



# Fishing



### RAINBOW TROUT

Identifying marks are black spots on a light body and a red stripe along the sides of the fish.



### BROWN TROUT

Dark brown in color with black and red-orange spots surrounded by light blue.

## Gold Medal Waters

Streams and rivers in Colorado are designated as Gold Medal Waters by the state wildlife commission if they provide outstanding angling opportunities for large trout. Special regulations are required to maintain Gold Medal-quality experiences. Of the more than 9,000 miles (14,484 km) of trout streams in Colorado, only 362 miles (583 km) are designated as Gold Medal.

The Gunnison River within Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park is designated as Gold Medal Waters. The Gold Medal Waters begin 200 yards (183 m) downstream of Crystal Dam and continue past the confluence with the North Fork Gunnison River to the Relief Ditch Diversion (5 miles [8 km] above Austin Bridge).

## Regulations

- A Colorado fishing license is required. A license can be purchased online or over the phone. For information, call 800-244-5613 or visit <https://cpw.state.co.us/buyapply/Pages/Fishing.aspx>
- Artificial flies and lures only. NO BAIT.
- ALL rainbow trout are CATCH AND RELEASE only.
- Brown trout: Daily bag limit is 4 fish. Possession limit is 8 fish of any size.
- Fishing is prohibited within 200 yards downstream of Crystal Dam.

## Catch-and-Release Fishing

The numbers of fish important to anglers are declining for a variety of reasons. Anglers often catch fish that are required by law to be returned to the water, such as rainbow trout in the Gunnison River.

Fish become stressed through capture and handling, which upsets their blood chemistry. Effects can be cumulative and can cause death. We recommend these actions to increase the survival chances of a “catch-and-release” fish:

- Bring the fish in as quickly as possible.
- Use barbless hooks, or crimp the barbs with needle nose pliers.
- Minimize handling the fish. Be sure your hands or net are wet before touching the fish.
- Use a net with knotless mesh.
- Keep the fish in the water. It preserves its protective slime coat.
- Use a hook disgorger to remove hooks in the throat. Do not remove a deep hook, but cut the line just above the lure.
- Use a heavy leader line, which exerts maximum pressure on the fish.
- Gently hold fish in water facing upstream to allow it to gain equilibrium and add oxygen to its blood. Release it when it struggles.