



Horseshoe Reservoir

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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General Information: Horseshoe Reservoir, approximately 160 acres in size, offers good fishing for rainbow trout, bass, catfish, bluegill, sauger, and crappie. The reservoir is contained within Lathrop State Park. For park hours, fees, and other information, visit <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/Parks/lathrop>.

Location: Huerfano county. Go 5 miles W of Walsenburg on HWY 160 to the entrance of the park.

Recreational Management: Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Area 11 wildlife office (719-561-5300) and Lathrop State Park office (719-561-9320) [click here to buy a fishing license](#)

Fishery Management: Coldwater and warmwater species. **Annual Survey Data:** (see following pages)

Amenities

- Boat Ramps (2)
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms

Regulations

- Minimum size for largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass is 15" total length.
- Tiger muskie has a bag and possession limit of 1, over 36 inches in length.
- Bag and possession limits for all fish species are listed under the Arkansas drainage in the regulations brochure at: <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/RegulationsBrochures.aspx>

Special Information

- Eurasian Milfoil is found here and is a noxious weed in the State of Colorado. All anglers should clean all equipment after use as milfoil can spread by transporting pieces of the plant to other waters. All boats will be inspected upon entrance to and exit from the park and boat ramp hours are limited.

Previous Stocking

2019

Black Crappie
Bluegill
Channel Catfish
Largemouth Bass
Rainbow Trout
Sauger
Tiger Muskie

2018

Black Crappie
Bluegill
Channel Catfish
Rainbow Trout
Tiger Muskie

Sportfishing Notes

Trout

- Horseshoe is stocked heavily with "catchable" trout in the spring and fall. Some fish will put on several inches through the summer and anglers can expect good catches during the ice free season.

Catfish

- Horseshoe has a sizeable population of channel catfish with the occasional black bullhead. Most of the fish are about 15" in length but some fish are in the 10-pound class.

Bass

- Horseshoe contains largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. Many techniques are successful for these fish and they can be caught through all of the ice-free season.

Tiger Muskie

- Horseshoe does yield some trophy tiger muskie for anglers with the patience to work for them. These fish are not numerous and are often hard to catch. Some northern pike have been illicitly stocked from Martin Lake. **Know the difference!!**

Fish Consumption Advisory

The Colorado Department of Health has posted a Fish Consumption Advisory for smallmouth bass and sauger in Horseshoe Reservoir. Advisories are posted at the reservoir or can be found at the Colorado Department of Health web page: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wq-fish-consumption>



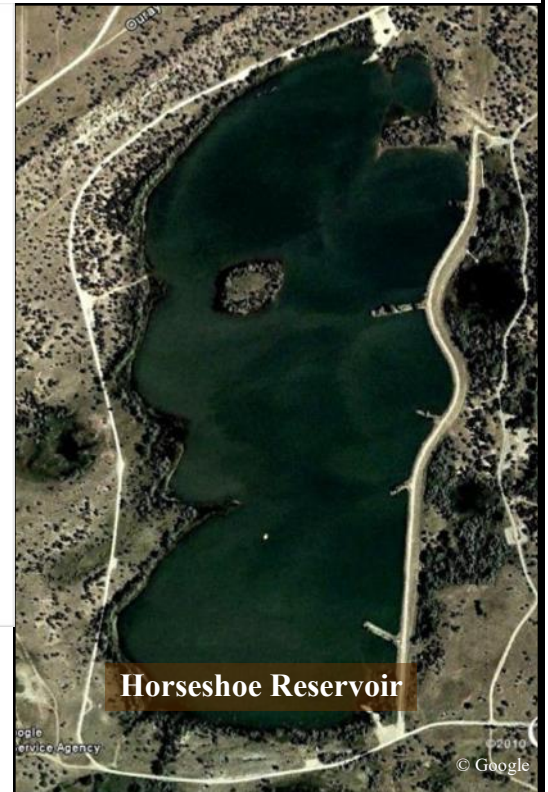
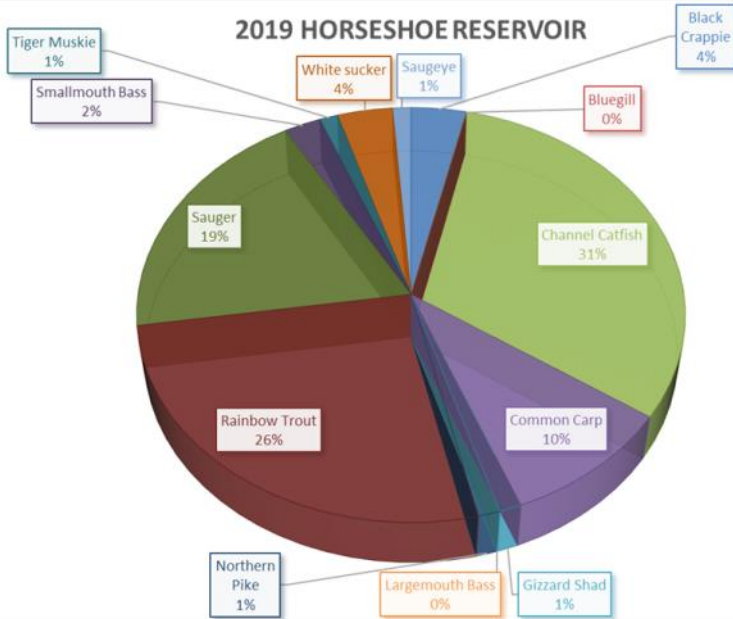
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FISH SAMPLING DATA

2019 FALL SAMPLING

Fall sampling, completed in October, involved the use of four gillnets set overnight.

	# Caught	CPUE	Length (in)		Weight (lb)		PSD	Relative Weight
		Fish/net	Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)		
Black Crappie (BCR)	3	0.75	7.6	(5.2-11.8)	0.36	(0.08-0.88)	33.33	116.7
Channel Catfish (CCF)	26	6.5	11.2	(6.9-25.1)	0.88	(0.08-7.13)	42.86	97.5
Common Carp (CPP)	8	2	18.6	(16.8-20.6)	2.68	(2.25-3.62)	100	81.4
Gizzard Shad (GSD)	1	0.25	16.1	(16.1-16.1)	2.12	(2.12-2.12)	100	121.3
Northern Pike (NPK)	1	0.25	27.2	(27.2-27.2)	5.23	(5.23-5.23)	100	105.5
Rainbow Trout (RBT)	22	5.5	11.6	(9.7-19.8)	0.55	(0.26-2.45)	4.76	68.7
Saugeye (SAG)	1	0.25	23.7	(23.7-23.7)	5.52	(5.52-5.52)	100	103.4
Sauger (SGR)	16	4	14.4	(7.1-19.3)	1.09	(0.09-2.42)	100	90.8
Smallmouth Bass (SMB)	2	0.5	11.9	(11.8-12.1)	0.71	(0.70-0.71)	100	78.8
Tiger Muskie (TGM)	1	0.25	10.5	(10.5-10.5)	0.28	(0.28-0.28)	-	134.6
White Sucker (WHS)	3	0.75	15.9	(14.2-17.2)	1.79	(1.19-2.14)	100	98.8
Total	84	21						



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FISH SURVEY DATA AND 2020 FORECAST



SAUGER

Horseshoe offers a rare opportunity in the State of Colorado to catch “pure” sauger AND to take home a state record. The current state record sauger was caught in Horseshoe Reservoir in 2011 by Jeff Riddle (3.5 lbs, 21.5 inches). The sauger population in this reservoir is moderate, with many mid- to large-sized fish. 16 sauger were caught in 2019 gill-nets at an average of 14 inches in length and 1.09 pounds. The number and quality of fish captured seem to have improved from 2018. Anglers primarily catch sauger in June and July. Sauger prefer rocky substrate and can be caught using a variety of bass or walleye techniques. Please be aware of the consumption advisory for sauger due to mercury contamination (see page 1).



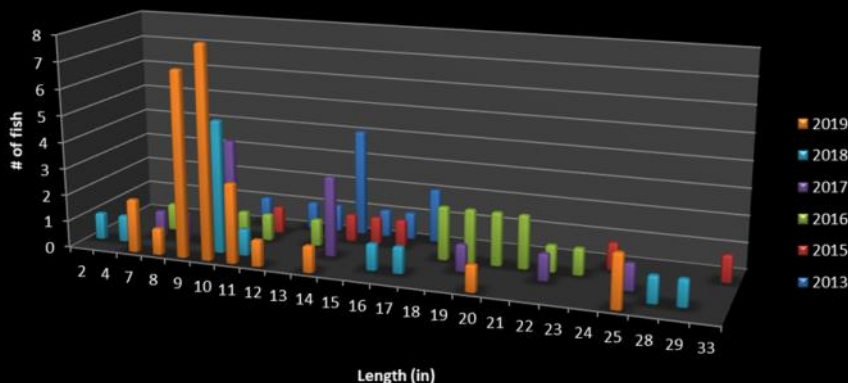
Identification of sauger. Sauger are characterized by dark blotches on the side of the body that extend to

the belly of the fish, distinct circular spots in the spiny dorsal fin (see 1) with *no black blotch on the small end of the dorsal fin* (see 2). There is **NOT** a white blotch on the caudal fin (which you see in walleye and saugeye), although a light leading edge is sometimes observed (see 3).

CHANNEL CATFISH

Horseshoe has channel catfish and the population is relatively small, but slowly increasing, and there are a some decent sized fish present. Catfish anglers are successful throughout the season, with the peak in August and September. Anglers with the persistence to catch catfish should catch low numbers of high quality fish in 2020 and decent numbers of mid-sized fish. Use common catfish techniques to be successful. The average length sampled in 2019 gillnets was 11.2 inches and 0.88 pounds. Black bullhead are also common in Horseshoe Reservoir. The population seems to be rebuilding with smaller fish present in larger numbers.

Channel Catfish Length Frequencies





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BLACK CRAPPIE AND BASS

Crappie have been stocked as approximately 1 inch fish into Horseshoe Reservoir since 2009. Low water levels may hinder their growth and survival in past years, and 2018 was a drought year. The population of crappie may have been affected by this lower water. Anglers who are willing to work for them could see decent catches in 2020.

Horseshoe has a good fishery for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. Horseshoe Reservoir was sampled in August of 2019 by shoreline seining, but no fish were sampled. In 2018, sampling via shoreline seining indicated many small bass and crappie are present. Forage fish for juvenile and adult bass appears to be decent as well. Some largemouth are in the 6 pound range and the occasional smallmouth in the 3 pound range are caught. Anglers catch the most bass in June, July, and September. Largemouth bass often reach 18 inches, and smallmouth bass typically reach 10 to 11 inches in length. Fishing should be moderate for bass in 2020. Please note that there is a health advisory for smallmouth bass in Horseshoe Reservoir (see page 1).

TIGER MUSKIE

Tiger muskies are important to Horseshoe as they help control the number of white suckers. They are stocked in low numbers and reach large sizes. These fish are not currently produced in Colorado and come from other states when available. They have been stocked since 2014. In 2019, most tiger muskies were medium sized, with several very large fish available. These fish cannot be harvested until they reach 36" in length. They are an important management tool in Horseshoe Reservoir and improve other sport fishing opportunities. Most anglers catch these fish from shore in June and July. Several large northern pike have been sampled since 2017 with one at 27" caught in 2019. These fish were most likely transplanted from Martin Lake. These fish are NOT wanted and are detrimental to the fish population. **Please do not transplant northern pike into Horseshoe Reservoir!!**

RAINBOW TROUT

Trout fishing is a staple for the reservoir. Trout are heavily stocked as 10 inch fish from March to November every year, with the exception of mid-summer months when water temperatures preclude stocking. 22 rainbow trout were caught during gillnet sampling, but they were not stocked for several months before sampling. Typically trout range in size between 10 to 18 inches. Many trout are caught at 14 inches, particularly in the spring after ice-off. Trout fishing will continue to be good in 2020. They can be caught from both shore and boats while casting or trolling.

Anglers should look to catch rainbow trout and cuttbow trout throughout the summer fishing season, with the best catch rates in May and June.

Gillnetting Relative Abundance w/o Trout

