

WILDHORSE RESERVOIR



ANGLER AND FISH SURVEY INFORMATION
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General information: Wildhorse Reservoir is a productive trout fishery with trophy size potential for several different trout species. Trout species present in Wildhorse Reservoir are Cuttbows, Rainbows, Tiger, 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 is the responsibility of the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Water management is under the responsibility of the 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.
- Daily limit is 5 trout, 1 black bass, 1 Wiper, 5 Channel Catfish.
- 15" minimum size for black bass and Wiper.
- Black bass may not be kept from March 1st- June 30th.
- Possession limit is twice the daily limit.

Previous stocking

2024

Species	Number of fish	Avg size (inches)
Rainbow Trout	73,886	9.3
Tiger Trout	6,913	11.3
Brown Trout	7,168	10.4
Wiper	546	8
Channel Catfish	5000	4

2023

Species	Number of fish	Avg size (inches)
Rainbow Trout	68,701	8.9
Tiger Trout	7,801	9.6
Brown Trout	7,097	10.7
Wiper	675	10
Channel Catfish	16,000	4

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

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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2024 FISHING FORECAST

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Water Level: Snowpack conditions as of March 1, 2025, was 110% of average for the Owyhee watershed, and Wildhorse Reservoir is currently at 75% capacity and is expected to spill again this spring.

Trout Fishing: Trout fishing in early spring through early summer will still be very good with a large portion of fish being over 18". Angler drop-box surveys in 2024 reported almost 53% of trout reported being over 19". Creel surveys in early 2025 showed an average size of checked trout being over 18". Wildhorse should continue to provide quality trout angling into the fall of 2024 and through the following ice fishing season.

Warmwater Sportfish

Smallmouth Bass: Smallmouth Bass populations remain strong and will provide ample angling opportunity for those pursuing them in 2025. 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 Wiper population was augmented again in 2023 with approximately 675 fish and 2024 with 546 fish. The current adult Wiper population remains small though some anglers were catching Wipers over 10-pounds. 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 50,000 Channel Catfish were stocked from 2017-2023 augmenting the existing Channel Catfish population. In 2024, approximately 5,000 4" Channel Catfish were stocked. It will take several years for these fish to reach catchable size but should provide great opportunities in the years to come. Relatively few anglers specifically target Channel Catfish. 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 is beginning to improve in numbers and size with a new state record caught in 2023 at 14 1/8" and 1 lb. 9 oz. Ice fishing derbies in January 2024 and February 2025 were won with Yellow Perch over ten inches. There is an abundance of smaller 4-6" Yellow Perch so the challenge for anglers will be finding pockets of larger fish that are of desirable size. Creel and angler drop box surveys indicated large numbers of Yellow Perch being caught during the summer and through the ice. It is expected Yellow Perch size and numbers will continue to increase in 2025 and for the 2025/2026 ice fishing season.