

# Lake Tahoe



## ANGLER AND FISH SURVEY INFORMATION Sam Sedillo- Fisheries Biologist, Reno Office 1100 Valley Rd, Reno, NV (775) 688-1882

**General information:** - Lake Tahoe, located in the Sierra Nevada, covers 192 square miles, and has a maximum depth of 1,646 feet. Several introduced sport fishes inhabit the lake including Lake Trout (Mackinaw), Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Kokanee Salmon, and to a lesser extent Largemouth Bass, White and Black Crappie, and Bullhead Catfish. At times, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) have been stocked, but they are rare. Mackinaw is the most caught and popular species and generally ranges between 16 and 25 inches. Rainbow trout are the next most sought-after fish which usually average from 10 to 14 inches. Fishing success throughout the year varies, but fishing from shore, top- or deep-lining from a boat during July and August are the most productive months. Cave Rock and Sand Harbor (Nevada State Parks) produce the best catches for small Rainbow Trout since they are stocked from these locations. Shore access is limited around most of the lake due to private property and limited parking. Top-line trolling for Rainbow and Brown Trout is the most productive method for boaters, while deep-line trolling, jigging, and fishing with live minnows are the most widely used techniques for mackinaw. Numerous commercial guide services are available for anglers that lack the extensive fishing setups or angling knowledge required for catching Lake Trout. Record fish include a 4 lb. 13 oz Kokanee Salmon, a 15 lb. 15 oz Brown Trout, a 37 lb. 6 oz Lake Trout (state record), an 11 lb. 7 oz Rainbow Trout, and a 4 lb. 9 oz Mountain Whitefish (unofficial state record).

**Location and 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.

**Management:** NDOW manages Lake Tahoe as a put and take fishery and works to monitor and protect wild spawning fish in the Nevada tributaries.

### General Info

- Mandatory boat inspections and a Tahoe sticker (or short term pass) are required prior to launching any boat into Lake Tahoe. Please visit <http://tahoeboatinspections.com> for information on inspection locations and fees.
- Lake Tahoe has **reduced speed areas, Boating Prohibited Areas, and Motor Restrictions**. Please be familiar with the signs and information before you bring your boat to the lake.

### Fishing Regulations

- Season is open year-round, 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 Creeks; a 500 yard radius from Sand Harbor Boat Ramp; and within the boat launch area inside the jetty at Cave Rock Boat Ramp. Limit is 5 game fish.

### Regulations Cont'd

- Live Bait: Fish used as live bait may be taken only from Lake Tahoe and tributaries in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Commercially prepared and preserved baitfish or their parts may be used as bait. Chumming is prohibited.
- Persons under 16 years of age are not required to have a fishing license. Persons 16 years of age or older must have either a Nevada fishing license or a Nevada Interstate Boundary Waters license; a Nevada short-term fishing permit, or a California fishing license to fish anywhere on the lake.

### Previous Stocking

	<u>2022</u>	
Rainbows	4,509	8-12 Inches
LCT	45,441	8-12 Inches
	<u>2021</u>	
Rainbows	17,995	8-12 Inches
LCT	50,241	8-12 Inches

### Fishing Notes

- Expect fishing success in Lake Tahoe to remain similar as in the past with the possibility to catch a native stocked Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. Anglers who dedicate several days to learning the lake and when/where to target certain species will be rewarded with better than average days. While fishing can be slow, the potential to catch a large fish exists whether you are targeting Rainbows, Browns, or Lake Trout
- Shore fishing for smaller stocked Rainbow Trout is best at Sand Harbor and Cave Rock following planting and provides opportunity for anglers who do not have access to a boat. Targeting shoreline drop off points with Kastmasters, panther martins, balanced leeches or midge flies can also be a productive way to fish for trout that are in these areas
- Trolling or jigging from a boat will give you the best chance at catching a Lake Trout.

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## 2023 Fishing Forecast

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**Water levels-** Lake Tahoe will remain above its rim in 2023, expect the lake to maintain good levels due to the snow pack in the Sierra exceeding 200% of average.

### Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout

In 2022, 4,509 Rainbow Trout were stocked in Lake Tahoe. These coldwater game fish can be targeted from shore and will take all sorts of gear or flies thrown at them. Rainbow Trout make up the predominant fish caught from shore in Lake Tahoe and make up 16% of angler catch in the lake. The wild Rainbow and Brown trout in Lake Tahoe can grow to exceptional size. Fish drop off areas along the shoreline with an assortment of spinners, bait (powerbait and live bait) and streamer/midge flies for the best chance of catching one of these trout from a boat or shore.

### Lake Trout

Lake Trout in Lake Tahoe can grow exceptionally large and feed on a wide assortment of resident fish in the lake such as Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Kokanee, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, crayfish and other forage fish. Lake Trout can grow up to +30 pounds due to their high protein diet. Lake Trout account for 50-70% of angler catch in Lake Tahoe due to the large amount of fishing boats and charters targeting these fish. Fishing from a boat with trolled spinners and lures and jigging is your best chance at catching a monster. If you don't have a boat, Lake Trout can be targeted from shore or deep drop off points in the early season with bait, lures or flies.

### Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

In 2022, 45,441 Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) were stocked in Lake Tahoe in Nevada with an additional 54,608 stocked in California. An additional 100,000 will be stocked in Lake Tahoe in 2023. LCT and Mountain Whitefish are Lake Tahoe's native salmonids. While larger LCT no longer exist or are extremely rare in Lake Tahoe, expect to catch stocked LCT for the month following their stocking which generally occurs between June and September. Target public access areas such as Sand Harbor and Cave Rock with panther martins, powerbait and suspended midge flies or balance leeches.

### Kokanee Salmon

Kokanee are land-locked salmon that inhabit Lake Tahoe and are a species you can target from a boat with trolled lures and spinner. Kokanee make up 25% of angler catch in Lake Tahoe. They can be caught trolling with small to medium size spinner and lures and can grow on average to 12"-20" with an occasional larger fish caught. These fish are a great "catch and keep" species to bring home to your table.

### Warmwater Game Fish

Lake Tahoe has a wide variety of warmwater game fish such as Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Bluegill, Crappie, and Bullhead Catfish. These fish are generally associated with marina areas, primarily the Tahoe Keys, where the water is shallow and warmer than the main lake, although some, particularly Smallmouth Bass, can be caught in the lake. The Tahoe Keys is a private community with limited public access; anglers should respect private property, including docks, so fishing is best done from a boat. Target shallow areas with structure close to shore with topwater lures, spinnerbaits, crankbaits, or nightcrawlers for your best chance at catching these fish.



2022 Lake Tahoe Angler Drop Box Catch Composition

