

Frequently Asked Questions



Fishing is a long-standing tradition in Yellowstone's waters.

Why are the same fish species regulated differently in different areas of the park?

Park fishing regulations are designed to protect native fish and aquatic ecosystems, provide recreational opportunities, and also preserve the tradition of angling in Yellowstone.

Cutthroat trout, Arctic grayling, mountain whitefish, and other native fishes are important to the ecology of Yellowstone. Nonnative trout are important to the angler experience in Yellowstone, and angling is an important part of the park's cultural history.

In Yellowstone, bald eagles, ospreys, pelicans, otters, grizzly bears, and other wildlife take precedence over humans in using fish for food. Park management and regulations reflect this priority. For example, some waters are closed to fishing to protect threatened and endangered species, and sensitive nesting birds. Regulations ban lead tackle because the lead concentrates in aquatic environments, posing a risk of lead poisoning to waterfowl that might



Early park managers transplanted fish to stock the park's fishless waters.

ingest it. Only non-toxic alternatives to lead are allowed (see p. 3 for one exception). Of particular concern in Yellowstone are the alarmingly low populations of trumpeter swans and loons.

Yellowstone is making a substantial, on-the-ground effort to conserve native fish in several areas. These actions, which are currently focused in the Lamar and Grayling Creek drainages and Yellowstone Lake, are described in the park's native fish conservation plan. The goals of the plan are to reduce the risk of extinction, restore and maintain the ecological role, and create sustainable angling and viewing opportunities for native fish.

Where did the nonnative fish come from?

When Yellowstone became a national park, more than 40 percent of its waters were barren of fish—including Shoshone Lake, Lewis Lake, and the Firehole River above Firehole Falls. Early park managers transplanted fish into new locations, produced more fish in hatcheries, and introduced