

Interstate 80 Lakes — Grand Island to Elm Creek Fish Survey Results - Spring 2014

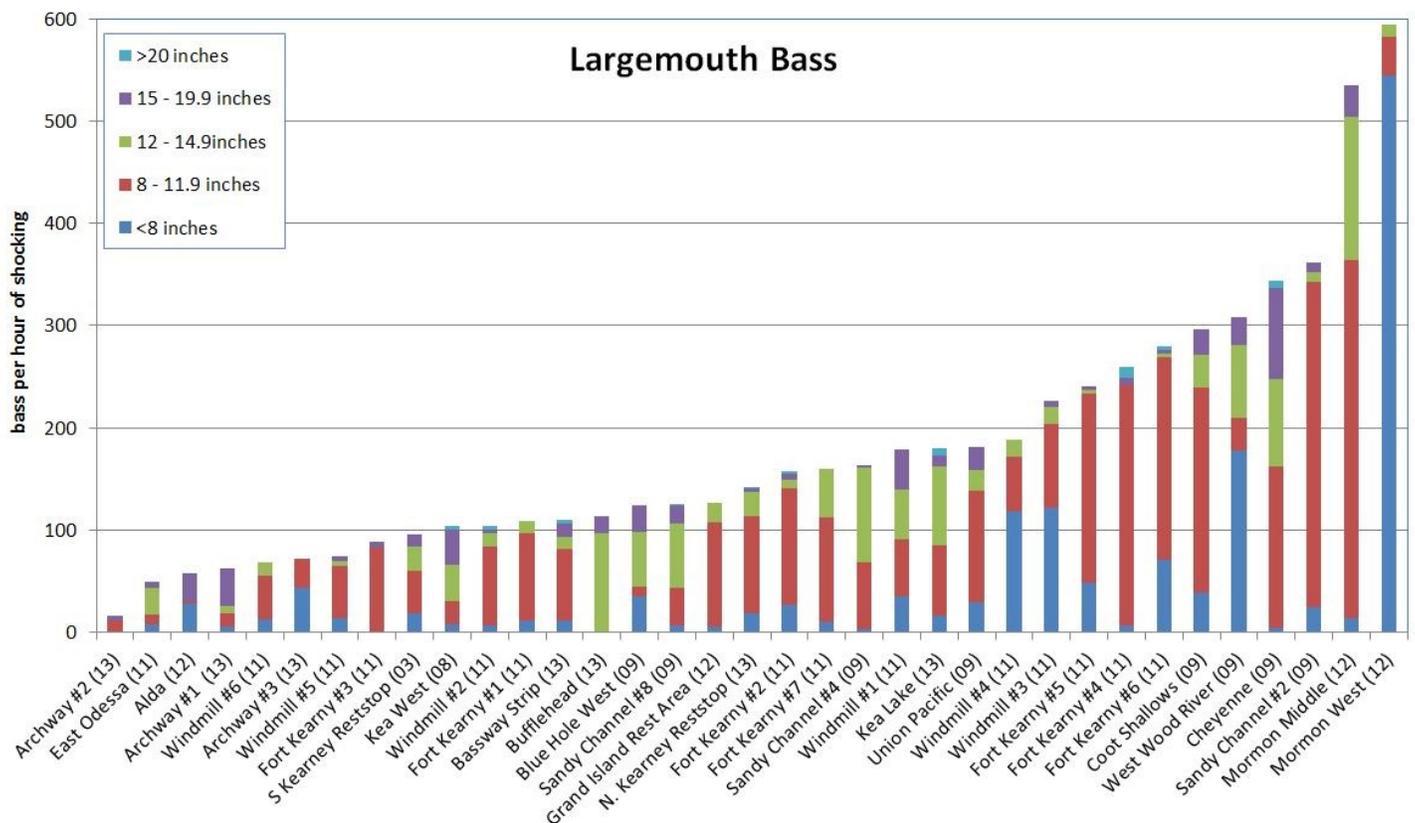


Brad Eifert, Fisheries Biologist

Spanning a stretch of 150 miles along Interstate 80 from Grand Island to Hershey more than 60 small lakes are available for public fishing. Fisheries staff from the Kearney office has the management responsibility for the Interstate lakes located from Grand Island to Elm Creek. These man-made lakes, most of which were created for fill material when the Interstate system was developed in the 1960's, range in size from 1 to 42 acres. The ground water fed lakes have excellent shoreline access for anglers and usually contain clear water and abundant aquatic vegetation, providing excellent habitat conditions for largemouth bass and bluegill. In addition, most of the lakes contain channel catfish, while others have crappie, rock bass, walleye, and northern pike. The fish populations are surveyed on a five year rotation and the following graphs and text display these results.

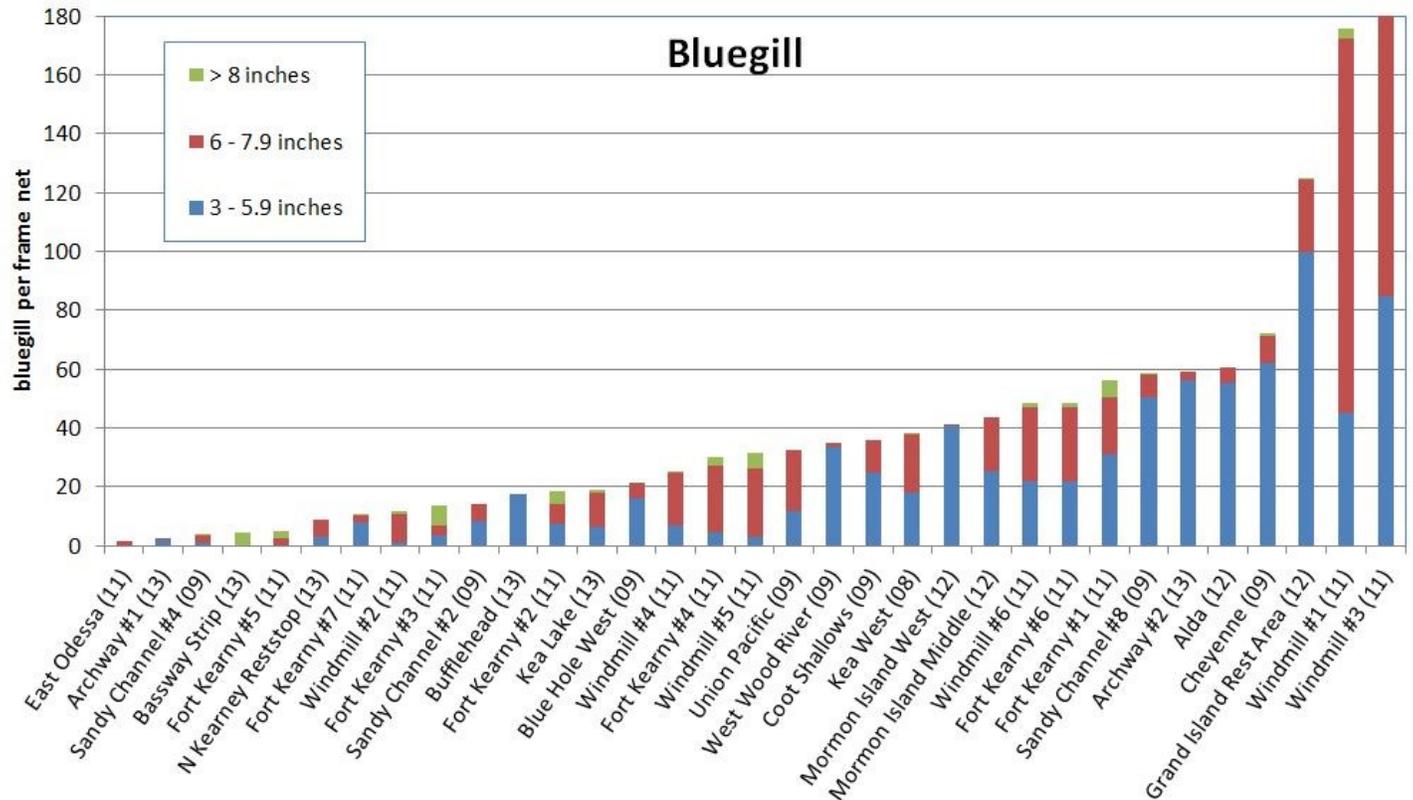
Largemouth Bass

Largemouth bass are present in all of the Interstate lakes in the central portion of Nebraska, with the exception of War Axe, which has been stocked with smallmouth bass. Lakes with high densities of smaller bass, include Windmill, Ft. Kearny, West and Middle Mormon Island, Kea Lake, Coot Shallows, and Sandy Channel #2. Lakes that traditionally produce larger bass include Cheyenne, Windmill #1, Bassway Strip, Blue Hole West, and Sandy Channel #8. Most of the I-80 lakes have a 15-inch minimum length limit on black bass. Exceptions include; Mormon Island SRA, Cheyenne, West Wood River, War Axe, and Archway Lakes, all of which have a 21-inch minimum length limit. In addition, Kea West is designated as a catch and release only lake for all species. Anglers are encouraged to practice catch and release on bass in the I-80 Lakes as they are easily over-harvested.



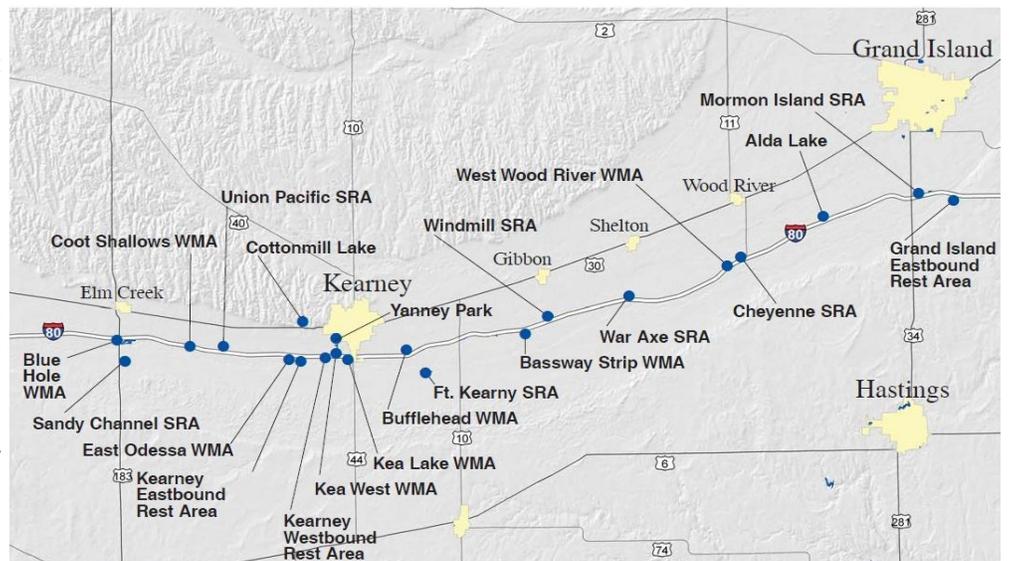
Bluegill

Bluegill are present in most of the I-80 lakes in central Nebraska. While most of the lakes can be great places to catch bluegill, some of the best lakes to catch six to eight inch bluegill include Mormon Island Middle, Cheyenne SRA, Windmill SRA, Fort Kearny SRA, Kea West, and Union Pacific. Big bluegills, greater than eight inches, can also be found in most of the lakes. Lakes that consistently produce larger bluegill include Bassway Strip, Kea Lake, North Kearney Rest Stop, Sandy Channel #8, Windmill #2 and Ft. Kearny #1 and #7. Anglers are reminded that the daily bag limit for panfish is 15 fish per day.



Lake Summaries

The remainder of this document provides additional information on the Interstate 80 Lakes open to public fishing in the central portion of Nebraska. Lakes are covered individually and in geographic order starting at Grand Island and heading west to Elm Creek. Information from the most recent fish population surveys, special regulations, boating regulations, and other general information is covered.



Grand Island Rest Area Lake

Location: 1 mile east of Grand Island Locust Street (Exit 314) Interchange (accessed only from eastbound lane of I-80.)
Latitude: 40.82310 Longitude: -98.32785

Waterbody Information: Grand Island Rest Area Lake is a shallow 6 acre lake with a maximum depth of eight feet. It is owned by the Nebraska Department of Roads. The fishery was renovated in 2004 to remove rough fish and it was restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. Survey results from May 2012 indicated a good fishery for largemouth bass, with numerous fish ranging from 16 to 19 inches. The channel catfish population also had a fair number of large fish ranging from 20 to 28 inches. Most of the bluegill sampled were small, ranging from 4.5 to 6.5 inches. Unfortunately, drought and low water levels during the summer of 2012 resulted in a substantial fish kill that likely killed most of the large bass and channel catfish present in the lake. Although



numerous small bass and bluegill survived the fish kill, it will likely be several years before the abundance of large fish rebounds. Due to the shallow depths of this lake, the likelihood of future fish kills remains high during drought years. Water levels were once again very low during the summer of 2013 resulting in another minor fish kill. Future fisheries management and stocking have been temporarily suspended until water levels improve. No boating is allowed on this lake. Low water levels and abundant aquatic vegetation can make fishing difficult during the summer months. Access for shoreline angling is fair.

Mormon Island State Recreation Area

Location: Exit 312, NE quadrant of Grand Island Interstate 80 Interchange
Latitude: 40.82498 Longitude: -98.37416

Waterbody Information: Three lakes are present at the Mormon Island State Recreation Area. The area is maintained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as a State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required to enter. Modern and primitive camping is available, as well as a shower house and swimming beach. A concrete boat ramp is present on the middle and west lakes and boating is limited to 5 mph/no wake. A



handicapped accessible fishing pier is located on the west lake. Shoreline access is excellent on the middle and west lakes making them great places for family fishing outings. Access to the east lake is by walk-in only and shoreline access is poor. Special fishing regulations for these lakes include a 21-inch minimum length limit for largemouth bass and a 40-inch minimum length limit for muskellunge.

Mormon Island West: The largest of the three lakes at 42 acres. The lake has varied depths, with a maximum depth of 25 feet. A contour map can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/MormanWest.pdf>. The fishery in this lake was renovated in 2010 to remove rough fish and has been restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, black crappie and muskellunge. In addition, nine-inch walleye were introduced in the fall of 2013. A fish population survey was completed on the lake during the spring of 2012, which indicated that the newly established fishery is progressing well. Largemouth bass were very numerous and had an electrofishing catch rate of 590 bass per hour. Most of these fish were from the 2011 year-class and ranged from 4 to 8 inches. Bass from the original 2010 stocking ranged from 11 to 13 inches. Muskellunge also appeared to be doing well and were showing good growth rates. The muskellunge caught during the survey ranged from 18 to 24 inches. Channel catfish were introduced in 2010 and this year-class has provided good angling opportunities during the past

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Mormon Island West (continued):

year, as these fish range from 15 to 19 inches. An additional 2,100 10-inch channel catfish were stocked in the fall of 2012. Two year-classes of black crappie were sampled with the 2010 year-class averaging 9 inches and the 2011 year-class averaging 5 inches. The bluegill from the original stocking ranged from 6 to 8 inches, but most of the bluegill sampled were from the 2011 year-class and averaged 3 inches. Future fish stockings includes 2,100 10-inch channel catfish and 420 9-inch walleye during the fall of 2014. Forty-two 12-inch muskellunge are scheduled for stocking in 2015. The next fish population survey is scheduled for the spring of 2017.

Mormon Island Middle: This 19 lake is shallower than the west lake and has a maximum depth of 12 feet. The lake normally has very clear water and has abundant submerged aquatic vegetation. A contour map can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/MormanMiddle.pdf>. The fishery was renovated in 2005 to remove rough fish and has been restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, black crappie and redear sunfish. The fish population was last surveyed during the spring of 2012 and results indicated a healthy fish population. Largemouth bass abundance was very high with the majority of the bass ranging from 9.5 to 12.5 inches. There was a fair abundance of 15 to 18 inch bass and the largest collected was nearly 20 inches. Bluegill were abundant, but most were small, ranging from 4.5 to 6.5 inches. Redear sunfish were also common and had slightly better size distribution than the bluegill. Most redear ranged from 6 to 8.5 inches. There were very few black crappie sampled in the survey. Channel catfish were moderately abundant and ranged from 12 to 20 inches. Future fish stocking includes 570 10-inch catfish scheduled for 2014. The next fish population survey is scheduled for the spring of 2017.

Mormon Island East: This 31 acre lake is owned by the Department of Roads. Access to this lake is by walk-in only through Mormon Island SRA. Shoreline access is very poor due to dense stands of cattails. The fishery has not been surveyed since 1995. No boating is allowed on this lake.

Alda

Location: Exit 305, NE quadrant of Alda Interstate 80 Interchange

Latitude: 40.80278 Longitude: -98.49172

Waterbody Information: Alda is a 12 acre lake owned by the Nebraska Department of Roads. Maximum depth of the lake is 15 feet. The latest fish population survey was completed during the spring of 2012. The quality of the fishery at time was fair. Largemouth bass abundance was lower than what is normally sampled in I-80 lakes. About half of the bass collected during the survey ranged from 3 to 4 inches, while the other half ranged from 15 to 19 inches. Advanced bass fingerlings were stocked in the fall of 2012 to help improve abundance. Bluegill were very abundant, but had a poor size distribution. Most of the bluegill collected ranged from 3 to 5 inches. Only a few bluegill up to 7 inches were caught. Channel catfish were not abundant, but there were some quality sized fish present. Several catfish averaging 25 inches were sampled. There were 300 10-inch catfish stocked during the fall of 2012. Northern pike have been stocked several times over the years and survey results indicated a fair population of 22 to 28 inch pike present. There were sixty 10-inch pike stocked during the fall of 2013. Other species caught during the survey included high numbers of four inch alewife and low numbers of three inch green sunfish. Future fish stockings include 60 10-inch northern pike in the fall of 2014 and 300 10-inch channel catfish during the fall of 2014.



There is a 30-inch minimum length limit on northern pike. No boats are allowed on this lake. There is a small parking area on the north side of the lake which provides fair shoreline access for bank anglers.

Cheyenne

Location: Exit 300, NW quadrant of the Wood River Interstate 80 Interchange
Latitude: 40.76500 Longitude: -98.59027

Waterbody Information: Cheyenne is a 17 acre lake with a maximum depth of 12 feet. The last fish population survey was completed in 2009. Survey results indicated that the lake had an excellent largemouth bass fishery, both in terms of a high abundance and presence of large fish. Numerous bass greater than 15 inches were sampled and several fish greater than 20 inches were caught. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit on black bass for this lake. Bluegill abundance was also high, but most of the bluegill were less than six inches. The black crappie population was very good and fair numbers of fish over ten inches were sampled. Channel catfish are also present in good abundance. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 570 10-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. A moderate abundance of common carp are also present. Cheyenne has a gravel boat ramp and boating is limited to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access is excellent, allowing for family friendly fishing trips. The area is managed as a State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required. Primitive camping is available.

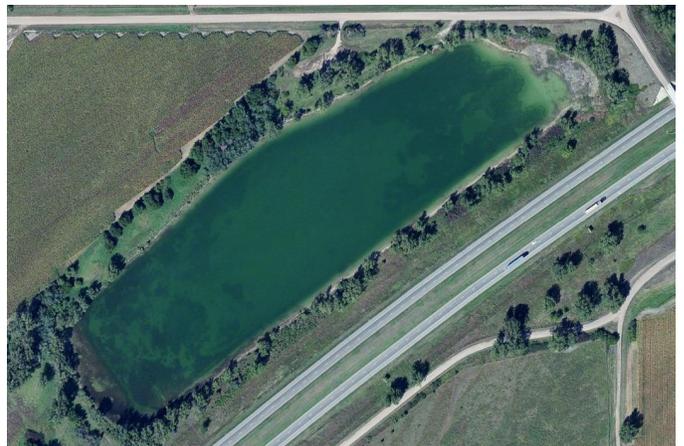


Parks Division closed the area to vehicle access from October 2013 to May 1, 2014 due to budget constraints. The area is open to walk-in traffic only during this period.

West Wood River

Location: West Binfield Road & South 140th Road, Directions from Wood River Interchange (Exit 300) go 1/2 mile south, 1 mile west, North across overpass, 1/4 mile west
Latitude: 40.75687 Longitude: -98.61049

Waterbody Information: West Wood River is 15 acres and has a maximum depth of 10 feet. The latest fish population survey was completed in 2009. Survey results indicated that the largemouth bass fishery was very good, as there were high numbers of bass and good size quality. While bass from 12 to 15 inches were most abundant, there was also fair numbers of fish from 15 to 18 inches. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit on black bass for this lake. Bluegill abundance was high, but most of the fish were less than six inches. Black crappie abundance was good and fair numbers of crappie greater than 10 inches were sampled. Channel catfish abundance was also very good, with several year-classes collected. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 450 10-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. There is also a high abundance of common carp present, most ranging from 16 to 25 inches. West Wood River is managed as a Wildlife Management Area. Shoreline access is good. A gravel boat ramp was constructed in 2012 and boating is limited to 5 mph/no wake.



War Axe

Location: Exit 291, NE quadrant of Shelton Interstate 80 Interchange

Latitude: 40.72451 Longitude: -98.73529

Waterbody Information: War Axe is 14 acres and has a maximum depth of 20 feet. The fish population was renovated in 2007 to remove rough fish and has been restocked with smallmouth bass, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. The fish population was last surveyed in the spring of 2011. Survey results indicated that the fishery was progressing extremely well. Smallmouth bass abundance was high. There was good representation of smallmouth from 3 to 15 inches collected during the survey. The largest smallmouth bass sampled were approaching 18



inches. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit for black (largemouth, smallmouth, spotted) bass. The redear sunfish population is also doing well. Abundance was high and the population had a good representation of quality sized fish. The majority of the redear range from six to eight inches, but several fish collected were over nine inches. The channel catfish fishery is also doing excellent. Abundance was high and fish up to 24 inches were sampled. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 420 10-inch catfish scheduled for the fall of 2015. Since the last survey, bluegill have been illegally introduced in War Axe. There are currently large numbers of small bluegill present. It is unknown at this time what impact this is going to have on the fishery, but could result in an over abundance of small panfish over time. A gravel boat ramp is present and boating is restricted to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access for anglers is excellent and the area is a great lake for a family fishing outing. The area is managed as a State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required for entry. Primitive camping is available and a modern restroom is open during the summer months. **Parks Division closed the area to vehicle access from October 2013 to May 1, 2014 due to budget constraints. The area is open to walk-in traffic only during this period.**

Windmill State Recreation Area

Location: Exit 285, NE quadrant of Gibbon Interstate 80 Interchange

Latitude: 40.70691 Longitude: 98.845301

Waterbody Information: Six lakes are available for fishing at Windmill SRA ranging from 1 to 7 acres. The area is maintained as a State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required to enter. The area provides both modern and primitive camping, as well as a shower house and swimming beach. Shoreline access is excellent on all of the lakes and the area is an excellent place to introduce youngsters to fishing. No boat ramps exist on these lakes, but electric motors and non-powered boats may be used. The fisheries in all of these lakes were last surveyed in the spring of 2011.



Windmill #1: This is the largest lake on the area at 7 acres. This lake has an excellent largemouth bass fishery, especially for large fish. Survey results

revealed good numbers of bass over 15 inches. Bluegill abundance was also high and the size structure of the population was very good. Most of the bluegill sampled ranged from 5.5 to 7.5 inches, but there was also some fish up to nine inches collected. Black crappie abundance was also high, with good abundance of 6 to 11 inch fish. This lake commonly floods, so there are numerous other species present. Common carp, bullheads and gar are abundant. Catchable trout have historically been stocked in this lake, but starting in the spring of 2013, the trout stockings were moved from Lake #1 to Lake #2. Future stockings for Lake #1 include 400 10-inch channel catfish during the fall of 2015. A lake map can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/Windmill1.pdf>

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Windmill State Recreation Area (continued)

Windmill #2: This 2 acre lake has a maximum depth of 18 feet. Largemouth bass abundance is good, but most of the fish collected in the survey were less than 12 inches. One bass greater than 20 inches was sampled. The bluegill fishery is very good, with most bluegill ranging from 7 to 8.5 inches. Black crappie and yellow perch are also present in low abundance. No channel catfish were collected during the survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 100 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. This lake also contains a few large common carp. A handicapped accessible fishing pier is located on the north side of this lake. Catchable rainbow trout are also stocked seasonally in this lake. Stocking rates consist of 300 trout in the spring and 600 trout in the fall. A map of the lake can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/Windmill2.pdf>.

Windmill #3: This one acre lake is the smallest at Windmill. Largemouth bass abundance is high, but most of the fish sampled were less than 12 inches. The largest bass sampled were approaching 17 inches. Bluegill abundance was very high. Most bluegill collected ranged from 5 to 6.6 inches, although a few bluegill up to 8 inches were sampled. Channel catfish abundance is very good. Fifty 10-inch channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking scheduled for the fall of 2015. To help provide quality catfishing opportunities, this lake has been designated as catch and release only for channel catfish. Black crappie are present in low abundance. There are also a few very large common carp present. A map of Lake #3 can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/Windmill3.pdf>.

Windmill #4: This three acre lake has a maximum depth of 24 feet. Largemouth bass abundance is high, although most of the bass collected during the survey were less than eight inches. There were a few bass collected between 8 and 15 inches, but none over 15 inches. Bluegill abundance was good, with most sampled fish ranging from four to seven inches. Channel catfish abundance is high. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. A low abundance of black crappie also exists, with fish up to nine inches collected in the survey. Common carp are rather numerous, with most of the fish ranging from 20 to 28 inches. A lake map of Lake #4 can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/Windmill4.pdf>

Windmill #5: Windmill #5 is a shallow, six acre lake with a maximum depth of nine feet. This lake also has a designated swimming beach on the west end. The abundance of largemouth bass is fairly low. Most of the bass ranged in length from 8 to 11 inches. Very few bass were sampled between 12 and 15 inches and no fish larger than 15 inches were caught. Bluegill abundance and size structure was very good, with most of the fish measuring between 6 and 8.5 inches. Channel catfish are also present, but none were captured during the last survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 300 10-inch fish occurring in the fall of 2015. Common carp are also in high abundance, with most fish ranging from 20 to 24 inches.

Windmill #6: This 2.5 acre lake has a maximum depth of 25 feet. This lake had the lowest density of largemouth bass of all the lakes sampled at Windmill during the 2011 survey. All of the bass collected were less than 15 inches, with most ranging from 9 to 12 inches. Bluegill abundance was fairly high, with most of the bluegill ranging from 5.5 to 7.5 inches. There were a few bluegill larger than eight inches sampled. Channel catfish were very numerous, with lengths ranging from 13 to 23 inches. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 125 10-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. High water during the past several years has allowed flood waters to enter this lake, as common carp, shortnose gar, and bigmouth buffalo were all collected for the first time in 2011.



Bassway Strip

Location: Exit 279, Minden Interstate 80 Interchange, 1/4S on Nebraska Hwy. 10, east on county road back toward I-80
Latitude: 40.68630 Longitude: -98.94866

Waterbody Information: This nine acre lake has a maximum depth of 24 feet. A map of the lake can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/BasswayStrip.pdf>. The fish population was last surveyed during May of 2013. Survey results from 2013 indicated that the abundance of largemouth bass has declined since the 2008 survey, but remains a decent bass fishery. Bass from 10 to 12 inches were the most abundant size group sampled, with fish from 15 to 18 inches the next most common size group. The largest bass sampled were 21 inches. Bluegill abundance and average size was also lower than previous survey results. Most bluegill collected ranged from 6 to 7.5 inches. While Bassway Strip has historically produced good numbers of bluegill larger than eight inches, none were collected during the 2013 survey. A few black crappie up to 11 inches were also collected during the survey. Channel catfish abundance was lower, but the population continues to have a good size distribution. The largest catfish sampled were 29 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 270 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other fish showing up in the survey included common carp and yellow bullheads. Carp abundance remains higher than preferred for an Interstate lake. Two size groups of carp were sampled; 16 to 24 inches and 26 to 32 inches. Yellow bullhead abundance also remains higher than preferred for an Interstate lake. Most of the bullheads collected during the survey ranged from 8 to 11 inches. A concrete boat ramp is available and boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access for angling is fair. Several smaller lakes are also located on the Bassway Strip Wildlife Management Area. While no active fisheries management occurs on these lakes, they do provide fair fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, channel catfish and carp. The area also provides excellent access to the north channel of the Platte River.



Fort Kearny State Recreation Area

Location: From Kearney Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 272), 2 miles south, 5 miles east on Highway 50, 1 mile north
Latitude: 40.65208 Longitude: -98.98943

Waterbody Information:

Seven lakes are available for fishing at Fort Kearny SRA ranging from 1 to 4 acres. The area is maintained as a State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required to enter. The park provides both modern and primitive camping, as well as a shower house, swimming beach, and picnic shelters. A hike/bike trail is located



on the eastern edge of the park provides access to the Platte River. Shoreline access for angling is good on most of the lakes and the area is an excellent place to introduce youngsters to fishing. No boat ramps exist on these lakes, but electric motors and non-powered boats may be used. The fish populations were last surveyed in the spring of 2011.

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Fort Kearny State Recreation Area (continued)

Fort Kearny #1: Lake #1 consists of two 1.5 acre lakes connected by a small channel. Depths on each lake approach twenty feet. Largemouth bass abundance is fair and most bass ranged from 8 to 11 inches. The largest bass sampled in 2011 was 13.5 inches. Bluegill are abundant with the majority of fish ranging from 4 to 7 inches, although there was a good sample of 8 to 9 inch fish collected. Channel catfish abundance is also good and fish up to 18 inches were collected. Catfish are stocked in alternate years and the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2014. Other fish collected during the survey of this lake included low numbers of black crappie, white crappie, green sunfish and redear sunfish.

Fort Kearny #2: Lake #2 is a three acre lake with a maximum depth of 28 feet. The largemouth abundance is very good, with most bass ranging from 6 to 11 inches. Low numbers of bass larger than 12 inches were sampled and the largest bass was 20 inches. Bluegill were not as abundant, but there are good numbers of 7 to 8.5 inch fish. The channel catfish population is excellent, both in term of high abundance and numbers of large fish. Catfish of all sizes were collected, with the largest fish measuring 37 inches (20 pounds). There is a catch and release only regulation in effect for catfish on this lake. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2014. Other fish collected during the survey included low numbers of green sunfish and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids.

Fort Kearny #3: Lake #3 is only one acre and is the smallest lake on the area. It has a maximum depth of 28 feet. Largemouth bass abundance was low and most of the bass collected in the survey ranged from 9 to 11 inches. The largest bass was 16 inches. Bluegill abundance was fair, but there was a good number of 7 to 9 inch bluegills collected in the survey. Channel catfish are also present, with most fish averaging 16 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 60 ten-inch catfish scheduled for the fall of 2014. Other fish sampled during the survey included a few large common carp, green sunfish and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids.

Fort Kearny #4: Lake #4 is 3 acres with a maximum depth of 18 feet. This lake was treated with rotenone in 2003 to remove rough fish. It was restocked with wipers only and a feeding program was initiated to enable these fish to grow quickly. While the wipers grew very fast and quickly reached trophy sizes, they were not easily caught by anglers and the stocking program was ended in 2009. A small population of large wipers (>20 inches) still exists. Other fish species were illegally introduced by anglers following the renovation, including largemouth bass, bluegill and black crappie. Currently the lake has an excellent density of largemouth bass. A high percentage of the bass sampled ranged from 8 to 11 inches. Lake #4 had the highest abundance of bass greater than 15 inches of all of the Fort Kearny lakes. The largest bass collected was 22.5 inches. Bluegill are very abundant, with most of the fish measuring from 6.5 to 8.5 inches. Black crappie are present in low abundance. Channel catfish are also in low abundance, as they have only been stocked one time since the renovation. They are scheduled for alternate years with the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2014. Other fish sampled during the survey included low numbers of green sunfish and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids.

Fort Kearny #5: Lake #5 is 3.25 acres and has a maximum depth of 32 feet. Largemouth bass abundance is high, with most of the fish ranging from 7 to 11 inches. Few bass larger than 12 inches were sampled and the largest bass was 18 inches. Bluegill abundance was low, but most of the fish ranged from 7 to 8.5 inches. Black crappie abundance was low, but a few larger crappie are present (12-14 inches). Channel catfish were also present, with most fish ranging from 18 to 22 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next scheduled stocking of 150 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2014. Other fish captured in low numbers during the survey included large common carp (30-32 inches), green sunfish and rock bass. Yellow perch fingerlings have been stocked several times in recent years, but predation from largemouth bass has limited their survival and no perch were caught during the survey.



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Fort Kearny State Recreation Area (continued)

Fort Kearny #6: Lake #6 is 3.75 acres and has a maximum depth of 20 feet. This lake had the highest density of largemouth bass out of all of the Fort Kearny lakes. Most of the bass ranged from 7 to 10.5 inches. Only a few fish larger than 12 inches were sampled and the largest bass collected was 21.5 inches. Bluegill abundance was also the highest of all of the Fort Kearny Lakes. Most of the bluegill ranged from 5 to 7 inches, although there were a few larger than 8 inches. Channel catfish abundance is very high at this lake. Most of the catfish range from 15 to 22 inches, but fish up to 40 inches (28 pounds) have been caught from this lake. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next scheduled stocking of 200 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2014. Catchable-sized rainbow trout are stocked in Lake #6 during March and October. There are 600 trout stocked in March and 1,200 trout stocked in October. Other fish encountered during the survey included low numbers of black bullheads and green sunfish. A handicapped accessible fishing pier is located on the south side of Lake #6.

Fort Kearny #7: Lake #7 is 3.5 acres and has a maximum depth of 28 feet. This lake has a designated public swimming beach on the south side. Shoreline access is poor around most of the lake, but a handicapped accessible pier is located on the northeast corner. Largemouth bass abundance is high, with most of the bass collected measuring from 7 to 12.5 inches. Few bass larger than 12 inches were sampled and the largest bass was 15.5 inches. Bluegill abundance was good, with most of the fish ranging from 3 to 6 inches. Although few bluegill larger than eight inches were collected during the latest survey, Lake #7 has traditionally produced bluegills up to 10 inches. Channel catfish abundance was very high and lengths ranged from 11 to 27 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next scheduled stocking of 175 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2014. Other fish captured in the survey included a few 30-34" common carp and small green sunfish.

Bufflehead

Location: From Kearney Interchange (Exit 272), 1 mile north to 11th Street, 3 miles east to Cherry Avenue, 1 mile south, 1/2 m east
Latitude: 40.67087 Longitude: -99.01802

Waterbody Information: Bufflehead is a shallow 15 acre lake with a maximum depth of 12 feet. The shallow depths and clear water allow for an abundance of vegetation to grow. The fish population was last surveyed during May 2013. Survey results indicated that the quality of the fishery has declined since the prior survey was completed in 2008. Largemouth bass abundance was much lower and overall average size was down. No bass smaller than 12 inches were collected and most of the bass sample consisted 12 to 14 inch fish. The largest bass sampled was 18 inches. The quality of the bluegill population has also declined. Historically, Bufflehead has traditionally produced eight inch bluegill, but no fish larger than five inches were collected during the survey. Bluegill lengths ranged from 2.5 to 5 inches. Rock bass are also normally fairly common in Bufflehead, but only one 10-inch rock bass was collected during the 2013 survey. Yellow perch are also present in Bufflehead, but none were collected during the survey. Yellow perch fingerlings have been stocked several times in recent years to improve abundance. Channel catfish appear to be abundant, with most of the sampled fish ranging from 18 to 20 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 450 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. The only other species captured during the survey were low numbers of common carp (20-28 inches). Shoreline access is limited due to tree encroachment along the shoreline. An improved concrete boat ramp is available and boats are limited to 5mph/no wake.



Archway Lakes

Location: From Kearney Interchange (Exit 272), 1/2 block north, 1 block east on Talmage St., 1 block south on 1st Ave, 3 miles east on 1st St

Latitude: 40.67106 Longitude: -99.03850

Waterbody Information: An agreement was signed with the Archway Foundation in 2010 to provide public fishing access to the four lakes located on their property. These lakes range in size from 1 to 25 acres. There is a 21" minimum length limit for black bass (largemouth, smallmouth) on all of the Archway Lakes. Non-powered boats are permitted. All of these lakes were last surveyed during the spring of 2013.



Lake #1: At 24 acres, Lake #1 is the largest lake on the property. The entire lake is currently open to public fishing access, with the exception of the area immediately surround the bridge in the middle of the lake. Lake #1 has a variety of different species ranging from largemouth bass to common carp. Largemouth bass were not overly abundant, but the size structure of the population was very good. Fish of most size classes were sampled and a high percentage of the population ranged from 14 to 18 inches. The largest bass captured during the survey was 19 inches. Bluegill were also not very abundant, with most of the bluegill ranging from 5 to 7 inches. A few bluegill were up to 8.5 inches. Other game fish species sampled in low abundance included green sunfish, green sunfish x bluegill hybrids, channel catfish and yellow perch. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 300 10-inch fish scheduled for September 2014. Rough fish are very common in Lake#1, as common carp, carpsucker, and gizzard shad were abundant. Most of the common carp ranged from 20 to 25 inches.

Lake #2: This two acre lake was chemically treated with rotenone during the summer of 2010 to remove rough fish populations. It has been re-stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie and channel catfish. Survey results from the spring of 2013 indicated that the fish population was slowly developing into a good fishery. Largemouth bass abundance was low, with most of the sampled fish averaging about ten inches. A large number of three inch bass were present, which should provide decent fishing in future years. The largest bass collected was 16 inches. Bluegill were very abundant and the vast majority of the sample consisted of 2.5 to 6 inch fish. The largest bluegill collected were 7.5 inches. Black crappie were also abundant and two year-classes were sampled. Most of the sample consisted of age-1 crappie which averaged 4 inches, while the crappie from the original 2011 stocking averaged ten inches. Channel catfish were also very abundant and two age-classes were sampled. The original stocking from 2010 ranged from 20 to 24 inches, while fish from the 2012 stocking averaged 12 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 100 10-inch fish scheduled for fall of 2014.

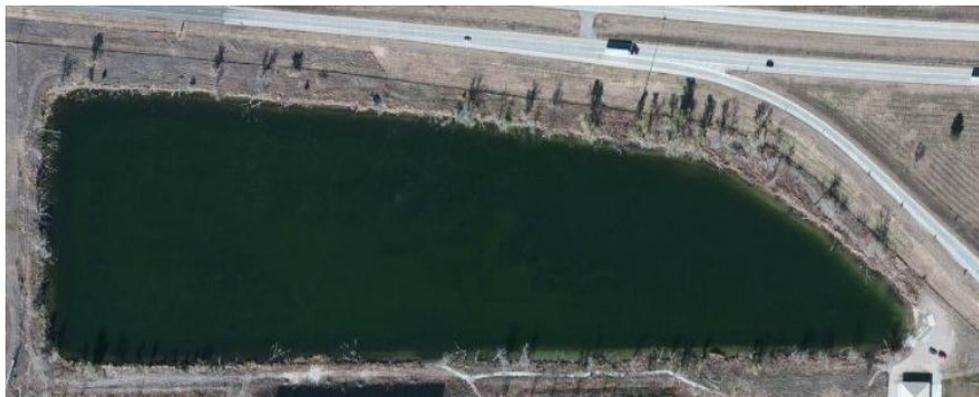
Lake#3: This 1.8 acre lake was reduced in size during the addition of the new Cherry Avenue Overpass. Lake #3 contains both largemouth and smallmouth bass. Largemouth bass were most numerous during the 2013 survey, with lengths ranging from 4 to 9 inches. Smallmouth abundance was fair, with all of the sampled fish ranging from 8 to 12 inches. Bluegill x green sunfish hybrids are very abundant in Lake #3. Sizes range from 3 to 8 inches, with the most common size group being 5 to 6 inches. Bluegill were also fairly abundant, ranging in length from 4 to 7 inches. Low numbers of green sunfish, yellow perch and black crappie were also sampled. No channel catfish were sampled. Sixty 10-inch channel catfish are scheduled to be stocked during the fall of 2014.

Lake#4: This one acre lake is the smallest on the Archway property. It was chemically treated with rotenone during the summer of 2013 to remove common carp and bullhead populations. It has since been re-stocked with largemouth bass and yellow perch. Rock bass and channel catfish are scheduled to be stocked during the fall of 2014.

Kea Lake

Location: Exit 272, Southwest quadrant of the Kearney Interstate 80 Interchange
Latitude: 40.66765 Longitude: -99.08783

Waterbody Information: Kea Lake is 20 acres and has a maximum depth of 12 feet. The fish population was last surveyed during May of 2013. Survey results indicated that the lake had a very good fishery for several different species. A high abundance of largemouth bass was present. The most common length groups for bass were 8 to 10 inches and 12 to 14 inches, although bass of all sizes were sampled. The largest bass captured was 21 inches. Bluegill abundance was fair, with most fish



ranging from 6 to 7.5 inches. A few bluegill larger than eight inches were sampled. Kea Lake also has a small population of triploid hybrid crappie, also known as jumbo greys. These fish are created in the hatchery by crossing white and black crappie. The fertilized eggs are subjected to pressure to make them triploid, which results in fish that are sterile and unable to reproduce. This allows the fish to achieve faster growth rates as energy is not used for reproduction. Six stockings of hybrid crappie have been introduced into Kea Lake since 2003. While the triploid crappie exhibited very good growth rates, stocking survival was low and the fish are time consuming and expensive to produce. Therefore, triploid crappie stocking has been suspended at Kea Lake. Anglers will likely encounter small numbers of these fish for the next several years and the ones caught should large fish. Channel catfish were very abundant during the last survey, with most of the fish collected measuring from 12 to 24 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 600 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other fish caught in the survey included small green sunfish and one walleye. The City of Kearney manages the land surrounding the lake and is in the process of constructing a walking trail around the lake. Shoreline access is very good for anglers. A concrete boat ramp is available on the east end of the lake. Boats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake.

Kea West

Location: From Kearney interchange (Exit 272), 1 mile N to 11th Street, 1 1/4 mile W to Kea West Rd, 1 mile S to overpass approach, turn east
Latitude: 40.66765 Longitude: -99.08778

Waterbody Information: Kea West is seven acres with a maximum depth of 20 feet. The fishery was last surveyed in 2008 and the next survey is scheduled for the spring of 2014. Although largemouth bass abundance is lower than most Interstate 80 Lakes, the size structure of the bass population is excellent. Approximately half of the bass sampled in the survey were larger than 13 inches and there was good representation of bass larger than 15 inches. The largest bass collected were 21 inches. Bluegill were very abundant, with most fish ranging from 5 to 7 inches. There were a



few larger than eight inches. Black crappie were also fairly common and fish up to 10.5 inches were sampled. Rock bass are common in Kea West, with fish ranging from six to ten inches. There is also a low density of yellow perch, most of which are less than nine inches. Yellow perch fingerlings have been stocked several times in the past five years to improve densities. Channel catfish are also present and are stocked on alternate years. The next catfish stocking of 210 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other species captured in low abundance included common carp (30-35 inches), green sunfish, green sunfish x bluegill hybrids, and walleye. Kea West is managed as a catch and release only lake for all species. Possession of any fish species other than baitfish while fishing this lake is prohibited. Shoreline access is good and a mowed trail encompasses the lake. A gravel boat ramp is located on the west and boats are limited to 5 mph / no wake.

North Kearney Rest Stop

Location: From Kearney Interchange (Exit 272), 1 mile north to 11th Street, 2 miles west to 30th Ave, 2 miles south
Latitude: 40.67159 Longitude: -99.12372

Waterbody Information: North Kearney Rest Stop is seven acres with a maximum depth of 14 feet. The lake is located directly north of the westbound Interstate 80 Rest Area and the property around the lake is maintained by the Nebraska Department of Roads. Anglers can either access the lake via the rest stop or from 30th Avenue. Access to the lake is walk-in only and no boats are allowed. Shoreline access is fair and is best along the south side. The fishery was last surveyed in 2013. Largemouth bass abundance is slightly higher than the average normally observed on I-80 lakes. The majority of the bass ranged in length from 10 to 12 inches. There were also moderate numbers of 12 to 15 inch bass present. The largest bass sampled was 22 inches.



Bluegill were not overly abundant, but fish of several size groups were sampled, ranging from 3 to 7.5 inches. Channel catfish were very abundant and also had a very good size distribution. Most the sampled catfish ranged from 18 to 24 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 210 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other fish captured in low abundance included common carp (32-36 inches), flathead catfish (15 inches), green sunfish, and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids. There were 700 three-inch rock bass fingerlings stocked in November 2012, but none of these fish were captured during the survey.

South Kearney Rest Stop

Location: 4 miles west of Kearney Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 272) — access is only available from the east bound lanes of Interstate 80 or by walking in from East Odessa WMA
Latitude: 40.67066 Longitude: -99.15849

Waterbody Information: This one acre lake is one of the smallest public lakes located along Interstate 80. It has a maximum depth of 14 feet. The lake is located directly southwest of the eastbound Interstate 80 Rest Area and the property surrounding the lake is maintained by the Nebraska Department of Roads. No boating is allowed and shoreline access for anglers is fairly good. Due to its small size and restricted access, limited fisheries management occurs on this lake. The fishery was last surveyed in 2003 and the quality of the fishery at that time was fair. Largemouth bass abundance was lower than average and the majority of the bass ranged from 5 to 12 inches. A few fish greater than 15 inches were sampled and the largest bass was 17 inches. Panfish were abundant and several species were present; including black crappie, bluegill, redear, and sunfish hybrids. Crappie ranged from 6 to 12 inches, bluegill ranged from 3 to 6 inches, and the redear ranged from 3 to 7 inches. A few large common carp were also collected. No catfish were sampled and they are not currently stocked in this lake.



East Odessa

Location: From Odessa Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 263), 4 miles east on gravel access road on south side of I-80
Latitude: 40.67048 Longitude: -99.16491

Waterbody Information: This seven acre lake has a maximum depth of 28 feet. The fish population was last surveyed in the spring of 2011 and the next survey is scheduled for 2016. Survey results indicated a low abundance of largemouth bass, with most bass ranging from 6 to 13 inches. A couple bass larger than 15 inches were collected, with the biggest measuring just over 18 inches. Bluegill abundance was also fairly low, but most of the bluegill were large, measuring from six to eight inches. The channel catfish fishery was excellent, as abundance was high and many quality sized fish were caught. Catfish lengths ranged from 14 to 32 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 210 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. A fair number of common carp were also observed in the survey. Most of the carp collected



ranged from 21 to 35 inches. East Odessa lake is located on the 160 acre East Odessa Wildlife Management Area. The access road leading to the property is minimally maintained and can become difficult to navigate when wet. Shoreline access around the lake is fairly good. No boat ramp is available, but the lake is open to electric motors and non-powered boats. Access to the Platte River is also available on this area.

Union Pacific

Location: Exit 263, NE quadrant of Odessa Interstate 80 Interchange
Latitude: 40.67881 Longitude: -99.25220

Waterbody Information: This 15 acre lake has a maximum depth of 21 feet. A map of the lake can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/UnionPacific.pdf>. The fish population was last surveyed in 2009 and the next survey is scheduled for 2014. Largemouth bass abundance was high and fish from 4 to 19 inches were present. Bass from 8 to 12 inches were most abundant, but there were also several fish larger than 15 inches collected. Bluegill are also abundant in Union Pacific, with most of the bluegill ranging from 5 to 7 inches. Rock bass are present in low abundance and fish up to 10.5 inches were caught. There were 1,200 three-inch rock bass fingerlings stocked during November 2012. Channel catfish are moderately abundant, with sampled catfish ranging from 13 to 23 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 360 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other fish captured included a few common carp (25 inches), small green sunfish, green sunfish x bluegill hybrids (5.5-7.5 inches), and a northern pike. Union Pacific Lake is located on the Union Pacific State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required to enter. Primitive camping facilities are available and a modern restroom open during the summer months. A gravel boat ramp is present and boats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access along the north side of the lake is mowed and is good for bank angling. **Parks Division closed the area to vehicle access from October 2013 to May 1, 2014 due to budget constraints. The area is open to walk-in traffic only during this period.**



Coot Shallows

Location: From Odessa Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 263), 3/4 mile North, 2 miles west on 11th Road
Latitude: 40.68423 Longitude: -99.29258

Waterbody Information: This 16 acre lake has a maximum depth of 12 feet. The fish population was last surveyed in 2009 and the next survey is scheduled for the spring of 2014. Survey results from 2009 indicated a good fishery for several different species. Largemouth bass were very abundant and the population had fairly good numbers of quality sized fish. Bass from 4 to 18 inches were sampled, but fish from 8 to 12 inches were most abundant. There were also several bass larger than 15 inches caught during the survey. Bluegill were very abundant, but the majority of the sample consisted of 4.5 to 6.5 inch fish. Channel catfish were also very abundant and had an impressive size structure. Catfish lengths ranged from 13 to 24 inches, with the average length of 16 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next scheduled stocking of 480 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Black crappie are also present in low abundance, but none were sampled during the last survey. The only other fish captured was a 13 inch yellow bullhead.



A concrete boat ramp is available and boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access is fair around the lake. Efforts are currently underway to remove brush and trees along the north side of the lake to improve angler access.

Blue Hole West

Location: Exit 257, SW quadrant of the Elm Creek Interstate 80 Interchange
Latitude: 40.68717 Longitude: -99.38198

Waterbody Information: This 24 acre lake has a maximum depth of 12 feet. Blue Hole has an active channel of the Platte River flowing through it, creating poor water quality and allowing various rough fish species to enter. The fish population was last surveyed in 2009 and is scheduled to be surveyed again in the spring of 2014. The current fishery contains a variety of different species, but still provides some decent fishing opportunities. Largemouth bass are not as abundant as they are in other I80 lakes, but Blue Hole consistently produces large bass. Bass from 4 to 20 inches were caught in the last survey, but most fish were 12 to 16 inches. Bluegill are also fairly abundant, but typically they do not get very big. Lengths ranged from 3 to 7 inches, with most measuring less than 6 inches. Both white and black crappie are also present in low abundance. The crappie collected in the last survey all were less than 10 inches. Channel catfish are present, but were not sampled in the latest survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 720 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Sauger fingerlings have also been stocked annually over the past ten years. These stockings have created a low density sauger population, but have failed to produce a quality fishery. Sauger up to 24 inches have been occasionally caught from Blue Hole. With the connection to the Platte River, Blue Hole supports a plethora of rough fish species. Common carp, carsuckers, buffalo, gizzard shad, gar, and white suckers are all very abundant. Other species caught in low abundance included white bass, black bullheads, green sunfish, green sunfish x bluegill hybrids, and redear sunfish. A gravel boat ramp is available and boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access is fair. Access to the Platte River is available through this property.



Sandy Channel

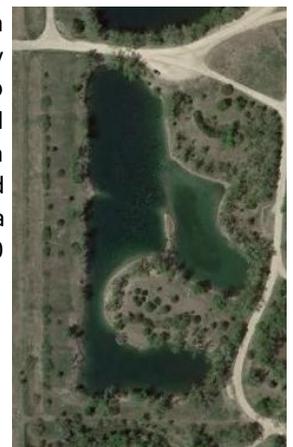
Location: From Elm Creek Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 257), 2 miles south on Highway 183
Latitude: 40.66838 Longitude: -9937982

Waterbody Information: Ten lakes ranging from .5 to 28 acres are available at Sandy Channel Recreation Area. The area is maintained by the Parks Division, but no park entry permit is required. Primitive camping is allowed and vault toilets are available. Shoreline access ranges from poor to very good on these lakes. A concrete boat ramp is available on Lake #8 and boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. All the other lakes are open to electric and non-powered boats only. Active fisheries management only occurs on Lakes 2, 4 and 8. The remaining lakes are either too shallow or have flooding issues, which limit their potential for quality fisheries. The four lakes listed below provide most of the fishing opportunities at Sandy Channel. A fish survey was completed on Lake's 2, 4, and 8 in 2009 and the next survey is scheduled for 2014. An angler access project is scheduled for 2014, which will improve shoreline and boating access on Lakes 2, 4 and 8.

Lake #1: This 20 acre lake is located on the southern edge of the park. The south channel of the Platte River flows through this lake allowing rough fish to enter and creating poor water quality. No fisheries management is done on this lake. The lake does provide good fishing for channel catfish, common carp and gar. Shoreline access is poor.

Lake #2: This 10 acre lake has a maximum depth of 16 feet. The lake was renovated in 2003 to remove rough fish populations and has been re-stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. At the time of the last survey, the lake had a very good, although still developing fishery. Largemouth bass were extremely abundant, but the average size was small. The majority of the bass were 9 to 11 inches, but several fish greater than 15 inches were caught. The largest bass was 18 inches. Bluegill were moderately abundant, but most were small. Bluegill lengths ranged from 3 to 7 inches and averaged about six inches. No channel catfish were sampled, but some quality fish should be present. Catfish have been stocked five times since the renovation and the next stocking of 300 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other fish species caught in low abundance included green sunfish and bluegill x green sunfish hybrids. Shoreline access is poor on this lake for bank fishing. During 2012, there were 960 three-inch rock bass and 800 four-inch yellow perch stocked in Lake #2.

Lake #4: This 5 acre lake has maximum depth of 14 feet. Results from the last survey indicated a good fishery for largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. Largemouth bass abundance was fairly high and bass from 4 to 15 inches were caught. The majority of the bass population measured 11 to 13 inches. Bluegill abundance was fairly low, but some quality fish were sampled. Most bluegill ranged from 6 to 8.5 inches. Channel catfish are also present and they ranged from 13 to 15 inches in length. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 250 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. Other fish captured included some very large common carp (28-34 inches) and a few small green sunfish x bluegill hybrids. Shoreline access is fair for bank angling. There were 510 three-inch rock bass stocked into Lake #2 during 2012.



Sandy Channel (continued)

Lake #8: At 28 acres, this is the largest lake on the area. Lake #8 has a maximum depth of 28 feet and a detailed contour map of the lake can be found here:

<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/SandyChannel.pdf>. This lake has extremely clear water and provides very good fishing opportunities for several species. Largemouth bass are abundant and the population contains good numbers of large fish. Bass collected in the survey ranged from 6 to 20.5 inches. The majority of the bass are 11 to 13 inches and there was a high abundance of bass greater than 15 inches. Bluegill were also very abundant with lengths ranging from 3 to 9 inches. Most of the bluegill measured 5 to 7 inches. Both black and white crappie are also present



in low numbers, with most fish less than 10 inches in length. Rock bass densities were high and had lengths ranging from 3 to 8.5 inches. There is a good yellow perch population present in Sandy Channel #8. While most of the perch were less than 8 inches, several 11 inch fish were caught. A good number of channel catfish were sampled, ranging from 13 to 18 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 840 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2015. A few nice walleye were also collected. These fish ranged from 14 to 16 inches. Walleye have been sporadically stocked in Sandy Channel over the years, so a few larger walleye should be present. Advanced walleye (300 9-inchers) were stocked during the fall of 2013 and are tentatively scheduled to be stocked again in the fall of 2014. Other fish captured in the survey included a few large common carp, green sunfish, and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids. Muskellunge were also introduced into this lake during the spring of 2013, when 60 12-inch fish were stocked. Muskies will be stocked on alternate years when available from the hatchery. Anglers are reminded that there is a 40-inch minimum length limit in place for muskellunge. Shoreline access is fair around the lake for bank angling. A handicapped accessible concrete boat ramp is located on the northeast side of the lake.



For additional information about fisheries management on these Interstate Lakes, please contact the NGPC Kearney office at 308-865-5310 or by email at the addresses listed below.

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Biologist: Brad Eifert, brad.eifert@nebraska.gov