

This is a fishing forecast for the Salt Valley area. 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](http://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. **Olive Creek** and **Wagon Train** will be a good choice for recreational anglers or beginners, while anglers targeting larger bluegills should try **Czechland** or **Homestead**.

## 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. A number of Salt Valley reservoirs such as **Olive Creek**, **Wildwood**, **Meadowlark** and **Yankee Hill** will offer a good opportunity to catch good numbers of largemouth bass with some greater than 15 inches.

## 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 **Wagon Train**, **Stagecoach**, or **Czechland**. A better chance at catching crappies larger than 12 inches exists at **Branched Oak**, **Yankee Hill** or **Pawnee**. A 10 inch minimum on crappie is in effect at Branched Oak and Czechland.

## Channel Catfish

Channel catfish are popular throughout Nebraska and can be found in almost every reservoir and river in the Salt Valley area. Some waters to note for anglers seeking eater-sized catfish would be **East Twin** and **Stagecoach**. Anglers seeking larger catfish may want to try **Branched Oak**, **Wagon Train** or **Czechland**. The catch and release regulation at **Wildwood** also provides a great opportunity to catch a trophy channel catfish.

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.

## Flathead Catfish

**Branched Oak** continues to be one of the top flathead destinations in the state and will provide some excellent fishing in 2013. They are a true trophy fish and provide a great battle

on a rod and reel. Tagging efforts will continue in 2013 and anglers are asked to report all tag information to the Nebraska Game and Parks. Anglers should also note that there is a catch and release regulation on flathead catfish at Branched Oak.

## Walleye

Anglers targeting eater-sized walleyes in the Salt Valley will want to try **East Twin**, **Wanahoo** or **Wagon Train**. Opportunities for trophy sized walleyes will be best at **Stagecoach** or **Pawnee**.

## Other Species

### Blue Catfish

Blue catfish can be found in **Branched Oak**, **Conestoga**, **Wanahoo**, and the **Platte River**.

### Northern Pike

**Lake Wanahoo** will again provide a unique fishing opportunity to catch northern pike in Eastern Nebraska. Anglers are required to release all northern pike caught. The northern pike tagging study will continue in 2013 and anglers are asked to report all tagged fish to the Nebraska Game and Parks.

### 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 **Homestead**.

### 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 at **Bowling Lake**.

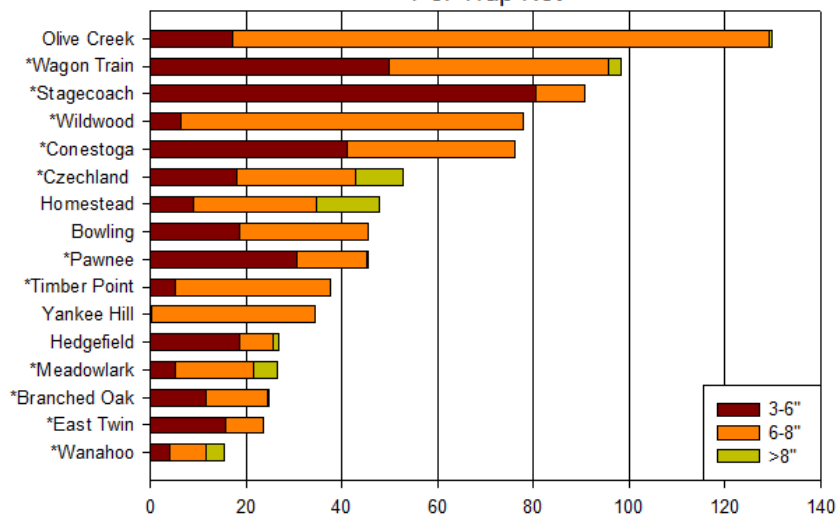
## Wipers

The Salt Valley reservoirs such as **Wagon Train**, **Stagecoach** and **Branched Oak** will again provide anglers an opportunity at some big wipers in Eastern Nebraska. Anglers can keep only one white bass or wiper that is 16 inches or longer in their daily bag limit. Remember white perch, a similar looking species to white bass and wipers, cannot be transported live from any waterbody as they are an aquatic invasive species.

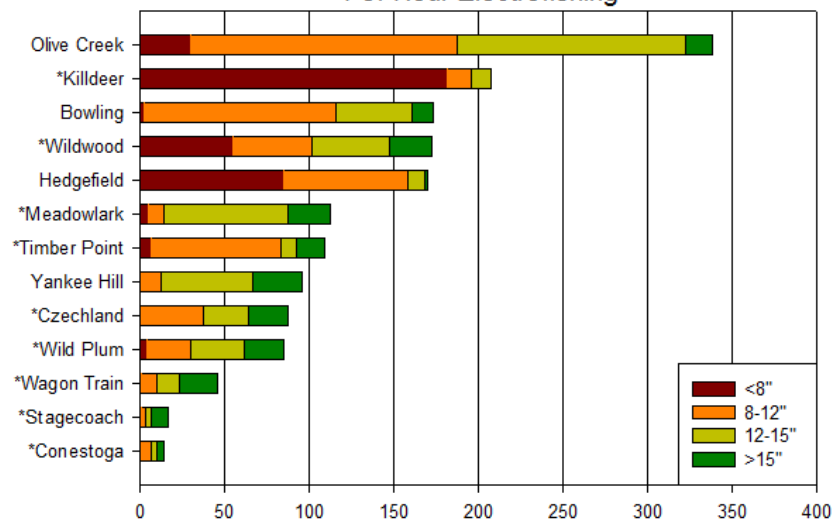
## Shovelnose Sturgeon

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 River**. 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.

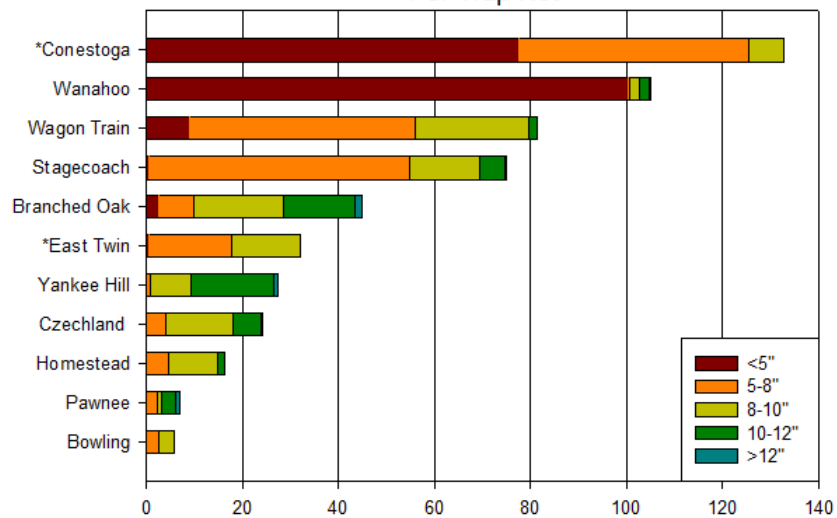
**Bluegill**  
Per Trap Net



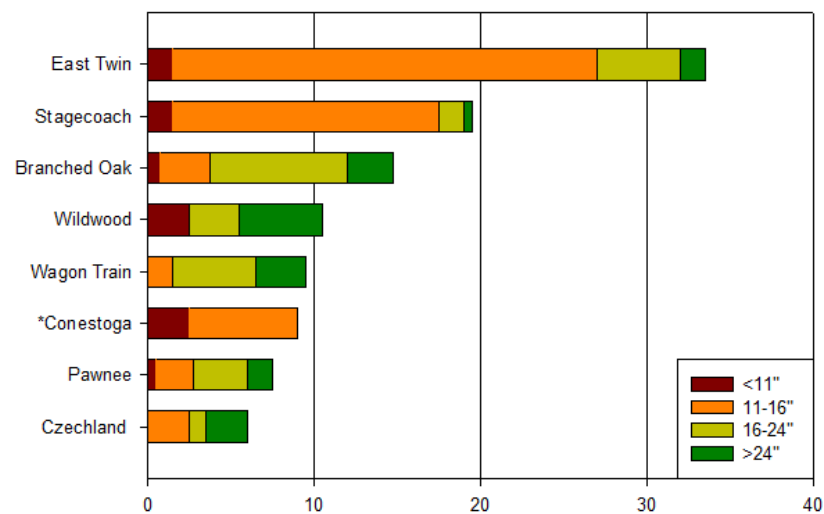
**Largemouth Bass**  
Per Hour Electrofishing



**Crappie**  
Per Trap Net

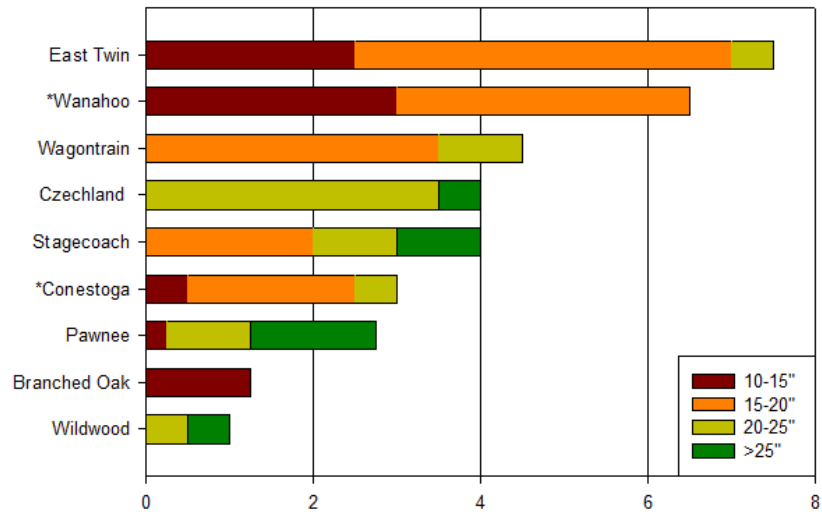


**Channel Catfish**  
Per Gill Net

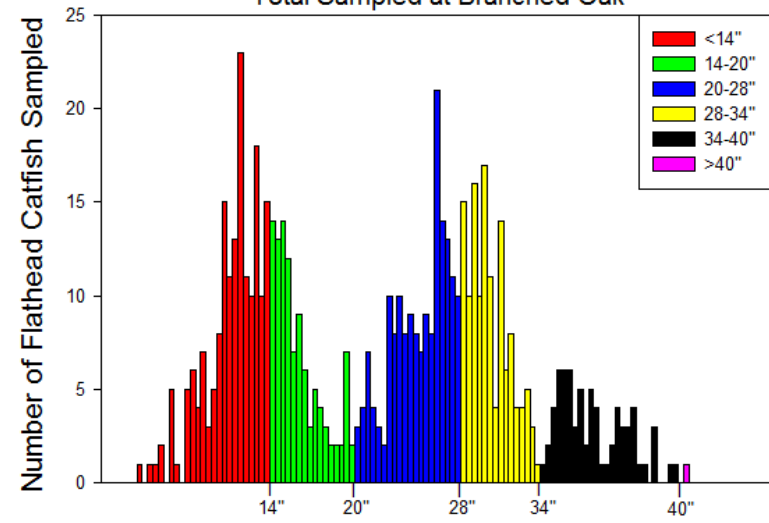


\* 2011 Survey

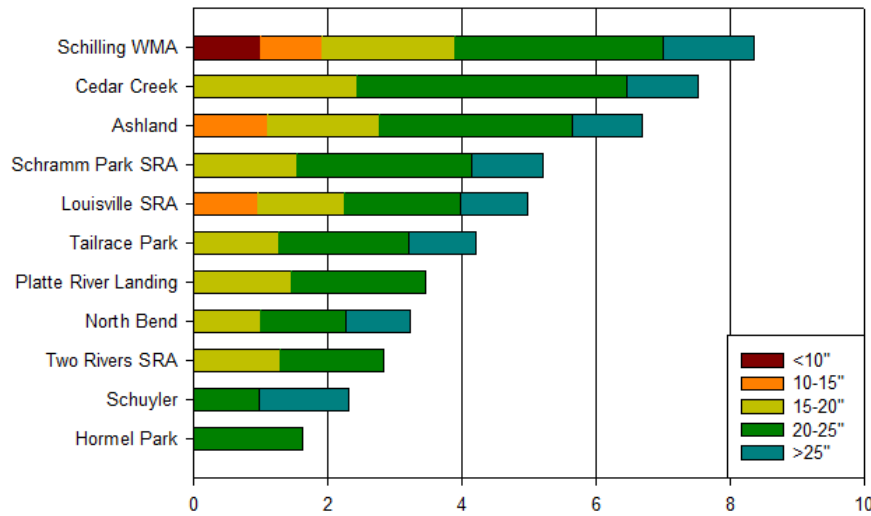
**Walleye**  
Per Gill Net



**Flathead Catfish**  
Total Sampled at Branched Oak



**Shovelnose Sturgeon**  
Per Trammel Net on the Platte River

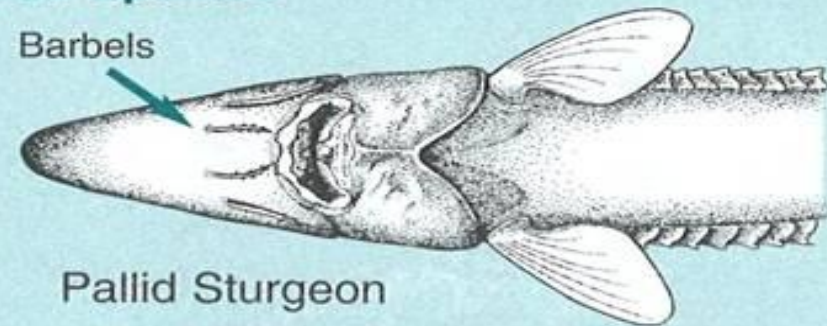


\* 2011 Survey

## 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



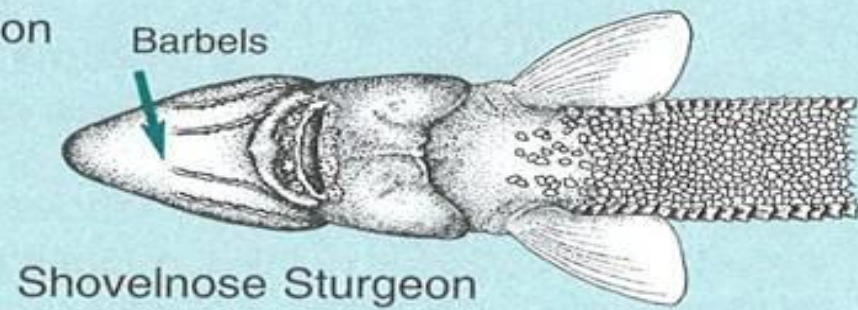
### Lake Sturgeon - A Threatened Species

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

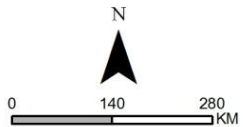
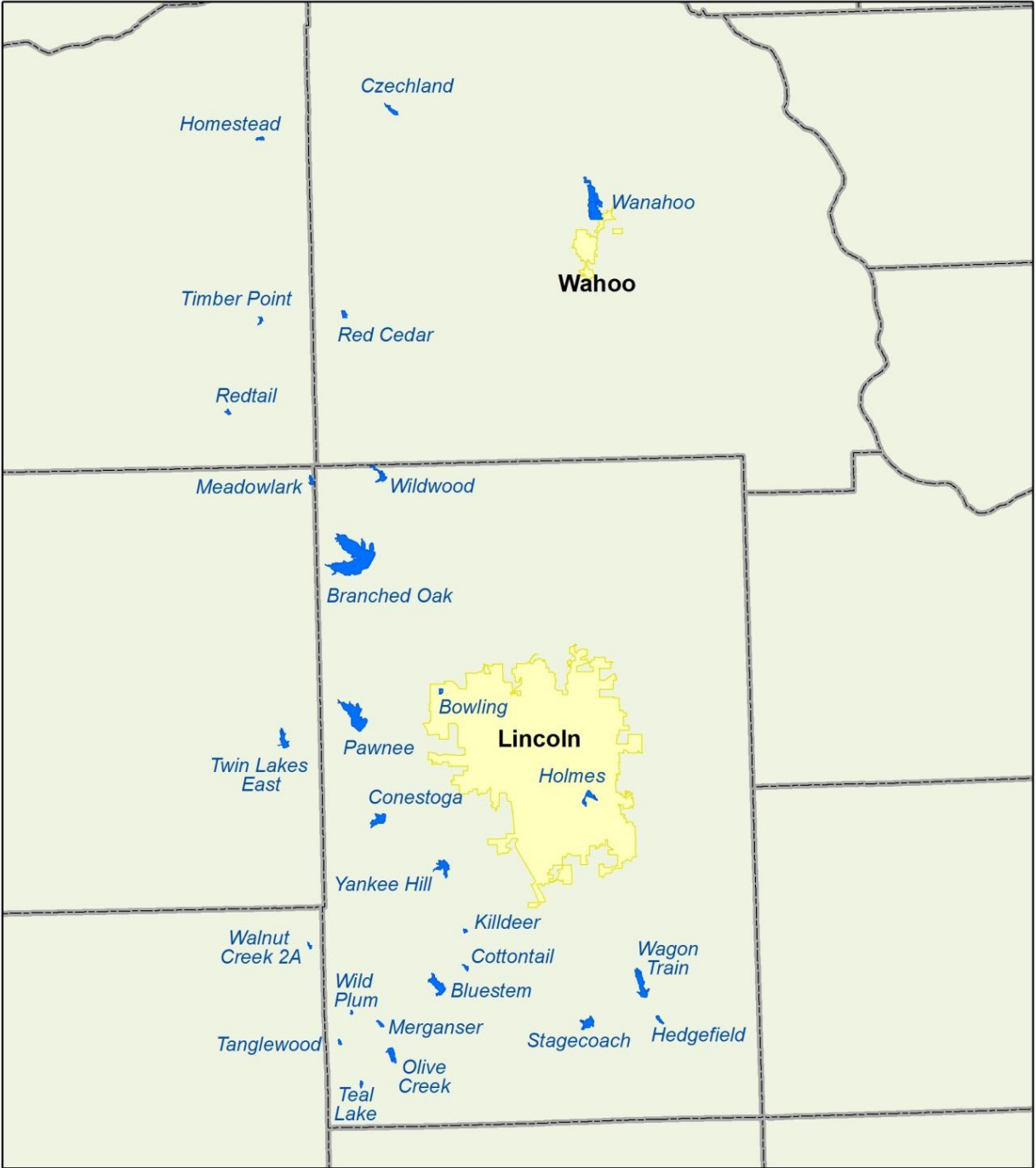


### Shovelnose Sturgeon

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







**NEBRASKA**  
 GAME PARKS

Trisha Schlake, IT Division, 12/18/2012

