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## High temps prompt additional hoot owl restrictions on some rivers in southwest Montana

1 message

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

### High temps prompt additional hoot owl restrictions on some rivers in southwest Montana

HELENA - Daily hoot owl fishing restrictions are being implemented for sections of the Gallatin, Beaverhead, Big Hole and Clark Fork rivers to reduce fish stress and mortality during high water temperatures.

Hoot owl restrictions prohibit fishing each day between 2 p.m. and midnight. These restrictions go into effect at 2 p.m. on Friday, July 29:

- Gallatin River: from the mouth of the river to Cameron Bridge Fishing Access Site
- Beaverhead River: from the mouth of the river to Selway Park FAS
- Big Hole River:
  - From the North Fork of the Big Hole to Saginaw Bridge FAS
  - Dickie Bridge FAS to the confluence with the North Fork of the Big Hole
  - Tony Schoonen FAS to FWP's Maidenrock FAS
- Clark Fork: from the confluence with Flint Creek to the confluence with Warm Springs Creek and Silver Bow Creek

Hoot owl restrictions are currently in place for these waters:

- Big Hole River: from the confluence with the Beaverhead River to Tony Schoonen FAS
- East Gallatin River: from the confluence with the West Gallatin River at Nixon Bridge to Penwell Bridge Road

- Jefferson River: the entire river
- Madison River: from the Warm Springs boat launch to the confluence with the Jefferson River
- Smith River: from the confluence of the North Fork and South Fork to Eden Bridge FAS
- Sun River: from the Highway 287 bridge to the mouth of Muddy Creek

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](http://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.

An emergency safety closure remains in effect on the Yellowstone River from Mayors Landing FAS to Sheep Mountain FAS.

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