



UPPER YELLOWSTONE RIVER SMALLMOUTH BASS REGULATION
Fish and Wildlife Commission
April 19, 2022

On Feb. 19 an angler caught a smallmouth bass at the confluence of the Gardner and Yellowstone River. Video of the catch was provided to the National Park Service and species and location of catch was verified by NPS and FWP staff. Smallmouth bass have slowly been expanding up the Yellowstone River, but this report marks the furthest upstream extent of smallmouth bass. The nearest documented catch of smallmouth bass was nearly 34 miles downstream near Emigrant. It is unknown if this fish pioneered upriver as part of population expansion or was illegally introduced into the river.

Following guidance from the Unauthorized Placement of Fish Administrative Rule (12.7.15, ARM), the department is proposing a mandatory catch, kill, and report regulation for the upper Yellowstone River from the boundary with Yellowstone National Park to Springdale Bridge FAS. Additionally, the department proposes to amend an existing similar regulation to encompass the entire Shields River. Possible language for both proposals is presented below.

Proposed new language is presented in *italics* and deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.

Shields River

Page 70 change:

SHIELDS RIVER

~~Upstream from Chadbourne Diversion~~ **Entire River**

- Smallmouth Bass: All Smallmouth Bass caught must be killed immediately, kept and the entire fish turned into FWP. Anglers who catch Smallmouth Bass in the Shields River ~~above the Chadbourne Diversion~~ are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-577-7900). Anglers will be asked to provide location, date, and time of capture and may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number, and phone number. Anglers are required to turn in the whole Smallmouth Bass to a FWP office within 10 days of capture (frozen is allowed) during regular business hours.

Rationale: A catch, kill, and report regulation is already in place for smallmouth bass in the Shields River above Chadbourne Diversion. This amendment would extend that regulation to include the entire Shields River and maintain consistency with the proposed smallmouth bass regulation in the Yellowstone River.

Yellowstone River

Page 73 add:

YELLOWSTONE RIVER

~~Entire River~~

- ~~Smallmouth Bass: 10 daily and in possession.~~

Yellowstone National Park Boundary to Pine Creek Bridge

- Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.

Yellowstone National Park Boundary to Springdale Bridge FAS

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

Springdale Bridge FAS to the North Dakota border

- *Smallmouth Bass: 10 daily and in possession.*