

**FISHING REGULATIONS PROPOSAL FORM**

Waterbody or Fishing District: Western District, Flathead Lake and all waterbodies upstream.

Proposed change, addition, or deletion (for existing regs, include District Standard or Exception to the District Standard. Indicate new language in *italics*, deleted language with a ~~strike through~~):

Page xx add/change/delete:

Page 23 of the 2026 regulations.

Brown Trout (Flathead Lake and all waterbodies upstream): All brown trout caught must be killed immediately, kept, and the entire fish presented to FWP. Anglers who capture brown trout in Flathead Lake or any water body upstream are required to report the catch to FWP within 24 hours (406-752-5501). Anglers will be asked to provide location, date, and time of capture and may be asked to provide their full name, ALS number and phone number. Anglers are required to present the whole brown trout to a FWP office within 10 days of capture (frozen is allowed) during regular business hours.

Rationale (biological justification for proposing this change. Include how this change addresses a fisheries management problem):

FWP has received reports of brown trout caught in Ashley Lake, the Flathead River and Church slough over the past year. Two of these reports have been confirmed and the rest are likely legitimate. These brown trout are the result of illegal introductions and pose a real threat to sport and native fish throughout the drainage. The current distribution and status of these fish is unknown but they are likely in low abundance. Angler catches throughout the area will provide important information needed for management.

The Confederated Salis Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) intends to implement the same regulation for Flathead Lake and the Flathead River upstream of SKQ dam.

Management Plan Reference (drainage, waterbody, language directly from the plan):

SFMP Part i; FWP's action plan for responding to a confirmed unauthorized introduction may include the following management strategies:

- Discontinue stocking any forage fish species that benefits the unauthorized species.
- Modify angling regulations for the waterbody and connected waterbodies, which may include:
 - Liberalizing or removing daily angling limits.
 - Enacting catch-and-release fishing regulations.

- Extending or removing the angling season.
- Allowing capture methods other than hook and line.
- Implementing mandatory catch-and-kill or catch-kill-and-report regulations.
- Closing the waterbody to all fishing.
- Deny applications for fishing contests that target the unauthorized species, except when the department determines that a contest is an essential tool for suppression or eradication and requires catch-and-kill rules.
- Authorize commercial harvest or economic harvest incentives for the unauthorized species when statutory authority is provided and the action is prescribed by a management plan.
- Implement physical control measures to reduce unauthorized-species populations, including:
 - Installing fish barriers.
 - Removing fish using chemical or mechanical methods.
 - Netting spawning fish or using other techniques to reduce reproductive success.
 - Manipulating habitat, such as through reservoir drawdown.
 - Removing illegal species encountered incidentally during other management or survey activities.
 - Disturbing spawning areas to reduce survival.
 - Implementing angler harvest-incentive programs.

Regulation Type (clarification, enforcement, conservation, relevancy, management plan, other):
Enforcement, Conservation, Management Plan.

Public Engagement :This proposal has not been scoped publicly. FWP has issued a press release concerning brown trout and asking anglers to report any captures.

Interdivisional Review (most likely input from Enforcement, but input from Com Ed, Legal, Wildlife may also be appropriate. Multiple divisions will review in Helena via RRAM): This regulation has been reviewed by regional and headquarters fisheries staff.

Nonbiological Information (is there an organized advocacy for this change, controversy, other information that decision makers should be aware, relevant MCA or ARM to justify this change):

Criminals continue illegally introducing fish into region 1 waters. Requiring anglers to kill and submit any brown trout caught may disincentivize future illegal introductions.