

# General Regulations

## 1 Fishing Hours & Season Dates

The season begins the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend (usually the last weekend in May) and extends through the first Sunday in November. Exceptions are listed on page 10. Open daily from 5 AM to 10 PM. Fishing with an artificial light is prohibited. Some areas are closed to human entry, have trail or seasonal closures, off-trail travel and daylight hour limitations, or party size recommendations. See the Bear Management Area restrictions in the *Yellowstone Backcountry Trip Planner* for specific rules and information.

*Streams may be temporarily closed due to low water levels and high water temperatures to protect fish populations.*

## 2 Fishing Permits

a. When required, anglers must be in possession of a valid Yellowstone National Park fishing permit to fish in the park. A fee permit is required for anglers 16 years of age or older. Anglers 15 years of age or younger have two options:

1. Children 15 or younger may fish without a permit if they are fishing under the direct supervision of an adult who has a valid park fishing permit.
2. Children 15 or younger may obtain a free permit that must be signed by a responsible adult; with this permit, a child can fish without direct adult supervision.

With either option, the adult is responsible for the child's actions and must ensure the child complies with all fishing regulations and provisions.

b. Park rangers may check permits, inspect tackle, fish, creels, and/or other containers where fish or tackle may be stored.

## 3 Boat & Float Tube Permits

All types of vessels—including float tubes—require a boat permit. Fees are charged. Float tubes are not allowed on certain lakes or on any river or stream in Yellowstone except the Lewis River between Lewis and Shoshone lakes. Obtain permits in person at the South Entrance, Lewis Lake Campground, Grant Village Backcountry Office, and Bridge Bay Ranger Station. Obtain non-motorized permits (only) at Mammoth, Canyon, or Old Faithful backcountry offices, Northeast Entrance, the West Yellowstone Visitor Information Center, and the Bechler Ranger Station.

## 4 Tackle & Bait Restrictions

- a. Each angler may use only one rod or line, which must be attended at all times.
- b. Only artificial lures and flies may be used. No natural or organic bait such as minnows, salmon eggs, worms, insects, or foodstuffs are allowed. Scented attractants are illegal. (Exception: Gardner River drainage, where children 11 years of age or younger may fish with worms as bait. See next page.)
- c. Hooks must be barbless, or barbs must be pinched down by pliers.
- d. Lures may have only one hook with a single, double, or treble configuration. No fish snagging is allowed.
- e. Flies may have only one hook with a single point. Up to two flies may be used on a single leader.
- f. Leaded fishing tackle such as leaded split-shot sinkers, weighted jigs (lead molded to a hook), and soft lead-weighted ribbon for nymph fishing are not allowed. Lead core line and heavy (> 4 lb.) downrigger weights used to fish for deep-dwelling lake trout are permissible because they are too large to be ingested by wildlife.

## 5 Bridge & Boat Dock Restrictions

No fishing from any road bridge or boat dock.

## 6 Size & Possession Limits

- a. Size and possession limits vary by species and management area. The maximum number of fish an angler can keep is five fish per day. An angler must cease fishing immediately after filling the possession limit. Exceptions: all lake trout caught from Yellowstone Lake must be killed; no limit for lake trout caught from Heart Lake. Possession limits include all fish—fresh, stored, or preserved.
- b. Fish that do not meet the specified size restrictions must be returned carefully and immediately to the waters from which they were taken. Unintentionally killed fish should also be returned to the water so they can be consumed by wildlife. It is the responsibility of the angler to be able to measure fish lengths and to identify fish by species.

## 7 Evidence of Fish Species

If you keep any fish, you must leave the skin attached to the fish so the fish species can be visibly identified. In the Lewis River system above the Lewis River Falls, including the Lewis Channel and Shoshone Lake, you may keep only one fish greater than 20" and it—along with all other fish in your possession, while in transit or in the field—must be whole with head, skin, fins, and tail attached. Gills and entrails may be removed from all fish in possession but discarded only within the waters where the fish were caught.

## 8 Disposal of Fish & Entrails

You must dispose of fish and fish entrails within the waters where the fish was caught and at least 100 feet from backcountry campsites. For more instructions for fish and entrail disposal, see page 13.

graphic removed for faster loading

## Where to Take Young Anglers

Families and young anglers can enjoy fishing together in many locations throughout the park. Park rangers' kids recommend:

- ◆ Mammoth: Blacktail Deer Creek, Indian Creek near campground, Gardner River at the Montana/Wyoming state line, Joffe Lake
- ◆ Lake: Yellowstone Lake along Gull Point Drive or at Sand Point
- ◆ Grant: Aster Creek near Lewis Falls, Lewis Lake shoreline
- ◆ East Entrance: Middle Creek, Sylvan Lake
- ◆ Norris: Gibbon River at Virginia Meadows or other meadow reaches, Solfatara Creek near campground
- ◆ Madison: Gibbon River near Tuff Cliffs
- ◆ Old Faithful: Goose Lake, Firehole River at picnic areas, Nez Perce Creek
- ◆ Northeast area: Pebble Creek near campground, Trout Lake