

## Lakes & Rivers in New Mexico

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### Abiquiu Reservoir

Located 30 miles north of Espanola this reservoir offers some of the finest fishing in northern New Mexico. The area includes a fine panoramic view of the Cerro Pedernal from the dam. Reptile Fossils have been found in the area.

**Abiquiu Reservoir P.O. Box 290 Abiquiu, NM 87510 (505) 685-4433**

### Animas River

The Animas River can be rafted most of the year. It enters New Mexico from Durango, Colorado. The river passes directly by Aztec Ruins, home of the largest reconstructed Great Kiva and two parks within Aztec: Riverside Park and Hartman Park. The river meanders through a view of sandstone cliffs and farmland for another 15 miles before it joins the San Juan River at the western edge of Farmington.

### Avalon Reservoir

Fishing is available year-round, predominantly for white bass, catfish, and bream. Located 3 miles north of Carlsbad, Avalon Reservoir is stocked by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, which also provides law enforcement for all boating activities. Boating fees are charged. Fishing is available year-round, predominantly for white bass, catfish, and bream. Scuba diving for game fish is permitted.

### Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Located where the Chihuahuan Desert meets the Southern Plains, Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge is one of the more biologically significant wetland areas of the Pecos River watershed system. Straddling the Pecos River, Bitter Lake NWR is truly a jewel, a wetland oasis inhabited by a diverse abundance of wildlife species. The refuge protects and provides habitat for some of New Mexico's most rare and unusual creatures. The refuge offers excellent nature photography and wildlife viewing opportunities. Contact the refuge for updated hunting regulations and season dates. The entire north tract of the refuge, including the wilderness area, is open to hiking and horseback riding. Fishing is prohibited at Bitter Lake NWR to protect rare native fish. **Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge Roswell, NM 88201**

### Blue Hole

Santa Rosa's Blue Hole is an 81-foot-deep artesian well bordered by a ring of sandstone featuring azure waters in a soda bottle-shaped configuration. The well was once used as a fish hatchery, but it now serves as a dive-training and recreational site for those with water on their minds. Because the water has a stable temperature of 61 degrees F, you can dive here year-round. The water itself is a deep, clear blue, with visibility up to 80 feet. The Santa Rosa Dive Center is open on weekends to rent gear and provide air fills. The shop opens midweek only by appointment for certified divers and groups.

### Bluewater Lake State Park

Bluewater Lake and Bluewater Creek are stocked with rainbow trout, native or cutthroat trout, and catfish, with trout weighing up to 9 pounds having been caught in the lake. Numerous good fishing areas are easily reached by car. The park also is a popular spot for ice fishing in the winter months. The park is host to many of nature's feathered friends. Bluewater Lake is situated on the north flank of the Zuni Mountains in the Las Tusas Basin. The reservoir is located in a valley carved in shale and limestone. **Bluewater Lake State Park P.O. Box 3419 Prewitt, NM 87045 (505) 876-2391**

### Bottomless Lakes State Park

In 1933 the bottomless lakes area was set aside as New Mexico's first state park. Lea Lake is the deepest at 90 feet and is the only lake where swimming is allowed. During summer, visitors can rent paddleboats for a small fee. Devil's Inkwell is 32 ft. deep and is named for its steep sides and dark water. The lake is stocked with rainbow trout in winter. Lazy Lagoon is surrounded by treacherous and odorous mud flats, making it inaccessible for recreation but a great place to view waterfowl that are often present. Recreational opportunities at Bottomless Lakes include camping, picnicking, fishing, boating, sailing, and wildlife viewing. The area is also famous for its "Pecos Diamonds", which are actually quartz crystals formed inside the gypsum in the soil. The soft gypsum sometimes crumbles away, exposing the "diamonds". **Bottomless Lakes State Park HC 12, Box 1200 Roswell, NM 88201 (505) 624-6058**

### **Brantley Lake State Park**

Brantley Lake State Park is New Mexico's newest state park. It is the southernmost lake in New Mexico, and a refreshing place to fish and enjoy other water sports. The visitor center includes historical exhibits about the Wild West Town of Seven Rivers. Anglers can catch a variety of warm water fish such as largemouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, white bass, bluegill, and crappie. **Brantley Lake State Park PO Box 2288 Carlsbad, NM 88221 (505) 457- 2384**

### **Caballo Lake State Park**

The Caballo Mountains serve as a majestic backdrop for Caballo Lake State Park, which boasts a full array of water sports, winter waterfowl watching, and cactus gardens in bloom. This park's claim to fame is the majestic Bald and Golden Eagles that migrate through. Visitors can stroll among yuccas, century plants, prickly pears, and other desert cacti growing in the park's two cacti gardens. Swimming, fishing, jet skiing, and windsurfing are some of the wet and wild activities available at the Park. Both lake and river provide anglers with the opportunity to catch a variety of fish. The area is home to largemouth bass, walleye, white bass, catfish, crappie, bluegill, northern pike, sunfish, and an occasional rainbow trout. **Caballo Lake State Park P.O. Box 32 Caballo, NM 87931 (505) 743-3942**

### **Canadian River**

The Canadian River is a very long, major U.S. waterway that flows from its headwaters near Raton Pass to just south of the Colorado border, down through east-central New Mexico, then east across the Texas Panhandle into Oklahoma. In New Mexico, the river has a navigable flow that is usually limited to years of above-average rainfall in the desert between Raton and Tucumcari. The Canadian River includes granite cliffs and canyons and a deep sandstone canyon with historical ancient ruins between the Cornudo Hills to the west and the Kiowa National Grasslands to the east.

### **Cimarron River**

From Eagle Nest Dam to Cimarron, the Cimarron River kicks up continuously challenging whitewater and passes alongside towering granite cliffs at Cimarron Canyon State Park. Below the village of Cimarron, the river calms down and occasionally holds enough water to carry boaters another 25 miles to the town of Springer.

### **Clayton Lake State Park**

Set among rolling grasslands, Clayton Lake State Park offers outstanding fishing. Four state-record walleyes have been caught since 1980. Several duck species -- including mallards, pintails, and teals -- frequent the lake, Canada geese and bald eagles are often seen. Along the spillway, more than 500 dinosaur footprints have been preserved and identified. Plant-eating and carnivorous dinosaurs, as well as some ancient crocodiles, made these prints. **Clayton Lake State Park 141 Clayton Lake Road Clayton, NM 88415 (505) 374-8808**

### **Cochiti Lake**

Just 50 miles north of Albuquerque and west of I-25 at the Santo Domingo and Peña Blanca exits, this no-wake lake has a paved boat ramp and campground with showers on each side. It has a slip-rental marina with no services. The top water activities at the lake are sailing, wind surfing, and swimming. **Cochiti Lake 82 Dam Crest Road Pena Blanca, NM 87041 (505) 465-0307**

### **Conchas Lake State Park**

Conchas Lake State Park offers a wide variety of water sport activities including boating, fishing and water-skiing at this refreshing, 25-mile long reservoir. One of the state's largest lakes includes 60 miles of varied shoreline, secluded coves, canyons, and sandy beaches. Observant visitors may discover the fossils of ancient sea creatures. It has ample camping and picnicking facilities, boat ramps, marina, bait and tackle supplies, food services, and playgrounds. Anglers can catch walleye, largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegill, and crappie. **Conchas Lake State Park P.O. Box 976 Conchas, NM 88416 (505) 868-2270**

### **El Vado Lake State Park**

Located in New Mexico's northern mountains, El Vado Lake State Park offers fishing, boating, water-skiing, and winter cross-country skiing. A five and one-half mile scenic trail along the Rio Chama connects El Vado with nearby Heron Lake. The lake and surrounding area are a major wintering ground for bald eagles and other birds. **El Vado Lake State Park P.O. Box 367 Tierra Amarilla, NM 87575 (505) 588-7247**

### **Elephant Butte Lake State Park**

The largest and most popular lake in New Mexico, Elephant Butte Lake State Park provides a setting for every imaginable water sport. A wide variety of water sports are available at the lake, with fishing being one of the most popular. The visitor center offers regional interpretive exhibits. The mild climate of the area makes this park a popular year round destination. **Elephant Butte Lake State Park P.O. Box 13 Elephant Butte, NM 87935 (505) 744-5923**

### **Fenton Lake State Park**

A popular year-round retreat surrounded by beautiful ponderosa pine forests, Fenton Lake State Park features a cross-country ski and biathlon trail and wheelchair accessible fishing platforms. The park sits at an elevation of 7,900 feet and covers 700 acres of land in addition to the lake.

**Fenton Lake Park 455 Fenton Lake Rd Jemez Springs, NM 505-829-3630**

### **Fishing Navajo Lake State Park & the San Juan River**

#### **San Juan River**

The San Juan River, teeming with many varieties of trout, is world-renowned for its trout fishing just south of the Navajo Dam. The first 4.3 miles stretch of the river below the dam is "trophy water" where many varieties of trout can be found-- some as large as 21 inches! The river flows about 98 miles across far northwestern New Mexico through Blanco, Bloomfield, Farmington and Shiprock into the Four Corners area.

### **Navajo Lake State Park**

The second largest lake in New Mexico, Navajo Lake State Park is a very popular attraction for both tourists and natives alike. The park offers the full gamut of water sports and services, and has some of the best fishing in New Mexico, containing both cold and warm water fish. The park is comprised of 21,000 acres of land, 15,590 acres of lake and has camping facilities. **Navajo Lake State Park 1448 NM 511 #1 Navajo Dam, NM 87419 (505) 632-2278**

### **Heron Lake State Park**

A picturesque lake set among tall pines, Heron Lake State Park has been designated a "quiet lake" where boats operate at no-wake speeds only. This park is known for its excellent sailing, fishing, cross-country skiing, and hiking. Ice fishing is popular in winter. Access the hiking and fishing trail along the gorgeous Rio Chama from the dramatic caprock stairway near Heron Dam. **Heron Lake State Park P.O. Box 159 Los Ojos, NM 87551 (505) 588-7470**

### **Leasburg Dam State Park**

A quiet desert oasis, this state park provides peace and relaxation, beautiful cactus gardens, several short trails, and opportunities for fishing and canoeing in the Rio Grande. The dam channels water from the Rio Grande for irrigation in the Mesilla Valley. Nearby Fort Selden State Monument has a museum and trails at the site of a 19th century army outpost. Special events at the park include "Sky Safaris" held a few times a year; local astronomer's also lead star gazing sessions. **Leasburg Dam State Park P.O. Box 6 Radium Springs, NM 88054 (505) 524-4068**

### **Mora River**

During a wet spring, boaters can navigate a 30-mile stretch of the Mora River, from just east of Watrous to the confluence of the Canadian River. This run begins lazily, gradually increasing in whitewater intensity.

### **Morphy Lake State Park**

Hidden among a forest of pine trees, Morphy Lake State Park is found at the end of a three mile road that is steep and may be rough at times. Located in the heart of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and surrounded by a lush pine forest, the park lies close to the Pecos Wilderness. Picnic sites are furnished with tables and fireplaces, but no drinking water. This small, scenic lake is stocked with trout, and in winter visitors frequent the lake for ice fishing. Boating is limited to electric motors. **Morphy Lake State Park P.O. Box 477 Guadalupita, NM 87722 (505) 387-2328**

### **Pecos River**

Like the Rio Grande, the Pecos River flows mostly southward across New Mexico. Unlike the Rio Grande, it rises within the borders of the state, having its headwaters not far to the east of Santa Fe. Its tributaries are mountain streams the flow eastward out of the southernmost part of the Rocky Mountains. South of Carlsbad, it flows into the state of Texas and continues several hundred more miles before joining the Rio Grande. The River offers terrific fishing and camping opportunities, particularly in the Pecos Wilderness.

### **Percha Dam State Park**

Percha Dam State Park may well be the greatest hidden treasure of the New Mexico State Park system. Virtually unknown, it is a quiet and serene getaway under the shade of tall trees. The park is covered with a blanket of grass protected by cottonwood, salt cedar and Russian olive trees. The park provides excellent fishing and bird watching along the river. At an elevation of 4,100 feet, this park covers 80 acres of land and 11,500 acres of lake. The park itself is covered with a blanket of grass protected by cottonwood, salt cedar and Russian olive trees. The park provides excellent fishing and bird watching along the river. Recreational opportunities include camping, picnicking, and fishing. Trails provide hiking opportunities along the river. **Percha Dam State Park P.O. Box 32 Caballo, NM 87931 (505) 743-3942**

### **Rafting & Fishing the Rio Grande**

Spanish for "Big River", the Rio Grande starts in southern Colorado and flows almost due south across the entire extent of New Mexico, past Albuquerque and Las Cruces. After passing out of New Mexico, it forms the boundary between Mexico and Texas. The Rio Grande is home to some of the Southwest's best whitewater runs, abundant wildlife populations, quality fly-fishing and truly spectacular scenery. Forged by snowmelt originating deep in the Rocky Mountains, the Rio Grande Gorge has been carved drop by drop over thousands of years to create the 800-foot deep crevasse where the river runs deep in the spring.

### **Rio Chama River**

The Rio Chama is a major tributary of the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico. It flows through a multi-colored sandstone canyon and through areas that are designated as wilderness. Towering cliffs, heavily wooded side canyons, and historical sites offer an outstanding wild river backdrop for the fisherman or float boater. Fishing is especially good on the upper mile of this river segment. Car camping is popular on the lower 8 miles, and float boaters enjoy two or three day trips on Class II rapids on the entire 31-mile segment (advance permits required), or half day trips on the lower segment (no advance permits required). **Rio Chama River BLM 226 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571 (505) 758-8851**

### **Santa Rosa State Park**

Santa Rosa Lake State Park offers a variety of water sports. Anglers often catch bass, catfish, and walleye. Hiking trails wind through the wild areas around the lake. Eagles roost on snags at water's edge or on small islands on the lake. Nearby Santa Rosa is famous for its clean natural lakes where fledgling scuba divers from around the country come to learn scuba diving. **Santa Rosa State Park P.O. Box 384 Santa Rosa, NM 88435 (505) 472-3110**

### **Storrie Lake State Park**

The lake's serene waters are open for fishing year-round. Storrie Lake boasts consistent winds that provide excellent conditions for sailing and windsurfing. Bird watching is a must in order to view the geese and ducks that flock to the lake during seasonal migrations. Follow walking-trails through sagebrush-covered landscape spotted with cactus, yucca and wildflowers. **Storrie Lake State Park HC33, Box 109#2 Las Vegas, NM 87701 (505) 425-7278**

### **Sumner Lake State Park**

This sparkling blue lake with a rocky shoreline and gently rolling hillsides of juniper provides a refreshing change from the flat grasslands of New Mexico's eastern plains. Sumner Lake State Park offers fishing for a variety of species including, bass, crappie and channel catfish, and is a winter haven for migrating waterfowl. Besides excellent warm-water fishing, boating, swimming, sailing, and water skiing are popular. Other recreation opportunities include camping and picnicking. **Sumner Lake State Park HC 64, Box 125 Fort Sumner, NM 88119 (505) 355-2541**

### **The Gila River**

The Gila River is a major waterway for New Mexico. It usually runs in the early to late spring, when snows melt in the Black, Mimbres, Elk, Mangas and Mongollon Mountains of Gila and Apache National Forests in far western New Mexico. The river begins as four forks north of Silver City and west of Truth of Consequences. From its headwaters, the Gila River flows west through Safford, Florence, Glendale and Yuma, then into California along the Mexico border to the Colorado River.

### **Ute Lake State Park**

Ute Lake State Park, a Canadian River reservoir, offers some of the best walleye fishing in New Mexico. Anglers can also try their luck for bass, crappie, and catfish. 24-hour fishing is available every day of the year for angler fanatics. The lake has produced several state-record game fish. It boasts a marina and a full range of water sport activities. With its scores of inlets to explore, the lake abounds in ducks, quail, doves and pheasant. Deer and antelope roam the surrounding plains and mesas. **Ute Lake State Park P.O. Box 52 Logan, NM 88426 (505) 487-2284**