

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
North Carolina-Tennessee

FISHING IN THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

The fishery resources of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park offer opportunities for sport to visiting anglers. There are 600 miles of streams which range from small, steep headwaters to large main streams with splendid pools and swift cascades. The variety of streams is such that the angler can enjoy his sport on the type of water he loves best to fish.

The quality of fishing holds throughout the $3\frac{1}{2}$ -month season. Recent studies of the fish and fishing show that the catch per hour of fishing effort is as good in August as it is in May. Water levels are relatively stable in summer and stream temperatures generally remain within favorable limits for fishing.

Native brook trout (speckled trout) are found in headwater streams at the higher elevations. They are usually rather small and a 12-inch fish is a rare prize. With but few exceptions, access to brook trout waters is limited to a foot-travel over trails.

Rainbow trout were introduced into the Smokies from the West about 50 years ago. They are now the primary sport fish in the park. Stream-reared fish occur in all principal streams from the boundary to remote headwaters where they mix with the brook trout. Their number range from fair to exceptionally abundant. Indeed, the numbers of rainbow trout in major streams such as Big Creek, Hazel Creek, Cataloochee River, Little Pigeon River, Oconaluftee River, and Little River are noteworthy when compared with trout populations of well-known streams in the North. Specimens up to 12 inches are commonly taken and some 20 or more inches in length are caught in the larger waters. Most of the good streams are accessible by car, but the best fishing is found by those anglers who are willing to walk in to areas which are less heavily fished.

The National Park Service endeavors to keep the fish stocks at self-sustaining levels of abundance. Fishing regulations are based on research findings and enforced to protect the fishery from excessive exploitation. Hatchery-reared trout are stocked only in a few waters where it is necessary to restore flood-damaged populations or where natural reproduction is inadequate to maintain the resource. The National Park Service is presently cooperating with the Fish and Wildlife Service in a program of research to gain additional information on the regulation and management of the fishery. Certain streams have been set aside as "sport-fishing-only" streams. Good fishing for brook and rainbow trout is afforded, but all fish under 16" must be returned to the water unharmed. READ THE PARK FISHING REGULATIONS BEFORE YOU FISH.

In respect to lures and tackle, terminal equipment should be light and fine because the trout in these clear waters become very shy and wary after the season commences. One will find that sparsely tied wet and dry flies in sizes 12, 14, and 16 are the most consistent producers. Locally-favored patterns include the Coachman, Royal Coachman, Gray Hackle, Gray Hackle Yellow, Brown Hackle, Adams, and Black Gnat. Good results may also be obtained early in the season or in high water with spinner-and-fly combinations. USE OR POSSESSION OF BAIT IS PROHIBITED, AND NO ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY CONTAIN MORE THAN ONE HOOK.

We urge you to try your luck. Please exercise caution in wading because the rocks may be more slippery than those of your home waters.