



Carter Lake

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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General: Carter Lake, an 1100 acre storage reservoir, offers good fishing for trophy walleye and rainbow trout. Anglers occasionally catch lake trout, splake, and largemouth bass. For park hours, fees, boat inspection hours, and other information: <http://www.co.larimer.co.us/parks/carter.htm>

Location: Larimer county. Go 5 miles W of Loveland on HWY 34, then S 2 miles on CR 29, then W 2 miles of CR 18E then follow signage.

Recreational Management: Larimer County Parks and Open Lands (970-679-4570)

Fishery Management: Cold water angling with trophy walleye

Purchase a Fishing License: <http://wildlife.state.co.us/ShopDOW/AppsAndLicenses/>

Amenities and General Info.

- Boat Ramps (3)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Swim Beach
- Marina
- Hiking trails

Fishing Regulations

- All walleye longer than 21 inches must be returned to the water immediately.
- Daily bag for walleye is 3 fish 21 inches or less in length.
- Possession limit is 5 walleye.

- No saugeye are present in this lake.

- Possession of cleaned fillets onboard a boat is illegal.

- Minimum size for largemouth and smallmouth bass is 15".

- Snagging for Kokanee is permitted Oct. 1 - Dec. 31.

- No ice fishing.

Previous Stocking

2011

- Rainbow Trout
- Cuttbow
- Native Cutthroat
- Largemouth Bass
- Bluegill

2010

- Rainbow Trout
- Cuttbow
- Kokanee Salmon
- Bluegill

2009

- Rainbow Trout
- Cuttbow
- Snake River Cutthroat

2008

- Rainbow Trout
- Cuttbow
- Kokanee Salmon

Sportfishing Notes

Walleye

- The special walleye regulation gives anglers an opportunity to catch, photograph, and release a trophy, while allowing the DOW to run an egg take operation that, when needed, can supply other Colorado waters with thousands of young walleye.
- Naturally reproducing population.
- Fish are difficult to locate given the large amount of rock habitat but jiggging crawlers and casting rainbow rapalas are good baits.

Rainbow Trout

- Trout fishing is generally fair year round using traditional baits. Walleye have eaten many of the stocked trout.

Kokanee Salmon

- Walleye have eaten the vast majority of the kokanee.
- Given the poor survival, kokanee are no longer stocked in Carter.



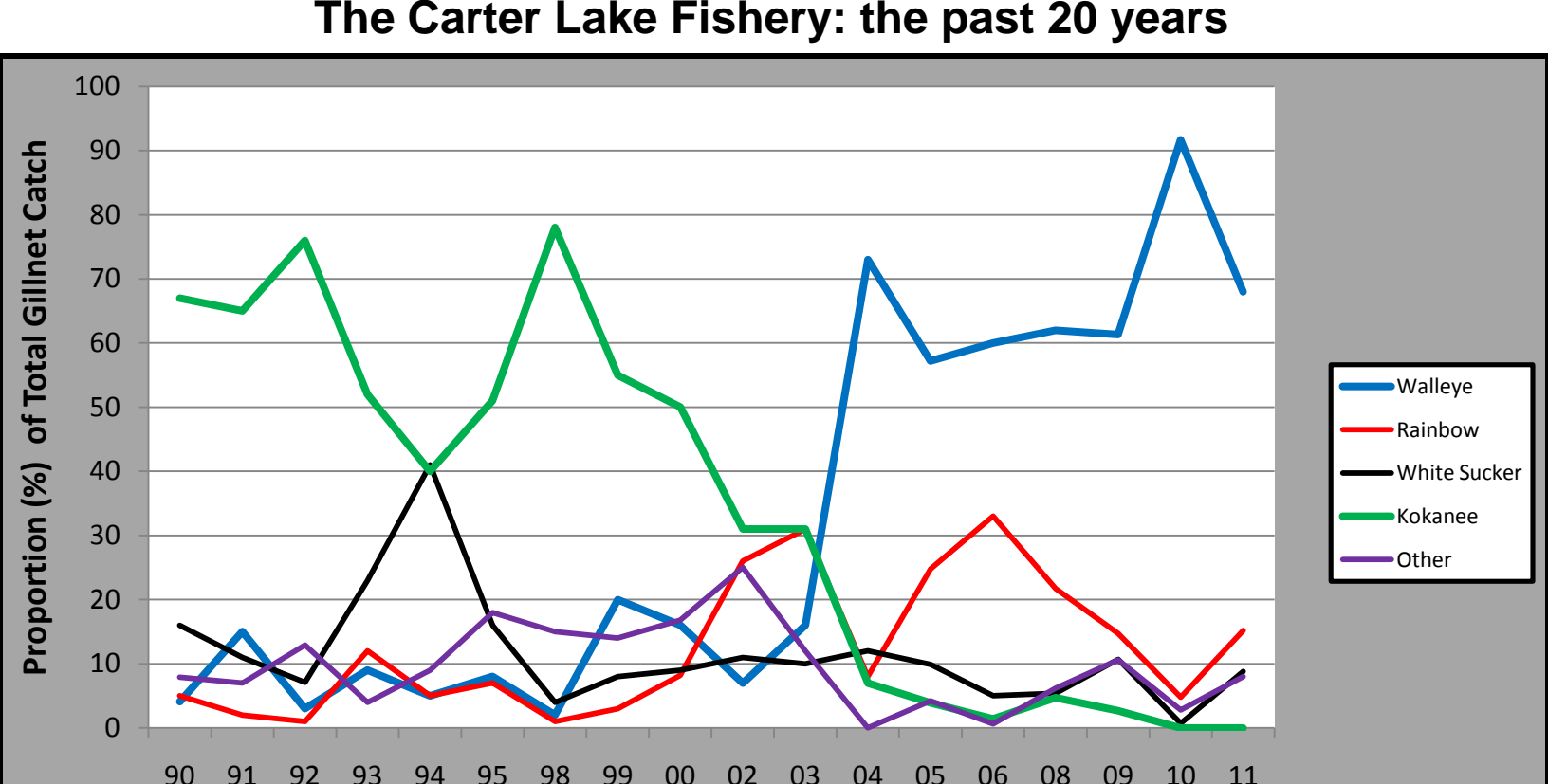
2011 Gillnetting Survey (10/28/2011)

Fall 2011 Gillnet Survey Species	# Caught (7 gillnets)	Proportion Total Catch	Average Length and (Range) in inches	Average Weight (lbs)
Walleye	85	68.0%	19.0 (8 - 30)	3.82
Rainbow Trout	19	15.2%	12.4 (10 - 14)	0.82
Lake Trout	2	1.6%	28.0 (23 - 33)	10.55
Largemouth Bass	7	5.6%	10.5 (8 - 14)	0.67
White Sucker	11	8.8%	17.3 (15 - 20)	2.24
Yellow Perch	1	0.8%	9	0.32

2010 Gillnetting Survey (10/28/2010)

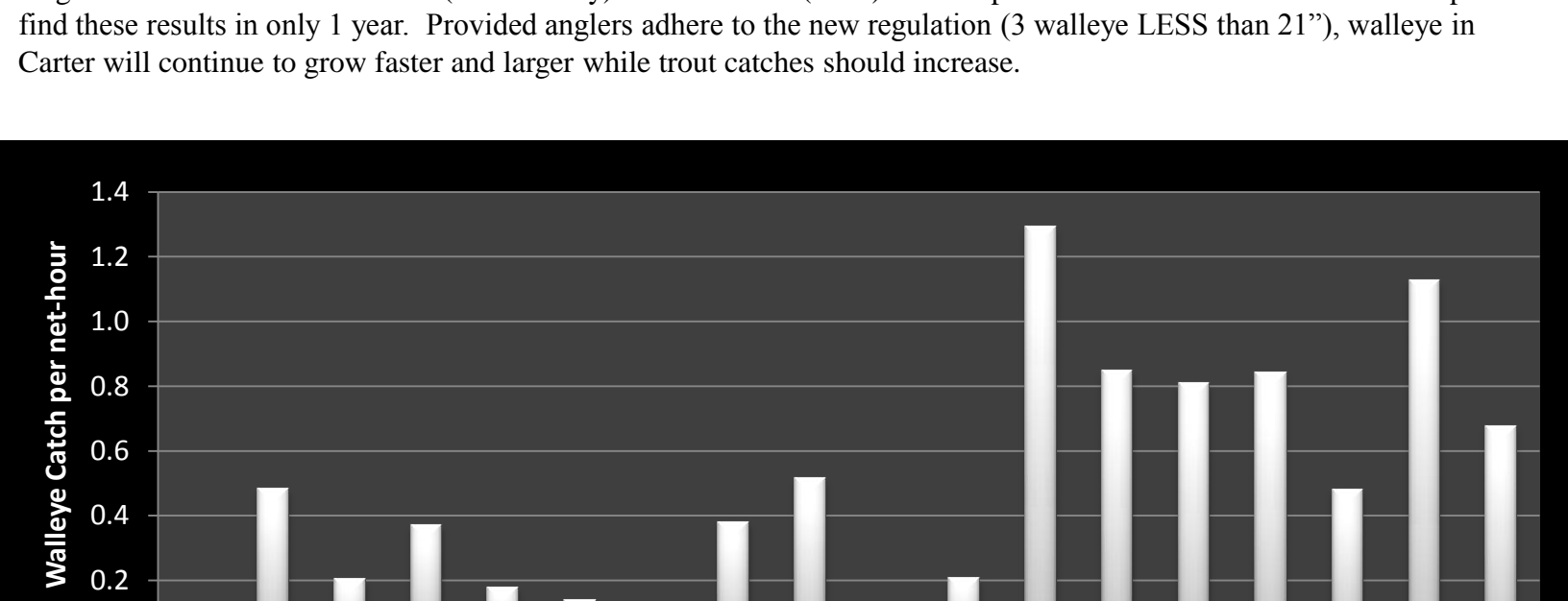
Fall 2010 Gillnet Survey Species	# Caught (7 gillnets)	Proportion Total Catch	Average Length and (Range) in inches	Average Weight (lbs)
Walleye	134	91.8%	15.6 (5 - 32)	1.8
Rainbow Trout	7	4.8%	19.2 (12 - 22)	3.46
Lake Trout	3	2.1%	26.9 (25 - 30)	7.77
White Sucker	1	0.7%	16.3	1.72
Yellow Perch	1	0.7%	11.9	0.82

The Carter Lake Fishery: the past 20 years

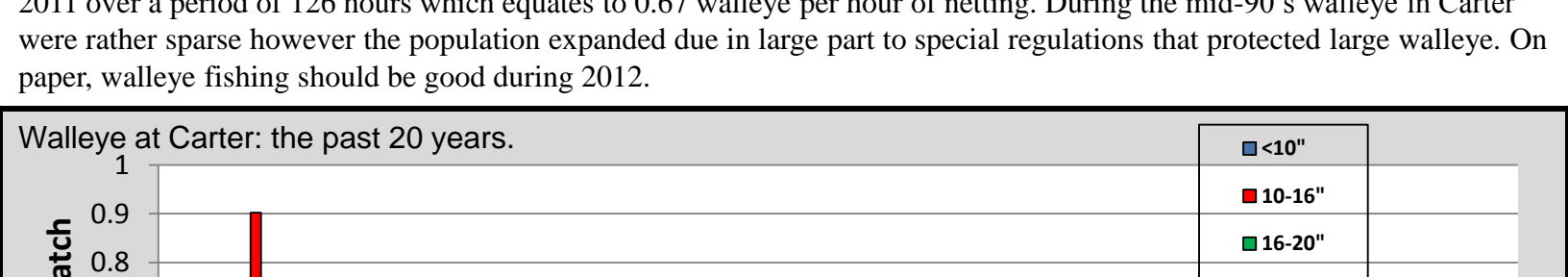


Graph 1 - above: The respective proportion of the total gillnet catch reflected by individual species over the past 21 years. The walleye population expanded in 2002 and beyond to a point which the reservoir could not naturally sustain. Upon consuming most of the naturally reproducing forage fish (white sucker and perch), walleye began consuming a substantially larger portion of stocked trout and kokanee salmon. Attempts to overcome walleye predation through stocking more trout and kokanee has failed miserably. For example, kokanee stocking was doubled in 2008 (250,626 fish) and the 2010 calendar year of stocking delivered 208,685 rainbow trout totaling 11,828 pounds. Zero kokanee and only 7 rainbow trout were identified in the 2010 annual survey. This approach artificially pushed walleye abundance well beyond the carrying capacity of the reservoir. Although kokanee will no longer be stocked in Carter, a full complement of trout will continue to be planted as we evaluate the effectiveness of the new regulation which allows anglers the opportunity to harvest more walleye (3 fish, 21 inch maximum size).

The 2011 survey, the first of its kind following the regulation change, suggests the new regulation is starting to balance the overall fishery. In short, walleye abundance has decreased while trout abundance has risen. Also, the average walleye length increased from 15.4 inches (2010 survey) to 19.0 inches (2011). I anticipated this result however I did not expect to find these results in only 1 year. Provided anglers adhere to the new regulation (3 walleye LESS than 21"), walleye in Carter will continue to grow faster and larger while trout catches should increase.



Graph 2 - above: Illustrates a closer look at the historic trend of walleye abundance in Carter Lake. Annual net sampling indicates overall walleye abundance has changed little in past 7 years. Represented is the number of walleye collected for each hour of gillnetting, by year. (standardizes catch rate across years). For example, a total 85 walleye were collected in 2011 over a period of 126 hours which equates to 0.67 walleye per hour of netting. During the mid-90's walleye in Carter were rather sparse however the population expanded due in large part to special regulations that protected large walleye. On paper, walleye fishing should be good during 2012.



Graph 3 - above: The proportion of annual fall gill net walleye catch classified by year and length (inches) category. Previously, Carter Lake had a slot limit of one walleye 16 to 20 inches long per day. The new regulation, effective January 1, 2011 increased a day's bag limit to three walleye; maximum size of 21 inches. The lower end of the slot limit has been eliminated. In other words, all walleye larger than 21 inches must be released but 3 walleye less than 21" can be kept. This regulation will reduce trout predation by the more abundant smaller walleye and actually speed the growth rate into the protected size limit. The results of the 2011 survey strongly indicates the regulation is already taking shape as the number of walleye measuring >21" has increased since 2010. The trophy walleye component along with the ability to run an egg take operation remains intact. For the 4th consecutive year a 30"+ walleye was sampled (photo below). I would expect the number of walleye exceeding 30" to expand in the future.

Trout - Anglers may find trout fishing a little better in Carter during 2012. Each year roughly 30,000 catchable-sized rainbow are stocked in Carter, however half the number of 10" trout were stocked in 2009 because of the extensive loss to walleye predation. With the implementation of the new regulation 30,000 10-inch and 50,000 3-inch rainbow trout were stocked during 2011. The same numbers will be stocked in 2012.

(Table Right). Results from a 1990 versus 2006 creel survey. During April-June, 1990 15,224 trout were caught, that fell to 1,756 trout during the same period in 2006. If trout fishing is slow, anglers might try Flatiron or Pinewood Reservoirs which are both minutes from Carter.

Creel '90 vs. '06	1990	2006
Angler Hours	23,949	14,417
Angler Days	5,987	4,253
RBT Catch/Hour	0.64	0.25
RBT Catch/Trip	2.56	0.85
Total RBT Catch	15,224	1,756
Total RBT Harvest	14,601	897
Mean RBT Length	11.8	12.3

