

RUBY LAKE NWR



ANGLER AND FISH SURVEY INFORMATION
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General information: Ruby Lake is a natural, spring fed, high elevation marsh, located entirely on the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is divided into the South Lake, North Dike units, the Collection Ditch, and the South Springs. This is a popular fishery for trout in the winter, spring and fall while providing excellent bass fishing as water temperatures increase in the summer. Largemouth Bass can reach 20 inches but are most abundant in the 8-to-13-inch range. Rainbow Trout, Tiger Trout (Brown Trout x Brook Trout hybrid), and Brown Trout regularly exceed 20 inches. Fish water records include a state record Rainbow Trout at 16 lb 8 oz (2011), state record Tiger Trout at 15 lb 9 oz (2011), water record Brown Trout at 25 lbs, water record Largemouth Bass at 9 lbs, and a 4 lb 14 oz Brook Trout.

Location: Elko and White Pine Counties, 50 miles southeast of Elko, via Hwy 228 and Harrison Pass or Hwy 229/Secret Pass and County Road 788. Use our FishNV tool at <https://fish.wildlifenv.com/>.

Size: 9,000 acres of lakes, ponds, and waterways intermixed with islands, bulrush stands, and dikes. Maximum depth is 12 feet in the South Lake.

Management: Ruby Lake NWR is managed as a General Warmwater Fishery and secondarily as a General Coldwater Fishery, with the Collection Ditch being managed as a Trophy Trout Fishery.

Fishing/Boating Regulations*

- Open year round in all areas except as posted. Refuge is open 1 hr before sunrise to 1 hr after sunset.
- January 1 – June 14, limit is 3 trout and 5 black bass.
- June 15 – December 31, limit is 3 trout and 10 black bass.
- Minimum size for black bass is 10".
- Artificial lures only in the Collection Ditch.
- Unlawful to clean or fillet fish within refuge boundaries.
- Refer to regulation book for federal boating regulations on Ruby Lake NWR.

*See regulation book for more detail

Amenities and General Info

- 2 boat ramps are available.
- Vault toilets at both ramps and 1 at Brown Dike.
- Forest Service operated campground.
- Fish Cleaning Station in the summer months.
- Gallagher Hatchery site tour.

Previous stocking

	2022	2021	2020
Rainbow Trout	22,633	19,836	15,042
Brown Trout	0	1,026	1,103
Tiger Trout	5,199	4,933	2,174
Total	27,832	25,798	18,318

Fishing notes

- For bass use soft plastics, plugs, and spinner baits. Fly anglers use streamers, woolly buggers or poppers.
- Work the edges of the bullrush and focus on shadowed areas in the afternoons.
- For trout use woolly buggers, leech patterns, and bead head nymph patterns.
- Spinners, spoons, and shallow diving crankbaits can be effective for catching trout.
- As summer temperatures increase trout move into spring heads to utilize the cooler waters.

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2023 FISHING FORECAST

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Water level

Snowpack conditions in February 2023 were at 185% of average snow water equivalent for the Clover Valley and Franklin Basin. Ruby Lake is currently just below objective levels and with current snowpack conditions, water levels should be good in the spring and early summer months. As is normal, water levels will continue to drop throughout the summer, but water conditions should be fair to good by August and have few impacts to boating.

South Lake

In 2022, just over 10,000 Rainbow Trout with an average size of 9.2 inches were stocked in the South Lake. Trout angler success should be fair, with most success coming in June and early July. With consecutive years of fair water levels, the number of bass present for anglers is good. A 2022 survey showed that over 42% of the captured bass were 9 inches or greater and after 10 months of growth these fish should be reaching the minimum size for anglers to keep. Catch rates for bass have fluctuated around 20 fish per hour with average keeper bass being about 11 inches. As with most years, expect to have to fish through 10-20 small bass per keeper bass.

Collection Ditch

In 2022 there were 9,128 Rainbow Trout and 3,096 Tiger Trout stocked in the Collection Ditch. Recent data shows catch rates of 1.5 fish per hour and nearly 20% of captured fish are over 20 inches, with nearly half of those being over 24 inches. A five-year summary shows angler catch composition as 63.8% Rainbow Trout, 7.2% Tiger Trout, 0.7% Brown Trout, and 28.3% unknown trout species. Fishing should continue to be good in the Collection Ditch, with plenty of opportunity for trout over 20 inches. Warming summer temperatures will slow angler success, particularly north of Bressman's Cabin, before picking back up in the fall.

Dike Units

Units 10, 13, 14, 20, and east units have very few bass due to Refuge water management. Angler success will be low.

Unit 21

Fishing will be good in the spring and fall for trout and fair to good for bass during the summer months.

South Springs

Trout fishing will be fair to good in early spring and fall. Stocked with Tiger Trout and Rainbow Trout yearly. Trout exceeding 20 inches can often be caught in these ponds, particularly Ramires Pond and Hidden Springs Pond.