

# Saving Summer

## Fishing

Every summer, millions of Americans head to quiet lakes, fast-flowing streams, and winding creeks to fish. Whether a lifelong angler or casting for the first time, they support a robust outdoor recreation economy and are often powerful advocates for conservation.

Climate change is breaking the rhythms of this cherished pastime. Warmer weather means warmer water, warmer winters with less snowpack, and more extreme drought. Spikes in water temperature have particularly devastating impacts for fish like trout and salmon, which need continually flowing cold water to survive. Fish can get stressed and sick in warmer water, largely due to its lower dissolved oxygen levels. Climate change has already helped drive sharp declines in fish species abundance (the number of individual fish) and richness (number of individual species) in cold water streams in the U.S.

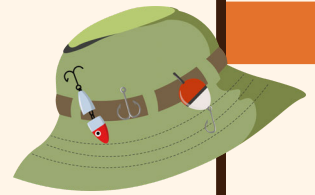
Declines or shifts in streamflows also impede the ability of freshwater fish to migrate and reproduce. Wild sockeye salmon have already shifted their migration timing in response to climate change; other salmon species likely won't be able to adapt as well.

Fishing restrictions are increasingly common in the summer. States in the west, including Montana, implement "hoot owl" restrictions - which prevent fishing after 2 p.m. - once river temperatures reach around 73 degrees Fahrenheit for consecutive days. Last summer, Yellowstone National Park closed multiple rivers to fishing to protect trout inside park borders. These closures came earlier than ever in 2025 and likely will again. The Idaho Fish and Game Department has already warned anglers to expect fewer and smaller trout this season, due to persistent drought and poor water quality.



Visit [NWF.org/Climate](https://www.nwf.org/Climate)

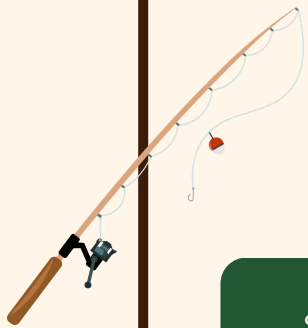
# Saving Summer



## Fishing

Anglers in the East and Midwest are also seeing declines in the iconic and much-beloved brook trout: Rising temperatures could lead to a 77 percent decline in brook trout habitat in the East. There are climate threats beyond warmer water, too. Eastern hemlocks, an evergreen that grows along streams and helps keep them cool, are being killed by the invasive hemlock wooly adelgid – and climate change is extending the pests' range northward. Hurricane Helene scrambled miles and miles of trout habitat in North Carolina, and devastated one of the state's fish hatcheries, killing 600,000 fish.

Fish that can withstand warmer waters, like bass, aren't spared. Warmer water can lead to increased bacteria and parasites, which impacts the health of fish and has led to mass mortality events worldwide. Hybridization, when native fish species reproduce with non-native species, is also becoming more common due to climate-induced expansions of non-natives. Hybridized fish – like cut-bows, a cross between native cutthroat trout and invasive rainbow trout – aren't as genetically suited to their environment, and are even less able to adapt to climate change.



### Save Our Summers

Summer is more than a season. It's a collection of experiences, traditions, and places that allow us to connect with nature and each other.

The choices we make today will determine whether future generations inherit the same summer we know or a season fundamentally transformed by a warming world.

We must by reduce pollution, conserve habitats, expand clean energy, and practice responsible recreation.

Visit [NWF.org/Climate](https://www.nwf.org/Climate)