

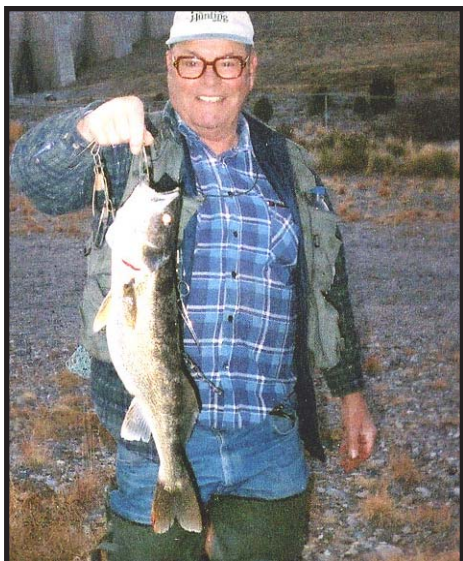


TECH BULLETIN

COLORADO

ELEVEN MILE & SPINNEY MOUNTAIN

Compiled from the Diaries and Logs of the Luhr Jensen Fishing Research Team.



By ED MARSH

Colorado, a state with the reputation for superb trout fishing, has two lakes within five miles of each other that are proof-positive that this reputation is richly deserved. Eleven Mile Reservoir, located 55 miles west of Colorado Springs off U.S. 24, is the first of these two gems and Spinney Mountain Reservoir, five miles further west, is the other. Both are part of the South Platte River system and are located east of the Continental Divide. Each is considered a "Gold Medal Water" that offers world-class trout fishing. But surprise, there are very large northern pike to be found in both lakes! Both Eleven Mile and Spinney Mountain can

provide outstanding fishing, from ice-out in the spring until freeze-up in the fall. In addition, Eleven Mile also provides excellent ice fishing opportunities for the "cold footers" and recently produced a 17 1/2-lb. brown through the ice. (Ice fishing is not allowed at Spinney). Many big fish, including some real trophies, are caught from both lakes every year. In Eleven Mile, it's brown, rainbows and cutthroats, kokanee salmon, northern pike and some jumbo yellow perch while Spinney "only" has browns, rainbows, cutts and northern pike. Trout weights will run into double digits and northern pike weights will come close to 30 pounds.

TROUT

In Eleven Mile, browns are most often found off deep, abundant rocky areas. Depths holding them can range from shallow to 20, 30 or more feet. Spinney is a rather shallow lake and lacks Eleven Mile's rock formations (except along the dam), so here, browns can be caught almost anywhere with the area along the dam usually very good. At both lakes rainbows and cutthroats can be caught throughout the day, especially in the spring and fall, and from shallow water to deep water.

Cast and retrieve methods from shore will work well for trout, especially in the spring right after ice-out, and again in the fall just before the lakes freeze over. Jigging with lures such as the *Krocodile®*, *Super Duper®* or *Hus-Lure™* is an absolutely deadly technique and will usually produce far more

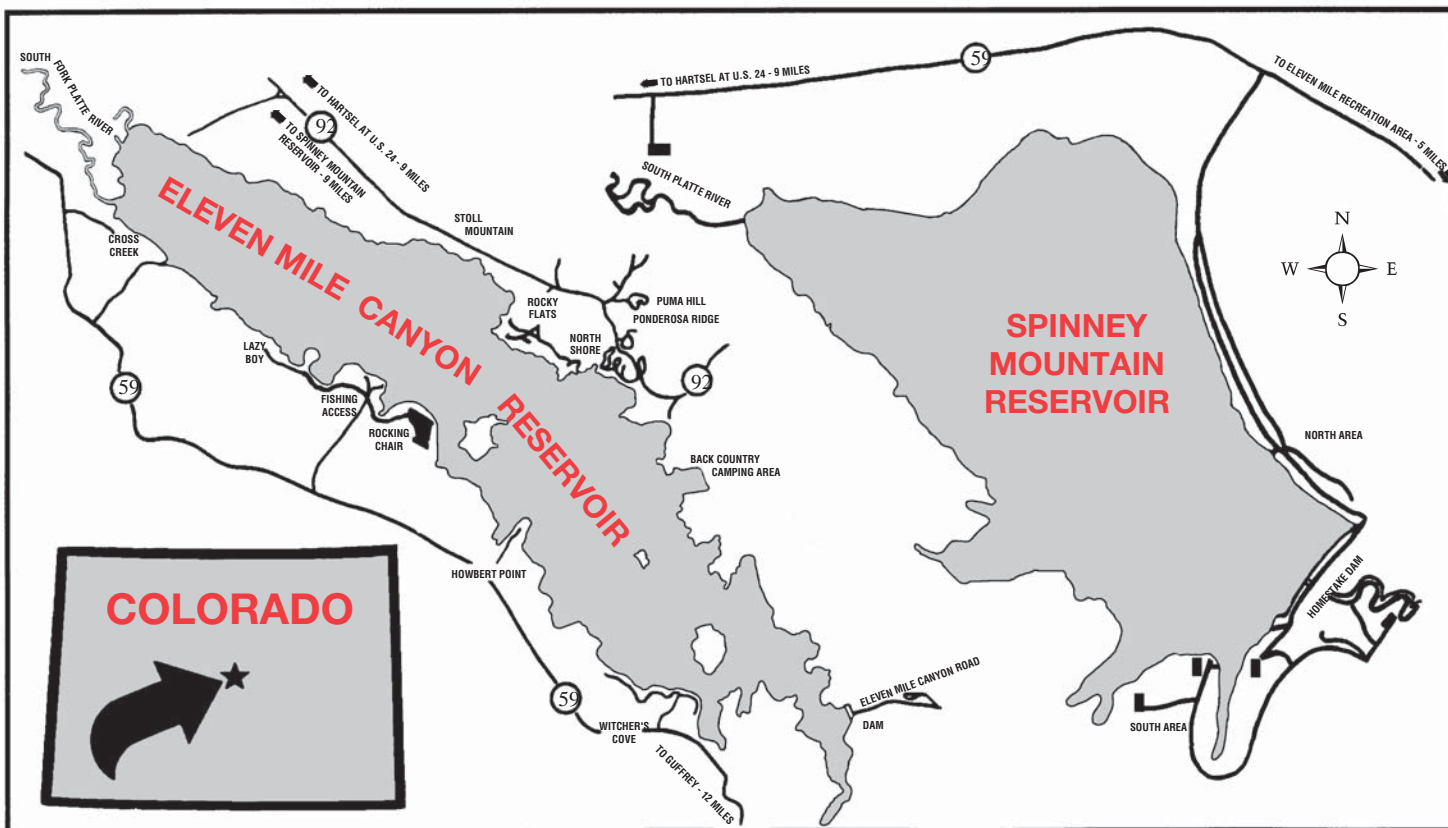
strikes than using the same lures with a straight, unvaried retrieve. Nearly every "hardware" angler at either lake will have several Krocodiles and Super Dupers in their lure boxes, attesting to the popularity and effectiveness of these great lures. Even so, I've done as well with a Hus-Lure, so try that too.

An excellent jigging technique to use is to raise the rod tip sharply from 6 to 12 inches, drop the tip and reel in the slack. This causes the lure to dart upward, then flutter back, as though injured. Don't be surprised if when you reel in the slack, a trout has already grabbed the spoon. Many times one will grab the spoon as it is sinking. Because they are predators, this action can and will excite trout into striking what appears to be injured prey.

Casting plugs such as a K6 or K7 *Kwik-fish®* in *Rainbow Trout*, *Metallic Perch* or *Fire Tiger* finish or a 1/8-oz. *Speed Trap™* in *Rainbow Trout* or *Bluegill Perch* can really turn the trout on, especially in early morning or late afternoon. The *Rainbow Trout* finish works especially well at Eleven Mile on big cutthroats, but pike will hit it too!

Drifting and casting from a boat is an effective technique and allows the boater to cover water beyond the reach of shore anglers. This method works well on both lakes. Simply position the boat upwind from the area to be fished, kill the motor and start working the lure as the boat drifts with the wind.

Considering how strong the winds can



TACKLE FOR ELEVEN MILE & SPINNEY



be on both lakes, at times the boat will move at a fairly rapid pace, quite similar to trolling with a motor. Incidentally, when drifting and casting, jiggling that spoon, just as when jiggling from shore, can be very effective and many times will produce a lot more strikes than that non-fish-attracting straight retrieve!

NORTHERN PIKE

This very popular game fish is pursued by many anglers at both Eleven Mile and Spinney and for a good reason . . . a chance of landing a 30-lb.-plus northern pike! So far the biggest recorded pike that has come from Eleven Mile weighed a little over 29 pounds! The best fishing for these fighters starts in May and will continue into August and even September depending upon the type of tackle and lures being used.

Fly anglers catch many pike during late May and into June until the fish move to deeper water as it warms up in July and August. Then spin anglers use a *Javelin*[™], *Speed Trap* or *Brush Baby*[®] in *Fire Tiger* or *Rainbow Trout*, to continue catching this incredible gamefish.

When the pike are in the shallows during late May and June, a topwater plug such as a *Nip-I-Diddee*[®], *Jerk 'n Sam*[™] or *Wood-chopper*[®] in medium to large sizes, will bring savage, spectacular strikes that can only come from a northern pike. Just remember, a hungry pike can eat a fish half its own size, so it's difficult to use a lure that's too large.

KOKANEE SALMON

During spring and well into the summer, bank anglers walking the shoreline and casting a spoon such as a 1/6-, 3/16- or 1/4-oz. *Krocodile* in *Chrome/Fluorescent Red Stripe* or *Brass/Fire Stripe*, catch many kokanees. Other finishes will also work as will one of my personal favorites, the old reliable *Super Duper*, especially in 1/6-oz, *Nickel/Red Head*. Of course trout will also hit these same lures, and be sure to jig them, even for salmon.

I catch my share of these fine eating fish and after filleting, I like to soak them in a Luhr Jensen's *Trout & Salmon Brine Mix* solution, then smoke them for about 12 hours in my *Big Chief*[™] *Electric Smokehouse*. Ahhhh . . . it just doesn't get any better!

In late September and early October, when the mature kokanee school up to spawn, they will hit bright, flashy lures that have

stripes of red or orange, in spite of what some people say. This is when a *Hotrod*[®] *Wobbler* in various *Silver*, *Gold* and *Red* combinations can be deadly.

TROLLING

Many boat anglers troll for trout in both lakes and for kokes in Eleven Mile. Some of the most popular trolling flashers for both trout and salmon are a *Cowbell*[®], *Ford Fender*[®] or *Dave Davis*[®] and some refuse to use anything else. Use a 12- to 24-in. leader behind the flashers with a nightcrawler, *Needlefish*[®], *Super Duper* or even a small *Kwikfish* attached to the end. When the trout or kokes are deep, I recommend using a *Pink Lady*[®] or a *Dipsy Diver*[®] which work as well as a downrigger or lead core line and aren't nearly as expensive.

A number of trollers use nothing more than 4-lb. test line and a 1/6- or 1/4-oz. *Super Duper* in *Nickel/Red Head* or *Chrome/Silver Prism-Lite*[®]. I trail the lure on light tackle at least 100 feet behind the boat. When an 18 or 20-inch kokanee hits, it's **WAR!** Some serious pike anglers troll *Speed Trap*, *Brush Baby* or *Sugar Shad*[®] crankbaits in larger sizes and various finishes and catch a lot of pike that way.

ICE FISHING

Eleven Mile Reservoir is one of the most popular ice fishing lakes on the eastern slope of the Rockies. Most anglers are after kokanee and jig for them with a variety of lures including *Krocodiles* and *Super Dupers* in various sizes and finishes. I've done very well here with a 1/6-oz. *Crippled Herring*[®] in *Chrome/Neon Blue Back*. I change the single hook to a treble because I feel this holds the fish a little more securely.

Most ice anglers tip one of the treble points with a meal worm to add scent. I've found that Berkley[®] *Power Wigglers* will also provide a scent that both salmon and trout like, plus I don't have to worry about the *Wigglers* freezing!

Most ice fishing for kokanee is done in 50 to 70 feet of water and they'll usually be found traveling in schools 10 to 40 feet down, following the plankton. A curious but very deadly technique to use involves a string of three or four sets of *Cowbells* or *Ford Fenders* on 50-lb. test line; a short heavy rod and a car windshield wiper motor hooked to a 12-volt battery. The wiper motor constantly jigs the flashers, attracting

and holding large schools of salmon. This technique will produce when standard jiggling without flashers produces no, or at best, few fish. It really works!

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

The *Chaparral Park General Store* is located adjacent to Spinney Mountain Reservoir on County Road 59, about 1/4-mile west of the entrance to the reservoir and offers camp sites, boat and camper storage, gas, groceries, ice, boat rentals, licenses and tackle. Call Edwin Borchers at 719-836-0308 or write to P. O. Box 497, 19015 County Road 59, Hartsel, CO 80449.

The *Eleven Mile General Store* at the reservoir also offers an excellent list of services including gas, propane, groceries, ice, boat and RV storage, snack bar, tackle, and licenses. Call 719-748-3424 or write RR 2, Lake George, CO 80827.

11 Mile Sports, Inc. specializes in boat and fishing equipment rentals as well as guide and outfitting services. They are located at Lake George in Eleven Mile State Park and operate under the authority of a special use permit granted by the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Call 719-748-0317 or write 11 Mile Sports, Inc., Lake George, CO 80827.

Eleven Mile State Park offers beautiful, clean campgrounds with both electrical and nonelectrical sites. A Colorado State Parks pass is needed for entrance to either lake and a camping fee is charged. Passes are available at park headquarters. There is good, safe drinking water at all campgrounds. No camping is allowed at Spinney Mountain and lake access closes at sundown. Dress warmly as the 8,600-ft. altitude usually means cool to cold evenings and brisk mornings although daytime temperatures can reach the 80s in the summer.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS

Spinney Mountain is restricted to flies and lures only and no night fishing is allowed. At Eleven Mile, bait and night fishing are allowed.

Be sure to carefully read the current Colorado Fishing Season and property Directory, because there have been drastic and dramatic changes in bag and possession limits, including NO restriction on northern pike.