



Photo: Richard Hansen

Monster muskies

New fishing rules allow anglers to keep one tiger muskie longer than 40 inches.

Please see Page 6.

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Urban fisheries

Fishing fun is just a hop, skip and a jump away.

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No such thing ...



Photo: Dan Williams

Summer trout fishing is a relaxing experience at Trout Lakes in Northern New Mexico.

... as a bad day fishing

By Dan Williams

New Mexicans are blessed with some of the most diverse fishing opportunities in the West. Often, you never know what you'll catch from one water -- or one cast -- to the next.

"That's the beauty of it," said Eric Frey, fisheries biologist for the Northeast Area. "In some places, it's almost like saltwater fishing: You don't know what you're going to get, and something's always biting."

Whether you're after natives or stockers, pan-sized or trophies, or just a quiet getaway, chances are there's a spot not too far from home. The hard part is deciding exactly where to go, when, and of course, what to use for bait.

Most anglers have favorite fishing spots where they return year after year. Like comfort food, we never get tired of them. There are days, however, when we have a hankering to break the cycle and try something new. That's when we can use a little advice.



Photo: Chris Guikema

Five-year-old Augustus Guikema was mighty pleased with the smallmouth bass he caught at Navajo Lake. Story, Page 4.

For answers to these all-important questions, we went to the experts at the Department of Game and Fish. We asked the "fish squeezers" who work the spawns and conduct the surveys. We sought out people who oversee hatcheries and stocking schedules, and those who rub shoulders with other anglers and fisheries biologists day-in and day-out. We asked them to share their personal favorite fishing spots -- and they were happy to oblige.

As Frey put it, "Just get me started and I can talk about fishing all day long."

Rick Castell Northwest Area fisheries biologist

"My favorite, if you have a boat, is Navajo Lake," Castell said. "Hands-down, it's the best fishery in the state. It's chock-full of fish; about the only thing it doesn't have is walleye. The catching is always good, and if by chance, it isn't, you can trailer the boat the fish the tailwater."

... continued on Page 14



Changes in store for N.M. hunters

Wednesday, April 7, is the deadline for hunters to apply for 2010-2011 deer, elk, antelope, ibex, javelina, Barbary sheep and bighorn sheep hunting opportunities allotted by draw in New Mexico.

Online applications must be received by 5 p.m. April 7. Paper applications must be postmarked by April 7 or delivered to the Department office in Santa Fe by 5 p.m. April 7.

Online applicants are encouraged to apply early to avoid missing the deadline because of forgotten passwords or other computer-related issues at the last minute. Late applications will not be accepted.

New this year

- Deer licenses:** The State Game Commission eliminated the deer hunting permit. To legally hunt deer, hunters must draw a public-land deer license or purchase a private land-only deer license valid only with landowner permission. Private land-only deer licenses will be available from license vendors.
- Discounted resident combination licenses:** Residents who apply online for public-land deer licenses will be able to buy a combination license such as a general hunting and fishing license, at the time of application. Applicants who request combo licenses will be issued an authorization number to use as their small-game and fishing license. If successful in the draw, they will be mailed a license and tag. If unsuccessful, the authorization number will serve as their license.
- Unit 6A-6C boundary:** The boundary was moved westward to the Coyote/

Cuba Ranger District Boundary in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness. An updated map is available on the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

- New application fee:** The nonrefundable special hunt application fee is \$10 for residents, \$27 for nonresidents.
- Full fee up-front:** Applicants for any public draw deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, oryx, ibex, javelina or Barbary sheep license must pay the application fee and the full license fee before the drawing.
- No every-other-year holdout:** Hunters who successfully drew a Quality (Q) or High-demand (HD) deer or elk license, or pronghorn license last season may apply for Q or HD hunts or pronghorn hunts this season. The Game Commission removed the every-other-year restriction at its December 2009 meeting.
- Two spring turkey tags:** Beginning this year, hunters will be issued two tags with their spring turkey license. One tag can be used for a turkey taken in open units statewide, the second tag can be used in units open to a two-turkey bag limit. Hunters no longer will have to purchase a second tag separately.
- Furbearer hunter and trapper reporting:** Furbearer hunters and trappers must report their harvest by April 7. They also must purchase their licenses at a Department office, online or via Form 3. Licenses no longer will be available from other vendors.

- Barbary sheep:** Licenses for 2010-2011 only will be available through Department offices, online and through the public drawing.

Customer ID Number

Applicants are reminded that everyone applying for a public-land license or permit, or purchasing a license via a private land authorization or the Valles Caldera must first obtain a free Customer ID Number online at www.wildlife.state.nm.us or in person from any Department office. This number must be included on each application, paper or online, or the application will be rejected.

The Department is expecting to receive more than 150,000 applications for about 50,000 available licenses and permits.

Mandatory harvest reports

All applicants who were licensed to hunt deer or elk, or to hunt or trap furbearers in the 2009-2010 seasons must have submitted a harvest report to be eligible for the upcoming drawing. Hunters and trappers who did not report by the deadlines -- Feb. 15 for deer and elk hunters, April 7 for furbearer hunters and trappers -- can participate in the 2010-2011 drawings if they submit a harvest survey and pay an \$8 late fee before applying. Hunters who fail to report their harvest results -- successful or not -- will have their applications rejected. Reports can be submitted at www.newmexico-hunt.com or by calling (888) 248-6866.

The drawing will take place in June, and results will be available in late June on the Department Web site or in person at any Department office.

More information is available at www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

Shooting hours, turkey bag limit may increase

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is requesting public comments on several proposed changes to the state's big-game hunting rules that will be presented to the State Game Commission this year.

The proposed changes will be available for public review in three parts and at different times to give the public the best opportunities to review them before modified versions are presented to the Commission. Proposals will be posted on the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us according to the following schedule:

- Turkey, upland game, javelina:** Proposals were published on the Web site in March. Modified recommendations will be presented to the Commission for review in April, with a Commission decision expected at its May or June meeting.
- Bighorn, exotic species, elk, waterfowl, Open Gate:** Proposals will be published on the Web site in April. Modified recommendations will be presented to the Commission for review in May or June, with a Commission decision expected at its July meeting.
- Deer, bear and cougar, pronghorn, A-PLUS:** Proposals will be published on the Web site in June. Modified recommendations will be presented to the Commission for review in July, with a Commission decision expected at its September meeting.



Photo: Don MacCarter

A two-turkey statewide bag limit is under consideration.

Here are summaries of the proposed big-game hunting rule changes that, if approved, would take effect in the 2011-2012 seasons:

General proposals, all species

- Make rules effective for four years instead of the current two years. This would allow the Department to base management recommendations on three years of data instead of one, improve consistency for hunters and landowners, and decrease the amount of staff time spent on rule development.
- Change legal shooting hours to ½-hour before sunrise to ½-hour after sunset. The current rule ends shooting time at sunset.
- Legalize crossbows for use during

"any legal weapon" and muzzleloader hunts. This would increase hunter opportunity with no conflict with archery seasons.

Javelina

- Open certain Lesser Prairie Chicken Areas, the La Joya Wildlife Area and the Water Canyon Wildlife Area to javelina hunting.

Upland game

- Add Arizona gray squirrel, fox squirrel and eastern gray squirrel to the legal bag limit for squirrel hunters.
- Prohibit hunting upland game over bait.

Turkey

- Prohibit hunting turkeys over bait.
- Increase the statewide spring bag limit to two turkeys, except in the Valles Caldera National Preserve.
- Change the fall season to Nov. 1-30.
- Open Units 6A, 6C, 32 and 33 to fall hunting.
- Open portions of Units 2A and 2C to spring and fall hunting.

Complete information about proposed rule changes is available at www.wildlife.state.nm.us. Comments can be sent to darrel.veybright@state.nm.us or New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Wildlife Management Division, 1 Wildlife Way, Santa Fe, NM 87507. Questions? Please call (505) 476-8038.



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Dan J. Williams
Editor

Lance Cherry
Chief of Publications

Letters may be sent to:

NEW MEXICO WILDLIFE
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504-5112
Telephone (505) 476-8004
dan.williams@state.nm.us



Please visit our Web site,
www.wildlife.state.nm.us



Salopek, Fonay appointed to State Game Commission

Two men from southern New Mexico joined the New Mexico Game Commission early this year, replacing members whose terms had expired.

Gov. Bill Richardson appointed Thomas “Dick” Salopek of Las Cruces and Gary Fonay of Hobbs to the seven-member commission that oversees the Department of Game and Fish. Their terms will expire Dec. 31, 2013.



Dick Salopek



Gary Fonay

owns and manages a farm and ranch in southern New Mexico. In 2004, he retired from the oil industry after nearly 30 years. He was co-owner of Lynx Petroleum in Hobbs from 1984-2004. Before that, he worked for Conoco, Inc. He is a graduate of the Colorado School of Mines and holds a bachelor’s degree in Petroleum Engineering.

Salopek, who replaced Leo Sims of Hobbs, is a pecan grower who owns two farms in the Las Cruces area. He holds a bachelor’s degree in agronomy and soil from New Mexico State University. Prior to his appointment to the Commission, he was appointed by the governor to serve as a NMSU regent.

Fonay replaced Alfredo Montoya of Alcalde. He

Grab the rods, pack up the kids: Fishing is free June 5

In New Mexico, it doesn’t get much better than Saturday, June 5, 2010, when the weather’s fine and the fishing is free.

Free Fishing Day is a great time to round up the family, some gear and head to your favorite fishing water. The State Game Commission established two Free Fishing Days, June 5 and Sept. 25, when all anglers, residents and nonresidents can fish without a license or habitat stamp, although all other fishing rules apply.

To celebrate June 5, the Department of Game and Fish and its partners will conduct free fishing clinics at waters across the state. Anglers of all ages are encouraged to participate. All you need is some basic fishing equipment and a desire to fish in New Mexico’s great outdoors. Most clinics will offer prizes for kids who register and attend educational stations.

Young anglers will learn the basics: how to bait hooks, tie knots, catch fish and the correct way to release fish. They’ll also learn how to be responsible anglers and how to get the most out of the Department’s Fishing Rules and Information Booklet.

Most of the clinics will be from 8 a.m. to noon, but anglers are encouraged to check the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us, or call (505) 476-8095 for more information and updates. Here’s where to find the clinics:

- **Las Cruces:** Alumni Pond.
- **Lake Roberts.**

Report OHV violations online or on toll-free hotline

The next time you see an ATV, dirt bike or other off-highway vehicle in violation of state OHV laws, take the time to gather some information and call the state’s new toll-free OHV Violations Hotline, (800) 366-4868, or report the violation online at www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

The Department of Game and Fish launched the 24-hour automated hotline Wednesday, Feb. 10, and has since activated the online reporting system. Callers will be prompted for basic information, which will be forwarded to the OHV program manager for investigation. All reports will be confidential. For emergencies, people are advised to call 911.

Hotline callers and online reporters will be asked to provide:

- Date and time of violation.
- Location and county.

Fonay is an avid outdoorsman and is a member of Quail Unlimited Lea County, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Valle Vidal Coalition. He served as president of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association in 1993 and currently is on the board of trustees for University of the Southwest.

More about the State Game Commission, including contact information, meeting schedules, minutes, agendas and briefings, is available on the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us.



Photo: Dan Williams

The trout were biting on Free Fishing Day last year at Lake Roberts.

- **Roswell:** Wal-Mart Super Center, catfish, portable pool.
- **Ruidoso:** Grindstone Lake.
- **Aztec:** Aztec City Pond.
- **Questa:** Eagle Rock Lake.
- **Grants:** Grants Riverwalk Pond.
- **Santa Rosa:** Blue Hole Park Pond.
- **Santa Fe:** Santa Fe River, downtown.

- Type of vehicle involved -- ATV, dirt bike, snowmobile, side-by-side.
- Details of violation.
- Suspect information, vehicle description and license plate.
- Your name and phone number if you wish to be contacted.

Any information about off-highway vehicle violations is helpful as the Department and other law enforcement agencies increase efforts to enforce the New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Act. People who witness violations are encouraged to report them, but are discouraged from confronting violators on the trails.

For more information about state OHV laws and the Department’s Off-Highway Vehicle Program, please call (505) 476-8140 or visit www.wildlife.state.nm.us or www.b4uride.com.

Get involved

Many organizations in New Mexico are dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement and wildlife-related recreation. Whether you are interested in birding, wildlife watching, hunting, fishing or trapping, chances are there is an outfit you’ll deem worth supporting. Here are some of them:

Quail Unlimited: The national organization has almost 300 members dedicated to the wise management of America’s wild quail and restoring quail populations for future generations. John Moen, (575) 526-3571, trophy@zianet.com.

New Mexico Chapter, Wild Sheep Foundation: Formerly the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, the organization’s goal is “Putting more sheep on the mountain.” Members work with the Department of Game and Fish to increase populations of desert and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in New Mexico. Information: Lanny Rominger, (505) 821-5064.

Ducks Unlimited, New Mexico: More than 1,500 members support the organization’s mission to restore and manage wetlands and habitats for North American waterfowl. Cindy Wolfe, cjwolfe@gilanet.com, (575) 854-3365.

New Mexico Wildlife Federation: Founded by Aldo Leopold in 1914, the organization is a strong lobbyist in the New Mexico Legislature, “dedicated to protecting New Mexico’s wildlife, habitat and outdoor way of life.” (505) 299-5404, www.nmwildlife.org.

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation: An all-volunteer organization focused on New Mexico’s wildlife and habitat resources. It offers monthly meetings with guest speakers, in-the-field habitat restoration projects and a monthly newsletter. (505) 281-2925, <http://abq.nmwildlife.org>.

Audubon New Mexico: Devoted to the protection, preservation and enjoyment of the environment, with a particular emphasis on birds. The organization has chapters statewide, with headquarters at the Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe. (505) 983-4609, <http://nm.audubon.org>.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation: A large national organization dedicated to ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat. The organization actively supports efforts to protect and enhance elk country, conservation education and to restore elk herds. New Mexico information: (505) 892-1250. National website: www.rmef.org.

Southwest Environmental Center: Works to reverse the accelerating loss of species worldwide by protecting and restoring native wildlife and their habitats in the Southwestern borderlands, through grassroots advocacy, public education and on-the-ground restoration projects. (575) 522-5552, www.wildmesquite.org.

Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen: An organization representing at least 15 sporting and conservation groups of diverse interests. The group’s three primary objectives are to “disseminate wildlife and habitat information, participate in habitat maintenance projects, and review and comment on proposals involving wildlife habitat.” (575) 526-5056.

Trout Unlimited, New Mexico: Dedicated to the restoration, protection and conservation of all coldwater fisheries, their tributaries and watersheds and the fish that inhabit them. (505) 470-4878, www.newmexicotru.org.

New Mexico Wild Turkey Federation: Supports scientific wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport. (505) 869-3837, www.nwtf.org.

New Mexico Trout: Dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of trout fishing in New Mexico’s waters through restoration of riparian habitats and through the education of the public about trout fishing and the value of trout habitats. newmexicotrout@gmail.com, www.newmexicotrout.org.

Southwest Muskie Maniacs: This rapidly growing club was formed as the 59th chapter of Muskies Inc. in 2008 by a group of anglers interested in catching tiger muskies stocked in Bluewater and Quemado lakes, and northern pike in northern New Mexico waters. Information: Michael Bishop, mb_tigers@yahoo.com; or Jared Blaschke at jbfsn@comcast.net.

Safari Club International: Promotes wildlife conservation worldwide while protecting the hunting heritage and supporting numerous education and humanitarian projects. Southern New Mexico Chapter: LTC R.A. “Pancho” Maples, pancho1@plateautel.net. Northern New Mexico Chapter: Brian Payne, b_payne10@msn.com.





Fishing guide Chris Guikema with

Smallmouths are predators that feed mostly on minnows, crustaceans such as crayfish, and aquatic and terrestrial

Many different types and brands of lures work great for smallmouth bass. They include jerkbaits, crankbaits, Mepps spinners, floating Rapalas, Junior Thundersticks, tube jigs, bugeye jigs, Rattleback jigs, Rapala countdowns and Bomber spinnerbaits. If all else fails, the best bait for catching smallmouth bass is the good old hook and worm.

Ross Morgan is the Department of Game and Fish public information officer for the Northwest Area. He can be contacted at (505) 222-4707 or ross.morgan@state.nm.us.



The jaw of a smallmouth bass, top, does not extend past its eye, unlike the jaw of a largemouth bass, below.

Big largemouth bass thriving in Lake Roberts

"They start to spawn in April and go into protection mode," Vega said. "They can



Small boats are popular with bass and trout anglers at Lake Roberts north of Silver City.

be very aggressive.” He suggests using jigs, crankbaits or live minnows from shore or a boat, concentrating on the cattails on the north end of the lake by the dam, where the water is deepest.

It's not uncommon to catch largemouth bass weighing five pounds or more in the spring. It gets tougher in the summer months when warm temperatures drive the bass into deeper water and the visibility is not as good.

Trout fishing can be good year-round at the lake, but springtime is best because of cooler, clearer water. As the water warms, parts of the lake can become choked with algae, making it difficult to get bait to the fish. To address that problem, the Department of Game

and Fish and the U.S. Forest Service purchased two solar-powered water circulators in 2007. The “SolarBees” are improving water quality and oxygen levels while reducing algae blooms.

The Department also is continuing to explore alternatives to replace or repair the Lake Roberts dam to improve its spillway capacity. An assessment by the State Engineer's Office Safety Bureau indicated the spillway may be too small to accommodate a large runoff event. Approximately \$900,000 was spent to rebuild the dam outlet and tower structure in 1998.

If you're looking for a good spot to take the family fishing, don't miss the free fishing clinic June 5 at the lake. The U.S.

Forest Service, Department of Game and Fish and many volunteers will be on hand with educational stations, prizes and food for the event that coincides with Free Fishing Day. Fishing licenses are not required at public waters statewide on this special day, although all other fishing rules apply.

Lake Roberts was named in memory of Austin A. Roberts, a Department pilot who lost his life in the line of duty in 1960. The Department bought the property in 1962 for \$11,000 and the dam was built for \$140,000 in 1963, impounding 77 acres from Sapillo Creek. Most of the area around the lake is controlled by the U.S. Forest Service, which maintains two campgrounds and picnic areas.



Catch spring fever at Conchas, Ute

By Clint Henson

After this year’s long, wet winter, I have been thinking about this summer’s vacation. Both my kids are getting older, and I like to take them to memorable locations. But, like most families, the budget is tight and tickets to Hawaii are out of the question. Actually, four tickets to anywhere are out of the question. I love staying in New Mexico; there is so much history at every turn. But where can we go?

If I prefer to stay in the northeastern part of the state, my thoughts turn to Ute Lake or Conchas Lake. Both of these lakes are “out-of-the-way,” but close enough for a weekend getaway. Very few travel routes pass by these destinations, but once you discover them, it may change your regular routine. The fact that they are off the beaten path is why these lakes are so popular. You can really get away from it all.

Conchas Lake is 72 miles east of Las Vegas on N.M. 104, and 32 miles west of Tucumcari on the same highway. It also can be reached by going north on N.M. 129 from Interstate 40 at Newkirk, just east of Santa Rosa. It is a beautiful drive through the canyons of the Conchas River. This is a road you probably won’t drive unless you are heading to the lake, but it is well worth the trip.

Conchas Dam was constructed in 1939 at the confluence of the Canadian and Conchas rivers. It has a surface area of 9,600 acres and has 60 miles of shoreline. With many coves, inlets and secluded beaches, it is very easy to find a spot for yourself.

Fishing is great at Conchas for walleye, crappie, largemouth, smallmouth and



Photo: Jack Kelly

Conchas Lake holds good populations of largemouth, smallmouth and white bass.

white bass, bluegills, and catfish. It’s a great place to fish with kids because there is always something biting, and if they get bored, water temperatures are great for summer swimming or a hike to see wildlife and petroglyphs. There is a nine-hole golf course, and plenty of spots to just relax in the sun. The lake also is enjoyed by windsurfers and scuba divers.

Conchas Lake State Park has 41 electrical equipped campsites and 104 developed campsites, along with handicapped-accessible tables, grills and restrooms. While most people bring their own boats, you can always fish along the shore and rock outcrops that are walking distance from the campsites.

There also are opportunities to rent charter boats and jet skies.

Ute Lake is just west of Logan on N.M. 54 between Tucumcari and Dalhart, Texas. Logan is 40 miles northeast of Tucumcari. You may never have had a reason to travel this route -- until now.

Ute Lake was impounded in 1963 by a mile-long earthen dam. In 1984, a new spillway was constructed, raising the water depth to 130 feet at the lake’s deepest point. The lake is 13 miles long and one mile wide, with a surface area of 8,200 acres.

Ute Lake State Park has 77 electrical campsites, 142 developed campsites and

Northeast



Clint Henson

practically unlimited primitive camping. It has handicapped-accessible tables and restrooms.

Ute and Conchas lakes are similar with miles of shoreline with numerous coves and inlets that allow users to find spots to themselves. Swimming, diving, hiking and fishing are great ways to spend your days.

Both state parks offer special educational and interpretative opportunities, so check at the visitor centers to see what is on the schedule. Don’t forget to thank the rangers for the great work they do keeping the parks clean and quiet.

For more information on these great getaways, contact the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish or the New Mexico State Parks Division. The website for State Parks, www.nmparks.com, has lots of information for planning your next trip.

Clint Henson is the Department of Game and Fish public information officer for the Northeast Area. He can be contacted at (575) 445-2311 or clint.henson@state.nm.us.

Eager trout await anglers at scenic Bonito Lake

By Mark Madsen

Nestled in the southern Sacramento (White) Mountains near Ruidoso is a small mountain trout fishery called Bonito Lake. Surrounded by majestic pine-covered mountains, it is about 14 miles northwest of Ruidoso. Fishing at Bonito offers anglers the opportunity to leave the desert heat behind and enjoy the cool mountain breezes and scenery.

Bonito Lake is a popular destination for trout anglers from New Mexico and south Texas, with the lake consistently ranking in the top 15 fishing waters of the state as far as the number of angler days and fishing pressure.

The 45-acre lake is owned by the city of Alamogordo and serves as the city’s municipal water supply. Its dam was built in 1931 to provide water for the steam-powered trains of the Southern Pacific Railroad, which sold the lake to the city when diesel-electric trains took over in the 1950’s. A 90-mile pipeline now carries water from Bonito Lake to the water plant north of Alamogordo in the village of La Luz.

The Department of Game and Fish leases annual fishing access to Bonito, paying the lease with money generated by the sale of Habitat Management and Access Validation stamps. The lease costs about \$33,000 a year and is paid through the Department’s Open Gate Program.

Bonito Lake opens for fishing April 1 and remains open through the end of November. Opening day is always

crowded with anglers eager to catch trout hungry after a long winter.

The Department stocks the lake with about 6,000 rainbow trout a month from April through November. Access to the lake for fishing purposes is free to legally licensed anglers. Boats, canoes and other floatation devices are prohibited.

Overnight camping is available at two campgrounds, one managed by the City of Alamogordo, the other by the Lincoln National Forest. The lake is surrounded by Lincoln National Forest, where primitive camping is allowed.

There are many ways to rig a rod and reel for trout fishing from the bank. Most trout anglers prefer spinning reels loaded with 6- to 12-pound test line. For terminal tackle, try one of the many commercially available floating-bait rigs. These consist of a swivel, leader and normally a small treble hook. Floating-bait rigs work well with Power Bait and salmon eggs, enabling the bait to “float” above aquatic vegetation, moss or algae.

Another method is the use of “crappie rigs.” Crappie rigs consist of a swivel, leader, small wire hoops and a terminal swivel. Snelled hooks are attached to the wire hoops allowing the hooks to hang free of the main line and also remain above any aquatic vegetation. You’ll probably want to change out the hooks and replace them with size 6 or smaller bait-holding hooks. Crappie rigs work really well with Power Bait, salmon eggs, corn and worms.



Department file photo

Bonito Lake is stocked with about 6,000 rainbow trout a month from April through November.

More adventurous anglers can try casting Panther Martins, Mepps or other small spinners or lures using ultralight spinning gear. Fly-fishing can be productive, especially in the shallower western portions of the lake. Spin fisherman can get in on the fly action by using casting bubbles and various flies. Fly-fishing, of course, is more productive on the occasional days when the wind doesn’t blow.

The city of Alamogordo Westlake Campground normally opens the last week of March or first week of April, depending upon weather conditions. For more information about the Westlake Campground, call (575) 336-4157. The Lincoln National Forest South Fork Campground is open May 15 to Sept.15. For information, call (575) 434-7200.

Mark Madsen is the Department of Game

Southeast



Mark Madsen

and Fish public information officer for the Southeast Area. He can be contacted at (575) 624-6135 or mark.madsen@state.nm.us.



Bigger bag limits in new fishing rules

Anglers in New Mexico will encounter some new rules this season, many of them designed to provide more opportunities to catch fish.

The State Game Commission approved the new rules at its Feb. 25 meeting in Santa Fe. The rule changes were recommended by the Department of Game and Fish based on suggestions from anglers and from Department efforts to improve and protect the state's fishing resources.

Complete information about New Mexico fishing rules is available in the Fishing Rules and Information booklet, available at all license vendors, Department offices in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Raton, Roswell and Las Cruces, and on the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

Fishing rule changes beginning April 1, 2010, include:

- Reducing the bag limit on striped bass to two fish. The limit was increased to three fish during the drought of 2004 because surveys showed poor overall health of the fish, likely due to overpopulation. Elephant Butte Lake's water level has increased and fish health has improved. Reducing the bag limit will allow more fish to grow to trophy size.
- Allowing unlimited take of brown trout in the Rio Cebolla from McKinney Pond near Seven Springs Fish Hatchery to the headwaters. Removing brown trout from the stream will help protect native Rio Grande cutthroat trout.
- Changing the age restriction at Grants Riverwalk Pond to allow youths ages 17 and younger to fish. The city of Grants requested the change to provide more angling opportunities.
- Reopening Capulin Creek on Bandelier National Monument and U.S. Forest Service property to catch-and-release fishing. Capulin Creek was devoid of fish after the 1996 Dome Fire near Los Alamos. In 2006, the Department, working with the U.S. Parks Service and U.S. Forest Service, reintroduced Rio Grande cutthroat trout to the stream and closed the stream to fishing. Natural reproduction occurred shortly after stocking and the population has taken hold.
- Designating Cabresto Creek from Cabresto Canyon to the headwaters as a Special Trout Water, requiring catch-and-release fishing for Rio Grande cutthroat trout and unlimited take for other trout species.
- Allowing unlimited take of brook trout in the Vermejo River system on Vermejo Park Ranch and in Leandro Creek on public lands. The rule change will aid the project to restore native Rio Grande cutthroat trout to the watershed.
- Opening the Pine River to kokanee salmon snagging during the time Navajo Lake is open for snagging (Oct. 1 to Dec. 31). The Pine River was closed while the Department tried to develop a kokanee spawning run. The run was successful, but the Department was unable to consistently capture the fish for egg harvesting. Other methods at Heron Lake have proven



Photo: Richard Hansen

Joey Vega, the Department of Game and Fish fisheries biologist for the Southwest Area, holds a 39-inch tiger muskie captured during a recent survey at Quemado Lake. The impressive fish needs to grow to more than 40 inches to be a "keeper" under the state's new bag limits.

New regulations allow anglers to keep one monster tiger muskie

New Mexico anglers eager to take home aunker of a lifetime will have their chance this year at Bluewater and Quemado lakes. Tiger muskies more than 40 inches long are now fair game for the freezer -- or the trophy wall.

For the first time since the tiger muskies were stocked in 2003, the Department of Game and Fish is allowing a one-fish bag limit. The only hitch: A "keeper" must be longer than 40 inches. That would be about 20 pounds of meat and bone, in case you were wondering.

A tiger muskie that large most likely would be one of the original fish stocked seven years ago in Bluewater or Quemado lake as fry. The goal was to introduce a fish that would help clean the lakes of "rough" fish, mostly goldfish and white suckers. Tiger muskies were perfectly suited for the job because they are fast-growing, voracious predators. They are a hybrid cross between a

northern pike and muskellunge, and they do not reproduce.

The Department has stocked 326,000 4- to 5-inch tiger muskies in Bluewater Lake and 115,789 in Quemado Lake since 2003.

Before this season, all tiger muskies had to be returned to the water if caught, but now that many of them have grown so big, the Department decided to reduce some of the competition among the large fish by removing a few. Taking some of the largest fish, biologists say, will allow the smaller muskies to grow and more effectively forage on the rough fish.

The next question: Who will be the first angler to claim rights to the New Mexico record tiger muskie? If you think your catch qualifies, you can find information about applying for a state record on the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

successful and there is no longer a need to pursue a run in the Pine River.

- Changing regulations at the two city ponds in Red River so the larger pond is open to all anglers and the smaller pond is open only to children. The Town of Red River requested the change to increase fishing opportunities because of crowding at the smaller pond.
- Allowing unlimited take of rainbow, brown and brook trout above the fish migration barrier in Black Canyon in the Gila National Forest. Catch-and-release restrictions will

remain for native Gila trout.

- Reducing the length of the Special Trout Water on the upper Pecos River by approximately ½-mile to create more consistent regulations and create more family fishing opportunities near Cowles Pond.
- Allowing a bag limit of one tiger muskie longer than 40 inches at Bluewater and Quemado Lakes. Surveys indicated that non-reproducing tiger muskies are effectively controlling undesirable fish in the lakes and limited take can be allowed.





Photos: Dan Williams

Lesser prairie chickens, pronghorn antelope and scissor-tailed flycatchers are found in the Department of Game and Fish Prairie Chicken Areas.

Discover diverse wildlife of eastern N.M.

Hidden treasures thrive in Department’s prairie chicken areas

By Dan Williams

El Llano Estacado, the “staked plains” of far southeastern New Mexico, isn’t a popular destination for people looking for outdoor recreation. It’s flat and desolate, usually windy. There’s not much to see from the road, not much to beckon anyone out of their vehicles to go exploring. Most travelers pass it by without a second glance.

“It’s lonely country,” says Grant Beauprez the Department of Game and Fish lesser prairie chicken biologist. He spends most of his days among the sand dunes, shinnery oak and tall grass prairies that nurture one of New Mexico’s most threatened native birds. “I like the openness of the native prairie and the wildlife associated with it,” he says. “The sunrises and early mornings are special.”

A closer look can reveal some hidden treasures of lesser prairie chicken country. The terrain may look flat from the road, but walk 100 yards and you can disappear among the sand dunes, undulations and gullies that challenged the country’s most recent homesteaders. Deer, pronghorn antelope, quail and dozens of other wildlife species call the area home.

The homesteads of the early 20th Century are long gone, replaced by large ranches and farms mostly sustained by dwindling aquifers. Decades of livestock grazing, oil and gas development and agriculture consumed nearly 90 percent of the prairie chicken’s historic

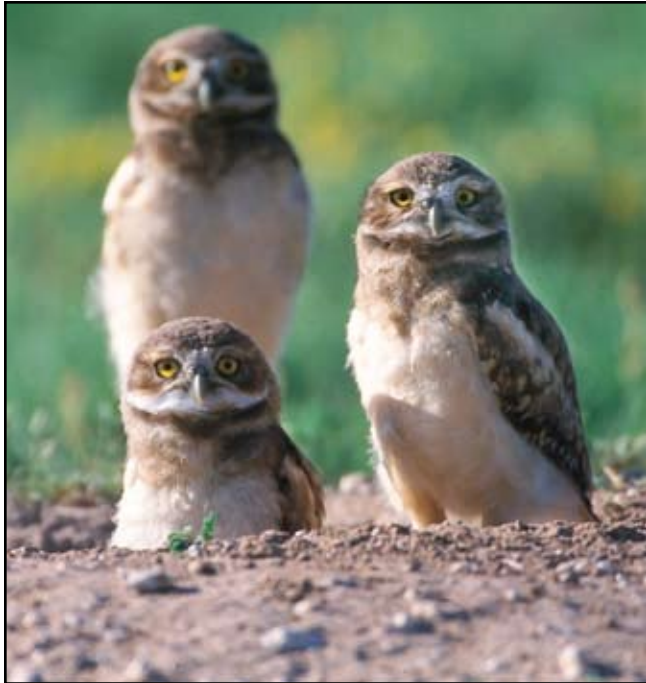
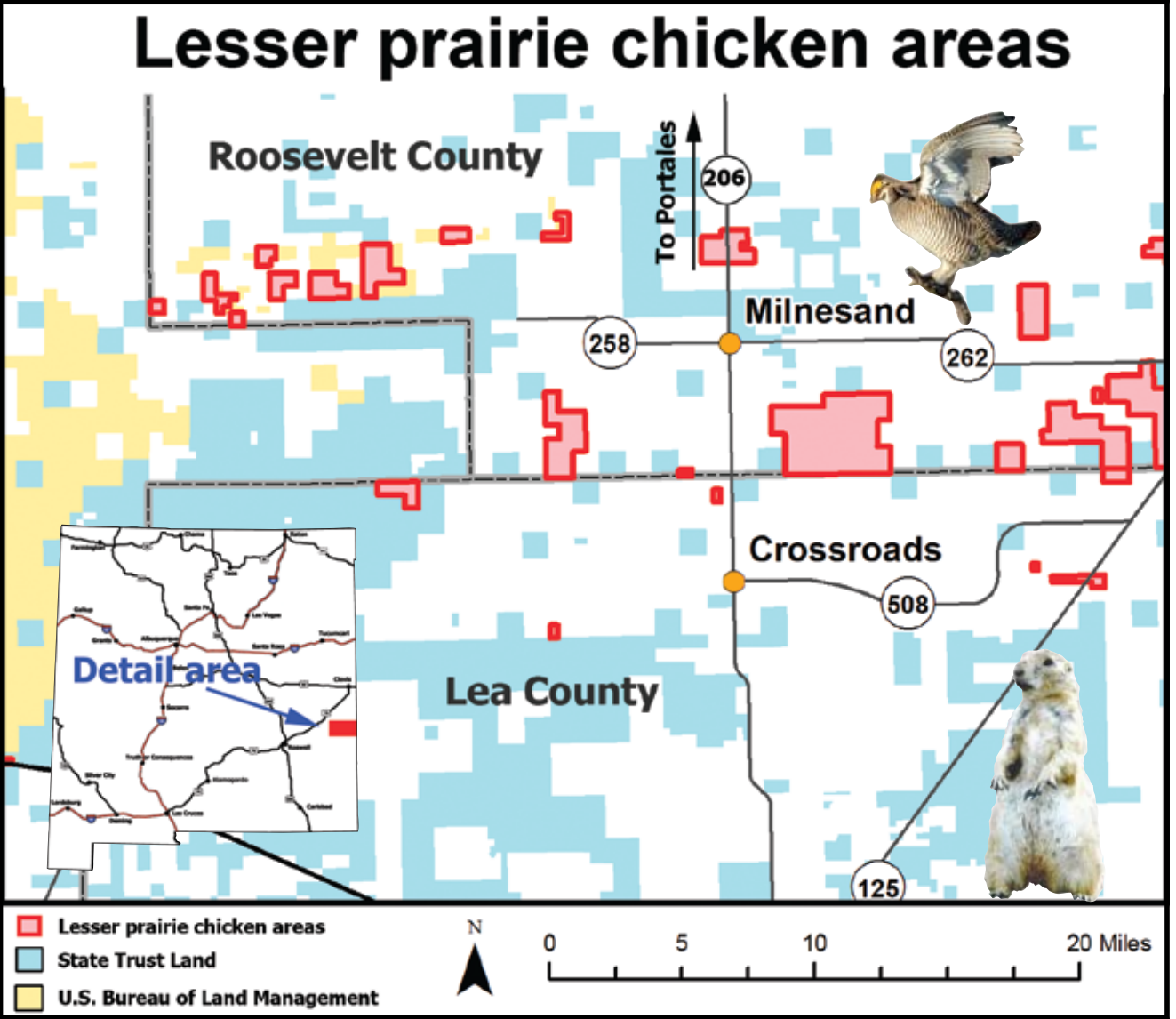


Photo: Don MacCarter

Burrowing owls make their homes in abandoned prairie dog burrows.



rangeland. But today, some of that habitat is being restored.

Declining numbers of lesser prairie chickens inspired the first habitat restoration efforts in 1939, when the Department purchased 1,275 acres near Milnesand. Since then, the agency’s lesser prairie chicken areas have grown to more than 29,000 acres in areas scattered around the eastern plains.

Today, thanks to cooperation among area landowners and conservationists, lesser prairie chickens have rebounded to a population of around 2,000 birds, despite the recent drought and a devastating hail storm in the spring of 2008. That’s far below the estimated population of 40,000 to 50,000 in the early 1960s, but wildlife biologists consider it great progress considering the loss of habitat.

Partners in the prairie chicken restoration efforts include conservationist James Weaver’s Grasslands Charitable Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Mexico State Land Office, the Sutton Avian Research Center, El Llano Estacado Resource Conservation and Development, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, and others.

Every spring, area residents and visitors celebrate prairie chicken restoration efforts at the High Plains Prairie Chicken Festival, a three-day event that includes birding and educational tours about the area’s archaeology, native plants and history. The highlights of the event, limited to 100 participants, are early morning tours to leks, the prairie chickens’ breeding grounds.

All spots are taken for the 2010 Prairie Chicken Festival. Advance notice of next year’s event is available from Tish McDaniel, (575) 762-6997 or chickenfestival@yahoo.com.

The prairie chicken areas are closed to the public during the prairie chicken breeding season in April and May, but they are open at other times for wildlife viewing and hunting during open seasons. Hunters use the areas to pursue quail and deer. Wildlife watchers enjoy seeing pronghorn antelope, prairie dogs and a wide diversity of bird species.

The prairie chicken areas recently were opened to wildlife-associated recreation through the Gaining Access Into Nature, or GAIN, program. Visitors ages 18 or older must have either a GAIN permit or a current hunting or fishing license, and a Habitat Management and Access Validation. Permits, including the validation, cost \$19 for a full year, \$8 for five days.



Partnership will protect wildlife corridors

By Terry Riley
and Wally White

Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson delivered a special gift to state residents this past winter -- the new wildlife corridor initiative between southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. In the beginning of December, the governors agreed to work together to identify and protect key wildlife travel and migration corridors across their shared border. The agreement sets out a plan to use the best scientific geospatial mapping systems available to help conserve several key habitats and migration areas.

Protecting wildlife corridors is clearly a gift to the elk, deer, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep that now will have safe travel routes. But wildlife corridors also are a gift to the people and future generations of our region.

By protecting the habitat of critical wildlife, Govs. Ritter and Richardson are in fact investing in our economies. Wildlife watchers, hunters and anglers spend money on food, lodging, transportation and equipment, which translates into regional prosperity.

In New Mexico, hunters and anglers spend \$1.2 million every day, which supports 8,000 jobs. It's no surprise that sportsmen and sportswomen generate so much revenue: New Mexico's hunters and anglers outnumber the combined populations of Las Cruces, Santa Fe and Rio Rancho, three of the state's largest cities. Wildlife watching is also very popular. In 2006, approximately 787,000 people participated in wildlife related activities boosting New Mexico's economy by over \$297 million. At a time when state budgets are stretched paper thin and tax revenues are falling, it makes good economic sense for Govs. Ritter and Richardson to ensure that our combined billion-dollar wildlife-related industry continues to thrive.

In 2006, wildlife watching in Colorado generated a total impact over \$1.2 billion and supported 12,800 jobs. Wildlife related activity is an asset in every county. For example, in La Plata County,



Photo: Don MacCarter

Thousands of Rocky Mountain elk migrate between southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.

hunting and angling has a total economic impact of approximately \$43,340,000 annually. Looking at Colorado as a whole, hunters and anglers in 2007 contributed \$1.8 billion to Colorado's economy in direct and indirect spending, which supported 21,000 jobs. To put those hefty sums in perspective, the annual economic impact of Colorado sportsmen and sportswomen is more than six times the combined revenues of the Colorado Rockies, Denver Broncos and Nuggets.

Residents of New Mexico and Colorado benefit every year from our robust outdoor recreation industry. However, future generations also will benefit from protecting wildlife and their habitats. The intermountain west is a unique place because of our natural heritage. Our scenic peaks, stunning deserts and ample wildlife makes our region a truly distinctive and spectacular place. By protecting wildlife corridors and investing in public lands, we are allowing our children to learn from America's outdoor classrooms.

In addition to the economic, educational and cultural impacts of this wildlife corridor project, this joint initiative has positive political

implications. Challenges that arise from unprecedented population growth, energy development, air quality degradation and climate change do not occur neatly within state boundaries. On the contrary, key habitats, resources and the air we breathe exist across political boundaries. Coordinating wildlife protection across state lines is a great example of how elected officials from different states can and should collaborate to solve our complex problems.

The governors' wildlife corridor initiative was a precious gift to the people, wildlife and future generations of Colorado and New Mexico. It was not a disposable party favor, but a valuable and lasting contribution to our economic, environmental and social well being.

Terry Riley is a wildlife biologist and former New Mexico game commissioner who specializes in fish and wildlife conservation policy on public and private lands. He is a leader in conservation policy development with a wide array of national conservation organizations. Wally White is a county commissioner for La Plata County, Colorado's District 3, in southwestern Colorado.

Butterflies inspire New Mexicans

Review by Kevin Holladay

"Butterfly Landscapes of New Mexico"
by Steven J. Cary
UNM Press, \$27.95, 167 pp.

Butterflies are sheer magic. Part of their enchantment comes from how they change within their chrysalis from pudgy, earthbound caterpillars into flitting, ethereal jewels.

Butterfly watching has really caught on with wildlife viewers. The number of butterfly festivals and field guides available has grown exponentially in recent years. New Mexico has more than 300 species of butterflies; only Texas and Arizona have more. They are found everywhere in New Mexico, from the highest point on Wheeler Peak to the lowest elevation near the Pecos River along the Texas border. With the growing popularity of butterfly viewing and our diversity, there has been a real need for an introductory guide to New Mexico's butterflies.

Steven J. Cary's unique 2009 book, "Butterfly Landscapes of New Mexico," is as magic and transformational as the insects he loves. Cary says he is a geographer at heart, and it shows quite clearly in this rich expression of a 25-year exploration of New Mexico's landscape and its butterflies. The text is organized according to how and where butterflies are found on the land

After delving into this book, one will see New Mexico's landscape in a profoundly different way.

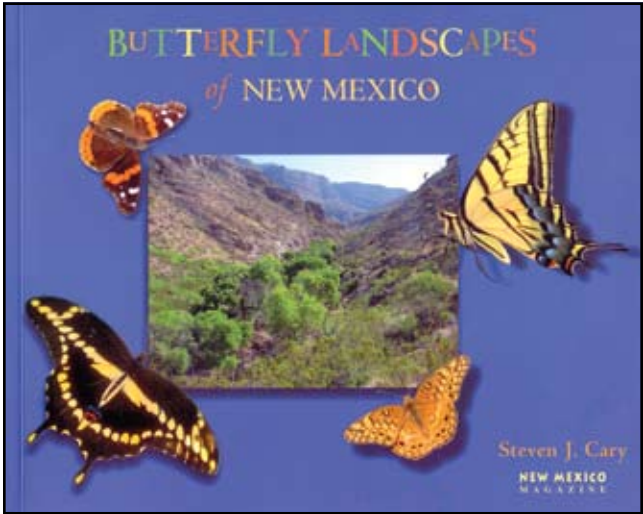
New Mexico's varied landforms always have had their stories to tell. Cary deftly weaves together the stories of New Mexico's butterflies, the diverse habitats that sustain them and the fascinating men who obsessed over them, chased them and admired them.

The book is not an identification guide. There are fantastic guides already out there, which he lists. But almost every butterfly found in New Mexico has its photo here. These are gorgeous, crisp photos. Butterflies fly off the pages -- such as the unbelievable, day-glow orange of the Gulf Fritillary.

Carefully and eloquently, Cary takes one into the world of butterflies, explaining why they are found where they are, their life cycle, how to create a butterfly garden in your backyard and much more.

Of particular strength and eminently interesting are the numerous sidebars sprinkled throughout the text. Cary introduces us to some fascinating, colorful individuals from the early 1900's who made significant contributions to our understanding of New Mexico's butterflies.

Academics such as Frances Snow, a professor of entomology from the University of Kansas, who rode the new rail lines wherever he could with his students and collecting equipment in tow. Or cowboy naturalists such as Englishman John Woodgate, who was a fence rider for ranchers, but managed to carry a bug net with him. His impressive collection of butterflies from the Jemez Mountains constituted the most detailed



knowledge of butterflies of any area of New Mexico at the time.

Cary focuses on many of the grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees that are critical to the survival of various butterflies. Basic principles of wildlife management are illuminated as they relate to butterflies. There are fascinating observations of habitat, plant succession, fire ecology and predator-prey relationships. For example, many male butterflies establish territories in the springtime. They actively patrol these areas and chase off intruders, including other insects and birds.

This book is pure fun to read, and is an excellent introduction to the state's butterflies and the parks, wildlife refuges and forests where they are found.

Kevin Holladay is coordinator of the Aquatic Resources Education Program and Project WILD for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.



Clayton Lake walleye eggs in 2010 harvest

By Eric Frey

Every year, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish conducts a major effort to collect walleye eggs from several of New Mexico’s reservoirs. The Department typically collects eggs from Ute and Conchas reservoirs, but on occasion collects walleye eggs from the Maxwell Lakes, Santa Rosa Lake, Caballo Reservoir and Clayton Lake.

Walleye, an introduced fish species to New Mexico, is native to northern midwest United States and most of Canada, where they are a very popular game fish. First stocked in New Mexico into Elephant Butte Lake in 1959, walleye now exist in 11 lakes statewide.

Walleye normally start spawning behavior in mid-March, and peak in late March and early April. Unlike most other fish species in New Mexico, walleye cannot successfully spawn (reproduce) in our lakes. Walleye distribute their eggs along shorelines among submersed rocks and weeds, and the eggs require very clean, well-oxygenated flowing water to survive. Many of our lakes have clean water, but not flowing water.

Because reproduction success is extremely low, the Department must collect the eggs manually, hatch the eggs at the Rock Lake Warmwater



Photo: Dan Williams

Sean Buczek and a Conchas Lake walleye.

Hatchery in Santa Rosa, and then stock the walleye in state waters as fry. Walleye would not exist in New Mexico without the egg collection efforts.

The Department of Game and Fish plans to collect walleye eggs from Clayton Lake this spring. Recent fish

surveys have indicated that Clayton Lake has a good walleye population that should support a successful egg collection effort.

Clayton Lake historically has produced large walleye, including the state record, a 16-pound, 9-ounce fish caught in 1989.

The Department will capture the fish using very large fish traps called Merwin traps. The traps will be set along the shore and trap the walleye as they come in at night to spawn. The fish then will be sorted; eggs will be squeezed from the females and fertilized by milt from the males, and then all fish will be returned to the lake.

The Merwin traps are used because they are very effective at catching fish without harming them during the process. The Department is asking all anglers and park visitors to be respectful and not tamper with the traps. The process is critical to efforts to provide walleye for the state’s anglers.

In 2009, the Department stocked about 13 million walleye fry throughout the state. Clayton Lake receives 200,000 walleye annually. In 2009, the Department stocked about 12,000 fingerling walleye in addition to the fry.



Photo: Dan Williams

The new, 55,000 square-foot building covering the raceways at Los Ojos Hatchery is the largest structure in the valley.

Los Ojos Hatchery returns with new covered raceways

Five long years after its raceways were drained of trout and whirling disease, Los Ojos Hatchery is back in business with a new roof and a bright future.

It’s been a long haul, literally, for hatchery worker Billy Sands and the rest of the Los Ojos crew. With no trout to raise, they’ve been spending most of their time transporting and stocking fish for the state’s other hatcheries.

“That’s a lot of miles on the road, but hopefully those miles are all behind us,” Sands said.

Los Ojos, formerly called Parkview Hatchery, is one of six hatcheries positioned around New Mexico. Together, they stock about 16 million fish a year of various sizes in state waters. With Los Ojos out of action since September 2005, that task has been a special challenge.

“It’s been a battle,” state Fisheries Chief Mike Sloane said of the continuing fight with whirling disease. “But even though at one time we had four infected hatcheries, we were able somehow to meet the anglers’ needs. That says a lot about our hatchery crews.”

This spring, workers put some finishing touches on a statewide effort to cover and fence all trout raceways to protect them from disease-carrying birds and other predators. One of the largest projects was at Los Ojos, where a new \$2.1 million raceway building now stands as the largest structure in the valley.

Roddy Gallegos, the Department’s assistant fisheries chief in charge of hatcheries, said the improvements at Los Ojos will allow the use of 50 raceways -- 30 in the large building and another 20 in the old brood stock facility. All the raceways received a final disinfection in February. They will hold sentinel fish for

at least another year as a final test to ensure there is no disease present.

“Then, if everything checks out, we’ll be able to stock fish out of Los Ojos again,” Gallegos said. “The only question is whether we’ll use the hatchery to raise mostly fingerlings, or continue to raise catchables.” Raising only fingerling trout may be more efficient, he said, because cold water at the hatchery doesn’t promote fast growth of the trout.

“The important thing is to get our trout production back on line,” Gallegos said. “For the past five years, all we’ve been able to raise at Los Ojos are kokanee fry, because we could do that without raceways.”

The improvements at Los Ojos include a 55,000 square-foot building enclosed by 1-inch mesh fencing to keep out even the smallest birds and predators. The fencing is set into an asphalt apron to keep animals from tunneling into the building. Birds, including osprey, herons, mergansers and kingfishers are partly to blame for spreading disease spores from infected nearby waters to the raceways. Raccoons and other water-loving mammals contributed to the problem.

“We know some waters nearby are infected with whirling disease, including the irrigation ditch that flows past the hatchery,” Gallegos said. “We also know from tests that our water sources for the hatchery -- natural springs -- are not infected. That suggests that the predators were bringing it in.”

Whirling disease is caused by a single-celled parasite that attacks a young trout’s skeleton and nervous system, causing the fish to swim in circles. There is no known treatment.

The Department has now covered or is in the process of covering all the state’s hatchery raceways. The last hatchery to be covered, Rock Lake near Santa Rosa, is expected to complete construction this year.



Catch A Special Thrill

C.A.S.T program gives special kids a taste of fishing

Story and photos
by Marti Niman

Everywhere there are kids – teenagers to toddlers, jet-haired, tow-headed and everything in between, garbed in bright orange life vests and splashy leis, awkwardly toting unfamiliar yellow tackle boxes and fishing poles and all wearing ecstatic ear-to-ear grins. This is the annual event, C.A.S.T. – Catch a Special Thrill, at Navajo Lake State Park.

“The name is perfect,” said Kellie Campbell, a boat captain for the event. “When you see them catch fish, when you can hear little kids giggling and laughing on the lake, it is so exciting.”

It’s not clear if the thrill belongs more to the kids who get to fish or those who make the event happen, but C.A.S.T. clearly brings joy to everyone. Imagine growing up without ever fishing outdoors – not for a day or even an hour. Imagine a daily struggle to cope with a disability or to have the basics of food and shelter. Now envision a whole day on a lake with mentors to help catch that big fish and learn about the natural world, followed by a barbecue party with volunteers and kids sharing a picnic at the lake.

“It’s all about the kids and their enjoyment; they get to be just kids,” said Debra Lisenbee, area director for Special Olympics. “A lot of these kids battle every day to get through life. When they come here, they can say, ‘Look what I did; I caught that fish!’”

The Catch A Special Thrill for Kids Foundation is a public charity formed in 1991 to join volunteers who love to fish with disabled and disadvantaged children for a day of fishing outdoors. Special-needs children and their caretakers can leave their problems ashore and share a day of fun on the water. For most of the participants, it’s their only opportunity to go fishing.

CAST at Navajo Lake State Park began in 1999 with an agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation, which owns and operates the dam at Navajo Lake, and the C.A.S.T. charity based in Washington State.

We had 40 kids that first year,” said Jere Wales, who works for the Bureau and helps coordinate the event. “The Bureau sponsors the first 40 kids; anything over that costs about \$50 for each participant, which covers T-shirts, fishing poles, tackle and a plaque.”

Wales and Lisenbee are event co-coordinators who target special-needs groups in the Four Corners area such as Special Olympics, Boys and Girls Clubs, Navajo missions, and local schools to identify kids who might be interested. In recent years, there have been close to 100 participants, with funding and help from countless local agencies, companies, donation boxes in town, the local bass clubs and marinas.

“In our lean years, some C.A.S.T. committee members have pitched in their own money to be sure everyone who wants to go, gets to go,” Lisenbee said. “We had to say, ‘No,’ one time, and it just pulled our insides out. You don’t know their personal stories.”



Catch A Special Thrill brings underprivileged and special-needs children to Navajo Lake every spring for a day of fishing on the water with volunteer anglers from the Four Corners area.



Campbell is a member of the Four Corners Bass Masters. She helps recruit other boat captains, who often don’t know what to expect.

“It can be scary the first time out because they don’t know what they are supposed to do or not do,” she said. “After the first time, I’ve never had a captain not want to come back.”

Some of the boats are pontoons that are rented or donated by local marinas and can accommodate wheelchairs. Last year, the nonprofit “Hopes Float” of Colorado brought a pontoon boat specially equipped with lower guard rails to allow easier casting from a wheelchair. The pontoons are different sizes that can carry two to 10 youngsters, but if there are too many kids, they stop having fun and start tangling lines. Many of the boats and captains are from local bass clubs and dazzle the kids when they pull up to the dock in their speedy, sparkly bass boats. Some kids would rather drive the boat than fish. Others prefer to remain on terra firma where they can safely fish from the shore or dock – that is, until

‘We forget how profound a simple act of kindness can be; we forget that just a few moments of our time can change a life forever.’

Debra Lisenbee
C.A.S.T co-coordinator

they see their compatriots return after a day on the water.

“Sometimes they’re afraid of water and fish from the shore, but when they see all the other kids coming back in on the boats, the next year they have to have a boat,” Wales said.

The kids are brought to the main boat ramp at Navajo Lake by buses from town, accompanied by the San Juan County Sheriffs, Farmington Police and a helicopter. The escorts hit the sirens about five minutes before they arrive at the boat ramp to alert volunteers to get ready.

“We have police escorts because we can’t have kids on the bus without at least two adults, especially kids with disabilities,” Lisenbee said. “We’ve had some exciting times.”

One year, C.A.S.T. was scheduled the same weekend as the Special Olympics games, so Lisenbee – who always lined up the bus routes – wasn’t able to attend.



Plentiful, tasty crappie give young anglers and C.A.S.T. volunteers plenty of action -- and smiles -- at Navajo Lake State Park in the springtime.

"I got a frantic call from Jere saying, 'There's no bus ... where is the bus?' I was in Albuquerque and had no idea where the bus was! As it turned out, the driver was waiting at a stop where no one showed up. So now we have to be specific: If no one shows, you crank up and go!"

Wales recalled another incident several years ago when some single moms from a Navajo mission saw the police cars surrounding the bus, got scared and went home, leaving everyone to wonder what happened to them. On occasion, kids are delivered to the wrong location and even the wrong state.

"The first year we did (C.A.S.T.) some kids ended up on the Colorado side of the lake," said Doris Goode, park superintendant at Navajo Lake State Park. "The Colorado State Parks staff drove them down here in a boat."

"The biggest challenge is the logistical nightmare on the morning of the event, trying to partner kids with boat captains," Campbell said. "It's somewhat assigned beforehand but sometimes kids show up, captains don't show up and there's a whole flex mix to get everyone partnered on boat."

All the volunteers have special stories, and occasionally request to go out with certain kids. Sometimes an unexpected friendship alters the best-laid boat plans. Two young Navajo girls met for the first time in line and couldn't be separated. One was scared and had to go in the same boat with her new friend, Wales said. Enduring friendships are one of the additional and sometimes unexpected perks of the event.

"One of our new volunteers took a participant out in his boat along with his own son and the two kids became lasting friends, going camping, fishing and playing basketball together," Wales said.

Some enduring friendships are launched between boat captains and their charges. Campbell has taken the same participant for four years who hadn't caught fish until he went fishing with her.

"He got a fish for the first time with me and now I'm his boat captain," she said. "I took him bass fishing and he started catching bass. The next year it was too windy and cold, so I took him to the docks. There was a guy cleaning a bunch of carp, so he wanted a carp. All right, I got a carp on the hook for him. It weighed 20 pounds so I convinced him to put it back and we'd catch it again next year."

The event is scheduled in the springtime on a weekend that's free of other possible conflicts,

when crappie are running best and the kids catch as many as they want.

"Boom, boom, boom, they don't have to do any trolling," Goode said. "We only had a C.A.S.T. event once in October. The bus drivers weren't too happy with us because the kids caught carp and all wanted to take their fish home," she said. "If you've ever caught carp, you know what I mean."

Campbell said she tries to get the fish cleaned and donated to a charity or one of the missions so there is no waste of meat. One little girl caught a tiny minnow-sized fish and insisted on taking it home, so the volunteers put it in a plastic bag of water like a guppy from the pet store.

"It can be a challenge explaining why we can't keep a fish," Campbell said. "All the kids I've taken out have been able to learn to catch and learn what they can and can't keep."

Youngsters who have attended C.A.S.T. in previous years often instruct the first-timers, so the event offers those with special needs to be mentors. Wales has seen the same children cycle through the program several years in a row.

"Special Olympics kids are wonderful – they blossom, they mature," she said. "The special-



Catch A Special Thrill participants strike a pose with mascot Lenny the Lizard before boarding the bus for the trip home.

Supporting C.A.S.T.

C.A.S.T. for Kids is made possible by the generous donations and participation of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Parks, numerous oil and gas companies, bass clubs, nonprofit organizations and individuals.

The next C.A.S.T. event is scheduled for May 15, 2010, at Navajo Lake State Park. For more information or to volunteer, please contact:

- **Doris Goode, Navajo Lake State Park, (505) 632-2278.**
- **Debra Lisenbee, Special Olympics, (505) 325-2824.**



needs kids help the little ones from the Boys and Girls clubs. Those kids are fun when they tell others how to do it: 'You go here and get your tackle box, then you stand there and get your picture taken with Otto and Lenny.' "

Otto the Otter and Lenny the Lizard are two mascots representing the Bureau of Reclamation and State Parks respectively, adding to the color and general chaos at the boating ramp the morning of the event. Volunteers munch on free breakfast burritos and coffee while trying to assign kids and boats. Students from the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at Piedra Vista High School were a new addition to the event last year, helping to set up and break down the tent shelters, usher the kids through registration, prepare for the barbecue and clean up afterwards.

"Those young people are wonderful; they love the kids and work one-on-one with them, kid-to-kid," Wales said. "They help with the wheelchairs and help kids catch fish. One young man dove into the water and untangled the fishing lines. I don't know what we'd do without them."

"We forget how profound a simple act of kindness can be; we forget that just a few moments of our time can change a life forever," Lisenbee said. "The whole day you see their faces, it's just pure joy. There are a lot of kids who are living in group homes and very seldom do they get a time that is all about them. This is a day that is all about them."

Campbell said there is only one drawback to the event: The day isn't long enough and it doesn't happen often enough.

"C.A.S.T. for Kids is my favorite day of the whole year," she said. "Take a kid fishing! It's such a wonderful pastime to get a kid interested and teach about wildlife or nature. It's an opportunity no one should pass up."

Marti Niman is the public information officer for New Mexico State Parks. She can be reached at (505) 827-1474 or marti.niman@state.nm.us.



Cerrillos Hills rich with history, adventure

New state park offers recreation, education

Story and photos
by Marti Niman

If these hills could talk, they would offer stories of New Mexico dating back to A.D. 900 and beyond. Migration and conquest, volcanic eruptions and supernovas, railroads and prospectors all converged at the unassuming region known as Cerrillos Hills to form a fascinating glimpse into New Mexico’s history. A small portion of these hills has been set aside with the intention of speaking to the mysteries of the past and offering a place of solitude and quiet recreation.

Cerrillos Hills State Park opened to the public with little of the usual fanfare and bustle that accompanies such momentous occasions. Perhaps because the 1,116-acre park already was open to the public under the auspices of Santa Fe County Open Space, it slipped seamlessly from county management to State Park management in August 2009 with little notice.

“This park feels very remote even though it’s close to two big cities,” said Sarah Wood, park manager. “I really like that quality. We’re not going to develop it extensively. There’s only one trash can; it’s a pack-in, pack-out place and I’d like to cultivate that ethic.”

The park is situated in the small community of Cerrillos, population 250 -- “a little town with a mix of New Mexico Hispanic families who have been here for generations, retirees and artists,” Wood said. With its dirt roads, adobe churches and wandering goats and dogs, the town seems suspended in time and unaffected by Santa Fe just 20 miles north or the bustle of Albuquerque 45 miles south. Mary’s Bar, the What Not Shop, Scherer’s Architectural Antiques, the Casa Grande Museum and Petting Zoo, a post office and health clinic are the sole town businesses.

The community originally was named Cerrillos Station during its railroad heyday, when the train actually stopped in town to load the valuable coal and ores mined in the hill country: coal to the south, silver, lead, manganese and iron to the north. The mineral that holds the greatest fascination for many, however, is turquoise.

“The oldest and certainly the largest source of turquoise for all of New Mexico was found in the mine named Chalchihuitl, a Nahuatl term from Mexico,” said Bill Baxter, member of the Cerrillos Hills Coalition that helped found the park more than a decade ago. Chalchihuitl is north of the park in a privately-owned parcel, and there is potential for acquiring it in years to come. Turquoise from Chalchihuitl turned up as nearby as Chaco Canyon and as far away as the courts of Spain.

Baxter, who lives in San Marcos, just six miles north of Cerrillos, is fascinated by the history that sits at the doorstep of his home.

“San Marcos is the site of an extremely large city in the Southwest that was abandoned at time of the Pueblo Revolt in 1680,” he said. “They could control access to the hills from that vantage point and visit the mines for turquoise.”

The park has five miles of trails for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Wood is applying for a federal trails grant to make the ¼-mile Village Vista Trail ADA compliant. She also works with Volunteers for the Outdoors and the Trails Alliance of Santa Fe to maintain existing trails. The park offers events most weekends that



Spectacular scenery, gentle slopes and well-groomed trails are popular with hikers and mountain bikers at Cerillos Hills State Park.



focus on the history, geology, botany and wildlife of the area, with hiking the core activity.

“When we were first looking at the park features with State Parks staff, the running joke was, ‘Where are we going to put the boat ramp?’ Cerrillos Hills is never going to be The Butte,” Baxter said. “It’s a small pocket park for nature and recreation.”

Wood finds the park biologically intriguing, with numerous springs in addition to dozens of abandoned mines that have been capped for safety.

“There is a robust diversity of plants and 22 native species of grass – indicator species like black grama, which is one of the first to give up the ghost under pressure,” Wood said. “It’s also a reptile paradise with lots of coachwhips, ground snakes, rattlesnakes, and lizards including whiptails, fence lizards, horned and collared lizards.”

Wood, who worked as a regional interpretive ranger for State Parks prior to her current job as park manager, emphasizes the educational opportunities at the park for kids and adults alike.



“We have terrific intertwined cultural and natural history here,” Wood said. “We have the history because we have the geology. Geology and soils define what plants and animals live here. We can even bring the stars into it: The elements that make up the minerals on earth came from the stardust of supernovas which we can view in the dark skies of the park.”

Astronomy figures in the park’s future programs along with history and natural resources, with a 12-inch telescope and clear skies unsullied by city lights. Wood doesn’t see an observatory in the park’s future, however, because she likes people to have the experience of using a telescope themselves. “I don’t want a lot of high-tech stuff. Letting people discover the stars with their own eyes is part of the excitement.”

Wood is working on the “best guided hike ever,” an interactive walking tour of living cultural and natural history. “Researching and developing this program will help me get my head wrapped around the extensive and complex history here,” she said.

Baxter notes that Cerrillos Hills is essentially a microcosm of New Mexico history, representing Pueblo, Hispanic and Anglo cultures.

“I would like to see a place where people in New Mexico could learn about why we’re here and where we came from. Everybody’s history is here.”



Trails to abandoned coal, silver, lead, iron and manganese mines are accessible by foot, bike or horseback at Cerillos Hills State Park.





Catfishing at Santa Rosa Lake

Springtime fun at State Parks



Mescal Roast at Living Desert Zoo & Gardens

Get ready for festivals, flowers and fabulous fishing

Story and photos
by Marti Niman

After a long and rather soggy El Nino winter in many parts of the state, New Mexico State Parks is ready to welcome spring with flowers, festivals, and best of all, no furlough closures. The "Butte" is gearing up for the spring fever party that is Memorial Day weekend; water conditions are expected to be excellent there and at most state parks for water sports and celebrating.

Many parks will host annual festivals and several have more reasons than usual to celebrate. Sugarite Canyon honors its 25th anniversary in May, Vietnam Veterans Memorial will reopen the doors to its newly-renovated visitor center, and several parks will honor American Wetlands Month in May and National Trails Day on June 5.



Bottomless wetlands

American Wetlands Month will be honored at several southern parks in May. May 1-2, **Mesilla Valley Bosque** near Las Cruces will feature birding, native plants, ethnobotany, archeology, wetland geology and hydrology, a wildlife spotting station and a nature photography hike, (575) 523-4398. River of Birds, a collaboration between State Parks and New Mexico Audubon, is in the works for early May at **Leasburg Dam**. The event will celebrate the importance of the Rio Grande for songbirds and waterfowl. **Bottomless Lakes** near Roswell is on the cusp of completing its wetlands renovation with a new boardwalk and viewing blind. A celebration is tentatively planned for mid-May, (575) 624-6058.

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens' Mescal Roast and Mountain Spirit Dances is an annual Mescalero Apache interpretive and ceremonial event that begins May 6 in Carlsbad with the Mescal Pit Blessing. The event continues for four days with a Native American arts and crafts show, Apache feast dinner, war dances, Dance of the Mountain Spirits, mescal pit opening and tasting ceremony. For information and tickets, call (575) 887-5516.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial flag march

City of Rocks' Southern New Mexico Star Party north of Deming features nightly stargazing with astronomers and telescopes May 5-9, (575) 536-2800.

Oliver Lee Memorial State Park's Heritage Preservation Day on May 8 offers a quiet green oasis of cottonwoods, ash trees and maidenhair fern in the Chihuahuan Desert south of Alamogordo. Experience the beauty and history of Dog Canyon and the Tularosa Basin, (575) 437-8284.

Take a kid fishing at **Navajo Lake** north of Aztec on May 15 during the annual C.A.S.T. for Kids. Disabled and disadvantaged kids from across the Four Corners region get to spend a day on the water fishing with friends. Please see Pages 10-11, or call (505) 632-2278.

Everyone loves a parade, and visitors can watch a flotilla of boats decorated in red, white and blue at **Elephant Butte Lake's** Fly Freedoms Flag on May 22, (575) 744-5923. Join a parade of vintage Model-A Fords on May 23 as they cruise five miles from Raton to **Sugarite Canyon** State Park to celebrate the park's 25th anniversary during the Coal Camp, Cowboys and Cars. Visitors can wander the living history trail and chat with "residents" of the 1930s coal camp. Enjoy a chuck wagon cowboy meal, listen to live music and take a horseback or carriage ride. Catch tagged fish for cash, prizes and enter a drawing for a fishing boat May 29 through June 6 during the annual Sugarite Fishing Derby, (575) 445-5607.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire hosts a packed Memorial Day Weekend of events May 29-31 with guest speakers, the 44th Army Band, a candlelight vigil and a flag march with the beautiful Moreno Valley as a backdrop. A short dedication of the newly-renovated visitor center will be Saturday morning, (575) 377-2293.

Near Carlsbad, **Brantley Lake's** Seventh Annual Desert Starlight astronomy event June 4-5 offers drawings for astronomy merchandise, laser constellation tours, telescope viewing until midnight and solar observation through large telescopes with special filters, (575) 457-2384.

Several parks offer a tribute to trails on National Trails Day on June 5. There are 30 million years of history in the **Cerrillos Hills** south of Santa Fe, and a do-it-yourself scavenger hunt will help visitors discover it. Pick up the list at the main parking lot and explore the past, (505) 474-0196. Enjoy the outdoors at **Santa Rosa Lake** near Santa Rosa on the three-mile Shoreline Trail, (575) 472-3110. Join Volunteers for the



Wetlands education at Mesilla Valley Bosque

Outdoors at **Hyde Memorial** near Santa Fe and help enhance the park's trails and streams. This annual event is always a lot of fun, hard work and benefits all users of Hyde Park's trail system. A barbeque is provided for all workers, (505) 983-7175. **Sumner Lake** near Fort Sumner offers its second annual Frame the Hike around the lake

with professional photographer Bob Morgan. Participants learn to use their cameras and light to get the best picture. Morning and evening sessions are offered, (575) 355-2541.

Santa Rosa Lake's Fourth Annual Kids Fishing Clinic for children ages 12 and younger June 19 includes information about types of fish, bait

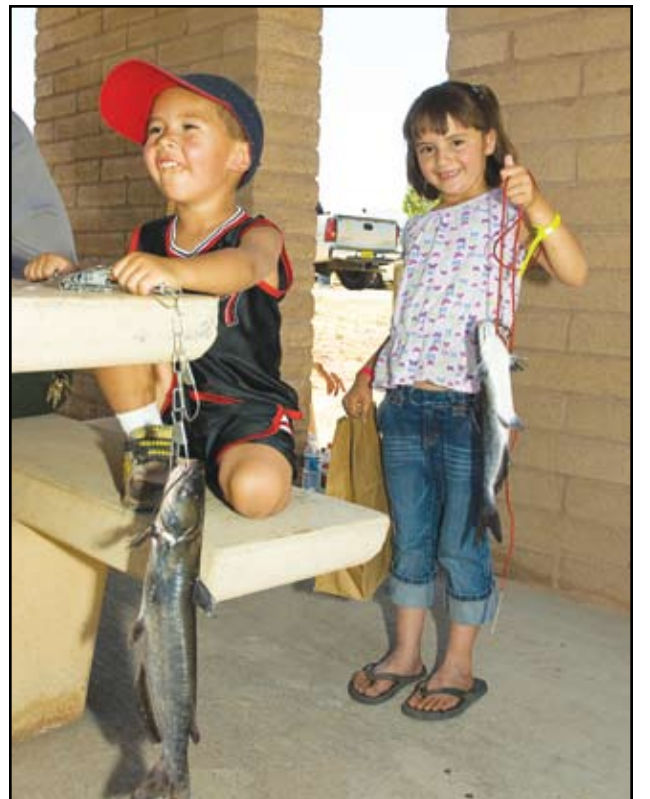


Sugarite's Bodacious Butterflies

and tackle selection, water safety, a fish cleaning station, and some hands-on fishing with the help of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, area businesses, the park's friends group and fishing clubs. A barbeque and prizes for the kids are part of the festivities, (575) 472-3110.

The Bodacious Butterfly Fest June 26-27 teaches the martial art of butterfly stalking in lush **Sugarite Canyon** State Park with expert and author Steve Cary. Bring the kids for butterfly face painting and games, learn how to attract butterflies and take home a native plant for your butterfly garden, (575) 445-5607.

All events are subject to change; visitors are advised to call the parks to verify dates and times.



Kids 'N Cats at Santa Rosa Lake

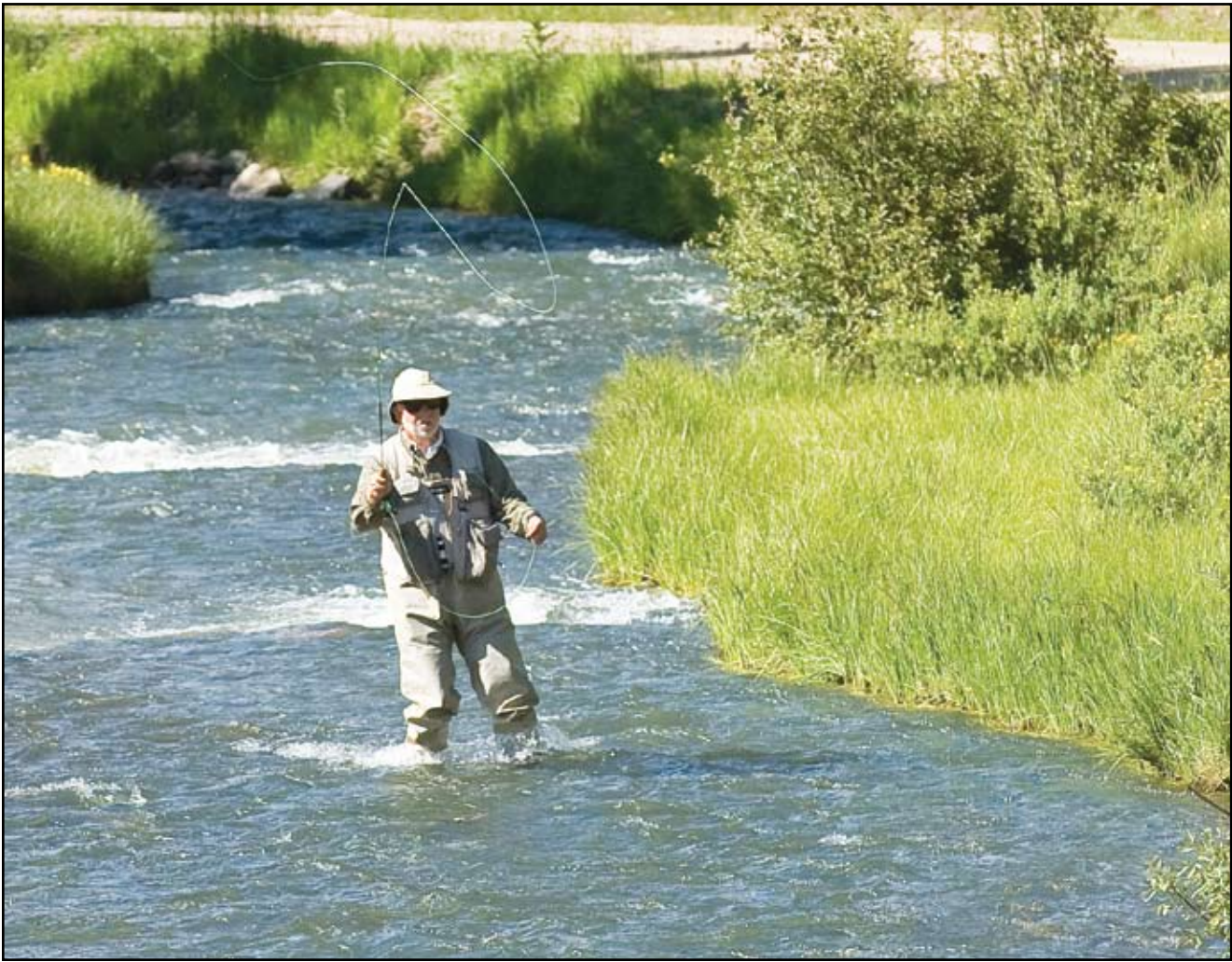


Photo: Dan Williams

Native Rio Grande cutthroat trout and some of New Mexico’s most spectacular scenery lure anglers to Costilla and Comanche creeks in the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest.

... continued from Page 1

The tailwater, of course, is the world-famous San Juan River quality waters, where trophy-sized trout are always willing to bite.

If you plan to fish the lake, springtime is the very best. That’s when the crappie are running, the bass are spawning and the northern pike and trout are most active.

“Just start throwing little skirt jigs,” Castell said. “You don’t even have to know what you’re doing.”

If you’re looking for good trout fishing, scenery and solitude, Castell said the streams in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness are hard to beat.



Photo: Mike Sloane

The Pecos River and Maxwell Lakes are excellent places to get kids hooked on fishing.

His favorite stream, the Rio Las Vacas, is full of Rio Grande cutthroats.

“You have to walk in one to five miles and that makes it very secluded,” he said. “There’s wildlife everywhere and the cutthroats are easy to catch. I like to use small spinners or flies and hit it in May or early June, after the snowmelt.”

His favorite family fishing spot is a lot closer to home.

“If I’m taking my two boys and just wanting to get them exposed to fishing, I’ll just drop in to Tingley Beach,” he said. “It’s heavily stocked in the winter. I like to take them to the central pond so I can fish along with them and just let them have a good time.”

**Shawn Denny
Southeast Area fisheries biologist**

Largemouth and smallmouth bass and walleye call out to Denny from Sumner Lake every year from mid- to late-April through Memorial Day.

“It’s an excellent place to fish from the shore because of the access,” Denny said. “You can reach the dropoffs and work the fish when they get up shallow, especially on the east side of the lake.”

He suggested driving around the lake and trying different spots until you find a hot one. Live bait, crayfish imitations, diving crankbaits and jigs can be productive. Or try a three-inch brown or green pumpkin tube.

Santa Rosa Lake can be a good place to fish in the spring, when the walleye move into shallow water and the bass are spawning. Denny said surveys have been turning up some large crappie. He suggested fishing for them in May after the walleye spawn.

For the kids, Denny said Chaparral Lake in Lovington is one of the state’s best because it’s full of bluegills. The lake’s irregular shape gives it a long shoreline, providing the kids plenty of space to toss out a worm under a bobber for plenty of fun all year.

**Joey Vega
Southwest Area fisheries biologist**

“My favorite is Quemado Lake because of the aesthetics of the area, its easy access and it grows phenomenal trout,” Vega said. He likes to fish the lake in the springtime from the shore using Power Bait, worms or corn.

“A bubble-and-fly rig also is awesome at times,” he said.

The Department stocks 10,000 trout in Quemado every September. By the time the lake thaws in the spring, those fish are 12 inches of longer. Add them to another 10,000 trout stocked in April and May, and the trout fishing can be great.

If you’re looking for some real action at Quemado, rig up a large lure. Be prepared to hang on -- you might hook into one of the monster tiger muskies stocked in the lake to control goldfish. This year, there’s a one-fish bag limit for muskies. A keeper must be longer than 40 inches.

Vega said one of the state’s best walleye lakes is often overlooked. Caballo Lake holds some surprisingly large numbers of walleye, and springtime is the best time to catch them.

“Try throwing different lures along the riprap by the dam or all the way up the river to the Butte from March through May,” he said. “In the summer or winter, they’ll start hitting crankbaits trolled in the main part of the lake.

Elephant Butte should have good water levels again this year, which means the recent crappie explosion should continue, Vega said.

“All that vegetation that grew up when it was low became prime crappie habitat when the lake came back up,” he said. “Fish the brushy areas with some kind of minnow from a boat, or they’ve also been catching the heck out of them off the marina.”

Vega said Butte anglers should see larger largemouth and smallmouth bass this year, but fewer white bass. Walleye and catfish populations are stable. Striped bass fishing could be slow, but antlers may see larger fish than in the past two years.



Photo: Marti Niman

Navajo and Elephant Butte lakes are great for springtime crappie.



Photo: Dan Williams

Some of southwestern New Mexico’s best bass fishing is at Lake Roberts north of Silver City.





Photo: Marty Frentzel

New Mexico offers anglers a wide variety of trout fishing opportunities, whether they prefer fishing for smaller trout in back-country waters such as Goose Lake, above, or casting for trophy browns in the Rio Grande. Below, Fisheries Biologist Eric Frey shows off an impressive Rio Grande brown that turned up during a fish survey below the Taos Junction bridge.

Eric Frey
Fisheries biologist, Northeast Area

When Frey wants a quick hike to get away from it all and catch lots of brown trout, he heads for the Rio Embudo above Dixon.

“The brown trout population has gone nuts there, and it’s such a cool place to go,” he said. “It’s only a half-mile hike in there, then you kind of step away from the world. It’s a good-sized creek -- about the size of the Red River -- with open areas for casting and lots of good pools.”

He likes to fish the Embudo with flies, but almost any bait will work for small to medium-sized browns.

For variety, scenery and big fish, the Rio Grande from Pilar to the Taos Junction Bridge is Frey’s favorite.

“I like the diversity of the fish there,” he said. “You can catch pike, smallmouth bass, brown and rainbow trout and nice Rio Grande chubs -- up to 10 inches. And there’s always deer and ducks around, migratory birds, wild hops -- the complete package.”

He suggested fishing in the fall or just after the spring runoff after the water has cleared. That’s when the pike can see your lures and the trout are moving. Hit it in October for a color blast when the browns are active and the cottonwoods are turning. Spinners and lures work well for all species. Try big Daredevils or Rapalas for northern pike.

Summertime is when anglers seek some cooler waters, and there are few places that beat the Valle Vidal.

“There are wild trout in the creeks and big fish in Suree Ponds,” Frey said. Costilla Creek and Comanche Creek are favorites with locals and visitors because of the spectacular scenery and relative solitude.

For kids, Frey likes to head to Maxwell Lakes for a variety of species, including some large trout, walleye, bass and yellow perch. “Maxwell 13 is perfect for kids,” he said. “In the spring, the trout are hungry and going crazy.”



Department file photo

Lake Maloya and Lake Alice are gems in Sugarite Canyon State Park -- ideal for family fishing from small boats or from the bank. “In the winter, my 3-year-old daughter has a blast ice-fishing at Maloya and Alice,” Frey said.

Marty Frentzel
Chief, Public Information and Outreach

Nothing beats a good fishing hole near home, and if you live in the Albuquerque area like Frentzel, the Corrales Riverside Drain fits the bill.

“I used to take my kid down there every morning,” Frentzel said. “They do a good job stocking that ditch; it’s not as crowded as



Higher water levels at Elephant Butte Lake have created a ideal habitat for crappie and spawning bass. Fishing should be good for both species this spring, but slower than normal for striped and white bass.

Photo: Marti Niman

Tingley Beach, and there’s a lot of things to see and do.”

The Department stocks the ditch with more than 500 rainbow trout twice a month from January through March and November through December. The ditch also contains smallmouth bass, brown trout and bullfrogs. “We caught a turtle once,” Frentzel said.

Popular baits include salmon eggs, worms, Power Bait, spinners and flies.

Richard Hansen
Fisheries biologist

For Hansen, there’s no place like Abiquiu Lake in May, when the water starts warming up and the fish get active.

“It’s close to home and has a lot of different fish,” he said. “Plus, it’s where my Dad used to take me when I was a kid.”

Hansen suggested fishing from the bank with live bait or various spinners and lures for crappie, smallmouth bass, walleye, trout and catfish. Trolling for walleye in the upper end of the lake with a spinner-worm combo works well, too.

Kirk Patten
Fisheries biologist

“My favorite place to fish is the Rio Grande Box in the fall,” said Patten, who oversees the Department’s Rio Grande cutthroat restoration program. “There’s a chance of catching a big fish, and it’s not packed with people like the San Juan.”

Patten likes to fish the Wild and Scenic Rivers area north of Pilar to the Colorado border. He prefers to use a fly rod rigged with something like a bead-head nymph and a midge for large rainbows and browns.

Mike Sloane
Chief, Fisheries Management Division

Sloane looks for a quiet, family friendly spot when he takes his 5-year-old daughter fishing, and often ends up at Charette or Clayton lakes.

“They have pretty scenery and there’s not a lot of people,” he said. “Plus, there are plenty of good chances for her to catch something, even if it’s a yellow perch or a bullhead.

The Department of Game and Fish publishes statewide fishing waters maps and distributes weekly fishing reports to newspapers statewide. Visit the Department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us, or call (505) 476-8000 for more information.





Buckets of fun

Hop, skip and jump to your favorite urban fishing hole

By Colleen Welch

Spring is the time of year when flowers bloom and our thoughts turn to fishing and other outdoor fun. Going fishing does not have to include a long drive to distant reservoirs or mountain streams. New Mexico has good fishing sites in or near small and large urban areas. Most of the urban lakes and ponds are stocked with rainbow trout and/or channel catfish. Bluegills are favorites with children because they are easy to catch and plentiful in many warmwater ponds and lakes around the state.

Here are some of New Mexico's favorite family urban fishing holes:

North Central

Santa Cruz Lake, near Pojoaque and **Monastery Lake**, near Pecos, are stocked with rainbow trout. These small lakes have good bank fishing. At Santa Cruz Lake, small, no-wake boats are allowed. A canoe can get anglers out onto the lake for trout and bluegill fishing in the summer months.

Northwest

Aztec Pond is an inviting urban water right in town, where children can fish for rainbow trout and channel catfish.



Northeast

Springer and Clayton lakes are not truly urban, but they are only a hop, skip and jump from the communities that they are named after.

Clayton Lake is well-stocked with rainbow trout and used by New Mexicans and visitors from nearby Oklahoma and Texas. Boats are ideal for this large state park lake.

At **Springer Lake**, large northern pike, channel catfish and bluegill could be the angler's prize. Good bank fishing spots can be found along Springer Lake for those without boats.



Photo: Dan Williams

Trout, catfish and bluegills await young anglers in special waters across New Mexico.

Mid-state

On the eastern side of New Mexico in Santa Rosa, children enjoy fishing at **Blue Hole Park Pond**. Children can fish for green sunfish, bluegills, channel catfish and largemouth bass.

Corona has a fairly new community pond that is continually fed from cold-water wells. Fish for channel catfish in the spring and rainbow trout in winter.

Tingley Beach in Albuquerque is well-known to the locals. Tingley has a children's pond in addition to the central and south ponds. The children's pond is stocked with rainbow trout in the winter and channel catfish in the summer.

Northwest of Albuquerque, Grants is home to the

Grants Riverwalk Pond, where catfish waters attract young anglers in the spring and summer.

Southeast

Oasis Park Lake at Oasis State Park near Portales has winter-stocked rainbow trout, summer-stocked channel catfish, and bluegills.

Lake Van near Dexter offers good fishing for catfish, bluegills and green sunfish during the summer. In the winter, it is stocked with rainbow trout.

Green Meadows Pond in Hobbs is owned by the Department of Game and Fish and managed by the city of Hobbs. Rainbow trout are stocked in the winter and catfish in the summer. Sunfish and bluegills will delight young anglers.

Green Acres Pond and **Ned Houk Ponds** in Clovis offer fun fishing opportunities with winter rainbow trout and summer catfish.

The Pecos River flowing through Carlsbad has dams that create **Municipal and Bataan city lakes**. Fishing includes trout, catfish and bluegills.

Southwest



Glenwood Fish Hatchery Pond in Glenwood provides community fishing that is popular with local families and tourists fishing for stocked rainbow trout.

In Las Cruces, **Burn Lake** offers fishing for winter rainbow trout and summer catfish. **Young Pond** is a children-only fishing site for winter trout and summer catfish.

Colleen Welch is co-coordinator for conservation education and Project WILD for the Department of Game and Fish. She can be contacted at (505) 476-8119 or colleen.welch@state.nm.us.

The three ponds at Albuquerque's Tingley Beach are the most popular and well-stocked waters in New Mexico. The family friendly city park offers fishing for trout, catfish, bass and sunfish. One pond is reserved just for kids.

Photo: Ross Morgan

