

## Omaha Metro Area Fisheries Update 2021

### Introduction

Anglers fishing within the Omaha metro area will continue having great fishing opportunities in 2021. A diversity of fish species reside within the area; in addition, anglers targeting Largemouth Bass, Crappie, and Channel Catfish will have plenty of good lakes to fish. Amidst the pandemic, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) staff continued efforts to maintain health and safety and limited travel and sampling efforts in the Omaha area. As such, the standard Omaha Area Fishing Forecast will be slightly different this year and function more as an update of fishery activities than lake-specific fish sampling results in Omaha. For anglers still interested in lake-specific fish sampling efforts in the Omaha metro area, please refer to the published 2021 Fishing Forecast, last year's 2020 Omaha Metro Area Forecast, and area fisheries biologists for additional questions about where to fish. All of the aforementioned subjects can be found online at [outdoornebraska.gov/](http://outdoornebraska.gov/).

### Cunningham Lake

Continued aquatic enhancements occurred at Cunningham Lake in 2020. The lake was chemically renovated in 2019, assessed with sampling nets to confirm no fish presence post-renovation, and then subsequently stocked to begin fishery establishment. A multitude of fish were stocked in Cunningham Lake in 2020 including Largemouth Bass, White Bass, Bluegill, and Channel Catfish (Table 1) as the lake refilled.

After the fish renovation in 2019, and before the lake level was raised and fish stocked, a cedar tree habitat project was procured with the aid of a local bass fishing club. The cedar trees were placed in strategic places throughout the lake bed prior to the lake refilling to establish additional aquatic habitat resources for fish to utilize and anglers to target.

The Cunningham lake project and construction progress is still underway as the site is molded into a

*Table 1. 2020 Stocking in Glen Cunningham. Month denoting time of stocking, number stocked, and mean total length in inches.*

Month	Species	Number stocked	Mean TL (inches)
April	Largemouth Bass	1,000	3.5
June	Largemouth Bass	15	12.0
June	Bluegill	55	7.0
June	Channel Catfish	19	15.0
July	Largemouth Bass	39,180	1.75
August	White Bass	106	12.0
September	Channel Catfish	4,013	10.5
September	Channel Catfish	6,538	12.0
September	Bluegill	58,010	3.0
October	Bluegill	118,299	1.5



*Figure 1. Lake Cunningham Boat Ramp*

family friendly location for public use. New boat docks, rock shoals and vegetation barriers were some of the improvements made for anglers (Figure 1).

### **Big Elk (WP7) and Portal Recreation Area (WP6)**

Construction of two new reservoirs in south Omaha is under way with anticipated openings in 2021 with specific dates TBD. Both reservoirs will be stocked with Yellow Perch and Smallmouth Bass to create a unique fishery within the Omaha area to offer additional variety to anglers.

#### *Fishing Regulations*

The fishery will take a few years to fully develop and will be managed with species-specific regulations. The Smallmouth Bass will be managed using a 12-inch maximum length limit and two-fish daily bag limit. The intended purpose for this regulation design is to keep the density of smaller fish down in order to promote growth of remaining fish to produce a quality fishery for Smallmouth Bass. The Yellow Perch will be managed under a 5-fish daily bag limit. As the Yellow Perch will likely be highly targeted for their table qualities, the 5-fish daily bag limit will help spread the harvest out among anglers by reducing the daily bag per angler. No live baitfish will also be in effect at both reservoirs as the introduction of any new species, including Bluegill and Largemouth Bass, will be detrimental to the intricacies of the Yellow Perch and Smallmouth Bass dynamic.



*Figure 2. Walleye*

#### *Boating*

Portal Recreation Area (WP6) – Single Lane Concrete Boat Ramp & Paddlecraft Launch Area

Big Elk (WP7) – Paddlecraft Launch Area, ADA Paddlecraft Launch Dock, Hand-Launch Only



*Figure 3. Black Crappie*

Numerous angler access nodes are around the reservoirs as well as in-lake habitat features, water quality basin, walking trails, parking, restrooms, and picnic shelters.

### **Advanced Walleye Stockings**

Continued stockings of advanced Walleye (6-8 inches) in the Omaha area are responding well and promoting Walleye fisheries in the populace area. Lakes in the Omaha area that continue to see good numbers of catchable-sized Walleye include Lawrence Youngman, Prairie Queen, Zorinsky, and Wehrspann (listed in order of Walleye abundance from previous surveys).