

Special Trout Waters

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

General Information

Special Trout Waters (STW) are managed to enhance the unique angling opportunities available in New Mexico. Regulations vary for STWs — some are managed to produce trophy-size trout, some to improve conservation of native trout, and others to enhance the overall trout population structure and density. Regulations are tailored to each water and may include reduced bag limits, catch-and-release for native Gila trout and Rio Grande cutthroat trout or increased harvest for nonnative fish species. Many STWs require artificial flies and lures with a single, barbless hook. Anglers must never disturb rocks, plants, or sediment to attract fish. Chumming and baitfish use are not allowed in any Special Trout Water. By following these regulations anglers help to conserve healthy fisheries in New Mexico and promote high-quality fishing experiences for everyone.

Designations of Special Trout Waters (STW)

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has established three designations for Special Trout Waters: Red Chile Water, Green Chile Water and Xmas Chile Water. Each designation is easy to remember, and signs with symbols are posted at STWs with bag limits and tackle restrictions.



Red Chile Water

Catch-and-release
with tackle restrictions



Green Chile Water

Two (2) trout daily bag limit
with tackle restrictions



Xmas Chile Water

Two (2) trout daily bag limit
with any legal tackle

Locations of chile waters are listed on pages 19–21.

Native Trout Conservation Waters

Several Special Trout Waters have been established to help protect and conserve Gila trout and Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Nonnative trout species can outcompete or hybridize with native trout species. In order to protect native trout species, unlimited bag limits in some waters have been established for nonnative trout species (rainbow, brown, and brook trout). These waters are listed on page 20 under Red Chile (Native Trout Conservation).

General Bag and Possession Limit Restrictions

All fishing in STWs must stop when the daily bag limit for that water has been taken. Anglers may not continue to fish another STW with a similar or lower bag limit, but may continue if another STW has a higher bag limit or if fishing in Regular Trout Waters. Anglers **must count** those STW fish toward their overall daily bag limit. If fishing STWs where the bag limit is zero, anglers **must not** possess any trout.



Red Chile Water

Tackle restrictions: artificial fly or lure with a single barbless hook.

Catch and release only.

Capulin Creek from the confluence with the Rio Grande to its headwaters.

Cimarron River from the east end of Tolby Campground downstream 1.4 miles to the first U.S. Highway 64 bridge.

Jack's Creek from the waterfalls located 0.25 miles downstream of N.M. Highway 63 crossing upstream to its headwaters.

Mogollon Creek from barrier at waterfalls near U.S. Forest Service Trail 153 upstream to confluence of Trail Canyon. Open from July 1–October 31.

Nabor Creek and **Nabor Lake** on the Sargent Wildlife Management Area.

Pecos River in the Pecos Wilderness above Pecos Falls.

Rio Chama from USGS gaging station located below Cooper's Landing to the Rio Nutrias confluence.

Rio Costilla from its confluence with Latir Creek upstream 2.4 miles to the Valle Vidal boundary.

Rio Las Animas within Gila National Forest, Black Range District.

Rio Valdez in the Pecos Wilderness from the waterfall barrier 0.8 miles below FS Trail 239 upstream to its headwaters.

San Juan River from Navajo Dam downstream 3.75 miles to the Crusher Hole Day Use Area. It is illegal to fish with more than 2 flies or lures on a single line when fishing the Special Trout Water of the San Juan River.

Tingley Beach South Pond within the Albuquerque Conservancy Park.

Valle Vidal All streams. Open July 1–December 31.

Catch & Release Tips

Many game fish in New Mexico have restricted bag and/or size limits that require immediate live release back into the water where taken. To ensure healthy release, follow these suggestions:

1. Land the fish quickly and don't play it to exhaustion.
2. Use a landing net whenever possible.
3. Keep the fish in the water.
4. Do not squeeze or grab any part of the fish. Wet your hands first if you must handle the fish.
5. Gently remove the hook (barbless hooks are easier).
6. If the hook is swallowed deeply, cut the leader. A fish's body fluids will dissolve the hook in a matter of days.
7. Let a tired fish recover. Hold it by the tail in the water with one hand and gently support it from below and just behind the head until it swims away.
8. Never toss or throw a fish back into the water.

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Red Chile Water (Native Trout Conservation)

Tackle restrictions: Artificial fly or lure with single, barbless hook.

Catch-and-release only for Rio Grande cutthroat trout and Gila trout.

Bag limit unlimited for rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout.

Black Canyon upstream from waterfall barrier at Black Canyon Campground. Open July 1–October 31.

Cabresto Creek upstream from Cabresto Canyon to headwaters, not including Lake Fork or Cabresto Lake.

Canada Tio Grande within the Carson National Forest, excluding private land.

Columbine Creek from its confluence with the Red River upstream to its headwaters.

Frijoles Creek (Taos County) from its confluence with Rito de la Olla upstream to its headwaters.

Gavilan Creek from its confluence with the Rio Hondo upstream to its headwaters.

Italianos Creek from its confluence with the Rio Hondo upstream to its headwaters.

Leandro Creek within the Valle Vidal. Open July 1–December 31.

Palociento Creek from its confluence with Rito de la Olla upstream to its headwaters.

Rio Cebolla from the Seven Springs Day Use Area upstream to the headwaters including McKinney Pond.

Rio de Las Vacas from the fish migration barrier located 0.2 miles upstream of FS Road 70 crossing to its headwaters.

Rio Santa Barbara from the West Fork and Middle Fork confluence upstream to its headwaters including the East Fork.

Rito del Padre from the fish migration barrier located about 0.3 miles upstream of the confluence with the Rito Sebadilloso to its headwaters including Rito de los Chimayosos.

South Fork Rio Hondo (Taos County) from its confluence with the Rio Hondo upstream to its headwaters.

Tanques Creek from FS Road 93 crossing upstream to its headwaters.

West Fork Luna Creek from the Carson National Forest property boundary upstream to its headwaters.

Yerba Creek from its confluence with the Rio Hondo upstream to its headwaters.





Green Chile Water

Tackle restrictions: Artificial fly or lure with single, barbless hook.

Bag limit two (2) trout only.

Pecos River in the box canyon 0.5 miles upstream of its confluence with the Mora River to 0.2 miles downstream of the bridge crossing at Cowles.

Red River from its confluence with Goose Creek 1.1 miles upstream to the Carson National Forest boundary.

Rio Chama within the boundaries of the Rio Chama Wildlife and Fishing Area from Heron Reservoir outlet 2.9 miles upstream to Cottonwood Flats.

Rio de Los Pinos from FS Road 284 and 87A, 2.5 miles upstream to the private property boundary.

Rio Guadalupe from its confluence with Deer Creek Landing upstream 6.0 miles to Stable Canyon.

Rio San Antonio from the San Antonio Hot Springs pedestrian bridge upstream 2.0 miles to the Valles Caldera National Preserve boundary.

Sargent Wildlife Management Area for all waters within or adjacent to the WMA including the Rio Chamita, Sixto Creek, and Rio Chama, excluding Nabor Creek and Nabor Lake.

Shuree Ponds on the Valle Vidal. Open July 1– December 31.

Valles Caldera National Preserve all waters within preserve.



Xmas Chile Water

Tackle restrictions: Any legal tackle.

Bag limit two (2) trout only.

Gilita Creek and Willow Creek from its confluence with Snow Creek upstream to its headwaters including Little Turkey Creek.

Mineral Creek from its confluence with San Francisco River to its headwaters.

Red River from its confluence with the Rio Grande upstream to the lower walking bridge at Red River State Fish Hatchery.

Rio Chama from the river-crossing bridge on U.S. Highway 84 at Abiquiu upstream 7.0 miles to the base of Abiquiu Dam.

Rio Grande from the Colorado state line downstream to the Taos Junction Bridge at N.M. Highway 567.

Rio Ruidoso from Fridenbloom Drive upstream to the Mescalero Reservation.

Whitewater Creek from the Catwalk National Recreation Trail parking area upstream to the headwaters, including all tributaries.