



# 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://parks.state.co.us/Parks/lathrop>.

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

**Recreational Management:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Area 11 wildlife office (719-561-5300) and Lathrop State Park office (719-561-9320)

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

### Amenities

- Boat Ramps (2)
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms

### Regulations

- Minimum size for large-mouth, 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: <http://wildlife.state.co.us/RulesRegs/RegulationsBrochures/>

### 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

#### 2011

Black Crappie  
Bluegill  
Channel Catfish  
Rainbow Trout  
Sauger

#### 2010

Black Crappie  
Bluegill  
Channel Catfish  
Cuttbow  
Rainbow Trout

#### 2009

Black Crappie  
Bluegill  
Channel Catfish  
Rainbow Trout

### Sportfishing Notes

#### Trout

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

#### Catfish

- Horseshoe has a sizeable population of channel catfish. Most of the fish are about 15" in length but some fish are in the 10-20 pound class.

#### Bass

- Horseshoe contains both large-mouth and smallmouth bass. Many techniques are used to catch these fish and they can be caught through all of the ice free season.

#### Tiger Muskie

- Horseshoe does yield some trophy tiger muskie to anglers with the patience to work for them. These fish are not numerous and are often unavailable for stocking.

### 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: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/FishCon/HorseshoeADVISORY.pdf>



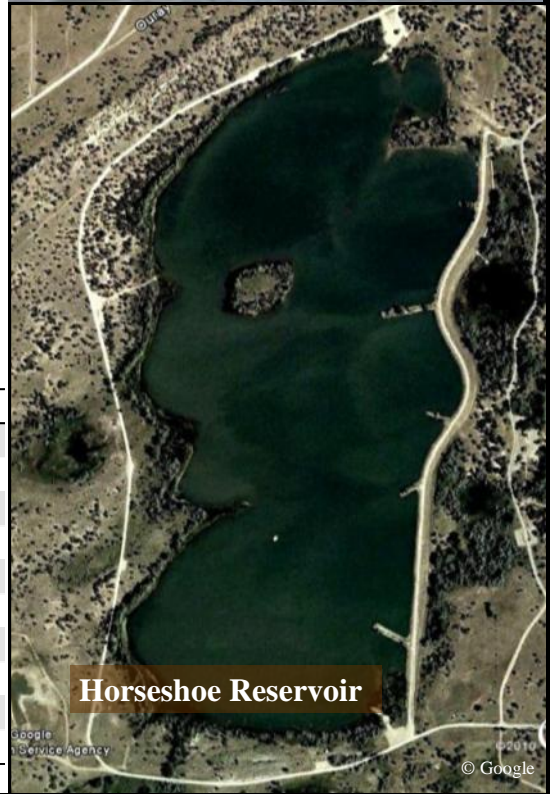
# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

## FISH SAMPLING DATA



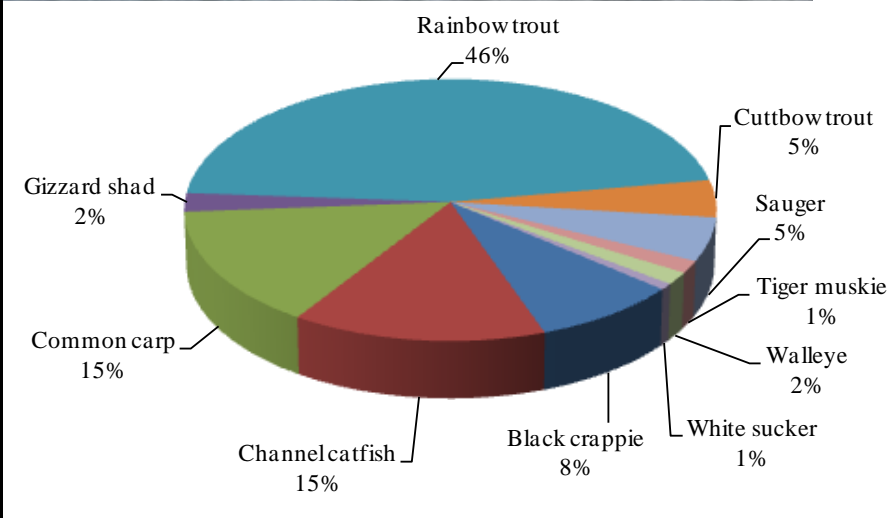
### 2011 FALL SAMPLING

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



Horseshoe Reservoir

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	# Caught	#/net	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)	
			Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)
Black crappie (BCR)	11	2.8	2.9	(2.2-5.5)	0.0	(0.0-0.1)
Channel catfish (CCF)	19	4.8	15.0	(7.2-28.0)	1.7	(0.1-9.8)
Common carp (CPP)	19	4.8	19.6	(17.7-24.8)	3.6	(2.4-6.5)
Gizzard shad (GSD)	3	0.8	14.9	(10.2-18.0)	1.8	(1.1-2.7)
Rainbow trout (RBT)	60	15.0	11.4	(9.3-14.6)	0.5	(0.3-1.0)
Cuttbow (RXN)	6	1.5	13.2	(10.6-14.8)	0.9	(0.7-1.1)
Sauger (SGR)	7	1.8	18.1	(16.1-21.5)	2.1	(1.3-3.6)
Tiger muskie (TGM)	2	0.5	37.2	(36.6-37.8)	11.3	(11.2-11.4)
Walleye (WAL)	2	0.5	24.1	(22.0-26.1)	6.5	(4.8-8.3)
White sucker (WHS)	1	0.3	13.1	(13.1-13.1)	0.9	(0.9-0.9)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>32.5</b>				



# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

FISH SURVEY DATA AND 2012 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 low density, but fish are high quality. All sauger caught in 2011 gill nets were between 16 and 21.5 inches in length, the largest being 3.6 lbs. In 2011, anglers primarily caught sauger in June and July. Anglers should expect the same for 2012. 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 dorsal fin (which you see in walleye), although a light leading edge is sometimes observed (see 3).

## BLACK CRAPPIE AND BASS

Crappie have been stocked as approximately 1 inch fish into Horseshoe Reservoir in 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011. Low water levels may be hindering their growth and survival, but anglers who are willing to work for them could see some great catches in 2012. In 2011, anglers fishing in May (from both shore and boat) did very well and fish often reached 11 and 12 inches in length.

Horseshoe has a very good fishery for largemouth and smallmouth bass. Numbers are high with lots of small fish. Some largemouth have been caught in the 6 pound range and smallmouth in the 3 pound range are occasionally caught. In 2011, anglers caught the most bass in June, July, and September. Largemouth bass often reached 18.5 inches in length and smallmouth bass typically reached 10 to 11 inches in length. Fishing should be good for bass in 2012. 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 not been available for several years, so the tiger muskies that remain are few and very large.

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.



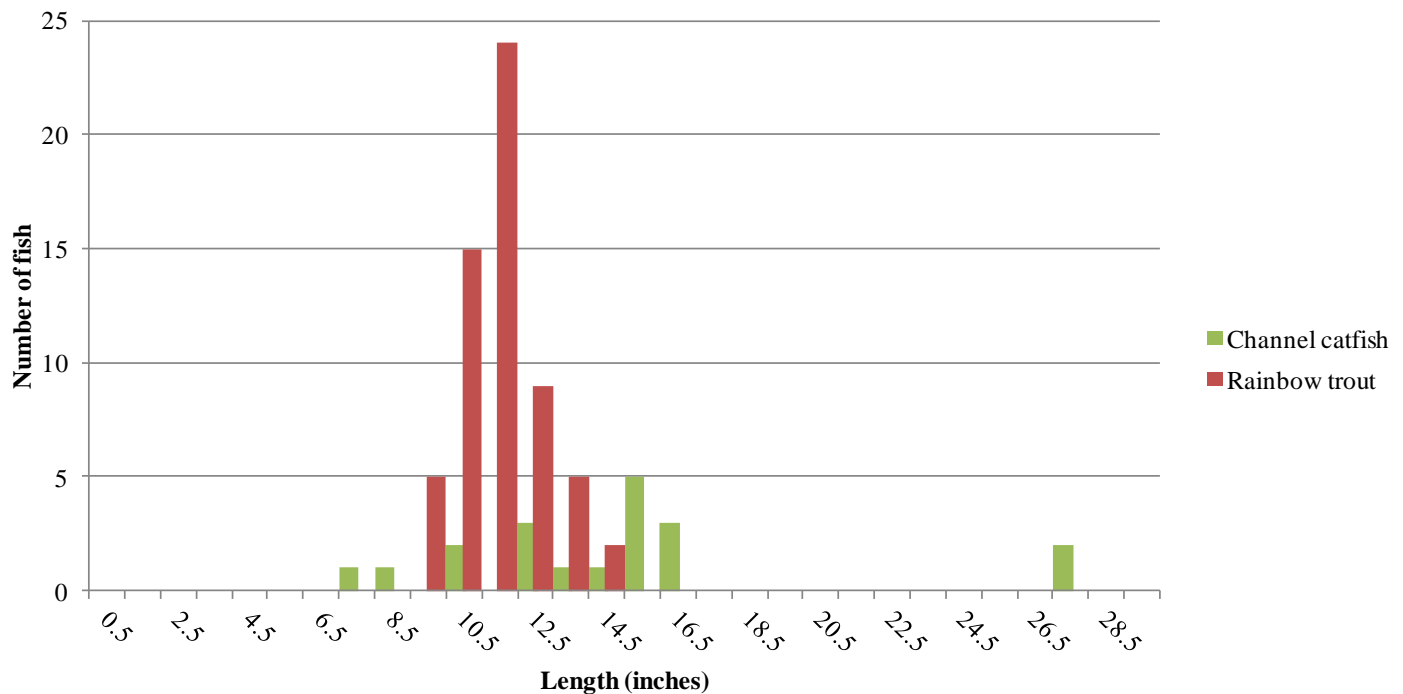


# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

FISH SURVEY DATA AND 2012 FORECAST

## CHANNEL CATFISH

Horseshoe contains channel catfish and the population is relatively small but based on the catch in 2011 gillnets, many of the fish are above 13 inches in length (see green bars in the figure below). The fish are in good condition, and averaged over 3.5 pounds during the fall survey. In 2011, anglers caught catfish up to 18 inches in length and were successful throughout the season, with the peak in August and September. Anglers with the persistence to catch catfish can catch low numbers of high quality fish in 2012. Common catfish techniques are all successful.



## RAINBOW TROUT

Trout fishing is a staple for the reservoir and trout were heavily stocked as 10 inch fish from March to October in 2011. Most of the gill net catch was fish approximately 11.5 inches in length, with fish up to 14.6 inches (see red bars in the figure above). Many fish in this reservoir grow to good sizes. Trout fishing will continue to be good in 2012. They can be caught from shore as well as from boats casting or trolling.

In 2011, anglers caught rainbow trout and cuttbow trout throughout the summer fishing season, but had the best catch rates in May and June. Fish were typically caught in the 10 to 13 inch range.



## 2011 MASTER ANGLER AWARDS

Stephen Stuckert

Tiger muskie

42 1/4"

Horseshoe Lake

May 2011

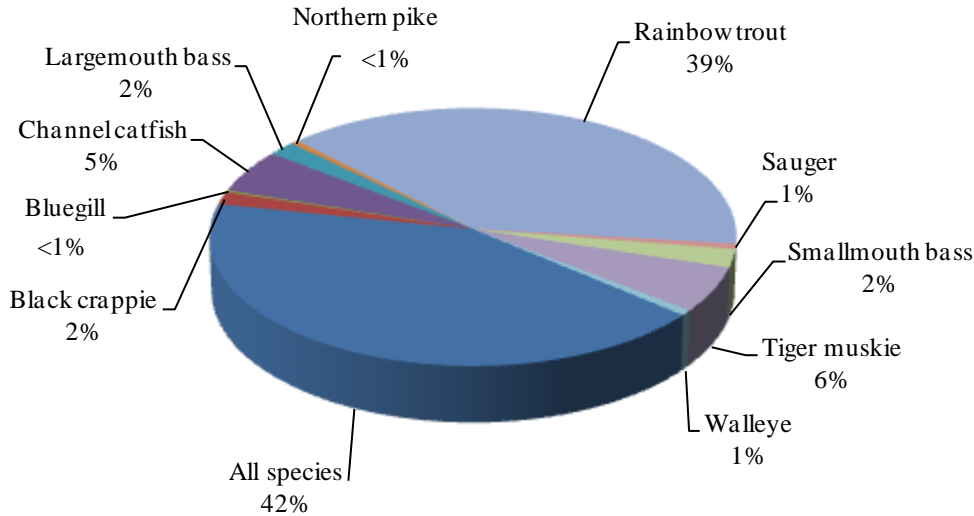


# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

## 2011 CREEL SURVEY DATA

A SUBSET OF ANGLERS WERE SURVEYED FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2011 TO DETERMINE ANGLER USE AND PREFERENCE AT HORSESHOE RESERVOIR. THE RESULTS OF THAT SURVEY ARE DESCRIBED BELOW.

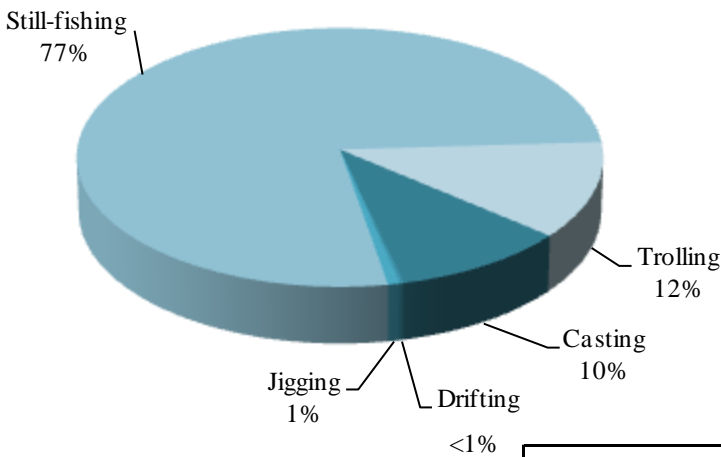
### TARGET SPECIES (WHAT ANGLERS WERE FISHING FOR)



From May to September, there were an estimated 5,786 anglers at Horseshoe Reservoir that spent an estimated 17,351 hours fishing. Most people fished from shore (78% of anglers). Still fishing was the most popular method of angling (see figure below), and most people were fishing for all species or for rainbow trout (see figure to the left).

Most anglers were residents of Colorado (96%), and of those people, 22% were from Walsenburg.

### ANGLING METHOD



During this period, almost 9,000 fish were caught and anglers kept about 55% of their catch. This indicates that people are releasing more fish, as the last creel survey in 1993 showed that 88% of the catch was kept.

Most people rated their trip quality as good (57%) or excellent (37%) and fish quality was typically rated good (48%) or average (32%).

Catch rate averaged 0.5 fish per hour (see table below), which is better than 1993 when it was measured at 0.35 fish per hour.

The data collected from this creel survey is extremely valuable, and provides information on the satisfaction of anglers, the species they are most interested in, and how our stocking rates and management plans are matching up with angler catch rates. This will help aid in future management decisions.

Thank you for your participation!!

Report	Estimates		
	Shore	Boat	All
HOURS ANGLERS FISHED	13,857.3	3,494.1	17,351.6
NUMBER OF FISHERMEN	4,733.6	1,052.6	5,786.2
TOTAL FISH CAUGHT	6,741	2,159	8,900
NUMBER OF FISH KEPT	4,282	572	4,854
NUMBER OF FISH RETURNED	2,459	1,587	4,046
TOTAL CATCH/HR	0.5	0.6	0.5
KEPT CATCH/HR	0.3	0.2	0.3
RETURNED CATCH/HR	0.2	0.5	0.2
AVERAGE TRIP LENGTH (hours)	2.9	3.3	3.0