.**
3. **Keep the fish in the water as much as possible.** Minimize the time out of water for photos.
4. **Remove the hook gently.** Use of artificial lures, single and barbless hooks makes hook removal faster and easier.
5. **Let the fish recover before release.** If the fish is hooked deeply or bleeding, you may have to snip the line at the fish's mouth, or consider keeping it if regulations allow.

Consider limiting your catch. Even with catch-and-release, fish are stressed and some will die. To best avoid harming the fish, keep it underwater where it can breathe.

Rainbow trout photo by Pat Clayton/Engbretson Underwater Photography.

Learn more: **fwp.mt.gov**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

This message brought to you by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks