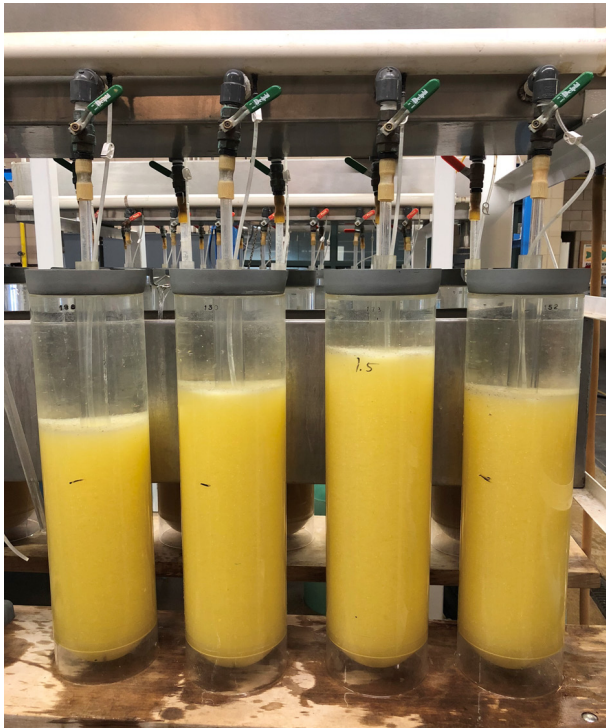


Walleye Production

Walleye eggs are collected from wild spawning operations at Cherry Creek, Pueblo and Chatfield Reservoirs. CPW crews set nets along the dams in early spring. The adult fish are stripped of their milt and eggs and are then released. The eggs are fertilized and brought to the hatchery for incubation and hatching. After hatching, most walleyes will be stocked as 3–5 day old fry. They are placed in plastic bags at densities of 100,000 per bag, oxygen is pumped into the bag and they are sealed and placed into insulated bags for transport.

Around 30–45 million walleye eggs a year pass through the hatchery. One million or so of the walleye fry are not directly stocked out, but are held back to be restocked into some of the 32 ponds to be raised for fingerling (1–2 inch fish) production. Both fry and fingerling walleye are stocked all over Colorado at lower elevation reservoirs.



Pond Production



Pueblo Fish Hatchery raises large-mouth bass, walleye, saugeye, striper, wiper, bluegill, black crappie and occasionally hybrid grass carp. Pueblo

has 32 earthen ponds — 16 one-acre ponds and 16 half-acre ponds — for production. The ponds are filled with water and fertilized, using cottonseed meal, alfalfa pellets and/or old fish food. The fertilizer promotes the growth of phytoplankton (microscopic algae), which in turn is fed on by zooplankton (small water bugs).

A week or so after the fertilizer has been added and the zooplankton has bloomed, the ponds are stocked with fish to be reared. These fish eat the zooplankton and grow for about 30–45 days. The pond is fertilized 1–2 additional times to maintain the nutrient levels. Once the fish reach the desired size, the ponds are drained and the fish are collected in a concrete structure called a kettle. Like the trout, the fish are weighed and placed in the fiberglass fish tanks on trucks and taken to reservoirs to be stocked.

Pueblo State Fish Hatchery

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COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

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Eagle photo © Michael Ebert



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The Pueblo Hatchery

The Pueblo Hatchery was officially dedicated in 1986 as a joint venture between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (now Colorado Parks and Wildlife) for the DOW to operate. Today the hatchery staff consists of seven full-time employees. The hatchery grounds sit on 80 acres and consists of the main hatchery building, various maintenance shops, 16 one-acre ponds, 16 half-acre ponds and 32 concrete raceways. Water is supplied from two sources: the reservoir for the raceways and ponds, and wells for the hatchery building.

The Pueblo Hatchery is the only state hatchery to produce both warmwater and coldwater fish. Trout, walleye, wiper, black crappie, bluegill and largemouth bass are some of the species raised here.

CPW operates 19 hatcheries that breed, hatch, rear and stock over 90 million fish per year. Many of the fish produced are to enhance angling opportunities, while others serve a critical role in native species recovery efforts. Colorado fish hatcheries support our angling pastime, which annually contributes 1.9 billion dollars to our state's economy!



Workers at Pueblo Hatchery load rainbow trout from a raceway onto a delivery truck.

Trout Production

We currently raise several species of trout, including rainbows, browns and cuttbows (a cross between rainbow and cutthroat trout). The fish are raised to subcatchable (three inches or less) or catchable (10–11 inches) before they are stocked. The subcatchables are raised inside the hatchery in fiberglass tanks until ready to stock. The catchables are raised in 150-foot long raceways. They are fed a high-protein, vitamin and mineral enriched feed 2–8 times per day, depending on size and water temperature. Once they reach size, the fish are loaded in tanks and transported by truck to lakes and streams. A normal stocking season begins in February and ends in early July.

