

FISHING INFORMATION

Big Fish Awards Program

You can qualify for a New Mexico fishing award. Just weigh and measure your catch, fill out the application form for NM Fishing Award (which can be downloaded from the FISHING home page) and return it to the Santa Fe office. Any fish legally taken in New Mexico is eligible.

Award Rules: Anyone may enter. Any fish legally taken by angling in New Mexico will be considered if it meets or exceeds the minimum size in the table below. A witness is needed; this may be the person who weighs and measures the fish. Send photo if possible.

Fish taken in prior seasons may be entered if there is enough evidence (photos, witnesses, etc.) to substantiate the claim.

Mail completed application to:

**Public Affairs Division
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Post Office Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504**

Species - Minimum Length in Inches

Largemouth bass - 20"

Smallmouth bass - 14"

Spotted bass - 14"

Rock bass - 10"

White bass - 15"

Striped bass - 34"

Walleye - 26"

Smallmouth buffalo - 20"

Bullhead - 15"

Common carp - 35"

Crappie - 14"

Blue catfish - 28"

Channel catfish - 24"

Flathead catfish - 36"

Longnose gar - 22"

Northern pike - 38"

Yellow perch - 12"

Bluegill sunfish - 9"

Green sunfish - 10"

Longear sunfish - 10"

Brook trout - 14"
Brown trout - 20"
Cutthroat trout - 15"
Lake trout - 25"
Rainbow trout - 20"
Kokanee/coho salmon - 17"
Other species - Write us

Boat Registration

Where do I register my boat?

Information for registering your boat is available from your local Motor Vehicle Division field office (1-888-MVD-INFO, or www.state.nm.us/tax/mvd). For information on boat license and rules for boat use, contact N.M. State Park and Recreation Division at 1-888-667-2757 or www.emnrd.state.nm.us/nmparks

Fishing/Stocking Reports

Does the Department compile a fishing report or stocking reports?

Get up-to-date fishing reports provided by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and information on fishing regulations, special waters, and answers to other pertinent questions by calling our toll-free number 1-800-ASK FISH. You can also access the current fishing or stocking reports on our web site under the FISHING section. The fishing report is updated on Tuesdays and the stocking reports are updated on Fridays. If you need additional information regarding stocking, call (505) 476-8055.

Free Fishing Day

What is "free" fishing day?

Free fishing days are two Saturdays of the year when anglers do not need a fishing license to fish, though all other regulations apply. The Saturdays are the first Saturday in

June to coincide with National Fishing Day and the last Saturday in September, to coincide with National Hunting and Fishing Day. For the 2001-02 fishing season, free fishing days are June 2, 2001 and Sept. 29, 2001.

Group Fishing Privileges/Restrictions

I have a group of handicapped youngsters I want to take fishing? Are there special arrangements we can make to go fishing free?

The law allows the Director to grant free fishing privileges to certain groups (i.e., nursing home residents, groups in mental health rehabilitation programs, etc.). Such consideration should be requested in writing to the Department, explaining the group involved, the benefit to be derived, how the privilege will be used, and any other information deemed useful in considering the request. Available only to mentally and physically handicapped groups.

Hatchery Tours

Where are your hatcheries, and are they open for tours?

The Game and Fish Department has six hatcheries or fish rearing facilities: Lisboa Springs at Pecos; Red River, near Questa; Seven Springs, near Jemez Springs, Parkview, near Chama; Glenwood, at Glenwood; and Rock Lake, in Santa Rosa. Call the Game and Fish Department Fisheries Division, (505) 476-8055 regarding tours.

Kokanee Salmon Snagging Season Info

When does the special kokanee salmon snagging season begin for 2001-02? Where? What are the possession limits?

The season is Oct 1 - Dec 31, 2001 at: Abiquiu Lake, Chama River from El Vado Lake to the west boundary of Rio Chama Wildlife and Fishing Area, Eagle Nest Lake, El Vado Lake, and Navajo Lake.

The season is Nov 15 - Dec 31, 2001 at: Heron Lake, Willow Creek and Pine River.

Bag limit is 12 per day, 24 in possession, in addition to the other limit for trout. It is unlawful to possess kokanee at Heron Lake and Pine River during the closed season Oct 1-Nov 14, 2001.

Why are Heron Lake, Willow Creek and Pine River closed until Nov 15?

Spawning operations are held each fall at Heron and Navajo Lakes in order to ensure there are continued supplies of kokanee in the state. Department employees, using electro-fishing boats, collect spawning kokanee and temporarily store them in holding pens until eggs and milt can be collected. Afterwards, the kokanee are released back into the lakes. The eggs and milt are mixed, water added to activate the milt and the fertilized eggs are hauled off to incubators at the hatcheries. Although eggs are sometimes available from out-of-state sources, it's cheaper, more reliable and more efficient for the department to collect eggs when the kokanee spawn. Last season, the department collected 3.25 million eggs and planted 2.5 million kokanee fry in state waters.

License Requirements

Who is required to have a fishing license?

A fishing license is required of all persons age 12 and older who fish in New Mexico. Residents 70 years of age and older can obtain a free annual license from their local vendors or Game and Fish Office.

Mercury Levels In Fish

How do I obtain information regarding mercury levels in certain fish?

Contact the New Mexico Environment Department, Surface Water Quality Bureau at (505) 827-0187 or check the Fish Consumption Guidelines Due to Mercury Contamination report on their web site at:
<http://www.nmevn.state.nm.us/swqb/Mercury.html>

Mosquito Fish (Gambusia)

I'd like to purchase Mosquito Fish (gambusia).

If you need a large quantity, contact the City of Albuquerque, Insect and Rodent Control Lab, (505) 873-6613. Otherwise many fish stores in the state carry this fish if you need just a few.

Stocking of Private Ponds

I would like information regarding stocking my private pond. Whom do I contact?

New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, Fisheries Management, (505) 476-8055. They will provide you with a list of certified vendors for you to contact to buy your fish. The department will answer any question you may have regarding stocking your pond.

Trout Fishing in the Santa Fe Area

Where is the closest and best place to trout fish in the Santa Fe area?

Pecos River, 35 minutes southeast of Santa Fe

Two Poles

Is it legal to use two poles to fish?

You may use two poles in warm-waters, but only one pole if you're fishing in trout waters. Note that during the period Nov.1 through Mar. 31 some warm waters are designated as winter trout waters and stocked with trout thus limiting them to one pole during that timeframe.

Whirling Disease

What is whirling disease?

Whirling disease, *Myxobolus cerebralis*, is spread by microscopic spores found on the bottom of ponds, lakes and rivers. It cannot be contracted by humans and fish carrying the spores are safe to eat.

In the life cycle of the disease, the spores are eaten by tubifex worms and develop into Triactinomyxons while inside the worms. The Triactinomyxons are released from the tubifex worms into the water, where they cling to the bodies of trout and burrow into the fish's nervous system. Another metamorphosis within the fish results in a mature spore attacking the cartilage right behind the fish's head. After several weeks, that results in spinal deformities and "whirling" motions by the fish. Black tails are additional evidence of a whirling-disease infection. Young rainbow and cutthroat trout, birth to nine months, are particularly vulnerable to whirling disease, although brown trout are relatively resistant to it. Brown trout are native to Europe and evolved with whirling disease.

What can I do to help prevent the spread of whirling disease?

Anglers can take many steps to reduce its spread. Moving live infected fish, or parts of dead infected fish, is probably the biggest source of contamination. Anglers should never move live fish and always should dispose of fish entrails and skeletons properly in trash receptacles on land rather than throwing fish parts into the water. Do not use kitchen-sink disposals to dispose of fish parts. Anglers also can thoroughly wash and dry their boots and other gear after fishing the Pecos River or infected waters in other states.

Specific Area Questions

How can I find out about the water flow conditions of various streams and rivers in the state?

The US Geological Survey -Water Resource Division maintains an excellent web site at <http://www.nm.water.usgs.gov> or you can call their hotline at 505-830-7988. This site is updated each Monday, Wednesday and Friday and include information on the Gila, Chama, San Juan, and the Rio Grande, to name just a few. In addition to water flow conditions, this site also has historical water data and lists current investigations and assessments that the Division is currently handling.

I would like to know the water level at Cochiti.

Because this dam is under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corp of Engineers, you can call them for the latest information at 505-465-2300

I would like to fish at the Costilla Reservoir (a 90-acre privately-owned reservoir on Costilla creek, 10 miles east of Costilla). I'd also like to find out about camping and fishing conditions. Whom do I contact?

The Costilla Reservoir is owned by the Vermejo Park Ranch, and only guests may fish those waters. Call them at 505-445-3097 for more information and current rates.

I'd like to find out the conditions at Eagle Nest Lake.

Contact Cimarron Canyon State Park, (505) 377-6271

I'd like information regarding conditions at Elephant Butte Lake State Park.

Contact the Park Superintendent, (505) 744-5421.

What are the conditions at El Vado Lake?

Contact (505) 588-7247 or Heron Lake State Park, (505) 588-7470.

What are the conditions at Fenton Lake?

Contact Fenton Lake State Park, (505) 829-3630.

What is the water flow level at Navajo Dam?

Contact the Bureau of Reclamation in Albuquerque, NM, (505) 248-5321

I'd like information about conditions at Navajo Dam.

Contact Navajo Lake State Park, (505) 632-2278

What are conditions at Santa Cruz Lake?

Contact the Bureau of Land Management in Taos, NM (505) 758-8851.