

FISHING FORECAST

2015

2014 Fish Sampling Charts

Guide to Fishing Nebraska in 2015



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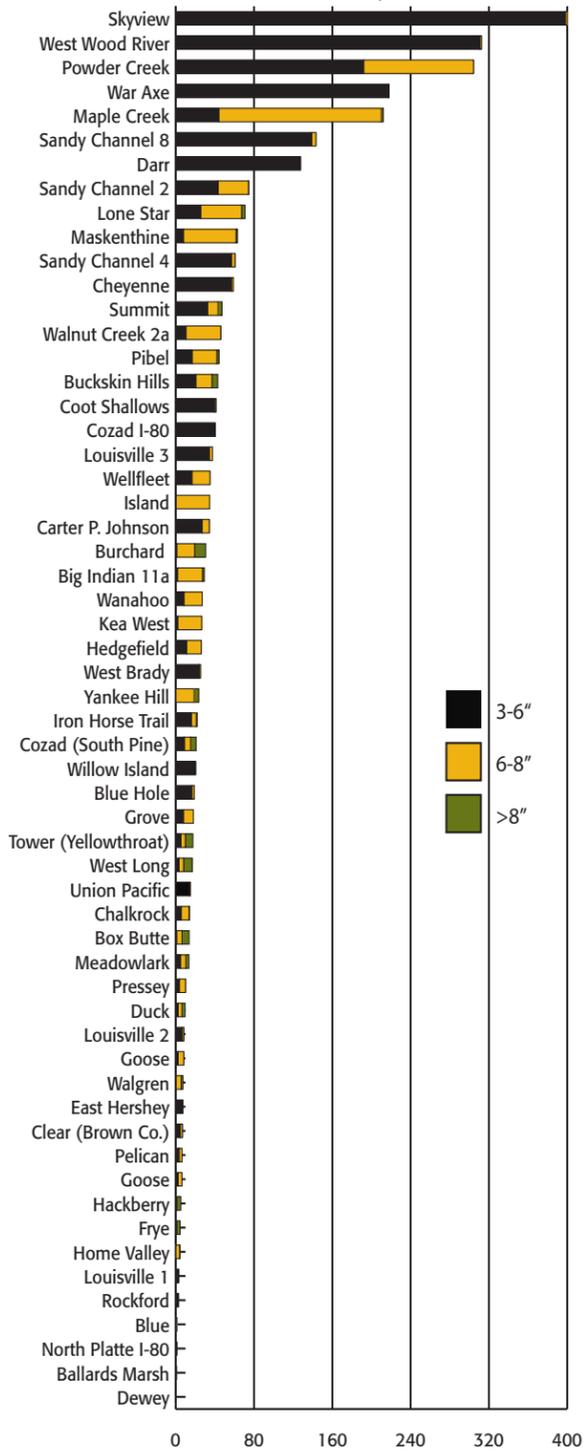


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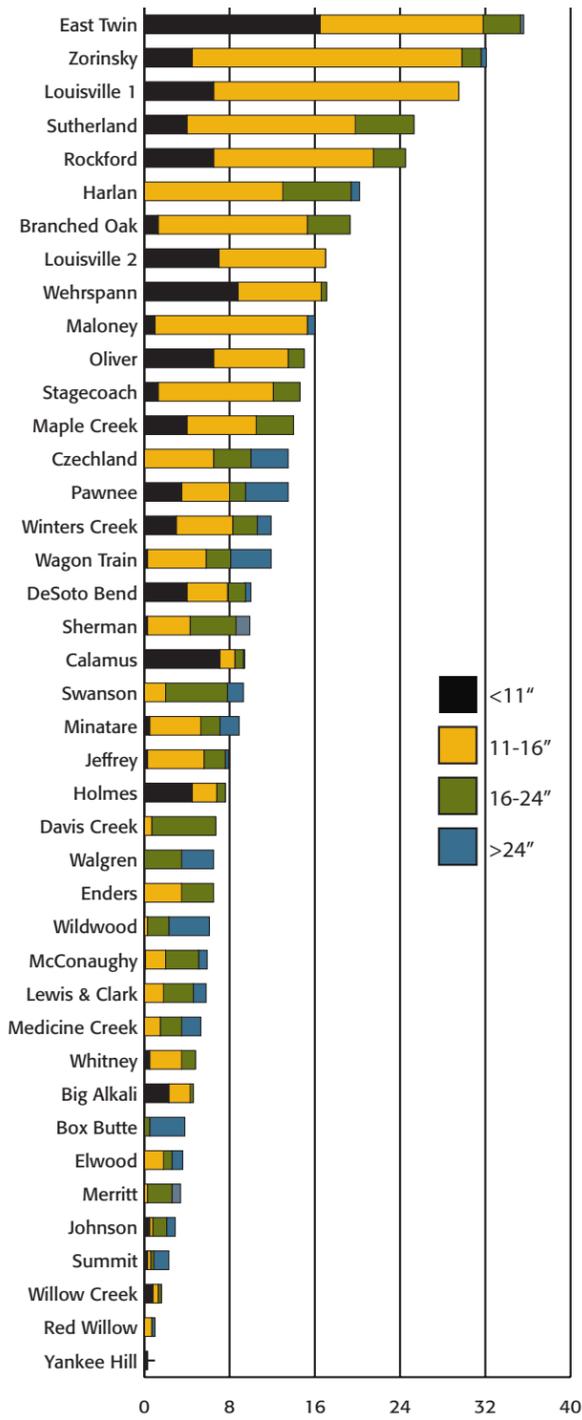
BLUEGILL

Per Trap Net



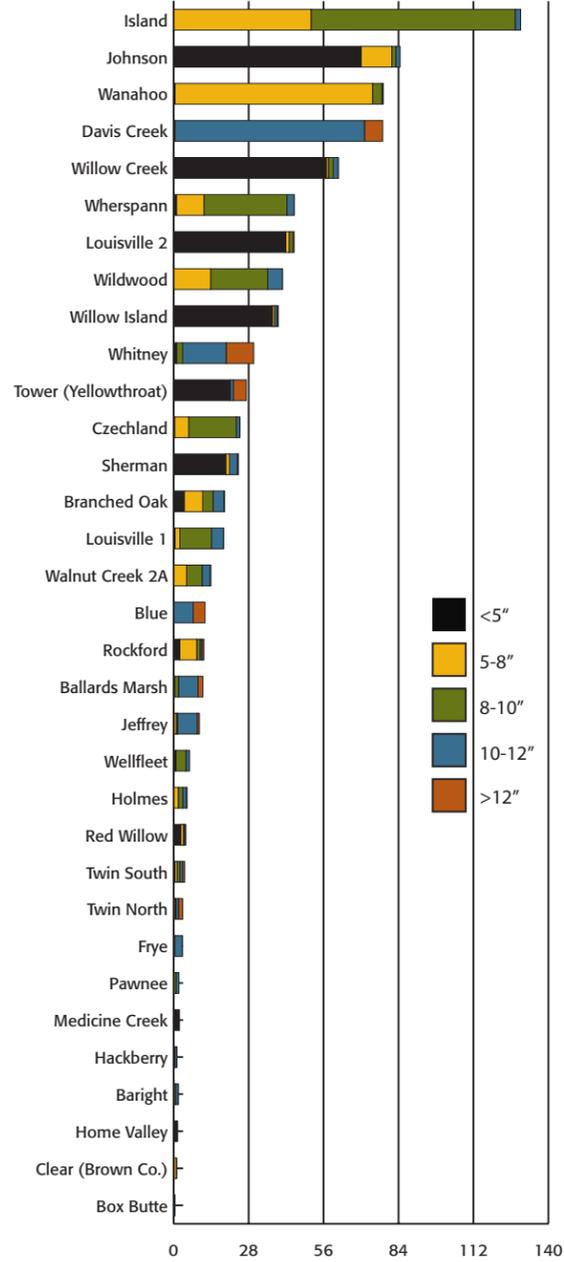
CHANNEL CATFISH

Per Gill Net



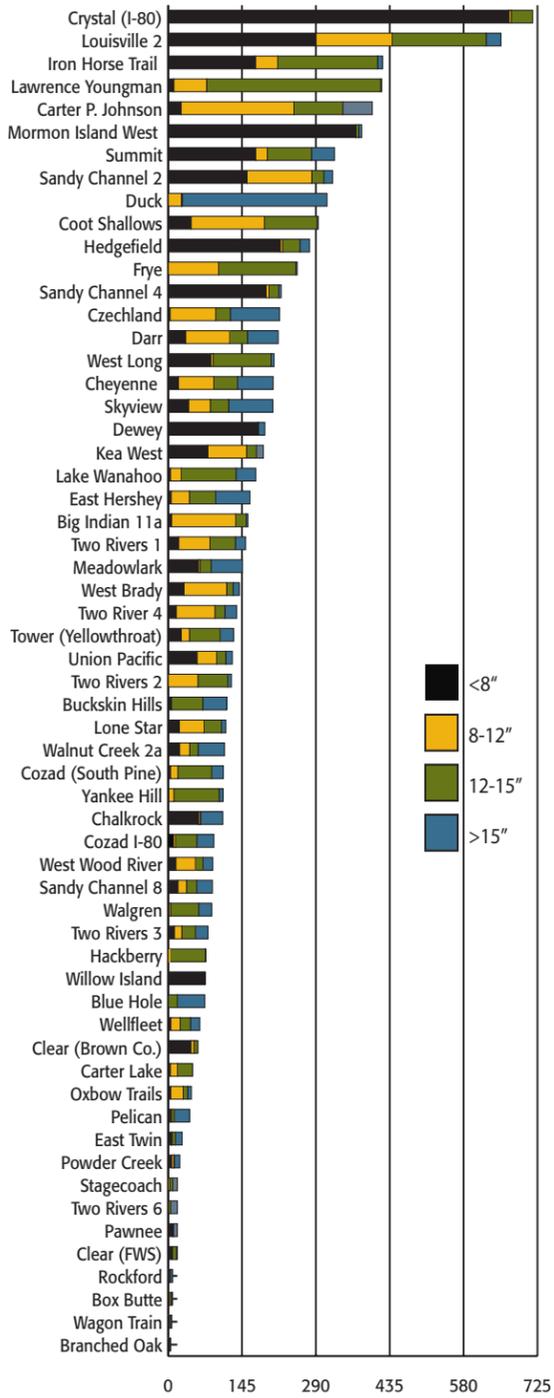
CRAPPIE

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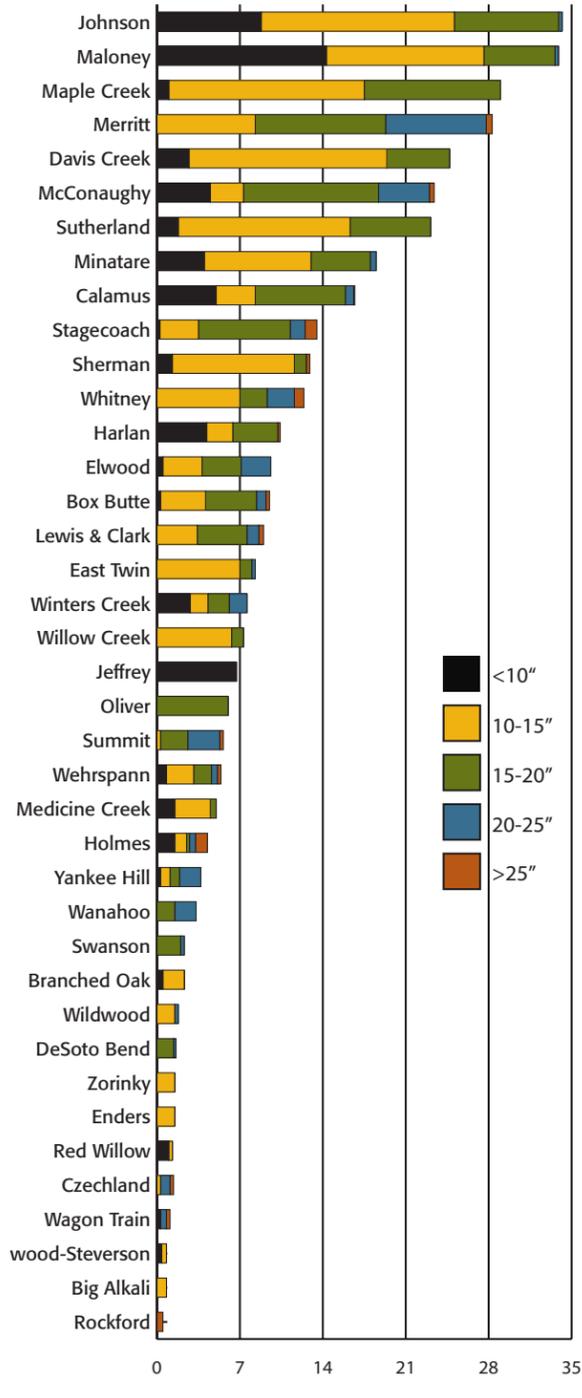
LARGEMOUTH BASS

Per Hour Electrofishing



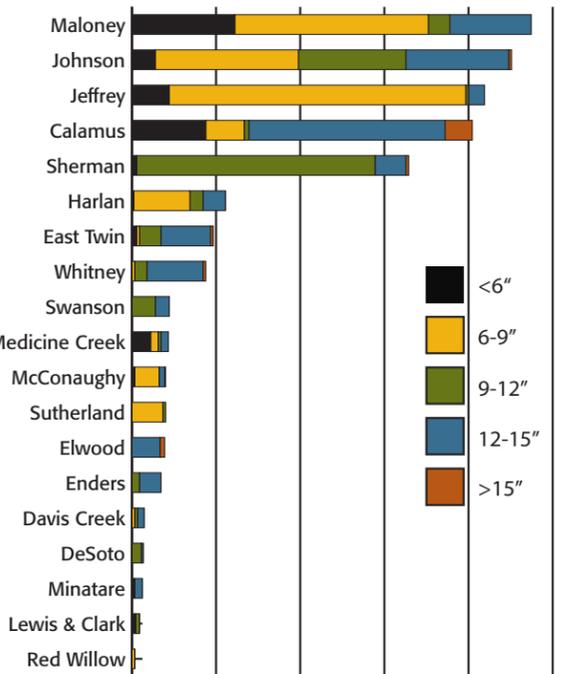
WALLEYE

Per Gill Net



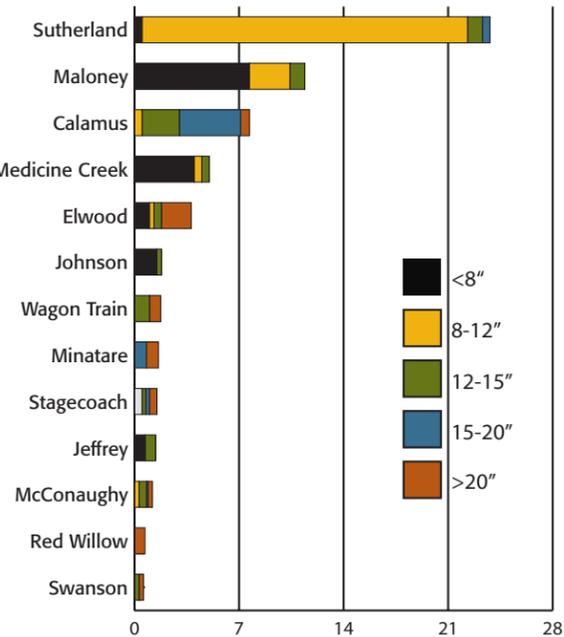
WHITE BASS

Per Gill Net



WIPER

Per Gill Net



A GUIDE TO FISHING NEBRASKA IN 2015 **By Daryl Bauer, Game and Parks fisheries outreach program manager**

WALLEYE – Large reservoirs will always be the best walleye fisheries in Nebraska because they are large enough to be excellent walleye habitats. Reservoirs that will be good for walleyes in 2015 are traditionally some of the best walleye fisheries year after year. Walleye anglers can always count on some excellent walleye fishing at **Merritt** and **McConaughy**. In addition, especially for numbers of eating-size, 15- to 20-inch walleyes, plan to fish **Johnson**, **Calamus** and **Sutherland** reservoirs. **Maloney**, **Oliver**, **Davis Creek** and **Minatare** also will offer some good walleye fishing. If a fish larger than 25 inches is your target, **Merritt** and **McConaughy** will be the best bets, but do not overlook **Lewis and Clark** for some big walleyes. Small- to medium-size reservoirs tend to have fewer walleyes because smaller waters are less ideal walleye habitats, but anglers will have some opportunities to catch walleyes, and perhaps some big ones, at **Stagecoach** in southeast Nebraska. **Maple Creek Reservoir** is relatively new and has a growing population of walleyes; some of those fish will be larger than 15 inches.

WHITE BASS – Numerous Nebraska reservoirs will offer excellent white bass fishing again in 2015. **Harlan** is consistently one of the best white bass waters in the state. It will be again, and **Calamus** also will be outstanding in the coming year. The southwest reservoirs also are traditionally good for white bass and **Enders** will be the best of those. Likewise, the canal reservoirs always produce some good white bass fishing; **Maloney** and **Johnson** should be the best of those reservoirs this year. **Sherman** was very good for white bass in 2014 and that will continue into 2015. Smaller reservoirs that will also offer some white bass in the coming year include **Whitney** in the Panhandle and **East Twin** in southeast Nebraska.

WIPERS – Wipers are large, open-water predators that also thrive in Nebraska's largest large bodies of water — reservoirs. Therefore, some of the same Nebraska waters are consistently good for wipers year after year. Along with excellent white bass fishing, **Calamus** also will offer some of the state's best wiper fishing this year, and anglers often can catch wipers right along with white bass. **Minatare** and **Sutherland** are a couple of other reservoirs that will be good for wipers in 2015. **Red Willow** has long been known for its wiper fishing and is home to Nebraska's hook-and-line state record wiper; anglers will have a good chance of catching some big wipers there again this year as well as at **Swanson Reservoir**. **Elwood** and **McConaughy** will be two other Nebraska reservoirs that will offer anglers a good chance of catching a trophy wiper in 2015. Smaller waters are less ideal wiper habitats, but **Stagecoach** and **Wagon Train** reservoirs in southeast Nebraska support some wipers including fish in excess of 20 inches.

BLUEGILL – Bluegills thrive in smaller waters, especially those that have clean water and an abundance of aquatic vegetation. In Nebraska anglers can find small bluegills almost anywhere, but have to hunt to find the best waters with an abundance of fish larger than 8 inches. Small- to medium-size reservoirs will offer some of the best bluegill fishing in 2015, from **Box Butte** in northwest Nebraska to **Burchard** in the southeast. In the northeast part of the state, anglers will discover that **Buckskin Hills Reservoir** will be one of the best in that part of the state for quality bluegills. **Summit** has also been a very good bluegill fishery in recent years and it will be again in 2015. **Yankee Hill Reservoir** will be another good bluegill fishery to check out in the coming year. The Sandhills lakes are some of the

few truly natural lakes in Nebraska; they tend to have lower densities of bluegills, but can offer some trophy fish with the biggest specimens in excess of 1 pound. **West Long Lake** on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and **Tower Lake** on the Yellowthroat Wildlife Management Area (WMA) will be two of the best Sandhills bluegill lakes, but **Cozad Lake** on the South Pine WMA, **Hackberry** on the Valentine NWR and **Frye Lake** will also be good.

CRAPPIES – Crappies are another panfish species that can be found throughout Nebraska. Small- to medium-size reservoirs tend to be excellent crappie habitats and those can be found across the state. **Whitney** in northwest Nebraska will again offer some excellent crappie fishing in 2015, while **Branched Oak**, **Yankee Hill** and **Walnut Creek 2A** in the opposite corner of the state will be good. **Jeffrey Reservoir** in central Nebraska will be a good crappie fishery as well as **Blue Lake** and **Ballard's Marsh** in the Sandhills. Water level fluctuations on irrigation reservoirs tend to be detrimental to crappie populations, but **Sherman Reservoir** consistently offers good crappie fishing in spite of annual draw downs, and **Davis Creek** is another irrigation reservoir crappie anglers should target.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Small reservoirs, Sandhills lakes, pits, and ponds tend to be the best largemouth bass habitats in Nebraska. Those waters offer the stable water levels, clean water and abundance of shallow water cover in which largemouth bass thrive. Some of those waters can have very high densities of bass, which may produce excellent panfish fishing (bass keep panfish numbers in check), but those waters with lots of bass may not necessarily be the best for producing big bass. Small reservoirs like **Czechland**, **Skyview** and **Meadowlark**

will offer some of the best numbers of largemouth bass 15 inches and larger. **Carter P. Johnson**, **Buckskin Hills** and **Summit** are other good examples of small- to medium-size reservoirs that will produce some good bass fishing this year. Sandhills lakes can also be good largemouth bass habitats and produce some beautiful, fat bass. **Duck Lake** on the Valentine NWR will be the best example of sandhill lake bass fishing this year. Private pits and ponds always produce some of the best bass fishing in the state, and many Nebraska anglers have permission to fish at least one of those privately-owned waters. In addition, some of those private pits and ponds have been enrolled in the Open Fields and Waters program and are open to the public. Interstate lakes and other public pits like **Cheyenne**, **East Hershey**, **Darr**, **Blue Hill** and **Sandy Channel No. 8** will also offer some excellent bass fishing.

CHANNEL CATFISH – Channel catfish are one of the most popular fish among Nebraska anglers, and can be found across the state. Some of the best channel cat waters for 2015 will range from **Sutherland**, **Swanson** and **Harlan** reservoirs in south-central and southwest Nebraska to **Branched Oak** in the eastern part of the state. **Davis Creek Reservoir** will be another good channel catfish spot. Anglers looking for trophy channel catfish will want to spend some time on **Wagon Train**, **Pawnee**, **Wildwood**, **Box Butte**, **Merritt** and **Calamus** reservoirs. All catfish have to be released at **Wildwood Reservoir**; that is why there is an abundance of big channel cats there. Anglers should consider voluntarily releasing big catfish at other reservoirs to maintain the quality of fishing. For a different experience, do not overlook Nebraska's warm-water **Missouri**, **Platte**, **Elkhorn** and **Niobrara** rivers, where public access is available in some areas.

REDEARS, ROCK BASS AND

SMALLMOUTH BASS – Nebraska has opportunities to catch other species of sunfish like redears at **West Brady** or **East Hershey** interstate lakes or **Pawnee Slough WMA**, and rock bass at **East Hershey**. **Lewis and Clark Reservoir** and the **Missouri River** in northeast Nebraska, **War Axe State Recreation Area**, **Johnson Lake**, **Lake McConaughy** and **Box Butte Reservoir** will offer some of the state's best smallmouth bass fishing in 2015.

BLUE CATFISH – Blue catfish can be found in reservoirs like **Swanson**, **Wehrspann** and **Branched Oak**, but look to the **Missouri River** in southeast Nebraska for the biggest blue cats in the state, potentially some fish weighing up to triple digits.

FLATHEAD CATFISH – Flathead catfish are another big, bad catfish species, and anglers can catch some trophy flatheads in **Harlan**, **Sherman** or **Branched Oak** reservoirs as well as the **Tri-County** and **Loup canal systems**. All flatheads at **Branched Oak** must be released immediately after capture and anglers should consider releasing those big cats on other fisheries, as well; it takes several years for those fish to reach trophy proportions.

SAUGER – **Lewis and Clark Reservoir** and the **Missouri River** in northeast Nebraska is the best sauger fishery in the state, but **Johnson Reservoir** and the canal system and associated reservoirs above Johnson also have some excellent sauger fishing.

YELLOW PERCH – Yellow perch are a very tasty and popular panfish. Some of the best yellow perch fishing will be found at **Crescent**, **West Long**, **Blue**, **Home Valley** and **Frye** lakes in the Sandhills.

NORTHERN PIKE – Sandhills lakes are some of the best northern pike habitats in the state and once again Valentine NWR lakes **Hackberry** and **Dewey** will be some of Nebraska's most popular pike fisheries. **Goose** and **Twin** lakes are other Sandhills lakes that will be good for northern pike this year, but do not overlook reservoirs like **Box Butte**, **Merritt** and **McConaughy**. Southern and eastern Nebraska waters can be too warm for the cool-water northern pike, but in southeast Nebraska, **Lake Wanahoo** will continue to offer anglers a chance to catch-and-release some pike.

BULLHEADS – Bullhead fishing will be particularly good at **Holmes**, **Czechland**, **Wanahoo**, **Yankee Hill** and **Zorinsky** reservoirs. Catchable-size bullheads are stocked annually at state recreation area lakes **Louisville No. 2A**, **Two Rivers No. 6**, **Two Rivers No. 7** and **Fremont No. 3**.

MUSKELLUNGE – The “king of freshwater sport fish,” muskellunge, can also be found in Nebraska waters. To catch this large, toothy predator, anglers should target **Merritt**, **Calamus** and **Wagon Train** reservoirs, as well as **Fremont No. 20**, and Grand Island's **L.E. Ray Lake**.

TROUT – Nebraska has waters capable of supporting cold-water fish year-round, where anglers can find rainbow, brown, and brook trout. Most of the cold-water trout streams are found in western and northern parts of the state; the **East Branch of Verdigre Creek**, **Long Pine**, **Soldier**, **Plum** and **Ninemile** creeks are perennial favorites among trout anglers. In 2015 the rainbow trout fishing at **Lake Ogallala** will continue to be good, and anglers might even catch some cutthroat trout from **Lake Ogallala** or the **White River**.

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