



# Fishing regulations summary

Banff, Yoho and Kootenay national parks



A national park fishing permit is required when angling in national parks in Canada.

Provincial fishing licenses are not valid.

**Note:** This is NOT a complete listing of National Parks Fishing Regulations and has no legal status.

Scan the QR code for a complete listing.



April 1, 2026–March 31, 2027

## National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations

### It is unlawful to:

- Fish without a valid national park fishing permit in your immediate possession.
- Fish with or possess within 100 metres of park waters the following:
  - ◊ natural bait and chemical attractants;
  - ◊ any lead tackle (sinkers, jigs, lures and flies) under 50 grams;
  - ◊ lures with more than 2 treble hooks;
  - ◊ a line capable of catching more than one fish at one time;
  - ◊ live or dead fish or any parts thereof for use as bait.
- Fish by any method other than angling.
- Fish with more than one line at a time.
- Fish with a line having more than one artificial fly.
- Fish closed waters.
- Leave a fishing line unattended.
- Fish from 2 hours after sunset to one hour before sunrise.
- Sell, trade or barter any fish caught.
- Place or transfer any fish or fish eggs between any park waters.
- Place any food for fish in park waters.
- Harass fish by throwing objects or impeding their movements.

### When fishing in park waters that allow possession (see Catch and possession limits), it is unlawful to:

- Possess more than 2 game fish at one time.
- Continue fishing on any day after having caught and retained the maximum daily catch and possession limit.
- Allow your catch to spoil or to be wasted.

Report suspicious activities at 1-888-927-3367.

### Catch and possession limits

You must correctly identify your catch. If you are not sure, release it immediately. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-fish-identification](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-fish-identification) for information on how to identify different fish species.

|   | Limit |
|---|-------|
| Lake trout from Lake Minnewanka reservoir | 2     |
| All other species and locations           | 0     |
| Maximum daily catch and possession        | 2     |

(If a fish has been filleted, two fillets will be considered one fish.)

### Follow these recommendations to help released fish survive:

1. Use a single, barbless hook to release fish more easily. Replace treble hooks with single hooks or remove two of the three treble hooks with wire cutters. Make barbed hooks barbless by flattening the barb with pliers.
2. Minimize fish handling time by releasing fish as quickly as possible.
3. Always keep fish in the water when handling, taking photographs, and releasing.
4. Handle fish with bare, wet hands. Keep fingers away from the gills and do not squeeze to avoid injuring the fish.
5. Remove the hook gently with needle-nosed pliers. If the hook is deep, cut the line or leader rather than pulling the hook out. The hook will decompose in time.
6. Avoid angling in hot weather – trout are more likely to die after catch and release when water temperatures exceed 18 °C.

By following these tips, you can significantly increase the chances of a released fish surviving and thriving. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-fishing](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-fishing) for more tips.

## Banff National Park

### Special restrictions

Before entering park waters, visitors must:



- **Know where to go:** Watercraft, waders, and wading boots are prohibited in certain lakes and rivers. Felt-soled wading boots are prohibited everywhere.
- **Clean, drain, dry and certify** all watercraft and equipment between uses. Motorized watercraft require a Parks Canada inspection before launching in Lake Minnewanka only. Non-motorized watercraft, angling equipment and other gear requires a self-certification permit where use is allowed.

Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-clean-drain-dry](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-clean-drain-dry) for more information.

### Open seasons

#### Year round

Bow River - from Hector Lake to east park boundary, including associated backwaters and oxbows. No ice fishing on the Bow River.

#### May 16 to September 7

Ghost Lakes (3), Lake Minnewanka reservoir, Two Jack Lake reservoir, Vermilion Lakes (3) and adjacent inflow streams and beaver ponds.

#### July 1 to August 31

All tributaries of the Bow River, except the Cascade River.

#### July 1 to November 1

Cascade River and tributaries above Lake Minnewanka reservoir (excluding closed waters).

#### July 1 to August 15

Owen Creek.

#### July 1 to November 1

All other waters except closed waters.

### Closed waters

#### Waters closed to fishing:

Castleguard River - the upper portion of the river located in the Zone I – Special Preservation Area; Cave and Basin marsh system; Lake Agnes; Luellen Lake – outflow stream from fisheries' boundary markers, downstream to the confluence of the outflow stream and Johnston Creek; Marvel Lake - outflow stream from fisheries' boundary markers, downstream to confluence with Bryant Creek; All tributaries and associated lakes in the Clearwater and Siffleur river systems, excluding Isabella Lake; Owen Creek; Johnson Lake reservoir, adjacent wetland and outflow creek to confluence with Cascade River.

#### Waters closed to all water based activities:

Babel Creek; Helen Creek; Skoki Creek; Hidden Lake; Margaret Lake; Mystic Lake and outlet downstream to confluence with 40-mile Creek; Outlet Creek; Fish Lakes - the two Fish Lakes nearest campsite Mo18; Sawback Lake; Sawback Creek; Rainbow Lake; Elk Lake; Cuthead Creek; Spray River above Spray Lakes reservoir; Marvel Lake; Bow River from Bow Lake outlet to Hector Lake inlet.

For current, restrictions, closures and additional information:

[parks.canada.ca/banff-fishing](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-fishing)  
[parks.canada.ca/banff-bulletins](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-bulletins)

## Yoho and Kootenay national parks



**Closed waters alert:** Fishing and watercraft use are prohibited in Yoho and Kootenay national parks.

Violators of the closures can face fines of up to \$25,000 under the Canada National Parks Act.

### For current information:

[parks.canada.ca/kootenay-fishing](https://parks.canada.ca/kootenay-fishing)

[parks.canada.ca/yoho-fishing](https://parks.canada.ca/yoho-fishing)

### Fishing permits



Anyone under the age of 16 requires a permit unless accompanied by a national park fishing permit holder 16 years of age or older. However, their catch is then included within the permit holder's daily limit. A valid national park entry pass is also required when fishing in the mountain national parks.

### Definitions



**Angling:** Fishing with a hook and line held in the hand or with a hook, line and rod held in the hand. It does not mean fishing with a set line.



**Artificial fly:** A single or double hook on a common shank, dressed with silk, tinsel, wool, fur, feathers or other material (no lead), or any combination thereof, without a spinning device whether attached to the hook or line.



**Natural bait ban:** You can only use lures made of feathers, fibre, rubber, wood, metal or plastic. No edible material (plant or animal products), scented lures or chemical attractants are permitted.



**Tributary:** Any water course which flows into another body of water. This includes a tributary of a tributary. Lakes are excluded unless otherwise specified.



**Trout:** For the purposes of this summary, the word trout includes char species.

### For further information:

Banff National Park: 403-762-1550  
[banffinfo@pc.gc.ca](mailto:banffinfo@pc.gc.ca)

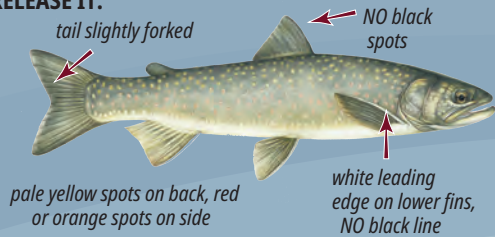
Yoho and Kootenay national parks: 250-343-6108  
[llyk.aquatics@pc.gc.ca](mailto:llyk.aquatics@pc.gc.ca)

# How to identify your catch

## Light markings, dark background

### Bull Trout (species at risk)

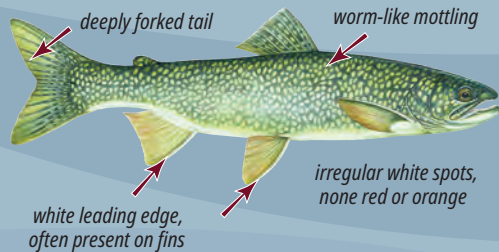
Bull Trout are a species at risk due to small population and concerns of viability. **They have a zero possession limit across the province – IF YOU CATCH THIS FISH YOU MUST RELEASE IT.**



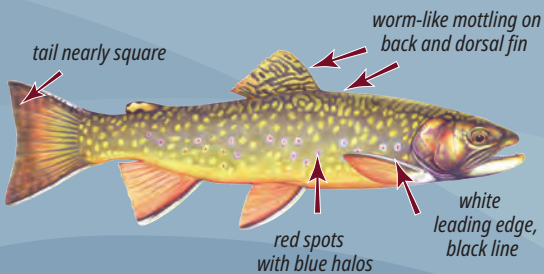
Bull trout are slim fish with a large head. Their back is olive-green to grey while their sides are silvery and marked with pale yellow to red spots. There are no spots on the dorsal fin.

### Lake Trout

Lake Trout are a grey fish with irregular white spots and a forked caudal fin.



### Brook Trout (introduced)



**!** Anglers are responsible for distinguishing one fish species from another. If you are unsure, release it.

## Black spots, light background

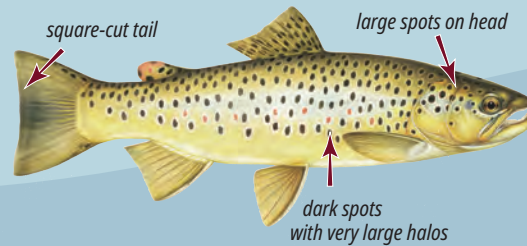
### Westslope Cutthroat Trout (species at risk)

Westslope Cutthroat trout are a species at risk in Yoho, Kootenay and Banff national parks.

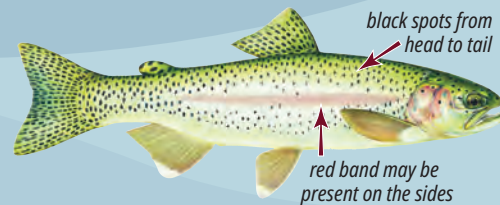


Note: red band may be present. Use red slash for proper identification.

### Brown Trout (introduced)



### Rainbow Trout (introduced)



Note: use lack of red slash under jaw for proper identification.

### ! Important note:

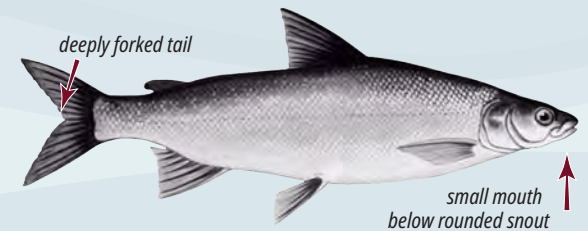
This guide is not an extensive list of species but represents the most common fish caught in Banff, Yoho, and Kootenay national parks. **Yoho and Kootenay national parks waters are closed for 2026.**

## Other

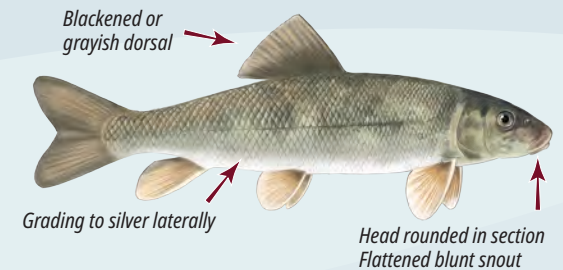
### Mountain Whitefish



### Lake Whitefish



### White Sucker



### Kokanee Salmon



Females and males: red bodies during fall spawn, with green or black heads. Silvery bodies for remainder of the year.