

STATE FISH HATCHERIES

- It is unlawful to fish at any time in the waters or on the property of any state fish hatchery, including Bones Creek from the Lake Rim Dam to the U.S. 401 Bypass (Raeford Road), except McKinney Lake Reservoir at McKinney Lake State Fish Hatchery.

Fishing on Game Lands

- A game lands license is not required to fish in any waters on game lands.
- All game lands are open to public fishing with the following exceptions:
 - Re-stocked ponds when posted against fishing.
 - Grogan Creek in Transylvania County, which serves as a fish hatchery and water supply.
 - Hunting Creek Swamp Waterfowl Refuge in Davie County.
 - Private ponds where fishing may be prohibited by property owners.
- In all game lands ponds, forked-tail catfish may be taken only by hook and line, and the daily creel limit is six catfish for all species combined.
- The use of special fishing devices, including crab pots, is prohibited in designated waterfowl impoundments located on game lands. Exception: Nongame fish may be taken year-round with archery equipment (see page 42) from waterfowl impoundments located entirely on game lands other than the impounded waters on the Sandhills Game Land and Public Mountain Trout Waters.
- Blue crabs may be taken recreationally from designated waterfowl impoundments on game lands with hand-held lines with single baits and a collapsible crab trap with a maximum opening of 18 inches. The limit is 50 crabs per person, per day or 100 per vessel per day with a minimum carapace width of five inches (point to point).

REGULATIONS FOR MOUNTAIN TROUT

Brook, brown and rainbow trout require cold, clean water and are therefore generally restricted to mountain streams and lakes. Those mountain waters that support trout and are open to public fishing are designated as “Public Mountain Trout Waters” by the Wildlife Resources Commission and are managed for public trout fishing. A significant amount of trout fishing opportunities in western North Carolina are located on private property. These landowners have generously allowed for public access for fishing. Please respect their property. Your cooperation is needed to protect fishing opportunities for future generations. The Commission conspicuously marks Public Mountain Trout Waters with regulation signs that indicate locations for public access. When anglers encounter “posted against trespass” signs along these designated sections on private lands, they should respect the property owner’s rights and choose another location along that stream to fish. Maps of trout water and their classifications may be viewed at ncwildlife.org/fishing/trout.

Fishing in Public Mountain Trout Waters

- Fishing is limited to hook and line only.
- An **artificial lure** is defined as a fishing lure that neither contains nor has been treated with any substance that attracts fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- **Natural bait** is defined as any living or dead organism (plant or animal), or parts thereof, or prepared substances designed to attract fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- It is unlawful to take fish bait or bait fish from Public Mountain Trout Waters.
- It is unlawful to possess natural bait while fishing Wild Trout and Catch and Release waters, unless those waters are also specifically classified for use of natural bait.

- Dropper flies may be used when fishing any Public Mountain Trout Waters.
- It is unlawful to fish with more than one line per person, except on power reservoirs and municipal water supply reservoirs.
- Fishing is not allowed in Hatchery Supported Trout Waters during the closed season except in the Linville River and tributaries within Linville Gorge Wilderness Area and on power reservoirs and municipal water supply reservoirs designated as trout waters.
- Non-trout species may be harvested from Delayed Harvest Trout Waters during the catch-and-release only trout season under applicable size and creel limits.
- It is unlawful to place hatchery-reared fish into Wild Trout Waters or move wild fish from one stream to another on game lands without prior written authorization.
- Information and regulations about trout fishing on game lands are listed on page 28.

Trout Fishing in Undesignated Waters

Some waters that are not designated as Public Mountain Trout Waters contain mountain trout. When fishing in undesignated waters, there is no size limit or bait restriction, and the creel limit is seven trout per day. A trout fishing license is not required to fish undesignated waters, and there is no closed season.

Public Mountain Trout Waters

Public Mountain Trout Waters are classified for management purposes as either “Hatchery Supported Trout Waters” or “Wild Trout Waters.” Hatchery Supported Trout Waters must be stocked periodically with trout to sustain angling. Wild Trout Waters are high-quality waters that sustain trout populations by natural reproduction. Some Public Mountain Trout Waters are specially regulated to meet specific management objectives. These are further classified as follows:

- “Catch and Release/Artificial Flies Only Trout Waters”
- “Catch and Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters”
- “Delayed Harvest Trout Waters”
- “Special Regulation Trout Waters”
- “Wild Trout/Natural Bait Waters”

Some of these public trout waters are also classified as Mountain Heritage Trout Waters and are identified on page 28.

Catch and Release/Artificial Flies Only Trout Waters

These waters and their tributaries, except as noted, may be fished only with artificial flies having one single hook. No trout may be harvested or possessed while fishing these streams. These streams are marked with red-and-gold signs.

Catch and Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters

These waters and their tributaries, except as noted, may be fished only with artificial lures having one single hook. No trout may be harvested or possessed while fishing these streams. These streams are marked with purple-and-gold signs.

Delayed Harvest Trout Waters

Delayed Harvest Trout Waters, excluding tributaries except as noted, may be fished only with artificial lures with one single hook, no natural bait may be possessed, and no trout may be harvested or possessed while fishing these waters between Oct. 1, 2017 and 30 minutes after sunset on June 1, 2018. These waters are closed to fishing between 30 minutes after sunset on June 1 and 6 a.m. on June 2. At 6 a.m. on June 2, 2018, these waters open to fishing for youths under 18 years old under Hatchery Supported Trout Waters regulations—no bait restriction, no minimum length limit and seven-trout-per-day creel limit. At 12 p.m. on June 2, 2018, these waters open for all anglers under Hatchery Supported Trout Waters regulations. These waters are marked with black-and-white signs.