

# Pyramid Lake one of the best fisheries in the world

BY BRUCE AJARI  
GONE FISHIN',

How many of you realize that we have a world-renowned fishery right in our back yard? Pyramid Lake about 35 miles northeast of Reno, located on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Indian Reservation, is that lake. It's the home of our area's only native trout, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

I have written about this high desert lake quite a bit in this column. It is a terrific fall, winter and spring fishery. What makes this lake so special?

It is a large lake, at 112,000 surface acres, and sits at 3,817 feet in elevation. The water is very alkaline, which means it is a bit like saltwater. According to the Pyramid Lake Fisheries website, it is reportedly about one-sixth as salty as sea water.

Recently, former South Shore resident and fly fishing author Denny Rickards wrote a piece for the Winter 2011 edition of Fly Fishing and Tying Journal in which he listed the top 10 public trophy fishing lakes in the country.

The first one mentioned, though he says it's not in any particular order, is Pyramid Lake. While lists are subject to an individual's opinion, this is not the first time I have seen Pyramid on such a list. In the other it was rated as one of the top 10 lakes in the world.

The average length of the fish in this lake has gone up recently due to the management program put in place by the tribe. Today, it seems that an average fish in this lake will be around 19 to 20 inches long, and fish exceeding 10 pounds are now a fairly common occurrence.

There is a strict artificial-only (lures or flies) requirement, and barbless hooks are required. The slot limit allows an angler to keep two fish, but they have to be a certain size. All other fish must be released.

A legal fish to take is 16 to 19 inches, and/or 24 inches or longer. Of the angler's two-fish limit, only one may be 24 inches or longer. One important difference is that the size is measured from the tip of the nose to the fork in the tail (fork length). This is a measurement commonly used by fisheries biologists. Most anglers are used to measuring their catch to the longest point of the tail rather than the fork (total length).

As a result of this slot limit, the number of fish in excess of 24 inches is truly impressive. You will catch a number of good fish each season. The size and the numbers makes this a world-class fishery. The opportunity to land a trophy-size Lahontan Cutthroat is possible on any given cast.

Being located entirely on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, only tribal fishing and boating licenses are necessary. Daily and seasonal permits are available for purchase at \$9 per day and \$75 per season.

If fishing from shore, you only need a fishing permit or a seasonal permit. They can be purchased at the Pyramid Lake Store, Crosby's Lodge, Ranger Station or the Nixon Store on the Reservation. Permits can also be purchased online at <http://www.plpt.nsn.us/rangers/index.html>.

— Bruce Ajari is a Truckee resident and regular fishing columnist for the North Lake Tahoe Bonanza and other area newspapers.

---

[http://www.tahoebonanza.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?  
AID=/20101223/SPORTS/101229972/1061/NEWS&parentprofile=1050&template=printart](http://www.tahoebonanza.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101223/SPORTS/101229972/1061/NEWS&parentprofile=1050&template=printart)