

Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
AQUATIC WILDLIFE SECTION  
Southeast Region



## 2020 Fishing Forecast

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*With the current health situation, CPW suggests fishing close to home and practicing social distancing while enjoying our exceptional aquatic resources.*

This report is based on the best information that we have available as of April 2020. Water levels and stream flows, conditions that are not usually under Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) control, can change significantly and can have effects 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 <https://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 website 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 2020:** 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](#)**).

**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 in late April, pending snow and ice conditions. Motorized watercraft should be able to launch (pending ice conditions) starting in the middle of May, 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 and cutthroat trout can also be had. With good snow pack in the high country this year, the reservoir is being filled rapidly and water levels are expected to be good for most of the 2020 season. Once open, boat ramp access to Rampart Reservoir will be allowed through the middle of October 2020, 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. 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 water 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, cutbows 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 2019 detected small numbers of lake trout, some 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 [North Slope Recreation Area](#) website for current and future dates and hours of operation. Typically, the North Slope Recreation Area access opens May 1st and closes on the third Sunday in October. 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)**

Crystal Creek Reservoir will be drained over several months in the summer of 2020 in order to complete repairs on the dam. No stocking took place in 2019 and none will take place in 2020. The reservoir will be open for angling at the discretion of North Slope Recreation Area staff. Harvest limits will be lifted in order to allow fish to be salvaged by the public. Anglers should visit the [North Slope Recreation Area](#) website for current and future hours of operation. Typically, the North Slope Recreation Area access opens May 1st and closes on the third Sunday in October. 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 in late May, but opening is dependent on all ice being clear from the

reservoirs. Days and hours of operation for the season are Thursday - Saturday, 7:30am - 2:30pm through the last Saturday in September. ***Use of the area is by permit only!*** More information can be found by visiting [coloradosprings.gov/open-spaces](http://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 a high abundance of cutthroat trout. In 2014, Boehmer Reservoir above Mason was completely drained and many 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.

### **Manitou Lake (16 ac)**

Manitou Lake is typically 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 2020. Manitou reservoir is an excellent place to introduce kids to fishing as 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 [Pike National Forest Service Webpage](#). 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 several years and is scheduled to be stocked heavily in the spring and fall of 2019. 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 projected to be good throughout the summer. The lake is stocked with both warmwater and coldwater species. In 2020, Monument is scheduled to be stocked with over 10,000 rainbow trout as well as 2,000 channel catfish. Smaller-sized bluegill and yellow perch are abundant and there are smaller numbers of largemouth bass as well.

### **Rosemont Reservoir (90 ac)**

Rosemont Reservoir is filling with runoff and is expected to have good water levels for the angling season. Anglers should find good to excellent numbers of catchable rainbows and the occasional brookie 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)**

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 warm water 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](#) are available to read online.

### **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 and channel catfish are present in Pikeview. Please respect the business owners along Garden of the Gods Road and do not park in their lots.

## **Upper Arkansas River Basin**

**Mike Atwood - Salida (719-530-5525) or [michael.atwood@state.co.us](mailto:michael.atwood@state.co.us)**

### **Arkansas River**

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 2020 and with abundant public access anglers can find ample opportunity to enjoy this excellent freestone fishery.

\*The Hayden Pass Fire of 2016 has had significant, negative effects on the trout population in a long section (23 miles) of the Arkansas River. 1.5 miles downstream of Coaldale, CO, where Big Cottonwood Creek enters the Arkansas, is the beginning of the most heavily impacted section of the Arkansas. Population level effects last as far downstream as Canon City, CO. Heavy rainfall events that fell on top of the Hayden burn scar caused historic flash flood events, and deposited sediment over the substrate of the Arkansas River. The flood events alone, when intense enough, can cause harm and cause trout mortality. The deposition of sediment creates a longer-lasting problem, by

filling in the interstitial spaces of the substrate, effectively causing a massive reduction in aquatic invertebrate (fish food) habitat. As such, the lowest ~23 miles of Gold Medal designation are not meeting the Gold Medal criteria. Anglers are encouraged to focus their fishing efforts upstream of Coaldale, where the fishery remains excellent. In time, CPW expects the impacted, lower section to fully recover and once again meet Gold Medal standards.\*

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 over 18 inches. They sustain themselves through natural reproduction.

Rainbow trout are less prevalent, but CPW continues to work towards creating a self-sustaining rainbow trout population in the Arkansas. 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. Management objectives have shifted toward a desire for a wild, more genetically fit strain. In early spring of 2017, 2018 and 2019, the Wellsville area was stocked with a wild, pure genetic strain of Gunnison River rainbow trout (GRR) that has shown resistance to whirling disease. This is a pilot program to see how these fish survive. Fall sampling in 2019 showed good survival of the new rainbow strain. CPW plans to produce more of these fish in the coming years to expand the stocking effort in the Arkansas River in 2020. These rainbow trout were stocked at a size of 3-4" on average, so anglers must be patient as we hope to see these fish survive and reproduce naturally in the next several years. Some GRRs are now in excess of 17".

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. 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. 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.

### **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 16 inches. Clear Creek Reservoir will receive catchable trout stockings from April-August. 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 decline in the past decade persists in 2019. CPW has no clear explanation for the reduction in adult kokanee numbers, but believes that a heavy gill lice infestation is playing a negative role. More kokanee specific netting efforts will be carried out in 2020, to try to understand how the population is doing, and what can be done to improve kokanee numbers. Kokanee snagging is allowed in the reservoir and upstream about 0.5 miles to the gauging station from October 31 to December 31. Flyfishers 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. In recent years, the kokanee spawning run has been very limited, and large numbers of adult spawners have not been observed migrating upstream. Current snowpack data suggests runoff will be average/above average, and Clear Creek Reservoir will likely fill up. Our reservoirs are at a good water level currently, and we expect the fishing opportunities to be good.

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 2012-2019. They were stocked to prey on an abundant white sucker population while providing the opportunity for anglers to catch a trophy sized fish. Since their introduction, white sucker numbers have dropped significantly. Before tiger muskie introduction, white suckers would make up nearly 80% of our total gill net catch. In 2019, white suckers only accounted for 40% of our total gill net catch - a vast improvement. Angler opportunity has also increased recently and many fish exceeding 40 inches have been caught. 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. The boat ramp is open from May 1st - Sept. 28th, but it is closed every Tuesday and Wednesday. The only exception is the week of the 4th of July, when the boat ramp will remain open all week long. In 2020, CPW will have the boat ramp open for 7 days/week from June 1 - Aug 15. For more up to date information, reach out to the Area Biologist, Michael Atwood.

### **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 cutbow 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 woolly worms or lures fished slowly from the south shore. An occasional large brown trout is taken in the 10 to 12-pound class (see photo).

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).

### **Skaguay Reservoir (115 ac)**

This lake should be full in 2020. Catchable trout are stocked throughout the summer providing good action for anglers. They range in size from 10-16 inches. Brown trout have become more prevalent in recent years, comprising 30% of the total catch in 2013, but only 7% in 2019, and they can reach lengths over 16 inches. Though somewhat scarce, this reservoir supports a population of northern pike that average over 20 inches with fish exceeding 40 inches in length. There is no limit on northern pike. Anglers are encouraged to catch and harvest these toothy predators (see photo). 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.

There is no ANS boat inspection at Skaguay Reservoir. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each boater to make sure that their boat and gear are CLEAN, DRAINED, and DRY before launching at any water body.

### **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 (see photo). 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. Brown trout catch rates increased significantly in recent years, and they average 11" in length. An occasional large brown trout up to 30 inches is landed at Turquoise.

Abundant facilities (e.g. numerous campgrounds, one open boat ramp with inspection) and scenic vistas make this one of the most enjoyable places to fish in the State. Water level should be normal in 2020 and fishing is predicted to be good. A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today.

### **Twin Lakes Reservoir (2700 ac)**

Twin Lakes is once again producing trophy lake trout! They average just under 19 inches but large, fat fish like the one shown (next page) are becoming increasingly common. These large fish were not stocked. Several hundred lake trout were stocked in 2017 from Blue Mesa Reservoir but they averaged 22 inches and none were over 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 12 inches with fish up to 20 inches taken. 2019 produced a surprising number of trophy sized brown trout, as pictured below. 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 should be normal in 2020 and fishing should be good to excellent.

A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today. An [inspection schedule for 2020](#) is available.

**Middle Arkansas River Basin**  
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### **Arkansas River - below Pueblo Dam**

This reach of the river extends from the Pueblo Reservoir dam through the city of Pueblo to Interstate 25. There is good public access to 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 have good growth rates. Anglers can also expect to see some brown trout in their catch; although numbers are low, some very large fish are present. A year-round creel survey completed in 2014 showed anglers caught about 53,000 fish in the river and action is usually fast. The size of rainbows and cutbows are typically 10 inches and greater, with most fish between 13 and 20 inches in length. Rainbows caught during 2019 sampling measured up to 25 inches in length for both rainbow and brown trout.

A major stream habitat improvement project was completed in the spring of 2013 and 2014, which has greatly improved the stream function and fish habitat. Additional pool habitat and holding structures were created which has increased the health of trout populations. The popularity and high use of this reach can make angling more challenging, but it is predicted to continue to be a top-notch place to catch large trout in 2020. Please make sure you are educated on proper fish handling and landing techniques.

There are also some warm-water fishing opportunities for smallmouth bass, saugeye, walleye, and 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 can change rapidly with varying flows in the river throughout the summer, so vigilance while fishing is critical. Warm-water fish are most abundant in the lower part of this reach, closer to I-25. Three saugeye greater than 21 inches were caught during 2019 fall sampling in the lower reaches of the river below City Park.

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)**

DeWeese Reservoir experienced a normal rawdown in 2019. It seems that the drought and higher water temperatures may have affected resident fish populations because only thirty-four fish were sampled in 2019 versus over 140 in both 2016 and 2017. Seasonal algae blooms continue to plague the reservoir, but shouldn't affect fishing. Water levels should be much the same in 2020 with decent fishing anticipated.

Catchable trout will be stocked throughout the spring and fall, and provide good fishing throughout the season. Ice fishing in 2019/20 was decent for trout with a better winter than 2018. Most trout are 13 to 15 inches in length, but trout up to 19" were caught in gillnets during sampling. In 2020, fishing should be composed primarily of 10 to 15 inch rainbows with the 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 (11-16"), but fish up to 19 inches can be caught occasionally. Most fish sampled in 2019 were between 15 and 18" in length. Also, 157 smallmouth bass were sampled during night electrofishing in the summer of 2017 ranging between 3.2 and 16.3 inches. Several bass fishing tournaments are held at DeWeese Reservoir every year as well. 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 tiger muskie in DeWeese; these fish have been stocked to help control sucker numbers. The tiger muskie population consists of a good number of average sized fish and a few keepers. There have been reports of several 40+" fish caught since 2016, including a 50" one through the ice in the winter of 2018. Seven tiger muskies were sampled in 2019 ranging between 8 and 22.2 inches. The reduction of the sucker population has resulted in improved growth in trout. 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)**

Horseshoe Reservoir is located within Lathrop State Park near Walsenburg, CO along with Martin Lake. Horseshoe Reservoir contains 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 quality trout fishing. The best months to fish for trout are May and June. Largemouth and smallmouth bass populations are sizable 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 lower numbers but represented the majority of the catch during fall sampling in 2019.

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). Sixteen saugers were sampled in 2019 ranging between 7 and 19 inches in length.

Anglers can catch some quality tiger muskie, but the number of large fish is low. Tiger muskies have been consistently stocked over the last several years. During sampling in 2019, only one tiger muskie was sampled at 10.5 inches. Unfortunately, northern pike have been illegally introduced into Horseshoe Reservoir, most likely from Martin Lake. Be sure you know the difference between the two species as tiger muskie cannot be legally harvested until they reach 36". There are no size restrictions for northern pike, and harvest is encouraged on both lakes in Lathrop State Park. Hopefully northern pike don't become the most abundant fish species, but it seems like they are reproducing in Horseshoe Reservoir.

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 <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wq-fish-consumption> for more details. Additionally, Eurasian milfoil has been found in both lakes and anglers need to be careful about cleaning their boats thoroughly to ensure 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 for all of these species, but anglers may have to work for their catch depending on the time of year. The warm-water fishing component at this lake is often overlooked and presents a great opportunity to catch very large fish.

Eurasian milfoilbeds have expanded in the lake, which improves the habitat for young fish, 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; the largest pike sampled in 2019 was 44.5 inches. Typical pike techniques should be used to target these fish. Fishing for walleye/saugeye should also be decent in 2020, with most fish in the small or larger range (the largest walleye sampled in 2019 was 28.4 inches). Look for these fish in May and June by shore or boat.

Wipers are numerous in the 15-19" range (average weight of 2 lbs), resulting from several years of successful plants. In 2019 fall sampling, five wipers were sampled with the largest measuring 24.2 inches. Wipers can be difficult to catch, but anglers should look for wipers feeding and adjust their techniques according to the prey and the season.

**Please DO NOT transport northern pike to Horseshoe Reservoir.** Also, Eurasian milfoil has been found in both the lakes and anglers need to be careful about cleaning their boats thoroughly to ensure 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>.

### **Monument Reservoir (40 ac)**

Several trout species and Kokanee salmon are stocked every year into Monument Reservoir. This fishery should continue to be excellent in 2020. In addition to good growth rates, additional large fish (brooders) have been stocked by the Monument Resort. Kokanee salmon have been stocked since

2017, so expect to see the population continue to rebound and provide good ice fishing opportunities. Fishing in 2020 should be marked by great catches of trout and salmon with fish up to 20” for brown and 17” for rainbow trout. The kokanee salmon have high growth rates and will hopefully start to enter the higher quality size category.

### **North Lake (100 ac)**

North Lake should provide some excellent fishing for catchable rainbow trout in 2020. Splake, when caught, should be of a large size; they have been stocked again for the past two years after almost a decade of no stockings of splake (they will be stocked in 2020 as well). Kokanee salmon have been stocked since 2017, and many fish were caught during ice fishing season. The kokanee salmon have high growth rates and will hopefully start to enter the higher quality size category. Catchable rainbow trout are stocked during the summer and early fall months and fishing is good throughout the ice free season. Ice fishing can be very good on the lake when conditions are safe for multiple species. Trout up to 20” were sampled in 2018. Please note that North Lake is restricted to the use of flies and lures only and boating is with hand, wind, or electric motors only.

### **Lake Pueblo (4000 ac)**

**NEW REGULATIONS:** The bag and possession limit for crappie is now 10 fish with a minimum size restriction of 10 inches. The bag and possession limit for wipers is now 5 fish with only one wiper longer than 21” allowed. Also, the walleye spawn dam closure has been expanded and now reads: “Fishing prohibited from dam and within 100 ft of dam or walleye spawning nets from March 1 to April 15, or until walleye spawning operations are complete.”

Pueblo Reservoir lake waters are high again so far this year with high water expected through June. The walleye population is mostly composed of many fish under the legal limit of 18 inches in length, but legal fish be caught by dedicated anglers. Walleye spawning operations in 2019 were at record levels in terms of number of fish caught and eggs harvested. 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 and into deeper water. During the past ten years of fall sampling, the largest number of “keeper” walleye were measured during fall gillnetting in 2018. In 2019, less walleye were sampled than in 2018, but good quality walleye remain.

The size of the wiper population is still rebounding with high numbers of fish still being sampled in gillnets. There are fair numbers of fish over 21 inches in length if anglers can convince them to bite; the largest sampled in 2019 was 21.3 inches. In 2017, most wipers were less than 15” in length; in 2018, most wipers were between 15 and 20.9” in length. In 2019, more fish were >21” than seen in sampling since 2016. Wiper fishing may be slow at certain times of the year, especially after the gizzard shad hatch. 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 versus largemouth or spotted 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. Several bass fishing tournaments are held at Pueblo Reservoir every year. Catch of bass in gillnets was down in 2019 versus 2018, but a spotted bass measuring 22.3 inches was sampled in 2019. Night boat electrofishing was conducted on Pueblo Reservoir in the summer of 2019. One

hundred and forty-seven black bass were sampled and several basses over 15” were measured of all three species.

Good numbers of bluegill can be found around brush and the tire breakwaters for anglers who wish to pursue these fish. Crappie populations have been incredible in the past three years, with many large fish reported between 13-16 inches. This should continue into 2020, so look for large schools of crappies 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 large flathead catfish present in the lake as a new state record flathead was caught in Pueblo Reservoir in 2017. The new state record blue catfish was caught in December of 2019. Catfishing for flatheads and channels should be great during the summer months and into the fall, with many large fish present. Channel catfish over 15 pounds are regularly caught in the reservoir. The largest caught during fall sampling in 2019 was 33.9 inches in length.

Trout fishing in the reservoir will likely be moderate in 2020 with fair numbers of fish in the 14 to 24-inch range. Fish are stocked at a 10 inch “catchable” size, but many trout grow well in the reservoir and anglers fishing between January and March or those trolling April to June can catch very large fish. Many large (20”+) trout are caught every year during walleye spawning operations in March.

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 have been found previously 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 2020 will remain decent for catchable rainbow trout. Kokanee numbers remain low, but have been stocked since 2017. Fishing for kokanee has started to pick up, especially during ice fishing season. 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 still very numerous and are small and stunted due to competition and a lack of a large predatory base. Anglers will also likely encounter some “goldfish-looking fish,” which are European Rudd and golden shiners, and are present due to an unauthorized stocking. 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 2020, fishing should remain decent. Investigations into improving the quality of trout in the lake are on-going.

### **Trinidad Lake (800 ac)**

Trinidad Reservoir is one of the best fishing spots in the southeast because it can hold 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 2020 should continue to be great as populations are composed of good sized fish, and gizzard shad have been stocked for several 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 largest sampled in 2019 was 31.3 inches and 11 lbs.

The wiper population is moderate, but the size of the fish in the reservoir is excellent. Fish over 20 inches in length are common with the largest sampled in 2019 measuring 25.7 inches. They can be 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 into 2020, as there have been 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 (15" minimum). Several bass fishing tournaments are held at Trinidad Reservoir each year. The largest bass sampled in 2019 was 18 inches.

Catfish numbers are low, but the quality is good with many fish measuring over 20 inches and some fish in the 10 to 18-pound range. The largest caught in 2019 was 31.3 inches and 17.67 pounds in the gillnets and a fish measuring 33.9 inches and 18.81 pounds was caught during trot line sampling. Night fishing is effective for catching these fish.

The trout fishery will remain very good with catchable fish stocked along with 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 many master angler sized perch were caught by anglers in the last several years. Anglers that are willing to target yellow perch may be rewarded in 2020.

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 <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wq-fish-consumption> 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)**

**NEW FOR 2020:** Anglers are allowed to fish Valco Ponds #1-5. Pond #6 and #7 remain CLOSED to fishing and public access at this time. The Valco Ponds are located off the Arkansas River below Pueblo Reservoir along Highway 96. Please contact Lake Pueblo State Park for specific access information. **There is a catch and release regulation for all black bass on Ponds #4 and #5 as well as a bag and possession limit of one channel catfish.**

Anglers can 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, bass, and catfish. Valco Pond #2 has good populations of bass, bluegill, and saugeye. Valco Pond #3 has decent populations of saugeye, bass, catfish, and black crappie. Valco Pond #4 has excellent populations of bass, saugeye, and bluegill.

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 2020, 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. For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>.

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

**John Martin Reservoir (currently about 5500 acres)**

The 2020 spring fishing season is starting out with water levels in decent shape, but a bit lower than this time last year. Boaters can not use the west boat ramp (road 19). The ramp is closed due to low lake levels. This ramp may reopen in 2020 if water levels improve to the point that the ramp becomes serviceable. Boat inspections are required at all ramps, and can be obtained at the State Park Visitor's Center.

Several consecutive years of higher-than-average water levels have benefitted the fishery at John Martin. Species such as wiper, white bass, walleye/saugeye, crappie, and catfish have flourished in the large lake. Crappie numbers appear to be excellent, and fishing should be good for these fish again in 2020. Anglers targeting crappie are most successful fishing from the rocky dam, railroad trestle, or the rocky coves on the north side. The special Arkansas regulation allows anglers to harvest 20 crappie.

White bass and wiper numbers continue to be very good. Excellent fishing is expected again in 2020 for these fish. Average wiper sizes continue to improve, and fish over 20" are common. Wipers fight harder than any other freshwater fish, so anglers targeting the larger wipers need strong rods and line to be successful. Walleyes and saugeyes have been stocked abundantly, and populations are good for these fish. In 2020, the average size walleye/saugeye should be around 15"-16", with fish up to 24" being common. Anglers are reminded that the regulation changes enacted in 2016 allow 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 2020. Anglers should continue to benefit from the large numbers of catfish that were stocked in John Martin during the fall of 2018. The spillway below the dam was cleaned out for maintenance. All of the catfish from the spillway were moved back into the lake. Thousands of 15"-20" fish, along with some trophy sized flatheads, channels, and blue cats were put back in the lake for anglers to catch. These fish, along with the normal complement of stocked fish, should provide good catfish angling again in 2020. Also removed from the spillway were several trophy-sized striped bass. These fish had grown very large in the spillway by eating smaller fish passing through the gates. Fish over 30 lbs. were released in the lake, and should provide anglers a chance to catch a state record.

**Nee Noshe Reservoir (about 2200 acres)**

Nee Noshe Reservoir was completely filled in 2017, but the hot, dry summers of 2018 and 2019 have resulted in lake levels being lowered for irrigation. Nee Noshe currently has good water levels, but the high water ramp is out of service. Boaters can launch at the north low-water ramp, but this ramp is shallow with slight grades, so smaller boats or boats with shallow drafts are recommended.

The fishery at Nee Noshe has rebounded quickly. Aggressive fish stocking has restored fish populations, and good numbers of crappie, catfish, wipers, and saugeye are available. Fishing for these species should be good to excellent in 2020. Anglers are advised that fishing conditions can be difficult at Nee Noshe, due to the large number of submerged trees that occupy the lake bottom. Small jigs or other inexpensive lures may be the preferred offering to prevent costly tackle losses. Fortunately, wipers, saugeye, and crappies (the 3 most abundant gamefish) will readily hit these type of lures, so fishing can be very good, even when using cheaper tackle. A small piece of bait (worm, minnow, or leach) behind a jig will sweeten the offering and make it even more effective.

Historically, Nee Noshe has been one of the best warm water fisheries in the state, and it is well on its way to reclaiming that status. Anglers are encouraged to fish Nee Noshe often in 2020, as fishing should be excellent.

### **Nee Gronda Reservoir (About 1200 acres)**

Large amounts of water were stored in Nee Gronda Res. in 2017, in hopes of refilling the lake that had essentially gone dry. Unfortunately, the lake was only filled to about 50% of capacity, but even at this level, Nee Gronda still has depths of over 28 ft. If extra water becomes available during a wet cycle, the lake may be filled to capacity. Although the boat ramps are still unusable, decent water levels are available and fish stocking has resumed at Nee Gronda. Fall sampling in 2019 revealed a developing fishery in which populations of saugeye wipers, and catfish are beginning to form. Anglers willing to wade or use a belly boat, fishing kayak, or other hand-launch type craft will be treated to a relatively untapped resource with fair numbers of saugeye, wipers, crappie, bluegill, catfish, and largemouth bass that have been stocked at Nee Gronda.

### **Adobe Creek Reservoir (Blue Lake) (about 3000 acres)**

Water levels were lowered significantly in 2018 and 2019 to allow the irrigation company to make repairs on the outlet structure. These repairs have been completed, and the lake has been refilled. 2020 will begin with a relatively full lake, with both high water boat ramps in service.

Excellent numbers of crappie, saugeye, and catfish await anglers in 2020. Fishing should be very good for these species. Walleye/Saugeye numbers have declined a bit, but the population is still strong, with fish ranging from 10"- 20" in size. Anglers are permitted to keep up to 10 walleye/saugeye, with no size restrictions. Crappie are abundant, with the average crappie measuring around 10" - 11". Some larger crappie are present as well, with fish up to 15" being available. Blue Lake has been an excellent crappie fishery, with numerous anglers harvesting 20 fish limits throughout spring and summer.

Catfish angling is expected to be very good in 2020, especially for blue catfish. These fish have been stocked abundantly in recent years. Populations have flourished and fishing is expected to be excellent for these fish in 2020. 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.

### **Two Buttes Reservoir (about 75 acres)**

Two Buttes Lake is fed by a stream that is dry most of the year. Actually, Two Buttes Creek only runs during extreme storm events. Since the lake was originally filled by a large flood in 2013, only a few small precipitation events have added any water to the lake. Without a reliable source of fresh water, the lake has steadily declined. Unfortunately, a decision was made in fall of 2019 to open the lake to public salvage. This means the lake is in imminent danger of a catastrophic fish-kill, so anglers are encouraged to take as many fish as possible, without regard to limits. Also CPW staff have been rescuing and moving as many game fish as possible. These fish have been relocated to other waters

in the area. Currently, lake levels average less than 4 ft. of depth. The lake is expected to be dry by the end of the summer. Of course, history has shown that one storm could completely fill the lake again in a matter of days. When this occurs, CPW will quickly restock the lake in efforts to rebuild the fishery as quickly as possible. In the meantime, a dam improvement project is expected to begin to provide some much-needed repairs to the headgates and outlet structures.

### **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. Large numbers of waterfowl tend to use Turks Pond as a winter sanctuary. These waterfowl produce a large influx of nutrients, which tend to promote plankton growth. Sometimes, extreme plankton growth can cause water clarity issues. When the water has very poor visibility, fishing can be difficult. The water usually clears somewhat as the season progresses, and fishing success tends to improve. The fishery at Turks has been steadily improving, as the over-abundant bullhead population has been kept in check. The crappie have especially flourished, with good numbers of fish averaging over 10". Crappie anglers tend to be successful fishing from the rocky dam with small jigs or live minnow rigs. Saugeye, wiper, largemouth bass, and bluegill are also present in good numbers. Rainbow trout are also very popular at Turks, and catchable sized fish are stocked seasonally to provide additional angling opportunity.

In a continued effort to maintain a proper balance in the fishery at Turks, 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 9-10" range.

### **Meredith Reservoir (3000+ acres)**

Meredith was completely drained and refilled in 2013-2014. The rebuild of the fishery is progressing, but some of the popular species at Meredith are still not as abundant as desired. Historically known for good catfish and crappie fishing, Meredith is slowly getting back to that status as restocking efforts continue. Currently, large numbers of bullheads are present. A desirable shift from bullheads to channel and blue catfish is expected as systematic stocking continues. A bright spot at Meredith is the excellent wiper fishing that has resumed during the past couple of years. Fish over 20", weighing over 5 lbs. are common. Shore angler catch these fish with baits such as: shrimp, mussels, crawdads, and worms. Boaters can be successful trolling shad-imitating lures, jigs, or worm harnesses. Another encouraging trend is the improving saugeye population. These fish have been stocked abundantly, and good year classes are beginning to develop. Currently a large number of fish in the 10" range are present. These fish should grow quickly and provide anglers with good action in the next couple of years.

### **Henry Lake (1000 acres)**

Like Meredith, Henry was completely drained and refilled in 2013-2014. Henry has historically been known as a good catfish and crappie lake. Recovery of these species is progressing, and fishing should improve as systematic stocking of sportfish species shifts the species composition from rough fish species (such as bullheads and carp) to the more preferred channel and blue catfish.

Fishing may be only fair again for catfish and crappie in 2020, but wiper fishing should remain good, as these fish have improved quickly since the lake refilled. The average wiper should be about 18" and weigh around 3 lbs. Saugeye numbers are also improving, as a good number of young fish appear to have recruited to the population. These fish should grow quickly in Henry's productive waters.

Henry is a large, shallow lake, with average depths of less than 8 ft. As such, when water is released for irrigation, fish loss is inevitable. A current need of a fish screening device to retain the fish during water releases is being evaluated.

### **Thurston Reservoir (about 100 acres)**

Thurston Reservoir has maintained good water levels for a couple of years in a row. Historically, Thurston has been an excellent largemouth bass, crappie, and catfish fishery. Full fish stocking has resumed and a quick rebound of the fishery is expected in the next couple of years. In 2019 Thurston was sampled with electrofishing equipment. Although the fishery is currently dominated by rough fish species (carp, shad and bullheads), game fish species are beginning to come-back. Largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, saugeye, and channel catfish will be available to anglers in 2020. Thurston is best fished with a fishing kayak, belly boat, or small craft. Shore access is very limited due to a thick cattail ring around the lake.

### **Midwestern Farms Lake (about 100 acres)**

Midwestern Farms Lake is a 100 acre reclaimed gravel pit leased by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Prior to 2017, the lake was divided into 2 sections by a gravel levy. Only the west side was open to public access. Since then, the levy has been removed, and access will be allowed to the east section beginning April 1, 2020. Anglers are reminded to park only in designated parking areas. Also, a boat ramp has been constructed and the entire lake is now open for boating. Boaters have full access to the entire lake, although boating is restricted to “no-wake” operation.

The lake is stocked with crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, redear sunfish, walleye, saugeye, tiger muskie, wiper, and rainbow trout. Fishing is expected to be fair to good in 2020, especially for walleye, crappie, and trout. As a side note, many of the fish rescued from Two Buttes Res. have been relocated to Midwestern!

### **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 involved 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.

The City of Lamar has installed several amenities at Northgateway Park #1 to create a family-friendly environment. Restrooms, picnic areas, and a fishing pier have been installed. More of these facilities are planned to be constructed at ponds #2 and #3 in the near future, as part of a CPW “Fishing is Fun” grant.

### **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 common carp and crappie that they catch. Grass carp are also stocked to assist in controlling aquatic vegetation.

### **Holbrook Reservoir (673 acres)**

Holbrook was drained in 2018 for irrigation purposes, and the fishery was essentially lost. A few remnant catfish and crappie may remain. The lake has since refilled but has not been restocked by CPW. Holbrook faces an uncertain future, so fish stocking will be suspended until a more stable water regime is established.

### **Upper Queens Reservoir (900 Acres)**

The fishery at Queens has progressed nicely since the lake was refilled in 2015. Currently, the lake is somewhat low, due to irrigation releases and work on the outlet structure. Boat access is only available at the low-water ramp on the south side. This ramp is fairly shallow with slight pitch, so small boats or boats with shallow draft are recommended. Lower Queens Lake is dry, as well as the canal between the 2 waters.

Good numbers of fish are available for 2020. Queens boasts an outstanding wiper and saugeye fishery. The average saugeye is over 18", with fish over 20" common. Wipers average over 18" as well, with plenty of fish well over 20". Rappie, largemouth bass, and channel catfish will also provide plenty of action at Queens in 2020. Anglers targeting these fish should use lures that resemble gizzard shad, as shad are the primary forage species at Queens.

### **Horse Creek Reservoir (Timber Lake) (<1000 Acres)**

Timber Lake was lowered significantly in 2019 for irrigation. Timber Lake is a secondary irrigation water storage lake. As such, it only receives water when other reservoirs are full. It is very likely that lake levels will continue to decrease in 2020, and the fishery may be lost. Currently, fishing access is difficult due to the extremely low lake levels. Timber Lake has held water since 2015, after being completely dry for a long period of time. The fishery was rebuilt quickly and had progressed nicely. Fishable populations of saugeye, wiper, crappie, largemouth bass, and channel catfish are currently present, but maybe very difficult to access.

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. Boating access is unavailable, as all ramps are out-of-service. Fishing kayaks and hand launch crafts are not recommended due to the muddy lake bed.

The future of Timber Lake is very dependent on the prevailing climate. If a wet cycle exists, Timber may be refilled. However, if a dry cycle persists, Timber will most likely go dry. Fishery management at Timber is a "feast or famine" proposition. Fortunately, it can be rebuilt quickly when conditions permit. CPW does not own any water at Timber, so recreation is dependent entirely upon irrigation storage.

### **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, free from any Aquatic Nuisance Species.