

From: Montana FWP <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>
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To: tnulph@bhwc.org
Subject: Warm water, low flows prompt fishing restrictions on several rivers



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Warm water, low flows prompt fishing restrictions on several rivers

HELENA - Angling restriction on several rivers go into effect today due to warming water temperatures and low flows.

The restrictions include what are commonly known as “hoot owl” closures, which means fishing is closed from 2 p.m. to midnight, and some full fishing closures. The closures and restrictions will stay in effect until conditions improve.

The closures and hoot owl restrictions include:

- Beaverhead River hoot owl restrictions from the mouth to Laknar Lane Bridge;
- Smith River hoot owl restrictions from the confluence of the North and South Fork of the Smith River to Eden Bridge south of Great Falls;
- Shields River full fishing closure from the mouth to Rock Creek;
- Lower Big Hole River hoot owl restrictions from the confluence with the Beaverhead River to Notch Bottom FAS;
- Upper Big Hole River full fishing closure from Saginaw Bridge on Skinner Meadow Road to the North Fork Big Hole River;
- Jefferson River entire river hoot owl restrictions;
- Sun River hoot owl restrictions from the mouth of Muddy Creek to the Highway 287 Bridge.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks’ drought policy provides for angling closures when flows drop below critical levels for fish, when water quality is diminished, or when maximum daily water temperatures reach at least 73 degrees for three consecutive days. The current forecasts for hot daily temperatures and existing low flows prompt implementing restrictions now.

These closures are designed to protect fish that become more susceptible to disease and mortality when drought and warm water conditions exist.

All stress to fish at this time of year is cumulative, and anglers should consider fishing in cooler waters during times of low flows and high water temperatures in rivers.

Anglers can help reduce stress for fish by following these practices when catching and releasing fish, though fish mortality may still occur:

- Fish during the coolest times of day, where permitted.
- Land the fish quickly.
- Keep the fish in water as much as possible.
- Remove the hook gently. Using artificial lures with single and barbless hooks can make hook removal faster and easier.
- Let the fish recover before releasing it.

If high temperatures and extremely low flows persist anglers may want to consider fishing areas with less stressful temperatures and conditions, such as larger lakes or reservoirs, or higher elevation waterbodies.



This email was sent to tnulph@bhwc.org using GovDelivery, on behalf of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
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