



## FWP NEWS RELEASE

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### **Low flows trigger full fishing closure on another section of Big Hole River**

**GLEN** – A full fishing closure will go into effect on a section of the Big Hole River due to low flows.

The closure extends from the Tony Schoonen Fishing Access Site upstream to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Maidenrock Fishing Access Site. The closure will begin at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 23. The closure will remain in place until lifted by FWP in consultation with the Big Hole Watershed Committee, or until Oct. 31.

Flows at a U.S. Geological Survey gauge near Glen fell below 190 cubic feet per second on Aug. 18, meeting criteria for the full fishing closure outlined in the Big Hole River Watershed Committee Drought Management Plan.

The fishing closure replaces a hoot owl fishing restriction that has been in place here since July 29. Fishing restrictions are in place for other sections of the Big Hole River and other Montana waterbodies. Anglers can find a statewide list of current restrictions at [fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions/waterbody-closures](http://fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions/waterbody-closures).

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.

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 where fishing is allowed, though fish mortality may still occur:

- Fish during the coolest times of day.
- 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.