

Fishing Report



Friday December 31st, 2020; New Year's Eve Edition

News and Information

COVID-19 Response

Below are some frequently asked questions we have been receiving from the public.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife reminds anglers, hunters, and all other outdoor recreationists that it is your responsibility to research and understand the specific guidance, ordinances, and restrictions in place for any planned local recreation - know before you go. To see specific county health orders, visit: [Colorado Counties Safer at Home Map](#). To see county fire restrictions, visit: [Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Fire Bans and Danger Page](#)

Give the gift of nature this holiday season

For those that [love living life outside, share some seasonal cheer with a gift from CPW](#). Recreationists, hunters, and anglers alike can enjoy the one-of-a-kind items found at our state park visitor centers or [online store](#). Specially designed park shirts, colorful patches, books and decals provide unique gifts any nature lover will treasure.

If you prefer letting your loved ones decide how they want to enjoy Colorado's great outdoors, CPW [gift certificates](#) are available as a quick and easy gifting option. Gift certificates can be purchased in any amount [online at CPWshop.com](#) or by phone at 800-244-5613.

CPW aquatic biologists studying Bear Creek after survey shows troubling decline in population of threatened greenback cutthroat, Colorado's state fish

Aquatic biologists and researchers at Colorado Parks and Wildlife have launched an intensive review of data on Bear Creek after [a routine survey revealed a troubling decline in greenback cutthroat trout populations](#).

"We have looked into several factors that may have contributed to this decline including water quality, temperature, flow, sediment accumulation, disease and the possibility of some unnatural human-caused event," said Josh Nehring, senior aquatic biologist for CPW's Southeast Region. "At this point, we cannot say there is one single, definitive cause."

Work schedule on dam at North Michigan Reservoir

As reservations begin to open for the 2021 camping season, Colorado Parks and Wildlife is reminding visitors to State Forest State Park that a contractor will [begin rehabilitation on the dam at North Michigan Reservoir during the month of May](#). The dam at the popular fishing and camping reservoir is being upgraded to improve safety for downstream properties.

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|  | <p>Now you can take the #ColoradoOutdoors anywhere. Follow us on @instagram @coparkswildlife! http://instagram.com/coparkswildlife</p> |
|  | <p>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/.</p> |
|  | <p>Fish with us on Twitter Colorado anglers can get updates directly from CPW on Twitter. Follow @COParksWildlife.</p> |

Stocking Report

| Body of Water | Region | Report Date |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Runyon Lake | Southeast | 12/17/2020 |
| Arkansas River | Southeast | 12/17/2020 |
| Anticline Lake | Southeast | 12/17/2020 |

Catch of the Week



Antonio Giron landed an absolute toad of a cutthroat at Lake John!

This fish came in at 26-inches long and weighing a whopping 10 pounds!

Antonio was using a white tube jig tipped with a red mealworm.

Would you like to be featured in the next CPW Fishing Report's Catch of the Week? Share your photo! Email dnr_fish.reporter@state.co.us and put "Catch of the Week" in the subject line

Conditions Report - Metro

Aurora Reservoir

The reservoir is closed to boating for the season. This closure includes all hand launched watercrafts such as float tubes, kayaks, rafts, and paddle boards. Trout fishing is fair to good using PowerBait from shore and gold kastmasters have been good from the dam. For more information call 303-326-8425.

[Aurora Reservoir](#)

Chatfield Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020, ice has formed on the reservoir and is fishable in some areas. Ice ranged anywhere from skim to 6 inches. Please use caution while venturing out onto the ice and bring proper safety gear. Anglers reported success catching walleye with rapalas, spoons tipped with wax worms and chatter baits. Few reports also were submitted of anglers having success catching catfish on night crawlers.

[Chatfield Reservoir](#)

Cherry Creek Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020, staff reported that the reservoir is about 99% capped with ice. Not all ice on the reservoir is fishable as of right now. A recent ice measurement recorded about 5"-6" on the west side of the reservoir. Anglers have reported a hot walleye bite as early as this current week. Rapalas, spoons, and chatter baits have all reportedly worked well on walleye. The reservoir has closed to boating for the season. For the most up-to-date conditions for Cherry Creek Reservoir, please contact park staff by calling 303-690-1166.

[Cherry Creek State Park](#)

Quincy Reservoir

Quincy Reservoir is closed for the season. It is scheduled to reopen March 1st, 2021. For more information call 303-326-8424.

[Quincy Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Northeast Colorado

Antero Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020, anglers reported 2 to 6 inches of fresh snow on top of 6-14 inches of ice with the recent cold front. Pink and white tube jigs worked well tipped with meal or wax worms. Spoons and blades were also working well.

[Antero Reservoir](#)

Boyd Lake

As of 12/25/2020, Boyd Lake park staff reported that ice had degraded and ice thickness was 0-2 inches in the marina. The shorelines started to melt and had open water. Please be aware that ice conditions change rapidly. Contact the park for most up-to-date ice conditions and always use caution.

[Boyd Lake](#)

Eleven Mile Reservoir

As of 12/23/2020, The 11 Mile Marina reports the lake is 100% capped. Thickness is running 8 to 12 inches. There were two days of temps reaching 48 degrees. Edges got weak but have firmed back up with colder temps. It is still early ice so caution is advised as always. Trout fishing is reported as very good all around the lake. Lots of different baits are working and early to mid-mornings seem to be the best times. The 11 Mile Marina states that pike fishing is picking up on fish 28 to 33 inches!

<https://www.11milesports.com/fishing-report> [Eleven Mile State Park](#)

[Eleven Mile State Park](#)

Dillon Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020 kokanee and Snake River cutthroat were still fishing well in the inlet and ice continues to build further into the lake. Swedish pimple and kastmaster tipped with waxworms are proving to do the trick.

[Dillon Reservoir](#)

Evergreen Lake

As of 12/31/2020 Evergreen continues to have excellent fishing conditions and stable ice conditions. Most areas show ice thickness greater than 8 inches. You will most likely not pull any 20-inch rainbows from this water body but it does provide an excellent opportunity to take the family out or show a new angler the ropes.

[Evergreen Lake](#)

St. Vrain State Park

As of 12/27/2020, there is currently good fishing at the ponds in St. Vrain State Park. Blue Heron has higher quality ice on the southeast half, but there is also open water and skim on the northwest half. Reports from anglers include catches of 18-inch brooders, crappie, saugeye, and channel catfish have. Mallard is getting close to 4-inches of ice. Coot pond has good ice over the old roadways but crumbly ice near the cattails.

[St. Vrain State Park](#)

North Sterling Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020, ice has begun to form at North Sterling Reservoir. The park notes that the ice is approximately ½" to 1" and is currently unsafe for anglers. Warmer weather and high winds last week damaged a lot of the building ice but a cold front moved in earlier this week. Contact the park for up to date ice conditions at 970-522-3657.

[North Sterling Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Southeast Colorado

Arkansas River - Leadville to Buena Vista

As of 11/18/2020, Braden Baker with Ark Anglers writes, "The upper river is very cold and icy. There are some areas between the Lake Creek confluence and Buena Vista that will still offer limited productivity on the warmer days, but generally you'll find more opportunities further south towards Salida during the winter. For those determined to fish the upper section, deep slow runs or pools that receive ample sunlight are going to offer your best chances at finding active fish. If you can locate a pod of fish in the deeper winter water, it's likely you'll find a concentrated population holding together with a lot of vacant water upstream and downstream. Your window of opportunity will be limited to 11am to 2pm. Midges will be your most important forage to imitate, and pairing a small midge larva or pupa with a large attractor nymph like a stonefly is a great way to cover your bases. Dry-dropper fishing can still be effective, but is not nearly as versatile as nymphing."

Flows: ICE CFS at Hayden Meadows, 197 CFS at Granite (12/29/2020)

[http://www.arkanglers.com/
Arkansas River](http://www.arkanglers.com/ArkansasRiver)

Arkansas River - Buena Vista to Salida

As of 12/30/2020, Braden Baker with Ark Anglers writes, "The Cold nights mean slush/ice flows in the mornings. However, on the warmer days the ice should clear up by noon. Look to the warmest days and mild nightly temperatures for your best chance to get into fish! Cold weather is beginning to limit opportunities north of Salida, but the river from Big Bend downstream will remain productive throughout the majority of the winter, outside of the coldest days. This time of year your best window during the day will generally be between 10am and 2pm, particularly in areas that receive ample sunlight. Fish have migrated to their usual winter lies such as deep, slow runs and pools where they can retreat to safety, but will actively feed out in the nearby runs and riffles when food is available. While you may still find midge hatches prompting sporadic surface feeding, most of the food in the river will be subsurface for the foreseeable future. Stonefly and other large attractor nymphs will be great anchor flies throughout the day, and you'll want to fish midge larva/pupa and caddis larva as droppers. Nymphing will give you the greatest flexibility to cover a range of water types. Not every pool and run will be productive, so it pays to try to find several areas to fish throughout the day. Usually where you find one fish, you'll find several. Strikes are subtle with the colder weather, so be very proactive in setting the hook on the slightest sign of a take."

Flows: 220 CFS at Helca Junction (12/30/2020)

[http://www.arkanglers.com/
Arkansas River](http://www.arkanglers.com/ArkansasRiver)

John Martin Reservoir

As of 12/16/2020, the east and west boat ramps have been closed for the season until March 15th, 2021. Anglers are still able to fish from shore. Park staff noted that there have been few anglers at the reservoir since temperatures have dropped. Ice has begun to form but 90% of the reservoir remains open water. Lake Hasty was reported to be capped with ice.

[John Martin Reservoir](#)

Lake Pueblo

As of 12/28/2020, anglers reported no ice at all on the lake and the water temperature was around 40 degrees. Reports of 19 plus inch walleye caught on jerkbaits and jigs. The bass bite continues but is reported to be off and on from day to day. Lake Pueblo boat ramps are open with inspection hours 5am-6pm and decontamination hours 8am-4pm.

[Pueblo Reservoir](#)

Trinidad Lake

As of 12/19/2020, the lake is at 572 surface acres with a surface elevation of 6176.45. The water level is rising slightly. Ice conditions are fluctuating. Reilly Canyon is the first to ice over however it is unknown on thickness. Some coves around the lake are also holding ice and a layer of snow. The majority of the lake remains ice free or has a thin layer that breaks easily in the wind. South Shore anglers were catching mostly trout with hooks tipped with dough bait and worms. Rapala/spinning tackle was reportedly used during the midday.

[Trinidad Lake](#)

Conditions Report - Northwest Colorado

Delaney Lakes

As of 12/31/2020, there are reports of 9" plus inches of ice on North, South, and East Delaney Butte Lakes. Similar to Lake John, it has also been pointed out that the ice conditions at all Delaney Butte Lakes have improve since last reported on 12/18/2020. Lake John Resort reports that anglers have had the best luck pulling in fish with white leeches, jigs, and sinking wet flies. Anglers should use extreme caution whenever venturing out onto ice.

[Lake John Resort](#)
[North](#), [South](#), [East Delaney](#)

Granby

As of 12/29/2020 Granby is reportedly capped over with fresh snow on top. Ice should be growing but is brand new in some areas. Ice thickness changes quickly and in a short distance. Depths were taken anywhere from 1 to 6 inches in the bays. Use caution and the buddy system. No reports from anglers on catches or tackle used yet. Feel free to submit a report to the DNR Fishing Reporter email, dnr_fish.reporter@state.co.us.

[Lake Granby](#)

Green Mountain Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020, Green Mountain Reservoir reported 6 to 10 inches of ice. Anglers found success with white tube jigs tipped with sucker meat as well as tungsten jigs tipped with mealworms.

[Green Mountain Reservoir](#)

Harvey Gap

As of 12/17/2020 Harvey Gap has 4-6 inches of ice and building. **Always use caution when fishing on the ice** and be sure to fish with a buddy. Ice thicknesses vary across the reservoir as a whole, and can vary significantly even a few yards away. Ice rescue stations are located at popular areas around the lake, but nothing can provide for your safety like taking proper precautions and planning and preparing for the unexpected. Recommended items to bring along are ice awls, a life jacket, rope and a fishing buddy.

[Harvey Gap](#)

Lake John

As of 12/29/2020, reports from Lake John Resort indicate the ice has grown from our last report and is 8 plus inches in most places. Trout fishing remains excellent at Lake John with large 20 plus inch cuttbows being landed. The resort suggested that anglers have been hooking fish on meal worms, waxworms, night crawlers, white leeches, and jigs. Anglers should use extreme caution whenever venturing out onto ice. This week's Catch of the Week was landed at Lake John!

[Lake John Resort](#)

[Lake John](#)

Steamboat Lake

As of 12/31/2020, Steamboat Lake is completely iced over with approximately 6-12 inches of ice. Worms and leeches continue to work well attacking the bottom with worms and working the water column for suspended fish using leeches. Call the visitor center, (970) 879-3922, for up to date information on lake conditions, open daily 8am-4pm.

[Steamboat Lake](#)

Vega Reservoir

As of 12/4/2020, it was reported by park staff that "all three boat ramps are closed for the season. Ice is encroaching on the shoreline making shore fishing difficult near the dam. There are still a few areas of open water on the north shore. The gravel pit area is closed as well as the south road."

[Vega Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Southwest Colorado

Blue Mesa Reservoir

As of 12/23/2020, there is ice and it is slowing building. The lola basin capped with 6-12 inches of ice. The ice is still forming East of Dry Creek and West of Elk Creek. Robby Richardson with Ice Fish Colorado stated, "The coves in this section tend to have the thicker ice. Be very CAUTIOUS if you venture out in these areas! So far, the trout fishing has been nothing short of excellent most days in most areas on most baits! It is arguably some of the best ice fishing we have seen in a very long time and it usually doesn't take much effort to figure out on any given day! This is a great time to get kids out on some great action as it is sure to engage their attention! A few yellow perch and lake trout have been mixed in with the trout, but we haven't spent much time chasing anything else so far".

[Ice Fish Colorado](#)

[Blue Mesa Reservoir](#)

Jackson Gulch Reservoir - Mancos State Park

As of 12/31/2020, staff at Mancos State Park report the lake is ice covered and people are fishing it. It was a HIGHLY VARIABLE start to the ice-on with fissures and wind-created open water for a long time. There may be areas that get suddenly thinner. Colorado ice is always highly variable, but right now this ice is EXTREMELY VARIABLE! Use extreme caution when assessing ice condition. Good action for rainbow trout 10-12 inches and yellow perch averaging 5 inches. A few larger rainbows being caught, along with a few perch near 14 inches! Water level is very low, so there's a long walk through the snow to the lake edge. Standard ice fishing approached: small teardrop jigs (tipped with crawler, waxworm or mealworm), jigging spoons like the Swedish Pimple, and bait hooks with PowerBait, 'crawlers, waxworms, and mealworms will work for both trout and yellow perch. Most yellow perch are small but ice fishing is a great time of year to catch some of the larger perch. We remind you to maintain distance from others while enjoying the fresh air, and to bring your hand sanitizer for using the park's waterless restrooms. A park pass is required on vehicles in the park, all the time. Daily park passes are available at the self-serve pay station at the park entrance. Credit, debit, cash and check are accepted at the available kiosk.

[Jackson Gulch Reservoir](#)

James M. Robb Colorado River

As of 12/7/2020, all of the ponds at James M. Robb Colorado River State Park have begun to ice over. Staff indicated that there remains opportunities for open water fishing from shore. Fishing remains good across all ponds and anglers have been successful on a variety of baits. Trout are typically easily attracted with night crawlers under a float.

[James M. Robb Colorado River - Corn, Fruita, and Connected Lakes](#)

Lake Navajo

As of 12/13/2020, it was reported that "fishing has slowed down, however, there have been some northern pike bites recently. The water temperature at the boat ramp in Arboles is currently 40 degrees." Staff also noted that "boat inspections and boat launches can be done through the winter months 8am - 4pm by appointment only, and only if there is a trained inspector available. Appointments can be made by calling ahead of time at 970-883-2208. The boat ramp gate will be locked daily at 4pm."

[Lake Navajo](#)

Ridgway Reservoir

As of 12/31/2020, open water fishing continues at Ridgway Reservoir. Water level at the reservoir is currently low and is open to hand launched watercrafts only. Ridgway rarely develops and sustains substantial ice for winter ice fishing. The reservoir remains a good early winter option for open water fishing. Meanwhile, the tail waters on the Uncompahgre River continues to be a popular fly fishing destination for winter months.

[Ridgway Reservoir](#)

Conditions Report - Statewide

Statewide Conditions

As expected, statewide conditions are generally cooling. However, cooler temperatures look different across the state. In high elevation lakes, such as Antero Reservoir, Lake John, or Steamboat Lake ice is beginning to form on the shores. Many of these high elevation lakes have closed to boating and are only accessible to anglers by shore fishing, only where water remains open. While ice may have begun to form, these water bodies have not made a full transition to stable or safe conditions for ice fishing. Meanwhile, many lakes at lower elevations remain accessible via boat and have good fishing conditions. The lower temperatures are ideal for rainbow trout as we've seen good trout activity in lakes such as, Jackson Gulch Reservoir, Highline Lake, or Aurora Reservoir. Rivers and streams have appeared to be stabilizing into their winter form. Fly anglers are using their nymphing skills to score fish hiding in deep and slow running waters. On bright and sunny days, fly anglers should keep an eye out for occasional midge hatches for some late season dry fly action. Most often, anglers should continue to focus on subsurface flies.

Tip of the Week - Best Flies for Winter Fishing

Now that we are into the winter season, we prepare for more technical fishing. Aside from improving your cast and minimizing drag, one thing that will help you in the weeks to come is knowing what patterns will offer the most bites. First on the list are egg patterns. Try to stick with orange or pink. They work well when you lead with an egg pattern then add a midge as your second fly. Some anglers prefer using a green egg pattern as an attractor. The brown spawning season runs through to December, and their eggs are a large part of a rainbow's diet. Pheasant Tails are another key pattern. Most anglers prefer using pheasant tails as a second pattern with a bright egg or nymph pattern as the attractor, while some prefer using two pheasant tails. Zebra/Jujube Midges are another effective pattern come winter season. Black and red will be your most productive colors for midges. The tungsten bead on Zebras also helps with weight, requiring less split shot. Midges make up a majority of a trout's diet in winter. Just a reminder, you are going to want to keep all your midges in the #18-20 range, and egg patterns in the #14-16 range. Lastly, stoneflies are always a winter go-to. They only hatch in the winter, and can endure the coldest of days. You will find hatches in any condition, and due to their contrast, they make easy targets for the already sluggish trout. Try sticking to the #14-16 size range.

Email us at dnr_fish.reporter@state.co.us

We would love to hear back from our subscribers regarding fishing reports, tips, and requests of material you would like to start seeing more of. Any useful feedback helps us make our fishing reports a "go to" resource for anglers fishing Colorado's waters. If you would like to report water and/or fishing conditions to be used in the next fishing report, feel free to submit a report to dnr_fish.reporter@state.co.us.

DNR Fish Reporter



COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
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