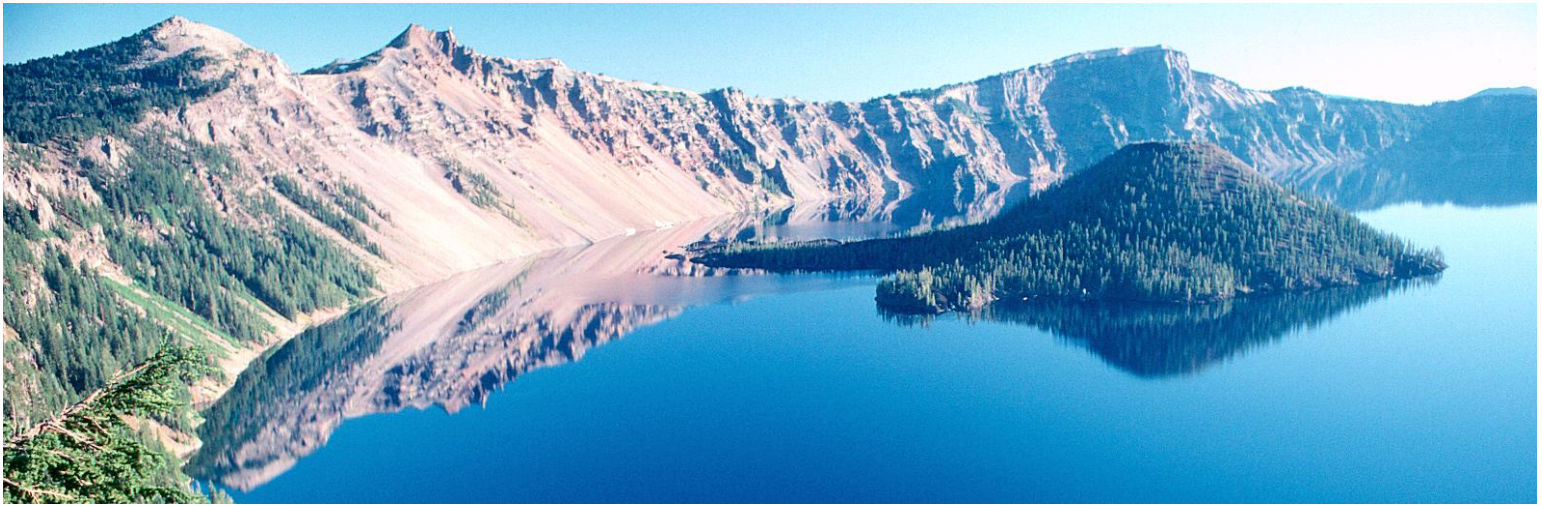




Fishing



The Shores of Crater Lake

If you're willing to work for your fishing opportunity, then try fishing at Crater Lake where the 1.1 mile long Cleetwood Trail drops almost 700 feet down to the shoreline. All waters within Crater Lake National Park are open to fishing unless otherwise indicated below. No fishing license is required within the boundaries of Crater Lake National Park. The fishing season runs from May 20 through October 31 generally. However, there are some special circumstances so make sure to read the Lake Regulations below.

There are also some opportunities to be had in the streams of Crater Lake National Park but state and federal regulations apply, so keep reading.

Fishing is only allowed from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. In all waters of the park, only artificial lures and flies may be used. No organic bait of any kind can be used; including live or dead fish, power bait, and fish eggs or roe.

Crater Lake Regulations

Limits

There are no restrictions to size, number or species taken.

Season

The lake can be fished year-round except when seasonal limitations prevent safe access. The only access to the lake is by the Cleetwood Trail located on the north side of Crater Lake. This trail is moderately strenuous, dropping nearly 700 feet down from the Rim Drive to the shoreline in just over a mile. Hiking back up can take, on average, 30 to 45 minutes.

Where

Cleetwood Cove provides about ¼ mile of rocky shoreline for angling. Wizard Island is also open while boat tours are running. Fishing is not allowed within 200 feet of the boat docks.

Note

Please pack out your catch. Cleaning fish in the lake is prohibited.

Boating

Private boats or flotation devices are not allowed on Crater Lake.

Stream Regulations

Closures

Fishing is prohibited in Sun Creek and Lost Creek within the boundaries of Crater Lake National Park.

Sun and Lost Creeks are protected habitat for the native Bull Trout which is listed under the Endangered Species Act. The park is engaged in a long-term project to eradicate non-native fish species from these creeks and restore

sustainable population of bull trout. Allowing fishing would jeopardize this species due to take, injury and mortality caused by catching, snagging, injuring while releasing, or keeping bull trout. There are no less restrictive measures that would provide adequate protection to bull trout.

Regulations

State regulations are enforced for stream fishing in Crater Lake National Park.

Fish in Crater Lake

In 1888, William G. Steel, considered the founder of Crater Lake National Park, made the first recorded attempts to stock Crater Lake. National Park Service researchers believe that before that time, Crater Lake contained no fish. William Steel's motive for stocking the lake was probably to improve the lake's recreational value.

Around the turn of the century, a regular stocking program was begun. Stocking continued through the early part of the century until creel censuses showed that the fish were naturally reproducing. Six species were introduced to Crater Lake during this time. The last recorded stockings were silver salmon in 1937 and rainbow trout in 1941.

Later investigations revealed that the naturally reproducing silver salmon were actually kokanee salmon. Since kokanee were not intentionally introduced, researchers believe that one of the plantings of silver salmon fingerlings was actually

kokanee. Of the six species introduced, two remain:

Kokanee Salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) are a dwarf, landlocked form of sockeye salmon. Kokanee are the most abundant species in the lake, estimated to have a population well in the hundreds of thousands. An average kokanee is about 8 inches long, but some grow to as long as 18 inches.

Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) are less abundant than the kokanee, but are typically larger. The largest documented rainbow trout from Crater Lake was a 6 ½ pound, 26 inches long specimen caught by the park research team. Most rainbows average 10 to 14 inches.

Rainbow trout and kokanee salmon populations are stable in the lake. Researchers believe that this stability is due to each fish species eating different foods. Kokanee feed on zooplankton and rainbows feed on aquatic insects.

Fish in Park Streams

Although the lake is by far the park's largest body of water, fish also inhabit many of the small streams within the park. These streams are generally not accessible because of the steep canyons in which they are found.

According to stocking records, two species, eastern brook and rainbow trout, were planted in park streams. However, a total of four species have been identified:

Eastern Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) have been found in almost every park stream.

Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) were originally planted in large numbers throughout the park. Today, it appears that their numbers are few and scattered. They have been collected in recent years from Annie, Bybee, Castle, Munson,

and Sun Creeks.

German Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) in recent surveys, one representative specimen was found in Sand Creek above the falls, which appears to be a barrier preventing migration upstream. Researchers believe that this fish may be the remnant of an unrecorded or unauthorized planting.

Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) are understood to be the only native fish species found within the park. These less competitive fish are a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, and are considered rare in the Southern Cascades. Programs to conserve this species have been implemented in Crater Lake National Park.