



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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#### ANGLERS FISH FOR FUN IN NATIONAL PARKS

Anglers fish for fun and release all the trout they catch in selected waters in Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Yellowstone National Parks this season, reports the Department of the Interior. Protection of wild trout populations while preserving recreational fishing is the objective of this Park program of Fishing-for-Fun.

The plan is applied to portions of the Bradley Fork, West Prong Little Pigeon River, Little River and Oconaluftee River in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee; Yellowstone Lake and tributaries in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho; and the Rapidan and Staunton Rivers in Shenandoah National Park, Virginia.

National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth said that the initial application of the plan was made on the Bradley Fork and West Prong Little Pigeon River in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1954 as an experiment under a cooperative fishery research project directed by the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service. Studies over a seven-year period revealed that in the experimental streams wild trout populations increased threefold and the average-angler catch exceeded four fish per hour under the no-kill restrictions.

Fishing-for-Fun for trout is open all year around on the Bradley Fork and the West Prong Little Pigeon River. Anglers are required under this plan to fish with artificial lures and release every fish caught which measures less than 16 inches. Between September 1 and May 15, Little River and Oconaluftee River operate on the Fishing-for-Fun basis. These two streams and all other waters in the Park are governed by general fishing regulations during the regular open season from May 15 to August 31.

The Fishing-for-Fun concept spread to the Left Branch Little Woman's Creek in north-central Pennsylvania, where it was established by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission in 1958. Here it operates successfully with no closed seasons, a limitless catch, and no-kill provisions.

On Yellowstone Lake, Fishing-for-Fun is administered as a voluntary program, whereas the plan is governed by Federal angling regulations in Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Parks and by State laws in Pennsylvania. Fishermen are encouraged to fish for the famed cutthroat trout with barbless hooks and release the fish they catch in Yellowstone Lake.

Increased fishing pressures and resultant larger catches of trout have threatened trout populations in Yellowstone Lake. Coupled with this expanded use, severe waste of trout has been discovered. It has become evident to Superintendent Lemuel Garrison that many fishermen catch more trout than they can use. He initiated the program last summer to emphasize the recreational aspects of fishing rather than the catch. This plan he hopes will assist in the survival of the Yellowstone Lake cutthroat trout populations. The number of fish an angler may retain from Yellowstone Lake remains at three fish per day during the season, which extends from June 15 to October 15.

Under the Fishing-for-Fun program, applied to the Rapidan and Staunton Rivers in Shenandoah National Park this spring, anglers are required to use artificial lures with barbless hooks and must return all trout alive. This activity is sponsored jointly by the Virginia State Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and the National Park Service. The season closes October 15.

The survival of trout hooked on artificial lures and carefully released is high, studies have discovered. Thus wild trout can provide recreation without being depleted.

State fishing licenses are required in Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Parks, but no fishing license is necessary in Yellowstone National Park.

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