

# 2025 Lincoln Area Fishing Forecast

# NEBRASKA





This is the 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) in 2024. Additional public water bodies exist in the area, but were not all sampled. Therefore, there are 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](http://www.outdoornebraska.gov).

Electrofishing for **Largemouth** and **Smallmouth Bass** is conducted in the spring, during the evening shortly after nightfall. Transects are typically 10 minutes in length. The data is then converted to number of bass sampled per hour. The data presented is the average number of bass in each size category sampled per one hour of electrofishing. Trap nets for **Bluegill** are set in the spring while trap nets for **Crappie** are set in the fall. The data presented is the average number of fish in each size category sampled per trap net. **Walleye**, **Saugeye**, **Wipers**, and **Channel Catfish** are sampled in the fall using gill nets and the data presented is the average number of fish in each size category sampled per gill net.

## Low Water Levels

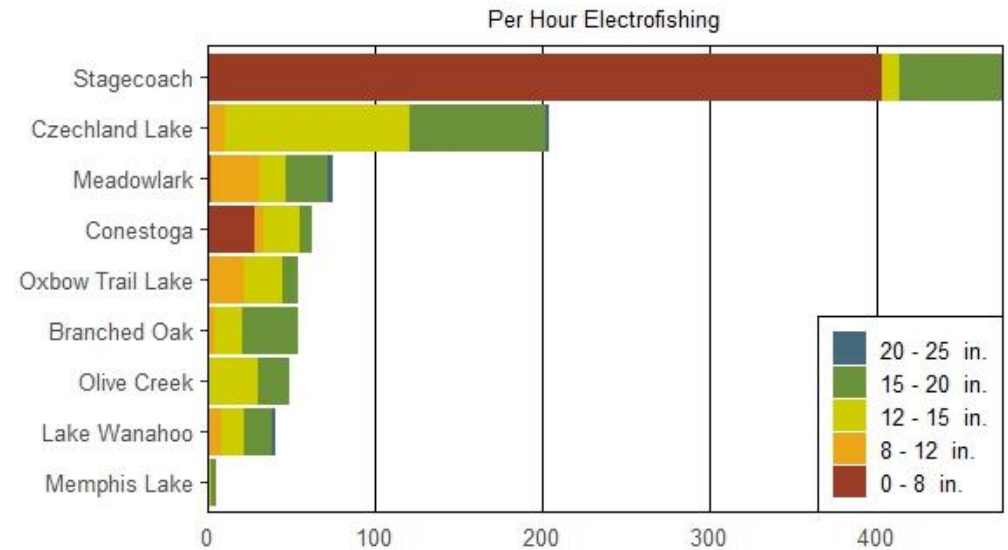
Lakes located south and west of Lincoln including **East Twin**, **Conestoga**, **Olive Creek**, **Yankee Hill**, **Hedgefield**, **Wagon Train**, **Bluestem**, **Merganser**, **Killdeer**, and **Cottontail**, among others, currently have low water levels that could impact fishing in 2025. Some of the smaller lakes have seen greater impacts and may have only a couple of feet of depth. Lakes with low water levels could have exhibited changes in the fishery, such as a fish kill event, since the surveys were conducted. Lakes that do have concerning low water levels will be monitored through the winter.



## Largemouth Bass

Largemouth Bass fishing opportunities will continue in the Lincoln area in 2025. **Stagecoach** yielded the highest catch rates with the majority of the fish sampled less than 8 inches in length. **Czechland** should continue to provide anglers with opportunities for Largemouth Bass > 15 inches in length. **Conestoga, Olive Creek, Yankee Hill, and Hedgefield** could provide opportunities for anglers to target Largemouth Bass >15 inches in length. **Wagon Train** will have a protected slot limit starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 where anglers are required to release all Largemouth Bass caught **between 15 to 18 inches** in length. Anglers are allowed to keep up to 5 Largemouth Bass from **Wagon Train** with only 1 Largemouth Bass over 18 inches in length.

## Largemouth Bass

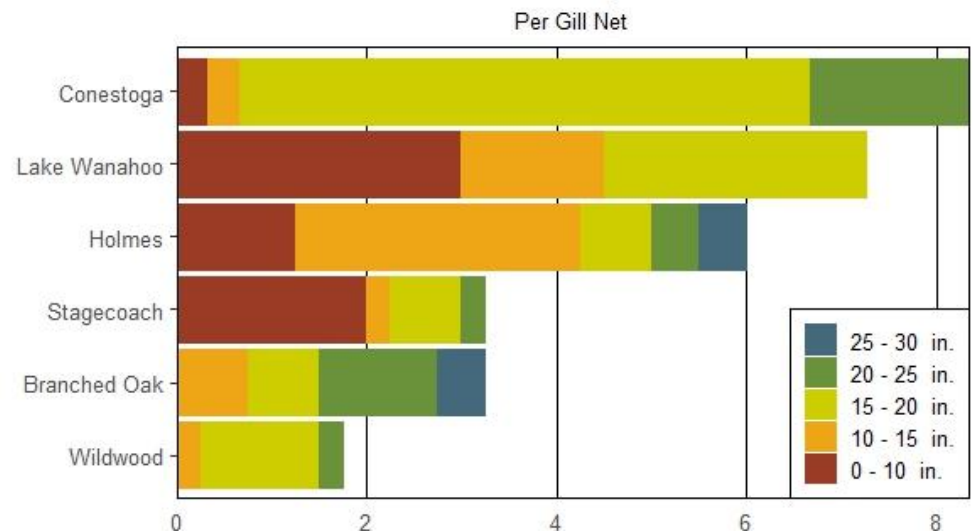


## Walleye

Anglers should have a good chance at catching some keeper sized  $\geq 15$ " Walleyes at **Conestoga, Lake Wanahoo, Pawnee** (Saugeye in **Pawnee**), and **Holmes** in 2025. Although net results were low, anglers could expect to catch a few Walleyes at **Stagecoach, Branched Oak, and Wildwood**. Anglers seeking to target larger Walleye should head to **Holmes** or **Banched Oak**.

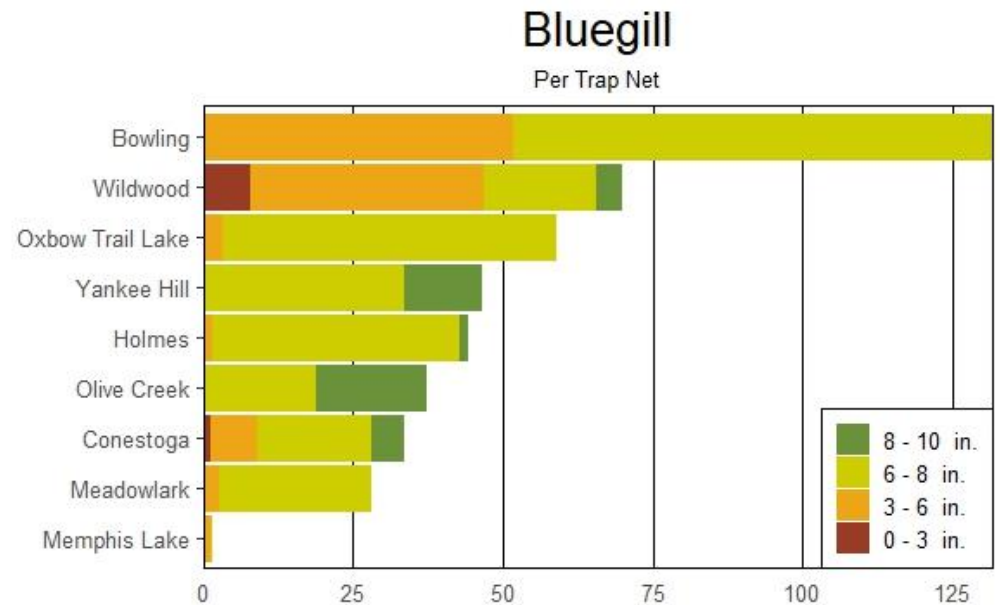
Anglers wishing to target Saugeye should head to **Pawnee**. In 2024 **Pawnee** produced 7.25 Saugeye per gill net with most of the catch over 18 inches in length (3.25 Saugeye/net between 18 and 22 inches in length and 1.5 Saugeye per net between 22 and 27 inches in length).

## Walleye



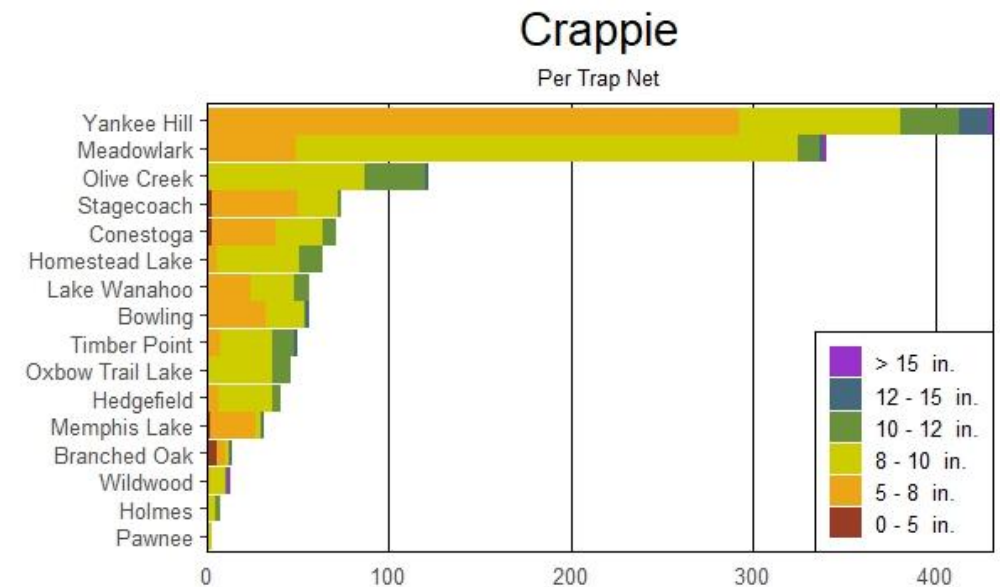
## Bluegill

Multiple lakes in 2024 were sampled for Bluegill in the Lincoln area. **Bowling** had the highest catch rates of Bluegills per trap net in the area, followed by **Wildwood, Oxbow Trail**, and **Yankee Hill**. **Yankee Hill, Wildwood, Olive Creek**, and **Conestoga** should provide anglers with the opportunity to catch Bluegill greater than 8 inches in length.



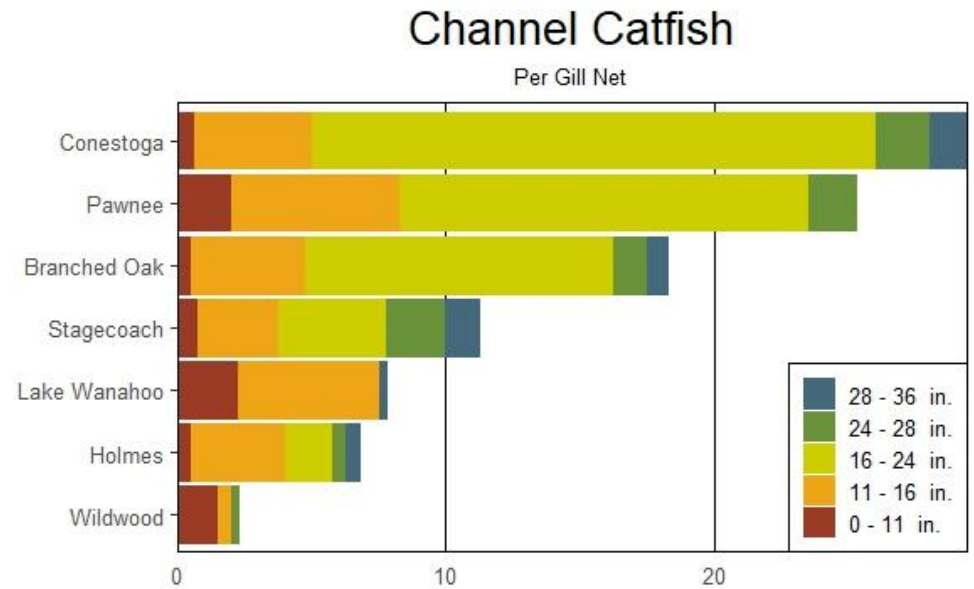
## Crappie

Anglers seeking crappies in the Lincoln area will have excellent opportunities in 2025. **Yankee Hill, Meadowlark, Olive Creek, Stagecoach, Conestoga, Homestead, Lake Wanahoo, Timber Point**, and **Hedgefield** yielded high catch rates during the 2024 sampling with a high proportion of the fish sampled between 8 and 10 inches, and a decent amount of fish >10 inches in length. Anglers wanting to target larger crappie should head to **Wildwood, Branched Oak, Timber Point**, or **Yankee Hill**.



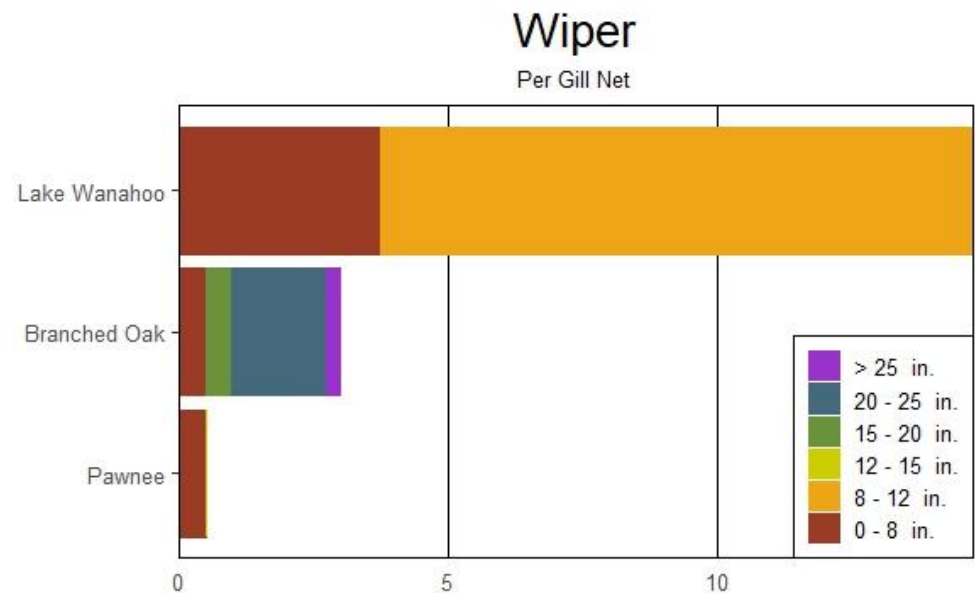
## Channel Catfish

Anglers seeking eater-sized Channel Catfish in 2025 should head to **Conestoga, Branched Oak, Pawnee, Stagecoach, or Yankee Hill**. Anglers seeking larger catfish may want to try **Czechland, Conestoga, Stagecoach, Branched Oak, or Wildwood**. Anglers are required to **release all Channel Catfish** caught at **Wildwood**.



## Striped Bass Hybrid (Wipers)

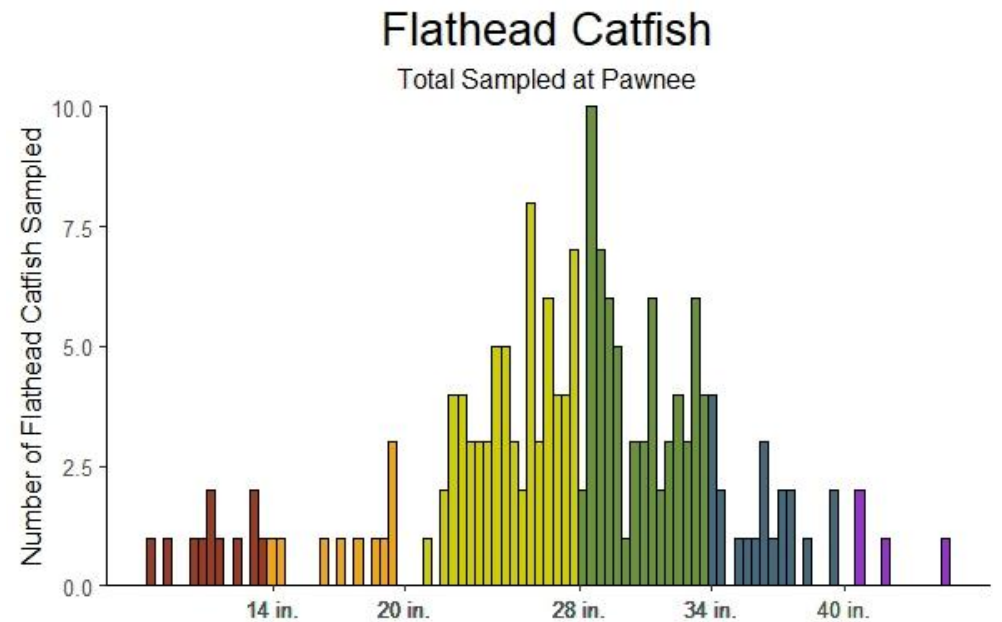
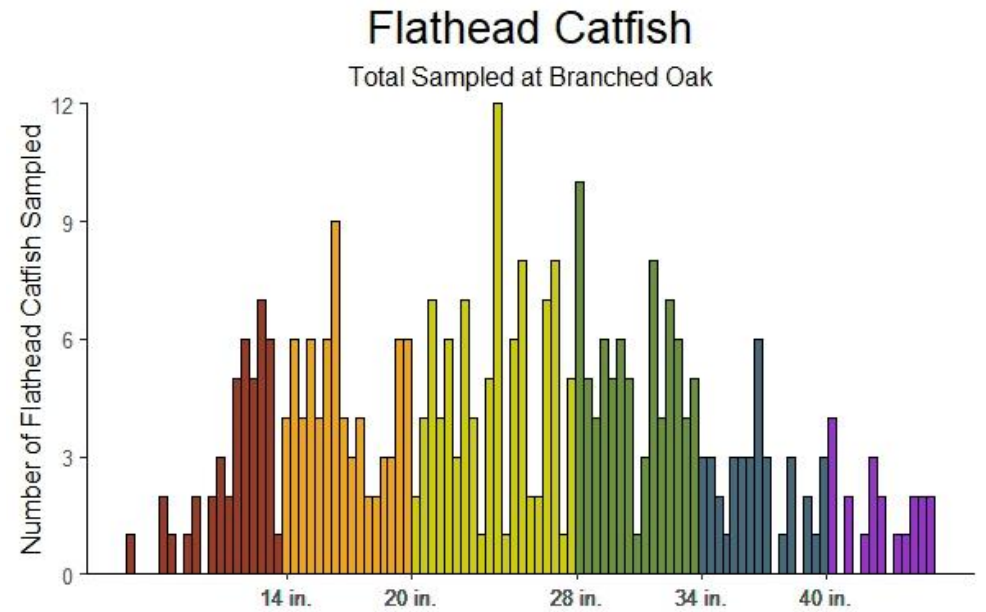
Salt Valley reservoirs such as **Branched Oak** and **Wanahoo** will provide anglers an opportunity to catch Wipers in 2025. Advanced Wiper stockings are doing well in **Branched Oak** with some Wipers over 25 inches residing in the reservoir. Wipers were stocked in **Lake Wanahoo** for the first time in 2024. Anglers are required to **release all Wipers** at **Branched Oak**. Remember White Perch, a similar looking species to White Bass, Striped Bass and Wipers, cannot be transported live from any water body as they are an Aquatic Invasive Species.



## Flathead Catfish

In 2024, **Branched Oak** will continue to be a top Flathead destination in the state with multiple fish over 40 inches in length, giving anglers a chance to catch a true trophy. Anglers are required to **release all Flathead Catfish** caught at **Branched Oak**.

**Pawnee Lake** will also provide some good flathead fishing in 2024 with opportunities for true trophy sized fish with lengths over 40 inches. Unlike **Branched Oak**, anglers are able to harvest up to five Flatheads at Pawnee; however, only one can be over 30 inches.



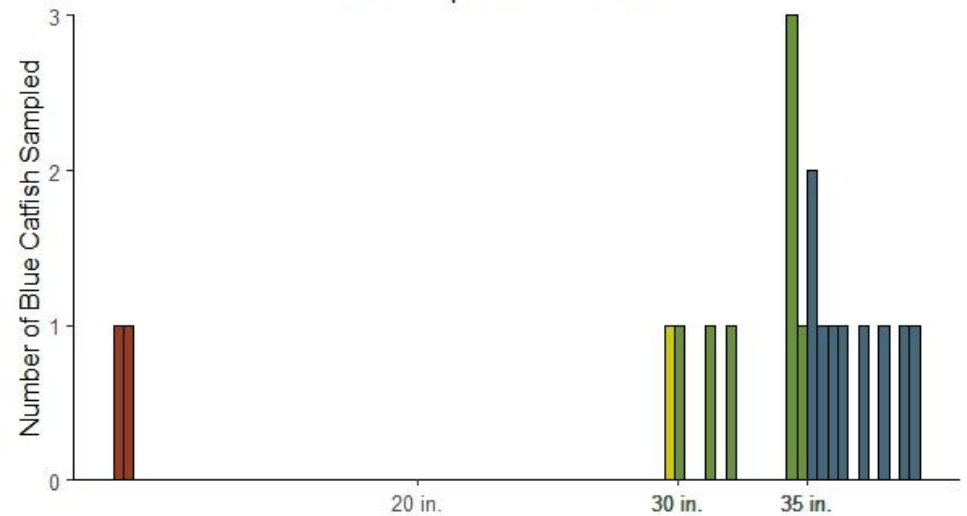


## Blue Catfish

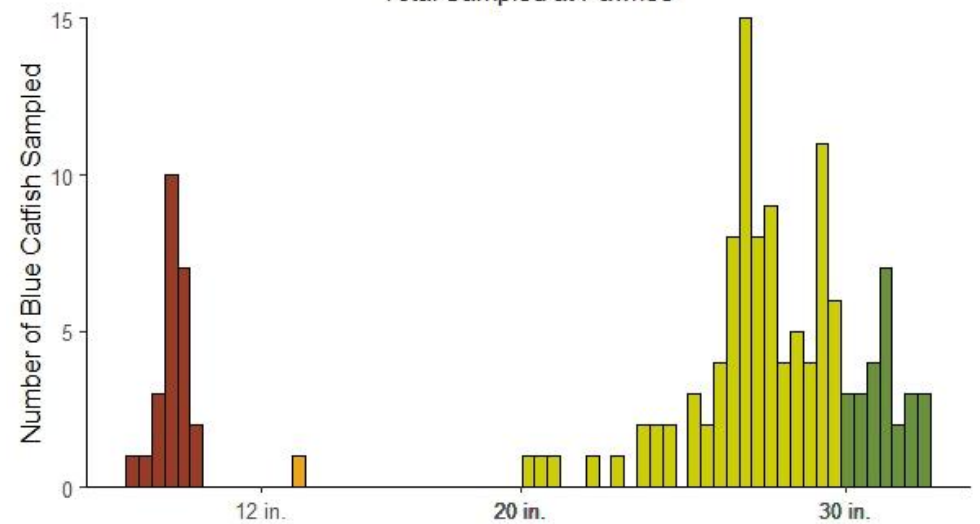
The Blue Catfish in **Branched Oak** will continue to provide anglers with opportunities for fish over 30 inches in length. Sampling of Blue Catfish at **Branched Oak** has always been difficult and the low catch rates don't provide a complete picture of the Blue Catfish fishery. A new stocking strategy was implemented at **Branched Oak** for Blue Catfish, and it is encouraging to have sampled some smaller fish.

Blue Catfish have been stocked in **Pawnee** over the last few years and appear to be doing quite well. As with **Branched Oak**, it is encouraging to see those smaller fish showing up in the sample after the new stocking strategy was implemented. Anglers can expect to catch fish around 25-35 inches in length now.

Blue Catfish  
Total Sampled at Branched Oak



Blue Catfish  
Total Sampled at Pawnee



## Other Species

### Northern Pike

Unfortunately, no Northern Pike were sampled at **Lake Wanahoo** in 2024, and the Northern Pike stocking program at **Lake Wanahoo** has ceased. Changes to the reservoir over the last several years including changes in water quality, habitat degradation, and invasive species has altered the ecosystem to the point where the lake won't support a thriving population anymore. Anglers at **Wanahoo** can **keep up to three Northern Pike with one being over 34 inches** in length starting on **January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025**. Anglers wishing to target Northern Pike are encouraged to head to **Flanagan** located in northwest Omaha (see the 2025 Omaha Area Fishing Forecast for the latest catch data).

### Rainbow Trout

Although the Lincoln area doesn't have cold-water stream that support trout, there are still plenty of opportunities around Lincoln to catch them. 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**.

## Musky

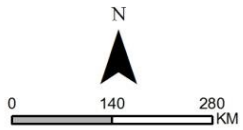
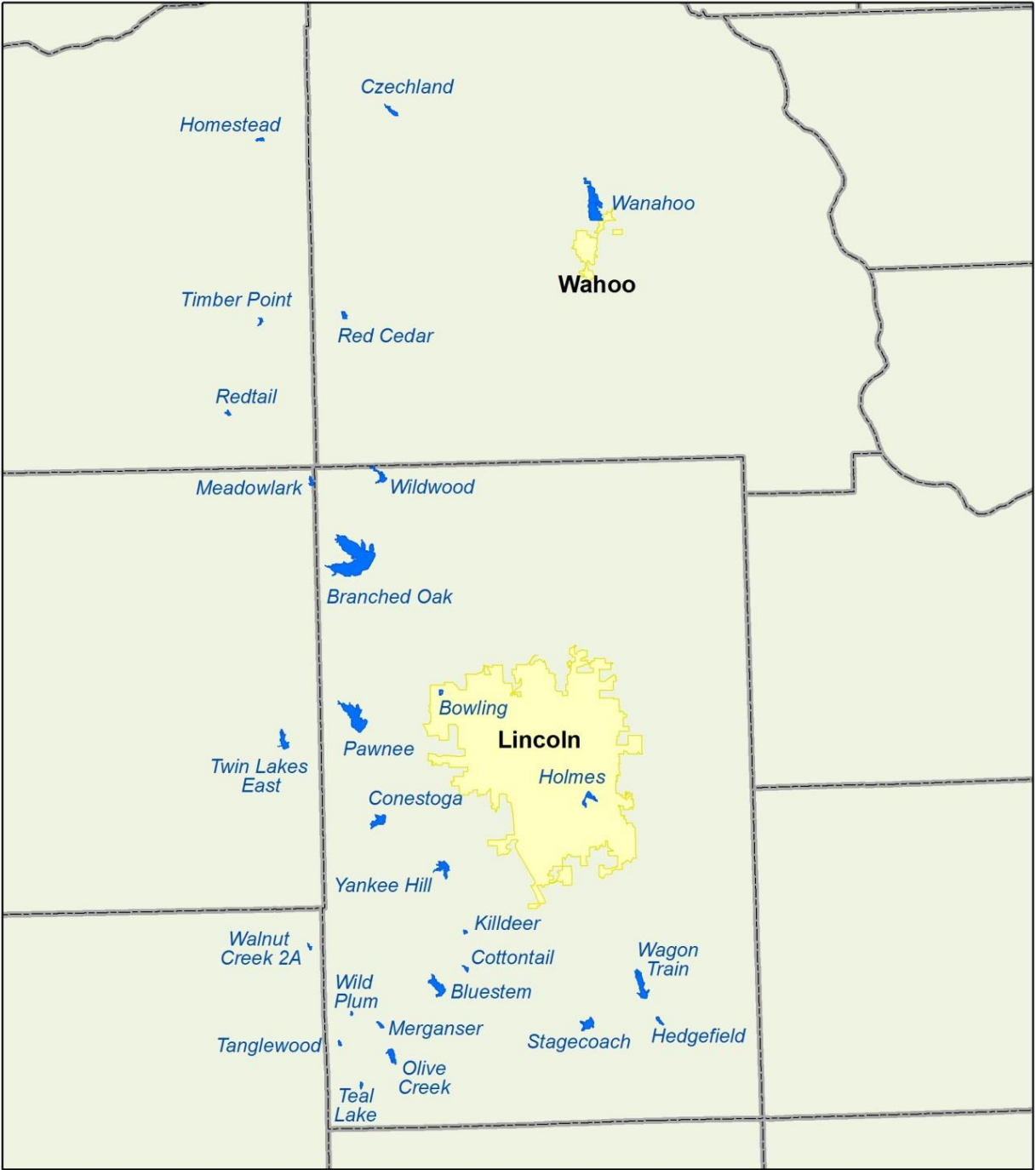
**Timber Point** and **Wagon Train** are stocked with pure Musky. **Timber Point** provides anglers with opportunities for Musky over 30 inches in length. **Wagon Train** has had trouble filling during the drought after the renovation in 2021. However, pure Musky will continue to be stocked in **Wagon Train** once the reservoir fills and will provide anglers with another unique species to target.





Table indicates what species were sampled at each lake in the Lincoln area in 2024. Not all lakes will be sampled for every species each year and are on different rotations.

Lake	Largemouth Bass	Bluegill	Crappie	Walleye/Saugeye	Channel Catfish
Bluestem					
Bowling		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Branched Oak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conestoga	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cottontail					
Czechland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Hedgefield			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Holmes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Homestead			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Killdeer					
Meadowlark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Memphis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Merganser					
Olive Creek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Oxbow Trails	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Pawnee			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Red Cedar					
Redtail					
Stagecoach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tanglewood					
Teal Lake					
Timber Point			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Twin Lakes East					
Wagon Train					
Walnut Creek 2A					
Wanahoo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wildwood		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wild Plum					
Yankee Hill		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		



**NEBRASKA**  
 GAME PARKS

Trisha Schlake, IT Division, 12/18/2012

