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 2016 and 2017. 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 another good year. Larger bluegills (>8”) were sampled in a number of reservoirs and will provide great ice and open water fishing in 2017. Olive Creek and Czechland will provide some excellent fishing in 2017. Although net samples were low at Lake Wanahoo and Yankee Hill, they will provide some excellent bluegill fishing this upcoming year as well. Anglers should also be able to target larger bluegills at Wildwood and Meadowlark.

* 2016 Survey
Largemouth Bass

Largemouth bass fishing should also be good in 2018. Anglers looking for >15” bass should head to either **Walnut Creek #2A** or **Wanahoo**. Anglers looking for numbers of bass should head to **Wildwood** or **Olive Creek** while anglers looking for large bass (>21”) should try lakes with lower bass densities like **Wagon Train**, **Czechland** or **East Twin**.

Crappie

Anglers seeking crappies in the Lincoln area will have plenty of opportunity. **Yankee Hill** will provide excellent crappie fishing with a good chance at catching some larger fish. **Holmes, Czechland, Branched Oak, Wanahoo** and **Wildwood** will continue to be crappie fishing destinations in 2017. Anglers are reminded of the 10” minimum length limit at Branched Oak and Czechland.

* 2016 Survey
Channel Catfish

Similarly to last year, anglers seeking eater-sized catfish should head to East Twin, Branched Oak or Pawnee. Anglers seeking larger catfish may want to try Wagon Train, Meadowlark or Czechland. Although catch rates were lower this year, 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 with multiple fish over 40”, giving anglers 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 2018. Unlike Branched Oak, anglers are able to harvest up to five flatheads at Pawnee; however, only one can be over 30 inches.

Walleye

Walleye fishing in the Lincoln area should be good at a number of reservoirs in 2018. The switch to stocking 8” fish has really paid off at Yankee Hill, Wildwood and Holmes. Other lakes such as Czechland, Pawnee and Wanahoo haven’t responded as well to the switch but will still offer a chance at a keeper walleye.
Saugeye

Saugeye were first stocked in a few reservoirs in 2015, and results have been pretty good so far. Anglers looking to catch legal saugeye (>15“) in the Salt Valley should head to Olive Creek or Meadowlark. Nearly 3,800 saugeyes were stocked in Pawnee in 2017. Those fish should reach legal length by the fall of 2018 or 2019.

Northern Pike

The northern pike in Lake Wanahoo continue to grow and provide anglers with a unique fishing experience. Multiple fish over 40” were sampled in the spring of 2017 along with a multitude of fish in the 35-40” range. Remember that all northern pike caught must be released immediately. The northern pike tagging study will continue in 2018 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 in Pawnee in 2015 and 11,183 in Branched Oak in 2017. These stockings should provide better blue catfishing for years to come.

Bullheads

Catchable sized bullheads can be found at Yankee Hill, Olive Creek and Lake Wanahoo. Several master angler bullheads (>15”) were sampled at Lake Wanahoo during 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.

Wipers and Striped Bass

Salt Valley reservoirs such as Wagon Train 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. It appears the wipers have survived better than the stripers as NGPC sampled a lot of 14-20” wipers in the fall of 2017. 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.