



Pueblo Reservoir

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

Carrie Tucker - Aquatic Biologist (Pueblo)

carrie.tucker@state.co.us / 719-561-5312

General Information: Pueblo Reservoir, approximately 4000 acres in size, offers good fishing for walleye, wiper, catfish, bass, and crappie. Additional species include bluegill, yellow perch, and rainbow trout. The reservoir has a State Park on the east end and a State Wildlife Area on the west end. For park hours, fees, and other information: <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/LakePueblo/>

Location: Pueblo County. The south entrance is located 5 miles west of Pueblo off of HWY 96 (Thatcher Blvd). The north entrance is south of HWY 50, and can be located by taking McCulloch Blvd. south from HWY 50 in Pueblo West, and turning south on Nichols Road.

Recreational Management: Colorado Parks and Wildlife (wildlife, 719-561-5300; Lake Pueblo State Park (719-561-9320) [click here to buy a fishing license](#)

Amenities

- Boat Ramps (2)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Marinas (2)
- Hiking trails

Regulations

<http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/RulesRegs/Brochure/fishing.pdf>

- Daily bag for walleye is 5 fish over 18" in length with no more than 1 fish over 21"
- Minimum size for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass is 15" in length
- See the regulations brochure for bag and possession limits of all other fish species
- Underwater spearfishing is *only* allowed for the take of carp, northern pike, gizzard shad, white and longnose suckers, catfish, and wiper. *See regulations brochure for specific limits and restrictions*
- Possessing filleted or cleaned fish in a boat on the lake is prohibited
- Contact Lake Pueblo State Park for dam access information

Previous Stocking

2017

Black Crappie (1.5")
Cutbow (10")
Flathead Catfish (0.5")
Largemouth Bass (1")
Rainbow Trout (10")
Walleye (0.2")
Wiper (0.2")

2016

Black Crappie (1.5")
Cutbow (10")
Largemouth Bass (1")
Rainbow Trout (10")
Walleye (0.2")
Wiper (0.2")

2015

Black Crappie (1.5")
Blue Catfish (3.5")
Channel Catfish (8")
Largemouth Bass (1")
McConaughy Rainbow Trout (2")
Rainbow Trout (10")
Walleye (0.2")
Wiper (0.2")

Sportfishing Notes

Walleye

- Big walleye are present in good numbers because the regulations protect larger fish. This regulation gives anglers an opportunity to catch a trophy fish and allows for an egg take operation that supplies other Colorado waters with millions of young walleye.

Wiper

- Wiper provide a fishery for quality fish and allow anglers to take fish home for the table. Wiper fishing is spotty and requires adaptability by anglers to catch these fish.

Bass

- Pueblo contains three species of bass: largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted. Many techniques are used to catch these fish and all can be caught virtually year round. A minimum size regulation allows some harvest while also protecting young fish and some spawning adults.



PUEBLO RESERVOIR

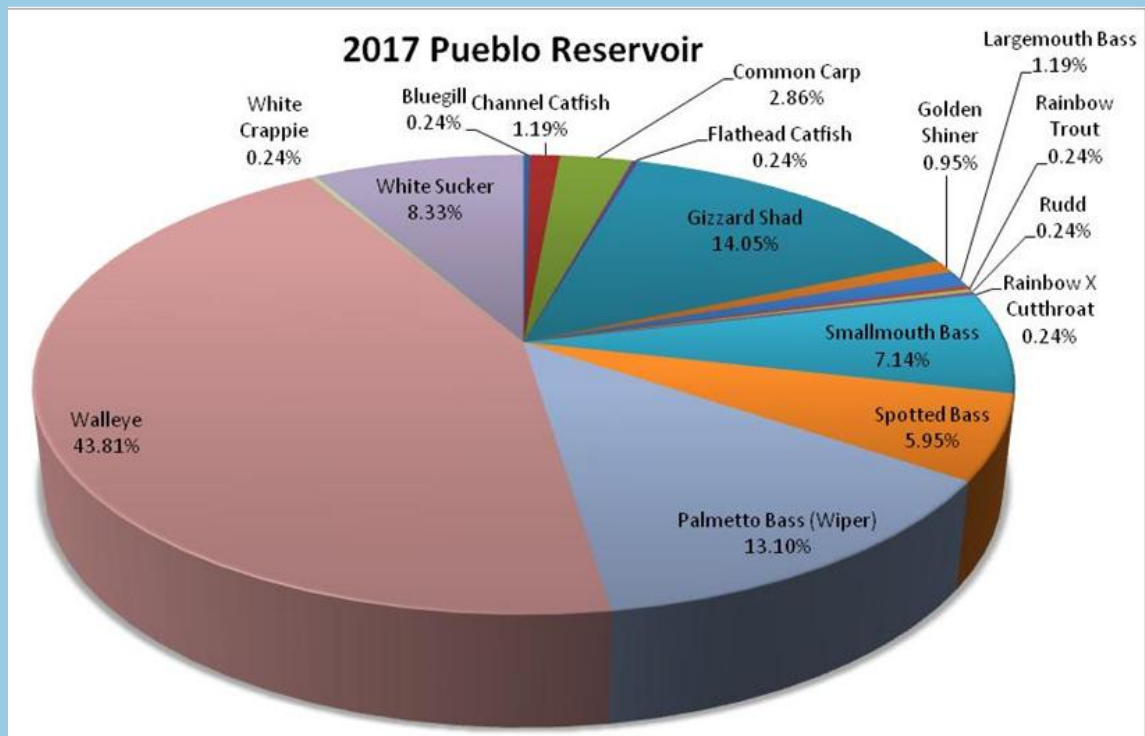
FISH SAMPLING DATA



2017 FALL SAMPLING (GILLNETTING)

https://www.google.com/maps/@38.25,105.05,15z

Google earth





PUEBLO RESERVOIR

FISH SAMPLING DATA AND 2018 FORECAST

2017 FALL SAMPLING (GILLNETTING, CONTINUED)

	# Caught	CPUE Fish/net	Length (in)		Weight (lb)		PSD	Relative weight
			Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)		
Bluegill (BGL)	1	0.1	7.6	(7.6-7.6)	0.22	(0.22-0.22)	100	57.63
Channel catfish (CCF)	6	0.8	19.6	(10.9-28.8)	3.70	(0.45-9.80)	80	99.93
Common carp (CPP)	12	1.5	22.7	(20.0-29.6)	6.35	(3.68-19.27)	100	99.54
Flathead catfish (FLC)	1	0.1	20.3	(20.3-20.3)	3.80	(3.80-3.80)	100	104.45
Gizzard shad (GSD)	59	7.4	15.3	(13.8-18.6)	1.46	(0.70-2.17)	100	98.93
Golden shiner (GSH)	4	0.5	15.1	(14.8-15.6)	1.43	(1.23-1.68)	-	74.77
Largemouth bass (LMB)	5	0.6	12.9	(12.0-14.3)	1.25	(0.80-1.82)	100	107.67
Rainbow Trout (RBT)	1	0.1	12.6	(12.6-12.6)	0.79	(0.79-0.79)	-	91.77
European rudd (RUD)	1	0.1	15.2	(15.2-15.2)	2.09	(2.09-2.09)	-	112.97
Cutbow (RXN)	1	0.1	18.2	(18.2-18.2)	2.06	(2.06-2.06)	100	81.1
Smallmouth Bass (SMB)	31	3.9	10.6	(3.0-15.0)	0.71	(0.07-1.74)	56.67	94.43
Spotted Bass (SPB)	25	3.1	11.7	(7.8-16.1)	1.07	(0.19-4.14)	84	102.02
Wiper (SXW)	55	6.9	15.4	(7.9-25.8)	2.04	(0.22-7.98)	96.36	94.61
Walleye (WAL)	184	23.0	14.8	(7.2-19.8)	1.09	(0.11-2.10)	70.93	87.48
White crappie (WCR)	1	0.1	16.4	(16.4-16.4)	1.72	(1.72-1.72)	100	63.65
White sucker (WHS)	34	4.3	16.7	(13.4-19.3)	2.10	(0.98-2.96)	100	100.93
TOTALS	421	52.6						





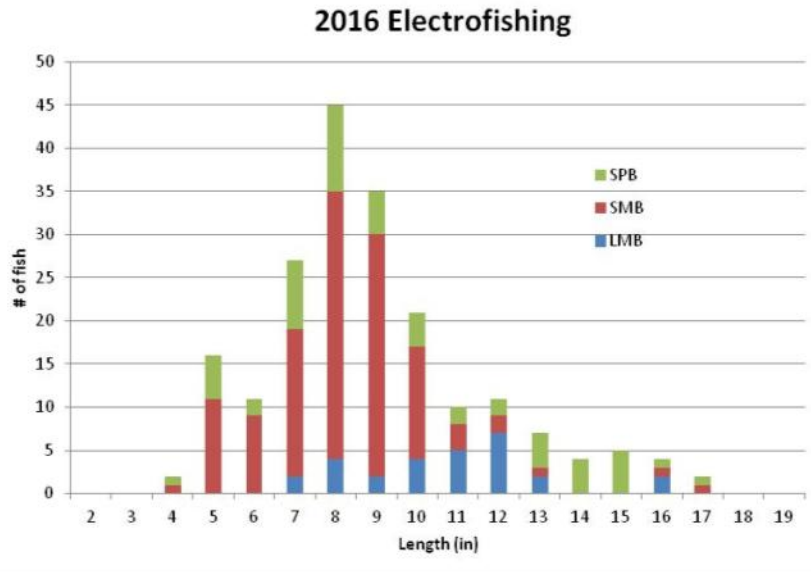
PUEBLO RESERVOIR

FISH SAMPLING DATA AND 2018 FORECAST

BLACK BASSES

Pueblo has three species of black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted). Numbers of bass in Pueblo Reservoir are high. Most fish are smaller than 15" in length, but some over 15" can be caught.

Bass were sampled through the use of night electrofishing in summer 2016. The majority of the catch was bass, with smallmouth bass being most predominant (see figure to right). The largemouth bass sampled were larger, between 7 and 16" in length. The largest size-group was 8 inches. The bass were in good condition (see figure at right).

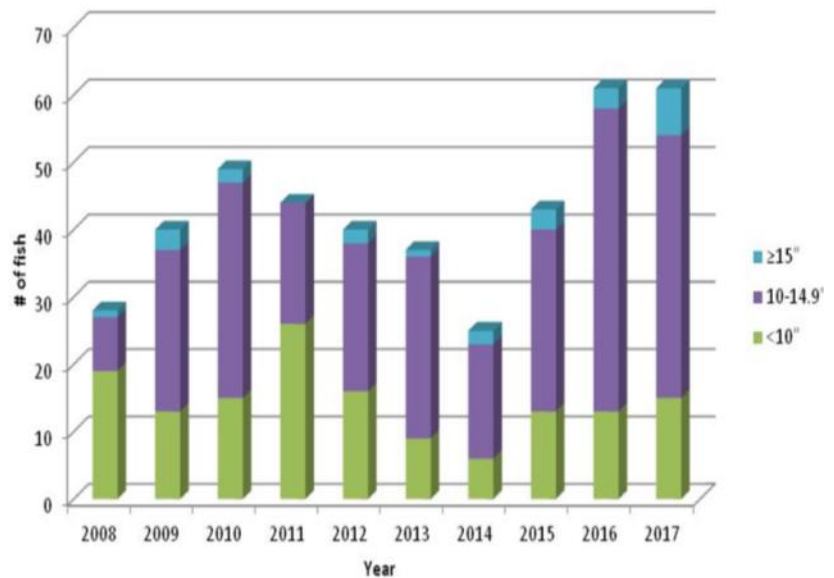


The length frequency of black bass (largemouth LMB, smallmouth SMB, and spotted SPB) collected via night electrofishing at Pueblo Reservoir in 2016.

Seven bass larger than 15" were sampled in 2017 gillnetting. Gillnetting is not the most productive way to catch bass with electrofishing being much more efficient. However, trend data indicate that the majority of the bass population is between 10 and 15" in length, similar to the size structure seen during electrofishing. Age, growth, reproduction, and fishing pressure on bass will be assessed in the future.

Anglers should see good catches of bass in 2018, as there were a good number of 10-15" fish in fall 2017. Fishing is particularly good in the spring. Bass fishing has been exceptional at Pueblo, and should continue to be a premier location to fish for bass in 2018, with many tournaments occurring on the lake throughout the year.

Gillnetting



The number of black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted) collected in gillnets at Pueblo Reservoir from 2008 to 2017.



PUEBLO RESERVOIR

FISH SAMPLING DATA AND 2018 FORECAST

WALLEYE

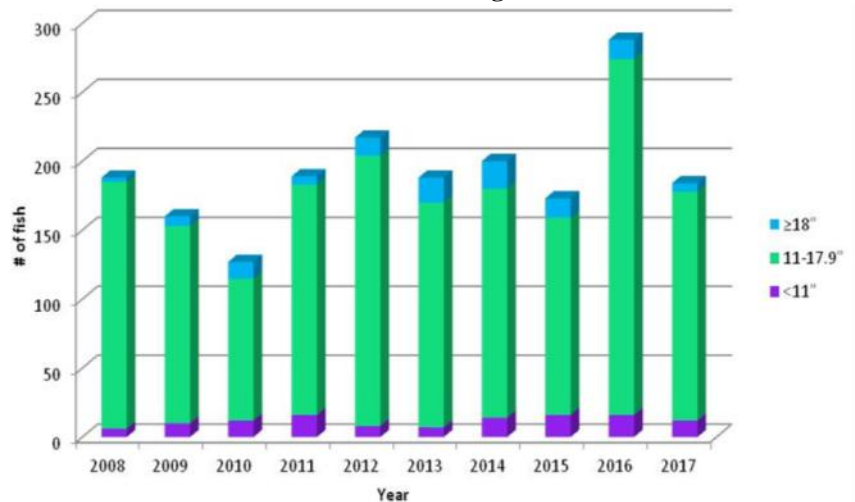
The total number of walleyes caught in gillnets in 2017 was again consistent with recent years, particularly the 11-17” length group (see figure below). Yet another large cohort of mid-range fish should lead to a better than average group of legal-sized fish in the near future. The 18” and over size group was smaller than recent years. Gillnet samples do not do a good job of assessing the status of larger walleye in the reservoir. These larger fish are present in the reservoir in good numbers, but are difficult to catch, especially when gizzard shad are numerous. Average catches of walleye in Pueblo Reservoir yields around 3 to 7 legal fish per 100 fish caught. 2017 was an even bigger “gang-buster” year for legal walleye, and 2018 should be very similar with the high water levels experienced in recent years.



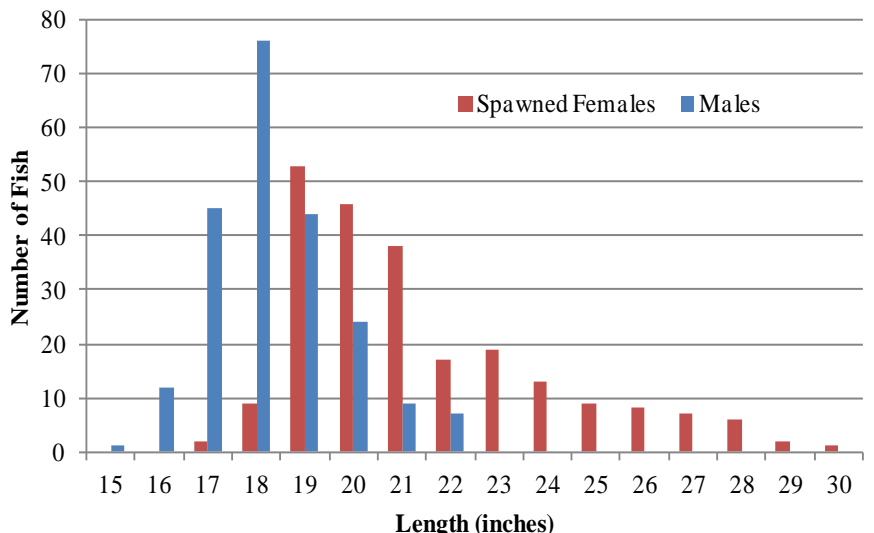
The walleye population in Pueblo Reservoir supports a spawning operation where biologists and hatcheries produce walleyes and saugeyes to stock in lakes and reservoirs throughout Colorado. These fish are also used to trade with other states so we can obtain fish we do not typically produce, like wiper. The data from the 2018 walleye spawn indicated a good number of fish of legal size, up to 30 inches in length. <5 of the 450+ females spawned in 2017 were <18” in length, indicating a strong population of larger fish.

The highest catch rates for walleye will usually occur from mid-May to the end of June. At this time the fish will be located on the flats and points in shallow water and will be feeding heavily. Anglers looking for larger fish should use larger baits and move away from the large schools of small fish. Catch rates will be significantly lower, but quality of fish will be significantly higher.

Gillnetting



The number of walleye collected in gillnets at Pueblo Reservoir from 2008 to 2017.



The number and sex of fish caught and spawned at Pueblo Reservoir walleye spawn, 2011.



PUEBLO RESERVOIR

FISH SAMPLING DATA AND 2018 FORECAST

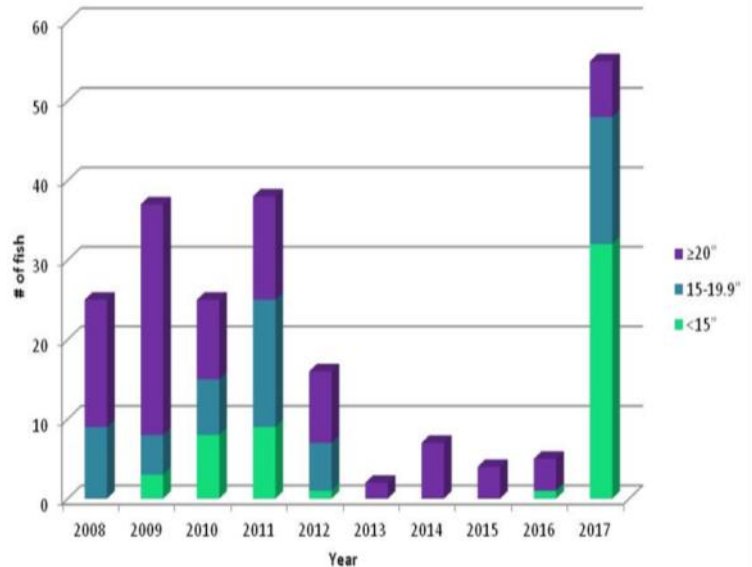
WIPER



Wiper were stocked in 2014-2017. Weather conditions for stocking in 2016-2017 were better than in 2013 (see photo at left). During gillnetting, wiper caught in gillnets were between 7.9 and 25.8 inches in length. The number of wipers has started to rebound over recent years, indicating that the population is smaller, but recovering (see figure below).

Fifty-five wiper were caught during sampling in 2017. CPW is optimistic that fish will continue to be available in 2018 as out-of-state fish are requested.

Fishing for wipers requires a lot of effort and patience as these fish are very particular about when and what they eat. Techniques to catch wipers change with the season and availability and size of forage in the reservoir. Anglers must pay attention to the changes and adapt their techniques. Best times to catch wipers include April and May and August through October.



CATFISH

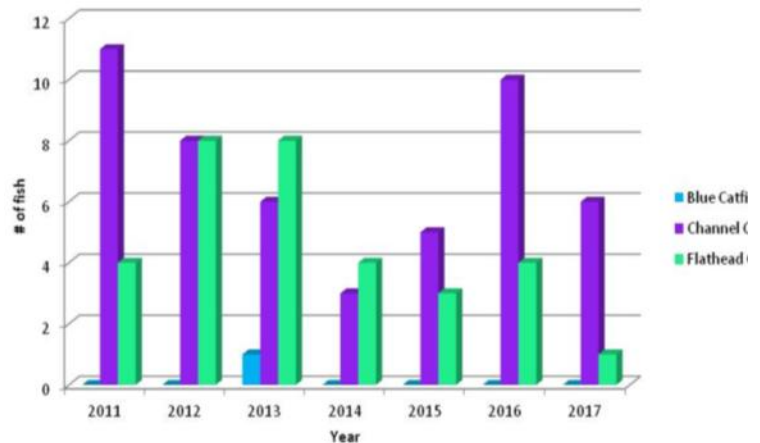
Pueblo has three species of catfish (channel, flathead, and blue). Numbers of catfish in Pueblo Reservoir have been fairly consistent in recent years and appeared to be made up of fairly large fish. A good number of catfish over 18" can be caught.



Blue catfish, primarily discontinued from the stocking schedule due to poor survival, were stocked in 2013 and 2015 as extra fish were available. Blue catfish are rare, but the possibility of catching one is possible. The new state record was caught in 2016! Channel catfish have been more abundant than flathead catfish, but the number of flatheads has increased in recent years, which will make for another state record possibility.

2016 Gillnetting

The new state record for flathead catfish was caught in Pueblo Reservoir in 2017! It weighed 30 lbs and 38.63 inches. In 2018, catch rates for catfish will likely be decent, especially if you target them. The quality of fish could be very high.





PUEBLO RESERVOIR

2018 FORECAST AND MASTER ANGLER AWARDS

OTHER SPECIES

Pueblo Reservoir also contains fishable populations of black and white crappie, bluegill, yellow perch and rainbow trout. Both of the species of crappie can be caught year round in the reservoir at very good sizes. With the extremely high water levels experience in recent years, all of the trees and brush (especially on the west end) were flooded. This bodes very well for young fish survival, and should amount to another phenomenal year of fishing on the reservoir in 2018. A number of “catchable” (10”) trout are stocked in the North and South marina coves during the early spring. Sub-catchable (< 3”) McConaughay rainbow trout are stocked in the summer of 2015. Anglers fishing January through March can catch some spawning rainbows that run from 16 to 24 inches in length. Boat anglers can also pick up these better trout by trolling from April through June.



MASTER ANGLER AWARDS

The Master Angler Recognition Program is designed to recognize anglers for success in their sport, as well as to promote the conservation of fishery resources and quality fishing by encouraging the careful release of trophy-size popular sport species. The program offers Master Angler award certificates in two general categories: fish caught and released, and fish caught and kept. Awards are based on fish length rather than weight. See <http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/MasterAngler.aspx> for more information.

2017 Pueblo Reservoir Master Anglers

Name	Species	Length	Location	Month	Year	Status
Russel Orlowitz	common carp	30 3/4"	Pueblo Reservoir	August	2017	Released
Hailey Snyder	channel catfish	36 1/8"	Pueblo Reservoir	August	2017	Kept
Russel Orlowitz	smallmouth bass	17 1/4"	Pueblo Reservoir	August	2017	Released
Brennen Walthers	smallmouth bass	20 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	August	2017	Kept
Wes Gammill	channel catfish	34"	Pueblo Reservoir	August	2017	Released
Nicholas Skalisky	smallmouth bass	17"	Pueblo Reservoir	December	2017	Kept
Chrystal Sanchez	wiper	27 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	July	2017	Kept
Naomi Kettner	smallmouth bass	17 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Released
Scott Parton	flathead catfish	30"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Released
Steven Flohr	walleye	28"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Kept
Austin Belcher	largemouth bass	19"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Released
Joseph Rogers	smallmouth bass	18 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Released
Stephen Conrad	smallmouth bass	17"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Released
John A. Dorr	wiper	26"	Pueblo Reservoir	June	2017	Kept
Jason Smith	largemouth bass	19 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	May	2017	Released
Craig Hale	smallmouth bass	18"	Pueblo Reservoir	May	2017	Released
Francis Ackley	smallmouth bass	18"	Pueblo Reservoir	May	2017	Released
Emma Smith	largemouth bass	18 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	May	2017	Released
Karen Orlowitz	white sucker	22 1/8"	Pueblo Reservoir	May	2017	Released
Peter Kuretski	smallmouth bass	20 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	November	2017	Kept
Lindsay Smith	walleye	27 1/2"	Pueblo Reservoir	November	2017	Released
James Apodaca	blue catfish	35"	Pueblo Reservoir	October	2017	Released