

Arizona Apache  
By Bob Willis

I had been planning a western fly-fishing trip for some time, and had targeted Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah as the locations for catching some unique trout. I would spend several days in eastern Arizona fishing both Arizona and New Mexico. The target species in Arizona would be Apache Trout and there were several locations in the White Mountain area of Arizona that promised success. I had not anticipated road work that closed the route to one of the best Apache locations in the state, nor the extreme fire situation in all of the National Forests in the state. I stayed in Alpine, Arizona and the major road (Highway 191) south of Alpine was closed due to a large fire located about 25 miles south of the community.



A 16-inch Apache Trout from Ackre Lake, Arizona.

I tried several rivers and finally found a very small lake that produced several fish the first evening that I fished it. I was amazed at their yellow color and tiny black spots. Apache Trout are uniquely colored fish. I had never seen a yellow trout, and having one in the net was a special experience. Apache hit hard and fight well. I caught over 30 fish that evening and the largest was a 16-inch fish that took my drag out. The drag was set

about medium and it usually takes a larger fish to pull out some line. All Apache fight, but they really fight when you try to take the fly out of their mouth.

Apache never give up, and that is the one characteristic that that I will always remember about them. On a three or four weight fly rod that makes them an extremely sporting fish. Arizona Apache are worth the effort to find, and if you like to tube there are several lakes around Alpine, Arizona that are perfect for tubing and good for Apache. All are in the Apache National Forest and it is good to have a map of that are before any trip.

If you want to learn more about Apache Trout check out the book or e-book **Trout Adventures – North America** from Wilderness Adventures Press sometime in 2012. The e-mail address is [www.wildadvpress.com](http://www.wildadvpress.com).