

Fishing Report



Friday January 26th, 2018

News and Information

Colorado Parks and Wildlife launches updated purchasing system.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is pleased to announce the [launch of our new integrated purchasing system](#), serving as a one-stop shop for all CPW products, including hunting and fishing licenses, campsite reservations, OHV and snowmobile permit renewals, Colorado Outdoors magazine and more.

\$60,000 grant from NFWF means more greenback cutthroats in Colorado waters.

This project to [restore native greenback cutthroat](#) trout to 14 miles of stream in George and Cornelius Creeks in the headwaters of the North Fork of the Poudre River, reached a major funding milestone with the award of the \$60k grant.

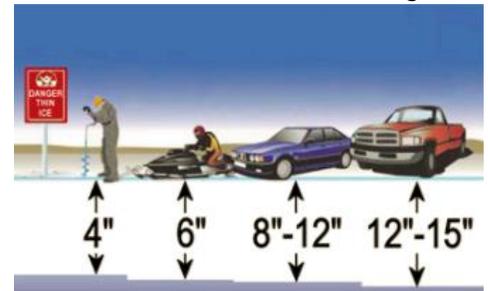
Agencies clarify status of famed "Toilet Bowl" trout fishing area, anglers will continue to have access.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife, city of Aspen, Bureau of Reclamation, Eagle County Sheriff's office and the U.S. Forest Service are [confirming anglers will continue having fishing access to the Toilet Bowl from the shore](#); however, paddle boarding, free diving, swimming, and wading will remain prohibited.

Ice Safety Tips

There probably is no such thing as "safe" ice, but there are some guidelines anglers should consider. In Colorado, ice conditions can vary from lake to lake. Along the Front Range, it is especially important that anglers check ice conditions before heading out because of the region's notoriously variable weather conditions. Many of the most popular lakes are within [Colorado State Parks](#) and anglers should check with the specific park staff about ice thickness before heading out.

- Know how to judge ice conditions
- It is always a good idea to drill test holes
- Always have a safety kit (ice chisel or auger, ice picks, nylon rope, wool blanket, thermos of hot liquids, cell phone)
- Be aware of ice covered with snow. Snow acts like a blanket can hide cracked and weak ice or open water.



Read more about Ice Fishing Safety at:

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/IcefishingSafety.aspx>



Now you can take the [#ColoradoOutdoors](#) anywhere. Follow us on [@instagram](#) [@coparkswildlife](#)!
<http://instagram.com/coparkswildlife>



Check out our CPW community on Facebook. Colorado anglers can "like" the CPW Facebook page to get tips, share stories and more. If you love the outdoors, this is the place to be. Before you head out, head for facebook.com/ColoradoParksandWildlife/.



Fish with us on Twitter
Colorado anglers can get updates directly from CPW on Twitter. Follow [@COParksWildlife](#).

Stocking Report

Body of Water	Region	Report Date
Eleven Mile	Northeast Region	1/16/2018
Eleven Mile	Northeast Region	1/17/2018
Manitou Reservoir	Southeast Region	1/12/2018

Catch of the Week



Wyatt went the old fashion way reeling in this 18” beauty with a worm on a bobber.

Have a fish you're proud of? [Share your photo](#)

Conditions Report - Metro

Aurora Reservoir

As of 1/20/2018 ice conditions are poor. Ice thickness is between 0-4 inches. The thickest ice will be deep in the coves. Water level is coming up quickly. Open water exists throughout the reservoir. Currently there is open water along the west end of the dam and the east dam for shore anglers. Keep in mind that conditions can change daily. Trout fishing from shore has been slow to fair using PowerBait. For more information call 303-326-8425. Park hours for January are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Barr Lake

As of 1/22/2018 ice conditions have been reported around 4-5 inches on the north end of the lake, however recent warm weather conditions have caused increased cracking and open water. Ice fishing is unsafe and not recommended at this time. Anglers have been catching perch and crappie near the dam, with some smaller walleye. For updated ice conditions, contact Barr Lake State Park at 303-659-6005.

[Barr Lake](#)

Cherry Creek

Ice conditions are extremely unstable, highly recommended staying off the ice as of 1/23/2018. For the most current ice conditions please contact Cherry Creek State Park at (303) 690-1166.

[Cherry Creek State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Northeast Colorado

Antero Reservoir

As of 1/25/2018 ice was reported 6-8 inches with snow cover. Mayfly soft baits tipped with wax worms and orange and pink jigs tipped with meal worms or wax worms have been working well to catch fish. Small colored tube jigs tipped with meal worms or wax worms have also been working well.

Eleven Mile Reservoir

This 3400 acre reservoir is located south of Hwy 24 between Wilkerson Pass and the town of Hartsel. As of 1/16/2018 ice conditions are varying across the reservoir. There have been multiple areas of open water. Other areas are reporting 6-8 inches of ice and then other are 10-12 inches of ice. Ice conditions are changing in very short distances so make sure you use all of your ice safety precautions: have a buddy with you and 50 feet of rope. Drill test holes as you are going out and as you move around. Wear your life jacket.

[Eleven Mile State Park](#)

North Sterling

As of 1/22/2018 the ice is 6-9 inches. Warmer temperatures are impacting the ice near the shoreline fastest making getting onto or off the ice tricky. Fishing overall for all species has been slow but those that are catching seem to do better near the sunrise and sunset hours. No OHV's or snowmobiles are allowed to operate in the park including on the ice. The Reservoir is CLOSED to BOATING. The Inlet is ON and the Outlet is OFF. Fishing has slowed for the winter season but a few Walleye and Crappie have come out. Please call the park for up to date conditions at (970) 522-3657.

[North Sterling State Park](#)

St. Vrain State Parks Ponds

As of 1/15/2018 ice is ranging from 3-5 inches. Blue Heron and Mallard have 4 inches or better ice. We do not recommend going onto ice until it is approximately 4 inches thick and healthy. We consider healthy ice to be solid, clear, and bluish in color, without any major cracking or trapped air pockets. Parking is limited near Sandpiper Pond, DO NOT park in campsites without a valid permit.

[St. Vrain State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Southeast Colorado

Arkansas River

January 15th - Upper River: The cold nights on the upper river will make fishing the upper Arkansas very difficult this time of year. It has iced up a lot above the Twin Lakes confluence, and can be challenging to effectively fish, if you can even find any active fish in the limited open water. Better conditions will be found further to the south below Buena Vista and near Salida throughout the winter.

January 15th - Middle River: Excellent weather on the radar today, with highs in the 50s and lots of sun. Since we look to cool down the next couple of days, make today count. Fish are definitely holding consistently near deeper water as temperatures cool down, but will not hold in the heavier, faster current at these flows. In fact, fish can still be found in shallow water when food is available as the sun warms the streambed. Midges are becoming more and more important, particularly subsurface in the mornings. At these flows, don't be afraid of tying on smaller patterns. Midges as droppers in the morning behind a stonefly nymph have been productive, and mayfly nymphs sizes #16-18 work well through the afternoons. The key is finding the right water. Spend more time picking apart likely lies out just inside the main current and adjusting dropper depth until you find the sweet spot.

January 15th - Below Salida: Beautiful weather continues today, with highs in the mid-50s in Salida today to wrap up the weekend. There was no slush in the river this morning and with the reduced flow of about 350 cfs (exactly at the long-term average for this date), the structure is well-defined, the winter water obvious, and the current very wadable. Upper Bighorn Sheep Canyon offers much more good winter water and winter fishing opportunity than the lower canyon. This is not what people expect, since the lower canyon is more arid and at a lower elevation. But the upper canyon, and indeed the river corridor all the way upstream to Stone Bridge, gets much more direct solar radiation in the winter than the lower does. It's been a great winter to fish from Stone Bridge to Coaldale (Over 30 miles of water).

Fish are now podded up in or near winter (deep) water, so where you find one fish, there are usually more. Current flows make for ideal wade fishing conditions near Salida. Though floating is still possible, current flows require you to boat right on top of lots of the best holding water, whereas wade fisherman can target the prime lies without disturbing fish.

Strong midge activity gets fish moving in the morning and active through the afternoon on the warmer days. The volume of subsurface food has made for better nymphing lately. Midges are active throughout the day, and mayfly nymphs sizes #16-18 work well through the afternoons. The key is finding the right water. Spend more time picking apart likely lies just inside the main current and adjusting dropper depth until you find the sweet spot. Deeper water fished with a tandem fly rig should be your best bet in the morning, but don't ignore shallower runs and riffles in the afternoons. Best hours of the day are 10am - 3pm where sun is on the water.

[Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area](#)

Lathrop State Park

The surface temperature on Martin Lake is around 20.0 degrees. The surface is currently open water, but it has iced over already once this year. Be sure to keep an eye on weather conditions. When overnight lows fall in the teens and single digits the lake can freeze. Be very cautious about venturing on to the ice in these conditions. Remember that the ice is likely unsafe and ice fishing is not recommended. Fishermen have occasionally caught trout as recently as last week. One visitor reported catching a rainbow that measured about 19 in. The surface of Horseshoe Lake is around 17.2 degrees. Horseshoe Lake is also currently ice free. Visitors have not reported any catches from this lake recently. In general, when temperatures are this cold, the fish slow down. Fishermen should follow suit and slow down as well. Smaller baits, such as mealworm, wax worms, and maggots are known to be effective in winter months. Choose small size spoons and spinners when using artificial lures. Reel them in slowly and allow the current to give the bait its action.

[Lathrop State Park](#)

Trinidad Lake

As of 1/18/2018 the lake is at 1011 surface acres with a surface elevation of 6205.87 feet. Fishing from south shore has been decent; the surface temperature remains in the low 30's. Fish that are being caught around the lake have been with worms and PowerBait (rainbow/peach/green color).

VERY THIN ICE has formed over entire lake, 100% coverage, the thickest spots seem to be in Reilly Canyon on the river.

[Trinidad Lake State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Northwest Colorado

Harvey Gap Reservoir

As of 1/22/2018 ice was in good condition ranging from 6-10 inches throughout the reservoir. Pike, blue-gill, and crappie have all been reported as good fishing so far this winter by anglers.

[Harvey Gap Reservoir](#)

James M Robb

As of 1/17/2018 open water fishing is available at all sites. Please use caution as some lakes will still have some thin, unstable ice. Fishing has been good using any kind of bait or flies. All the lakes were stocked at the beginning of October. Fishing has improved with the cooler temperatures. Fly fishing has been good in the early morning or late afternoon.

[James M Robb Colorado River](#)

Pearl Lake

As of 1/14/2018 the Lake is iced in and the ice is in good shape. Shore fishing for cutthroat trout has been decent. Anglers have also been reporting decent catch rates on grayling. Please note that only flies & lures are allowed, with a bag limit of two trout 18" or longer. In the winter, the road is only maintained to approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the lake. Anglers have to ski or hike from that point. There has been very little fishing pressure on Pearl Lake to speak of.

[Pearl Lake State Park](#)

Stagecoach Reservoir

As of 1/14/2018 the lake has iced over and is all fishable. Ice is now good with more than a foot of ice in the shallow areas and approximately 8 inches over the deeper sections. Fishing has been good for catchable rainbow trout throughout the lake coves and at the inlet area in about 8 to 12 feet of water. An assortment of terminal tackle has been producing, such as jigs tipped with PowerBait, wax worms, night crawlers, etc., tube jigs, plugs, castmasters, and solo night crawlers. An assortment of streamers and flies have been producing as well. Northern pike fishing has been slow, but some small ones are being picked up sporadically. For the benefit of the resource, anglers are strongly encouraged to harvest northern pike and walleye. Anglers may contact Stagecoach State Park for the most up-to-date conditions at (970) 736-8342.

[Stagecoach Reservoir State Park](#)

Steamboat Lake

As of 1/14/2018 the lake has iced over and is all fishable. Ice is good and is 12 - 16 inches in the coves and approximately 12 inches over the deeper areas. Fishing has been good for rainbow trout and Snake River cutthroat trout in approximately 3 - 12 feet of water. Fishing has been good in the bays and along the point bars. Mill Creek Bay, Meadow Point, and the Marina cove have been producing well, as well as Willow creek bay and the hump/point bar to the north of the Large Island. An assortment of terminal tackle has been producing, such as jigs tipped with PowerBait, wax worms, meal worms, night crawlers, etc., tube jigs, castmasters, and jigging rapalas, as well as an assortment of flies.

[Steamboat Lake State Park](#)

Vega

As of 1/22/2018, the lake is fully covered by ice and fishing is excellent at this time. Anglers are reporting catching rainbows and cutthroats in the 14 - 16 inch range using meal worms, jigs with wax worms and shrimp. There is approximately 10 - 12 inches of ice on the lake. Please be aware that ice depths vary across the lake. We currently have about 10 inches of new snow on the ground. The Visitor's Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

[Vega State Park](#)

Wolford Mountain Reservoir

As of 1/15/2018 the ice is 6 - 8 inches throughout most of the lake, more than 12 inches on north end. There are some dangerous pressure ridges with open water. Fishing has been steady for 10 inch stocker rainbows and a few browns.

[Wolford Mountain Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Southwest Colorado

Blue Mesa Reservoir

This 8,900 acre reservoir is located west of Gunnison. Ice has been very slow to develop in 2018, but has just recently capped over most of the upper Iola Basin. As of 1/22/2018 ice thickness is variable, but is currently increasing. Fishing has been good for rainbows and browns, but slower for yellow perch. Although some larger lake trout can be found in the upper basin, many of the better areas, particularly down the lake in the Cebolla and Sapinero basins, are still ice free.

Continental Reservoir

This 374 acre reservoir is located approximately 15 miles west of Creede. Ice fishing has been good lately but the ice thickness is currently unknown and anglers are asked to use caution. The lake was restocked last year and provides the opportunity to catch rainbow trout and Snake River cutthroat trout. For updated fishing reports and conditions, contact the Monte Vista office at (719) 587-6900.

Crawford

Anglers have been limiting out on crappie and trout. Perch have been plentiful. There are reports of pike in the 24-30 inch range, as well as catfish. Many anglers are near the dam and at the end of the peninsula. The ice is measuring anywhere from 4-6 inches.

[Crawford State Park](#)

Groundhog Reservoir

As of 1/26/2018 the ice is approximately 10 inches thick. No current road report. Fishing has been good for 12-16+ inch rainbows and cutbow trout. For more information please contact the CPW Durango office at (970) 247-0855.

Taylor Park Reservoir

Taylor Park Reservoir currently has about 12 inches of solid ice, with about 6 inches of snow on top. Taylor often has significant slush on top of the ice, especially as we move later in the winter, but currently has little slush. The Taylor Park Marina road is not plowed during the winter, so anglers should plan to walk, ski, snowshoe, or snowmobile from the Taylor Park Road or the Parking Lot next to the Taylor Park Trading Post. Anglers can expect to catch lake trout or stocked rainbow trout.

[Taylor Park Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Statewide

Rivers and Creeks

Now that we are into the month of January, we notice a shift in fishing conditions. With the arrival of winter, we see low flows and clear waters. This means anglers must be more careful not to spook the fish when approaching the water. Browns have also finished spawning for the season, so be cautious of redds when wading along the rivers. With most of the waters beginning to ice over, anglers will have to primarily rely on tailwaters, which refer to the waters below dams or any other structure that regulates water flow. The regulated water flow keeps the spots from freezing over and provides warmth for the cold-blooded trout. Even with the warmer conditions of these waters, the fish will still behave sluggishly. Fish diets in the winter are made up primarily of midges and an assortment of small blue-winged olive nymphs and are occasionally supplemented by larger mayflies, annelids, trout eggs, stoneflies, and even caddis larva. Winter fishing typically consists of a lot of nymph fishing since the trout are not overly active due to the cold water temperatures, so try using stonefly nymphs and imitation midges. Remember that the hatches are much smaller in the winter, so keep your flies in the #16 to #20 range. It is also important to be mindful of your split shot usage. With the fish being sluggish, they aren't going to divert too much for food, so making sure those flies drift directly in their path is important. Be sure not to use too much split shot though because the last thing you'll want to do is to have to retrieve a snag in those cold waters. As the trout continue to get a later start, anglers should mirror that and look for ideal times to be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

DNR Fish Reporter



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