

CAVE LAKE



ANGLER INFORMATION

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General information: Anglers will once again be able to fish and use watercraft at Cave Lake State Park, after nearly 6 years of the lake being lowered for repairs. Dam reconstruction was completed in the fall of 2024 and impounding water began in late November. The refill of Cave Lake occurred faster than expected, a nice surprise following the loss of the fishery. In 2025, NDOW will be working to rebuild the Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout fishery at Cave Lake.

Location: Cave Lake State Park, Schell Creek Range, 15 miles southeast of Ely. Use our FishNV tool (<https://fish.wildlifenv.com/>) to find waters near you, and buy your fishing license at ndowlicensing.com.

Size: The lake covers 32 surface acres and impounds 538 acre-feet when at capacity.

Management: NDOW manages the fishery at Cave Lake as a general coldwater fishery under its put-and-take management concept. NDOW owns the water rights to Cave Creek, keeping the lake at capacity all year. Nevada Division of State Parks owns the land adjacent to the lake.

Amenities and General Info

- Two designated campgrounds available by reservation.
- Campground is closed during the winter.
- Showers, flush restrooms and vault restrooms are available.
- Picnic tables and day use areas.
- Boat launch with dock.
- Float tube launch.

Fishing/Boating Regulations

- Season is open all year, any hour of the day or night.
- Limit is 5 trout and possession limit is twice the daily limit.
- Vessels must be operated at speeds that leave a flat wake.

2025 Stocking Plans

- 17,000 spring Rainbow Trout
- 10,000 fall Rainbow Trout
- Brown Trout

Previous Stocking

- Cave Creek received 4,000 Rainbow Trout averaging 10 inches in June 2024

Fishing notes

- Fishing is good all year, but the best is in June and again in September and October.
- Stripping wholly buggers, leach patterns, and bead head nymph patterns is usually successful.
- Nightcrawlers and PowerBait work well throughout the year.
- Ice fishing generally begins in late November/early December and can last into March.

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2025 FISHING FORECAST

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Water level

The recent dam reconstruction will keep the lake elevation the same as it has been historically, the reconstruction does not allow NDOW to impound more water. The lake will be full and spilling by the end of March. Cave Creek, the water source of Cave Lake, is expected to keep the lake at normal pool throughout 2025.

Rebuilding the Fishery

NDOW will begin rebuilding the fishery at Cave Lake by re-establishing the put-and-take Rainbow Trout fishery. The lake has always produced high catch rates of Rainbow Trout year-round, and NDOW intends to manage for high angler success now that the lake is full. The Brown Trout population that occupied Cave Lake was significantly reduced during the drawdown of the lake and the reconstruction process. The adfluvial Brown Trout population persists in the stream and will likely reestablish in the lake once it is full. This population will need to be augmented so that its recovery is quicker, and anglers can begin enjoying catching Brown Trout.

In addition to the trout fisheries, NDOW would like to introduce Smallmouth Bass to Cave Lake. There is a need to evaluate how the trout and crayfish populations are doing before we introduce a new species to the lake. Smallmouth Bass will need a reliable food source (crayfish) before we can be comfortable starting this new fishery. We are as excited about this new potential fishery, as are many of the anglers, but we need to be patient and let the lake recover after several years at minimum pool. Following our due diligence, we will let the public know when we start stocking Smallmouth Bass.

Another exciting addition to Cave Lake is the approximately 200 artificial habitat structures that were installed in September 2024. There were multiple kinds of habitats installed that will benefit both the trout and future Smallmouth Bass fisheries. Habitats were installed throughout the lakebed, at various depths and are designed to support fish through multiple life stages.

