

## *Area Lakes - Ely Nevada*

### ***Cave Lake:***

Cave lake state park is a beautiful Alpine lake set in a scenic canyon in the Schell Creek Range approx. 15 miles from the city of Ely. It is 32 water acres in size and the elevation is 7300 ft.. Its average depth is 25ft.. At it's deepest points it is 60ft. deep. It is stream fed by Cave Creek which flows into the eastern end of the lake. There are excellent camping facilities, ranger station, fish cleaning station, rest room facilities, boat launch and day use sites equipped with tables and BBQ grills. The park offers developed hiking trails as well as excellent fishing. It is a great place to bring the family and an excellent place to teach kids to fish.

Cave lake offers fishing from shore, boat or float-tube for Rainbow and Brown Trout. Each year Cave lake is amply stocked with Rainbow trout 9-10 inches in length. The Brown Trout population is naturally reproducing at Cave lake. The Rainbow trout caught are typically in the 10-13 inch range, with a few larger. They are readily willing to take all types of standard trout baits as well as small spinners and spoons. Fly fishing on Cave lake is usually fast and furious and a lot of fun. In the late afternoon the hatches of various insects begin and for the remainder of the evening into dark trout can be taken on dry flies and/or emerger patterns. Brown trout show up in the catch in lesser numbers and come in all sizes. Brown trout appear to like "meatier" offerings such as nightcrawlers for bait fishermen to larger flies (size 6 and larger) for the fly fisherman. Each year there are a few Brown trout caught that exceed 5lbs. The state record for Brown Trout was caught in Cave Lake in 1984, 27lbs., 5oz.!

To reach Cave lake take U.S. 93 south from Ely for about 8 miles to Success Summit Rd.. turn left (east) and continue until you reach the lake.

### ***Illipah Reservoir:***

Illipah Reservoir Recreation Site is located approx. 34 miles west of the city of Ely. It covers about 70 water acres at full capacity and is a stream fed lake. Illipah Reservoir sits at 6800ft. in elevation in high desert country. There are developed campsites, a boat launch area, restrooms and some picnic tables. Illipah Lake was enlarged years ago and is much like an hour glass shape with the old dam dividing the two halves (it is clearly visible). The maximum depth is 60 ft.

Fishing at Illipah lake is usually good to excellent for Rainbow and Brown Trout. The Rainbow Trout are stocked yearly and grow at moderate rates. The rainbows do hold over from year to year as water levels stay adequate. As a result, although the average Rainbow catch is between 12-14 inches, there are many Rainbows taken 15 inches and beyond. The fish are fat healthy specimens and put up an excellent fight! Brown trout reproduce

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naturally in Illipah Reservoir and although showing up in the average catch in lesser numbers, are much bigger.

Rainbow Trout seem to go for any of the standard trout baits (powerbait in various colors, salmon eggs, cheese, marshmallows, worms, etc.), and lures (spoons, spinners, crankbaits and stickbaits). Brown trout prefer nightcrawlers and lures.

Fly fishing at Illipah is good for Rainbows and Browns. During the day, nymphs and streamers are productive. The late afternoon usually offers good dry fly fishing til' dark with hatches of midges, callibaetis, caddis occurring.

Illipah is an interesting and somewhat challenging lake to fish because of it's structure and sub- surface terrain. Shaped like an hour glass, the two distinct sides of the lake are very different, and different to fish. The East end (by the Dam) is very deep, with sharp drop-offs and many typical rock point structures. The west side of the lake is shallow, averaging 6-8 ft. in depth through it's length. Except that there are variances in the bottom structure, such as the original creek bed. Consequently the depth can change quickly and these features are natural ambush and shelter points for fish, depending on conditions. The west side shoreline is also ideal for shore fishing with bait, or wading with a fly rod. The entire shoreline is free of trees, bushes, etc., and is a flat surface with a slow grade. So there is plenty of room to cast without obstructions.

To reach Illipah Reservoir, take U.S. 50 west approx. 32 miles until you reach a dirt road (on the left), National Forest Road 400 with a sign for Illipah Reservoir, and follow the dirt road south for another two miles.

### ***Comins Reservoir:***

Comins Reservoir is located approx. 12 miles from Ely center on U.S. 93. It's average depth is 6-8 ft.. The maximum depth is 15ft.. The lake is shaped like an hour glass, with a narrow passage in the center of the lake. The lake is feed by Cave creek and underground springs. It is a marvelous bird refuge where some of the rarest waterfowl and upland game can be viewed. When full Comins lake is approx. 410 water acres in size. It's elevation is approx. 6500 ft.. It is one of the richest lakes In insect and other fauna as I have ever fished. It is a "nutrient broth" This has accounted for Comins Lake being one of the great Trout fisheries of the west, certainly the greatest Nevada has ever seen.

Unfortunately, Northern Pike were illegally transported to Comins lake about 10 years ago and by 2009 the trout fishing was gone. The Pike rapidly naturally reproduce in the Comins lake environment and flourish gorging on Rainbow and Brown Trout. For 3-4 years sizable Northern Pike are then caught, exceeding 30 inches. However, by this time the trout forage is gone, the pike are decimating they're spawn and the pike population

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begins to decline. There are fewer pike in numbers. The Pike that survive become thinner within a couple of years. They also become stunted in length. In short, Pike fishing becomes poor, and remains so from that time on. The future of Comins lake as a trout fisher is grim. This is the second time in twenty years Pike have been illegally introduced. The cost in dollars to poison Comins and the related watershed is in the half-million dollar range. In today's economy, or even in the best of financial times, it eventually becomes impractical to continue to spend this kind of money on one lake in the system. It truly is a shame.

There is a Largemouth Bass population that seems to be holding it's own in Comins lake. Bass are definitely worth fishing for and fish over 5lbs. appear regularly in the catch. It seems as if the average number of Bass caught is low, but this may be because the lake is under-fished by serious Bass fishermen. Bait fishing for Bass is limited to Nightcrawlers. Best choices in lures are shallow or medium depth (6-8ft.) crankbaits, and plastics. Comins is an ideal lake to fish with the full range of plastics, rigged Texas style, Carolina style, or drop shot.

Pike are being regularly caught at Comins lake this year (2001), although the average length and weight have decreased significantly. Pike are running 18-27 inches on the average with some larger. Best lures for pike are size 11 Rapalas, large spoons and spinnerbaits with trailers, and Buzzbaits (my favorite).

### ***Bassett Lake:***

Bassett lake is a 110 water acre lake, 17 miles north of Ely, 5 mile NW of McGill. Take U.S. 93 north past the town of McGill, turn left at the sign for Bassett lake, take dirt road 5 miles to the lake. Bassett lake has an average depth of 5 ft. and a maximum depth of ten ft.. The lake contains Northern Pike, Largemouth Bass, and Carp. The Pike are stunted and small. The Bass average 10-12 inches.

### ***Sunnyside lakes:***

Approximately 65 miles south of Ely on State Route 318 there is a wildlife refuge and chain of lakes located within the Wayne Kirch Wildlife Refuge at approx. 5200ft. elevation. Four of these lakes are accessible for fishing: Dacey, 185 water acres; Adams McGill, 785 water acres; Coldsprings, 250 water acres; and Haymeadow, 180 water acres. All of the lakes contain Rainbow Trout, Largemouth Bass, and Bullhead Catfish.

Although sizable desert lakes, their structure and environment are more "Pond" like, no major structural changes, no drop-offs, rocky points, creek channels, trees, etc.. They are relatively shallow, 6-8ft. with some small areas that are slightly deeper. They are

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surrounded by impenetrable bull rushes with only the boat launch and dam areas accessible to shore fishermen. Therefore, fishing from a boat, pontoon boat, or float tube is the best way to fish these lakes. Also, as spring turns to summer, these lakes experience extensive weed growth making fishing much more challenging (but rewarding!). The challenging part involves using different methods of lure or fly choice and presentation, especially when it comes to Bass.

Bait, lure, and fly fishermen share equal success for the healthy Rainbow Trout, while lure fishermen are much more productive for Bass. Bass average catch is 12-15 inches, with fish over 5lbs. caught each year. Rainbow Trout average 13-15 inches, with 15 to over 20 inch fish showing up often enough to "expect" one during your trip.

There is a campground with sites available (somewhat primitive).

Access is available from NV route 318 via two unpaved roads. The lakes are approx. 4 miles down.