

2017 Lincoln Area Fishing Forecast

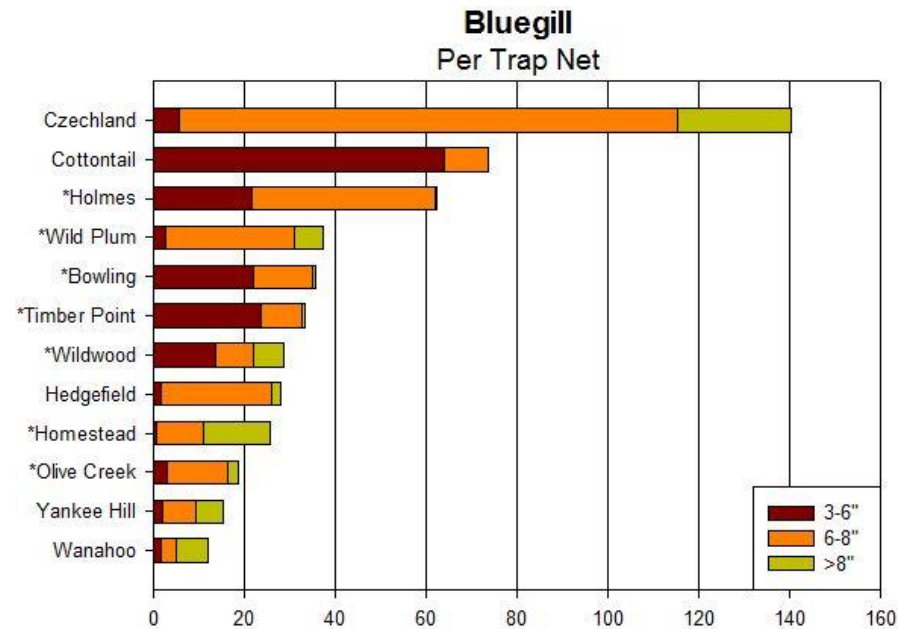


This is a fishing forecast for the Lincoln area. The forecast includes figures for area public water bodies that were surveyed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) during *2015 and 2016. Therefore, there may be other water bodies in the area that provide good fishing opportunities that are 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.gov



Bluegills

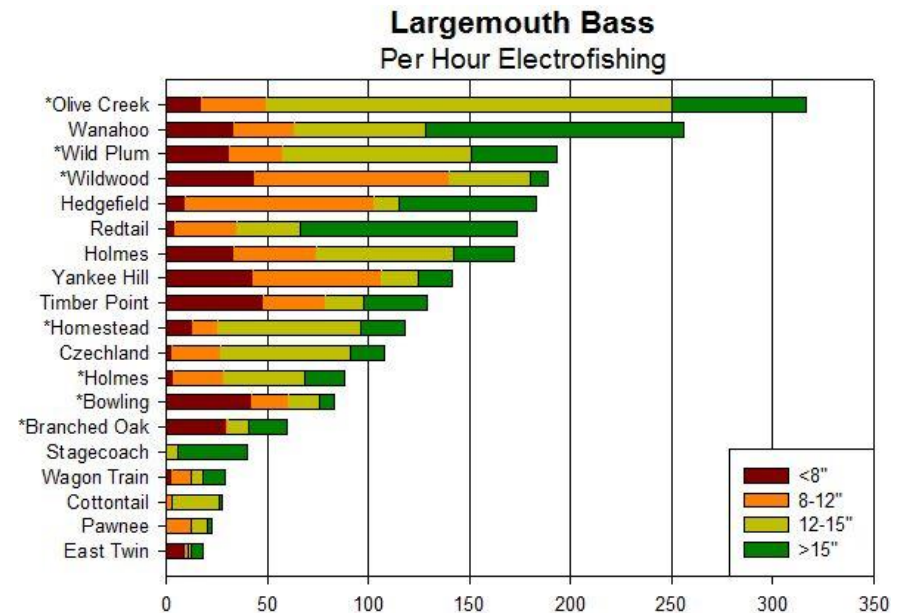
Anglers targeting bluegills in the Lincoln area should be in for a good year. Larger bluegills (>8") were sampled in a number of reservoirs and will provide great ice and open water fishing in 2017. **Czechland** will produce some nice bluegills, but anglers may have to sort out a lot of 6-8" fish. Although net samples were low at **Lake Wanahoo**, it will again provide some excellent bluegill fishing this upcoming year. Anglers should also be able to target larger bluegills at **Wildwood, Yankee Hill, Wild Plum** or **Homestead**.



* 2015 Survey

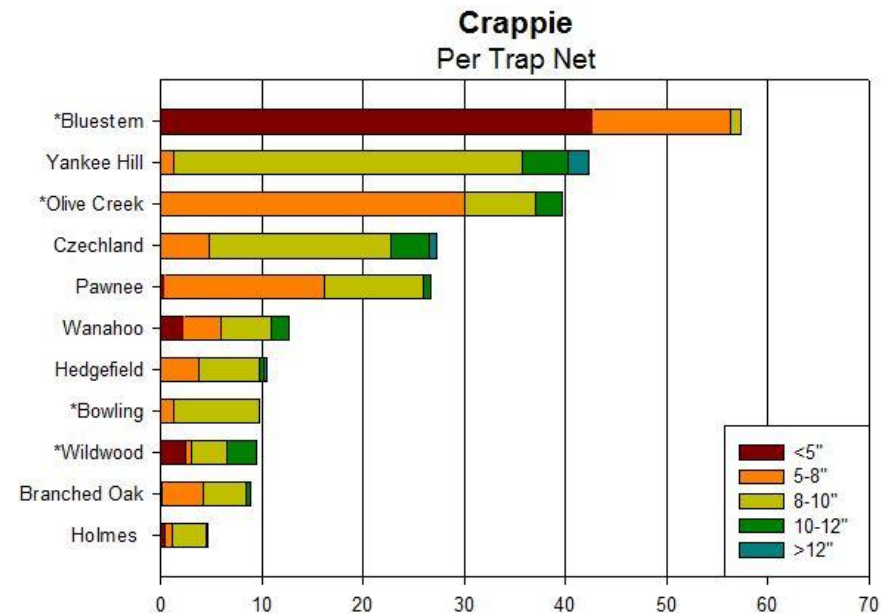
Largemouth Bass

The largemouth bass population at **Lake Wanahoo** continues to provide some of the best bass fishing in the state. **Redtail** has rebounded after the 2012 fish kill and should payoff for anglers who make the walk in. Anglers looking for numbers of bass should head to **Olive Creek** while anglers looking for large bass (>21") should try lakes with lower bass densities like **Stagecoach, Branched Oak** or **East Twin**.



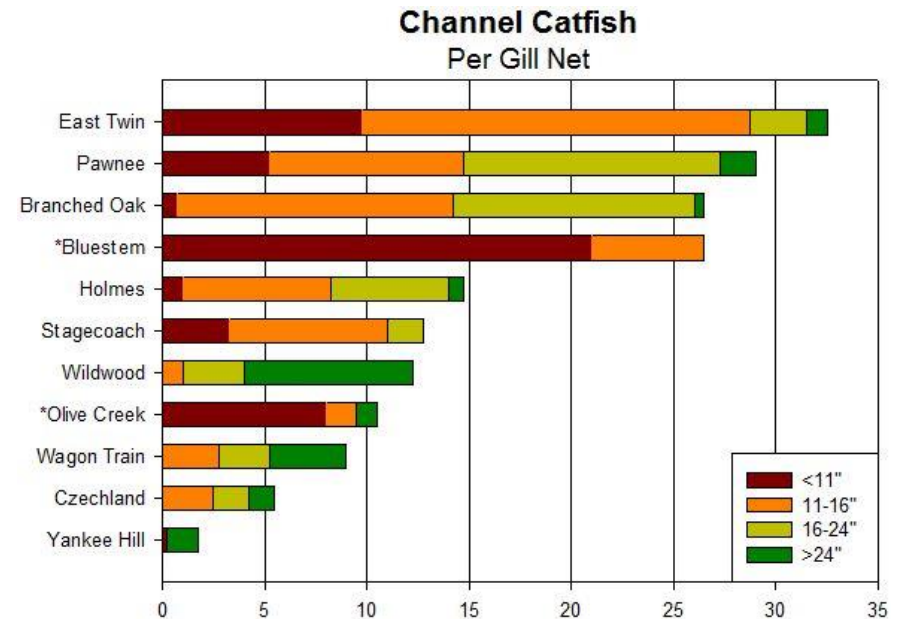
Crappie

Crappie fishing in the Lincoln area will be good again in 2017 at multiple lakes. **Lake Wanahoo** trap nets showed a dramatic drop in crappie from 2015; however, gill net data still showed a high crappie density in the lake. Larger crappie (>12") were sampled at **Yankee Hill, Czechland** and **Branched Oak** in 2016. Also, **Wildwood** will continue to be a crappie fishing destination 2017. Anglers are reminded of the 10" minimum length limit at Branched Oak and Czechland.



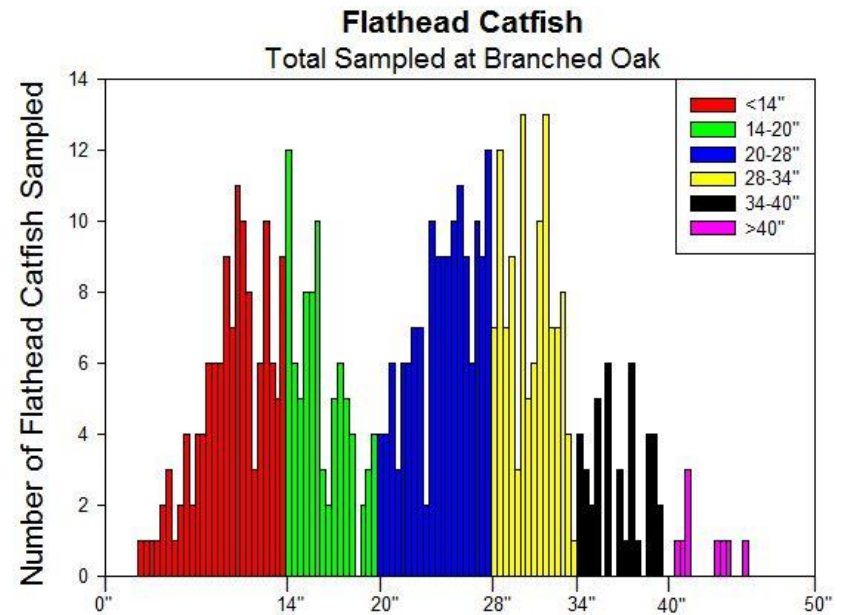
Channel Catfish

Similarly to last year, anglers seeking eater-sized catfish should head to **East Twin** or **Pawnee**. Anglers seeking larger catfish may want to try **Wagon Train**, **Yankee Hill** or **Czechland**. **Wagon Train** had the largest channel catfish sampled in 2016 at 34 inches. The catch and release regulation at **Wildwood** continues to provide a great opportunity to catch a trophy channel catfish.



Flathead Catfish

Branched Oak continues to be one of the top flathead destinations in the state and with multiple fish over 40" and anglers will have a chance to catch a true trophy. Anglers should also note that there is a catch and release regulation on flathead catfish at Branched Oak.



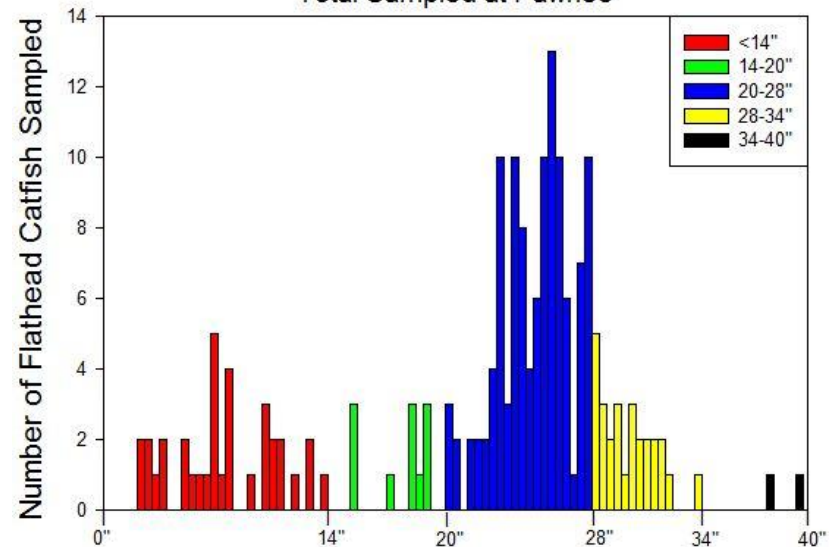
Pawnee Lake will also provide some good flathead fishing in 2017. Unlike Branched Oak, anglers are able to harvest up to five flatheads at Pawnee; however, only one can be over 30 inches.

Walleye

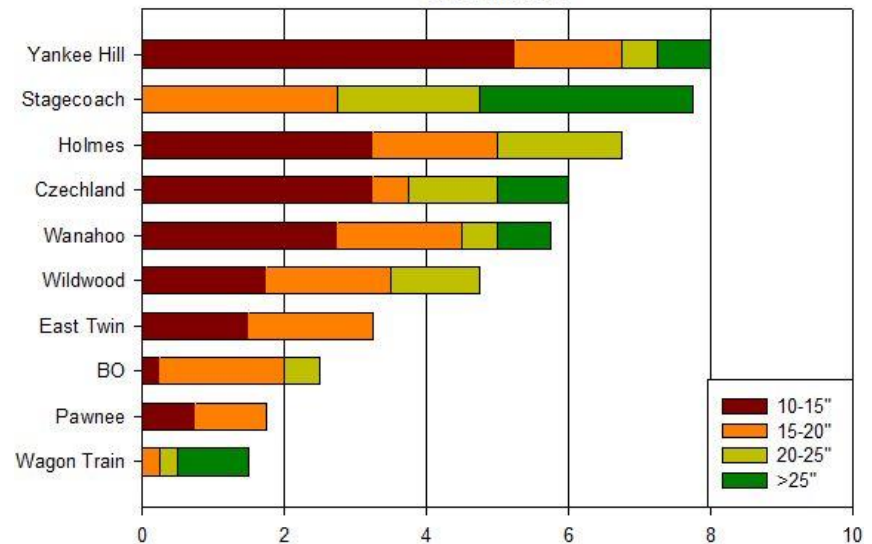
Since switching to the 8" advanced fingerling stockings we have seen an increase in walleye at a number of lakes. These advanced fish should all hit the legal 15" mark within 2 years of stocking. **Stagecoach** will again be a top destination for size and numbers of walleyes. Other lakes like **Yankee Hill**, **Czechland** and **Lake Wanahoo** will also provide opportunity for both eater and trophy sized walleyes.



Flathead Catfish
Total Sampled at Pawnee



Walleye
Per Gill Net



Northern Pike

Lake Wanahoo will again provide a unique fishing opportunity to catch northern pike in eastern Nebraska. Larger fish are becoming more abundant and NGPC biologists sampled their first pike larger than 40" in the spring of 2016. Remember that all northern pike caught must be released immediately. The northern pike tagging study will continue in 2017 and anglers are asked to report all tagged fish to NGPC.FISHTAGS@NEBRASKA.GOV.

Blue Catfish

Blue catfish can be found in **Branched Oak**, **Pawnee** and the **Platte River**. NGPC biologist stocked 6,515 blue catfish at Pawnee in 2015 which should provide better blue catfishing for years to come.

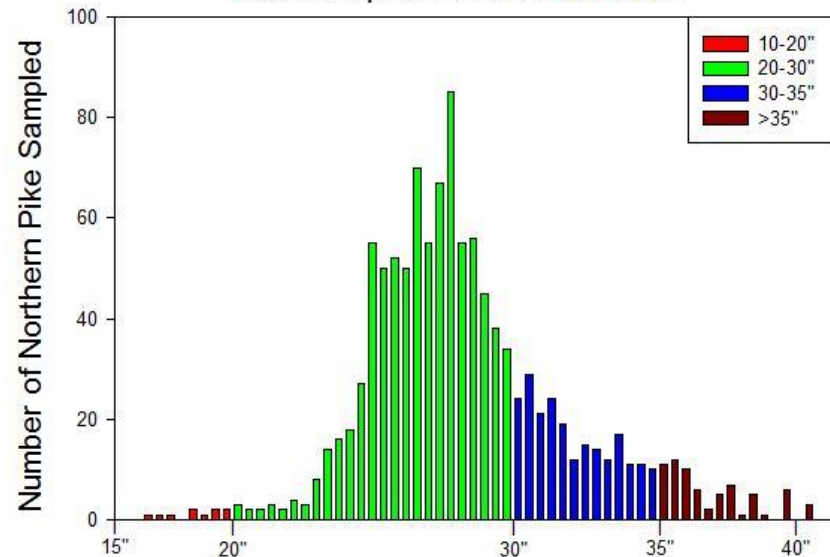
Bullheads

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 can be found at **Yankee Hill**, **Olive Creek** and **Lake Wanahoo**. Several master angler bullheads (>15") were sampled at **Lake Wanahoo** in the spring.

Rainbow Trout

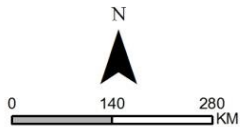
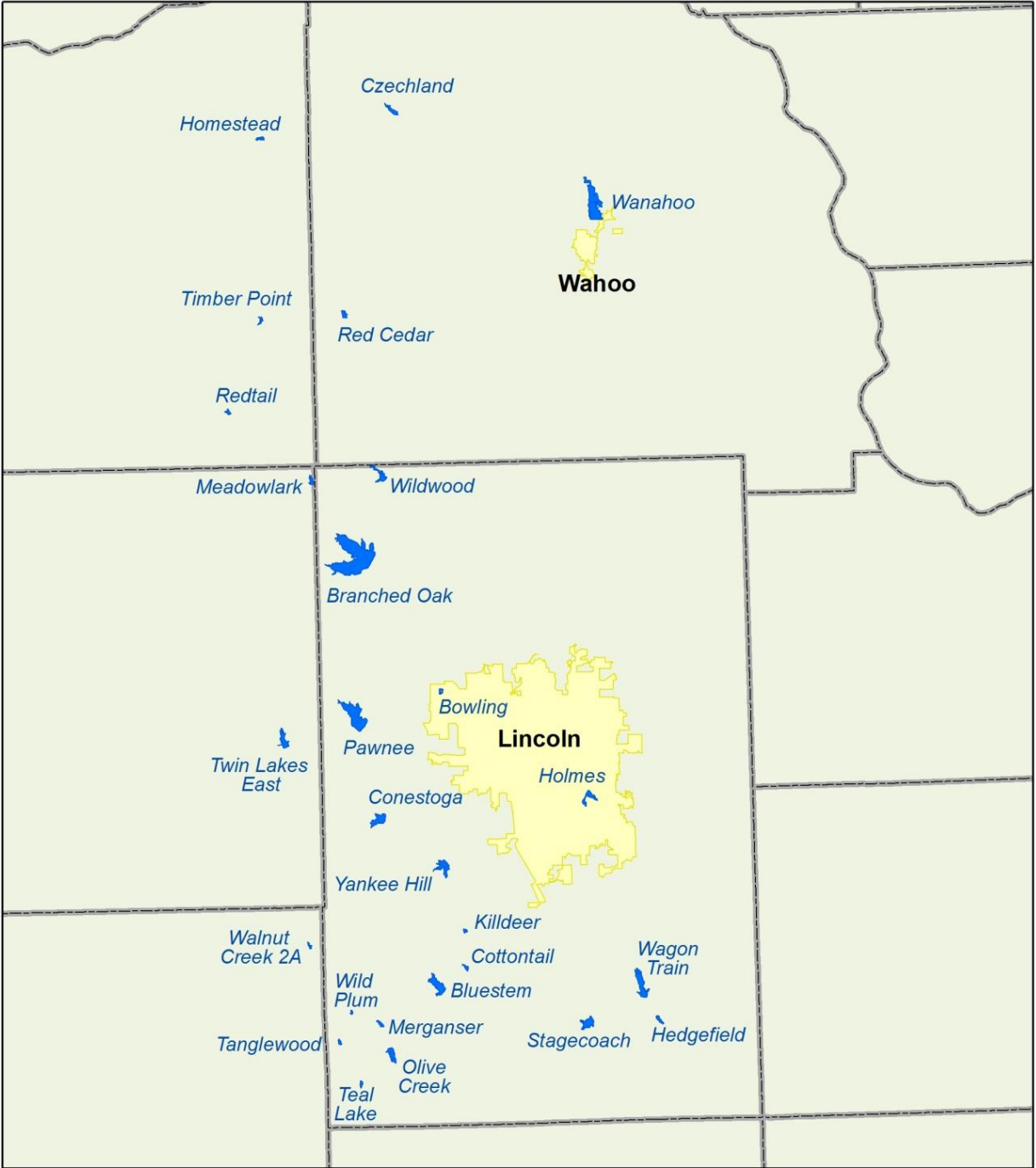
Rainbow trout also provide a great fishing opportunity for children or beginners. Rainbow trout are stocked in the spring, fall and winter at **Holmes Lake** and in the fall and winter in the south pond at **Bowling Lake**.

Northern Pike
Total Sampled at Lake Wanahoo



Wipers and Striped Bass

Salt Valley reservoirs such as **Wagon Train**, **Stagecoach** and **Branched Oak** will again provide anglers an opportunity to catch wipers in eastern Nebraska. Over 56,000 striped bass and roughly 4,000 wipers were stocked at **Branched Oak** in 2016. Anglers are reminded that they can keep only one white bass, striped bass or wiper that is 16" or longer in their daily bag limit, except at Branched Oak where a catch and release regulation is in place. Remember white perch, a similar looking species to white bass, striped bass and wipers, cannot be transported live from any waterbody as they are an aquatic invasive species.



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Trisha Schlake, IT Division, 12/18/2012

