

Colorado Parks and Wildlife
AQUATIC WILDLIFE SECTION
Southeast Region



2017 Fishing Forecast

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This report is based on the best information that we have available as of April 2017. Water levels and streams flows, conditions that are not usually under Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) control, can change significantly and can have some affects on access, stocking and your fishing. Surface acreages listed are for full lake volume unless otherwise noted. For the most up-to-date fishing information, readers are encouraged to visit the CPW web site at <http://www.cpw.state.co.us> and go to **Things To Do > Fishing > Statewide Conditions > Fishing Report**. You can also call the CPW Biologist or your local CPW Area Office for more detailed information. **A valid Colorado fishing license is required to fish in Colorado.**

Check this out! CPW has developed an interactive [Colorado Fishing Atlas](#). Visit our web site and click on **Places To Go**, and click on Fishing Atlas on the left side. There is a video tutorial, which will help you learn to navigate the map. There you can search for fishing opportunities by species, specific interest or proximity to your home or destination.

Expanded fishery information for 2017: Colorado Parks & Wildlife is now providing anglers with more in-depth fishery information on a number of selected waters throughout the state. Lake and stream information and fishery survey data can be found on the CPW website (go to **Things To Do > Statewide Conditions > Fishery Survey Summaries**), or click [HERE](#).

Important: Control of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) such as zebra and quagga mussels, New Zealand mud snails, didymo and other invasive animal and plant species is of critical importance in Colorado. Of particular concern, is the potential to transport these species by trailered boats. Please be aware that boat inspections will be conducted on a number of selected waters throughout the state, to inform and educate boaters on the proper way to eliminate these pests. To facilitate these inspections please arrive at the lakes with your boat **CLEANED, DRAINED AND DRY**. *All out-of-state boaters must pass a state-certified inspection if you plan to launch in any Colorado lake, reservoir or waterway.* Your cooperation will help prevent the spread of these organisms that can destroy habitat and your fishing.

Upper Fountain Creek and S. Fork Republican River
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Rampart Reservoir (500 ac)

Walk-in access and non-motorized hand launched watercraft will be permitted on Rampart Reservoir toward the middle of May pending snow and ice conditions. Motorized watercraft should be able to launch (pending ice conditions) starting May 18, 2017 after the mandatory inspection for Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS). For up to date information visit the [Pikes Peak Ranger District website](#). Fishing should be good for rainbow and cutbow trout particularly early in the season. Anglers can expect brown trout up to 16 inches, rainbow trout up to 15 inches and cutbow reaching 14 inches in length. The occasional lake trout can also be caught. The reservoir is 76% full as of April 12, 2017 and will likely rise until it begins to drop around June. Once open, boat ramp access to Rampart Reservoir will be allowed through early October, Thursday-Sunday with the following restrictions: No rental vans; Class A, B or C motor homes, or trailers over 22 feet allowed across the dam. No stopping on dam or boating within 500 feet of the dam. No shoreline fishing within 50 feet of the dam. No wakes are allowed on the reservoir. This is a US Forest Service lake that is managed by a concessionaire, and a fee is required. Call the US Forest Service, Pikes Peak Ranger District for updated access information.

North (210 ac) and South Catamount (150 ac) Reservoirs at the Pikes Peak North Slope Recreation Area

Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) reports that the water levels at the beginning of the year are slightly above average in these reservoirs. Provided waters levels are adequate, 20,000 catchable fish are scheduled to be stocked throughout the summer season in these reservoirs. Fishing should be good for trout species especially rainbows and Snake River cutthroat. Fishing for lake trout should be fair early in the spring at North Catamount and South Catamount. Although lake trout can sometimes be difficult to locate, sampling efforts in 2013 detected lake trout reaching over 30 inches and weighing 11 pounds. Fishing should be good to excellent at South Catamount for rainbow and Snake River Cutthroat trout. *North Catamount is restricted to artificial flies and lures only.* Anglers should visit the City of Colorado Springs website for current and future dates and hours of operation. For more information on access, visit the Pikes Peak Highway webpage. An access fee for the Pikes Peak Highway is required to fish these lakes.

Crystal Creek Reservoir at the Pikes Peak North Slope Recreation Area (130 ac)

Again, CSU anticipates that the water levels in these reservoirs will be good throughout the fishing season. Fishing should be good to excellent for catchable sized trout. Over 10,000 rainbow and Snake River cutthroat trout are scheduled to be stocked, with the majority of these fish being stocked in the spring. Brown Trout are stocked annually as fingerlings and opportunity exists for those as well. Anglers generally have good success with power bait or worms fished 12 inches off the bottom or fly patterns fished in the late afternoon. Anglers should visit the City of Colorado Springs website for current and future hours of operation. For more information on access, visit the Pikes Peak Highway webpage. A fee for access along the Pikes Peak Highway is required.

McReynolds Reservoir (119ac) and Mason Reservoir (108 ac) at the Pikes Peak South Slope Recreation Area (119 ac)

The South Slope Recreation Area has been extremely popular ever since opening to the public. The area is scheduled to open May 25th, but the opening is dependent on all ice being clear from the reservoirs. Days and hours of operation for the remainder of the season are every Thursday - Sunday, 7:30am - 2:30pm through the last week in September. ***Use of the area is by limited permit only!*** More information can be found by visiting coloradosprings.gov/open-spaces. Visitors are encouraged to pay close attention to the weather as it can change rapidly at this elevation.

McReynolds Reservoir is the closest to the parking lot and only requires a short hike to get down to the water. Recent sampling has determined that there are not many fish present in McReynolds. Several hundred cutthroat trout were transplanted into McReynolds Reservoir from Mason Reservoir in 2015. CPW also began stocking fingerling cutthroat trout in 2015 and these fish should be at catchable sizes. Small numbers of mature cutthroat trout, exceeding 20 inches are present in the lake, but catching them is very challenging.

Mason Reservoir has an abundance of cutthroat trout. In 2014, Boehmer Reservoir above Mason was completely drained and most of those fish ended up in Mason Reservoir. The cutthroat trout in Mason are somewhat smaller on average than most in McReynolds. However, they are still very good-sized fish averaging 13-16 inches in length. Anglers last fall reported several 100 fish days!

Manitou Lake (16 ac)

This lake north of Woodland Park should be good to excellent for catchable rainbow trout. Manitou Lake is stocked throughout the summer season generally from April-June and September-November with upwards of 7,000 catchable trout. Water levels are projected to be good for 2017. Manitou reservoir is an excellent place to introduce kids to fishing as the lake is heavily stocked and the access is very easy especially from the small trail system located on the northwest corner of the reservoir near the parking lot. Additionally, fishing access docks are available. This is a US Forest Service lake that is managed by a concessionaire, and a fee is required. More information can be found on the [Pikes Peak Forest Service Webpage](#). Good camping can be found nearby at US Forest Service campgrounds.

Prospect Lake (50 ac)

Fishing for catchable trout species should be good to excellent throughout the year. This lake serves as a great place for local anglers to have an excellent opportunity to catch some respectable fish usually reserved for larger bodies of water. Each year trout, saugeye and channel catfish are stocked into this reservoir. In past years CPW has also stocked a large amount of black crappie and some wiper. Anglers who target these species should have some excellent action if fished for properly.

Saugeye generally favor small twister tails tipped with a nightcrawler or worm and fished in 5-10 feet of water. Wipers can generally be caught by fishing smaller, chrome colored hard baits. Channel catfish are generally targeted using commercially available catfish "stink" baits. Anglers targeting crappie should focus their efforts on both the north as well as the south end of the lake as numerous habitat structures were placed in these locations, which crappie will utilize. This local favorite fishing lake is generally stocked with 10-12" trout from March-May and again in the late summer and fall after water temperatures cool off (August-November). This lake is generally one of the first to be stocked for the fishing season.

Palmer Lake (10 ac) / Upper Palmer Lake (12 ac)

Palmer Lake has held water for the last few years and is scheduled to be stocked heavily in the spring and fall of 2017. This lake is a great family fishing destination with good parking and foot access. Nearby, Upper Palmer Lake is a short distance hike and contains cutthroat trout, brook trout, and potential for larger tiger trout.

Monument Lake (40 ac)

Monument Lake is currently spilling this spring and water levels are project to be good throughout the summer. The lake is stocked with both warmwater and coldwater species. In 2017, Monument is scheduled to be stocked with over 10,000 rainbow trout as well as 2,000 channel catfish.

Rosemont Reservoir (90 ac)

Rosemont Reservoir is currently full and is expected to remain that way for the angling season. Anglers should find good to excellent numbers of catchable sized rainbows and the occasional cutthroat trout and splake. Rosemont should produce the best catch rates early in the spring and later in the fall. This is a great place to escape for an afternoon of fishing throughout the summer months. Rosemont Reservoir is restricted to artificial flies and lures only.

Brush Hollow Reservoir (200 ac)

Water levels are still low as of April 12, 2017, but as the reservoir fills prior to irrigation season, levels should come up making the boat ramp accessible. Anglers should focus their efforts early in the year as water levels drop in the spring and summer. Early spring action is generally focused on catchable trout as well as crappie and walleye. Fishing should be fair to good for most species, such as bluegill, sunfish, channel catfish, and yellow perch. Fishing for trout is fair right now as two plants totaling over 6,000 fish have already been stocked, and the warmwater fishing should improve as water temperatures increase in April. For anglers

targeting catfish, success is generally better from late June to late September. Overall, the fishing is expected to good to very good early, prior to the spawning of the primary forage, gizzard shad. Testing conducted by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment revealed elevated levels of mercury in some species of fish. The consumption advisory guidelines can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Quail Lake (17 ac) and Pikeview Reservoir (2 ac)

Water levels can vary in these lakes, but should be good throughout the summer if water can be added to the lakes. Plants of rainbow trout are plentiful in both lakes beginning in March to provide for good to excellent early spring fishing. Fishing at Quail Lake should be good for channel catfish once water temperatures rise above 60°F, and it should also be fair for bluegill after May 1st. A good population of saugeye are present in Pikeview. Some large catfish have been reported being caught as water temperatures improve. Please respect the business owners along Garden of the Gods Road and do not park at their lots.

Hale Ponds (6 ac total) (east of Bonny Reservoir)

Water level is fair in all of the ponds. Due to at least a partial fish kill last year, the population of warm water fish is currently unknown. These ponds have been stocked with trout the second week of April. This group of small ponds is a good place to take the kids fishing in the spring and early summer. Please be aware of possibilities for rattlesnakes in the area around Hale ponds.

Ramah Reservoir (170 ac)

Ramah reservoir completely filled during a storm in May 2015. The dry and warm weather this last fall and winter has taken a toll on water levels at the reservoir. In the summer of 2015, CPW stocked about 500 12" crappie, 1,000 8" channel catfish, 100 8" largemouth bass and over 300 9" bluegill. These fish are expected to have grown into impressive sizes and the low water has concentrated them into a small area. This is likely to result in excellent early season fishing. The boat ramp is out of the water and closed at this time. Additional stocking will be dependent on rainfall and water levels.

Upper Arkansas River Basin
Mike Atwood - Salida (719-530-5525) or michael.atwood@state.co.us

Arkansas River

Angler use reached a significant milestone in 2012 with 100563 anglers fishing the river throughout the year between Leadville and Parkdale. This is up from just under 70000 annual anglers in 1995 and 2007. The Arkansas River ranks as the favorite fishing destination in Colorado according to 2008 and 2012 Angler Survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. One-hundred and two miles of the Arkansas River from Lake Fork Creek to Parkdale was designated as Gold Medal water in January 2014, signifying it as one of the finest fisheries in the state. Trout catch rates, size, and vigor should be good in 2017 and with abundant public access anglers can find ample opportunity to enjoy this excellent freestone fishery.

Trout number and size has declined river-wide the last several years, although signs of improvement were observed in 2016 sampling efforts. The river is now averaging over 2000 trout/mile with fewer fish over 14 inches. Brown trout are the most prevalent species found and are caught most often by anglers. They average 12 inches long with good numbers to 16 inches and an occasional fish taken nearing 20 inches. They sustain themselves through natural reproduction.

Rainbow trout density and biomass has also declined the last several years. Rainbow trout grow well in the Arkansas, averaging 14 inches, with a higher proportion reaching lengths over 16 and 20 inches. Historically, rainbow trout fry were eliminated by mining pollution and whirling disease (WD). Heavy metals no longer kill fry and six inch WD resistant rainbow trout (Hofer/Colorado River) have been stocked since 2009 in hopes of establishing a self-sustained rainbow trout population. Wild fry were produced in 2012 but very few have been collected since. This stocked hybrid has recruited poorly to age 1, perhaps struggling to survive in the Arkansas River. Wild, more genetically fit strains will likely be considered in the future. In early spring of 2017, the river in and around Salida was stocked with a wild, pure genetic strain of Gunnison River rainbow trout that has shown resistance to whirling disease. This was a pilot program to see how these fish survive. CPW plans to produce more of these fish in the coming years to expand the stocking effort in the Arkansas River. These rainbow trout were stocked at a size of 4-5" on average, so anglers must be patient as we hope to see these fish survive and reproduce naturally in the coming years.

There is year round insect action on the Arkansas River for the fly fishing enthusiast! The most famous hatch on the Arkansas River is the Mother's Day caddis fly hatch. It begins in mid-April near Canon City and progresses upriver as water temperatures warm to about 54°F. There have been recent reports as of 4/13/17 that the caddis hatch has already begun near Cotopaxi. This is an early beginning to the hatch than what is expected on an average year. Stoneflies and mayflies hatch throughout the summer and fall along with good hopper action. Midges are the winter mainstay and from mid-March to mid-May baetis mayflies are abundant, arguably rivaling the caddis hatch in fishing popularity. Regardless of season, a two fly setup is recommended such as a dry/dropper combination. You can imitate two insect life stages or different species with this setup and cover more water. The top fly often acts as an attractor or strike indicator for the trailer fly and double hookups can occur!

Lure fishermen do very well with Panther Martins and small plugs that imitate fingerling trout and bait anglers find ample success with natural baits such as night crawlers. Bait angling is particularly effective during runoff when most fish are close to the bank where the current is less. Bait angling is allowed most places on the Arkansas River except for a five mile stretch in Hayden Flats below Leadville and a 7.5 mile stretch below Salida from Stockyard Bridge to Badger Creek.

One last tip is worth mentioning. The more you know about the life history, habits, and habitat preferences of the species you're fishing for the more successful you can be. For example, as water temperature warms in early spring fish will move out of deeper, winter pool habitat into the head of 3-5' deep runs. Upstream riffles produce a lot of food that trout are keying into. The best runs have boulders scattered throughout them where fish can rest and hide outside of the current but where food drifts nearby.

<http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Clear Creek Reservoir (400 ac)

Clear Creek Reservoir is traditionally one of the most productive and dependable fishing reservoirs in the upper Arkansas River basin. Catch rates consistently exceed one fish/angler-hour and the majority of anglers rate the quality of their fishing experience as good to excellent. It produces excellent fishing for stocked (10 inch) trout with an occasional large trout taken over 20 inches. Most anglers prefer to fish for trout (53%) using bait (48%) from shore (63%) but interest in other species and tackles has climbed since 2008. Anglers appear to appreciate the fish community available at Clear Creek Reservoir. Satisfaction and trout catch remains high while anglers enjoy the opportunity to catch tiger muskie and kokanee salmon. The kokanee salmon fishery is rebounding to historic levels and fishing should be good for this species in 2017. Kokanee snagging is allowed in the reservoir and upstream about 0.5 miles to the gauging station from October 31 to December 31. Flycasters are learning that kokanee salmon can be caught with small flies and egg patterns in the inlet stream during the fall spawning run from October to December. Water levels are forecasted to be high in 2017, and the fishing should remain good to excellent, especially in early and late summer.

Tiger muskie, a sterile cross between a northern pike and a muskie, were first introduced to this reservoir from 2004-2006 and more recently from 2012-2016. They were stocked to prey on an abundant sucker population while providing the opportunity for anglers to catch a trophy sized fish. Angler opportunity has increased recently and fish exceeding 40 inches have been reported. The limit for tiger muskie is one fish, 36 inches or longer.

The lake is serviced by one concrete boat ramp and a boat dock was installed in 2012. A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today.

For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Mt. Elbert Forebay (250 ac)

This reservoir fluctuates considerably due to pump back hydropower generation, impacting productivity and fishery potential. Remarkably, it routinely produces some of the best catches of large lake trout in the upper Arkansas River basin. Lake trout sustain themselves naturally and survival and growth is good. The limit is one fish and all lake trout 22-34 inches long must be released. Lake trout anglers find good success from the south shore in the spring using large Rapallas but trolling or jigging from a boat produces the highest catch rate throughout the season. Shore anglers report good success for lake trout while bait fishing for trout.

This lake also harbors a good trout population. Rainbow and cutthroat trout provide the most consistent action at the Forebay with anglers enjoying catch rates averaging almost one fish per hour. Catchable trout are stocked from late May to late August. In turn, most of the rainbow trout caught average 12 inches with consistent action throughout the summer fishing season using typical baits. Trout that survive the summer and over-winter to the next spring provide for some very good ice-out action in May and early June. These fish average 15 inches and are vulnerable to wooly worms or lures fished slowly from the south shore. An occasional large brown trout is taken in the 10-12 pound class.

Keep in mind that only carry-on boats, including float tubes, are legal on the Forebay. There is no boat ramp but if you can carry it, you can launch it. The best boater access is from the southwest corner of the lake. Park along the edge of the road but do not block the locked gate. Use extreme caution with small craft due to water level fluctuations. The north dam is closed to the public. Facilities are primitive here but the fishery makes the trip worthwhile. Lake County entities and Parks and Wildlife are currently exploring the possibility of improving facilities (e.g. restrooms, parking, and a hand carried boat launch). For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Skaquay Reservoir (115 ac)

This lake should be full in 2017. Catchable trout are stocked throughout the summer providing good action for anglers. They range in size from 10-15 inches. Brown trout have become more prevalent in recent years and reach lengths over 15 inches. Though scarce, this reservoir supports a population of northern pike that

average 20 inches with fish present in the 40 inch class. There is no limit on northern pike. Anglers are encouraged to catch and harvest these toothy predators. This will help to minimize trout predation while maximizing northern pike growth (more food for fewer fish). The inlet area offers the best habitat for northern pike. Angler facilities are good at Skaguay Reservoir and include a concrete boat ramp, parking, restrooms, and primitive camping. Wakeless boating is required. Beaver Creek below the reservoir offers good brown trout fishing for the stream fishing enthusiast.

For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Turquoise Reservoir (1800 ac)

Turquoise Reservoir supports an abundant lake trout population. Although most are under 20 inches, they offer the opportunity for anglers to catch an often hard-to-catch species. An occasional large fish up to 40 inches is taken. Most shore anglers fish from the south and east shorelines and find good action for mackinaw in June before fish move to deeper water. Using downriggers from a boat is the key to catching lake trout as the summer progresses. The bag limit for lake trout is two fish with no size restrictions.

Catchable-sized (10+ inch) trout stocking resumed in 2007 and will continue in the future. They are stocked from June through early September. These fish have dramatically improved fishing at Turquoise Reservoir. Typical baits, flies, and lures for trout should be used. An occasional large brown trout up to 30 inches is landed at Turquoise.

Abundant facilities (e.g. numerous campgrounds, two concrete boat ramps) and scenic vistas make this one of the most enjoyable places to fish in the State. Water level is forecasted to be high in 2017 and fishing is predicted to be good. A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today.

For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Twin Lakes Reservoir (2700 ac)

Twin Lakes is once again producing trophy lake trout! Mackinaw gill net catch has remained historically low but size structure has improved since 2009. They average just under 20 inches but large, fat fish like the one shown are more common. These large fish were not stocked. Most of the lake trout stocked the last four years from Blue Mesa Reservoir or Saratoga National Fish Hatchery have been under 30 inches. Some of the best action can be found at ice-out near the hydropower plant, where the upper lake enters the lower lake, or around submerged rock piles. Casting large Rapallas seems to work best. Fishing from a boat with downriggers produces the best catch as the summer progresses when mackinaw have moved to deeper water. Lures or deep water jigging with tube jigs tipped with sucker meat also works well at this time. Ice angling is popular in the winter using jigs tipped with sucker meat.

Trout action has picked up in recent years and is consistent from ice-out well into the fall. They average 11-12 inches with fish up to 20 inches taken. Catchable trout are stocked from early June through September. Twin Lakes offer good fishing in an exceptional mountain setting. One concrete boat ramp is available in the lower lake and two campgrounds are found nearby. Water level is forecasted to be high in 2017 and fishing should be good to excellent.

A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today.

For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Middle Arkansas River Basin
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Arkansas River - below Pueblo Dam

This reach of river extends from the Pueblo dam through the city of Pueblo to Interstate 25. There is good public access on city and Lake Pueblo State Park property. This river reach provides excellent fishing for catchable rainbow trout as fish are not only stocked year round (typically monthly), but they also tend to grow well. Anglers can also expect to see some brown trout in their catch; although numbers are low, some very large fish are present. Fish caught during 2015 and 2016 sampling measured up to 25 inches in length. A year round creel survey completed in 2014 showed anglers caught about 53,000 fish in this reach and action is usually fast. The size of rainbows and cuttbow are typically 10 inches and greater, with most fish between 13 and 20 inches in length.

A major stream habitat improvement project was completed in spring 2013 and 2014, which will greatly improve the stream function and fish habitat. Additional pool habitat and holding structures were created which should increase the health of trout populations. The popularity and high use of this reach can make angling more challenging, but it is predicted to be a top notch place to catch large trout in 2016. Please make sure you are educated on proper fish handling and landing techniques.

There are also some good warmwater opportunities for smallmouth bass, saugeye and walleye, even the occasional channel catfish, in the tailrace and in deeper pools in the river - particularly after irrigation season in late August and September. Conditions will change rapidly with varying flows in the river. Warm water fish are most abundant in the lower part of this reach, closer to I-25.

As a reminder, special regulations apply from the bridge at Valco Ponds downstream to Pueblo Boulevard (except at the Pueblo Nature Center as posted), and are as follows: 1.) Fishing is by artificial flies and lures only 2.) All trout 16 inches in length or greater must be returned to the water immediately upon catch. Statewide fishing regulations apply in the other sections of the river. Please note that the location of the bridge at Valco Ponds is downstream of the large parking lot off of Highway 96. For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Fishery%20Survey%20Summaries/ArkansasRiverPueblo.pdf>.

DeWeese Reservoir (200 ac)

Catchable trout will be stocked throughout the spring, summer, and fall and should provide good fishing throughout the season. Some rainbows and cuttbows survive through the winter season and are caught as 16 to 20 inch fish in the spring. Most fish are 13 to 15 inches in length, but can be much larger. In 2017, fishing should be good, but composed primarily of 10 to 13 inch rainbows and cuttbows with an occasional larger fish.

Brown trout will be found in very low numbers, but can be large in size. Smallmouth bass are abundant in the reservoir and may provide some fast action. Many of these fish are of good size and mid-range (10-14"), but fish up to 18 inches can be caught occasionally. Anglers that target bass may be rewarded in 2017. As a reminder, there are no special regulations on bass and fish of all sizes may be harvested.

Anglers also have the opportunity to catch a tiger muskie in DeWeese as these fish have been stocked to control suckers. The tiger muskie population consists of a good number of average sized fish and fewer keepers. The reduction of the sucker population has resulted in improved growth in the trout. If sucker numbers continue remain low, trout growth should continue to improve and angling opportunities will also get better. Reports of several large (35"+) fish caught in 2016 have been reported. Please note that the regulation on tiger muskie is a bag and possession limit of 1 fish over 36" in length.

For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>

Horseshoe Reservoir (at Lathrop State Park) (170 ac)

Much like Martin Lake, this is a small lake but the fish populations are surviving and growing well. There are good populations of trout, bass and bluegill, sauger, crappie, and catfish.

Trout remain a staple for Horseshoe Reservoir, as stocking is high and growth is good, which results in some very good quality trout fishing. The best months to fish for trout are May and June. Largemouth and smallmouth bass populations are sizeable and catch rates should be moderate, with chances for some very high quality fish (15+ inches). Bass are most often caught between June and September. Catfish are present in much lower numbers, and will likely be between 10 and 20 inches in 2017 (with occasionally larger fish). Horseshoe offers a rare opportunity in the State of Colorado to catch "pure" sauger AND to take home a state record. The current state record sauger was caught in Horseshoe Reservoir in 2011 by Jeff Riddle (3.5 lbs, 21.5 inches). Hopefully, the sauger population will continue to grow in 2017, as a successful plant in 2011 led to high survival and most of those fish are now in the 15-20 inch range. A fish an inch shorter than the current state record was caught during sampling in 2015. Anglers can still catch some quality tiger muskie, but the number of large fish is low. Tiger muskies were stocked in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016 but not in 2013. In 2016, several people reported catching northern pike in Horseshoe Reservoir. These fish were illegally introduced (most likely from Martin Lake) and are an undesirable species. Please harvest these fish if you catch them. However, some anglers may not be able to distinguish between northern pike and tiger muskie. Therefore, if you are unsure of your catch, it is best to release the fish. The statewide bag and possession limit for tiger muskie is one fish greater than 36".

Please be advised that mercury levels in some sizes of sauger and smallmouth bass in the reservoir exceed the State's human health standard. Please see the fish consumption advisory posted at the reservoir or refer to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website at <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-WQ/CBON/1251595874901> for more details. Additionally, Eurasian milfoil has been found in the lake and anglers need to be careful to clean their boats well after being on the lake to assure that this noxious weed is not spread to other waters. For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>.

Martin Lake (at Lathrop State Park) (200 ac)

Martin Lake can produce some incredible fish. Although trout are the most popular target species, anglers can expect to catch a diverse bag of fish including bass, black crappie, catfish, northern pike, walleye, saugeye, wipers, trout, and yellow perch. There are good quality fish available in all of these species, but anglers will have to work for their catch. The warmwater fishing component at this lake is often overlooked and presents a great opportunity to catch very large fish.

The weed beds have expanded in the lake, which improves the habitat, but makes fishing tougher. However, fishing the weed beds could land you a very nice northern pike. Northern pike numbers are low but their length can reach over 40 inches. Typical pike techniques should be used to target these fish. Fishing for walleye/saugeye should also be decent in 2017, with most fish in the 14-24" range. Look for these fish in May and June by shore or boat.

Trout fishing will be decent. Wipers, however, are numerous in the 15-19" range (average weight of 2 lbs), resulting from a successful wiper plant in 2010. Wipers can be difficult to catch, but anglers should look for wipers feeding and adjust their techniques according to the prey and the season.

Eurasian milfoil has been found in the lake and anglers need to be careful to clean their boats well after being on the lake to assure that this noxious weed is not spread to other waters. For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>.

Pueblo Reservoir (4000 ac)

The reservoir levels are extremely high so far this year with high lake levels expected through June. The walleye population appears to be at a high level and should produce high catch rates in May and June. The population is composed of many fish under the legal limit of 18 inches in length, but legal fish be caught by dedicated anglers. Fish caught during the walleye spawn operation were very large, indicating that fish between 18 and 30 inches are numerous, but difficult to catch. In 2016, anglers reportedly had a "gangbuster" year for walleye fishing. Walleye can be caught all year long, but some of the best fishing is in May and June when the fish are schooled tightly on the flats and points throughout the lake. Jigs and grubs tipped with nightcrawlers or leeches are very popular baits. Anglers looking for larger fish need to use larger baits and move away from the schools of small fish.

The size of the wiper population has been reduced in the last few years, but what it lacks in numbers it makes up in quality. There are fair numbers of fish over 20 inches in length if anglers can convince them to bite. Data from 2015 showed few fish, but fry were stocked in 2015. There is was also a successful plant in 2016 with several smaller wipers showing up in fall sampling and during the spring walleye spawn of 2017. Wiper fishing may be slow, but the population is increasing. Wipers are notoriously picky about what they will feed on, so pick your tackle carefully. Best times to catch wiper in Pueblo are April and May as well as August through October.

Bass are doing very well, and the lake is dominated by smallmouth bass. Bass over the legal size of 15" are less common but are present in decent numbers, so those that target big bass can be rewarded. Bass can be caught virtually year round, but fall fishing can be particularly good. Good numbers of bluegill can be found around the brush and the tire break waters for anglers who wish to pursue these fish. Crappie populations have been incredible, with many large fish being reported at 13-15 inches. This should continue into 2017, so look for large crappie in coves with good amounts of brush. The west end would be a great place to start.

Catfish numbers are improving and quality is high. Catch rates can be low, but the size of the catch can make up for the hard work. Anglers should be looking for the large flathead catfish present in the lake as a new state record flathead was caught in Pueblo Reservoir in 2010 and 2011. An even bigger fish could be caught in 2017. Catfishing for flatheads and channels should be great during the summer months and into the fall, with many large fish present. The new state record blue catfish was caught out in 2017.

Trout fishing in the reservoir will likely be moderate in 2017 with fair numbers of fish in the 14 to 24 inch range. Many fish are stocked at a 10 inch "catchable" size, but some trout grow well in the reservoir and anglers fishing between January and March or those trolling April through June can catch very large fish. Many large (20"+) trout were caught during the annual walleye spawning operation in March of 2015- 2017.

Please be aware of the boat inspections at the reservoir, which are meant to stop the spread of aquatic nuisance species like zebra and quagga mussels that were found in Pueblo Reservoir. For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>.

San Isabel Lake (30 ac)

Fishing in 2017 will be decent for catchable rainbow and cuttbow trout. Kokanee numbers have been extremely low in recent years and fishing for these fish may continue to be slow in 2017. After a tremendous kokanee spawn in Colorado in 2016, extra fish were stocked into San Isabel in an attempt to restart the kokanee population. Brown trout populations are low due to slow growth, but anglers may catch a few of these fish during the season, up to 15" in length. Yellow perch are now very numerous, but are small and stunted due to their abundance and competition. Anglers will also likely encounter some "goldfish looking fish," which are called European Rudd and are present due to an unauthorized stocking. Golden shiners are also present due to an unauthorized introduction. Please remove these fish from the lake if you catch them, as they are undesirable species. Good open water fishing starts at ice out and continues until ice begins to form in the fall. Ice fishing is also excellent at San Isabel. In 2017, fishing should be decent, but an abundance of shoreline vegetation could cause some difficulty for shore anglers.

Trinidad Reservoir (800 ac)

Trinidad Reservoir is one of the best fishing spots in the Southeast because it holds incredible fish and boasts few crowds. It has good numbers of walleye, saugeye, wiper, catfish, yellow perch and trout. Walleye and saugeye are abundant and many fish are very large. Persistent anglers could be rewarded with fish measuring 30 inches or larger and weighing over 10 lbs. Fishing in 2017 should continue to be great as populations are composed of good sized fish, and gizzard shad have been stocked for a couple of years to boost forage. Walleye and saugeye anglers will start catching good numbers of fish in May and continue to catch these fish into July and August. Drifting jigs and nightcrawlers on the bottom is a very good technique.

The wiper population is of a moderate size, but the size of the fish in the reservoir is excellent. Fish over 20 inches in length are common, and fish over 10 pounds are showing up in the population. They are hard to catch in Trinidad and still fishing with chicken liver seems to be an effective technique. Bass fishing will also continue to be good in 2017, as there have been some very large bass caught in gillnets and by anglers in recent years. These fish can be caught year-round with a variety of bass techniques. Please be aware of the bass regulation in place.

Catfish numbers are low, but quality is good with many fish measuring over 20 inches and some fish in the 10-15 pound range. Night fishing is effective for these fish. The trout fishery will remain very good with lots of catchable fish being stocked along with some holdover fish in the 16 to 20 inch range. To catch trout, try using bait and lures from the shore or trolling from boats. Yellow perch is also a good species to fish for at Trinidad, as perch over 12 inches were caught by anglers in 2016. Several Master Angler awards were turned in for yellow perch. Anglers that are willing to target yellow perch may be rewarded in 2017.

Please note that water levels will likely decline throughout the season and create some boating hazards; anglers need to be careful. Additionally, mercury levels in some sizes of walleye and saugeye in the reservoir exceed the State's human health standard. Please see the fish consumption advisory posted at the reservoir or refer to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website at <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-WQ/CBON/1251595874901> for more details. For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>.

Valco Ponds (range from 10 - 20 ac)

Anglers are allowed to fish four of the Valco Ponds located off the river below Pueblo Reservoir. These ponds are the four closest to the parking lot off of Highway 96, but PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME PONDS ARE ONLY PARTIALLY OPEN. Please contact Lake Pueblo State Park for specific access information.

Anglers will find good opportunities to catch some nice saugeye, bass and catfish in these lakes. Anglers will also find some decent crappie and bluegill in the lakes. Valco Pond #1 has a high number of saugeye and bass. Valco Pond #2 has good populations of yellow perch, bluegill, and crappie. Valco Pond #3 has good populations of saugeye and black crappie. Valco Pond #4 has good populations of saugeye, bass, green sunfish, and bluegill. A feeding program was formerly in place on Valco Pond #1 and resulted in some very nice catfish up to around 20 pounds that are still present.

Based on the 2013 creel survey, over 4,500 anglers visited the Valco ponds with almost half of the pressure occurring on Valco Pond #2. Catch rate was highest at Valco Pond #4 (0.75 fish/hr), but was at least 0.5 fish/hr at all ponds. Panfish were caught most often at Valco #2 and bass were caught at all four ponds, with the highest bass catch rate occurring at Valco Pond #4. The number of fish returned to the water was between 74 and 90% for all species at all the ponds. Specifically for bass, the return rate ranged from 93% to 100% (all sizes), with <1% of bass smaller than 14" inches in length harvested from each pond. The near lack of harvest below 14" indicates that the ponds are functioning as though they have a minimum size limit in place (but they do not). Harvest of larger fish (>14") was less than 17% at all ponds.

In 2017, anglers should expect to see good numbers of panfish, catfish, and bass. Anglers catch the most fish in May, June, July and August and catch rates are highest in July and August. Please note that trout are not stocked in these lakes.

Lower Arkansas River Basin
Jim Ramsay - Lamar (719-336-6607) or jim.ramsay@state.co.us

John Martin Reservoir (currently about 6300 acres)

Thanks to the remaining stored water from the flood events of 2015, John Martin has started 2017 with more water than average. Currently, the lake is at 133,000 Acre ft. This additional water has created a boom cycle for the fishery at John Martin, especially white bass. These fish are very abundant and should provide excellent angling opportunity in 2017. In 2016, anglers caught incredible numbers of white bass, however, many of these fish were small. An extra year of growth should equate to great fishing for better sized white bass in 2017. Wipers have been stocked abundantly for the past several years. These fish tend to intermingle with white bass until they reach larger sizes. Anglers targeting wipers should have good success in 2017. Crappie populations have benefitted from the higher water levels, and good fishing for these fish is expected as the water warms throughout the spring. Anglers target crappies along the large dam face, rocky coves on the north side, and near the railroad trestle at Rule Creek. Good numbers of saugeye/walleye have been stocked and populations of these fish are improving. Anglers have the opportunity to catch fish over 20", although the majority will most likely be in the 15"-17" range. Anglers are reminded that the regulation change enacted in 2016 allows the harvest of up to 10 walleye/saugeye, regardless of size.

5 species of catfish inhabit John Martin: Channel, blue, flathead, yellow bullhead, and black bullhead. Fishing for catfish is expected to be good in 2017, as substantial numbers of these fish are available at John Martin. Anglers tend to target catfish in the numerous coves along the north and south shorelines, as well as the stilling basin below the dam.

Currently, the road 19 boat ramp (west end) is closed. If sufficient water levels become available in 2017, it will re-open, but pre-launch boat inspections will be required to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Inspections can be obtained at the inspection station located near the visitor's center at the state park.

Nee Noshe Reservoir (about 500 acres)

The flood and irrigation water stored in Nee Noshe IN 2015 partially filled the lake. The lake is still very low, but enough water was stored to begin rebuilding the fishery. Species stocked since 2015 include: black crappie, bluegill, channel catfish, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, wiper, saugeye, and gizzard shad (forage). Although still early in the rebuilding process, anglers have the opportunity for good catches at Nee Noshe.

Currently, only 1 gravel boat ramp is in service at Nee Noshe. This ramp is shallow with not much slope. As such, it can only service small vessels or boats with extremely shallow draft.

Nee Gronde Reservoir (<200 ac)

Currently, no fishery exists at Nee Gronde due to low conditions and poor water quality.

Adobe Creek Reservoir (Blue Lake) (about 3500 acres)

Good water levels persisted at Blue Lake for the majority of 2016. Fishing was excellent for walleye/saugeye and crappie. A very large year-class of 12"-14" walleye/saugeye provided fast fishing action last spring. These fish have grown and should provide excellent action again in 2017. The special regulation for walleye/saugeye has been removed. The daily bag/possession limit for walleye/saugeye will be 10 fish with no size restriction. Crappie numbers have remained at a high level, and these fish are abundant in all size classes. Anglers have the opportunity to catch extremely large crappie (15", >1.5 lb.) at Blue Lake in 2017.

Catfish angling is expected to be very good in 2017. Large numbers of blue and channel catfish are available and should provide excellent action. Anglers targeting channel catfish tend to use organic baits fished on the bottom, while blue cats prefer a live offering fished higher in the water column.

FYI - The high water levels have hindered bank access to some of the more popular shore fishing spots. The popular outlet channel is currently inaccessible and completely underwater.

Two Buttes Reservoir (about 500 acres)

Since filling to over 32 ft. in August of 2013, Two Buttes water levels have steadily declined. Currently, the lake is less than 16' deep at the dam. Although water levels are declining, Two Buttes hosts an outstanding fishery. Good numbers of largemouth bass (up to 18") are abundant, as well as large numbers of crappie and bluegill. Saugeye and wiper populations have developed nicely, and these fish are plentiful at Two Buttes. Fish up to 18" are common.

Two Buttes relies solely upon precipitation events to maintain water levels. Unfortunately, only a couple small events have added any water since it filled in 2013. As a result, the lake has declined. It is hoped that some good precipitation events add significant water to the lake in 2017. Anglers should fish Two Buttes often in 2017 to take advantage of this great fishery while it is still available.

In 2016, Baca County was added to the list of counties in SE CO in which baitfish transport is legal. Anglers can use legal methods to obtain baitfish in Otero, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca counties. These fish may be transported and used as bait in any water within this 6-county area. Anglers are strongly encouraged to read and understand the baitfish regulations (listed in the fishing brochure) prior to transporting any baitfish.

Turks Pond (55 acres)

Good water levels have been maintained at Turks, thanks to the fully functioning irrigation well which supplies the majority of the water to the pond. For the past few years, the fishery has been a bit out of balance at Turks, due to a large population of black bullheads in the pond. Efforts to control these fish have been highly successful, and as a result, bullhead numbers are down and more desirable species (like crappie) have increased dramatically. Crappie fishing is expected to be excellent in 2017, as good numbers of these fish are available in all size classes.

Historically, Turks has been known as a good channel catfish destination. This trend should continue in 2017, as channel catfish are very plentiful. Bullhead fishing should be easy as well, and anglers are encouraged to keep all bullheads, or at least refrain from releasing them back into the water. The efforts to thin the bullheads have resulted in an increase in size of these fish, with the majority of the fish in the 9" range. This increase in size should encourage anglers to keep more bullheads for table fare. Other species available at Turks include: bluegill, largemouth bass, saugeye, and rainbow trout (seasonal).

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Meredith Reservoir (3000+ acres)

The young fishery is progressing nicely, as stocked species are making strong appearances in the yearly sample. As expected when a lake is refilled, the new fishery can be dominated by rough fish (carp, shad, and bullheads). These species enter the lake in large numbers through the canal system as the lake is filled. However, game fish species are growing in numbers at Meredith. Saugeye are especially abundant. The 2016 fall sample showed very large numbers of saugeye in the 8"-10" size class. These fish will grow quickly and should result in phenomenal fishing in the near future. Anglers are encouraged to target these fish, as liberal limits allow 10 fish to be kept, regardless of size.

Wiper and crappie fishing is expected to improve as populations develop, but fishing for these species may be poor in 2017.

Henry Lake (1000 acres)

Henry Lake continues to be in the process of rebuilding its fishery since the lake was refilled in 2014. Fortunately, good water levels have persisted since the lake was refilled, and full complements of sport fish have been restocked as well as gizzard shad (forage). Numerous carp also came into the lake with the new water. This is a common occurrence in the lower Arkansas River valley. Although not preferred as a game fish by most anglers, carp are relatively benign to sport fish management. Carp are a bit bothersome due to the fact that large numbers of carp can sometimes out-compete sport fish species, and numerous carp tend to leave the host water very turbid.

A quick success story at Henry is the impressive number of wipers that are rapidly growing at Henry. Fishing is expected to be excellent in 2017 for wipers in the 15" range. Fishing for other species may be poor in 2017.

Thurston Reservoir (< 100 acres)

Water levels continue to be very low. Some channel catfish and redear sunfish were stocked in 2016 to take advantage of the small lake area. Fishing opportunity will be limited in 2017.

Midwestern Farms Pond (35 acres)

Midwestern Farms Pond is a 35 acre lake leased by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. It is located on Hwy 50 between the towns of Granada and Holly at the Midwestern Farms gravel operation. As a former gravel pit, this water is very deep (>50'). Shoreline stabilization work has provided good access for anglers, although the east side of the pond is still off-limits due to the closed work area. Anglers are required to park in designated areas only.

The pond is stocked with crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, redear sunfish, walleye, saugeye, wiper, and rainbow trout. Fishing is expected to be very good in 2017, especially for walleye, crappie, and trout.

Northgateway Park Ponds #1 (9 acres), #2 (7 acres), and #3 (15 acres)

Northgateway Park is located on the north side of Lamar at the old Valco cement plant. The park contains 3 reclaimed gravel pit ponds that are stocked for fishing. All 3 ponds provide good opportunity to catch several warm-water species as well as trout in the spring, fall, and winter. Stocked species include: largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, channel catfish, blue catfish, black crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish, wiper, and rainbow trout. Of these species, smallmouth bass, channel & blue catfish, and rainbow trout have been stocked as adult (catchable) sizes. Some of these have been stocked as brood fish, and provide anglers an opportunity to catch a fish of trophy size. Also, several habitat projects have been conducted that involve the creation of numerous natural and artificial tree structures. These structures attract fish and are good places to try your luck. Some of these structures are marked with white buoys.

Northgate Park is undergoing several projects to create a family-friendly environment. As the recipient of a "Fishing is Fun" grant, many facilities and amenities will be constructed in the near future to make Northgate Park an enjoyable place to take a kid fishing.

Jackson's Pond (Eads, CO) (8 acres)

Jackson's Pond is an 8 acre pond located about ½ mile south of the town of Eads, CO. Originally a privately owned farm pond, Jackson's Pond has become a popular public fishing spot since being acquired by the Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation in 2004.

Fish species stocked at Jackson's Pond include: largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and yellow perch. Also available are black crappie and green sunfish. The crappie tend to become overabundant and stunted, so removal projects have focused on reducing crappie numbers at Jackson's Pond. Anglers are encouraged to harvest all crappie caught. Grass carp are also stocked to assist in controlling aquatic vegetation.

Holbrook Reservoir (675 acres)

In recent years, Holbrook has been completely drained and refilled several times during irrigation practices. Fortunately, the lake has been kept relatively full for a couple of years now. The decision was made to restock some fish species at Holbrook. Crappie, largemouth bass, saugeye, wiper, and walleye were stocked in 2016. Channel catfish will be added in 2017.

Upper Queens Reservoir (1200 Acres)

Queens was refilled in 2015. Stocking began immediately and fish populations have grown quickly. Good numbers of saugeye, wiper, crappie, and channel catfish should be available in 2017. Fish grow quickly in this highly productive lake, so keeper sized fish will be available. Boat access is good on upper Queens. Anglers are encouraged to enjoy this quality lake that has re-emerged as an excellent warm-water fishery.

Horse Creek Reservoir (Timber Lake) (2500 Acres)

Timber Lake had been dry since the early 2000s. The lake was refilled and stocked in 2015. Timber is a large lake with plenty of fish habitat. Fish have grown quickly in this highly productive lake. Timber has also benefitted from a large influx of fish that came in with the stored water. CPW fall fish sampling found good numbers of large walleyes at Timber. This was a surprising find due to the newness of the lake.

Fishing in 2017 is expected to be fair to good for walleye, saugeye, wiper, and channel catfish. Crappie and largemouth bass fishing may be slow as this aspect of the fishery continues to develop.

The future of Timber Lake is very dependent on the prevailing climate. If a wet cycle exists, Timber will remain filled. However if a dry cycle persists, Timber is usually one of the first lakes to be drained. Anglers are encouraged to enjoy this lake while it is available.

Public shoreline access is somewhat limited around Timber Lake. Be sure to stay within the marked boundaries. It is recommended that anglers consult the maps contained on the CPW website.

ATTENTION SOUTHEAST COLORADO BOATERS:

Most of the lakes in SE CO have boat ramps available to the public. The majority of these ramps do not have any boat inspectors present. By law, all boats coming in from out-of-state must be inspected at a qualified boat inspection facility before launching at any water in Colorado. Although not mandatory, it is a good idea to have all in-state boats inspected as well. The future of boating in Colorado is dependent upon each boater becoming educated in the importance of always maintaining a clean, drained, and dry vessel.