



Southwest Colorado Hot Spots



Animas River: The Animas River through Durango boasts many brown and rainbow trout 14-18 inches. Be aware of where you fish near Durango as there are restrictions and some private land. This river is best fished after snowmelt, from mid-April to June. Location: Take Highway 160 to Highway 550 to a stretch of the Animas River near Durango. [Interactive Map](#)

Beaver Creek Reservoir: This popular trout fishery in the South Fork area provides shore anglers with good action on rainbow trout using power bait, salmon eggs and lures. A concrete boat ramp allows access for boaters taking kokanee, brown trout and rainbow trout by trolling. Fly fishermen prefer the "dead chicken" wet fly. Ice fishing is popular during the winter. Location: From South Fork, 2 miles southwest on Highway 160 to USFS Road 360, then 6 miles south. [Interactive Map](#)

Blue Mesa Reservoir: The state's best water for catching kokanee salmon and excellent for up to 16-inch rainbow trout throughout much of the year. Good ice fishing action in January and February. Trophy lake trout can be caught in the spring immediately after the ice melts. Location: Take Highway 50, 9 miles west of Gunnison. [Interactive Map](#)

Conejos River: The Conejos River is providing excellent fishing for wild brown and rainbow trout. Prolific hatches of stoneflies, caddisflies and mayflies occur from May through July. Best fishing follows snow runoff in late June and July. Special regulations apply to two stretches. Location: Lower section: from Antonito 16 miles west on Highway 17 to Aspen Glade Campground. Access is through fishing easements on private property. Upper section: from Antonito 21 miles west on Highway 17 to USFS Road 250. Drive 9 miles north to public land upstream of South Fork Conejos River Confluence. [Interactive Map \(Lower Section\)](#) [Interactive Map \(Upper Section\)](#)

Crawford Reservoir: Crawford Reservoir State Park offers good fishing for black crappie, yellow perch, largemouth bass, channel catfish and rainbow trout. Mid-April through June is a great time to fish this reservoir as the water levels are typically high, resulting in good shoreline fish habitat. Crappie, perch and trout can be caught with small jigs fished underneath a float near cover like brush and weeds. Try fishing spinnerbaits, crankbaits and texas rigged plastics near cover for bass. Location: Take HW 92 13 miles south of the town of Hotchkiss. [Interactive Map](#)

Echo Canyon Reservoir: This reservoir has a reputation of growing big largemouth bass. The Colorado State record largemouth bass was taken here in 1997 (11 pounds, 6 ounces). Best fishing is in late spring and early summer before the submerged aquatic plants become too abundant. Located 4 miles south of Pagosa Springs on Hwy. 84. Anglers should take note of this [mercury warning](#) issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. [Interactive Map](#)

Grand Mesa Lakes: On the Grand Mesa Plateau southeast of Grand Junction, some of the finest fishing waters in the state are found in the dozens of lakes, reservoirs and streams located here. Some 22 picnicking and camping areas, plus accommodations, boats, horses and guides. Contact the Grand Mesa National Forest - [Grand Mesa Visitor Center](#) at (970) 856-4153 or the Grand Mesa National Forest Main Office at (970) 874-6600. Location: From Delta, north on Highway 65. [Interactive Map \(Island Lake\)](#) [Interactive Map \(Mesa Lakes area\)](#) [Interactive Map \(Bonham Reservoir\)](#) [Interactive Map \(Weir and Johnson Reservoir\)](#)



Gunnison River: The Gunnison River provides some of the best trophy brown and rainbow trout fishing. Numerous fish over 16 inches can be caught, particularly in the middle stretch between Crystal Creek and the confluence with North Fork, but only foot access is available in this section. Location: Take Highway 92, 15 miles east of Delta to the Pleasure Forks turn-off (200 yards before crossing the railroad tracks). Foot access is down the Duncan, Ute, Chukar and Bobcat trails. [Interactive Map \(Duncan Trail area\)](#)

Miramonte Reservoir: Miramonte Reservoir is a productive fishery that offers excellent fishing for chunky rainbow, brown and Snake River cutthroat trout up to 18 inches. These fish thrive on abundant crayfish, and can be caught on crayfish imitations such as small jigs and streamer flies fished near the bottom. They can also be caught on a variety nymphs and dry flies as well as bait. Fishing is best just after the ice leaves the lake in April, however fish can be caught all year. Location: The Dan Noble State Wildlife Area which encompasses Miramonte Reservoir is located 21 miles south of Norwood Colorado. Turn south off of HWY 145 onto CR 44z. Follow this for 19 miles and turn southwest onto Miramonte Road and follow it 2 miles to the reservoir. [Interactive Map](#)



Rio Grande River: The mighty Rio Grande begins its long journey to the Gulf of Mexico high in the San Juan. Look for good brown and rainbow trout fishing from Rio Grande Reservoir downstream to Del Norte. Fly-fishing is best June through July when stonefly and mayfly hatches dominate fish diets. The Gold Medal section from South Fork to Del Norte provides trophy brown trout. Location: West of Del Norte and north of South Fork to Creede. There is easy access to the river via highways 160 and 149. Much of the river is privately owned, but public access is excellent through numerous state leases.

[Interactive Map \(Masonic Park Fishing Easement\)](#) [Interactive Map \(Del Norte Fishing Easement - Gold Medal area\)](#)

Road Canyon Reservoir: This is a productive cold-water reservoir loaded with brook and rainbow trout. Fishing is best in the spring months following ice melt. Easy access is allowed via USFS Road 520. Location: From Creede, 25 miles west on Highway 149 to USFS 520, then 4 miles west to reservoir. [Interactive Map](#)

Sanchez Reservoir: Quality sized walleye and trophy northern pike dominate the catch at this cool-water reservoir in the San Luis Valley with yellow perch also being caught. Fishing is best following ice melt in May and June. Popular lures include plastic jigs and crankbaits worked along the rocky shoreline. A concrete boat ramp and camping is allowed east of the boat ramp. Location: From San Luis, 3 miles east on Highway 152 to Highway 242, then 5.2 miles south. Anglers should take note of this [mercury warning](#) issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. [Interactive Map](#)

San Juan River through Pagosa Springs: The Town of Pagosa Springs supplements the CPW's stocking with large (16+ -inch trout) each year and the fishing has been quite good. The public has access to about 2 miles of stream through town. In addition, improvements to the habitat were made a number of years ago. [Interactive Map](#)

Taylor River and Reservoir: Excellent rainbow and brown trout fishing is available in the tailwater below Taylor Park Dam where some of the largest rainbows in the state can be found. Rainbows 10-14 inches are common. Trophy lake trout and northern pike are often caught, especially in May and June. Some opportunity exists for brown trout and kokanee salmon. Location: Northeast of Almont on Highway 742. [Interactive Map \(Taylor River\)](#) [Interactive Map \(Taylor Reservoir\)](#)

Vallecito Reservoir: Trophy northern pike are increasingly common. One angler from Chicago (northern pike country!) commented that Vallecito Reservoir contained some of the best pike fishing he had ever experienced. Anglers should take note of this [mercury warning](#) issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. [Interactive Map](#)