

5 Top Fishing Lakes in Eastern Arizona

Written by Melissa Larsen
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Significantly cooler than the Valley, the White Mountains in eastern Arizona offer outdoorsy family fun year-round. Here, Steve North, a board member on the [White Mountains Partnership](#), gives the low-down on the five best lakes for catching trout, catfish, walleye and more during your next fishing excursion.



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Big Lake Big Lake offers fantastic scenery, has some of the best campgrounds in the state, has great hiking trails adjacent to the lake and offers a good chance at to catch big (18-inch-plus!) rainbow and cutthroat trout. Fall is a great time to catch big brook trout on a fly rod as they come into the shallows to spawn in mid-October to early November.

An Arizona Fishing License and Trout Stamp or a combination Arizona hunting and fishing license is required. Best time of year to fish is spring and fall and the best time of day to fish is early morning or late evening.

Reservation Lake More remote than Big Lake but Reservation Lake offers a good chance to catch large brown trout and maybe even set the new state record! The current state record brown trout (23 lbs.) was caught at Reservation Lake in 1999. This lake also offers a lot of beautiful countryside surrounding the lake for hiking and picnicking.

To fish this lake, you will need to purchase a permit from the White Mountain Apache Tribe.

Show Low Lake This lake is located inside Show Low city limits and is home to great scenery, cool weather, great camping and quick access to restaurants and shopping. To top it off, Show Low Lake offers the chance to catch walleye. The current state record walleye (16 lbs.) was caught at Show Low Lake in 2002.

An Arizona Fishing License and Trout Stamp or a combination Arizona hunting and fishing license is required here, and the best chance to catch the state record walleye is at night.

Hawley Lake This lake is one of the most beautiful lakes in the Arizona White Mountains and is also one of the highest lakes. This is a great lake for both boating and fishing; there are also numerous camping and picnicking areas around the lake. Rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout are all available and fly fishing is wonderful at this lake.

You will need to purchase a permit from the White Mountain Apache Tribe to fish this lake. The best time to catch that lunker trout is early in the morning or late in the evening.

Fool Hollow Lake This lake is also located inside Show Low city limits and close to city amenities and is also a part of the Fool Hollow Lake State Recreation Area, which offers highly developed campgrounds and restroom facilities. In addition, Fool Hollow Lake offers the chance to catch a wide variety of fish species including largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, rainbow trout, crappie, catfish and even northern pike. Kayak and paddleboard rentals are available at this lake as well as scenic pontoon boat cruises. Interestingly, the 19th-century town of Adair is located at the bottom of Fool Hollow Lake, and the lake is said to have been named for a farmer who was called a "fool" for trying to farm the land where the lake now sits.

An Arizona Fishing License and Trout Stamp or a combination Arizona hunting and fishing license is required to fish here.