6.
COMINS LAKE

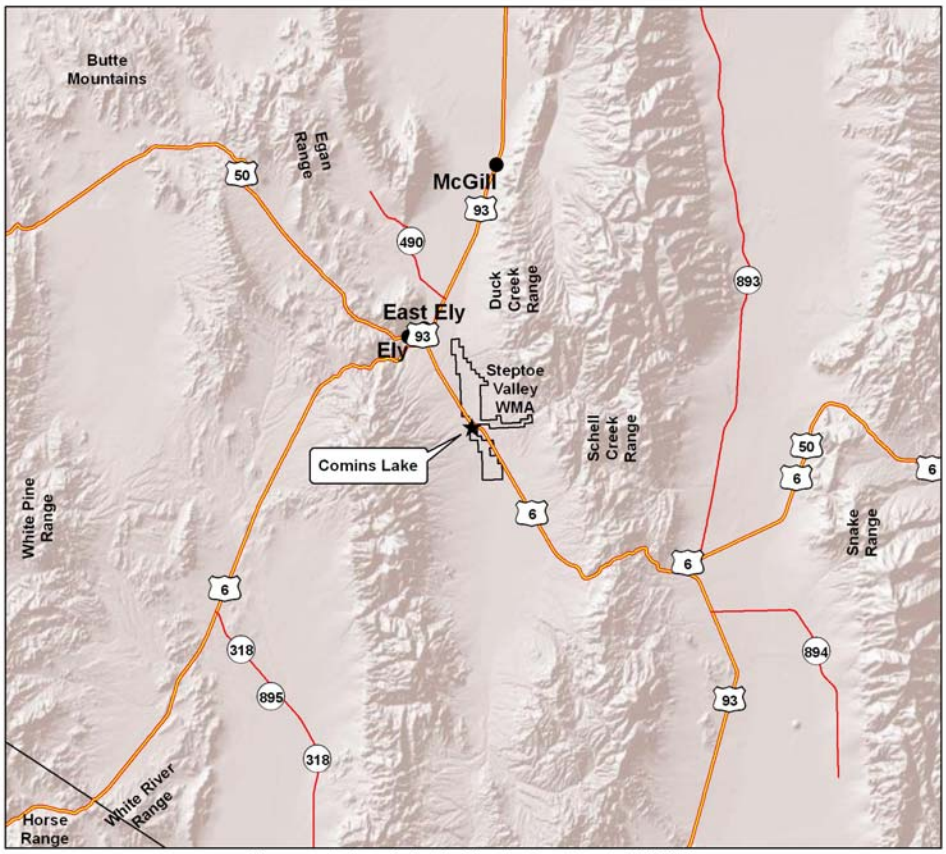
History - Comins Lake was created in 1953 by the realignment of Highway 93, which created the dam that created the lake. It is fed by both Steptoe and Cave Creeks from the east and Willow Creek from the south. At capacity, the lake covers 410 surface acres with a maximum depth of 14 feet. Average depth is 6 to 8 feet. Access to the reservoir was limited until 1999 when it was acquired by the Department of Wildlife as part of the 3-C Ranch purchase. The reservoir is situated on what is now the Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management Area approximately 7 miles south of Ely. Along with trout and bass, the reservoir maintained a population of northern pike in the 1970s and 1980s. When the pike population crashed, the reservoir was chemically eradicated in 1989 to remove the species. Largemouth bass were introduced by NDOW in 2002. Pike were ILLEGALLY introduced into Comins Lake in the late 1990s. Since then, the pike have successfully spawned a number of times. Substantial predation upon the trout and bass in the reservoir by the pike has been documented in recent years.

Pertinent Information – Rainbow trout, brown trout, largemouth bass and northern pike currently inhabit the reservoir. Due to the tremendous amount of feed, these fish grow very rapidly and reach healthy sizes. However, due to heavy predation of trout by northern pike, no further trout stocking will occur until pike are eliminated. An electrofishing survey in 2008 found no trout, but a few largemouth bass were still found. In general, fishing for trout is usually best in the spring and fall while bass fishing is most productive in the warmer summer months. Bait fishermen should fish off the bottom with Power Bait, salmon eggs, or night crawlers with a minimal amount of weight. Spinners and spoons are popular with the casters, but a fly-on-a-bubble produces excellent results. Fly fishermen should use wooly bugger and leech patterns in the spring and damsels as well as nymphs and midges under a strike indicator the rest of the year. Remember to use a heavy leader. For those willing to brave the elements, weighted jigs (green or yellow) seem to work best for ice fishing. Facilities - A primitive boat launch is available. There are restrooms on-site. Overnight camping and fires are not allowed.

Stocking – No fish are scheduled for stocking in 2009 due to a large northern pike population.

Regulations - Fishing is allowed year around. Limit is 5 trout and 5 black bass daily and in possession. There is no limit on northern pike (unlimited possession). Due to a change in regulations in 2006, northern pike are now considered a prohibited species and anglers wishing to keep pike are required to kill them upon capture.

Health Advisory - Due to elevated methylmercury levels, the Nevada State Health Division has issued a health advisory that recommends no consumption of largemouth bass or northern pike from Comins Lake. Please visit NDOW's web site (www.ndow.org) for more details.



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Biologist Forecast for 2009 - Water levels should remain stable this year and fishing for trout and bass should be very poor. The expanded northern pike population had a profound effect on the trout and bass populations. Northern pike fishing should be good and catching 20-26 inch fish should be common. Use flashy, colorful lures. Anglers are reminded to keep all northern pike caught at the reservoir.

Boating Regulations - Boats must be operated at a speed which leaves a flat wake and in no case exceeds 5 nautical miles per hour from sunset to 11 a.m. From 11 a.m. to sunset the reduced speed restriction is lifted and water skiing is allowed.

Access - Comins Lake is located 7 miles south of Ely off Highway 93.