



Wolford Mountain Reservoir

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

Jon Ewert - Aquatic Biologist (Hot Sulphur Springs)

General Information: Wolford Mountain Reservoir, a 1550- acre storage reservoir, is owned and operated by the Colorado River Water Conservation District. It provides good fishing for rainbow and brown trout, kokanee salmon and a few other assorted species. Boats need to pass an Aquatic Nuisance Species inspection prior to launch. To expedite this process, be sure your boat is clean, drained and dry when you arrive. For park hours, fees, and other information: http://www.crwcd.org/page_21

Location: Approximately 5 miles north of Kremmling, CO on US highway 40.

Recreational Management: Colorado River Water Conservation District (see link above)

Fishery Management: Cold water species

Amenities and General Info.

- Boat Ramps (1)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Swim Beach
- Marina

Regulations

- Standard harvest regulations for trout (4 fish daily bag/8 fish in possession) and kokanee salmon (10 fish).
- Snagging for kokanee salmon is not permitted.
- Public access, including fishing, is prohibited within 150 feet of any kokanee spawning trap or wing net from October 1- December 1. The purpose of this regulation is to maximize CPW's kokanee egg collection efforts.

Previous Stocking

2015

Species	Size	Number
Brown trout	2"	64,000
Rainbow trout	4"	109,728
Rainbow trout	10"	14,036
Kokanee	1.5"	100,326

2014

Species	Size	Number
Brown trout	2"	52,015
Rainbow trout	3"	100,000
Rainbow trout	10"	15,065
Kokanee	1.5"	100,000

2013

Species	Size	Number
Brown trout	2"	24,877
Snake River cutthroat	6"	8,000
Rainbow trout	3"	107,633
Rainbow trout	10"	15,000
Kokanee	1.5"	195,734

Sportfishing Notes

Rainbow trout

- Fishing is generally good year round using traditional baits.

Brown trout

- Once fish reach approximately 14", the brown trout in Wolford appear to switch to feeding on mostly crayfish, which are abundant in this lake. As a result, their body condition improves as they get larger.

Kokanee Salmon

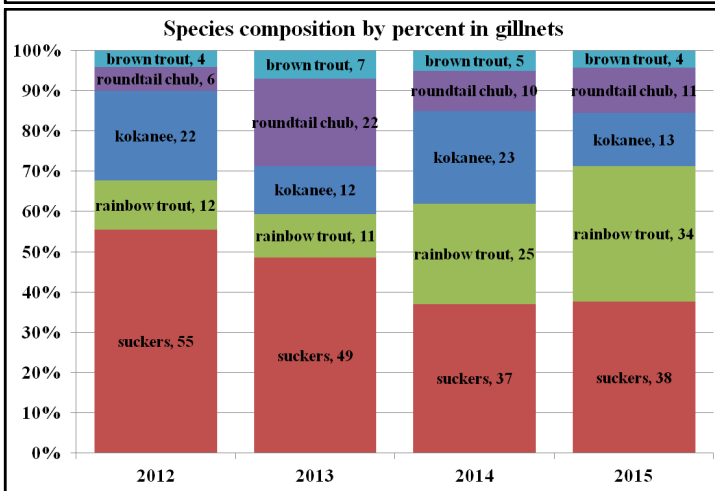
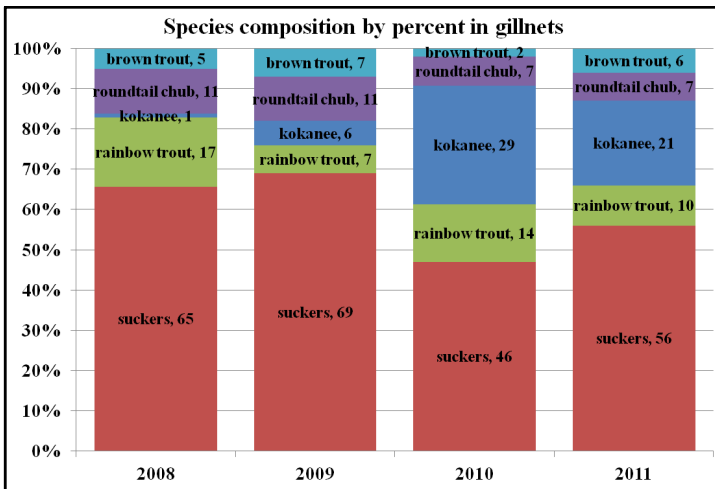
- Angers have been finding spawning kokanee in the fall in coves along the west side of the lake.
- Trolling in the open-water portion of the lake for kokanee during the summer has been successful in recent years.
- Post-spawn ice fishing for kokanee can be good as well.

Northern pike

- Northern pike appear to have been illegally introduced to the lake in recent years
- **The River District is offering a \$20 harvest incentive for any pike caught in the lake.**

Wolford Mountain Reservoir

Annual lake survey data
Jon Ewert - aquatic biologist



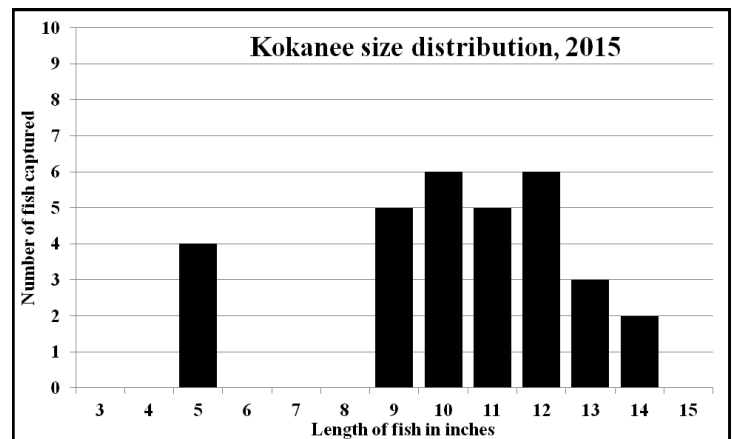
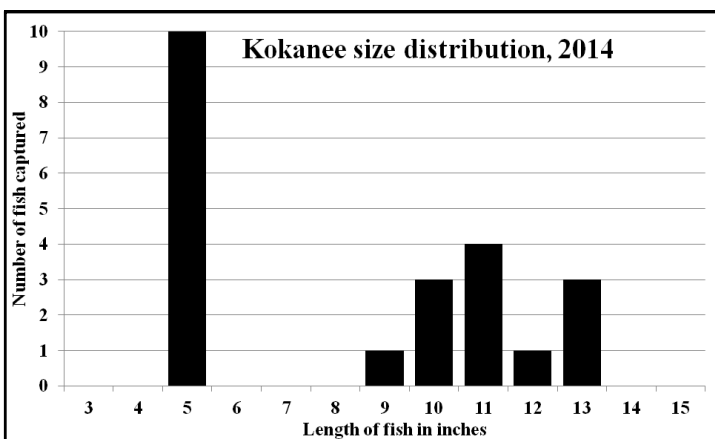
The graphs on the left display the species composition of annual spring gillnet sampling in Wolford. Kokanee fingerlings have been stocked annually since 2006. Wolford continues to develop into one of the most productive kokanee fisheries in the state.

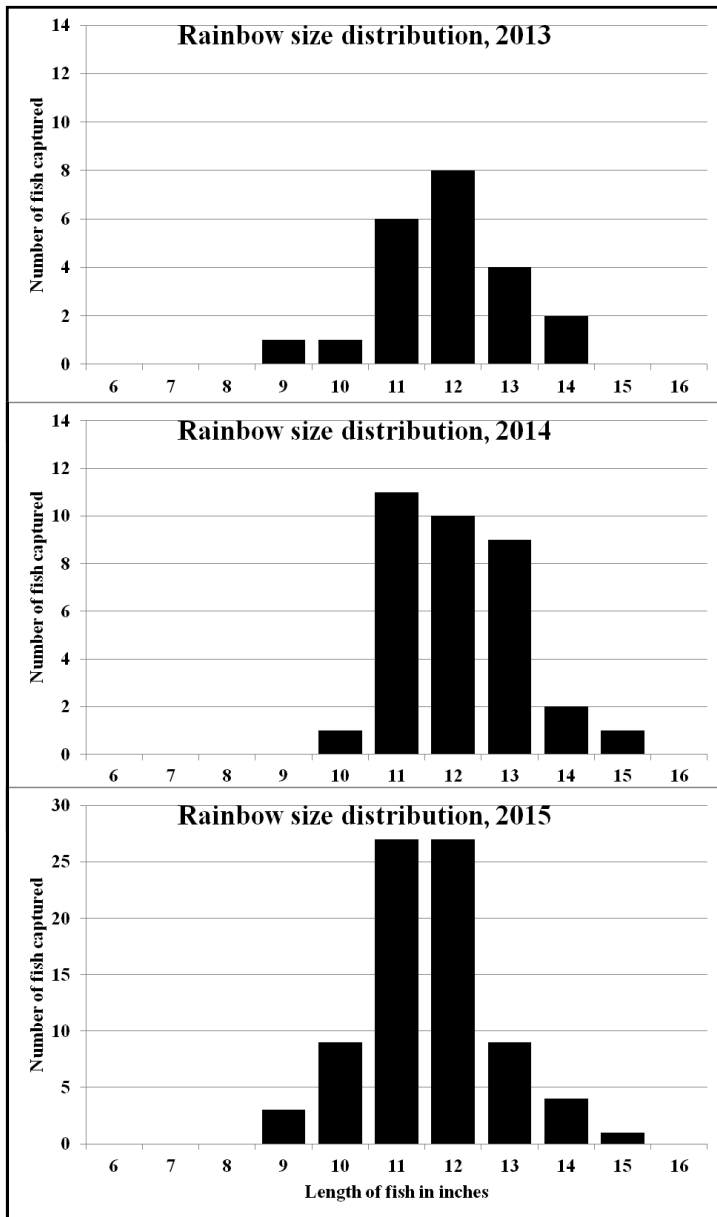
Developing a high density of brown trout in the reservoir continues to be a struggle, but the ones that are there can grow to large sizes using the abundant crayfish in the lake as forage. Brown trout fingerlings are stocked annually.

Because of the promise Wolford has shown as a kokanee lake in recent years, in 2011 the number of kokanee stocked in the reservoir was increased from 50,000 to 100,000. We stocked 100,000 again in 2012. The number of kokanee stocked in 2013 was increased to nearly 200,000 (see stocking records on previous page). The reason for this was that there were extra fish available that year. This was a one-time increase to see how a number this large would fare in the lake. The danger with overstocking kokanee is that if densities are too high they can become stunted. The 5" group appearing in the 2014 graph below is from that increased 2013 plant. This was the highest number of juvenile kokanee that we have captured in gillnets at Wolford, and the 5" bar on the 2014 graph actually extends upward to 20 fish of that size that we captured. In 2015, we saw the 2013 plant advance to the 10" size range and bolster the number of adult fish. It is important to remember that these gillnet samples occur in the spring. Therefore, the group of juvenile fish that is 5" in the gillnet sample can be expected to advance to approximately 9" by

the end of that summer and 10" by the following year's gillnet survey. 2016 kokanee fishing should remain good or even better than in the past, due to the large 2013 year class that will advance into the 12" range this year. Because of the apparent success of the larger 2013 year class, in 2016 we will increase the number of kokanee stocked to 120,000 and assess if this number strikes a balance between density of fish in the reservoir and maintaining good growth rates.

For the first time in 2012, CPW harvested kokanee eggs at Wolford. Approximately 1.9 million eggs were taken, which bolsters our statewide supply of kokanee available to stock. This egg collection effort was continued in 2013 (675,000 eggs harvested) and 2014 (1.8 million eggs harvested) and in 2015 for the first time we collected over 2 million eggs. Spawn operations will continue there permanently.





At left is the size distribution of rainbow trout caught in the spring gillnets over the past three years. In 2013, approximately 1,200 catchable rainbow trout had been stocked prior to the survey, but in 2014 no fish had been stocked prior. Therefore, the 2014 sample consists entirely of fish that overwintered in the lake. The 2013 sample may consist of a combination of fish that overwintered and fish that were recently stocked.

In 2013, a large number (approximately 10,000) of Hofer-Harrison (HXH) strain rainbow trout were stocked after September 1. The reason for this is that the state hatchery system tends to hit a bottleneck of production in May and June (when the vast majority of requests for stocking occur). Later in the year, more fish are available but there is less demand, so fish are stocked in the lakes that fell behind schedule earlier in the summer.

In many of our large reservoirs, if catchable-sized rainbow trout are stocked in the fall they essentially disappear and are not seen again. However, the 2014 data at left reveals that fall stocking of catchable trout may be a successful strategy at Wolford. The fish that were stocked in September of 2013 overwintered well, grew at least 2 inches on average, and were available for spring anglers. The percentage of rainbow trout in the total 2014 gillnet catch was about twice what it has been in previous years (see charts on previous page).

Because of the success of the fall 2013 rainbows, we repeated the strategy in 2014. These fish appear in the spring 2015 graph at left. Note the increased scale on the x-axis of the graph. The 2015 sample yielded the highest percentage of rainbow trout in the survey to date. We plan to continue the fall rainbow stocking strategy at Wolford indefinitely.

Roundtail chub

Wolford is also home to the only known reservoir-dwelling population of roundtail chub (pictured at right) in the state. This is a native species of the minnow family, with a range extending far down the Colorado River beyond the Grand Canyon. Anglers are encouraged to release roundtails caught in Wolford, so the species can continue to persist there.

