



# Turquoise Reservoir

## FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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**General Information:** Turquoise Reservoir, a 1789 acre impoundment, offers good fishing for brown, rainbow, cutthroat and lake trout. The reservoir has excellent amenities and is located in one of the most scenic areas in Colorado. To view map go to <http://maps.google.com/maps>

**Location:** Lake County. Located on the Lake Fk of the Arkansas River 4 miles west of Leadville, Colorado.

**Recreational Management:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife (719-530-5520) and USFS (719-486-0749).

**Fishery Management:** Coldwater angling for brown, rainbow, cutthroat and lake trout.

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

### Amenities and General Info.

- Boat Ramps (2)
- Picnic Areas (3)
- Campgrounds (8)
- Restrooms at most sites
- Trail on east and north side of lake

### Regulations

- The bag and possession limit for lake trout is 2.
- Statewide bag and possession limits apply for other species (see CPW Fishery Brochure).

### **WARNING!!!**

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

- **Clean, drain, and dry your boat after each use.**
- **Turquoise Reservoir requires mandatory inspections at Matchless Ramp before launching.**

### Previous Stocking

#### 2019

Rainbow Trout  
Brown Trout

#### 2018

Rainbow Trout  
Cutbow Trout  
Brown Trout

#### 2017

Rainbow Trout  
Cutbow Trout

#### 2016

Rainbow Trout  
Brown Trout

### Sportfishing Notes

#### Rainbow/Cutthroat Trout

- Angler catch and satisfaction has improved dramatically since 2007 with the resumption of catchable (10 inch +) trout stocking. They are stocked from June through September. Large fish are occasionally caught.

#### Brown Trout

- Brown trout fishing is improving with fish over 20 inches occasionally taken.

#### Lake Trout

- Abundant population with most under 20 inches. More fish over 30 inches collected in recent years and they were in excellent condition. Turquoise is a good place to catch an often difficult to catch species.



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## 2017 LAKE SURVEY DATA

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### 2017 Gillnetting Survey

Species	#Caught	Average Length and (Range) in Inches	Average Weight (lbs.)
Longnose Sucker	235	12.4 (5.0-16.4)	0.31
Brown Trout	100	11.1 (7-27.3)	0.53
Lake Trout	18	15.5 (8.0-26)	1.31
Rainbow Trout	14	11.2 (9.3-14.0)	0.49
Snakeriver Cutthroat	0	-	-
White Sucker	49	14.6 (6.9-20.5)	1.11



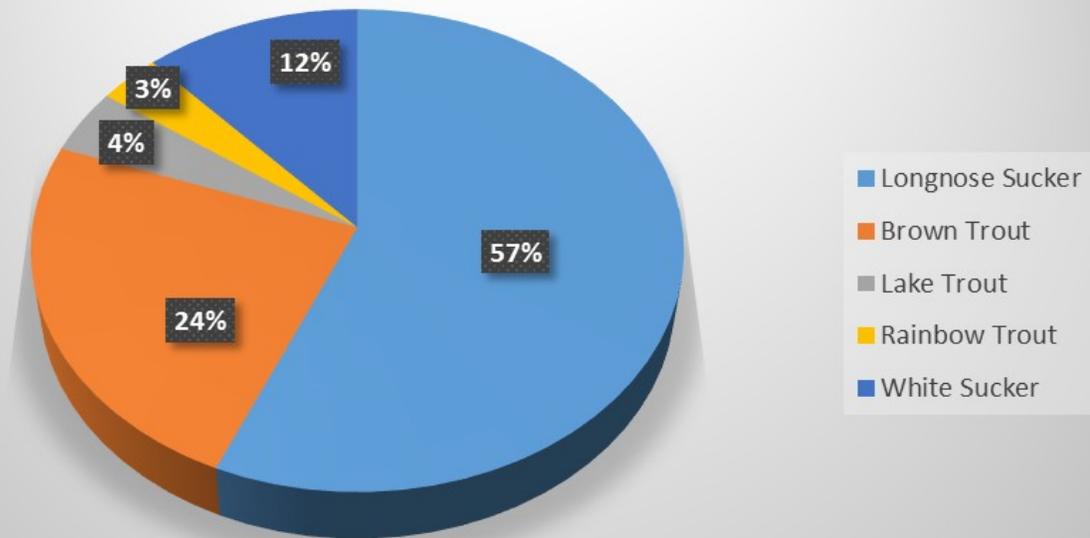
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## 2017 LAKE SURVEY DATA

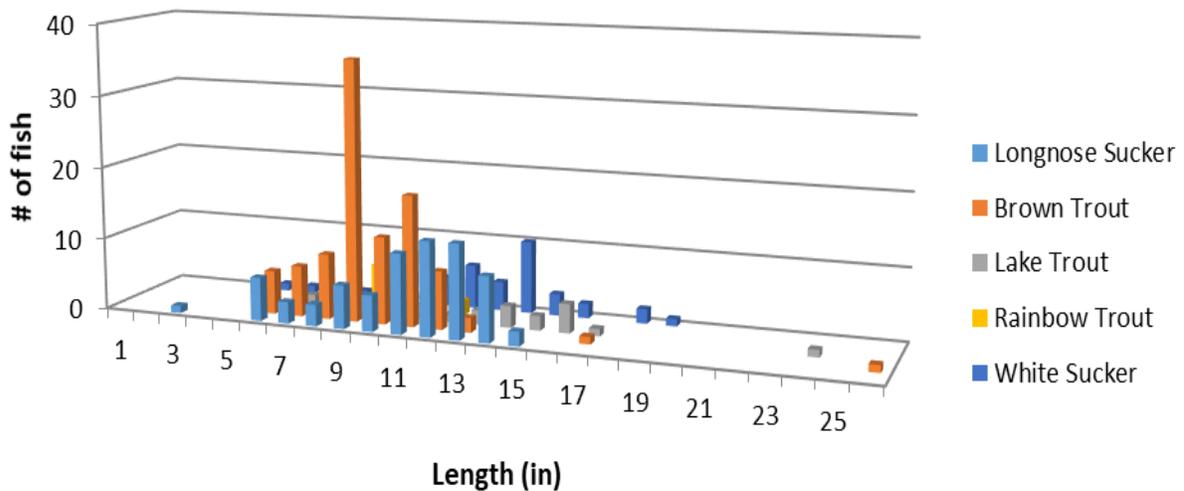
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### 2017 % Relative Abundance



### Gillnet Catch Length Frequencies





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## 2017 FISHING FORECAST

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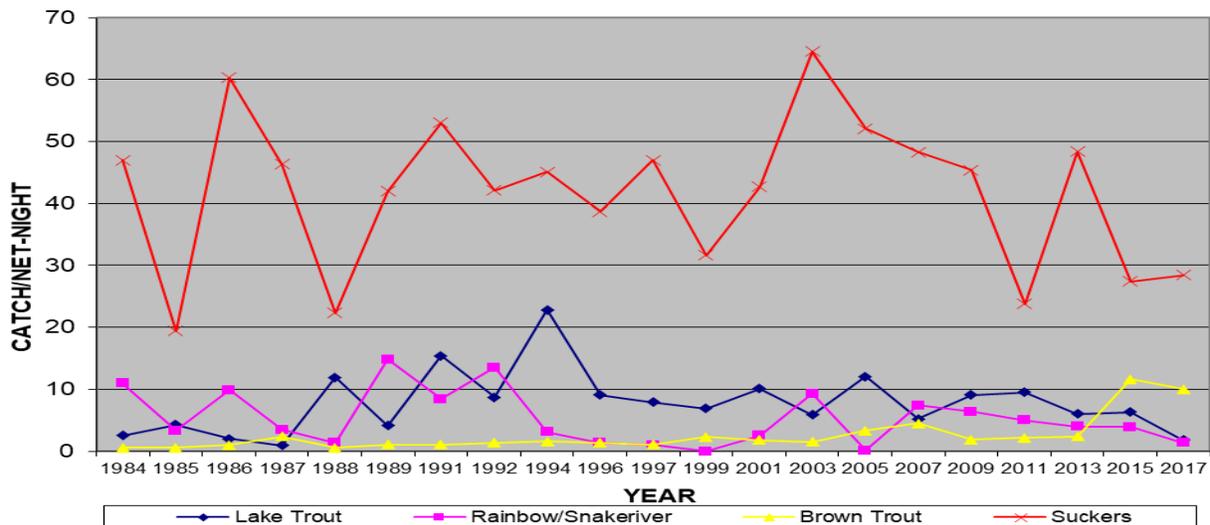
Turquoise Reservoir supports an abundant lake trout population. Although most are under 20 inches, they offer the opportunity for anglers to catch an often hard-to-catch species. An occasional large fish up to 40 inches is taken (see photo). Most shore anglers fish from the south and east shorelines and find good action for mackinaw in June before fish move to deeper water. Using downriggers from a boat is the key to catching lake trout as the summer progresses. The bag limit for lake trout is two fish with no size restrictions.

Catchable-sized (10+ inch) trout stocking resumed in 2007 and will continue in the future. They are stocked from June through early September. These fish have dramatically improved fishing at Turquoise Reservoir. Typical baits, flies, and lures for trout should be used. Brown trout catch rates increased significantly in recent years, and they average 11" in length. An occasional large brown trout up to 30 inches is landed at Turquoise.



Abundant facilities (e.g. numerous campgrounds, one open boat ramp with inspection) and scenic vistas make this one of the most enjoyable places to fish in the State. Water level should be normal in 2020 and fishing is predicted to be good. A watercraft inspection program was initiated at this reservoir in 2009 and continues today. Go to <http://wildlife.state.co.us/Fishing/MandatoryBoatInspections.htm> for an inspection schedule for 2015.

**TURQUOISE RESERVOIR CATCH/GILL NET-NIGHT, 1984-2017**





# Turquoise Reservoir MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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Turquoise Reservoir is part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas water development project, which delivers large volumes of water from the west to the east slope of Colorado. Other projects also deliver water to Turquoise such as Home-stake and Busk/Ivanhoe. This imported water is very soft (low hardness). Turquoise has a high flushing rate and fluctuates considerably. Primary and secondary production is relatively low, translating into limited food supplies for fish species. Highest production occurs in the warmer months of July and August in the shallows. Thermal stratification at this time, coupled with major adjustments in water levels, increases flushing of nutrients from the reservoir. These habitat limitations impact the number and size of fish the lake can produce. Maintaining lake levels and controlling flushing rates is critical for successful fishery management, particularly for lake trout and its life stages. Fish management is difficult under these circumstances and it is a challenge to find the optimum balance between predators and prey while maximizing the quality of the fishing experience.

Turquoise Reservoir produces few lake trout over 18 inches, but good numbers are present under this size. Past information shows that minimum or slot limit restrictions will not result in significant numbers of mackinaw over 18 inches. Consequently, the mackinaw regulation was changed in 1996 to allow for increased utilization of small mackinaw by anglers. The bag limit increased from one to two fish with no size restrictions. Lake trout number less than 15 inches has generally declined since 1994 while fish abundance from 15-22 inches has increased. It appears the current lake trout regulation has not negatively affected overall abundance or size distribution. Ecological factors and forage abundance are probably the most important factors affecting mackinaw viability. Lake trout growth and recruitment may be improving because of the resumption of annual catchable (10 inch) trout stocking since 2007.



Trout gill net catch is closely tied to catchable stocking/timing.

Sucker gill net catch has declined in recent years, compared to the very high rates seen in the early 2000's.

Current management appears to maintain balance in the fishery. Creel census was conducted at Turquoise Reservoir in 2012. Fishing use, catch, and satisfaction improved dramatically in 2012. Catchable trout accounted for most of the angling and are a critical component of this fishery. The majority of anglers (72%) support maintaining the current lake trout daily bag limit.