

WILDHORSE RESERVOIR



ANGLER AND FISH SURVEY INFORMATION
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General information: Wildhorse Reservoir is a productive trout fishery, with trophy sized potential for several different trout species. Trout species present in Wildhorse Reservoir are Cuttbows, Rainbows, Tiger Trout, and Brown Trout. Wildhorse also provides quality angling for several warm water sportfish, such as, Black Bass, Wipers, and Channel Catfish. Yellow Perch are also abundant in Wildhorse Reservoir and provide year-round angling opportunities.

Location: Elko County, 62 miles north of Elko on highway 225. Use our FishNV tool (<https://fish.wildlifenv.com/>) to find waters near you, and buy your fishing license at ndowlicensing.com.

Size: Wildhorse Reservoir capacity is 71,500-acre feet. Maximum surface coverage capacity is 2,830 surface acres.

Management: Fisheries management of Wildhorse reservoir the responsibility of the Department of Wildlife. Water management is under the responsibility of Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Amenities and General Info

- Wildhorse State Park offers camp sites with RV parking and hook ups.
- Cabins available for rent through State Parks
- Many Tribal Access points on reservoir for a \$5 day use fee.
- Dry camping also available on BIA land for a fee.

Fishing/Boating Regulations

- Open year round to angling
- Limit is 5 trout, 1 black bass, 1 Wiper, 5 Channel Catfish. 15" minimum size for black bass and Wiper.
- Black bass may only be kept from March 1st- June 30th

Previous stocking

2022

| Species | Number of fish | Avg size (inches) |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Rainbow Trout | 56,804 | 8.8 |
| Tiger Trout | 8,555 | 9.6 |
| Brown Trout | 4,140 | 5.3 |
| Wiper | 1,000 | 9.0 |

2021

| Species | Number of fish | Avg size (inches) |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Rainbow Trout | 73,919 | 8.2 |
| CuttbowTrout | 20,413 | 8.9 |
| Tiger Trout | 466 | 10.2 |

2020

| Species | Number of fish | Avg size (inches) |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Rainbow Trout | 78,194 | 8.4 |
| Brown Trout | 10,986 | 6.5 |
| Tiger Trout | 11,536 | 8.3 |

Fishing notes

- Trolling from a boat using Rapalas, spoons, Rooster Tails, or bait can be effective for trout or Wipers spring-fall.
- Fishing from shore can be very productive. Bait fishing nightcrawlers, meal worms, or artificial salmon eggs will catch trout. Also, actively casting spinners, soft plastics, or jigs while working the shoreline for all species.
- Ice fishing Yellow Perch and trout can be very productive. Trout are often caught 2-8 feet under the ice. Yellow Perch will typically be found in 15+ ft of water near the bottom.

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2023 FISHING FORECAST

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Water Level: Snowpack conditions in late winter of 2023 was 125% of average for the Owyhee watershed; it is likely that a significant spring recharge will take place putting the reservoir over 75% capacity by summer.

Trout Fishing: With low water levels not being a major factor for 2023, trout fishing in early spring should still be very good with a large portion of fish being over 18". Creel and angler drop-box surveys in 2022 reported almost 25% of trout reported being over 18". This quality should maintain through spring of 2023. Wildhorse should continue to provide quality trout angling in the fall of 2023 and through the 2023/2024 ice fishing season.

Warmwater Sportfish

Smallmouth Bass: Smallmouth Bass populations remain strong and will provide ample angling opportunity for those pursuing them in 2023. Angler creel data had 30% of bass over 13" in 2022. Anglers should expect abundant bass numbers, with most fish caught being in the 11"-13" range, and a few top end fish over 15".. Anglers will have the best success fishing various soft plastics, spinner baits, and crankbaits around structures and rock outcroppings.

Wipers: Wiper stocking resumed in spring of 2022 with 1,000 Wipers averaging 8.8 inches which was the first Wiper stocking event in over seven years. The current adult Wiper population remains small though some anglers were catching Wipers over 10-pounds throughout last summer. Some of the best techniques to target Wipers include casting/trolling crankbaits, casting swimbaits, and fly fishing with streamers. In addition to sport fishing opportunities, Wipers act as a biological control to reduce the numbers of small Yellow Perch.

Channel Catfish: A total of 34,000 Channel Catfish were stocked from 2017-2022 augmenting the existing Channel Catfish population. In 2023, Wildhorse Reservoir is expected to be stocked with 7,000-8,000 Channel Catfish. Fishing is forecasted to be fair to good in 2023. Anglers should expect most Channel Catfish to range between 2-6 lbs with the potential of catching fish over 10 lbs. In 2022 the previous water record was broken with a 29.8-pound catfish being submitted as the new water record.

Yellow Perch: Following the spring 2022 die off, Yellow Perch fishing in 2023 will remain slow with some smaller pockets of adult fish scattered in the reservoir with most in the 3-4" range. The Yellow Perch population has drastically decreased, making angling for them more challenging due to added difficulty of locating perch and finding pockets of perch that are of desirable size. Yellow Perch fishing is expected to be poor in 2023 but will rebound quickly as growth rates increase due to more available resources and large numbers of juvenile fish.