

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 that 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 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. Limits are 5 coldwater game fish of which not more than 2 may be Mackinaw (Lake Trout).

Regulations Cont'd

- Live Bait: Only Lahontan Redside, Tui Chub, Tahoe Sucker, Mountain Sucker, Paiute Sculpin, and Speckled Dace may be used as live bait fish. Fish must be taken from and native to Lake Tahoe. 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, a "Take Me Fishing" Group permit, or a California fishing license to fish anywhere on the lake.

Previous Stocking

	<u>2024</u>	
Rainbows	8,301	8-12 Inches
LCT	48,947	8-12 Inches
	<u>2023</u>	
Rainbows	1,054	8-12 Inches
LCT	45,292	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.

Lake Tahoe
2025 Fishing Forecast
Sam Sedillo– Fisheries Biologist
Reno Office



Water levels- Lake Tahoe will remain at or above its rim in 2025, expect the lake to maintain good levels due to snowpack in the Sierras being around 100%.

Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout

In 2024 there were 8,301 Triploid Rainbow Trout 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 Trout in Lake Tahoe can grow to exceptional size. All Brown Trout in Lake Tahoe are wild fish and are an introduced trout species native to Europe. Brown Trout in Lake Tahoe are generally piscivorous and occupy shallow to moderately deep habitat. They make up less than 3% of fish caught out of Lake Tahoe but grow to trophy sizes. Fish drop off areas 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, and other forage fish. Lake Trout can grow up to +30 pounds due to their high protein diet. Lake Trout account for 50-90% 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. Lake Trout can be targeted from shore or deep drop off points in the early season if you do not have a boat with bait, lures or flies.

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

In 2024, 48,947 Lahontan Cutthroat Trout were stocked in Lake Tahoe in Nevada with an additional ~55,000 stocked in California. An additional 100,000 will be stocked in Lake Tahoe in 2024. Lahontan Cutthroat Trout are Lake Tahoe's native salmonid. While larger LCT no longer exist or are extremely rare in Lake Tahoe, expect to catch stocked Lahontan Cutthroat Trout for the month preceding their stocking which generally occurs in June, July, and September, target public access areas such as Sand Harbor and Cave Rock with panther martins, powerbait and suspended 9midge 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, Crappie, and Bullhead Catfish. Target shallow areas with structure close to shore with topwater lures, spinnerbaits, crankbaits, or nightcrawlers for your best chance at catching these fish. Fishing from a boat during spring until fall will give you the best chance at catching the wide assortment of warmwater game fish.



**2024 Lake Tahoe Angler Drop Box
Catch Composition**

