

This is a fishing forecast for the Omaha metro. The forecast includes figures for area public water bodies that were surveyed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission during *2011 and 2012. Therefore, there may be other water bodies in the area that provide good fishing opportunities that are not included in this forecast (see map). The following information will help anglers decide on where the best fishing for a variety of species can be found based on survey results. Anglers seeking more information on area lakes such as locations, lake maps, regulations and stocking reports are encouraged to browse the Nebraska Game and Parks' website at www.outdoornebraska.org.

Bluegills

Bluegills prefer clean water and an abundance of aquatic plants. They are an excellent fish for beginning anglers to pursue. Bluegills can be caught year round, but may be most susceptible to anglers during the spawn. Spawning activity peaks when water temperatures are 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit, usually late May or early June. Recreational anglers or beginners who just want to catch numbers of fish should head to **Zorinsky** or **Walnut Creek**, while anglers targeting larger bluegills should try **Wehrspann** or **CenturyLink**.

Largemouth Bass

Largemouth bass are routinely targeted by anglers and are known for their aggressiveness and fighting ability. Largemouth bass, like bluegills and other members of the sunfish family, prefer clean water and an abundance of shallow water cover. Metro reservoirs such as **Walnut Creek** and **Wehrspann** will offer a good opportunity to catch largemouth bass greater than 15 inches. Sand pits, such as those found within **Louisville SRA**, will provide great opportunity for both numbers and size. Anglers

targeting large bass may want to check out **Memphis SRA** just north of Ashland.

Crappie

Crappies are highly regarded by anglers and are often considered to be among the best tasting freshwater fish. Crappies prefer habitat with sheltered coves or bays with an abundance of cover and aquatic vegetation. Anglers looking for plenty of eating-size crappies should head to **Wehrspann**, **Standing Bear**, or **Walnut Creek**. However, the drive to **Memphis SRA** may pay off with a few crappies greater than 12 inches.

Channel Catfish

Channel catfish are popular throughout Nebraska and can be found in almost every reservoir and river in the metro area. Some waters to note for catfish anglers in the Omaha metro area would be **Two Rivers SRA** and **Wehrspann**. **Memphis SRA**, which is not listed on the figure, will also provide excellent opportunity for both numbers and size.

The **Platte River**, water willing, will also provide some good catfishing opportunities. Anglers should target log jams in deep holes or channel drop offs. Nightcrawlers, stink bait, or cut bait are all good bait options. Public access on the Platte River can be found at **Schilling WMA**, **Louisville SRA**, **Platte River State Park**, **Schramm Park SRA**, **Two Rivers SRA**, **Platte River Landing** near Valley, **Hormel Park** in Fremont, **Bramble WMA**, **Whitetail WMA**, or **Tailrace Park** in Columbus.

The **Elkhorn** and **Missouri Rivers** will also offer some excellent fishing for channel catfish. Anglers should be able to catch channel catfish throughout the rivers using variety of baits such as nightcrawlers, cut bait, stink bait, or shrimp.

Flathead Catfish

Flathead catfish are a true trophy fish and provide a great battle on a rod and reel. Flathead catfish can be found throughout the **Missouri, Elkhorn, and Platte Rivers**, and thanks to the University of Nebraska sampling crew, we have some catch data from the Missouri River. Areas near the **Bartlett, IA** or **NP Dodge** Park boat ramp look to be good for both numbers and large fish. Further to the south, areas near **Indian Cave State Park** and **Peru Bottoms** will also provide anglers a chance at some larger fish. The University of Nebraska is also conducting a tagging study on channel and flathead catfish and asks all anglers to report tagged fish to the phone number on the tag.

Other Species

Walleye

Anglers targeting walleyes in the Omaha metro will want to try **Wehrspann** and **Cunningham**. The **Missouri River** will also provide opportunity to catch walleye or sauger. Anglers looking for good large-reservoir walleye fishing opportunities should look into the statewide fishing forecast.

Blue Catfish

Blue catfish can be found in **Wehrspann** as well as the **Platte, Elkhorn, and Missouri Rivers**.

Northern Pike

Around 1,300 ten-inch northern pike were stocked into **Cunningham** reservoir in late 2012 and will provide a unique fishing experience in the Omaha metro in years to come.

Lake Wanahoo will also provide a unique fishing opportunity to catch northern pike in Eastern Nebraska. The northern pike tagging study will continue in 2013 and anglers are

asked to report all tagged fish to the Nebraska Game and Parks. Anglers are required to release all northern pike caught at both **Cunningham** and **Lake Wanahoo**.

Bullheads

Bullheads provide a great fishing opportunity for beginners and children because they are easy to catch and a simple hook and worm is all you need. Catchable sized bullheads are stocked at state recreation area lakes **Louisville No. 2A, Two Rivers No. 6, and Two Rivers No. 7**.

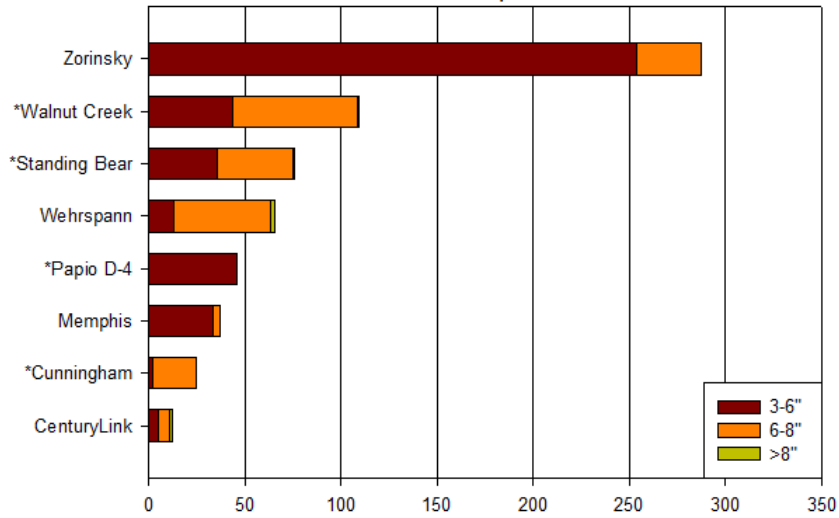
Rainbow Trout

Although the Omaha metro doesn't have cold-water streams that support trout, there is still plenty of opportunity in and around Omaha to catch them. Rainbow trout are routinely stocked at **Two Rivers No. 5, Standing Bear, Benson Lake, Hitchcock Lake, Towl Lake, Lake Halleck, and CenturyLink Lake (Qwest Lake)**.

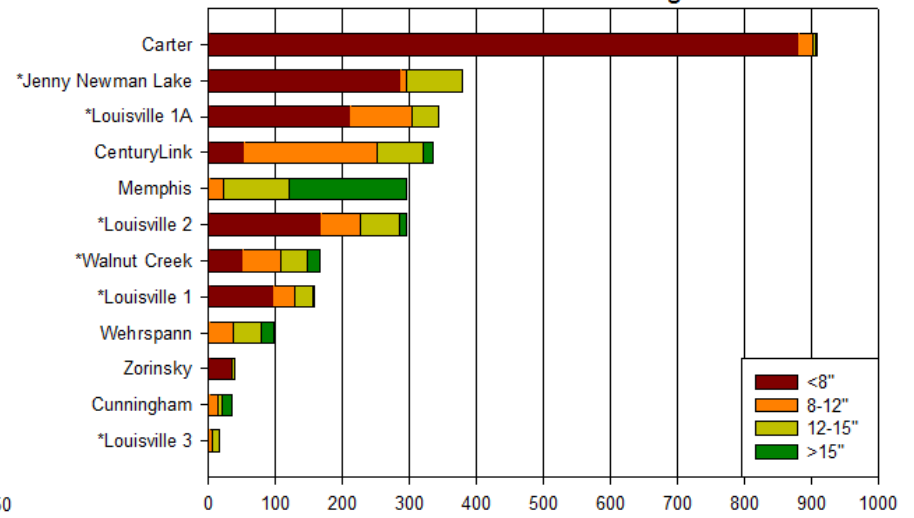
Shovelnose Sturgeon

Shovelnose sturgeon, the smallest sturgeon species found in North America, are a unique and ancient looking fish. Shovelnose sturgeon can be found in the **Platte, Elkhorn, and Missouri Rivers**. The University of Nebraska has been researching shovelnose sturgeon in the lower Platte River for the last few years and provided us with some catch data. Anglers targeting shovelnose sturgeon should try nightcrawlers on channel drop offs or areas of shallow swift current, and will have their best chance at **Schilling WMA, the Louisville area, or near Ashland**. The University of Nebraska is also conducting a tagging study and asks all anglers to report tagged fish to the phone number on the tag.

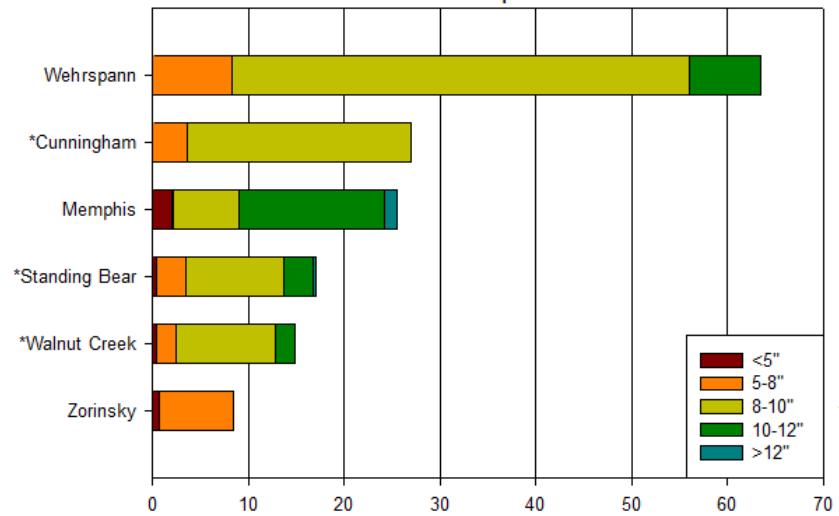
Bluegill
Per Trap Net



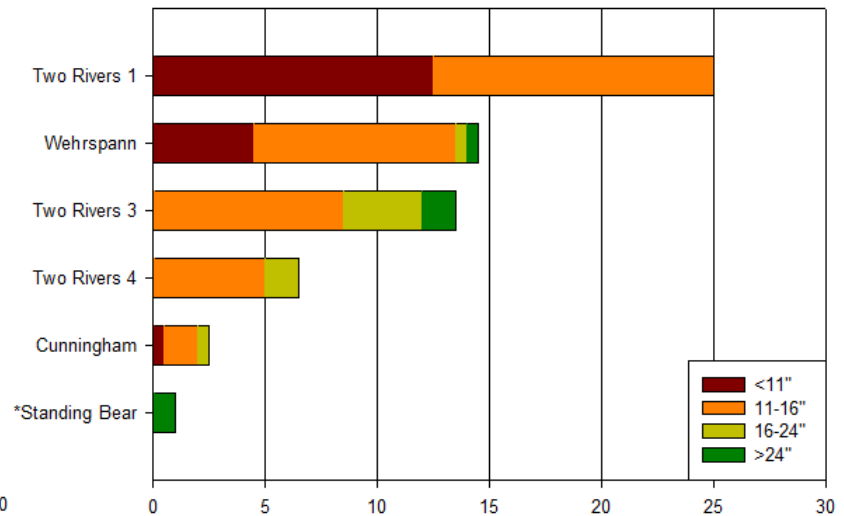
Largemouth Bass
Per Hour Electrofishing



Crappie
Per Trap Net



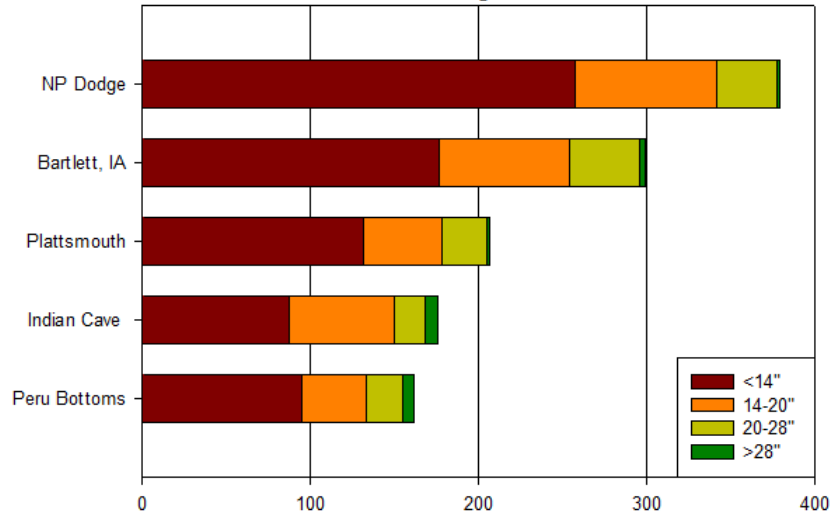
Channel Catfish
Per Gill Net



* 2011 Survey

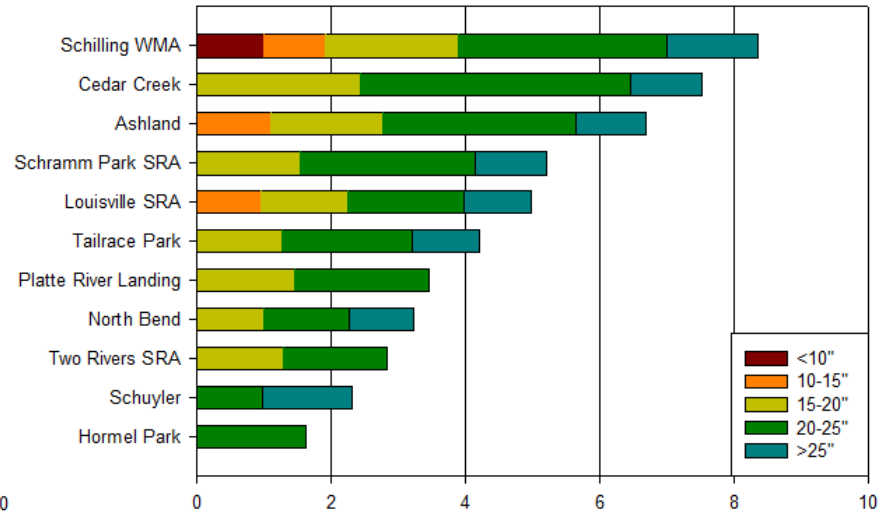
Flathead Catfish

Per Hour Electrofishing on the Missouri River



Shovelnose Sturgeon

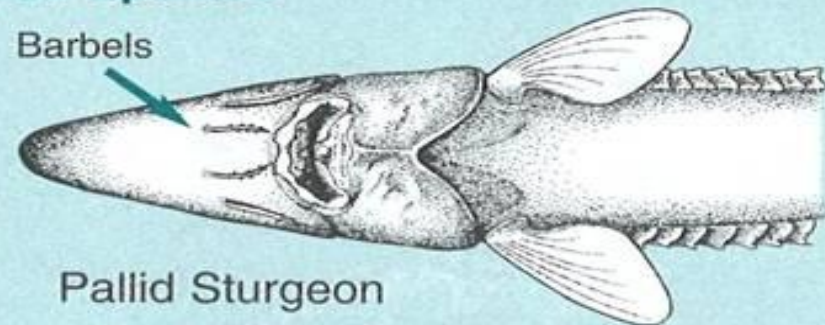
Per Trammel Net on the Platte River



KNOW YOUR CATCH

Pallid Sturgeon - An Endangered Species

- Illegal to possess
- Outer barbels twice as long as inner barbels
- Base of barbels "U" shaped, inner two set out in front



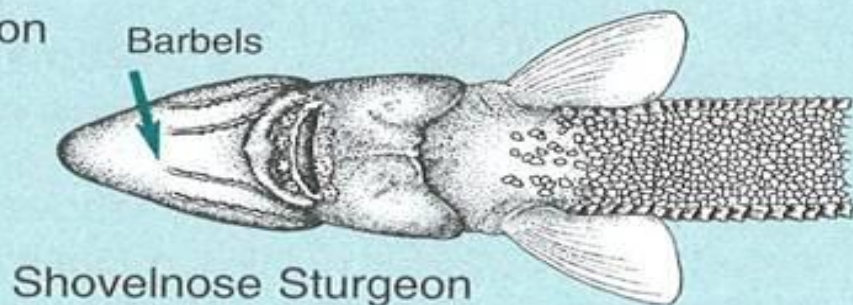
Lake Sturgeon - A Threatened Species

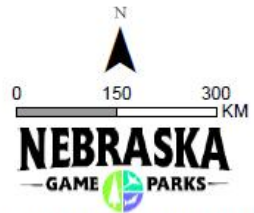
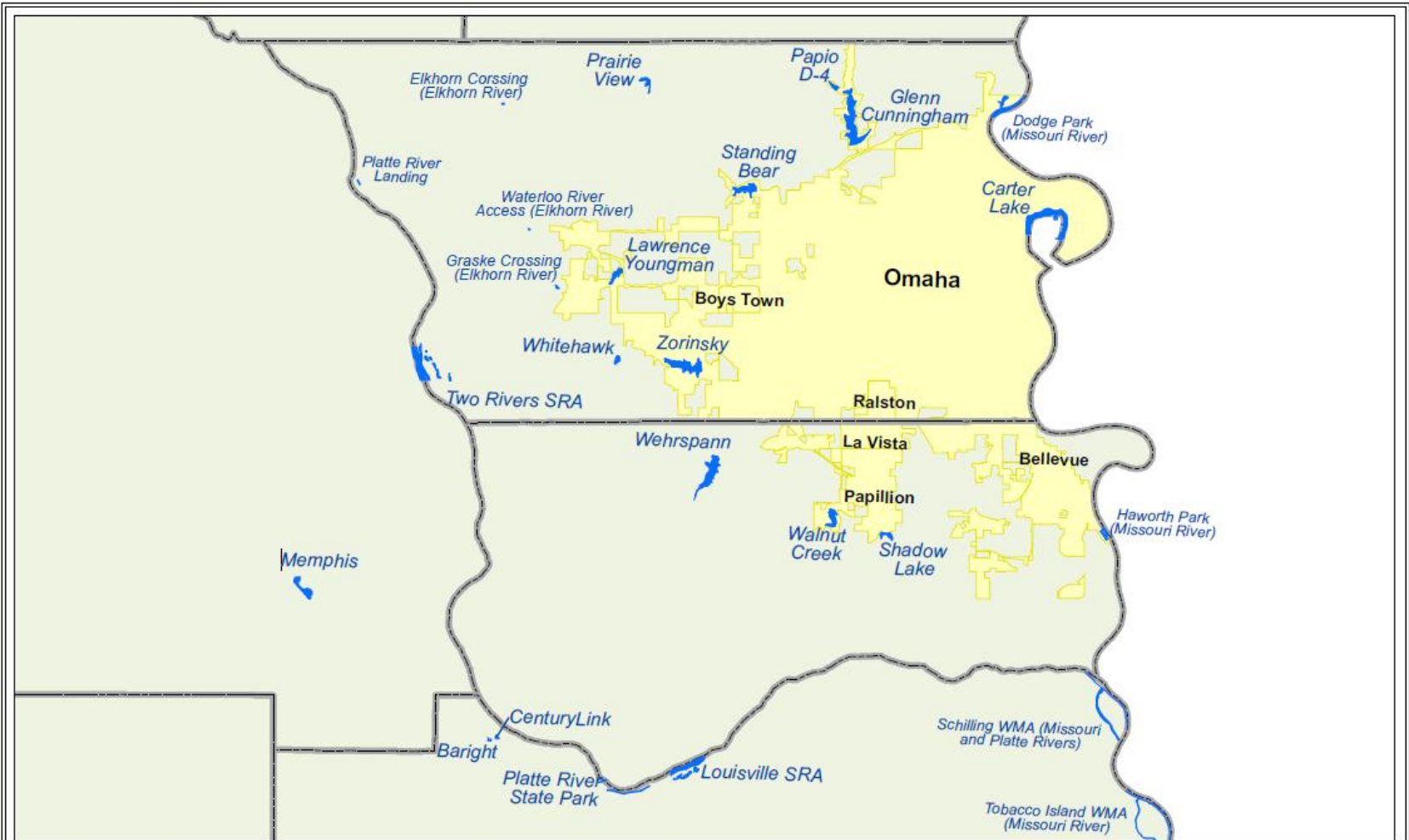
- Illegal to possess
- Short snout turns up at end
- Barbels are not fringed



Shovelnose Sturgeon

- Nebraska's most common sturgeon
- Barbels all the same length
- Barbels straight across
- Smallest Nebraska sturgeon, rarely exceeds 4 pounds





Trisha Schlake, IT Division, 12/18/2012

