



# Twin Lakes Reservoirs

## FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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**General Information:** Twin Lakes Reservoirs have a combined surface area of 2700 acres. They offer good fishing for brown, rainbow, and cutthroat trout with trophy lake trout potential. The reservoir has excellent amenities and is nestled at the base of Mt. Elbert and the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area. To view map go to <http://maps.google.com/maps>

**Location:** Chaffee County. Located at the mouth of Lake Creek northwest of Granite, 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 (1)
- Campgrounds (3)
- Restrooms at most sites
- Trail around most of lake
- Abundant fishing access

### Regulations

- The bag and possession limit for lake trout is 1. Lake trout 22-34 inches long must be returned to the water immediately.
- 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.
- Twin Lakes Reservoirs require mandatory inspections at Dexter Point Ramp before launching.

### Previous Stocking

#### 2019

Rainbow Trout  
Brown Trout

#### 2018

Rainbow Trout  
Cutbow Trout

#### 2017

Rainbow Trout  
Cutbow Trout  
Lake Trout

#### 2016

Rainbow Trout

### Sportfishing Notes

#### Rainbow/Cutthroat Trout

- Trout action has picked up in recent years. They average 13 inches with fish up to 20 inches taken. Catchables (10+ inch) are stocked from June through September.

#### Lake Trout

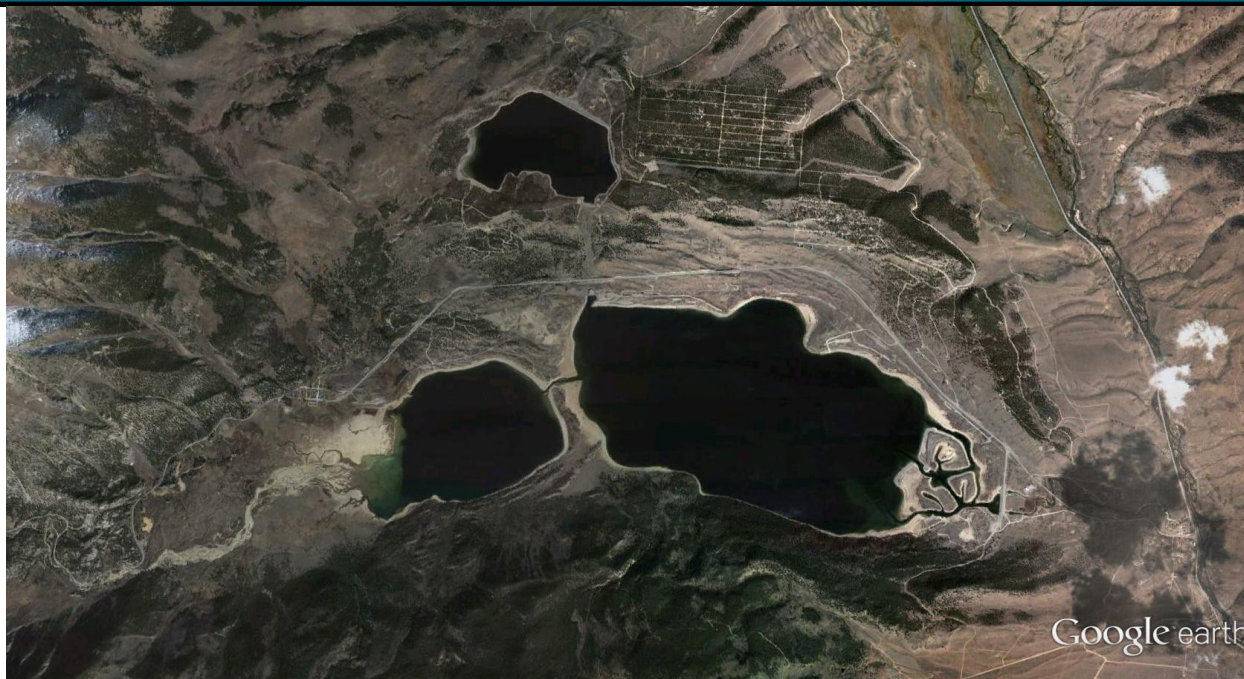
- Lake trout average 19 inches with fish in the 40 inch class becoming more abundant. Some of the best action can be found casting large Rap-pallas at ice-out near the hydropower plant, where the upper lake enters the lower lake, or around submerged rock piles. Fishing from a boat with downriggers in the summer using lures or deep water jigs tipped with sucker meat works well. Ice angling is popular in the winter using jigs tipped with sucker meat.



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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.)
Longnose Sucker	46	9.5 (4.5-14.8)	0.33
Brown Trout	10	14.5 (11.8-16.7)	1.08
Lake Trout	63	19.1 (8.2-38.0)	3.42
Rainbow Trout	195	12.4 (10.0-15.4)	0.68
Snakeriver Cutthroat	0	-	-
White Sucker	134	13.0 (9.1-18.9)	1.37

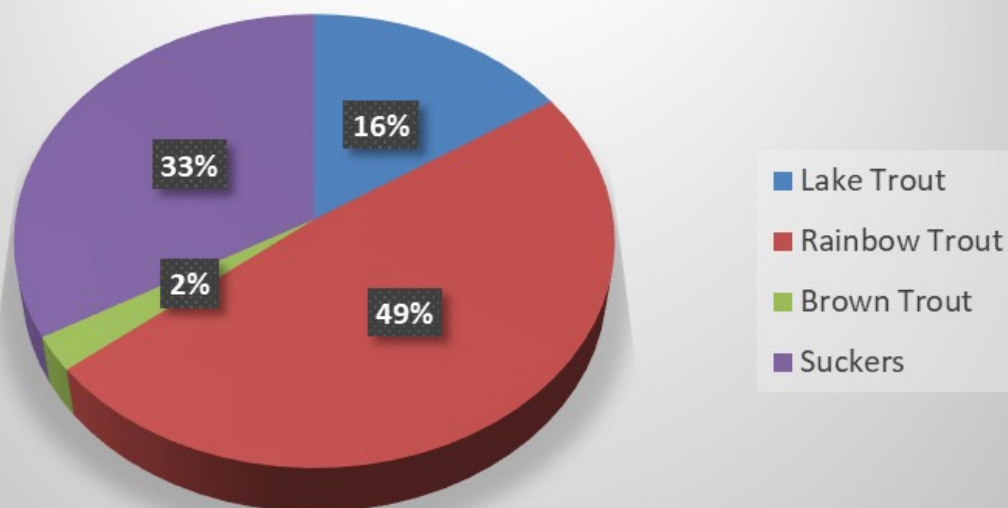


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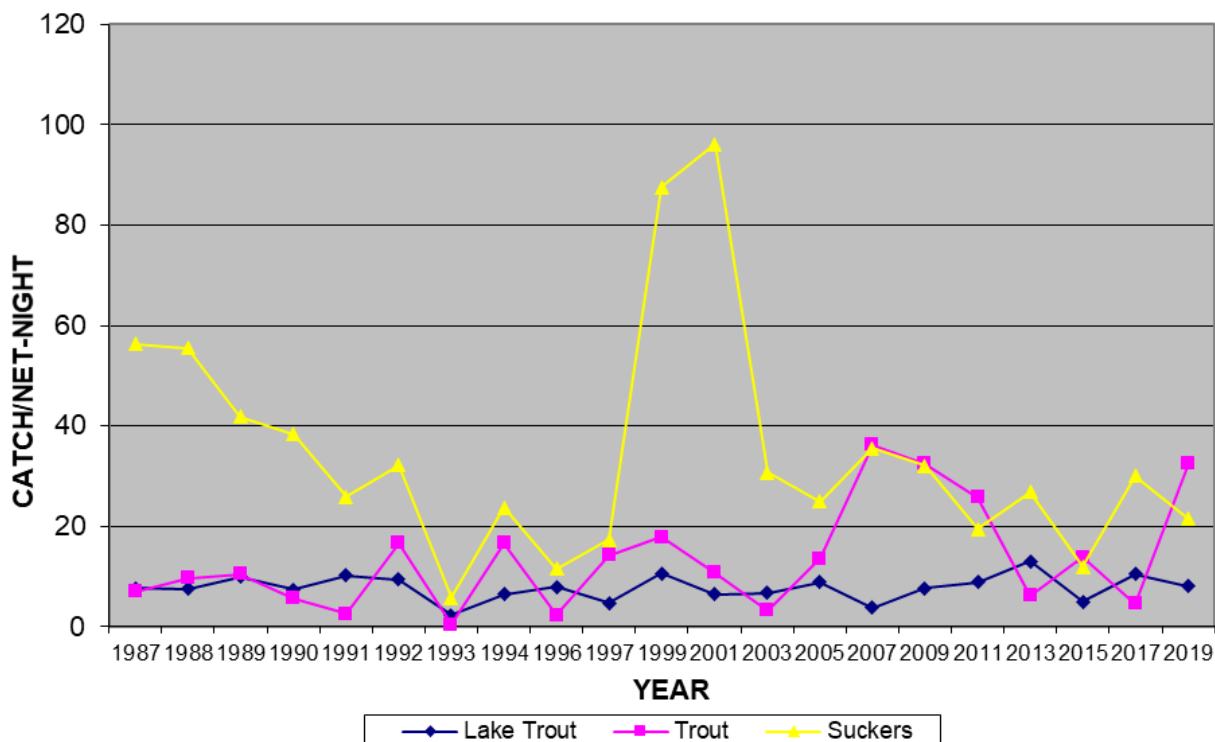
## 2019 LAKE SURVEY DATA

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### 2019 Percent Relative Abundance



### TWIN LAKES CATCH/GILL NET-NIGHT, 1987-2019







# **Twin Lakes Reservoirs**

## **2019 FISHING FORECAST**

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Twin Lakes is once again producing trophy lake trout! They average just under 19 inches but large, fat fish like the one shown (next page) are becoming increasingly common. These large fish were not stocked. Several hundred lake trout were stocked in 2017 from Blue Mesa Reservoir but they averaged 22 inches and none were over 30 inches. Some of the best action can be found at ice-out near the hydropower plant, where the upper lake enters the lower lake, or around submerged rock piles. Casting large Rapallas seems to work best. Fishing from a boat with downriggers produces the best catch as the summer progresses when mackinaw have moved to deeper water. Lures or deep water jigging with tube jigs tipped with sucker meat also works well at this time. Ice angling is popular in the winter using jigs tipped with sucker meat.

Trout action has picked up in recent years and is consistent from ice-out well into the fall. They average 12 inches with fish up to 20 inches taken. 2019 produced a surprising number of trophy sized brown trout, as pictured below. Catchable trout are stocked from early June through September. Twin Lakes offer good fishing in an exceptional mountain setting. One concrete boat ramp is available in the lower lake and two campgrounds are found nearby. Water level should be normal in 2020 and fishing should be good to excellent.

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 2020.





# Twin lakes Reservoirs MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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Twin Lakes Reservoirs are part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas water development project, which delivers large volumes of water from the west to the east slope of Colorado. A pump-back hydropower facility operates on the lower lake. Twin Lakes fluctuates considerably and experiences a high flushing rate. These reservoir operations appear to be adversely affecting the aquatic ecosystem. Primary and secondary production is relatively low in Twin Lakes resulting in limited food supplies for fish species from the base of the food chain all the way up to lake trout. Based on current conditions in Twin Lakes Reservoirs, the opportunity to manage the lakes for a lake trout sport fishery are limited both by reduction in carrying capacity of the ecosystem and constant disruption of the environmental factors that would contribute to increased productivity, i.e., non-fluctuating water surface elevation, less induced mixing of the euphotic zone, or increased hydraulic residence time.

Mackinaw gill net catch has remained historically low but size structure has improved since 2009 with more well conditioned fish found within and above the protected slot. The BOR has tended to evacuate storage in anticipation for west slope imports earlier in the spring the last five years. They agreed in 2009 to move water down the Arkansas River prior to March, whenever possible, to enhance trout growth in the river in the spring prior to runoff. Coincidentally, this practice has resulted in decreased water movement and fluctuation at Twin Lakes in the spring prior to storage of water from the west slope likely enhancing biotic production and may explain, at least in part, the improvement in lake trout size structure and fitness. Historically, water was evacuated just prior to west slope water imports causing a large change in volume over a short period of time.



Trout gill net catch is closely tied to catchable stocking. Catch of fish longer than 12 inches has improved in recent years. Creel census was conducted at Twin Lakes Reservoirs in 2013. Rainbow trout comprised 95% of the total catch in 2013, demonstrating their importance to the fishery.

The carrying capacity of this reservoir is limited making fishery management of this large reservoir difficult. The reservoir cannot support many fish and it is challenging to find the optimum balance between predators and prey while maximizing the quality of the fishing experience. The current lake trout fishing regulation (one fish bag and possession limit, all fish 22-34 inches long must be released) has been in effect since 1990. It serves to protect mackinaw from harvest once they enter the slot while allowing for limited harvest outside the slot. A low density population is desired due to habitat limitations and the objective of maximizing the number of large fish. Approximately 28% of anglers target mackinaw and the current harvest rate is less than 10%. This harvest rate is minor and given low numbers and improving size structure it makes biological sense to maintain the current regulation at this time. Anglers supported this management recommendation throughout the 2010 regulation review process and the 2013 angler survey showed their reluctance to increase the bag limit if the possibility of reducing the number of large fish existed.