Fishing

Fishing was popular with early settlers and visitors in the Rocky Mountains. Many streams and lakes were stocked with non-native species of trout to improve the sport. Waters that had contained no sport fish were also stocked. Even the National Park Service stocked non-native trout as late as 1969. The only trout native to the park are the greenback cutthroat and the Colorado River cutthroat. Efforts to enhance recreational fishing in the park were reconsidered in the 1970s. Since that time, the park has focused on restoring native greenback cutthroat and Colorado River cutthroat trout to park waters.

Today's Fisheries

Populations of at least four species of trout exist in the park: brown, brook, rainbow, and cutthroat. Suckers and sculpin also inhabit streams and lakes. Only 48 of the 156 lakes in the park have reproducing populations of fish. Cold water temperatures and lack of spawning habitat prevent reproduction in most high altitude lakes. Stocking is done only to restore and maintain native species. Fishing success at high altitudes varies even in waters known to contain fish.

Licenses & Fees

A valid Colorado fishing license is required to fish in Rocky Mountain National Park. No other permit is necessary; however, special regulations exist. It is your responsibility to know and obey these regulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Non-Resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual (16 years and older)</td>
<td>$26.00</td>
<td>$56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Annual Fishing (64 years or older)</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Colorado Residents Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-day license</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day license</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Habitat stamps ($5) required for first two licenses of the year. No license required the first full weekend in June.

Method of Capture

Each person shall use only one hand-held rod or line. A “second rod stamp” is not honored in park waters. Only artificial lures or flies with one (single, double, or treble) hook with a common shank may be used. “Artificial flies or lures” means devices made entirely of, or a combination of, materials such as wood, plastic, glass, hair, metal, feathers, or fiber, designed to attract fish. This does not include: (a) any hand moldable material designed to attract fish by the sense of taste or smell; (b) any device to which scents or smell attractants have been externally applied; (c) molded plastic devices less than one and one-half inch in length; (d) foods; (e) traditional organic baits such as worms, grubs, crickets, leeches, minnows, and fish eggs; and (f) manufactured baits such as imitation fish eggs, dough baits, or stink baits. Fly fishers may utilize a two-hook system, where one hook is used as an attractant.

While in possession of any fishing equipment, bait for fishing (insects, fish eggs, minnows, or other organic matter) or worms is prohibited. Children 12 years of age or under, however, may use worms or preserved fish eggs in all park waters open to fishing except those designated as catch-and-release areas.

No bait or worms are allowed in catch-and-release waters. Use of lead sinkers (or other lead fishing materials) is strongly discouraged.
Possession limit means the numbers, sizes, or species of fish, fresh or preserved, a person may have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Possession Limit</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow, brown, Colorado River cutthroat &amp; non-native cutthroat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10” or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenback cutthroat trout</td>
<td>0 (Catch-and-Release-Only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brook trout</td>
<td>6 (if no other species are possessed)</td>
<td>any size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brook trout in addition to above</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8” or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Catch-and-Keep
(lakes known to contain fish populations)

- Black Lake
- Box Lake
- Fourth Lake
- Haynach Lake
- Jewel Lake
- Lake Haiyaha
- Lake Nanita (outlet closed)
- Lake of Glass
- Lake Solitude
- Lake Verna
- Little Rock Lake
- Loch Vale
- Lone Pine Lake
- Mills Lake
- Mirror Lake
- Peacock Pool
- Pettingell Lake
- Poudre Lake
- Rock Lake
- Sky Pond
- Spirit Lake
- Sprague Lake
- Ten Lakes Park Lakes
- Thunder Lake
- Ypsilon Lake

Closed Waters

- Bear Lake, and its inlet and outlet streams, extending 200 yards up and down stream
- Bench Lake and Ptarmigan Creek above War Dance Falls
- Hunters Creek above Wild Basin Ranger Station, as posted
- Lake Nanita Outlet downstream 100 yards South Fork Cache la Poudre River above Pingree Park
- Upper Columbine Creek above 9,000 feet elevation
- Lily Lake east shore from May 1 to June 30

Catch-and-Release

Listed below are areas with restored native fish populations. They are open to catch-and-release fishing all year during daylight hours. Use barbless hooks only. Any and all fish species taken must be immediately returned to the water unharmed (except in areas designated with a #, where a legal limit of brook trout may be kept).

No bait is permitted by any age angler in catch-and-release areas.

- Adams Lake *
- Arrowhead Lake*
- Big Crystal Lake *
- Caddis Lake (Lower Fay Lake)*
- Cony Creek (above Calypso Cascades) *
- Dream Lake *
- Fern Lake and Creek*
- Fifth Lake **
- Forest Canyon (above The Pool)*
- Hidden Valley Beaver Ponds and Hidden Valley Creek (open only as posted) *
- Hutcheson Lakes*
- Lake Husted *
- Lake Louise *
- Lawn Lake *
- Lily Lake (south, west & north shores; east shore open July 1 to April 30) *
- Loomis Lake*
- Lost Lake*
- North Fork of the Big Thompson above Lost Falls *
- Odessa Lake *
- Ouzel Creek (above falls #) *
- Ouzel Lake *#
- Paradise Creek drainage **
- Pear Lake and Creek *
- Roaring River *
- Sandbeach Lake and Creek *
- Spruce Lake *
- Timber Lake and Creek **
- West Creek*
- *Greenback cutthroat trout
- **Colorado River cutthroat

# A legal limit of brook trout may be kept

Protect Fish
and their Habitats

Park fish are vulnerable to several invasive organisms that can be carried on waders and other gear. Please disinfect gear before entering park waters and when moving between different lakes and streams.

First, remove mud, snails, algae, and additional debris from boots, waders and other equipment.

Then disinfect equipment using one of the following procedures:
- Freeze gear overnight; or
- Soak equipment for more than one minute in 120 degree water; or
- Allow equipment to air dry in warm, direct sunlight.

March, 2009

Park information is available at 970-586-1206 or on-line at www.nps.gov/romo

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