

Luna Lake

Luna Lake is the last chance to fish in eastern Arizona before the New Mexico state line. Large, scenic, with lots of visitor amenities and close to the town of Alpine, Luna Lake offers good spring and early summer fishing for locals and visitors alike. The Luna Lake Wildlife Area that encompasses the upper end of the lake is also a good place to observe waterfowl. This lake holds the current state record for cutthroat trout at 6 pounds, 5 ounces.

Location – Luna Lake lies at 7,890 feet on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. It is located about 3 miles east of Alpine, just north of U.S. Highway 180. It's accessible year-round, but ices over in winter months. Ice fishing is usually possible, but always check ice conditions before setting out.

Description – Luna Lake is a 154-acre impoundment of the upper San Francisco River. It has a maximum depth of 21 feet and an average depth of 8 feet. It's stocked annually with fingerling and subcatchable rainbow and cutthroat trout, which rapidly grow to catchable size due to the high productivity of the lake. Because it is a shallow, nutrient-rich lake, it is subject to water quality problems and excessive weed growth. The Department annually harvests weeds to help alleviate some of the water quality problems.

Amenities – There is one boat ramp, barrier-free toilets, picnic tables and paved parking at the lake. The Luna Lake Campground, which includes 40 individual fee-camping sites, three group sites, picnic tables, restrooms and drinking water, is located on Forest Service lands about ¼-mile north of the lake. Reserve a site at Luna Lake Campground by visiting www.reserveusa.com on the web or by calling 1-877-444-6777. In addition, a concessionaire operates a small store near the dam where you can purchase tackle, bait, drinks, snacks or rent a boat.

Fishing Techniques – Trolling with flies works well in spring and early summer at Luna Lake. Try wooly buggers, a prince nymph and other large wet flies. Night crawlers and Power Bait fished off the bottom also work well. As water temperatures go up in the summer, fish in deeper, cooler water.

Special Notes – Luna Lake Wildlife Area, which covers only the uppermost end of the lake, is closed to public entry annually from April 1 through July 31. Statewide fishing regulations apply at Luna Lake. The bag limit is six trout; three for unlicensed anglers under the age of 14. Boat motors are restricted to either electric or 10 hp gas motors or less.

