

A Guide To Trout Fishing at Sycamore Island



Hatchery Trout are stocked by the Department of Fish and Wildlife in one of the ponds at Sycamore Island during late fall and winter. Trout are cold-water fish, and therefore they don't usually survive during the hot summer months. You can find the Sycamore Island Trout Pond by following the signs on the property, or ask for directions and pick up a map at the bait shop.

Step #1: Choosing Your Bait

Trout have an amazing sense of smell and sight. We recommend using natural bait such as worms, grubs, or insects. Artificial baits like lures and flies work well in many environments but are only recommended for the more experienced angler. The more advanced cast and retrieval methods used with artificial baits require more practice for fishing success.

Step #2: Choosing Your Rig

Trout have small soft mouths compared to other fish. You'll want to use smaller hooks. A single barb size 10 works well with most trout. Barbless hooks are recommended for catch-and-release fishing.

Spin-cast reels are ideal for trout fishing. You'll want a light – medium action pole since trout typically don't put up as strong of a fight as bass and larger game fish. Use a line weight that compliments the water current. For faster moving currents, you'll want a lighter line weight around 4lbs to prevent your line from sinking. When fishing in still water, try a heavier line like an 8lb to help sink your bait more efficiently, and prevent line breaks from snags or working through underwater terrains such as rocks or logs.

When fly fishing or trolling, you'll want to use the specific rods and reels required for that method.

Shore Fishing

When fishing from the shore, there are a variety of tactics you can use. When bottom-fishing, try using a 3/8 oz. egg sinker above a swivel. Then create a 14" line leader off the swivel to your hook.

You can also try using a lure, like a Rooster Tail or spoon bait. Make sure the hooks are small enough for a trout's smaller mouth. Try a "1-2-Pause" retrieval method. Reel once, then twice, then pause for a second. Then continue the process. The goal is to pause it just long enough to make the lure movement look natural, but not allow it to start sinking.

Time of day is crucial. Trout typically move shallow when feeding, typically in the early morning at sunrise and again in the evening at sunset. During the day they tend to move to deeper waters that are more ideal for trolling. So fishing at the right times when they are closest to the shore can help produce better results.

Trout will come all the way up to the surface to feed in the early morning and evening hours and swim down to deeper, cooler water in the middle of the day. When fishing in deeper water, use flashers or trolling rigs to help attract the fish. Provide a 12" leader of the line from the end of the flasher to your bait.

Fishing Rules and Regulations

As of February 2014, the limit for hatchery trout on caught in off-stream ponds is 5. The season is open all year. The limit for trout caught on the San Joaquin River is 2.