



Clear Creek

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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General Information: Clear Creek, with its headwaters at the foot of the Continental Divide, flows east through the towns of Georgetown and Idaho Springs and eventually into the South Platte River. From Georgetown downstream to the town of Golden, Clear Creek provides good fishing for wild brown trout. Between Georgetown and State Highway 40 the stream lies mostly on private property. There is good public access from Highway 40 downstream to Golden, with land owned by Clear Creek Open Space and Jeffco Open Space.

Location: Clear Creek County adjacent to Interstate 70, Jefferson County adjacent to State Highway 6.

Fishery Management: Coldwater angling.

Amenities and General Info.

- Approximately 30 miles of public angling access between Golden and Georgetown.
- The most continuous public angling access is in lower Clear Creek canyon between Golden and Idaho Springs
- Permanent restrooms at Georgetown Lake, the new parking area adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Tunnels, and businesses adjacent to I-70. Seasonal restrooms in Clear Creek canyon adjacent to Highway 6.

- **No surveys in 2013 due to high flows**

Fishing Regulations

- General regulations - daily bag limit for trout (in aggregate) is 4 fish, possession limit is 8 fish.
- In addition to above, the daily bag and possession limit for brook trout 8 inches and less is 10 fish.

Previous Stocking

2021

Rainbow Trout

2020

Rainbow Trout

2019

Rainbow Trout

2018

Rainbow Trout

2017

Rainbow Trout

2016

Rainbow Trout

2015

Rainbow Trout

2014

Rainbow Trout

2013

Rainbow Trout

2012

Rainbow Trout

Sportfishing Notes

- The Argo Treatment plant in Idaho Springs began treating metals-laden water from the Argo Tunnel in 1998.
- Trout populations downstream of Idaho Springs have generally improved since then.
- Fish habitat improvements were completed in 2015 adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Tunnels (formerly the Twin Tunnels), just downstream from Idaho Springs

Brown Trout

- Historically, the most abundant trout species between Georgetown and Golden, making up about 95 percent of the fish present.
- These are wild, naturally reproducing fish.
- Spawn from October through November.

Rainbow Trout

- Although stocked annually, make up only about 5 percent of the trout present between Georgetown and Golden, due to whirling disease.
- Beginning in 2009 a WD resistant strain will be stocked annually, probably increasing survival and abundance.

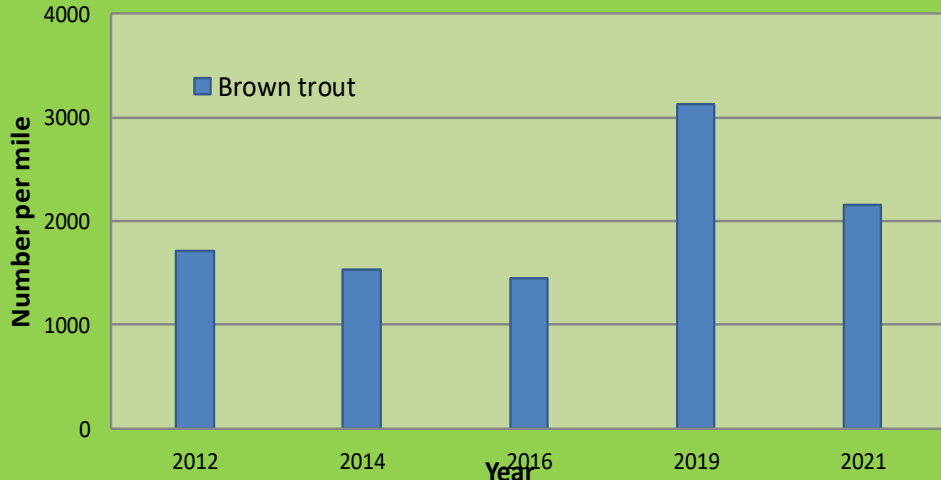


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Clear Creek at Spring Gulch



The figure to the left shows the abundance of brown trout greater than 5" collected in Clear Creek just below Spring Gulch (Philadelphia Mill Open Space) from 2012 to 2021. Brown trout in Clear Creek are not stocked, they sustain their populations through natural reproduction. Densities of brown trout are good at this site, with the highest recorded density occurring in 2019. Rainbow trout resistant to whirling disease have been stocked since 2009, but their numbers are still reduced, having to compete with the dominant brown trout population.

The figure below shows the length frequencies in 2021 of brown trout in Clear Creek just below Spring Gulch. The vertical bars represent the number of fish at a particular length. The catchable-size brown trout collected were 6 to 19 inches, with the majority of those 6 to 10 inches in length. The 19" brown trout weighed 3.3 pounds. Whirling disease is present in Clear Creek, which resulted in low survival of stocked rainbow trout prior to 2009. However, as stated above, resistant strains were stocked beginning in 2009, so it is hoped that rainbow survival will increase in Clear Creek in future years. The goal is to establish a wild population of rainbow trout in Clear Creek. Recent surveys have shown more young (i.e., wild spawned) rainbows compared to previous years.

Clear Creek at Spring Gulch, 2021



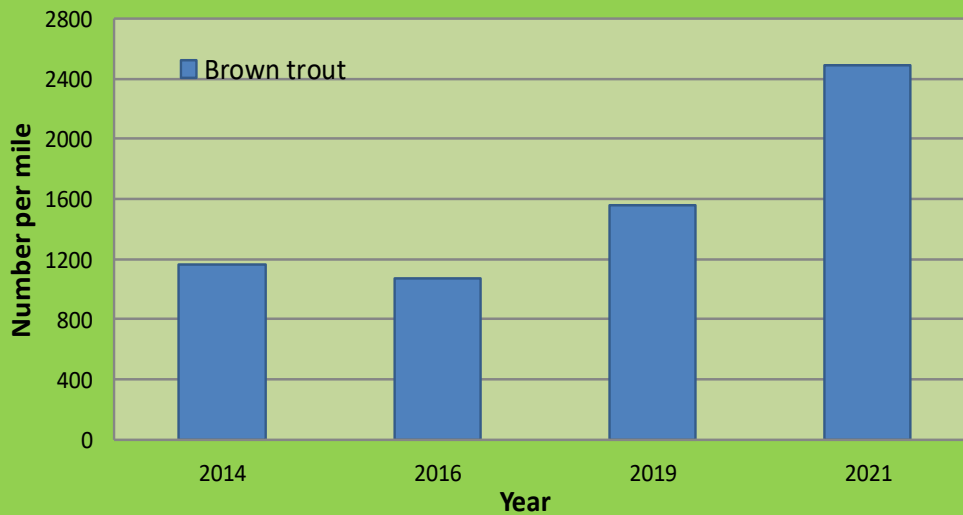


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Clear Creek Below North Clear Creek



The figure to the left shows the abundance of brown trout greater than 5" collected at a site in Clear Creek Canyon approximately one mile downstream from Highway 119, near a large pullout and access to the Peaks to Plains Trail. Brown trout density in 2021 was over 2,400 fish per mile, the highest ever recorded here. There is a large flat run here that is great for dry fly fishing during bug hatches such as mayflies, midges, and caddisflies.

The figure below shows the length frequencies in 2021 of brown trout from the site one mile downstream from Highway 119 in Clear Creek Canyon. The vertical bars represent the number of fish at a particular length. The majority of the catchable-size brown trout collected were 6 to 10 inches. A few adult rainbow trout were collected here in 2021 which had been stocked earlier in the year. It is hoped that whirling disease resistant rainbows stocked starting in 2009 will migrate through the drainage and create a new wild population. However, they still have to compete with the dominant brown trout.

Clear Creek Below North Clear Creek, 2021

