



# Clear Creek Reservoir

## FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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**General Information:** Clear Creek Reservoir, a 407 acre impoundment, offers excellent fishing for rainbow, cutthroat and brown trout. The kokanee salmon fishery is rebounding from an earlier die-off and tiger muskie are reaching trophy size. To view map see page 2 or go to <http://maps.google.com/maps>

**Location:** Chaffee County. Located at the mouth of Clear Creek just south of Granite, Colorado.

**Recreational Management:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife (719-530-5520).

**Fishery Management:** Coldwater angling for trout, kokanee salmon and tiger muskie.

**Detailed Fishery Information:** See additional pages.

### Amenities and General Info.

- CPW State Wildlife Area
- Boat ramp (1) and dock with restroom
- Dispersed camping allowed in inlet area
- Dam, spillway, outlet downstream to Hwy 24 closed to public

### Regulations

- Kokanee salmon snagging allowed October 1 to December 31 upstream to gauging station (1/2 mile above reservoir).
- The bag and possession limit for tiger muskie is 1, 36 inches or longer.
- Statewide bag and possession limits apply for other species (see CPW Fishery Brochure).

### Previous Stocking

#### 2019

Rainbow Trout  
Brown Trout  
Kokanee Salmon  
Cutbow Trout  
Tiger Muskie

#### 2018

Rainbow Trout  
Brown Trout  
Kokanee Salmon  
Cutbow Trout  
Tiger Muskie

#### **WARNING!!!**

**Prevent the Spread of Zebra Mussels and other Aquatic Nuisance Species**

- **Clean, drain, and dry your boat after each use.**
- **Clear Creek Reservoir requires mandatory inspections before launching.**

### Sportfishing Notes

#### Trout

- Excellent fishing for trout that average 12 inches with an occasional fish taken over 16 inches. Catchable trout (10-12 inch) are stocked from April through September.

#### Kokanee Salmon

- Salmon fishery still struggling. Flyfishing with small flies and egg patterns in the inlet stream during the fall spawning run can be productive.

#### Tiger Muskie

- Introduced to prey on an abundant sucker population. Angler opportunity has increased recently and fish exceeding 40 inches have been reported.



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## 2019 LAKE SURVEY DATA

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### 2019 Gillnetting Survey

Species	#Caught	Average Length and (Range) in Inches	Average Weight (lbs.)
Kokanee Salmon	3	7.3 (6.8-7.7)	0.11
Brown Trout	4	11.0 (6.0-15.6)	0.66
Rainbow Trout	98	11.7 (9.5-17.9)	0.55
Tiger Muskie	75	19.6 (11.8-39.5)	2.68
White Sucker	119	12.2 (4.5-17.7)	0.97

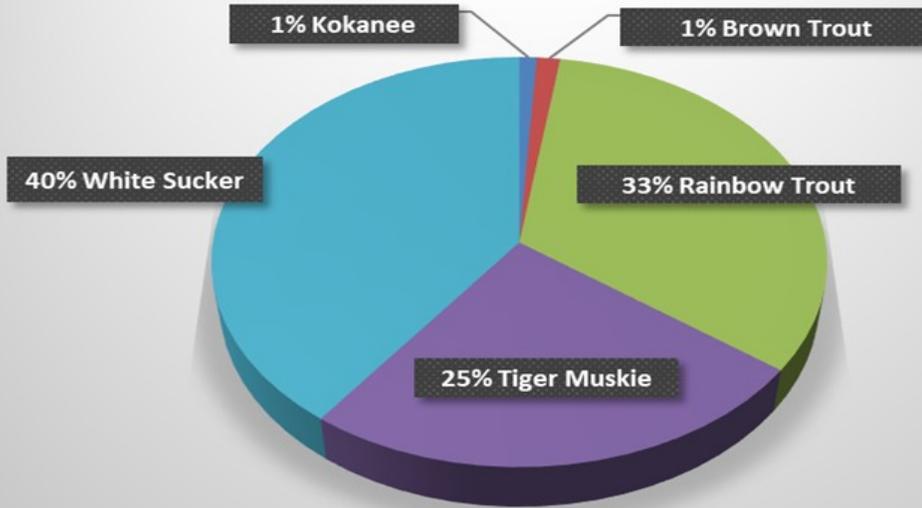


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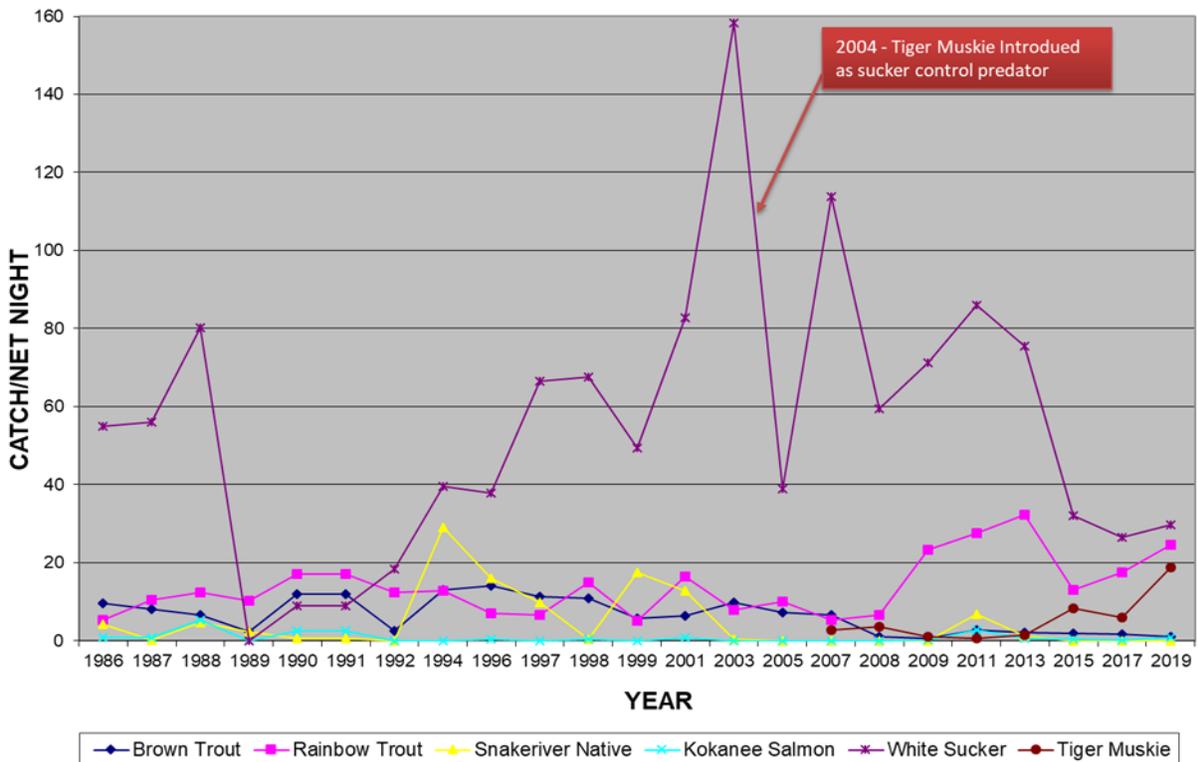
## 2019 LAKE SURVEY DATA

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### 2019 Percent Relative Abundance



### CLEAR CREEK RESERVOIR CATCH/GILL NET NIGHT, 1986-2019





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## 2019 FISHING FORECAST

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Clear Creek Reservoir is traditionally one of the most productive and dependable fishing reservoirs in the upper Arkansas River basin. Catch rates consistently exceed one fish/angler-hour and the majority of anglers rate the quality of their fishing experience as good to excellent. It produces excellent fishing for stocked (10 inch) trout with an occasional large trout taken over 16 inches. Clear Creek Reservoir will receive catchable trout stockings from April-August. Most anglers prefer to fish for trout (53%) using bait (48%) from shore (63%) but interest in other species and tackles has climbed since 2008. Anglers appear to appreciate the fish community available at Clear Creek Reservoir. Satisfaction and trout catch remains high while anglers enjoy the opportunity to catch tiger muskie and kokanee salmon.

The kokanee salmon fishery decline in the past decade persists in 2019. CPW has no clear explanation for the reduction in adult kokanee numbers, but believes that a heavy gill lice infestation is playing a negative role. More kokanee specific netting efforts will be carried out in 2020, to try to understand how the population is doing, and what can be done to improve kokanee numbers. Kokanee snagging is allowed in the reservoir and upstream about 0.5 miles to the gauging station from October 31 to December 31. Flyfishers are learning that kokanee salmon can be caught with small flies and egg patterns in the inlet stream during the fall spawning run from October to December. In recent years, the kokanee spawning run has been very limited, and large numbers of adult spawners have not been observed migrating upstream. Current snowpack data suggests runoff will be average/above average, and Clear Creek Reservoir will likely fill up. Our reservoirs are at a good water level currently, and we expect the fishing opportunities to be good.

Tiger muskie, a sterile cross between a northern pike and a muskie, were first introduced to this reservoir from 2004-2006 and more recently from 2012-2019. They were stocked to prey on an abundant white sucker population while providing the opportunity for anglers to catch a trophy sized fish. Since their introduction, white sucker numbers have dropped significantly. Before tiger muskie introduction, white suckers would make up nearly 80% of our total gill net catch. In 2019, white suckers only accounted for 40% of our total gill net catch - a vast improvement. Angler opportunity has also increased recently and many fish exceeding 40 inches have been caught. The limit for tiger muskie is one fish, 36 inches or longer.

The lake is serviced by one concrete boat ramp and a boat dock was installed in 2012. A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today. The boat ramp is open from May 1st - Sept. 28th, but it is closed every Tuesday and Wednesday. The only exception is the week of the 4th of July, when the boat ramp will remain open all week long. In 2020, CPW hopes to have the boat ramp open for 7 days/week from June 1 - Aug 15. For more up to date information, reach out to the Area Biologist, Michael Atwood.

For additional information on this fishery, see the fishery summary page at <http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/FisherySurveySummaries.aspx>





# Clear Creek Reservoir MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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Salida Service Center

Clear Creek Reservoir fluctuates moderately but is quite productive due to its basin configuration and prevalence of shallow water. Clear Creek Reservoir was chemically renovated in 1988 to remove an abundant sucker population. The sport fish community was reestablished post-treatment but suckers became dominant soon after. It is nearly impossible to remove all the suckers within the basin. The fish community has historically been dominated by white suckers to the detriment of sport species. Rainbow and cutthroat trout gill net catch can be quite inconsistent, largely dependent on recent catchable stocking. Brown trout and kokanee salmon are stocked as fingerlings and their gill net catch depends on their ability to survive and grow in this habitat. Brown trout recruitment has been fair while kokanee salmon survival remains low with sporadic fall spawning runs.

Gill lice (*Salminicola* sp.), a parasitic copepod, is believed to be primarily responsible for a kokanee salmon die-off at Clear Creek Reservoir in 2006 and thereafter. Other stress factors (e.g. warm water, low dissolved oxygen, poor nutrition, and other pathogens) may have combined to weaken the host, contributing to the die-off. Trout and kokanee in Clear Creek Reservoir have been positive for gill lice for some time. Higher infestation rates in kokanee salmon may be explained by their schooling habits, which make it easier for the parasite to pass from host to host. Kokanee salmon numbers remain low today despite consistent stocking since 2003. Annual water operations and drawdown (1997 and 2007) surely impact limnology and ultimately biotic production. Zooplankton, the primary food source for kokanee salmon, is particularly vulnerable to water fluctuations and flushing. Water operations that affect zooplankton density may indirectly impact kokanee density through the food chain. Tiger muskie predation on kokanee salmon is minimal due to low tiger muskie number, habitat segregation, and overall high prey availability (e.g. suckers and trout).

Tiger muskie were introduced to prey on suckers and restore balance in the fishery. This voracious predator is a sterile cross between northern pike and musky. Their numbers can be closely controlled through stocking with no threat of natural reproduction. They have worked well to control suckers in other coldwater Colorado reservoirs of similar size and productivity. A sucker standing crop of 20-30% of the fish community is desired without undue tiger muskie predation on other sport species. The goal is to sustain a low density population of trophy-sized tiger muskie to reduce sucker biomass while improving survival and growth of sportfish species. In 2019, we continue in this management direction.

White sucker catch/net-night has declined sharply since 2012, congruent with consistent tiger muskie stocking. They currently comprise 40% of the fish community (from gill net capture) and very few young white suckers were netted in 2019. Predation pressure on white sucker by tiger muskie is restoring balance in the fishery.

