

18. LAKE TAHOE

History - Lake Tahoe was discovered by European General John C. Fremont in 1844. Prior to the “discovery”, the basin was seasonally inhabited by the Washoe Indian Tribe. The lake, known for its picturesque setting and amazing water quality, is a lake to 6,223 feet and a reservoir between 6,223 feet and 6,229 feet (elevation above sea level).

Pertinent Information - Lake Tahoe, located in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, covers 121,000 surface acres or 192 square miles to a depth of 1,646 feet. Several introduced sport fish species inhabit the lake including lake trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, and kokanee salmon. Native fishes include mountain whitefish, Tahoe sucker, Lahontan sucker, speckled dace, redbase shiner, Lahontan tui chub and Paiute sculpin. On site creel census taken in 2003 found catch rates for shore, topline, and deepline of 0.07, 0.5 and 0.8 fish per hour respectively. NDOW’s angler drop boxes showed catch rates for shore, topline and deepline anglers of 0.18, 1.1 and 1.6 fish per angler respectively. Nevada Department of Wildlife’s (NDOW) Angler Questionnaire data for 2003 showed a catch rate of 2.36 fish per angler day. Fishing throughout the year is variable, but for shore, topline, and deepline angling, July and August are the most productive months in terms of angler success rates. Rainbow trout average 10 to 12 inches in length, while lake trout range between 15 and 25 inches. Fishing from the two State Parks (Cave Rock and Sand Harbor) from shore and toplining seems to produce the best catch rates for small rainbow trout. These are also the locations NDOW stocks. Shore access is limited due to private property and very limited parking. Standard shore baits include worms, power bait, salmon eggs and minnows. Lures such as Mepps, Panther Martin, Rapala and Daredevil often catch cruising rainbow and brown trout. Topline trolling for rainbow and brown trout is, at times, productive, while deepline trolling and jigging are the most widely used techniques for catching the mackinaw (lake trout). Numerous commercial guide services are available for anglers that lack the extensive fishing setups required for lake trout fishing and toplining. NDOW’s Trophy Fish Program lists records for a 4-pound, 13-ounce kokanee salmon, a 13-pound, 7-ounce brown trout, a 37-pound, 6-ounce mackinaw (State Record), an 11-pound, 7-ounce rainbow trout and a 3-pound, 4-ounce mountain whitefish (State record).

Stocking - Between April and August, approximately 38,000, 9 to 10 inch rainbow trout will be stocked into Lake Tahoe.

Regulations - Season is open year around, 1 hour before sunrise to 2 hours after sunset, except for the following closed areas: Within a 200 yard radius of the mouths of Third, Incline, and Woods Creek; a 500 yard radius from Sand Harbor Boat Ramp; and within the boat launch area inside the jetty at Cave Rock Boat Ramp. Limits are 5 coldwater game fish of which not more than 2 may be mackinaw (lake trout). **Live Bait:** Only Lahontan redbase shiner, tui chub, Tahoe sucker, mountain sucker, Paiute sculpin and speckled dace may be used as live bait fish. Fish must be taken from and native to Lake Tahoe. Fishermen may use either a Nevada or a California license to fish anywhere on the lake.

Biologist Prediction for 2005 - The catch rates for rainbow trout and mackinaw should be about the same as past years. Possible low lake levels could make boat launching difficult by late summer.

Boating Regulations - **Reduced Speed Areas:** All boat harbors and other areas designated by buoys are areas in which a vessel must be operated at a speed that leaves a flat wake, but in no case may a vessel be operated at a speed in excess of 5 nautical miles per hour to include: Zephyr Cove and Cave Rock in Douglas County; Round Hill Pines Beach in Douglas County; Sand Harbor; Incline Village General Improvement District Boat Ramp, and Crystal Shores West in Washoe County. **Boating Prohibited Areas:** Vessels are prohibited in areas which are designated by signs or buoys as follows: The main beaches at Sand Harbor and Diver's Cove within Lake Tahoe State Park; the swimming area of Incline Village General Improvement District and Burnt Cedar Beach; the swimming area of Galilee at the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center; the swimming area of the Glenbrook Homeowner's Association; the swimming area of the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe; the swimming area of Zephyr Cove Marina; and the swimming area of Crystal Shores West. **Motor Restrictions:** There are motor restrictions (type) imposed by the Tahoe Regional Planning Authority (TRPA).

Access - From Reno, travel 10 miles south on Hwy 395 to SR 431, turning right and traveling 20 miles west to Lake Tahoe. From Carson City, travel 2 miles south on Hwy 395 to SR 50, turning right and traveling 14 miles west to the lake. Hwy 28 circumnavigates the lake.

