



# Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Noreen Walsh, Chair  
Implementation Committee

Tom Chart  
Program Director

---

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - P.O. Box 25486 - Denver Federal Center - Denver, CO 80225 - (303) 969-7322 - Fax (303) 969-7327

## NEWS RELEASE

### MEDIA CONTACTS:

Patience Hurley: (701) 221-1204; [phurley@usbr.gov](mailto:phurley@usbr.gov)

Jana Mohrman: (303) 236-9883; [jana\\_mohrman@usfws.gov](mailto:jana_mohrman@usfws.gov)

Michelle Garrison: (303) 866-3441,x3213; [michelle.garrison@state.co.us](mailto:michelle.garrison@state.co.us)

For Immediate Release: June 3, 2016

## **Releases for Endangered Fish Begin**

LAKESWOOD, Colo. – Coordinated releases from a series of Upper Colorado River Basin reservoirs began today and are anticipated to carry on through next week as part of the Coordinated Reservoirs Operations Program. The program benefits the endangered fish of the Upper Colorado River Basin.

The Coordinated Reservoir Operations program was established in 1995 as part of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. Its purpose is to enhance spring peak flows in a section of the Colorado River upstream of Grand Junction, Colo., determined critical to the survival of four endangered fish species: the humpback chub, razorback sucker, bonytail and the Colorado pikeminnow. The higher peak flows remove more sediment from cobble bars that serve as spawning habitat for the endangered fish. In years with sufficient snowpack, surplus inflows to the reservoirs can be passed on downstream to benefit these fish without impacting reservoir yield.

Coordinated Reservoir Operations were last conducted in 2015 and 2010. In 2011 and 2014, wet conditions caused streamflows in certain areas of the basin to approach or exceed levels associated with minor flooding, so peak augmentation was not performed. In 2012 and 2013, reservoirs did not have surplus inflow to contribute due to extremely dry conditions.

Managers of the reservoirs completed a conference call today, agreeing to voluntarily run the program this year. Planned reservoir operations are described below. Release and flow amounts are approximate. Most reservoirs will step up releases over the next several days, hold at a constant rate for 3-7 days, and ramp releases back down.

Green Mountain Reservoir, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, is currently releasing approximately 815 cfs. Releases are expected to increase to powerplant capacity of 1450 cfs. Releases from Green Mountain include inflows bypassed by Dillon Reservoir, operated by Denver Water, which are increasing to 900 cfs during Coordinated Reservoir Operations.

---

Colorado River Energy Distributors Association - Colorado Water Congress - National Park Service - State of Colorado

State of Utah - State of Wyoming - The Nature Conservancy - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Utah Water Users Association - Western Area Power Administration - Western Resource Advocates - Wyoming Water Association

Denver Water also operates Williams Fork Reservoir, which is currently releasing 285 cfs. Releases will likely increase to approximately 700 cfs over the next week to bypass increasing inflows.

Homestake Reservoir, operated by Colorado Springs Utilities in partnership with the City of Aurora, will increase releases from 60 cfs to 110 cfs.

Wolford Mountain Reservoir, operated by the Colorado River Water Conservation District, is currently passing inflows of 440 cfs. Outflows will be increased to 700 cfs for approximately 7 days.

Ruedi Reservoir, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, is releasing 245 cfs, and will increase releases to 700 cfs over the next few days.

Increased outflows from the participating reservoirs will continue into next week. The Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC) has incorporated these planned reservoir operations into their streamflow forecasts. Based on weather forecasts and planned reservoir operations, flows at Cameo are anticipated to be approximately 16,000 – 19,000 cfs for June 6<sup>th</sup> through June 11<sup>th</sup>, with the highest flows on Tuesday and Wednesday June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Flows in the forecasted range are below defined bankfull and flood stages for the area.

More detailed information about forecasted streamflows in the Colorado River basin are available from the CBRFC website at [www.cbrfc.noaa.gov](http://www.cbrfc.noaa.gov). A map-based interface allows viewing of hydrographs detailing recent, current and anticipated flows.

For more information, contact Patience Hurley, Bureau of Reclamation, at (970) 962-4326, [phurley@usbr.gov](mailto:phurley@usbr.gov); Jana Mohrman, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, at (303) 236-9883, [jana\\_mohrman@usfws.gov](mailto:jana_mohrman@usfws.gov) or Michelle Garrison, Colorado Water Conservation Board, at (303) 866-3441, ext. 3213, [michelle.garrison@state.co.us](mailto:michelle.garrison@state.co.us).

*The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program is a cooperative partnership of local, state and federal agencies, water developers, power customers and environmental groups established in 1988 to recover the endangered fishes while water development proceeds in accordance with federal and state laws and interstate compacts.*

<30>