

WALKER RIVER



ANGLER AND FISH SURVEY INFORMATION
Kris Urquhart- Fisheries Biologist, Fallon Field Office
380 West B Street. Fallon, NV 89406 (775) 423-3171

General information: The East Walker River near the area known as the Rosaschi Ranch is a trophy trout fishery, this area is catch and release only. The remainder of the Walker River is managed under general regulations and harvest is allowed. Popular general fishery areas include the Elbow, Hoye, and Wilson canyons, and the Walker River State Park. Rainbow and Brown trout are the primary species targeted by anglers and range in size from 5 to 20+ inches. Road access along most of the river is pretty good, however, 4-wheel drive vehicles with good tires and clearance are recommended whenever travelling on roads not regularly maintained. Fishing licenses are available at ndowlicensing.com.

Location: Lyon and Mineral counties, from the CA/NV state line downstream to Walker Lake. Use our FishNV tool (<https://fish.wildlifenv.com/>) to find waters near you.

Size: East Walker River flows 62 miles in Nevada before it reaches the confluence with the west fork, which is about 30 miles long, however; access is limited in areas like Smith Valley where private property exists.

Management: NDOW manages the fishery at Rosaschi Ranch as a Trophy Cold Water Fishery and the remainder of the river as a General Cold Water Fishery. The Walker River Irrigation District controls flow on the system through release of water from Topaz and Bridgeport reservoirs. Land status adjacent to the river is largely a mix of Forest Service, BLM, Private, Nevada State Parks, and Walker Basin Conservancy.

Amenities and General Info

- Primitive camping on public land.
- Improved dry camping at the Bighorn Campground and Wilson Canyon.
- Nearby towns with accommodations include Topaz, Yerington, Smith Valley, and Hawthorne.

Fishing/Boating Regulations

- Season open year-round
- At Rosaschi Ranch, catch and release only, artificial lures with single barbless hook.
- General fishery limits are 5 trout, 10 Mountain Whitefish, and 15 warmwater game fish, of which not more than 5 may be black bass.

Last Year Stocking

2022 East Fork

Rainbow 6,759 9.7 inches
 Brown 19,224 6.7 inches

2022 West Fork

Rainbow 17,013 9.5 inches
 Brown 2,000 9.2 inches

Previous Year Stocking

2021 East Fork

Rainbow 6,577 9.5 inches
 Brown 19,109 7.7 inches

2021 West Fork

Rainbow 9,432 9.3 inches
 Brown 2,053 8.9 inches

Fishing notes

- Best fishing typically occurs in March and October on the East Fork and following stocking events on the West Fork.
- Fly fishing with nymph and dry patterns is most common, however, lure and bait fishing in the general fishery area is also productive.
- Trout population numbers typically increase from downstream to upstream in both forks.
- Flow rates rule, check USGS gauging sites in areas where you'd like to fish prior to departure.

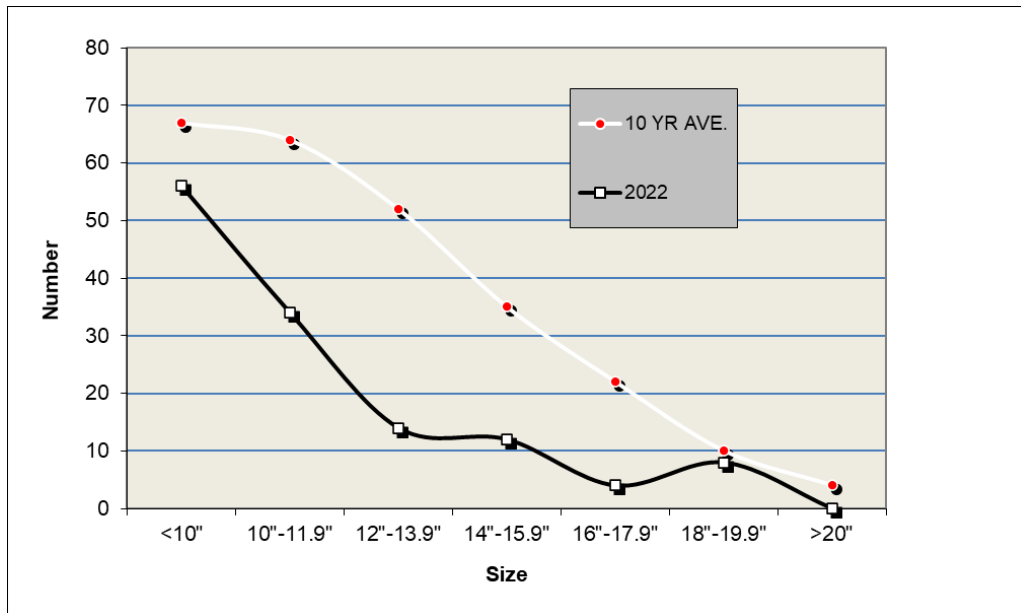
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FISHERY SURVEY DATA – 2022
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Length Frequency of Angler Reported Catch



Angler Drop-Box Survey Results

	2019	2020	2021	2022	10 Yr Ave
No. Anglers	41	72	46	28	46
Hrs Fished	219	314	189	116	209
Rainbow	109	233	108	37	132
Brown	99	235	133	77	116
Whitefish	3	39	20	11	13
Fish/Hour	0.96	1.62	1.38	1.08	1.19
Fish/Day	5.15	7.04	5.67	4.46	5.34

Walker River

2023 Fishing Forecast

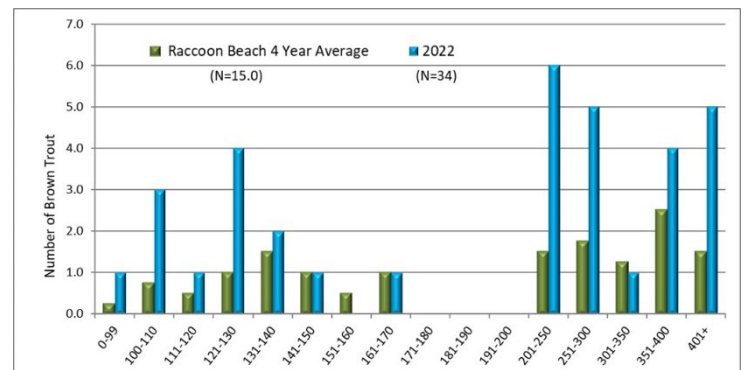
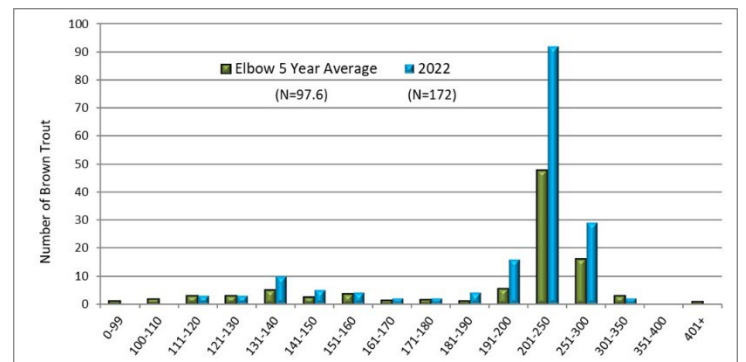
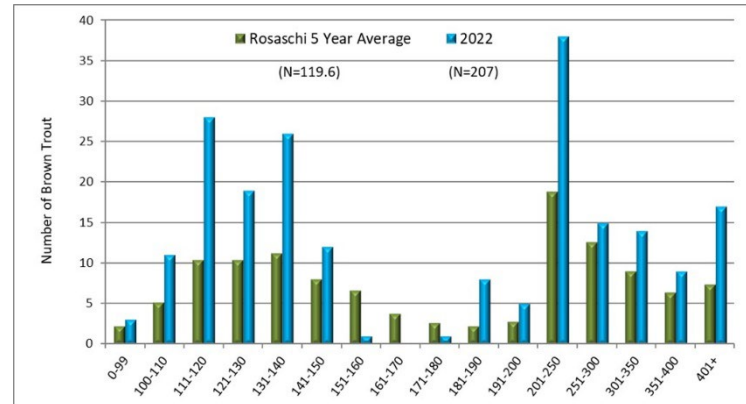
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Water level- During 2022, 61% of average Water Year to Date Precipitation (April 1) was recorded at SNOTEL sites in the Walker Basin above Bridgeport; as of April 1, 2023, that number is over 300%. Peak flows are predicted to be at or near record highs during spring and early summer which could limit angling opportunities early in the year; however, fish populations will benefit in the long run so we're not complaining.

East Fork

Electrofishing survey results estimated trout density to be (from upstream to downstream) 1,191 trout per mile at Rosaschi Ranch, 1,186 at the Elbow, 503 at the Ravenelle, 191 at Raccoon Beach 62 at Flying M and 59 at Rafter 7 Ranch. Trout density at some locations are occasionally influenced by a large majority of hatchery fish (common problem at the Elbow). During 2022, greater than average juvenile and adult Brown Trout abundance was observed. Downstream fish densities (Ravenelle, Raccoon Beach, Rafter 7, etc.) rebounded from lows observed during 2017-2021. During 2023 the large increase in flow will improve trout habitat and should provide an abundant fish population during 2024. Stocking at typical locations should occur during spring, early summer, and fall as temperatures allow. Angling conditions are expected to be difficult early on but improving as flows return to normal during summer. Most fish will be in the in the 10-14" size range with a few pushing 18- 20". During the hot summer months, be mindful of overstressing trout that you plan to release.



West Fork

In most locations, the west fork can be categorized as a put-and-take fishery. Flow out of Topaz this year will be cool and plentiful providing some thermal relief during summer, and plenty of habitat for carryover into fall 2023. Summertime carryover is typically limited because there are no minimum flow requirements, and the river occasionally will go nearly dry during fall, that will not be the case this year. Stocking typically begins during March (this may be delayed due to flooding conditions) and will continue until summertime water temperatures are too high, usually around late June. Fall stocking occurs as habitat conditions and hatchery fish availability allow. Angling for 10-12" trout from the Topaz Canal downstream to Yerington following stocking events typically produces a few trout and a lot of smiles. Please be mindful of private property throughout the Smith and Mason Valley areas, there are plenty of spots with public access. Wilson Canyon and Douglas County Parks and Recreation at Topaz offer primitive camping opportunities.