

**Colorado Parks and Wildlife
SOUTHWEST REGION
AQUATIC SECTION**



2017 Fishing Forecast

Dan Brauch, Aquatic Biologist – Gunnison
Eric Gardunio, Aquatic Biologist-Montrose
Estevan Vigil, Aquatic Biologist - Monte Vista
Jim White, Aquatic Biologist - Durango

John Alves – Senior Aquatic Biologist

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 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 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 or Stocking 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.

Upper Gunnison River Basin
Dan Brauch – Gunnison (970-641-7070) or dan.brauch@state.co.us

Blue Mesa Reservoir (9000 ac)

Blue Mesa Reservoir, located west of the town of Gunnison, provides great fishing opportunities for brown, lake, and rainbow trout as well as kokanee and yellow perch. Kokanee populations have rebounded nicely in 2016 and 2017. Kokanee fishing started strong in early 2017 and is expected to continue providing great opportunities through the summer fishing season. Kokanee daily bag limits are 5 fish at Blue Mesa with possession limits at 10 fish (the same as the statewide possession limit). With improved kokanee numbers, lake trout condition has improved, with many trophy sized lake trout caught so far in 2017. Opportunities for trophy lake trout should be good until water temperatures begin to warm and lake trout move deeper (early June). Anglers can keep an unlimited number of lake trout under 32 inches in length but may only keep one over 32 inches. Harvest of small lake trout will help to maintain kokanee populations and, in turn, provide good angling opportunities for kokanee and insure a good forage base for trophy lake trout. Brown and rainbow trout populations have been doing very well in recent years with quality fish regularly caught from shore or by boat. Anglers can expect to catch browns and rainbows in the 16-18 size range with occasional fish caught that exceed 20 inches.

Dome Lakes (Upper 75 ac, Lower 13 ac)

Dome lakes are located near Cochetopa Dome in the upper Cochetopa Creek valley. These lakes provide good fishing opportunity, especially early and late in the fishing season. Lower Dome Lake is not stocked but provides opportunities for wild brook trout and brown trout. Upper Dome Lake is stocked with rainbow trout and tiger trout. Upper Dome Lake occasionally experiences summer fish kills due to algae blooms. Trout often are able to weather the event by moving to deeper water, but fishing is impacted during these events.

East River

The East River is a popular area to fish for migrating kokanee in August through October and also provides excellent fishing for primarily brown trout during much of the year. Much of the East River is privately owned, but about 2.2 miles are open to public fishing on the Roaring Judy Hatchery property which is located 4 miles north of the town of Almont. As migrating kokanee are an important source of eggs to restock many Colorado waters, most of the kokanee run is halted at the hatchery outlet with the use of a screen beginning in late August or early September. The lower .7 miles of the East River on the Hatchery property is closed to fishing from August 1 through October 31 to allow kokanee to migrate into the hatchery ponds and into the spawning facility.

Gunnison River—Almont to Blue Mesa Reservoir

The Upper Gunnison River provides excellent trout fishing opportunity for brown and rainbow trout on this 18 mile reach. Kokanee angling is also popular during their fall migration, which begins in earnest in late August. Public access is generally good for bank, wade or float fishing. Several public access areas are available for anglers to bank or wade fish and most of the reach is accessible for float fishing. Fish populations in the upper Gunnison River consist of wild brown trout and a mix of stocked and wild rainbow trout, with about 3,500 brown trout and 1,000 rainbow trout present per mile. The Gunnison River's rainbow trout population was impacted by whirling disease in the 1990's, but has rebounded to historic levels after stocking of sub-catchable whirling disease resistant rainbow trout by Colorado Parks and Wildlife beginning in 2008 (Trout populations are also supplemented by private stocking of catchable rainbow and cutthroat trout). 2015 fish surveys indicated significant recovery of rainbow trout numbers with populations now back to historic levels. The upper Gunnison River provides excellent opportunities for quality trout fishing with an estimated 41 to 70 fish 14 inches or larger per acre documented during the summer 2015 fisheries inventory.

Lake Fork Gunnison River—Lake City to Blue Mesa Reservoir

The Lake Fork of the Gunnison River provides good to excellent opportunities for rainbow trout and wild brown trout. Much of the Lake Fork is managed as a quality trout fishery with flies and lures regulations in place on most river segments between High Bridge Gulch and the Red Bridge Campground. In this reach, all rainbow trout must be released and brown trout harvest is limited to two browns over 16 inches in length. Kokanee are stocked to provide kokanee snagging opportunities below Red Bridge beginning on September 1st. About 14 miles of public water is open to fishing on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River downstream of the town of Lake City, but it is comprised of at least 7 separate segments. Anglers are encouraged to check out maps of these public stream segments and to watch for signage which delineates ownership boundaries. Maps are available on the Bureau of Land Management web site at: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gfo/recreation_information/fish/fish-areas.html

Lake San Cristobal (346 ac)

Lake San Cristobal provides an excellent opportunity for anglers in the very picturesque Lake Fork of the Gunnison headwaters. This is Colorado's second largest natural lake and in 2017 should provide good opportunity for anglers to catch rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout and lake trout. Anglers may also catch an occasional naturally reproduced kokanee salmon.

Taylor Reservoir (2009 ac)

Taylor Reservoir continues to be a destination fishery for lake trout, catchable rainbow trout, and northern pike. Action is usually best for lake trout just after ice off, while pike angling is most active a month or so later, in early to mid June. Most shore angling is supported by regular stocking of catchable rainbow trout, but opportunities are often excellent at ice off for hold-over rainbows from the previous years' fish plants. Lake trout become more active in the early summer time period and can be caught in shallower water before surface water temperatures warm significantly and larger lake trout move to deeper water. Taylor Reservoir also provides great ice fishing opportunities through most of the winter with most of the catch consisting of smaller lake trout and rainbow trout.

Taylor River

The Taylor River downstream of Taylor Reservoir supports a quality trout fishery, with overall biomass and density greatly exceeding Gold Medal standards. The Taylor Tailrace in particular continues to support a significant trophy fishery with an estimated 90 trout over 14 inches present per acre. Public access in this reach is just .5 mile, but availability of a nutrition-rich mysis shrimp food source continues to support one of the best trophy trout fisheries in the state with fish over 30 inches and 20 pounds not uncommon. The Taylor River below the tailrace to the town of Almont includes about 10 miles of public water and provides excellent angling opportunities for trout. This section of the Taylor River benefits from controlled releases from Taylor Dam. With slightly above average snowfall in the winter of 2016-2107, June 2017 releases are expected to be approximately 500 cfs or more, making wading more difficult. After June, flows should be reduced to approximately 325 to 425 cfs for the remainder of the summer. The Taylor can be a tough river to wade, especially in higher gradient and narrower reaches, so it is advisable that anglers bring along a wading staff when fishing at this water.

Lower Gunnison, Uncompahgre, and San Miguel River Basins
Eric Gardunio – Montrose (970-252-6017) eric.gardunio@state.co.us

Gunnison River Below Crystal Reservoir

The Gunnison River in the Black Canyon and Gunnison Gorge is designated as a Gold Medal River. Fishing regulations were put in place in 2007 removing the slot limit on brown trout and extending the special regulations reach downstream 4 miles below the North Fork confluence. The current regulations, extending from Crystal Dam downstream to the Relief Ditch diversion, are fishing by artificial flies and lures only, catch and release on rainbow trout and a bag limit of 4 brown trout of any size. Anglers are encouraged to take advantage of the new regulation and harvest brown trout from the Gunnison to help rainbow trout recover from whirling disease. Fishing in the Gunnison River should continue to be excellent in 2017. Wild rainbow trout numbers continue to increase, especially in the Black Canyon and around the North Fork confluence. Brown trout numbers remain high throughout the river and the Gunnison continues to support some of the highest density of wild trout of any river in Colorado. The relatively average runoff of 2016 resulted in a large number of brown trout in the river (7,000 adult brown trout per mile). Rainbow trout numbers have increased in the lower river thanks to stocking of whirling disease resistant rainbow trout over the last three years. 2016 population estimates between the Smith and North Forks were 600 adult rainbows per mile, while in Ute Park the estimated population was 480 adult rainbows per mile. These are substantial increases from 2014 when these sections of river were last surveyed. The 2017 season should be a great year to catch large rainbow and brown trout throughout the river.

Uncompahgre River Below Ridgway Reservoir

The Uncompahgre River from Ridgway Reservoir to the town of Montrose, CPW utilizes stocking to supplement natural reproduction to create a quality trout fishery. Fishing should be good for rainbows, browns and cutthroats in Ridgway State Park and good for brown and rainbow trout lower in the river. The newly installed hydropower turbines in the Ridgway Reservoir dam have reduced the occurrence of gas bubble disease in the winter, which should result in larger, healthier fish in the tailwater section of the river. Special regulations apply in Ridgway State Park, fishing by artificial flies and lures only, catch and release. Several large brown and Snake River cutthroat have been caught in this section recently, and fishing should be good in 2017. In Montrose, a large habitat improvement project was completed in a 1/4 mile reach upstream of Baldrige Park in February of 2014. This section will serve as mitigation for lost fish habitat associated with the construction of the white-water park at Baldrige Park. Best access points for the Uncompahgre River in Montrose are from the west off the river trail from Rio Grande and from the east behind Home Depot or Petco.

San Miguel River

The San Miguel River is a quality trout fishery in SW Colorado. Fishing should be good for rainbows below Placerville, fair for browns and rainbows between Placerville and the South Fork, and good for small brook trout near Telluride. Numbers of brook and brown trout in the South Fork and upper San Miguel has increased the last several years, and 2016 saw larger rainbow trout than in past years. The 2017 snowpack is above average, so expect a strong runoff and good summer flows in the San Miguel River.

Ridgway Reservoir (1030 ac)

Located 20 miles south of Montrose, Ridgway Reservoir is managed primarily as a rainbow and brown trout fishery. In 2016, this reservoir should provide good fishing for 10 to 14 inch rainbow trout and the opportunity for trophy brown trout in the 10 to 20 pound range. Splake were introduced into the reservoir in 2007 and are available with fish over 4 pounds in the population. Fishing should be fair to good for smaller kokanee salmon (9 to 12 inch) in deep water in the summer and the inlet areas in the fall.

Illegally introduced smallmouth bass were identified in this reservoir by CPW in 2013 and anglers are encouraged to keep any smallmouth bass they catch to help protect this fishery and the fishery of the Gunnison and Uncompahgre rivers. The limit on smallmouth was changed to an unlimited harvest in 2014, so anglers can take as many as they want. Anglers should look for a smallmouth bass tournament July 8-31, 2017 that will offer a way for anglers to help reduce the numbers of smallmouth bass in the reservoir and win prizes while doing it.

Miramonte Reservoir (405 ac)

Located 20 miles south of Norwood, Miramonte Reservoir is managed as a quality trout fishery that grows trout to upwards of 3 pounds very rapidly. In 2016 it should provide good fishing for rainbow, brown and Snake River cutthroat trout exceeding 16 inches. The trout population is rebounding following the chemical treatment conducted in 2013 to remove illegally introduced smallmouth bass that were negatively impacting the trout fishery. The reservoir was stocked in October of 2014 with several size classes of brown and rainbow trout in order to build the population over upcoming years. CPW expects rapid growth of the fish stocked in 2013 due the abundant food sources in Miramonte. The aquatic invertebrates including crayfish are still very abundant in the reservoir following the treatment. Fishing in spring at ice off is one of the best times of the year to fish Miramonte, although fishing should be good all year long. Imitating crayfish or other aquatic invertebrates, or fishing worms off of the bottom of the lake near shallow weed-beds works well. The fish in Miramonte like to use weed beds for feeding. Anglers are encouraged to keep their eyes open for evidence of illegal fish introductions. If any suspicious behavior suggestive of stocking fish is observed, please call Operation Game Thief at 1-877-265-6648 (listed on back of fishing license).

Confluence Lake (18 ac)

Located in the town of Delta, Confluence Lake is managed as both a seasonal trout fishery and a warm water fishery. This lake will no longer be stocked with warmwater sport fish due to a change in the water management by the city of Delta. Fishing should be good for catchable sized rainbow trout in the spring and fall with fair fishing for naturally reproducing largemouth bass, sunfish, and crappie in the spring and summer.

Silverjack Reservoir (318 ac)

Located 20 miles south of Cimarron, Silverjack Reservoir is managed as a trout fishery. In 2017 fishing should be good for 9 to 14 inch rainbow trout and cuttbows. The Cimarron River below the reservoir is a good wild rainbow trout fishery and deserves some attention by anglers in the area. Other area lakes including Beaver Lake and Rowdy Lake have had several winter kill episodes recently and fishing has been highly variable.

Crawford Reservoir (392 ac)

Located 1 mile south of the town of Crawford, this reservoir is managed for a mix of warmwater and coldwater species. Fishing this year at Crawford should be slow for pike, but good for black crappie up to 14 inches and yellow perch to 11 inches. Following reductions to the pike population, rainbow trout have been returned to the fishery and should offer fast action. Additionally, the fishing for largemouth bass up to or exceeding 18 inches should be good and improve over future years thanks to northern pike reductions and a new regulation preventing harvest of largemouth bass under 18 inches in length. Fishing for catfish is expected to remain good. CPW has tagged many pike at Crawford as part of a population monitoring effort, if any pike are caught with a plastic tag near the dorsal fin, please report it with the phone number on the tag or leave the information at the State Park office if the fish is harvested. Anglers are encouraged to harvest all the northern pike they catch in Crawford, and there is no bag limit. Habitat limitations and an overabundance on pike were impacting the fishery in past years but reducing the

numbers of northern pike in the reservoir has helped balance the fishery and return the quality perch, crappie, bass and catfish fishery.

Island Lake (177 ac)

Located 15 miles north of Cedaredge, Island Lake is managed as a rainbow trout, brook trout and splake fishery. This reservoir should provide good fishing for 10 to 14 inch rainbow trout as well as the opportunity for good upcoming year classes of splake and some wild brook trout. Multiple strong year classes of splake are present; splake over 14 pounds will be present in 2017.

Eggleston Lake (164 ac)

Located 15 miles north of Cedaredge, Eggleston Lake is managed as primarily a rainbow trout fishery. Unfortunately, the fishery was drained in 2016 for dam repairs. CPW will sample the fishery in the spring of 2017 to determine the effects of the draining, and to determine how to quickly return the fishery. Expect fair fall fishing as the fishery recovers.

Young's Creek Reservoir #3 (23 ac)

Located 15 miles north of Cedaredge, Young's Creek #3 is managed as a cutthroat trout fishery. Fishing should be fair to good for cutthroat trout up to 16 inches. There are relatively low numbers of fish in this fishery, but the ones that are there are quality fish. Special regulations apply; artificial flies and lures only, catch and release on cutthroat trout.

Young's Creek Reservoir #1&2 (52 ac)

Located 15 miles north of Cedaredge, Young's Creek #1&2 is managed as a cutthroat trout fishery. Unfortunately, Youngs Creek #1 and 2 was drained in 2016. CPW will restock this fishery in 2017 with cutthroat, but fishing may be below average for a few years.

Granby Reservoirs (various sizes)

Located 15 miles north of Cedaredge, the Granby Reservoirs are managed as quality fisheries for brown, rainbow, brook and cutthroat trout. Fishing should be good to excellent for cutthroat trout. Big Battlement Reservoir should provide good fishing for wild brook trout.

Trickle Park Reservoir (123 ac)

Located 18 miles northeast of Cedaredge, the Trickle Park contains rainbows and Snake River cutthroat trout. In 2017, fishing should be good for catchable rainbow trout with a few large Snake River cutthroat and brown trout possible.

Rio Grande Basin

Estevan Vigil – Monte Vista (719-587-6908) or estevan.vigil@state.co.us

Beaver Creek Reservoir (114 ac)

This popular fishing destination is located 8 miles southwest of South Fork. Dam repairs were completed in 2016 and the reservoir has been refilled. Rainbow trout, brown trout, and kokanee salmon will be stocked in the reservoir in 2017. The water levels in the lake will allow for boating access through most of the summer. Historically, traditional trout fishing techniques such as bait fishing with worms or power bait and spin fishing with Kastmasters, Panther Martins, or Rapalas have worked well.

Big Meadows Reservoir (114 ac)

This popular fishing destination is located at the headwaters of the South Fork Rio Grande, 13 miles west of South Fork. Mountain scenery is outstanding at this high country reservoir. Water level should be relatively normal throughout the summer. Stocking level will be similar to past years with 25,000 catchable (10 inch) rainbow trout scheduled to be stocked from May through September. Although the majority of fish caught will likely be recently stocked rainbow trout, a 2015 survey of the reservoir showed that a good number of rainbow trout survive the winter in the reservoir which provides anglers an opportunity to catch these larger, over-wintered fish. When available from our hatcheries, Big Meadows is typically stocked with a small number of “broodfish” rainbow trout (16-20 inch) to give anglers an opportunity to catch large fish. Fishing is expected to be good to excellent throughout the summer for rainbow trout (10-14 inch) and brook trout (10-12 inch). Traditional trout fishing techniques usually work well, including power bait, worms, and lures (Kastmasters, Panther Martins and Rapalas). Fly fishing in the evening should produce good results for brook trout as well as rainbow trout.

Mountain Home Reservoir (631 ac)

Mountain Home Reservoir is a popular fishing destination located 4 miles southeast of Fort Garland. This reservoir provides outstanding views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Fluctuations in water level are expected throughout the summer due to irrigation water releases. Stocking level will be similar to past years with 15,000 catchable (10 inch) rainbow trout scheduled to be stocked from May through June. Sub-catchable (3 inch) rainbow trout are also stocked annually to allow these smaller fish an opportunity to naturally grow in the reservoir to a size in which anglers can catch these fish. When available from our hatcheries, Mountain Home is typically stocked with a small number of “broodfish” rainbow trout (16-20 inch) to give anglers an opportunity to catch large fish. Fishing for rainbow trout from bank or boat should be good throughout the summer with best action in June. Traditional trout fishing techniques usually work well, including power bait, worms, and lures (Kastmasters, Panther Martins and Rapalas). Northern pike were discovered in 2011 by CPW biologists during their standardized sampling efforts. This was most likely due to an illicit introduction. Anglers are encouraged to keep all northern pike they catch as the bag and possession for this species is unlimited statewide. Northern pike can decimate a trout fishery in just a few years.

Road Canyon Reservoir (140 ac)

This popular fishery is located in the upper Rio Grande basin, 29 miles west of Creede. The reservoir will be stocked with approximately 7,000 catchable (10 inch) rainbow trout throughout the summer. Sub-catchable (3 inch) rainbow trout and brook trout are also stocked annually to allow these smaller fish an opportunity to naturally grow in the reservoir to a size in which anglers can catch these fish. Water level should be normal with minimal fluctuations later in the summer. The trout fishery consists of rainbow trout (10-18 inch) and brook trout (12 – 16 inch). Good to excellent fishing for rainbow trout and brook trout using traditional trout fishing techniques should be expected from May to July. Trolling lures or casting artificial flies from boats and float tubes work well, especially early in the season. Algae blooms and aquatic vegetation growth may impact bank fishing in late summer.

Sanchez Reservoir (4571 ac)

This popular coolwater fishery is located 8 miles south of San Luis. Outstanding views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains may be observed from this reservoir. Anglers should expect fair to good fishing for walleye, northern pike and channel catfish. Yellow perch are making a gradual comeback, but abundance continues to be low. Best time to fish is from ice out through July.

Smith Reservoir (280 ac)

This highly productive trout fishery is located 4 miles south of Blanca. The water level in the reservoir has been low the last several years which has limited the over-winter survival of stocked rainbow trout. 2,500 catchable (10 inch) rainbow trout were stocked on April 17th; the reservoir is scheduled to be stocked every two weeks through mid-July with a total of approximately 8,500 catchable rainbow trout. Sub-catchable (3 inch) rainbow trout are also stocked annually to allow these fish to naturally grow in the reservoir and provide additional angling opportunities. Traditional trout fishing techniques usually work well, including power bait, worms, and lures (Kastmasters, Panther Martins and Rapalas).

Trujillo Meadows Reservoir

Located 24 miles west of Antonito, Trujillo Meadows Reservoir offers good fishing opportunity for rainbow and brown trout. Fishing is best from ice out through September. Traditional trout fishing techniques usually work well, including power bait, worms, and lures (Kastmasters, Panther Martins and Rapalas) and flies. However, due to necessary dam outlet repairs, the reservoir will be drained by August of 2017.

Conejos River

Flows are expected to be normal this summer. Fluctuations should be expected due to irrigation water releases from Platoro Reservoir. Angling for brown trout should be good to excellent from Mogote to Platoro. Best fishing areas include the Fly Water from Aspen Glade Campground upstream to Menkhaven Resort, the Pinnacles Section and the meadow below Platoro Reservoir. Best fishing time is before snowmelt and after runoff in late June through July. Mayfly, stonefly and caddis fly hatches occur throughout the summer providing outstanding fly fishing opportunities for quality size brown trout and some rainbow trout in the meadow below Platoro Reservoir.

Rio Grande

Flows are expected to be normal this summer. Brown trout and rainbow trout fishing should be good to excellent from Del Norte to Rio Grande Reservoir. Best time to fish is after snowmelt in mid-June through July, especially during caddis fly, stonefly and Green Drake mayfly hatches. Wade fishing is available on public land and CPW leases (contact Monte Vista Service Center for more information about leases). Multiple boat/raft launch sites on public land provide float fishing opportunities to fish long stretches of the river.

San Juan River Basin
Jim White – Durango (970-375-6712) or j.white@state.co.us

Animas River

The Animas River runs through Durango and is designated as one of Colorado's Gold Medal fisheries. Fish surveys done before and after the Gold King Mine spill showed no changes in the fish population. A fish survey done last year (2016) revealed a substantial increase in the number of large (14+ inch) trout in the Animas River. River flows are expected to be above average at least into early summer with the snowpack around 110% of average. The best fishing times are just prior to runoff and post runoff which should occur by mid to late June through the end of October. The Animas is famous for its huge caddis fly hatches in mid-June and large brown trout. Both the "Standard Regulation" reach from 32nd Street Bridge down to Hwy 160 and the Gold Medal reach from Hwy. 160 to Rivera Bridge (behind Home Depot) hold large brown and rainbow trout. During the summer, anglers should target fish in the early mornings or evenings to avoid undue stress to the fish. Prognosis for the year – should be a good year on the Animas River!

McPhee Reservoir (4470 ac)

Located 1 mi west of Dolores McPhee Reservoir is known for its feisty smallmouth bass along with the opportunity to catch warmwater pan fish as well as trout and kokanee salmon. Lake levels were at historic lows during 2013 and 2014 drought but rebounded nicely in 2016 with a good carry over of water over the winter. Smallmouth bass were in great body condition last year. The last low water cycle in McPhee Reservoir during the 2002/2003 drought resulted in a bloom of productivity when the lake filled up and a corresponding increase in the size and condition of smallmouth bass. Fishing is best for smallmouth bass in early June when water temperatures start hitting 60°F or greater. The trout fishing has improved with the stocking of larger and more catchable trout and anglers interested in kokanee should look for schools at the end of House, Beaver, and Plateau creek arms. Walleye were found for the first time in McPhee Reservoir in 1993. These fish were most likely introduced to the reservoir by an illegal stocking. Walleye are relatively abundant but hard to catch. There is no bag or possession limit for walleye in McPhee Reservoir. Prognosis – excellent for smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, and kokanee salmon. Boat inspection station is open.

Echo Canyon Reservoir (118 ac)

This popular mixed species reservoir is located 4 miles south of Pagosa Springs on Highway 84 and was recently highlighted as one of the top 10 warmwater fishing lakes in the State. Echo Lake holds the State Record for largemouth bass. The 11 lb 6 oz largemouth bass was caught in 1997. Fishing will be good for trout in the spring, largemouth bass in June-July and green sunfish during the summer months. A few large yellow perch inhabit this very productive reservoir as well as catfish and black crappie. The lake is very "weedy" so a small boat is advisable to reach open water in the summer months. This is a great place to bring kids in the summer to catch super abundant green sunfish.

Upper San Juan River

This increasingly popular fishing destination is located within the city limits of Pagosa Springs. Colorado Parks and Wildlife stocks over 3,000 catchable rainbow trout in this 3 mile section of river and the Town of Pagosa Springs supplements with even more rainbow trout in the 12-14 inch range. Large brown trout are also typically captured on brown and black jig patterns in the fall. Fishing is best in the section above the Pagosa Springs Hot Springs in the warmer months. Other tributaries to the upper San Juan include the East and West Forks of the San Juan River. Much of the West Fork is private; however, there is about 6 miles of public water on the East Fork of the San Juan located along FR 667 (10 mi E. of Pagosa on Hwy 160). Fishing is typically good during the months of July through October for rainbow and rainbow cutthroat hybrids ("cuttbows") on grasshopper patterns or irresistibles.

Vallecito Reservoir (2720 ac)

Located 14 miles north of Bayfield (~20 mi NE of Durango) on County Road 501 Vallecito Reservoir is one of Colorado's most beautiful Reservoirs. Vallecito has always been known for its trophy northern pike fishing especially just after "ice out" in mid-April. We captured lots of quality pike in the 2017 gillnet survey, including an almost 30 lb pike! Walleye in the 4-6 lb range were also common and rainbow trout were the most abundant we have seen them in the surveys in quite a while. Smallmouth bass are also increasingly popular with anglers with quality sized fish becoming common in the catch.

Kokanee salmon abundance is going to be low this summer. Prognosis -Excellent pike fishing, fair trout, and good smallmouth bass angling opportunities for 2017. Boat ramp inspection station is now open.

Pastorius Reservoir (49 ac)

Located approximately 10 miles southeast of Durango (take Hwy. 550 to Cty Rd 220; East to Cty. Rd. 301; S. on 301 to Cty. Rd. 304 and the lake). Pastorius is popular with local anglers and typically stocked in early April and June with catchable (10 inch) rainbow trout. About 100 16-20 inch "Broodfish" rainbow trout were stocked in late March. Northern pike have been illegally introduced to the lake. Anglers are encouraged to harvest any pike they catch. The bag limit for pike is unlimited at Pastorius.

Summit Reservoir (400 ac)

Located almost exactly halfway between Mancos and Dolores (~9 mi either direction) off Highway 184 Summit Reservoir has spectacular views of Mesa Verde to the West. Summit is stocked with rainbow trout every year. CPW has increase the number of "catchable" trout stocked in this reservoir based on poor angler success last year. Bass less than 15 inches must be released at Summit Reservoir. The lake is also stocked with crappie and bluegill. Anglers reported good catches of crappie last year. Trailered motorized watercraft prohibited at Summit Reservoir.

Puett Reservoir (145 ac)

Puett Reservoir is located just below Summit Reservoir but to get to it one must continue west from Summit Reservoir on Highway 184 and turn on CR 33. CR 33 is approximately 2 miles from Summit. Go about 1 mile south on CR33 and look for a left hand turn back to the east (CR 25) about 1 mile from the highway. Puett contains some good sized walleye and some of the largest smallmouth bass and yellow perch in the State but they are tough to catch! Puett also has a large number of northern pike which afford the novice pike angler with some great action. Fishing should be good this year with higher than normal reservoir levels. Trailered motorized watercraft prohibited at Puett Reservoir.

Totten Reservoir (250 ac)

Located 1 mile East of Cortez on Highway 160 (take Cty Rd 29 1 mi N to lake) Totten Reservoir should be good for warmwater pan fish, largemouth bass, and the occasional large walleye. There are some really nice bluegill and black crappie in this reservoir but they are not that abundant due to pike predation. Water levels stay relatively steady in this small impoundment. Trailered motorized watercraft prohibited at Totten Reservoir.

Jackson Gulch Reservoir (217 ac)

Located 6 miles north of Mancos off Highway 184 (take 42 road to "Mancos State Park" and reservoir) this scenic reservoir supports rainbow trout and numerous yellow perch. Some large brown trout have been captured during the winter ice fishing season. Jackson is liberally stocked by CPW with catchable trout.

Joe Moore Reservoir (25 ac)

Joe Moore is popular with local anglers. It is located 3 miles north of Mancos on County Rd 40 (sign at highway intersections says "Millwood Junction"). Joe Moore is typically good for larger yellow perch and feisty largemouth bass. Trout are stocked every year. Because of the aquatic weed beds, a float tube

or canoe is nice to have to access open water in Joe Moore. Trailered motorized watercraft prohibited at Joe Moore Reservoir.

Groundhog Reservoir (500 ac)

Groundhog Reservoir is located approximately 30 miles north of Dolores on road 526 (please consult a map for exact location). Recent stocking of rainbow trout has improved the fishing considerably at this scenic lake and fishing was great last year. Native Colorado cutthroat trout are also stocked on occasion.

Groundhog Reservoir is a very productive reservoir capable of growing trout into the 3-5 lb range. These larger fish are primarily feeding on crayfish which makes them an excellent fish for harvesting and eating! Recent fishing reports suggest a good year is in store for anglers willing to venture up to the top of the “Glade”. Groundhog has a small private campground and cabins as well as a small country store, which is very handy if you forget marshmallows for “smores”!