



# 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://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/Parks/lathrop>.

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

**Recreational Management:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Area 11 wildlife office (719-561-5300) and Lathrop State Park office (719-561-9320) [click here to buy a fishing license](#)

**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://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/RulesRegs/Brochure/fishing.pdf>

### 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

#### 2016

Black Crappie  
Channel Catfish  
Cutbow  
Rainbow Trout  
Redear Sunfish  
Sauger  
Tiger Muskie

#### 2015

Black Crappie  
Bluegill  
Channel Catfish  
McConaughy Rainbow Trout  
Rainbow Trout  
Sauger  
Tiger Muskie

### 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.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-WQ/CBON/1251595874901>

### 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, with the occasional black bullhead. Most of the fish are about 15" in length but some fish are in the 10 pound class.

#### Bass

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

#### Tiger Muskie

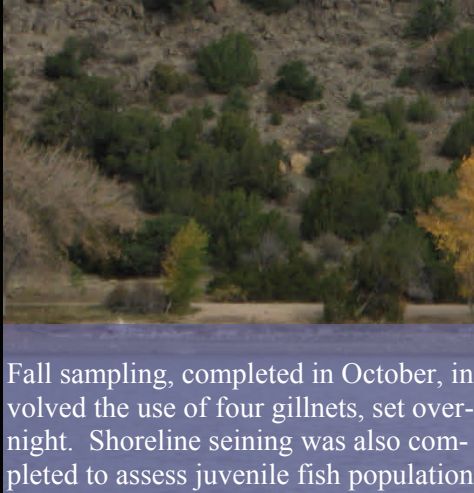
- Horseshoe does yield some trophy tiger muskie to anglers with the patience to work for them. These fish are not numerous and are often hard to catch. Some Northern pike have been illicitly stocked from Martin Lake.



# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

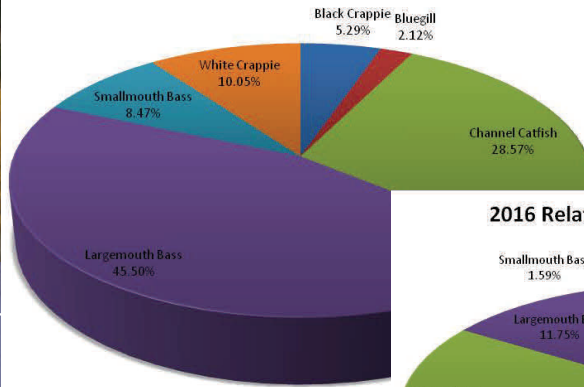
## FISH SAMPLING DATA

### 2016 FALL SAMPLING

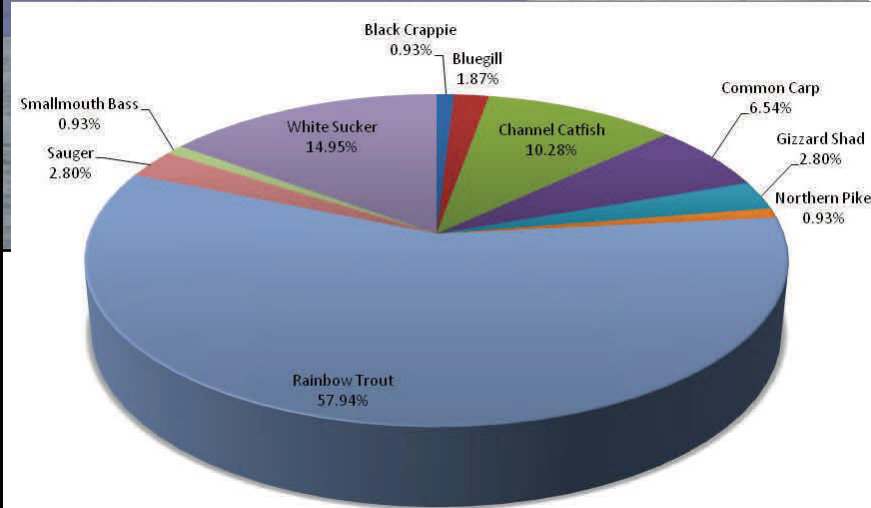
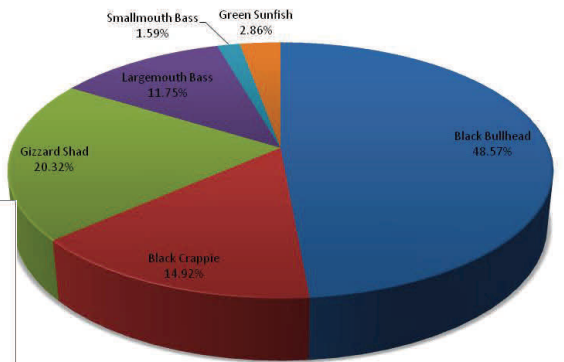


Fall sampling, completed in October, involved the use of four gillnets, set overnight. Shoreline seining was also completed to assess juvenile fish populations.

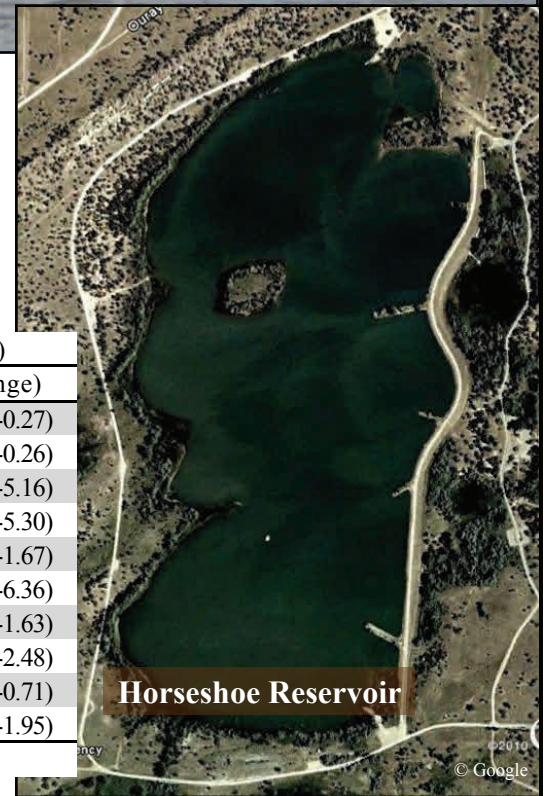
Relative Abundance - August



2016 Relative Abundance - September



	# Caught	CPUE Fish/net	Length (in)		Weight (lb)	
			Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)
Black Crappie	1	0.25	7.4	(7.4-7.4)	0.27	(0.27-0.27)
Bluegill	2	0.50	6.6	(6.2-7.0)	0.25	(0.24-0.26)
Channel Catfish	14	3.50	17.4	(7.1-23.3)	2.22	(0.15-5.16)
Common Carp	7	1.75	19.1	(17.2-23.2)	3.21	(2.25-5.30)
Gizzard Shad	3	0.75	14.7	(14.3-15.4)	1.46	(1.19-1.67)
Northern Pike	1	0.25	30.1	(30.1-30.1)	6.36	(6.36-6.36)
Rainbow Trout	62	15.50	12.4	(8.2-16.7)	0.64	(0.32-1.63)
Sauger	3	0.75	18.1	(15.9-20.5)	1.84	(1.39-2.48)
Smallmouth Bass	1	0.25	11.5	(11.5-11.5)	0.71	(0.71-0.71)
White sucker	16	4.00	14.3	(12.7-16.5)	1.23	(0.86-1.95)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>27.50</b>				



Horseshoe Reservoir



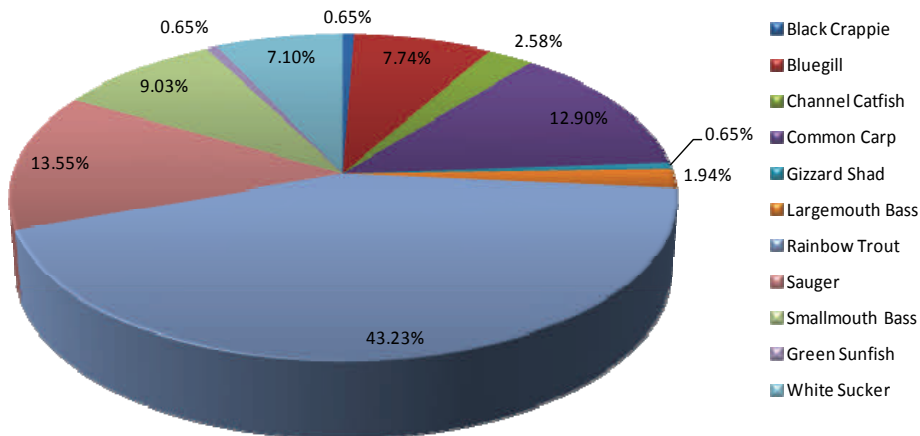
# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

## FISH SAMPLING DATA

### 2015 SUMMER SAMPLING (NIGHT ELECTROFISHING)

Electrofishing was completed at night, using a boat and sampling as much of the lake as possible in three fifteen minute stations. Electrofishing does a good job at sampling bass that aren't picked up during gillnet sampling. 188 fish were handled during electrofishing and eleven different species were sampled.

**Relative Abundance Electrofishing 2015**



	# Caught	Length (in)		Weight (lb)	
		Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)
Black Crappie	1	3.98	(3.98-3.98)	0.03	(0.03-0.03)
Bluegill	13	5.60	(3.35-8.43)	0.17	(0.03-0.47)
Channel Catfish	10	11.58	(7.44-20.67)	0.66	(0.12-2.5)
Common Carp	20	19.04	(12.44-24.8)	3.14	(0.63-5.82)
Gizzard Shad	1	14.45	(14.45-14.45)	1.16	(1.16-1.16)
Largemouth Bass	6	6.96	(4.02-14.69)	0.40	(0.04-1.92)
Rainbow Trout	67	11.08	(9.8-20.67)	0.46	(0.29-2.54)
Sauger	21	8.03	(2.99-20.59)	0.49	(0.0-2.79)
Smallmouth Bass	36	6.62	(3.07-11.57)	0.15	(0.01-0.56)
Green Sunfish	2	3.62	(2.52-4.72)	0.08	(0.03-0.13)
White sucker	11	12.14	(6.57-17.52)	0.92	(0.11-1.86)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>188</b>				





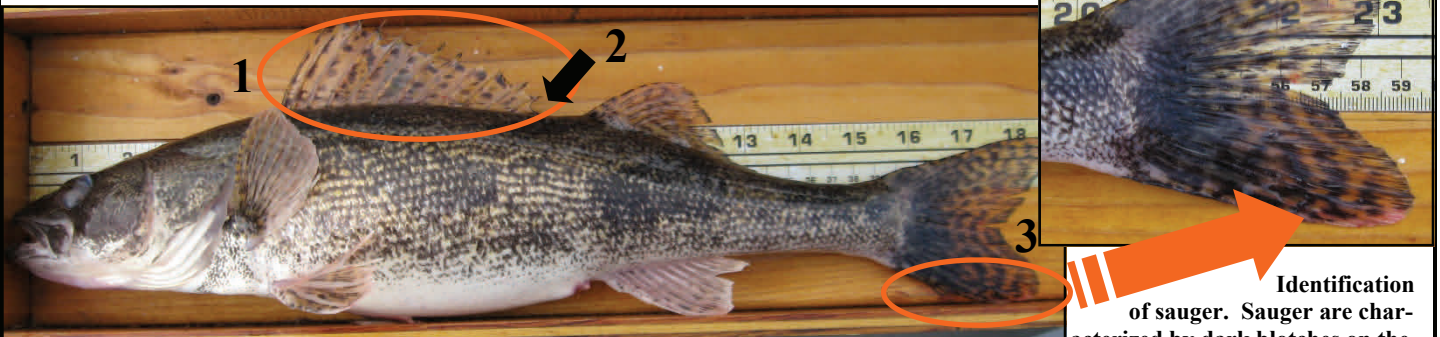
# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

FISH SURVEY DATA AND 2017 FORECAST



## SAUGER

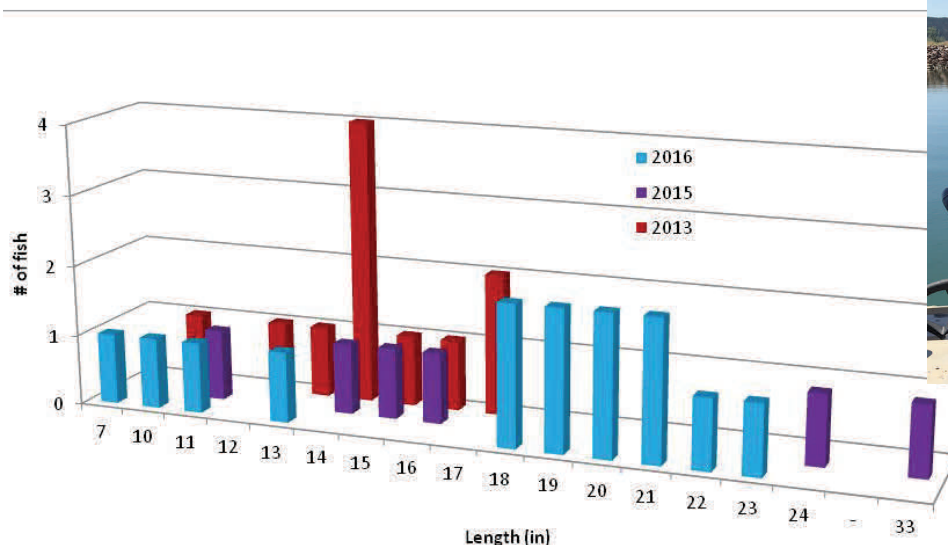
Horseshoe offers a rare opportunity in the State of Colorado to catch “pure” sauger AND to take home a state record. The current state record sauger was caught in Horseshoe Reservoir in 2011 by Jeff Riddle (3.5 lbs, 21.5 inches). The sauger population in this reservoir is moderate, with many mid- to large-sized fish. Only three sauger were caught in 2016 gillnets at an average of 18 inches in length and 1.84 pounds. The next state record fish could be caught anytime (a fish an inch under the state record was caught during electrofishing). Anglers primarily catch sauger in June and July. 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 and saugeye), although a light leading edge is sometimes observed (see 3).

## CHANNEL CATFISH

Horseshoe contains channel catfish and the population is relatively small, but slowly increasing, and there are some decent sized fish present. Catfish anglers are successful throughout the season, with the peak in August and September. Anglers with the persistence to catch catfish should catch low numbers of high quality fish in 2017 and decent numbers of mid-sized fish. Common catfish techniques are successful. The average length sampled in 2016 gillnets was 17.4 inches and 2.22 pounds. Black bullhead catfish are also common in Horseshoe Reservoir.





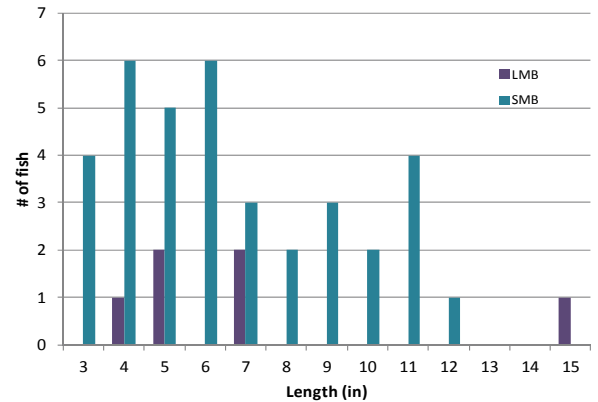
# HORSESHOE RESERVOIR

FISH SURVEY DATA AND 2017 FORECAST

## BLACK CRAPPIE AND BASS

Crappie have been stocked as approximately 1 inch fish into Horseshoe Reservoir in from 2009 to 2015. Low water levels may have hindered their growth and survival in past years, but 2016 was a decent water year so the population should be doing better. Anglers who are willing to work for them could see some great catches in 2017.

Horseshoe has a very good fishery for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. Numbers are high with many small fish. In 2016, sampling via shoreline seining indicated many small bass are present. Forage fish for juvenile and adult bass appears to be decent as well. Some largemouth have been caught in the 6 pound range and the occasional smallmouth in the 3 pound range are caught. Anglers catch the most bass in June, July, and September. Largemouth bass often reach 18 inches, and smallmouth bass typically reach 10 to 11 inches in length. Fishing should be moderate for bass in 2017. 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 were stocked in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016 after several years of unavailability. They were not stocked in 2013. In 2017, most of the tiger muskies will be small to medium sized, with a few very large fish. 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. Several large northern pike were sampled in Horseshoe in 2016. These fish were most likely transplanted from Martin Lake. These fish are NOT wanted and are detrimental to the fish populations. **Please do not transplant northern pike into Horseshoe Reservoir!!**



## RAINBOW TROUT

Trout fishing is a staple for the reservoir. Trout were heavily stocked as 10 inch fish from March to November in 2016, with the exception of mid-summer months when water temperatures precluded stocking. Sixty-two rainbow trout were sampled in 2016 gillnet sampling, ranging in size between 8.2-16.7 inches, with a max weight of 1.63 pounds. Many fish in this reservoir grow to good sizes and fish at 14" are caught often, particularly in the spring after ice-off. Trout fishing will continue to be good in 2017. They can be caught from shore as well as from boats casting or trolling.

Anglers should look to catch rainbow trout and cutthroat trout throughout the summer fishing season, with the best catch rates in May and June.

