

(Note: This is a news release from DWR, 7-9-08)

Emergency Fishing Change at Pineview Reservoir

Tiger muskie fishing at Pineview is now catch and release only

Huntsville -- You can no longer keep tiger muskies at Pineview Reservoir. Division of Wildlife Resources biologists put the emergency fishing change in place on July 9.

You can still catch and release tiger muskies at the reservoir east of Ogden, you just can't keep them.

Finding disease-free muskies

Tiger muskies are a cross between Northern pike and muskellunge. Anglers commonly refer to muskellunge as "muskies."

The goal of the closure is to keep plenty of tiger muskies in Pineview until the biologists can find a disease-free population of muskies to breed with Northern pike in Recapture Reservoir in southeastern Utah.

If the biologists can't find a disease-free population, the closure will extend the number of years you can catch tiger muskies in Pineview before the fish die of old age or other causes.

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) is the reason the DWR stopped buying and stocking tiger muskies from hatcheries in the Midwest three years ago. VHS affects numerous species of fish. Fish that contract the disease bleed to death. Many anglers won't be surprised about the change. The possibility the change might occur was discussed at Regional Advisory Council and Utah Wildlife Board meetings in May and June.

Other tiger muskie waters

Utah anglers have never been allowed to keep tiger muskies that are less than 40 inches in length. Pineview is the only water in Utah that currently has tiger muskies that are longer than 40 inches.

One water where tigers could grow to more than 40 inches is Newton Reservoir in northern Utah. "We'll propose to the Wildlife Board that tiger muskie fishing at Newton be catch and release only starting Jan. 1, 2009," says Craig Schaugaard, regional aquatic manager for the DWR.

An exciting and valuable fish

Tiger muskies have proven to be extremely popular and valuable at Pineview and Newton. They're an exciting sportfish. They're also a management tool that helps control panfish populations.

Proper catch-and-release techniques will prolong the opportunity Utah anglers have to catch tiger muskies until the DWR can find a certified, disease-free population to breed and stock.

Catch-and-release tips

Kent “Sorno” Sorenson, one of the DWR’s habitat biologists and an avid muskie angler, says his most valuable tool for safely releasing tiger muskies is a large net with coated mesh. The coated mesh helps protect the scales of the fish. “It serves as a ‘net pen’ so you can keep the fish in the water while removing the hooks,” he says. Sorno and his two sons, Nik and Dane, recently shot a brief video that highlights tiger muskie catch-and-release techniques. The video is available at www.utahwildlifevideos.blogspot.com.

For catch-and-release tips, visit www.wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/tiger_muskie_tips.php.