

General Regulations



A single pointed hook is the best choice for fishing in Yellowstone. Three-point hooks can severely injure fish and are often constructed with toxic lead solder.

jigs (lead molded to a hook), and soft lead-weighted ribbon for nymph fishing are not allowed.

Hooks must have points that are barbless, or the barbs must be pinched down by pliers. Lures may have only one hook with single, double, or treble (triple) points on a common shank.

Each fly may have only one hook. Up to two flies may be used on a single leader (also called “dry and dropper” or “hopper and dropper”).

Except for feathers and other typical fly-tying materials, the hook must be bare. No organic or inorganic baits

FAQ: Why is fishing lead-free in Yellowstone?

Lead is a toxic environmental contaminant. It accumulates in fatty tissue, eventually causing lead poisoning. Wildlife such as waterfowl, cranes, and shorebirds are vulnerable because of their largely fish-based diets.

FAQ: Why are barbless hooks required?

Barbless hooks reduce injuries and the time needed to handle fish and improve the overall condition of trout in heavily-fished waters of the park.

are allowed. *Organic baits* include fish or fish parts, minnows, salmon eggs, worms, insects, or foodstuffs such as bread or corn. *Inorganic baits* include rubber worms and plastic “twister” tails. Scented attractants (liquid and solid baits) are illegal. Putting any substance in the water for the purpose of attracting fish (chumming) is illegal.

Felt-soled footwear prohibited

To reduce the potential for introduction or spread of aquatic invasive species, footwear with absorbent felt or other fibrous material on the soles are prohibited.

Tackle exceptions

Non-toxic split-shot, sinkers, and jig heads molded with bismuth-tin, molybdenum, or tungsten are 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.

Artificial lures are not allowed on the Firehole River, Madison River, and lower Gibbon River (below Gibbon Falls); these streams are fly fishing only.