

Fishing Report



Friday April 6th, 2018

News and Information

Lake Pueblo State Park reopens South Ramp in time for fishing season

After being closed for two months due to high water, [the South Ramp at Lake Pueblo State Park is open and ready for boaters](#). The south ramp will be open 7:00 am- 7:00 pm, which coincides with the hours of operation for the mandatory inspection station for Aquatic Nuisance Species.

Eleven Mile Reservoir opens to boaters April 7

Starting April 7th the [North Shore Boat Ramp at Eleven Mile State Park will be open to boaters](#) each day from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset through October.

Introduction to Fishing Event Saturday April 14 at Saint Vrain State Park

[This class is geared for beginners](#). Learn the basics of fishing ethics, knot tying, casting and more. All equipment is provided and participants will have the chance to test out their new skills at Sandpiper Pond.

Go fish! 2018 fishing licenses are available now, valid beginning April 1

Colorado Parks and Wildlife reminds anglers that it's time to get ready for another season of fishing. Coloradans and non-resident visitors can purchase a [2018 annual fishing license](#) now either online, at your local CPW office or at any of our hundreds of authorized sales agents statewide.

Get ready for spring fishing - CPW stocks some lunkers

Recently, [CPW stocked cutthroat trout averaging 17 inches](#) at fishing spots that are easily accessible. In total more than 1,000 lunkers were stocked at waters in the Montrose, Ridgeway and Delta areas.

Spinney Mountain State Park Schedules Boating Opening Day

The much awaited day for pike and trout fisherman across the state, [Spinney Mountain State Park opened to shore fisherman and boats April 1](#). Each opening day at Spinney Mountain attracts anglers from Colorado as well as surrounding states. Trout fishing is expected to remain very good this year, thanks in large part to the continuing annual stocking program.



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
Mead Pond #2	Northeast	3/23/2018
Cormorant Pond	Northeast	3/23/2018
Harvey Gap Reservoir	Northwest	3/26/2018
Hudson Town Pond	Northeast	3/26/2018
Mann-Nyholt Lake South	Northeast	3/26/2018
Box Elder Lake 3	Northeast	3/26/2018
Brighton City Park Lake	Northeast	3/26/2018
Douglas Reservoir	Northeast	3/26/2018
Milavec Reservoir	Northeast	3/27/2018
Pueblo City Park Lake	Southeast	3/27/2018
Kenney Reservoir	Northwest	3/27/2018
Anticline Lake	Southeast	3/27/2018
Arkansas River #3B	Southeast	3/27/2018
Lon Hagler Reservoir	Northeast	3/28/2018
Pathfinder Park Pond	Southeast	3/28/2018
Brush Hollow Reservoir	Southeast	3/28/2018
Green Mountain Falls Lake	Southeast	3/28/2018
Jackson Gulch Reservoir	Southwest	3/29/2018
Ordway Reservoir	Southeast	3/29/2018
San Isabel Lake	Southwest	3/29/2018
DeWeese Reservoir	Southeast	3/29/2018
Hasty Lake	Southeast	3/29/2018
Thorton Gravel Lake #3	Northeast	4/2/2018
Thorton Gravel Lake #2	Northeast	4/2/2018
West Lake	Northeast	4/2/2018
Wonderland Lake	Northeast	4/2/2018
Roberts Lake	Northeast	4/2/2018

Body of Water	Region	Report Date
Boulder Kids Pond	Northeast	4/2/2018
Bear Creek Reservoir	Northeast	4/2/2018
City Park Lake	Northeast	4/2/2018
North Lake Park Pond	Northeast	4/2/2018
Georgetown Lake	Northeast	4/2/2018
Ehrlich Lake	Northeast	4/3/2018
Centennial Lake	Northeast	4/3/2018
Tarryall Reservoir	Northeast	4/4/2018
Eleven Mile Reservoir	Northeast	4/4/2018
Little Hohnholz Lake #2	Northeast	4/4/2018
San Luis Lake	Southwest	4/5/2018
Zeigler Reservoir	Northwest	4/5/2018
Rangely Fishing Pond	Northwest	4/5/2018
Corn Lake	Northwest	4/5/2018
Nofstger Reservoir	Northwest	4/5/2018

Catch of the Week



Sean Bauer caught this 24 inch Walleye Sunday April 1 trolling a Orange color Flicker Shad.

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

Conditions Report - Metro

Aurora Reservoir

This 762-acre impoundment is located off of E. Quincy Avenue, two miles east of E-470. As of **3/31/2018** Open to boating with a water temperature of 43 degrees. Trout fishing from shore has been slow to fair. A few reports of trout being caught using PowerBait and flies from the dam. Walleye action from shore and boats is slow. Should start to see fishing pick up as the water warms. Restricted to electric motors only. For more information call 303-326-8425. Park hours for the month of April are 6:00 am-8:30 pm.

[Aurora Reservoir](#)

Chatfield Reservoir

This 1,356 impoundment is located in Chatfield State Park, in Littleton. There are two entrances to the park the west entrance is on S. Wadsworth Blvd, one mile south of C-470 and the east entrance is off of Titan Rd. Both the North and South Boat Ramps are now open. As of **4/5/2018** water temperature is 51 degrees and increasing. Walleye fishing has been fair using jerk baits or shad style crankbaits in the low light periods of the day. Trout have been caught using a variety of baits from shore. **Please note that due to the Chatfield Reallocation construction fishing access from the west side of the park (Massey Draw - Kingfisher) is closed. Please access the lake from the east side of the reservoir.**

[Chatfield State Park](#)

Cherry Creek

This 881-acre impoundment is located in Cherry Creek State Park, in Aurora. There are two entrances to the park, the east entrance off S. Dayton St. and the west entrance off S. Parker Rd. The Walleye Spawn is **March 15th - April 15th**. During this time there is no fishing within 100 feet of the tower or net. The area will be a marked. Trolling the deeper water has been producing fair for walleyes during the day.

[Cherry Creek State Park](#)

Quincy Reservoir

Open to boating and the water temp is 45 degrees. As of **3/31/2018** the water level has come up but is still down. Bass fishing is slow to fair with a handful of some good reports. The current weather patterns have made the bass fishing difficult. Some reports from boaters and shore anglers using jigs, jerk baits, and crawdad soft plastics and wooly buggers fished slowly Trout fishing is slow to fair using spoons and spinners. Park Hours for April 6:00 am-8:30 pm. Restricted to artificial flies and lures only. Electric motors only and hand launched watercraft only-trailers and vehicles prohibited in the water. For more information call 303-326-8424. Boat rental is closed due to low water levels.

[Quincy Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Northeast Colorado

Bear Creek

This 103-acre impoundment is located in Bear Creek Regional Park off Morrison Road in Lakewood. Note that this is a City of Lakewood park, so a CPW parks pass does not work here. As of **4/2/2018** fishing for rainbow trout has been good using baits such as PowerBait, worms, or salmon eggs. A few smallmouth bass have been caught. Fishing for saugeye has picked up along the dam as the spawn begins. For updated conditions, contact Bear Creek Lake Park (303-697-6159).

[Bear Creek Reservoir](#)

Boyd Lake

Boyd Lake is open to boating, Aquatic Nuisance Species Inspection hours for the month of April are 7:00 am-7:00 pm daily. As of **3/31/2018** fishing for bass was fair using worms and crankbaits. Fishing for crappie and white bass has been slow throughout the lake. Trout fishing has also been fair using spoons and spinners. *Reminder - No fishing from marina slips or docks (next to is okay but can't use them in any way).* PLEASE NOTE: Any live fish collected for use as bait may only be used in the same body of water from which they were collected. All live bait/fish from a commercial source and transported by anglers must at all times be accompanied by a receipt for the source. See the Colorado Fishing Regulations for further clarification and information.

[Boyd Lake](#)

Clear Creek

As of 4/5/2018 flow was around 46 CFS at Golden with visibility reaching 36 inches. Water conditions were clear sitting at 38 degrees Fahrenheit. Fishing has been fair for browns, rainbows, and cuts using Stimulators, Griffith's Gnat, Sparkle Dun and Prince Nymphs in black or dark colors.

[Clear Creek](#)

Eleven Mile Reservoir

Eleven Mile Reservoir will open to boating, at the North Shore Boat Ramp only, on Saturday April 7, 2018 at 6:07 am. Trout fishing is expected to be very good. Let us know how the fishing is!

[Eleven Mile State Park](#)

Horsetooth Reservoir

As of 4/1/2018 the Inlet Bay ramp is open to boating 7:00 am- 7:00 pm seven days a week. With water temperatures at 45 degrees fishing for walleyes and smallmouth bass has been tough with a few being caught on slower presentations.

[Horsetooth Reservoir](#)

Jackson Reservoir

This 2,967 acre reservoir is located approximately 32 miles east of Greeley and 10 miles north of Wiggins. As of 4/2/2018 the water clarity is low and the weather patterns recently have slowed the fishing for all species. The lake level is full with a surface water temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit. For up-to-date fishing and ice conditions contact the park directly at 970-645-2551.

[Jackson Lake State Parks](#)

North Sterling

As of 3/24/2018, fishing has been good in the hours near sunrise and sunset. The Reservoir is open to boating as of Saturday March 17th, 2018. The Inlet is ON and the Outlet is OFF. The water temperature is 42 degrees with some warmer temps in the shallow coves. Fishing has been fair for all species.

[North Sterling State Park](#)

Spinney Mountain Reservoir

Spinney Mountain Reservoir opened to boating, at the North Shore Boat Ramp only, on Saturday April 1, 2018 at 6:17 am. Water levels are low but fishing for trout has been fair with wooly buggers. Pike fishing has also been fair using larger jerk baits trolled slowly. Fishermen are reminded that only artificial flies and lures are permitted at Spinney Mountain Reservoir and that items with any scent are prohibited, regardless of whether a scent is added by the manufacturer or by the angler after the item is purchased.

[Spinney Mountain State Park](#)

St. Vrain

There are 11 fishable ponds at St. Vrain that are stocked on a regular basis. Bald Eagle Pond is artificial flies and lures only. Bald Eagle Pond and Blue Heron Reservoir are trophy bass fisheries: all bass caught on these 2 ponds must be immediately returned to the water! Only 1 catfish in your standard bag and possession limit can exceed 20 inches on Blue Heron Reservoir. Blue Heron has been producing some good sized Black Crappie, Largemouth Bass, and Saugeye on jigs and lures. Trout fishing is very productive in spring and fall depending on stocking. Stocked trout are only 8-10 inches in length and we do not recommend keeping them until they have matured and are of a healthy size: around 12-24 inches. Overfishing these waters results in smaller, less productive populations.

[St. Vrain State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Southeast Colorado

Arkansas River

March 27th - 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.

March 27th- Middle River: With blue wings starting to emerge below Salida, we should begin seeing mayflies on the water above town any day now. With any cloud cover this week, be prepared for a blue wing hatch in the afternoon with duns and emergers in #16-18! The river is all clear between BV and Salida, and though fishing has been most consistent down near Salida, we've had a good reports from the BV area as well. Nymphing is still key here, with morning stonefly molts, caddis larva and midge drifts getting fish moving around before lunch. Afternoons have brought more blue winged olive nymphs onto the menu, as the nymphs drift in a daily fashion.

Fish will not be far from deep runs and pools, and will likely be concentrated together in the best winter lies. Midges are usually the most plentiful food items available on these colder days, but fish will give larger food a look if it drifts into them. Stonefly nymphs and other attractors like hare's ears, prince nymphs, and pheasant tails are all effective as larger offerings.

March 27th - Below Salida: Spring blue winged olives are finally here! For those waiting out the winter (if you can call this a winter) to finally fish dry flies, the wait is over. Trips this weekend and Monday reported good blue winged olive hatches below Salida. Guides are reporting blue winged olive duns on the water in the afternoons as big as #16. Look for Gulper Specials, Parachute Adams, Sprout Baetis, Extended Body BWO's, and Don's BWO in #16-18s to entice fish feeding on top when the mayflies are out. Subsurface mayfly nymphs and emergers can be imitated with Two-bit Hookers, Pheasant Tails, Jujubaetis, Darth Baetis, Bat-wing Emergers, RS2's, etc., also in sizes #16-18. With fish moving into shallower runs, riffles, and edges to intercept drifting baetis nymphs and midge pupa in the afternoons, dry-dropper fishing is becoming more and more effective to match food on or near the surface.

Beautiful weather in the forecast this week, with highs in the high 50s and 60s! We've seen consistently strong midge drifts mid-day, with enough bugs on the water that rising fish in the afternoons have been a lot more plentiful. Any more cloud cover this weekend should continue promote some strong blue wing activity, so be prepared with duns and emergers in #16-18! A shallow dry dropper rig in the afternoon can be a great way to find fish picking up emergers in shallower riffles and drop-offs, so don't hesitate to change things up as the day progresses.

Underneath, golden stonefly nymphs work well as attractors all day, though molting insects are typically most vulnerable in the mornings. Morning caddis larva drifts round out a diverse buffet for our local fish, so don't hesitate to experiment throughout the day as we are seeing opportunistic feeding at times. Float fishing is challenging at these low flows, but not impossible. 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. Make sure you are aware of public/private land transitions so you don't end up in a bad spot while fishing.

[Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area](#)

Clear Creek Reservoir

Located north of Buena Vista. As of **4/2/2018** the reservoir is more than 90% open water. Fishing for trout has been fair using a variety of methods including spinner baits and bait. Fishing is better near the boat ramp. For updated fishing reports and conditions, contact the CPW Salida Area Office (719-530-5520).

[Clear Creek Reservoir](#)

Lake Pueblo

As of **4/2/2018** both the North and South ramps are open as the water level has started to drop. Fishing for walleye has been good using jerk baits in 10 to 15 feet of water. Bass fishing has been fair with jerk baits and soft plastics.

[Lake Pueblo](#)

Lathrop

As of 4/3/2018 the surface temperature on Martin Lake is around 40 degrees. The surface is currently open water, but ice will form on colder nights. Temperatures this winter have not been cold enough to produce ice thick enough to fish on. Use extreme caution before attempting to traverse any newly formed ice. Wear a life jacket and make sure to measure the thickness of the ice every 10-15 feet as you move away from shore. Ice fishing is not recommended. Most fishing is done from shore due to the very windy conditions and rough water we have been experiencing over the last month. Trout have been biting pretty well with some in the 18-23 inch range. Both artificial lures and bait have been successful. Pike have also been active lately with anglers catching a 39 and 42 incher. Spoons and large spinner baits are best. There have also been reports of some nice smallmouth bass being caught out of Martin Lake as well. The surface temperature of Horseshoe Lake is about 41 degrees. Horseshoe Lake is currently free of ice. Visitors have reported less success in Horseshoe, but some smaller trout are being caught. Variations of PowerBait including rainbow and cheese styles have been used to catch fish recently.

[Lathrop State Park](#)

Staunton

Our ADA accessible fishing pier is complete and ready to be fished from. Please contact the park about how we can provide an accessible fishing experience. Access to the ponds is from the main parking areas only. There is no public access below the dams on Elk Creek Road. Do not drop people or equipment off at this location. Violators will be ticketed. For more information contact staff at 303-816-0912.

[Staunton State Park](#)

Trinidad Reservoir

The lake is at 1012 surface acres with a surface elevation of 6206.04 feet. Shore anglers are catching trout on homemade dough bait and PowerBait (green color) all along south shore and Reilly Canyon. No reports of walleye as of 3/20/2018. Boating is open for the season. Please be advised that all boats must be inspected prior to launching.

[Trinidad Lake State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Northwest Colorado

Delaney Buttes Lakes

As of 3/31/2018 all the Delaney's ice is deteriorating quickly, very little if any fishable ice remains. Several fishermen are reporting good fishing on all the Delaney's with flies and some anglers are reporting catching upwards of 20 Rainbow Trout a day.

[Delaney Buttes Lakes SWA](#)

Lake Granby

As of 4/1/2018 the lake was reported to be frozen with a water temperature of 38 degrees, with warmer temperatures the ice could begin to deteriorate quickly, be sure to have all safety equipment when fishing late season ice. Success has been reported catching lakereels on tube jigs tipped with meal worms or wax worms.

[Lake Granby](#)

Harvey Gap Reservoir

As of 3/20/2018, the lake was almost ice free. The water level in Harvey Gap was very low for much of the fall of 2017 as a result of a reservoir drawdown conducted by Silt Water Conservancy District to inspect the reservoir's outlet. During this period of low water level, CPW put a public fish salvage regulation on the lake in which bag and possession limits were removed for all fish species. This public fish salvage is no longer active as it was removed once the reservoir started to refill. Conversations with anglers and a survey conducted by CPW in the fall immediately prior to the lake beginning to refill showed that the same species were present in the reservoir following the drawdown compared to prior to the drawdown (i.e. tiger muskie, rainbow trout, black crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, yellow perch, channel catfish, northern pike, and smallmouth bass). In addition to stocking tiger muskie, rainbow trout, and channel catfish, CPW will be stocking increased numbers of bluegill and black crappie in 2018 to help the fishery recover from the drawdown more rapidly. Special fishing regulations at Harvey Gap Reservoir include a minimum size of 15 inches for largemouth bass and a bag and possession limit of 2 for channel catfish. Standard bag and possession limits apply for all other species. Bag and possession limits for smallmouth bass and northern Pike are unlimited. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CAN DISTINGUISH TIGER MUSKIE FROM NORTHERN PIKE. ALL TIGER MUSKIE LESS THAN 36 INCHES MUST BE RELEASED ALIVE. For more information regarding tiger muskie, please contact CPW Area Aquatic Biologist Ben Felt at benjamin.felt@state.co.us. Anglers may contact Harvey Gap/Rifle Gap State Park, 5775 Hwy. 325, Rifle, CO, 81650; Phone: 970-625-1607 for updates on fishing conditions.

[Harvey Gap Reservoir](#)

Highline Lake/Mack Mesa Lake

As of 3/23/2018, Highline Lake was ice-free. Highline Lake was stocked with rainbow trout in early February as well as early and mid-March so fishing should be good. As of 3/23/2018 Mack Mesa was also completely ice-free. Mack Mesa was also stocked with rainbow trout in early February and early and mid-March so fishing should be good. Highline and Mack Mesa were both stocked with 800 12 inch trout and another 1,000 in early March. Highline Lake and Mack Mesa are both open for boating. Please stop at the Visitor Center at the East Entrance or call 970-858-7208 to request an ANS inspection before launching. Anglers may contact Highline State Park for updates on fishing conditions.

[Highline State Park](#)

James M. Robb

As of 3/23/2018 all lakes are free of ice and offer ample shoreline fishing opportunities. Old Orchard, Roan's Pond, and Corn Lake have all been recently stocked. Anglers have reported success on a variety of different baits and flies. Send in a fishing report and let us know what you are finding success with!

[James M. Robb](#)

Lake Avery

As of 3/23/2018 fishing continues to be very productive for rainbow trout with an average size of about 12 inches. As warm temperatures continue ice has melted quickly. Please contact the CPW Meeker office at 970-878-6090 for the latest conditions and information about accessing the State Wildlife Area.

[Oak Ridge SWA](#)

Lake John

As of 3/31/2018 Boats have started to arrive on Lake John as the lake is all open water except for two small ice patches off the east side however boats can access the whole length of the lake. Fish have been active for both boaters and shore anglers with lures and flies.

[Lake John SWA](#)

Rifle Falls

As of 3/23/2018, rainbow and cutthroat trout are found in East Rifle Creek which flows through Rifle Falls. Fish up to 19 inches long have been taken, with 6-9 inch fish being the average size. Brown and Black flies or spinners work the best. Bait, except for live fish, can be used.

[Rifle Falls State Park](#)

Rifle Gap Reservoir

The east half of the lake is open water. Pike and trout are being caught on the east end. Special fishing regulations at Rifle Gap Reservoir include a bag and possession limit of 1 walleye 18 inches or greater; bag and possession limit for yellow perch is 20.

[Rifle Gap State Park](#)

Sylvan Lake

Beginning the end of March and through the summer of 2018, the lake will be drained for construction.

[Sylvan Lake State Park](#)

Vega

As of 4/3/2018, the road to Fisherman's Flats has been closed due to slush and muddy conditions. With warmer temperatures the lake is melting significantly around the edges and re-freezing at night. Please use extreme caution when accessing the ice this time of year. There is open fishable water at the feeder canal near Marmot Knoll. The Visitor's Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Anglers may also contact Vega Reservoir State Park, 15247 North 6/10 Road Unit A, Collbran, CO 81624; Phone: 970-487-3407 for weekly updates on ice conditions and angling success. The entrance station is closed; please use self-serve or come to the Visitor Center for passes. The Visitor Center's winter hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, seven days a week.

[Vega State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Southwest Colorado

Big Meadows Reservoir

This 114 acre reservoir is a State Wildlife Area southwest of South Fork. From Highway 160, access along Forest Road 410, currently the lake is only accessible by snowmobile, skis or snowshoes (2 miles). Because of its access restrictions and remote location, Big Meadows offers a good opportunity for anglers to enjoy a day of fishing away from the crowds while enjoying breathtaking views of nearby peaks in the Weminuche Wilderness. As of **3/8/2018** ice thickness is currently unknown and anglers are asked to use caution. Fishing has been good and anglers have been successful using worms at the upper end in the shallows. Fishing by the dam is also productive this time of year. For updated fishing reports and ice conditions, contact the Monte Vista office (719-587-6900).

[Big Meadows Reservoir](#)

Blue Mesa Reservoir

This 8,900 acre reservoir is located west of Gunnison. As of **4/6/2018**, Trout fishing has been very good, Kokanee Salmon fishing has been good 20 to 50 feet below the surface. Lake trout fishing has been slow with the occasional fish being caught. While the entire lake is open water, the Lake Fork Marina is the only ramp open to boating. Anglers can check on current conditions and boat ramp inspection schedules by contacting Curecanti National Recreation Area at (970-641-2337).

[Blue Mesa Reservoir](#)

Crawford

As of **4/4/2018** The Peninsula boat ramp is open, be sure boats are clean, drained, and dried for mandatory inspections. Pike have been reported to be caught in the shallows as they prepare to spawn. Water temperature remains too cold for the crappie to have begun spawning. Some reports of large catfish being caught. Let us know what you are catching!

[Crawford State Park](#)

Mancos

As of **3/23/2018**, the lake is mostly open water. Mancos is a great place for consistent action from rainbow trout and yellow perch. Most of the trout action is from 10-12 inch fish, but there's very good opportunity at an 18-20 inch trout and a few 12+” perch. Great opportunity for kids to catch fish. Most anglers are finding success with bait (PowerBait, eggs, and crawlers) fishing just off bottom or under a slip bobber. For a chance at the yellow perch and trout, a small jig fished under a bobber on a long leader and tipped with a piece of worm is a good bet. Casting or trolling typical in-line spinners (Panther Martins, Mepps) from boats is another approach at the trout. Hand-launchable boats (non-motorized kayaks, canoes, belly boats, etc) are a great way to fish the lake in this off-season. This is the first year in more than 15 years that the lake has not gotten decent ice to fish. A park pass is required on vehicles in the park. Daily park passes are available at the self-serve pay station at the park entrance.

[Mancos State Park](#)

Ridgway

Due to ice free conditions, as of **3/30/2018** fishing in the reservoir has been good for rainbows and a large brown and splake have been pulled in recently. Tail waters and ponds at Pa Co Chu Puk have been good but very crowded, we recommend coming off hours and days to maximize fishing experience.

[Ridgway State Park](#)

Conditions Report - Statewide

Rivers and Creeks

Although we are approaching the spring season, we are still seeing low flows and clear waters. This means anglers must be more careful not to spook the fish when approaching the water. The spawn beds from the browns are still active, so be cautious of redds when wading along the rivers. There are still waters that are iced over, so anglers will have to primarily rely on tailwaters--the waters below dams or other structures 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 energy 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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