



FWP NEWS RELEASE

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Fishing restrictions enacted for several southwest-Montana rivers due to high temps

Fishing restrictions help offset stress for fish caused by high water temperatures

BOZEMAN – Daily “hoot-owl” fishing restrictions are being implemented for the East Gallatin, Jefferson and lower Big Hole rivers to reduce fish stress and mortality during high water temperatures. The restrictions will begin at 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 27.

Hoot-owl fishing restrictions prohibit fishing each day between 2 p.m. and midnight. This applies to:

- The East Gallatin River from the confluence with the West Gallatin River at Nixon Bridge upstream to Penwell Bridge Road
- The entire Jefferson River
- The lower Big Hole River from the confluence with the Beaverhead River upstream to Tony Schoonen Fishing Access Site

Water temperatures in these areas have exceeded 73 degrees for three consecutive days, meeting criteria for the restrictions. The restrictions will remain in place until water temperatures allow for lifting the restrictions or until Sept. 15.

Fishing restrictions, such as hoot-owl restrictions and full closures, are designed to protect fish that become more susceptible to disease and mortality when conditions, such as low flows and high water temperatures, combine with other stressors, including catch-and-release fishing. Restrictions may be put in place for other waterbodies as warm temperatures continue in the coming weeks. Anglers can find a statewide list of current restrictions at fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions.

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.
- Wet your hands before handling the fish.

- 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.
- If the fish is hooked deeply, you may have to cut the line at the fish's mouth or consider keeping it if regulations allow.
- Let the fish recover before releasing it.

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