



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

POPULAR ICE FISHING LAKES IN NORTHWEST MONTANA

SPECIES	LAKE	TYPICAL LENGTH/WEIGHT RANGE	BEST TIMING
KOKANEE	Ashley Lake (near Kalispell)	9" - 12"	March - April
	Little Bitterroot Lake (near Kalispell)	10" - 16"	January - March
	Lake Five (near West Glacier)	9" - 10"	January - March
	Beaver Lake (near Whitefish)	9" - 10"	January - March
	Lake Mary Ronan (near Dayton)	11" - 12"	February
	Crystal Lake (TCL)*	9" - 11"	January - February
	Middle Thompson Lake (TCL)	9" - 13"	Late January - Early March
	Dickey Lake (near Eureka)	8" - 11"	January - March
PERCH	Smith Lake (Near Kalispell)	8" - 12"	December - March
	Thompson Lakes (TCL)	6" - 12"	Late January - March
	Stillwater Lakes (near Olney)	8" - 12"	December - March
	Echo Lake (near Bigfork)	6" - 12"	Late January - March
	Lower Clark Fork Reservoirs (near Noxon)	6" - 12"	January - March
	Island Lake (near TCL)	6" - 12"	January - March
LAKE TROUT	McGregor Lake (near Kalispell)	10" - 30"	February
	Whitefish Lake (near Whitefish)	10" - 30"	Late January - February
	Swan Lake (near Bigfork)	10" - 30"	Late January - Early March
RAINBOW TROUT	Murray Lake (near Whitefish)	10" - 20"	January - March
	Loon Lake (near Ferndale)	10" - 18"	January - March
	Foy Lake (Near Kalispell)	10" - 18"	January - March
	Cibid Lake (TCL)	10" - 18"	January - March
CUTTHROAT TROUT	Cad Lake (TCL)	9" - 13"	January - March
	Rogers Lake (near Kalispell) also has GRAYLING	9" - 15"	January - March
	Vinal Lake (near Yaak)	9" - 15"	January - March
NORTHERN PIKE	Church Slough (near Kalispell)	3 - 10 lbs.	January - March
	Stillwater Lakes (near Olney)	3 - 10 lbs.	January - March
	Thompson Lakes (TCL)	3 - 10 lbs.	January - March
	Bull Lake (near Troy)	3 - 10 lbs.	February
	Lower Clark Fork Reservoirs (near Noxon)	3 - 10 lbs.	January - March
	Island Lake (near TCL)	3 - 10 lbs.	February

*TCL: Thompson Chain of Lakes



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Always be aware of ice conditions and weather. Always check fishing regulations where you intend to fish.

Recommended **minimum** ice thickness guidelines for good, clear ice:

- **Under 4 inches:** STAY OFF
- **4 inches:** Ice fishing or other activities on foot
- **7 inches:** Snowmobile or ATV
- **10 inches:** Small car (not recommended, but if you must, proceed at your own risk)
- **12 inches:** Larger vehicle (not recommended, but if you must, proceed at your own risk)

TYPICAL ICE FISHING TACKLE AND TECHNIQUES

SPECIES	TACKLE*	TYPICAL DEPTH RANGE**
KOKANEE	Small (1/32-1/4 ounce) jigging spoon Swedish pimple, etc. Orange/pink/chartreuse tip with a glow hook and bait with maggot/corn	Generally, 20 to 30 feet but can be near the surface to greater than 50 feet or even at the bottom near 200 feet in Little Bitterroot Lake; a good fish finder will help
PERCH	Small (1/32-1/8 ounce) jigging spoon, marabou jig or twister-style jig; yellow/chartreuse/white tipped with a maggot/piece of worm/legal fish part.	Generally, less than 30 feet deep but can be deeper; (it is good to dig multiple holes) fish at or near the bottom
LAKE TROUT	¼ to 1-ounce (deeper requires greater weight) jigging spoon or lead head jig with white/chartreuse/glow twister tail; tip with legal fish parts; some people have had success with squid and even pork sausage.	5 feet to greater than 100 feet; a good idea to start at 30-70 feet and cut multiple holes shallow to deep; fish near the bottom to several feet off bottom
RAINBOW TROUT CUTTHROAT TROUT	Small (1/32-1/8 ounce) jigging spoon, marabou jig or twister-style jig; white/chartreuse/green tipped with a maggot/piece of worm/legal fish part.	Generally, less than 30 feet deep think shallower before deeper; In deep lakes fish near shore; In shallow lakes, be willing to move Fish at or near the bottom
NORTHERN PIKE	Can be caught by jigging (Remember to use a heavier duty jigging rod); use darters and spoons that are high visibility like white, chartreuse orange, tip with legal fish parts. The most common way to ice fish for Northern Pike is passive with tip-ups (Remember only two rods on lakes). This technique is simple and effective. More Northern Pike have probably been caught using a treble hook and preserved fish on a tip-up than any other method. Some of the best dead baits are smelt and suckers. It's a good idea to jig in one hole and use a tip-up in another. It's often a good idea to jig for perch or other catchable fish while you're waiting for pike to bite on the tip-up.	Pike can be caught up to 35 feet deep but general are caught much shallower; jigging off the bottom can attract pike to the area; bait on tip-ups should be suspended near the bottom.

* It is a good idea to visit your local sporting goods dealer and ask for suggestions for specific lakes.

** A good fish finder is invaluable for finding bottom and suspended fish.