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TOPAZ LAKE

History – Topaz Lake was impounded in 1922 to store irrigation water and is part of the West Walker River Drainage. It is situated in Nevada (Douglas County) and California (Mono County) and both states contribute to the management of the fishery.

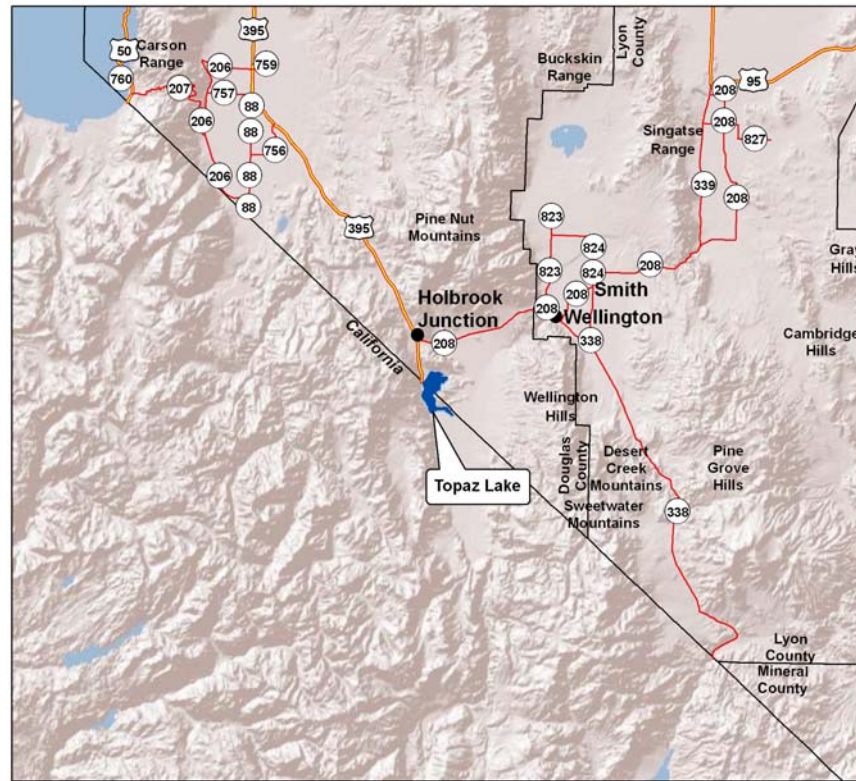
Pertinent Information – Topaz Lake is relatively large with a maximum pool of 126,000 acre-feet, 2,410 surface acres, a length of 3.5 miles, a width of 1.5 miles, and maximum depth of 92 feet. The water level typically remains high throughout winter and spring and reaches its lowest level in summer. After the irrigation season in October, the lake begins refilling. Rainbow trout is the dominant sport fish, but brown trout and, to a lesser extent, largemouth bass inhabit Topaz Lake.

Normal trout stocking rates continued after the 1997 flood and fishing success has steadily increased each year. Angler questionnaire data from 2007 found 2,935 anglers fishing 24,586 days to capture 44,152 fish for 1.8 fish per angler day. Boaters should troll the top 20 feet of the water column, a fish finder will help determine depth. Troll Rapalas for best results. Shore anglers should fish with Power Bait and/or worms and cast out as far as possible for best results. The annual average size of rainbow trout is usually around 12 inches, but trout commonly range in size from 10 to 18 inches. Several 5 pound or larger fish are caught each year. Topaz Lodge and Casino has a weekly fishing derby and the winners' photographs are posted at the lodge.

Most of the property around the lake, both in Nevada and California, is open to the public. Only portions of the west shore in Nevada and California and the far south end of the lake in California are private lands. Boat launching is available at Topaz Marina and at the Douglas County Park. Douglas County Park additionally provides camping, electrical hook-ups, bathrooms, picnic tables, and a playground. Topaz Marina also has fishing boat rentals, boat slips, bathrooms, food and drinks.

Stocking – NDOW plans on stocking 50,000 rainbow trout, 2,500 tiger trout and 5,800 bowcutt trout into the reservoir this year. Most fish are stocked at a size from 10 to 12-inches during the closed fishing season (October through December), but additional stocking occurs in March, after the start of the new fishing season.

Regulations – The season is open January 1 through September 30, 1 hour before sunrise to 2 hours after sunset, except for the area within the jetties of Topaz Marina, which is closed to fishing. Limit is 5 trout, 10 mountain whitefish, and 15 warmwater game fish of which not more than 5 may be black bass. Persons under 16 years of age are not required to have a fishing license. Those anglers, 16 years of age and older, must have a Nevada fishing license and a trout stamp, a Nevada short term fishing permit, *or* a California fishing license. Two-rod stamps are valid in both states.



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Biologist Forecasts for 2009– The lake water level is generally high at the beginning of the year. Fishing should be fair to good in the spring and early summer, tapering off in the summer. Fishing has been good in the spring of 2009 with limits of trout caught and some over 3 pounds. Again, boaters should troll the top 20 feet. As the weather warms, the fish will dive deeper to escape the heat. Boat anglers will do well trolling Rapalas and shore anglers should fish with Power Bait and worms as far out as they can cast for the best success. Largemouth bass fishing in summer may pick up. A project this spring to place out more protective habitat for young bass may help increase production.

Boating Regulations – At boat ramps in Douglas County - All boat harbors and other areas designated by buoys are zones 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. Vessels are prohibited in areas within the signs or buoys located at the county swim beach. There are no restrictions to the size of boat or motor used. Anglers trolling with 10 to 14-foot boats are prevalent and float tube fishing is becoming more common. Water skiing and use of personal watercraft is a popular recreation when the weather begins to warm.

Access – Access to Topaz Lake is excellent for all types of vehicles. From Carson City, travel south on Highway 395 for approximately 40 miles. Turn east on Topaz Lake Park Rd. to reach the Douglas County Park at the far east end of the reservoir *or* turn east on Kit Carson Ave. (just past Topaz Lodge and Casino) and follow the road to Topaz Marina. Shore access is available along Topaz Lake Park Rd., within Douglas County Park, and farther south on Highway 395 in California.

