



Arkansas River at Pueblo

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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General Information: The Arkansas River through Pueblo provides excellent fishing for rainbow and brown trout in a stretch of river measuring nearly 9 river miles. Walleye/saugeye and bass can occasionally be caught. The upper reach of this section is directly below the reservoir and is part of Lake Pueblo State Park. For park access, fees, and other information, go to <https://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/Parks/lakepueblo>. The Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center is also located along this stretch of river <https://hikeandlearn.org/>.

Location: Pueblo, Colorado (Pueblo county). Located from the Pueblo Reservoir dam east to Interstate 25.

Recreational Management: Colorado Parks and Wildlife (wildlife 719-561-5300; State Park 719-561-9320)

Fishery Management: Primarily cold water with some cool water angling opportunities

Amenities

- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms (Lake Pueblo State Park, Nature and Discovery)
- Public access for shore or wade angling throughout the river

Regulations

- Fishing regulations went into effect on January 1, 2011.
- To obtain a complete description of the fishing regulations, see:
- <http://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/RegulationsBrochures.aspx>

Purchase a fishing license at:

<https://www.cpwshop.com/home.page>

Previous Stocking

2019

Brown Trout
Rainbow Trout

2018

Brown Trout
Rainbow Trout

2017

Brown Trout
Cutbow
Rainbow Trout

2016

Brown Trout
Cutbow
Rainbow Trout
Snake River Cutthroat

2015

Brown Trout
Rainbow Trout
Saugeye

Sportfishing Notes

Rainbow Trout

- The Arkansas is stocked heavily with ten inch "catchable" trout year-round (monthly). Anglers can expect good catches of these fish during most of the season.

Brown Trout

- These fish are stocked yearly at 3" and grow well in the river. Browns are less numerous than rainbows, but anglers that work for them can catch some high quality fish.

Warmwater Species

- Saugeye were stocked into the river until 2016. These fish, as well as bass and catfish, can be great species to target and are most often caught in deeper holes further downstream. Several saugeye close to the state record length have been sampled in the past several years.

ARKANSAS RIVER SPECIAL FISHING REGULATIONS

From the bridge at Valco Ponds downstream to Pueblo Boulevard (except at the Pueblo Nature Center as posted):

- Fishing is by artificial flies and lures only
- All trout 16 inches in length or greater must be returned to the water immediately upon catch



STATE OF COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



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FISH SAMPLING

RAFT ELECTROFISHING

In 2019, sampling on the Arkansas River was accomplished using raft electrofishing. A mark/recapture population estimate was used to determine the population sizes of rainbow trout / cuttbow and brown trout. This means that three sections of river were sampled in November 2019 and the trout that were caught were marked using a very small punch on their tail fin. A few days later, the same sections were re-sampled. The number of fish caught that had a mark (were recaptured) and the number of fish that were caught without a mark (were captured for the first time) were used to determine the estimated population size within the sections sampled.

How does Raft Electrofishing work?

A driver steers the boat, gives direction, and monitors safety. One person throws an electrode (has a positive charge) into the water which completes an electrical circuit and has the effect of forcing fish to swim toward the electrode. Two people net the fish from the stream and move them onto the boat to await processing on the shore.



This section of river is tentatively scheduled to be re-sampled in November of 2020.

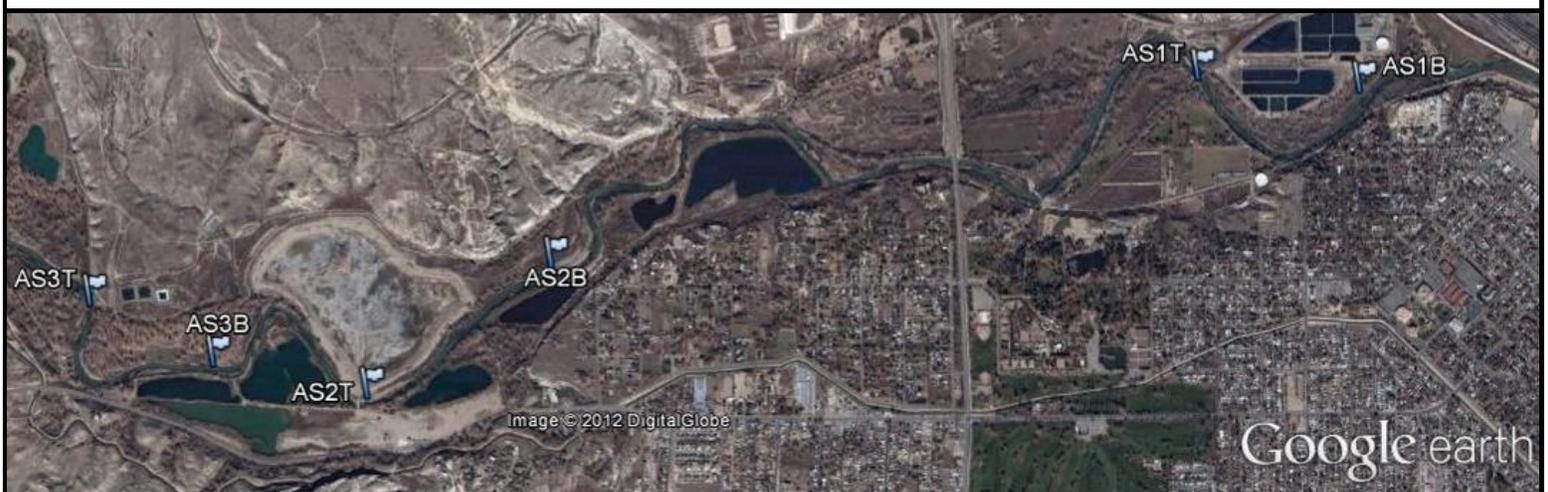


FISH SAMPLING STATIONS

The three stations are each between 0.60 and 0.65 miles in length. One station was above the special regulation section, one was within the special regulation section, and one was below it.

Specific Station Locations

Station 1 (Below City Park): Started at AS1T, ended at AS1B. Station 2 (Within Special Regulation Section): Started as AS2T, ended at AS2B. Station 3 (Above Special Regulation Section): Started at AS3T, ended at AS3B.





ARKANSAS RIVER AT PUEBLO

FISH SAMPLING DATA AND 2020 FORECAST

RAINBOW TROUT / CUTTBOW

Rainbow trout fishing is a staple for the river and 10" fish are stocked monthly. We sampled using a raft electro-fishing unit in 2019 and captured fish as large as 24 inches in length. The largest groups of rainbows were around 6-8" and 11-18" (Figure 1). Numbers of rainbows are slightly higher above Pueblo Blvd, and fishing the habitat structures will give you good success.

Please pay attention to the fishing regulations in place.

Fishing in 2020 should continue to be very good, particularly for big fish in the plus 18" range.

Rainbow Trout (11/2019)

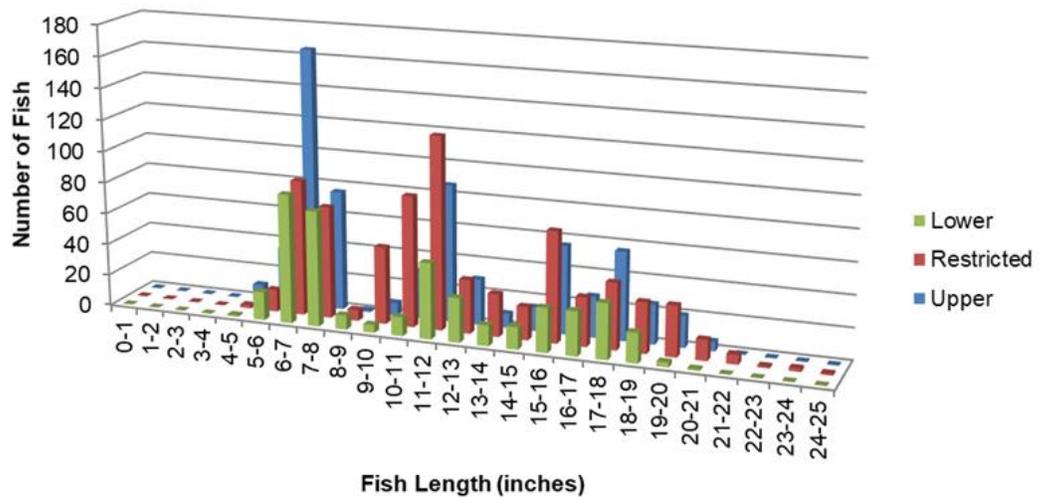


Figure 1. Length-frequency histogram showing the size distribution of rainbow trout in three stations of the Arkansas River below Pueblo Dam, November 2019. See page 2 for station locations.

BROWN TROUT

Brown trout are stocked once yearly as sub-catchable fish (3" in length). They are not as abundant as rainbow trout, but they present a more challenging type of fishing. Sampling in 2019 captured browns as large as 26" in length, but most are between 7 and 16 inches (Figure 2). Anglers targeting browns should wade carefully, fish below the water surface, and focus on undercut banks and other types of cover. Watch for fish attempting to spawn between September and November.

Brown Trout (11/2019)

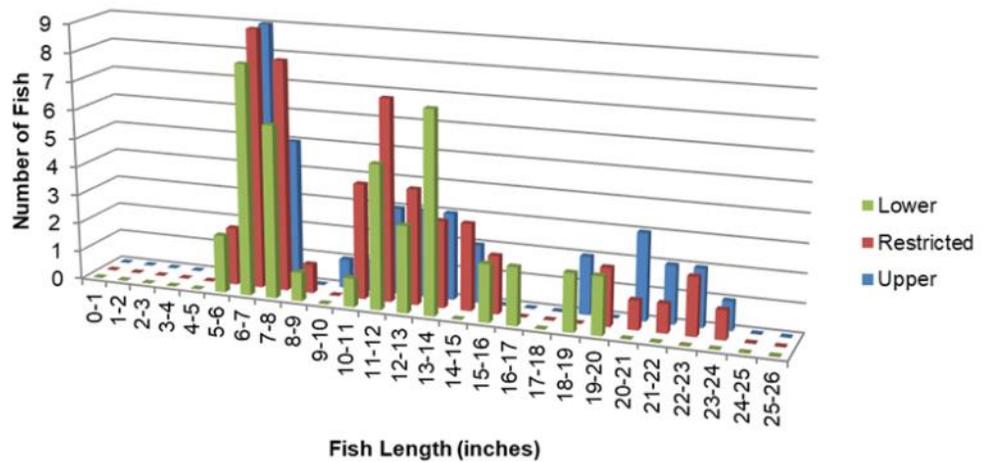


Figure 2. Length-frequency histogram showing the size distribution of brown trout in three stations of the Arkansas River below Pueblo Dam, November 2019. Note that the y-axis scale (number of fish) in this figure is different than Figure 1. See page 2 for station locations.



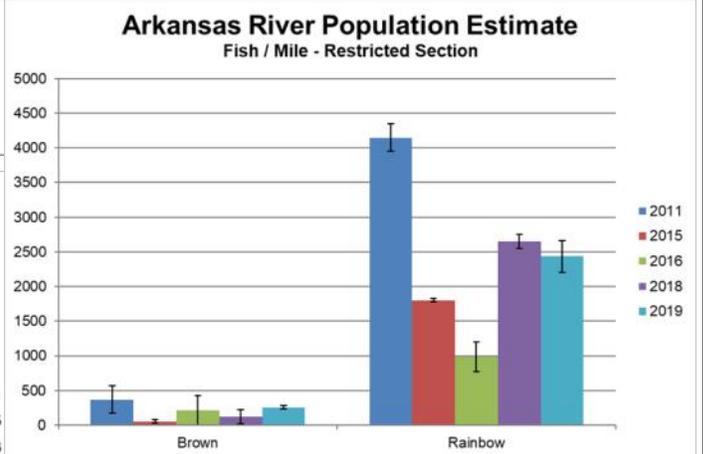
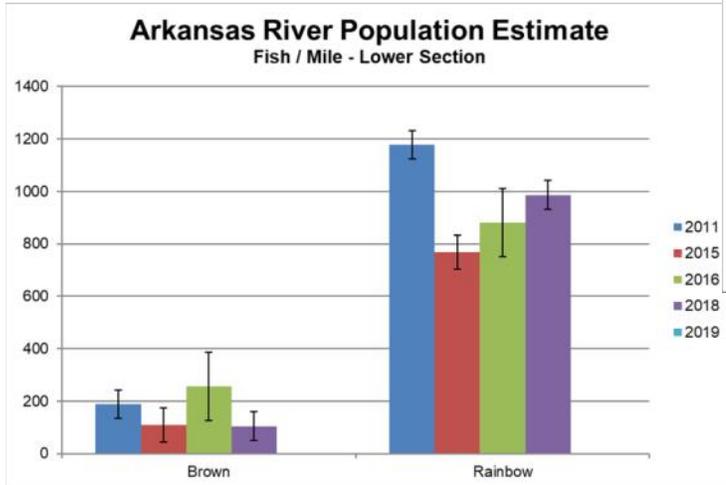
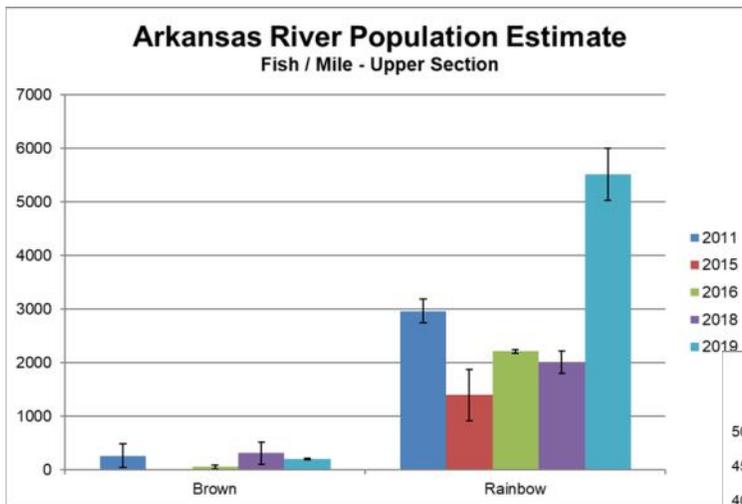
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FISH SAMPLING DATA AND 2020 FORECAST

POPULATION ESTIMATES

The mark/recapture electrofishing data were used to produce population estimates of fish populations within three sections of the Arkansas River. Only adult fish were used in this estimate, which is standard protocol for this type of data analysis. The results indicated that the highest population size per mile for brown trout was in the upper section (Station 1; below Pueblo dam), followed by the lower section (see Figure 3). For rainbow trout, the fewest adults were found in the lower section and the restricted station had the highest numbers of adults (see Figures 3-5). No population estimates were available for the lower section in 2019 because the recapture run was not conducted due to inclement weather.

This sampling is conducted to estimate and track trends in the trout populations in the Pueblo Reservoir tail water. It can be used to monitor the effectiveness of the special regulation that is in effect for part of the river. However, this dataset represents only a few years of data and cannot be used to draw conclusions on that regulation. Additional years of sampling are needed.



Figures 3-5. Population estimates of brown trout and rainbow trout/cutbow per mile at three stations of the Arkansas River below Pueblo Dam, November 2019. The uncertainty in the estimates are indicated by the vertical bars; the true population size could fall within that range. See page 2 for station locations.