



March 24, 2020

#### A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT:

As COVID-19 continues to force all of us to make changes to our daily schedule, the Department would like to remind you that together we can make a difference. To help minimize the spread of the virus:

- Practice social distancing
- Wash your hands regularly
- Avoid non-essential travel

In this time of change, the Department would like to encourage anglers to stay home, mend equipment and prepare for the upcoming fishing season. In the weekly fishing report, provided by Dustin Berg of [Go Unlimited](#) (supporting disabled anglers) and the Department of Game and Fish, we will be sharing tips and tricks to help you be ready to go on future adventures.

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**Here are a few artificial flies, lures and homemade catfish baits that can be made at home and used as soon as restrictions throughout New Mexico are lifted:**

#### Woolly Bugger

This is an excellent fly for catching trout, crappie, bluegill and bass. It is an easy fly to tie and a great starting point for beginner fly tiers. Some popular colors that have proven to be successful in many situations are black, olive, brown and white. [This video](#) will help you create a fish-catching Woolly Bugger of your own!

Fly tying equipment can be ordered online from many websites and range in price from about \$30 and up, but the feeling of catching a fish on a fly that you tied yourself cannot be defined by words. The key equipment in a starter kit includes a vise, scissors, whip finisher, bobbin, bodkin, bobbin threader, hackle pliers, hair stacker, half hitch tool and hackle gauge. Instructions on how to use these tools are usually included with the kit and are also available all over the internet.



A summer women's fly fishing workshop, hosted by the Department and the N.M. Mule Deer Foundation offered instruction on fishing with Wooley Buggers.

It is a fun activity and super rewarding when you catch a fish on a fly that you created!

## Chamois Leech

This fly is one of the easiest to make and is great for catching trout, crappie and other species. There are two variations of this fly that we will discuss. The first is a common mainstay in many fly fishermen's tackle boxes. It is created like most flies in a fly-tying vice. [This video](#) shows how to create this fly, if you have a vice.



This homemade Chamois Leech is cheap and easy to make, and it's fun to catch fish with something made at home.

*THE EASIEST WAY, that has worked well for Dustin Berg, Department Fishing Report Contractor,* is to purchase chamois cloth (commonly used to dry cars after washing) from an auto store. Cut leech-shaped strips that are about 1 1/2 - inches long, 1/3-inch wide in the middle and come to a point on each end. The finished cut piece should look like an elongated diamond. Once you have made your cuts, take a small salmon egg hook (Dustin recommends red hooks) and run it through the center of the chamois. Then run it back through the chamois so that the hook is centered length-wise and width-wise with the leech pattern you created. A very small dab of superglue where the hook goes through the chamois will secure it.

This fly can be fished with or without weight. In still water, once soaked with water, the chamois leech will slowly sink; trout will often strike on the fall. This chamois leech has been very successful for many kids that Dustin has taught to fly-fish at Seven Springs Brood Pond in the Jemez Mountains. The finished product looks like this (see photo above).

## Homemade Catfish Bait

Here is one of the easiest, most effective homemade catfish baits Dustin has found. Hotdogs are a great catfish bait by themselves, and they don't make you stink like some very pungent "stink baits." Add a little Kool-Aid and garlic to enhance your bait and improve your success. [This video](#) shows just how easy it can be to make your own catfish bait!



Aquatic Education Coordinator Dennis Segura, helped a family tie a lure onto their fishing rod at a fall fishing clinic on Whitewater Creek.

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If you have personal tips and tricks that you would like to share with your fellow anglers as we wait out the current restrictions, please email Dustin at [funfishingnm@gmail.com](mailto:funfishingnm@gmail.com).

## Closure Information:

Social distancing is a challenge for all anglers; the itch to go fishing just keeps growing. But this is a time for all New Mexicans to pull together for the overall health of all our citizens and stay home. The Department reminds



anglers it is their responsibility to be aware of closures and contact land managers for properties of interest when restrictions are lifted.

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - <https://www.blm.gov/new-mexico>
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS) - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/covid19-updates>
- New Mexico State Lands - <https://www.nmstatelands.org/resources/recreational-access/>
- New Mexico State Parks - <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/>
- New Mexico Open Gate Properties - <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/hunting/maps/open-gate-program/>
- New Mexico Wildlife Management Areas - <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/state-game-commission-lands/>
- City of Ruidoso- <https://www.ruidosoparksandrec.com/grindstone-lake-trail-system>
- Angler and outdoor recreationists should consult their local government's website for information regarding specific city and town fishing access.

**Clean, Drain and Dry** your watercraft.

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