



Carter Lake

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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General: Carter Lake, an 1100 acre storage reservoir, offers good fishing for trophy walleye and rainbow trout. Anglers occasionally catch lake trout, splake, and largemouth bass. For park hours, fees, boat inspection hours, and other information: <http://www.co.larimer.co.us/parks/carter.htm>

Location: Larimer county. Go 5 miles W of Loveland on HWY 34, then S 2 miles on CR 29, then W 2 miles of CR 18E then follow signage.

Recreational Management: Larimer County Parks and Open Lands (970-679-4570)

Fishery Management: Cold water angling with trophy walleye

Purchase a Fishing License: <https://cpw.state.co.us/buyapply/Pages/Fishing.aspx>

Amenities and General Info.

- Boat Ramps (3)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Swim Beach
- Marina
- Hiking trails

Fishing Regulations

• **All walleye longer than 21 inches must be returned to the water immediately.**

• **Daily bag for walleye is 3 fish 21 inches or LESS in length.**

• **Possession limit is 5 walleye.**

• No saugeye are present in this lake.

• Possession of cleaned fillets onboard a boat is illegal.

• No ice fishing.

Previous Stocking

2019

Hofer Rainbow Trout
Rainbow Trout
Redear Sunfish

2018

Hofer Rainbow Trout
Rainbow Trout
Redear Sunfish

2017

Black Crappie
Cutbow
Hofer Rainbow Trout
Rainbow Trout

2016

Bluegill
Hofer Rainbow Trout
Rainbow Trout

2015

Black Crappie
Cutbow Trout
Rainbow Trout
Redear Sunfish

Sportfishing Notes

Walleye

• The special walleye regulation gives anglers an opportunity to catch, photograph, and release a trophy, while allowing the DOW to run an egg take operation that, when needed, can supply other Colorado waters with thousands of young walleye.

• Naturally reproducing population.

• Fish are difficult to locate given the large amount of rock habitat but jigging crawlers and casting rainbow rapalas are good baits.

Rainbow Trout

• Trout fishing is generally fair year round using traditional baits. Walleye have eaten many of the stocked trout.

Kokanee Salmon

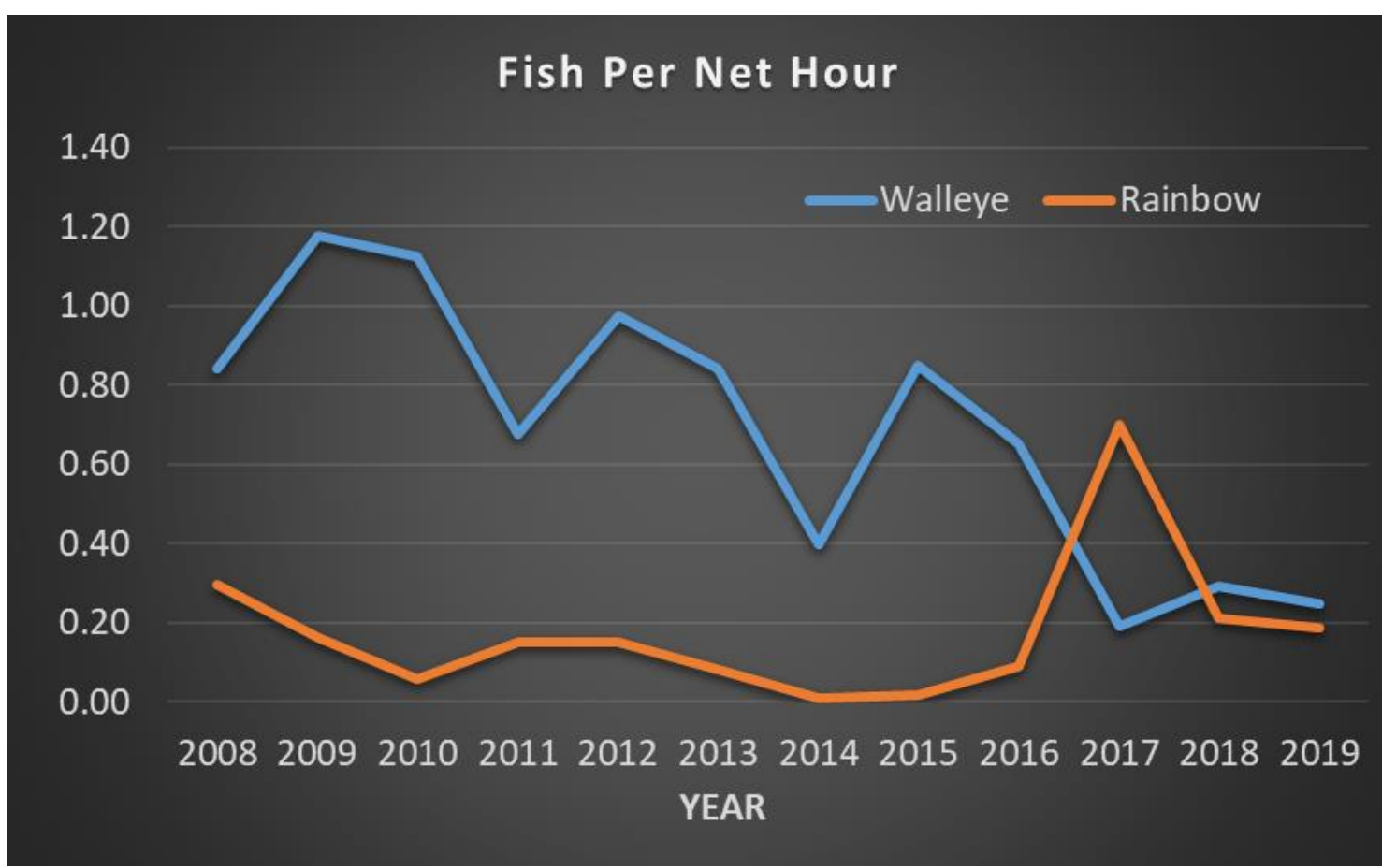
• Walleye have eaten the vast majority of the kokanee.

• Given the poor survival, kokanee are no longer stocked in Carter.

2019 Gillnetting Survey (10/22/2018); 6 experimental gillnets

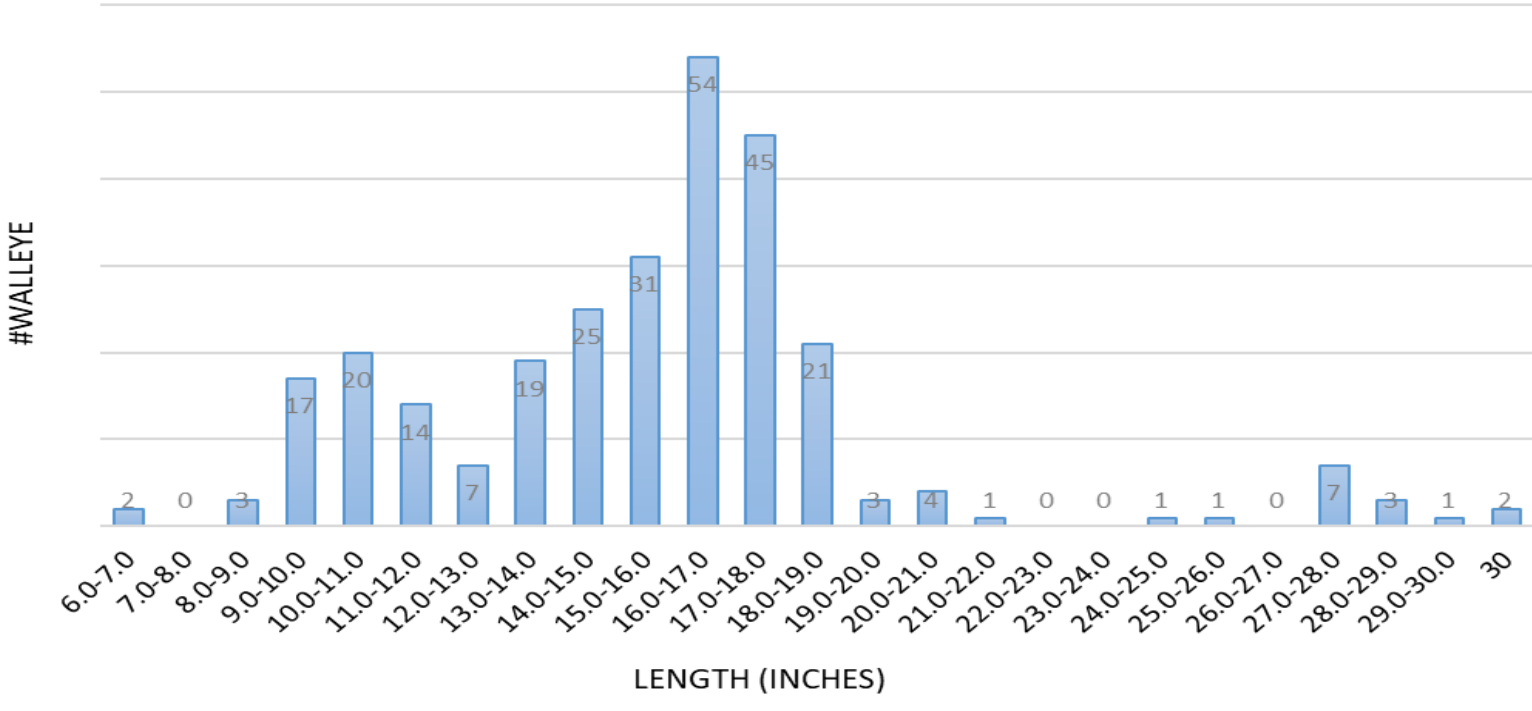
SPECIES	Total Catch	Mean	Length (inches)		Mean	Weight (lb)	
			Minimum	Maximum		Minimum	Maximum
LAKE TROUT (MACKINAW)	10	22.31	14.88	36.42	4.97	1.36	19.68
RAINBOW TROUT	9	13.74	11.10	16.22	1.09	0.46	1.86
RAINBOW X CUTTHROAT	15	16.41	10.79	35.20	1.74	0.52	3.20
WALLEYE	32	16.26	8.58	27.91	2.06	0.18	8.86
WHITE SUCKER	9	16.98	14.61	19.88	2.15	1.43	2.78
YELLOW PERCH	1	8.07	8.07	8.07	0.19	0.19	0.19

The Carter Lake Fishery: the past decade



Graph 1- above: The respective Catch Per Unit Effort (fish per net hour) over the past 11 years. The naturally reproducing walleye population expanded in the 2000's to a point which the reservoir could not naturally sustain. Upon consuming most of the naturally reproducing forage fish (white sucker and perch), walleye began consuming a substantially larger portions of stocked trout and kokanee salmon. (Attempts to overcome walleye predation through stocking more trout and kokanee failed miserably. To reduce walleye predation on stocked trout walleye bag limits were increased from 1 to 3 walleye with no walleye over 21 eligible for harvest. The past 2 surveys suggest the reservoir is reaching an equilibrium between stocked trout and walleye abundance.

Walleye Length frequency 2015-2019



Graph 2 – above: The length frequency of walleye from Carter surveys 2015-2019.

Trout – Anglers may find trout fishing a little better at Carter during 2020. Each year roughly 15,000 catchable-sized rainbows and cutbows are stocked in Carter.

(Table Right). Results from a 1990 versus 2006 creel survey. During April-June, 15,224 trout were caught, that fell to 1,756 trout during the same period in 2006. If trout fishing is slow, anglers might try Flatiron or Pinewood Reservoirs which are both minutes from Carter.

Creel '90 vs. '06	1990	2006
Angler Hours	23,949	14,417
Angler Days	5,987	4,253
RBT Catch/Hour	0.64	0.25
RBT Catch/Trip	2.56	0.85
Total RBT Catch	15,224	1,756
Total RBT Harvest	14,601	897
Mean RBT Length	11.8	12.3

