

**STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS**

Commission Policy Number 31

Number: P-31

Title: Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Management Guidelines

Reference: NRS 501.105, 501.181

Effective Date: March 22, 1996

Reviewed Date: 2002, 2022

Amended Date: November 18, 2016, March 2022

PURPOSE

The Board of Wildlife Commissioners (the Commission) establishes policies necessary to preserve, protect, manage, and restore wildlife and its habitat. The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout is one of six native salmonids currently found in Nevada. Historically, this fish existed in eleven lacustrine populations and an estimated 400 to 600 streams and rivers. Currently it exists in about 159 streams and 6 lakes and reservoirs in Nevada, California, and Oregon. The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout was federally listed as “threatened” in 1975 under the Endangered Species Act. In Nevada, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout is classified as a “game fish” by action of the Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

POLICY

The Commission does hereby establish the following policy to provide for the preservation, protection, management, and restoration of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

1. The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan approved in January 1995 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the associated Updated Goals and Objectives for the Conservation of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (2019), in combination with guidelines developed in cooperation with individual species Geographic Management Unit (GMU) implementation teams, will be used as the guidance for the Nevada Department of Wildlife’s species management planning and implementation with the objective of recovery and delisting of the species as rapidly as is biologically possible.
2. Distinguishable races of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) will be managed separately within the major drainage basins of historic Lake Lahontan. The three basin population segments include the Western Lahontan basin GMU, Northwest Lahontan basin GMU, and the Upper Humboldt River basin GMU.
3. In order to accomplish recovery objectives, the Department will participate in cooperative efforts with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; all land management agencies; other state agencies; willing private landowners and local/tribal governments that are working toward the recovery of LCT and their habitat.
4. Stream habitat restoration and management is a necessity on many waters before reintroductions can take place. On some streams, competing and/or hybridizing nonnative trout will need to be controlled or eliminated and/or physical barriers constructed to prevent

competition or introgression with LCT.

5. Private landowner cooperation is essential to the development of connected populations needed to ensure the survival and recovery of LCT within the Northwest Lahontan basin and Upper Humboldt GMUs. To protect private landowners who currently have LCT on their property, or who through conservation efforts may attract LCT to their property, there are two Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreements (SHA) available (Northwest Lahontan basin and Upper Humboldt SHAs). The Department will actively work to enroll willing private landowners into Cooperative Agreements under the SHAs which will provide regulatory assurances that future property use restrictions will not be imposed if they improve, restore, create or maintain habitat for LCT.
6. Currently occupied and potential habitats as identified in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan are to be dedicated to cutthroat recovery efforts. No competing salmonids will be stocked into occupied LCT recovery waters. Sterile (triploid) rainbow trout and / or Tiger Trout may be used on a short-term basis in potential LCT recovery waters to address angler use and demand until LCT reintroductions are deemed appropriate.
7. Where deemed necessary to assist in the recovery of the species, specific waters or specific areas within individual waters may be subject to restrictions or closed to angling by the Wildlife Commission. In most cases, sportfishing for Lahontan Cutthroat Trout has no negative impact on recovery progress.
8. The Truckee, Carson, and Walker rivers and Lake Tahoe are important salmonid recreational fisheries for rainbow and brown trout, both in Nevada and California. These waters support extensive angler use and are stocked annually with hatchery salmonids to support the high angler use and demand. Experimental releases of catchable size Lahontan Cutthroat Trout are encouraged to evaluate their contribution to the sport fishery and encourage angler interest and opportunity for catching native trout.
9. Because of social, economic, and environmental constraints, the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners considers it impractical to fully recover in the near future, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout in the main stems of the Truckee, Carson, Walker River systems, and Lake Tahoe, thus annual stockings of other salmonids are authorized. The use of sterile (triploid) rainbow trout is encouraged in all historic and potential recovery LCT waters. In the Truckee River, only sterile (triploid) rainbow trout and hatchery-reared LCT will be used for recreational stocking, and the use of hatchery reared LCT will be emphasized to the extent they are available for stocking in the size, quality and timing needed to maintain recreational fishing objectives.
10. The Department of Wildlife will actively pursue potential options for reestablishing suitable water levels and water quality in Walker Lake in order to restore this important Lahontan Cutthroat Trout sport fishery. Only solutions consistent with the final decree entered in United States of America, Plaintiff vs. Walker River Irrigation District, et al., Defendants in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada (C-125) will be pursued. Any proposed

redistribution of water shall be on a voluntary basis.

11. The Department of Wildlife may maintain brood stocks of pure strain Lahontan Cutthroat Trout both for use as recreational sport fish and, if needed, recovery stocks of selected races of cutthroat for reintroduction into recovery waters.

This policy shall remain in effect until amended, repealed, or superseded by the Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS IN REGULAR SESSION, MARCH
26, 2022

Tiffany East, Chairwoman
Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners