

# Carp

By Mike Sevon and Mark Warren

## Introduction

The lowly carp was first introduced to Nevada in the late 1800s in hopes of providing food for the early settlers. It has since spread throughout the state and is considered a menace by most anglers and biologists. Carp are rather long lived, past 20 years, and reach large sizes, up to 50 pounds. The state record is 34 pounds, 10 ounces, was 38 inches in length and was captured out of the Truckee River by Justin Edland in 2005. The problem with carp has to do with their prolific nature (high number of eggs) and their feeding habits. They spawn in the late spring, usually June, with larger fish producing up to a million eggs. Carp can literally “take over” a body of water. Also, being bottom feeders, their constant rooting around for food stirs up bottom materials, thus increasing water turbidity and decreasing pond productivity. In the past it has been necessary for NDOW to chemically treat waters to remove carp that had taken over. The Department of Wildlife doesn’t want them in the state, but as long as they are here, let’s have fun catching them.



## Spots to Fish

Carp are found in southern Nevada in the Colorado River system, which includes Lake Mead and Lake Mohave, and Pahranaagat Lake. In northeastern Nevada, they are found in the Humboldt River system. Carp waters in northwestern Nevada include the lower Truckee River, the lower Carson River, the lower Walker River, Lahontan Reservoir, Topaz Reservoir, Rye Patch Reservoir, Virginia Lake and Sparks Marina Pond.

## General Fishing Techniques

The most common techniques used to capture carp is fishing with a dough ball, although worms, sweet corn and pre-made

baits such as Berkley Power Carp Bait Chunks® available in corn, natural organic, strawberry and white chocolate flavors also work well. Sounds good enough to eat! Anglers have also successfully used small boiled or canned potatoes as bait. There are numerous recipes for dough balls available in books and on the Internet.

There are two basic rigs for carp: floating and bottom sliding. Since larger carp are very sensitive and spook if they feel any resistance, it is important to use a sliding bell or slip sinker to allow the fish to swallow the bait before setting the hook. A successful urban pond carp angler in Reno uses a fly rod with dough balls to fish. He would cast the bait; let it sink to the bottom, then strip out three to four feet of slack prior to laying his rod down. Eventually a carp would swallow the dough ball and start to swim off, alerting the angler who would then set the hook.

Some people eat carp, cutting out the lateral line and baking them. Others can carp after cooking them to soften the bones and a few people even smoke them. For additional information on carp fishing check out [www.carp.com](http://www.carp.com) and [www.carp.net](http://www.carp.net) on the Internet.





### **Expert Advice and Techniques - Bait Fishing for Carp**

Frank Walters and his wife Narda are well known carp anglers from Las Vegas. They have caught carp in all 50 states. Frank suggests fishing with sweet kernel corn or meal balls. He uses a number four or six hook and threads five to six corn kernels on the hook, leaving the barb exposed. He makes meal balls out of Quaker quick cooking oats, which he wets and molds around the hook. He then flavors the ball with liquid cinnamon, garlic or anise.

### **Expert Advice and Techniques - Fly Fishing for Carp**

Nevada Department of Wildlife Western Region Supervising Biologist Mike Sevon states, "I observed a few knowledgeable anglers that would catch these wily tackle-busting fish each spring, fishing in shallow bays with corn." These fish were among the biggest fish observed during each fishing season. He was intrigued by the thought of catching a fish that commonly exceeded 10 pounds. Most carp are released and because of this, catching carp seemed as normal as catching some of the more popular game fish.

In western Nevada, the Department of Wildlife began Kid's Carp Derbies at Lahontan Reservoir in 2001. The Derby is free and the Nevada Division of State Parks waives the daily park entrance fee for those who participate. The bay south of the Cove Boat Marina on the north shore of Lahontan is prebaited with cracked corn three days prior to the Derby to concentrate carp for the kids to catch. The action is fast and furious during the morning fishing session and prizes are provided to the kids in four different age classes following a barbeque sponsored by the State Park crew.

If you are interested in learning more about carp fishing first hand, the Nevada Department of Wildlife conducts fly fishing seminars in Lahontan Valley each spring, usually in June. Dates for the derby and seminars are available on our website at [www.ndow.org](http://www.ndow.org) by early March.

*Participants of the 2004 NDOW Carp Clinic at Lahontan Reservoir show off their fish.*



In 1996, Mike decided to expand his horizons and try out some carp flies. The fly that gave him his first rush with carp was called the cottonwood seed fly. This fly imitates the white seed of the cottonwood trees that are common around many of our local lakes. With this fly, he was successful in hooking carp at Lahontan Reservoir during the cottonwood seed hatch. The "hatch" has become an annual event for him. It begins around the middle of May and lasts through mid July. When the cotton is on the lake's surface, schools of carp can be seen sucking the seeds from the water. A school of carp is called a shoal of carp. Their surface feeding activity is known as cluping (pronounced clooping). By being stealthy, an angler can get to within 30 feet of the feeding schools, make a short cast and be into the biggest fish of his life.

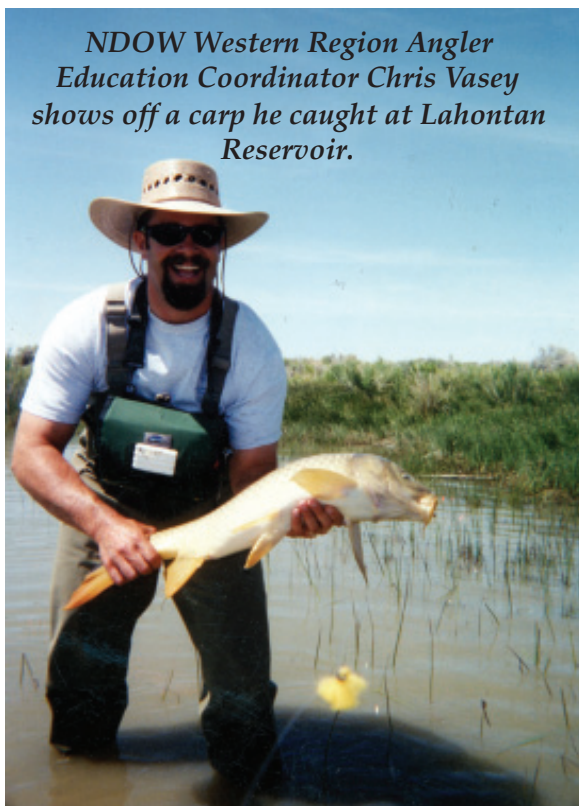
Carp fishing is visually very exciting, because you're constantly scanning the lake surface looking for schools of cluping carp. By being careful, the average angler can take two to three carp out of a shoal before having to move on to another location. These fish

learn very fast and, in a typical day, an angler will need to cover two to three bays to stay in the action. Once a fish is hooked, it is important to try to steer the fish away from the main school of carp and play it to the beach or to your net to avoid scaring the school. It is believed that a carp that is frightened or injured emits a chemical or pheromone, which other carp can smell. After playing a carp near a cluping school, the school will quit feeding for a period, which lasts from 10 minutes to more than an hour.

Feeding carp are most often visible during the afternoon, but can be located any time of the day that cottonwood seeds or insects are plentiful on the surface of the lake or pond. The key to catching carp is locating schools that are actively feeding. Carp can be caught on streamer flies during the spring when young minnows are found in the shallow bays. They can be caught when they are "tailing" for insects on lake bottoms in shallow water. This activity can be determined when the tails of carp are visible on the waters surface.

In many states, carp fishing derbies are held where a small bay or pond is pre-baited with corn a day or two before the derby. The same bait is then used by beginning anglers, usually young fishermen, to experience one of the most memorable fishing events of their lives. In western Nevada, the use of corn and pre-baiting is legal in most waters.

Mike concludes, "On a recent afternoon of carp fishing in Lahontan Valley, I discovered a bonanza of cluping carp. In less than four hours I caught eight fish, which weighed, in total, more than 60 pounds." There are many waters like this available. You may be interested in looking for a record carp to enter into the NDOW Trophy Fish Program. For this program, the minimum size for carp to be entered is 15 pounds. Information on NDOW's Trophy Fish program is located in our fishing regulation booklet available at your local sporting goods stores and also on the NDOW website: [www.ndow.org](http://www.ndow.org).



*NDOW Western Region Angler Education Coordinator Chris Vasey shows off a carp he caught at Lahontan Reservoir.*

# Tilapia

By Jon Sjöberg

## Introduction

Tilapia first appeared in Lake Mead in the mid 1990s, probably from an illegal introduction in the Muddy River tributary. Although less common now than when they were first introduced, anglers in shallow water areas throughout the lake may encounter them, especially in warm weather months from late April through October.

## Spots to Fish

Tilapia are most often encountered during spawning, in early to mid summer, in any area of Lake Mead, but most commonly in the Boulder Basin and mid-Overton Arm. Tilapia spawn in shallow shoreline areas similar to those used by largemouth bass, but generally start spawning later in the year when water temperatures exceed 68°F. Males dig large circular nests with their mouths in shallow water areas with fine sediments, similar to largemouth bass nests, but are often larger and more visible.

## General Fishing Techniques

Tilapia are not normally known for their angling quality. However, some anglers have reported good success using small pieces of hot dogs or lunchmeat, bread balls, dog food, frozen peas or live worms. A small hook size is recommended because of their mouth structure, and they are rarely caught on artificial lures. There is no bag or size limit for tilapia as they are an unprotected species. It is also legal to bow-fish or spearfish for tilapia in areas where those activities are permitted, but spearfish anglers should use caution, as tilapia underwater can resemble black crappie, which is a game fish species and prohibited from spearfishing.

*Tilapia*



*The second when there is nothing on the line, then all of a sudden there's a grab, and you may or may not have a fish on the line.*

*In that single moment lies the main reason I fish.*



**SPECIAL NOTE** – Possession and transport of live tilapia in Nevada is illegal. They can only be possessed if dead, so anglers who catch and want to eat a tilapia should kill them immediately and place them on ice. These fish are classified as a nuisance species, which could cause serious damage to sport and native fisheries in other waters. If not to be kept for consumption, tilapia should be killed immediately and disposed of properly.

# Biographies

## Writers

**Chris Crookshanks** has worked for Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) as a fisheries biologist in Ely since 1998. He has been fishing for as long as he can remember. He caught his first fish, a sucker, in the Swan River in Montana. He proposed to his wife, Chelise, while fishing at Schroeder Reservoir and they spent their honeymoon fly fishing the blue ribbon rivers of Montana. His three year old son, Cade, is on his way to becoming a future angler.

**Joe Doucette** has been the NDOW Conservation Educator in Elko, Nevada since 2000. His primary duties include public information officer, angler education and hunter education. Growing up in an Air Force family, Doucette was lucky to engage in a variety of fishing experiences, beginning with ice fishing on Lake Michigan at the age of five, continuing on to fishing with a cane pole from Mississippi River levees in Arkansas and later, in high school and college, hunting and fishing in western South Dakota.

**Chris Drake** is a fisheries biologist in Northeast Nevada and has worked for the Nevada Department of Wildlife for 14 years. After spending four years in NDOW's hatchery system, Chris was promoted to fisheries biologist for Churchill, Lyon and Mineral Counties in 1996, and then transferred to the Elko office in 2001 as the fisheries biologist of Northwest Elko County. Chris feels fortunate to have worked in Northern Nevada for his entire career and has had the benefit of working with and managing: rainbow, brown, bowcutt, tiger and Lahontan cutthroat trout, as well as walleye, wipers, white bass, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, yellow perch, sunfish, crappie, catfish and various native species within Nevada. Chris enjoys camping and fishing with his two children and exploring all that Nevada has to offer.

**Dave Rice** was employed by the Nevada Department of Wildlife for 30 years, between 1971 and 2001. He worked for the Conservation Education Bureau, retiring as Chief. Dave has always had a passion for fishing, especially at Lake Tahoe. He was mentored by an elderly angler early on, a gentleman, Les Bunch, who had fished for mackinaw for years at the Lake. While working for NDOW, Dave held an annual mackinaw fishing clinic for beginning fishermen each year, a practice he continues today.

**Ivy Santee** has worked for NDOW as Angler Education Coordinator for the Southern Nevada Region since June 1993. Santee started fishing when she was four years old on a camping trip to Loch Ness

in Scotland. Shortly thereafter when the family moved to Key West, Florida, she really developed a love of fishing. Growing up, she and her dad and brothers spent many days fishing various lakes near where they were stationed for the US Navy. When she was nine years old, her dad retired and they moved to California, where she learned to fish for striped bass in San Luis Reservoir. Santee says her real passion is fly fishing and whenever she gets the chance she can be found on a lake or stream casting to rising fish.

**Geoffrey Schneider**, a 38-year resident of Nevada, supervises Conservation Education programs in southern Nevada for NDOW. Some of Schneider's fondest fishing memories date back to his days as a child in McCook, Nebraska, where a boy who lived next door introduced him to fishing by teaching him how to catch bullheads in a farm pond. He is the author of the book *Lake Mead National Recreation Area Guide to Boating* published by Southwest Parks and Monuments Association.

**Mike Sevon** recently retired as the Western Region Fisheries Supervisor for the Nevada Department of Wildlife. He started fishing for carp in 1996. Since that time he has developed considerable expertise with catching carp on flies. In 2002, he broke the existing catch and release records for carp on a fly rod utilizing four and eight pound tippet. The fish caught on four pound tippet was 33 inches long and remains the current record in the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame.

**Jon Sjöberg** started working for the Nevada Department of Wildlife in June 1980 at the Verdi Hatchery, later transferring to Washoe Station. In 1989 he became the native fishes biologist in the Southern Region, moving up to Regional Fisheries Supervisor in 1995, a position he still holds. Jon runs the razor's edge between managing largemouth bass and humpback chubs. In his spare time he likes to tinker on his MG.

**Chris Vasey** is employed as the Regional Education Outdoor Coordinator for the Western Region of the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Chris, a native of Gardnerville, Nevada, grew up fishing the small streams of the Sierra with his dad. Prior to coming to work for NDOW, Vasey worked as a fishing guide in Montana for six years.

**Clyde Parke** has been the supervisor of the Lake Mead Fish Hatchery for the Nevada Department of Wildlife for six years. Parke has fished all his life in

various locations, such as the Sacramento Valley in California, and Alberta, Canada where he lived 19 years prior to moving to the Las Vegas area in 1999. He enjoys fishing for both fresh and saltwater species.

**Mark Warren** has worked for the Nevada Department of Wildlife for 30+ years, currently as Staff Biologist in the Fisheries Bureau in charge of the Sport Fish Program. A third generation Nevadan, he has fished all his life, starting at six years of age fishing streams with worms with his father. In his free time Warren loves to go fly fishing on his pontoon boat with friends. It was always Mark's dream to complete a How to Fish Book, for Nevada anglers. This is that book. Congratulations Mark!

### Expert Anglers

**Greg Ackerman** is a consummate angler who has no problem fishing all day long, stopping for a short break of a snickers bar and a coke around 1 p.m. Fishing for Greg is fuel enough to make it through the day. There is no one who has the depth and breadth of fishing knowledge that Ackerman has on Rye Patch and Lahontan Reservoirs.

**Brian Bennett** is an accomplished fly fisherman in a variety of situations and habitats, but, like any good angler, has adapted his craft to his surroundings. Living in Ely, he has mastered the art of fly fishing the numerous high desert reservoirs that characterize northern Nevada including White Pine County. His love of fly fishing is readily apparent just by watching him fish. He approaches the sport with an unmatched passion and joy. If you didn't know better, you'd think each fish he catches was his first. Brian is also an expert fly tier. Along with all the standard flies you'd expect to find in every fly box, he's known for some of his more unusual creations that have become legendary in eastern Nevada.

**Dennis Clark** is an avid carp and catfish fisherman. He is 57 years of age and has lived in Reno for the past 20 years after moving from California. He grew up around the Los Alamos area 150 miles north of Los Angeles where he did some fishing in local farm ponds, but mostly shore fished the ocean, catching lingcod, sea trout and rock bass.

**Rod Dahl** has been a passionate walleye angler since the early 1980s when this species was first introduced into Lahontan Reservoir. He has spent hundreds of hours becoming a master walleye

angler at both Lahontan and Rye Patch Reservoirs. Rod is employed in Reno at the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Steve Davis** of Fallon, Nevada, is a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife animal damage control agent who has a life-long passion for hunting and fishing. He has pursued walleye at Lahontan Reservoir ever since NDOW first stocked walleye there in 1980.

**Mickey Daniels** is a master guide at Lake Tahoe, where he owns and operates Mickey's Big Mack Charters. His 45 years of experience proves invaluable in catching big lake trout. He can be reached at (800) 877-1462 or on the web at [www.mickeysbigmack.com](http://www.mickeysbigmack.com).

**Jim Goff** has been a licensed master guide for the past 22 years on Lake Mead, based on 40 years of experience fishing the lake. Before moving to Las Vegas, Jim grew up in Southern Utah, learning to fish at Panguitch Lake and the nearby streams. He moved to Las Vegas when he was 11 years old and as a young man he used to ride his bike most of the way to Lake Mead with his friends and then hitchhike the rest of the way, leaving their bikes at a guard shack near what is today Lake Plaza.

**Dan Hannum** is the present (2004) state record holder for wiper. He also holds the 2003 state wiper record and for a short time had the number two entry in 2002 (it was number one for one week before being beat out by his friend – Keith Bachman). Dan is 49 years old and lives outside of Dayton, Nevada. He has been fishing since he was three years old, being taught by his grandfather who raised him. Growing up in the San Francisco area, he was able to find numerous small farm ponds to catch bluegill and other sunfish. He fished on the Bass Pro Circuit for 20 years, entering more than 200 tournaments. He also guided for 15 years at Lake Tahoe where one year he earned the top guide award.

**Dennis Lattin** is a fourth generation Nevadan who started fishing the drainage ditches and farm ponds in the Fallon area as a kid. He moved to Elko in 1977 where he fished mainly for trout in the high alpine lakes of the Ruby Mountains and at Wildhorse Reservoir. He started bass fishing at Ruby Marsh and Wilson Reservoir in the late 1970s. When South Fork Reservoir was built in 1988, and stocked with smallmouth bass, Lattin began targeting smallmouth. Lattin can be found on South Fork Reservoir several days a week during the spring, summer and fall pursuing his love of bass fishing.

**Bob Marcum** is a mainstay at Sportsworld, a sporting goods store located in Ely. To the legions of folks who travel to White Pine County, he's always there to give tips, advice, and current fishing conditions for local waters. Bob

is well known for his special technique that always seems to catch fish.

**Jim Neill** is an old friend of Bill Warren, Mark Warren's father. He has spent his life hunting and fishing, and is accomplished at both. For years he was the supervisor of the Hydro Electric Plant at Lahontan Reservoir, living in a provided house near the dam. This gave Neill the opportunity to fish Lahontan Reservoir on an almost daily basis.

**Jimmy Robinson** has spent many years fishing for largemouth and striped bass at Lake Mead and Lake Mohave. He is a resident of Henderson and operates J.R.'s Guide Service (702) 683-1552, (702) 266-6008.

**Bill Ronchetti** does custom auto painting as his main job and custom lure painting as a side job. He buys spoon blanks and does a beautiful job of painting them in multiple colors. Bill remembers fishing with his mom and dad his whole life. Some of his earliest memories are of his mother strapping him to her fishing creel while she fished. Ronchetti loves to fish and catch fish on his custom lures. He has hundreds of snapshots, mostly of trout, being captured with his equipment. In addition to the lures, he also custom paints downrigger weights to look like fish and makes attractors in various sizes and colors. He calls his most popular attractor the Dynamite Stick. It's about six inches long with various beads and one spinner. You can call Ronchetti at his shop at (775) 333-1063 or visit him at his shop in Reno at 1000 Telegraph # 3.

**Gene St. Denis** is a professional guide at Lake Tahoe. He has been fishing at the lake since 1981. He is insured and licensed by the California Department of Fish and Game. St. Denis is also a U.S. Coast Guard licensed Captain. He can be reached by calling (530) 544-6552 or on the web at [www.blueribbonfishing.com](http://www.blueribbonfishing.com).

**Jerry Stager** has lived in Elko since 1992, where he has fished for both pleasure and as a guide. He has been guiding since 1970. He has worked as a trapper and has been a professional fly tier since the early 1960s.

**Frank Walters** and his wife Narda are well known carp anglers from Las Vegas. They have captured carp in all 50 states. They are members of a national group of anglers known as the Carp Angler Group who advocate safe catch and release of carp.

## Artist

**Marvin G. Burgoyne** grew up in northeastern California and graduated from Surprise Valley Union

High School in Cedarville in 1959. He attended Humboldt State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Game Management in 1964. He accepted a job with the Nevada Department of Wildlife at the Verdi Fish Hatchery in 1965 where he spent 13 years as a fish culturist. In 1978 Marvin was promoted to the position of Fisheries Staff Specialist and acted as an administrative assistant to the Chief of Fisheries in matters of statewide fish cultural planning, federal aid, boating access and operation. Marvin enjoyed a 32-year career with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and retired in August of 1997. He now enjoys his time with his wife of 42 years, Augusta, his children and grandchildren. He keeps busy with gardening, woodworking, artwork, fishing, and hunting.

## Photographer - Fishing Lures and Flies

**Mike Sevon** is the Western Region Fisheries Supervisor for the Nevada Department of Wildlife. He is an avid photographer specializing in fine images of Nevada and the Great Basin. In his free time, Sevon is a freelance photographer for the Fallon Star Press.

## References

**The Hunting & Fishing Library.** 1982. *The Art of Freshwater Fishing.* Cy De Cosse Incorporated. Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343

**Quinnett, Paul G.** 1998. *Pavlov's Trout.* Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Thank you to **Mark Fore & Strike Sporting Goods** Store in Reno, for providing the fishing equipment used in Mike Sevon's photographs.



# STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

**YOU, the angler, can help prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species!**

Aquatic nuisance species can hitch a ride on clothing, boats, waders, tackle, and other fishing accessories and can easily be overlooked by anglers. When anglers then go to another lake or stream, the nuisance species can be released. And, if the conditions are right, these introduced species can become established and create drastic negative results.

Some of these harmful aquatic "hitchhikers" are Eurasian watermilfoil, hydrilla, zebra mussels, and New Zealand mudsnails.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) want to warn all anglers and water users about the risks of transporting New Zealand mudsnails, one of many detrimental aquatic species that can **damage fish populations**.

Since their discovery in Idaho's Snake River in 1987, New Zealand mudsnails have spread to surrounding areas where they have flourished. These small brown snails measure no more than 1/8 inch. New Zealand mudsnails can easily reach densities up to 750,000 per square yard and cause significant problems for stream ecosystems. At high densities the snails consume most available food leaving little for native snails and aquatic insects to feed on. This leads to a reduction or elimination of these vital food sources, which can result in a **significant impact on fish populations**.

"We are calling on all anglers to immediately take action to ensure that they do not spread New Zealand mudsnails" says Verne Lehmborg, FFF Conservationist. "New Zealand mudsnails are rapidly being spread to waters across the west and each of us must ensure that we are not part of the problem."

## What you can do:

**Here are some methods to minimize your chances of accidentally transporting destructive foreign aquatics. By following these steps you can help protect your valuable fishing resource for the future:**

- [ Remove any visible mud, plants, fish, or animals before transporting equipment.
- [ Eliminate water from equipment before transporting (including the live well).
- [ Carefully clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
- [ Never release plants, fish, or other aquatics into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water. Dispose of unwanted live bait on shore in a receptacle.
- [ Formula 409 or similar soaps have proven to be especially effective for cleaning equipment.



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
Particularly waders/boots.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

**For further information about aquatic nuisance species,  
please visit these websites:**

[www.ndow.org/fish/exotic](http://www.ndow.org/fish/exotic)  
[www.protectyourwaters.com](http://www.protectyourwaters.com)  
[www.fedflyfishers.org](http://www.fedflyfishers.org)  
[www.washingtoncouncilfff.org/nzms.htm](http://www.washingtoncouncilfff.org/nzms.htm)  
[www.esg.montana.edu/aim/mollusca/nzms/  
credits.html](http://www.esg.montana.edu/aim/mollusca/nzms/credits.html)



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

**Thanks for doing your part to protect our waters!**

# Fish Nevada



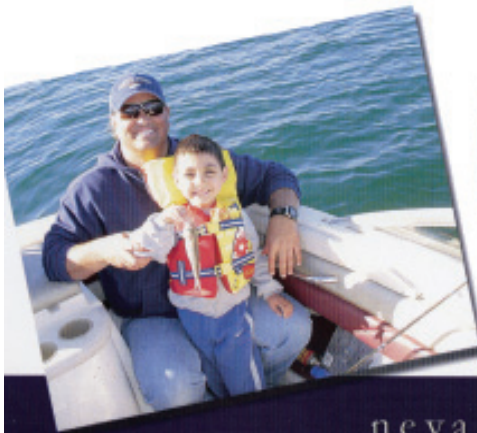
*Take me fishing  
Because I get the giggles when the  
boat bounces.*

*Take me fishing  
You can think about  
work later.*

*Take me fishing  
Because my  
wedding will be  
sooner than you  
think.*

**Buy your Nevada  
Fishing License  
and Trout Stamp  
Today!**

Buy your license at the counter today or visit us online at [www.ndow.org](http://www.ndow.org) to buy your license online, check the fish report and stocking updates, download an angler information guide and more!



nevada department of WILDLIFE  
[www.ndow.org](http://www.ndow.org)

