



McPhee Reservoir

FISH SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT DATA

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General Information: McPhee Reservoir is Colorado's second largest reservoir at 4,470 surface acres. McPhee has developed a reputation as a fine smallmouth bass fishery with a number of local and regional fishing tournaments held at the reservoir each year. Other fish species commonly caught include rainbow trout, kokanee salmon, black crappie, yellow perch and occasionally largemouth bass and walleye. **Location:** Montezuma County, a few miles NW of Dolores, CO and approximately 10 miles north of Cortez, Colorado.

Recreational Management: USFS (970) 882-6800

Fishery Management: Warm and Cold water species. CDOW Area Office 970-247-0855

Amenities and General Info.

- Boat Ramps (Main and House Creek)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Restrooms
- No Marinas
- Hiking trails
- Small concessionaire at main boat ramp

Regulations

- Smallmouth and largemouth bass 10-15 inches must be released. Daily bag limit for bass under or over the slot is 5.
- Daily bag for trout is 4.
- Daily bag for walleye is UNLIMITED.
- Daily bag limit for kokanee is 10 (see snagging below)
- Bag limit for northern pike and yellow perch is UNLIMITED.
- Snagging kokanee is not permitted in the Dolores River until Nov. 15th.

Boats

- Boats are recommended as most of the lake shore is inaccessible to anglers due to a combination of few roads and very rocky steep banks and vegetation.
- If your boat has been out of the state in the last 30 days it must be inspected for unwanted aquatic nuisance species before launching (call CDOW Area Office or US Forest Service phone #s above)

Previous Stocking

2009

Rainbow Trout (50,000 catchables)
Kokanee Salmon (20,000 fingerlings)
Smallmouth bass (61 broodstock)

2008

Rainbow Trout (50,000 catchable)
Kokanee Salmon (20,000 fingerlings)
Cutthroat (5,000 catchable)

2007

Rainbow Trout (43,000 catchable)
Kokanee Salmon (20,000 fingerlings)
Largemouth bass (53 broodstock)

Smallmouth and largemouth bass, yellow perch, walleye, and black crappie are self-sustaining and do not require stocking. Broodfish are occasionally stocked to provide a trophy fish opportunity when they are available.

Sportfishing Notes

Smallmouth bass

- Smallmouth bass fishing is the primary draw in the late spring early summer. Fish the inundated rocky-shorelines up House, Beaver, and Plateau creek arms of the reservoir using crayfish imitations.

Rainbow Trout

- Trout fishing is generally good year round using traditional baits or trolling near shoreline areas.

Crappie and Perch

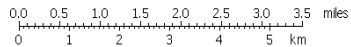
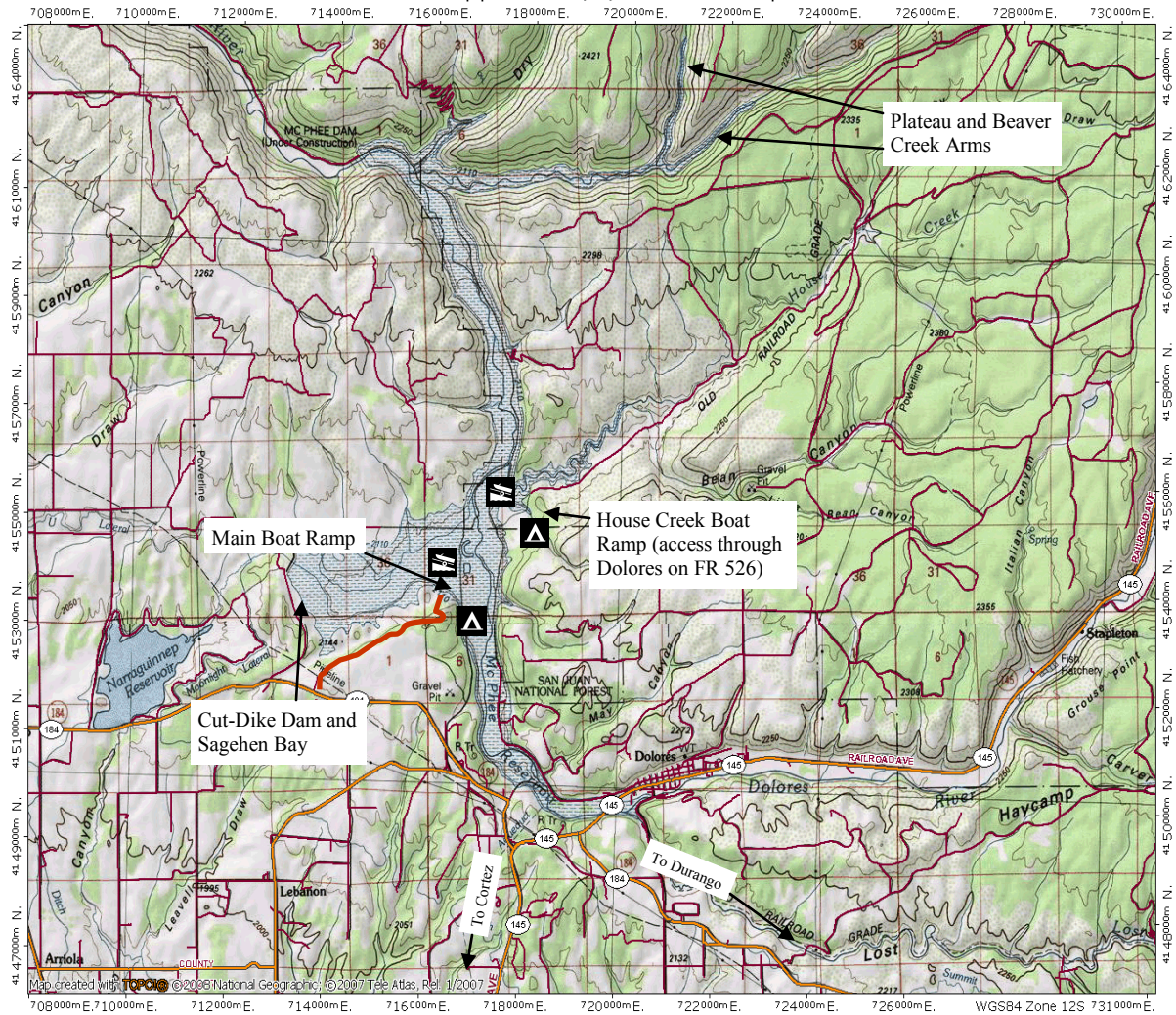
- Both species will keep an angler occupied but the growth rate on these fish is low and few quality sized fish are typically caught.

Walleye

- There are large walleye in McPhee. These fish were illegally stocked and the DOW has made a conscience decision not to actively manage these fish that is why there is no bag limit on them. However, they are difficult to catch. Probably the best location and time to fish for walleye is in April near the rip-rap along the great cut-dike dam.

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TOPO! map printed on 01/06/10 from "Untitled2.tpo"



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2009 Gill Net Survey Results*

Fish Species (sportfish listed in order of abundance)	# Caught	Average Length (Range) in inches	Average Weight in pounds
walleye**	11	17.7 (15.6-19.9)	2.31
rainbow trout	8	11.4 (10.0-13.1.0)	0.51
smallmouth bass	6	11.2 (8.7-15.8)	0.79
yellow perch	2	5.4 (3.7-7.1)	0.1
kokanee	1	10.8	0.64
white sucker	13	13.7 (9.4-17.0)	1.3
carp**	2	17.7 (17.2-18.1)	3.42

*Gillnet surveys consist of setting four 150 foot nets for only 2 hours at the same location and time (1st week in June) each year. Table is the combined catch for 2009.

**Walleye and carp were illegally introduced. Carp just showed up in the reservoir in 2009. Walleye in abundance in 2007.

Management Notes: McPhee Reservoir is managed primarily as a warmwater mixed species lake. Primary sportfish management is directed toward a combination of warmwater and coldwater species: rainbow trout, kokanee salmon, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and black crappie. McPhee provides about 16,000 angler days per year, with an estimated total catch of about 24,000 fish. Rainbow trout and kokanee salmon both comprise 37% of the catch, followed by smallmouth bass (19%), yellow perch (6%), and largemouth bass (1%). These estimates were derived from creel surveys done in 1988 and 1993. Fish species present (in decreasing order of relative abundance): smallmouth bass, yellow perch, rainbow trout, kokanee salmon, walleye, largemouth bass, black crappie, white sucker, flannelmouth sucker, carp, bluehead sucker, roundtail chub, green sunfish, channel catfish, black bullhead, brown trout, and cutthroat trout, and northern pike. McPhee Reservoir is managed to provide quality to preferred size smallmouth and largemouth bass (11 to 15-inch range). Smallmouth bass are self-sustaining; no further stocking of smallmouth is needed. McPhee Reservoir has been managed as a kokanee salmon brood lake since 1994. The average annual kokanee egg take at the old Dolores Hatchery above McPhee from 1996 to 2009 is 743,000 eggs. The recent illicit introduction of fish species such as walleye, northern pike, and now carp, may have a detrimental impact to other sportfishes through direct competition for food resources or outright predation (such as walleye and kokanee). Colorado relies on a number of "broodstock" lakes such as McPhee to supply the States stocking needs for kokanee salmon. Because kokanee populations are notoriously variable in nature a number of broodstock lakes have been started to hedge against Statewide shortages of eggs. Maintaining these broodstock lakes is becoming an increasingly difficult objective to satisfy as a number of illegally stocked fish keep showing up in Colorado's waters. As with many SW waters, there is a Fish Consumption Advisory warning anglers to limit their consumption of fish because some species may have higher concentrations of mercury than what the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment recommends. Specific information is posted at the lake..