

Medicine Creek Reservoir 2024 Survey Summary



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Fish populations are sampled each fall at Medicine Creek Reservoir using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish such as walleye, white bass, channel catfish and wipers. Gill nets are set on approximately the same dates and locations each year to reduce variability.

Walleye were not observed again in 2024. However, saugeye were sampled at just under 14 per net, making that the highest catch since their introduction in 2017. Due to the high success rate of saugeye stockings at Medicine Creek, they will now be stocked on an annual basis and walleye stockings will be paused for the time being. There are 1,800,000 fry and 90,000 fingerling saugeye requested for spring 2025. Saugeye stockings will continue to be evaluated, and changes will be made, as necessary.

Although the catch was down from the previous two years, the wiper population at Medicine Creek continues to thrive with just under 16 per gill net caught in 2024, claiming the 4th highest catch in the state. Anglers seeking trophy fish should have success in 2025 with most fish surveyed ranging from 15 to 20 inches with good potential at fish surpassing the 20" mark. Anglers looking to harvest fish need to be aware of the new regulation change in 2025 for wiper and white bass. The statewide "one-over" size restriction has increased from 16 to 18 inches to allow a longer harvest window when large year classes are available. The statewide daily bag limit of 15 fish is still in observance. To avoid overabundance, there are no wiper requested for 2025.

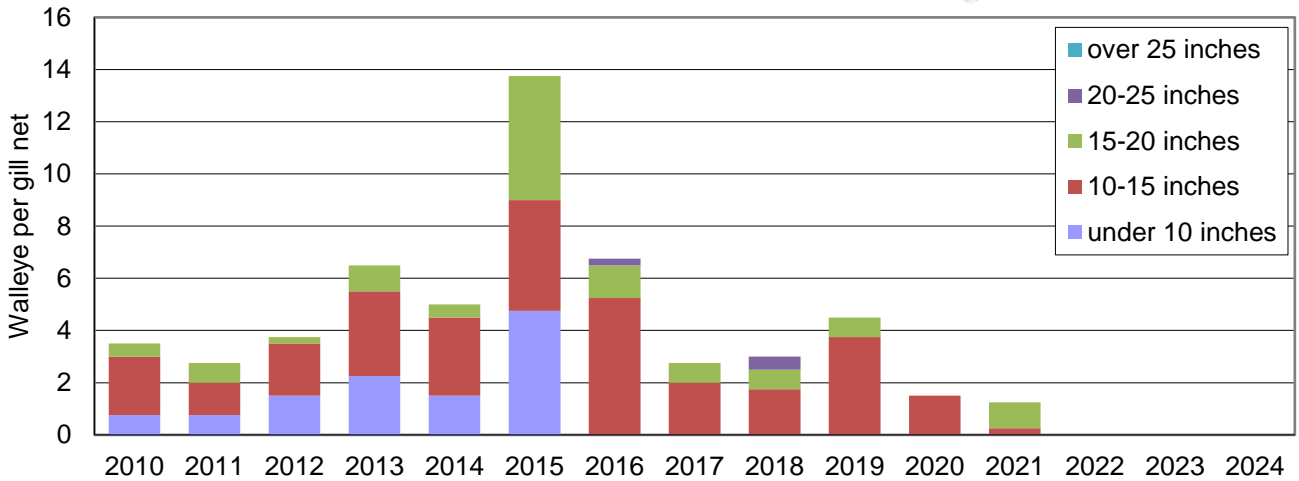
Biologists sampled just under 3 channel catfish per gill net in 2024, slightly down from the previous few years. Channel catfish in Medicine Creek have always maintained their population naturally. A one-year dip is not a concern at this time, but we will monitor the population moving forward and introduce stocking if needed.

In 2024, biologists began a low-frequency electrofishing survey to target blue catfish populations. The electrofishing survey will be a better way for biologists to annually assess the population of blue catfish in Medicine Creek and adjust management decisions accordingly. There are no blue catfish requested for fall 2025.

Beginning in 2021, crappie have been surveyed in Medicine Creek annually using spring trap nets. This effort is part of a multiyear study to evaluate the overall growth and age distribution of the population. The goal of this study is to gain a more complete understanding of the population to help assist management decisions in the future. Catch has been variable year to year as evident in 2024 with only 5 crappie per net surveyed.

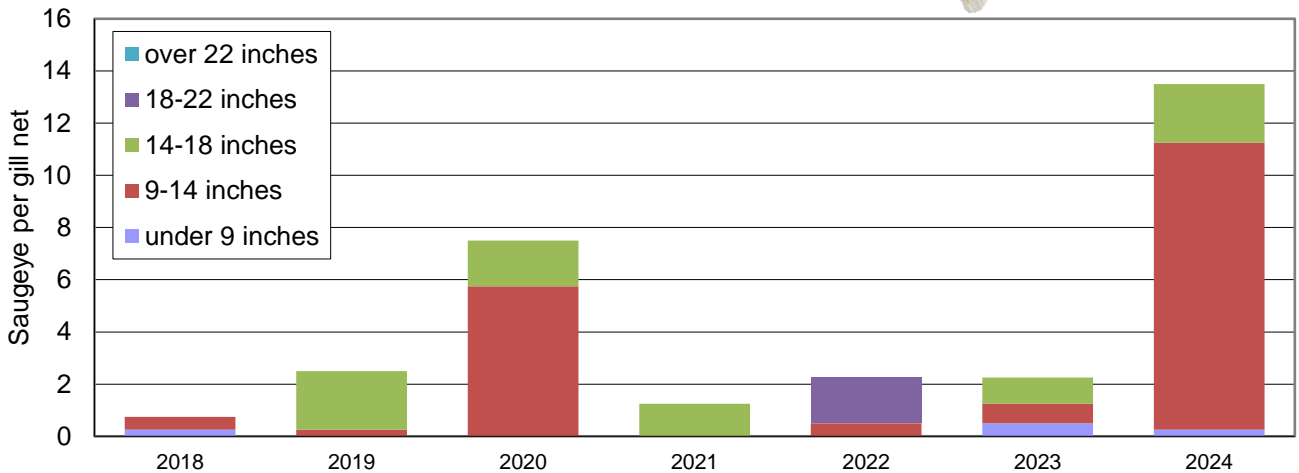
The following graphs show the average number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs.

Walleye



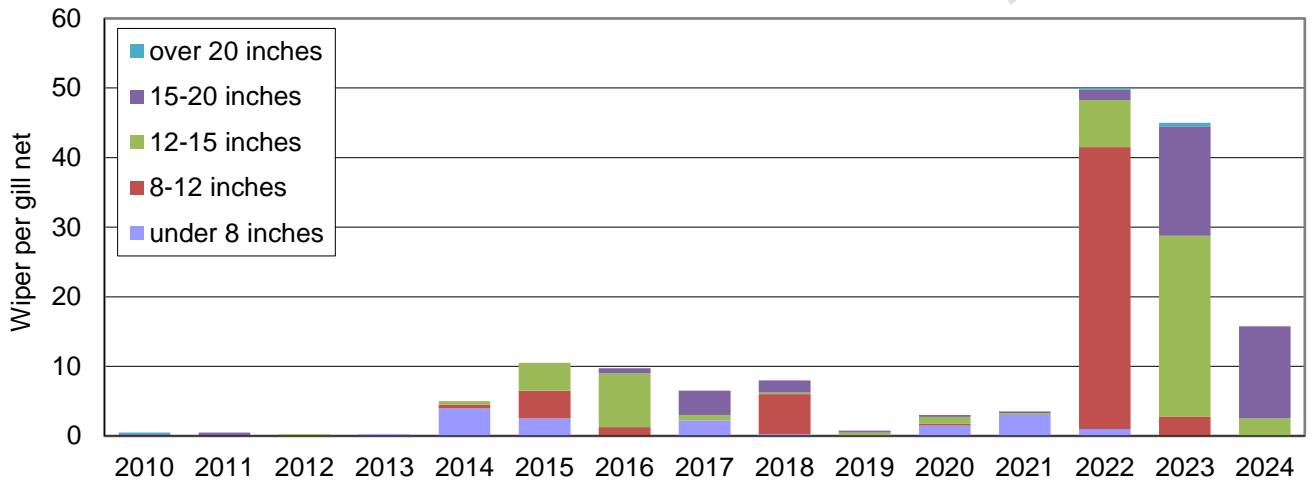
Walleye were not observed in our surveys for the last three years. Due to saugeye performing better since their introduction in 2017, we are shifting our stocking efforts away from walleye for the time being. There are no walleye requested for 2025.

Saugeye



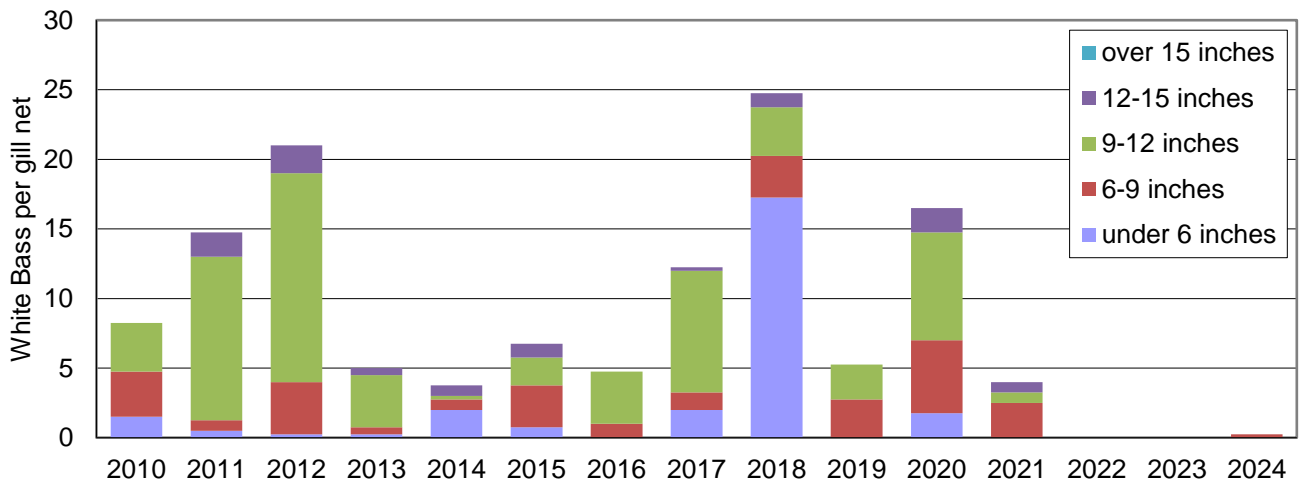
Saugeye catch rates reached an all time high in 2024 since they were first introduced in Medicine Creek. The 2024 fall gill net catch was just under 14 per net. The 2023 year-class was well represented in the 2024 survey, so the outlook for the fishery continues to be positive. The saugeye in Medicine Creek are growing well and will provide good angling opportunities during the 2025 season. There are 1,800,000 fry and 90,000 fingerling saugeye requested for 2025.

Wiper



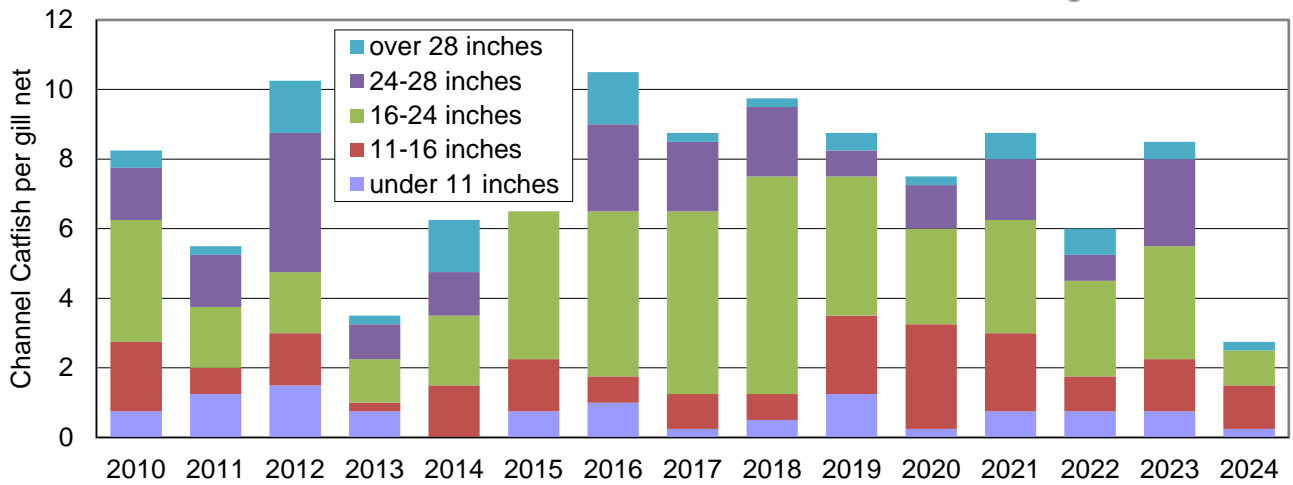
Wiper catch rates in 2024 were down from the previous two-year highs, but the overall catch was still good with just under 16 per net surveyed. Anglers looking to target trophy sized fish should have success as most fish surveyed were between 15 and 20 inches. To avoid overabundance, there are not wiper requested for 2025.

White Bass



White bass catch rates have been variable historically at Medicine Creek. The last three years of surveys resulted in only one white bass being sampled. A high wiper population may have impacted white bass catch during this time. We will continue to monitor the population in 2025 and makes changes to white bass management if deemed necessary.

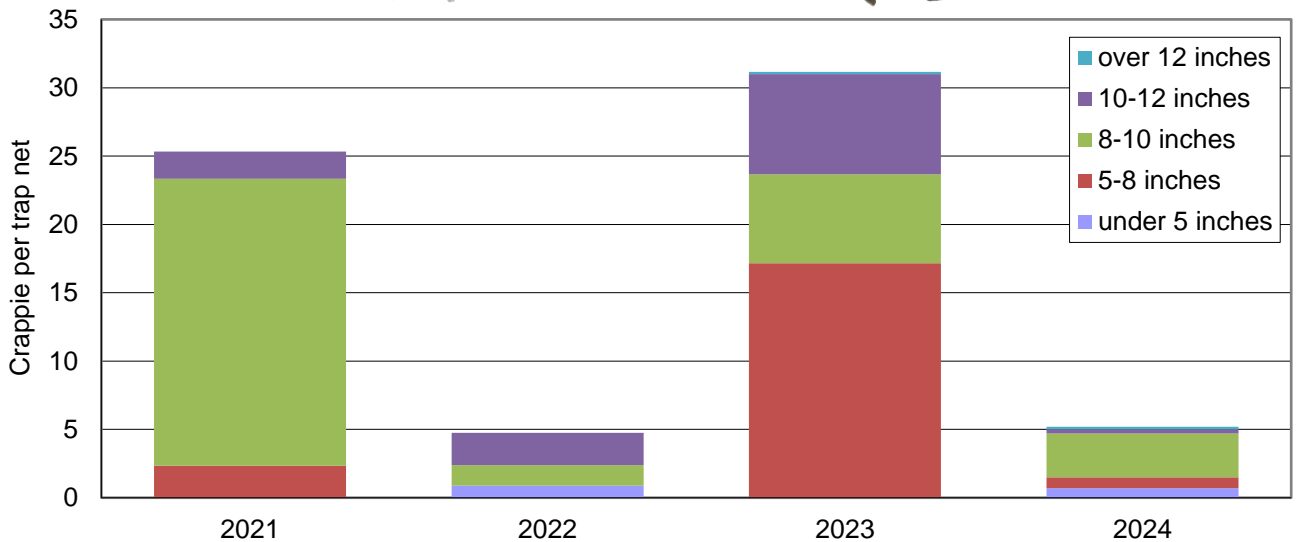
Channel Catfish



Channel catfish catch rates dipped in 2024 to just under 3 per gill net. Despite the low gill net catch, anglers should still be able to find quality fish. Medicine Creek continually produces trophy-sized fish surpassing the 28” mark along with smaller fish perfect for harvesting.

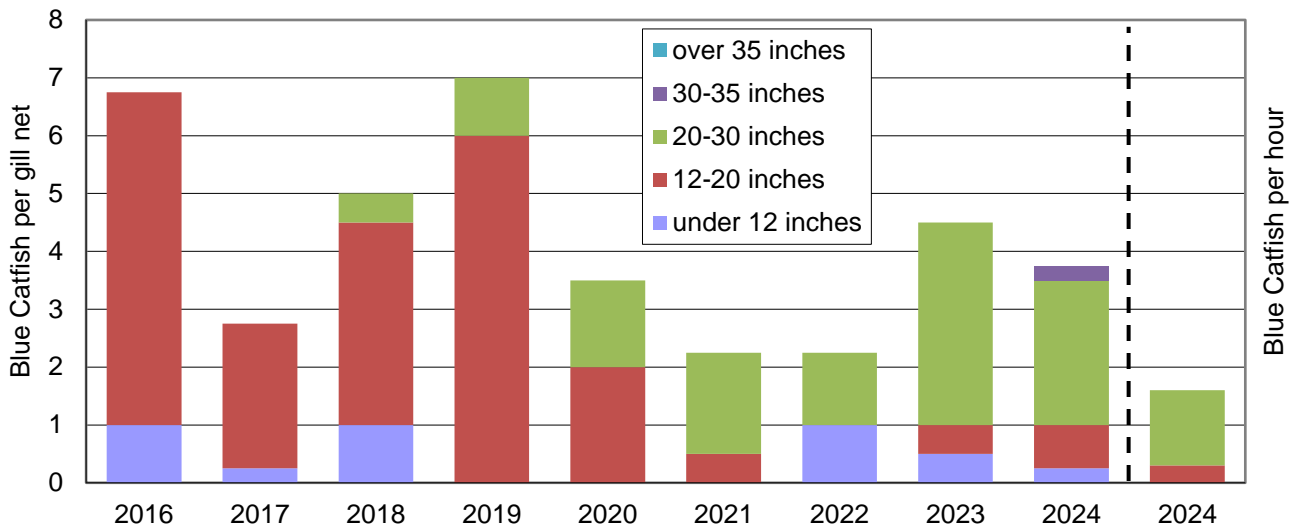


Crappie



Crappie catch rates have been highly variable since the annual crappie survey evaluation began on Medicine Creek in 2021. In 2024, crappies were surveyed at just over 5 per net, down from the 2023 high of just over 31 per net. The crappie population at Medicine Creek will continue to be monitored and changes to the management plan will be made, as necessary.

Blue Catfish



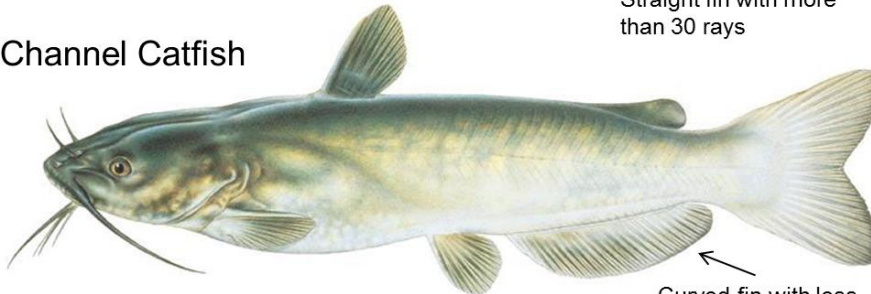
Biologists surveyed just under 4 blue catfish per gill net in 2024. In the initial year of conducting electrofishing surveys, the blue catfish proved a bit harder to find with just over 1.5 per hour surveyed. However, there is good trophy potential for blue catfish at Medicine Creek with fish starting to surpass the 30" mark, so anglers shouldn't overlook this unique fishery.

Blue Catfish



Straight fin with more than 30 rays

Channel Catfish



Curved fin with less than 30 rays

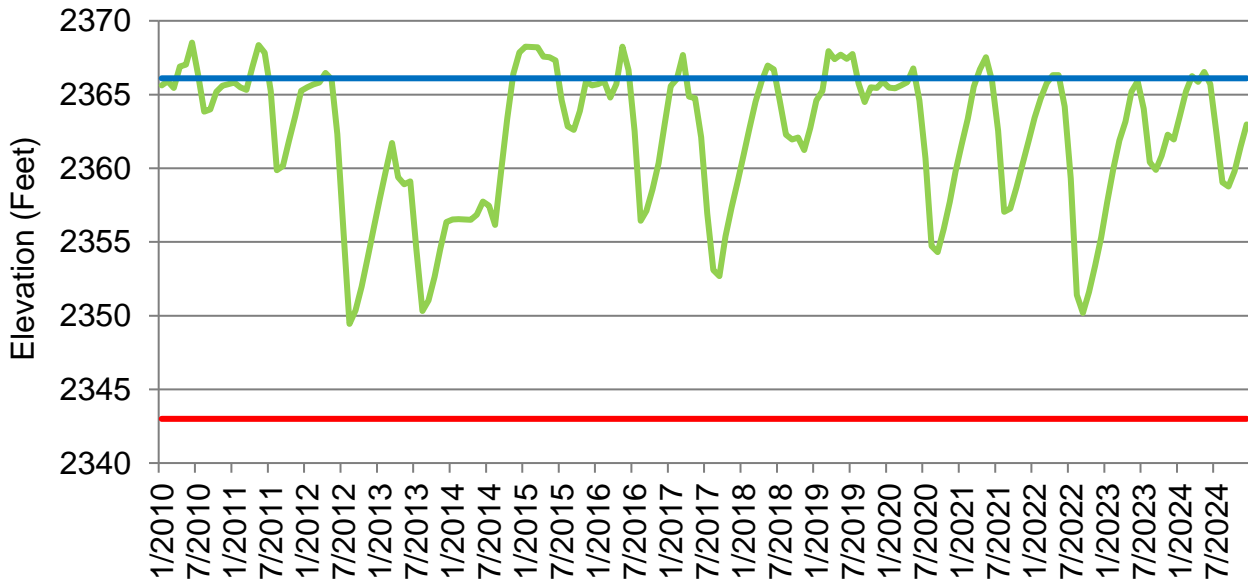
Blue catfish are known to grow in excess of 80lbs and are a very popular species for some catfish anglers. It is important to point out that there is a **1 fish daily bag limit** for blue catfish statewide. Anglers need to take care to identify their catch before harvesting any catfish species at Medicine Creek. The best method to distinguish between the species is to look at the anal fin. Blue catfish have a straight anal fin with more than 30 rays while channel catfish have a curved anal fin with fewer than 30 rays. There are other cosmetic differences such as body shape, color, and spots but those differences can be misleading depending on the environment and individual fish.

Medicine Creek Reservoir Fish Stocking Summary

Year	Walleye	Wiper	Yellow Perch	Saugeye	Blue Catfish
2024			47,981 (1.5")	1,625,390 (fry) 101,992 (1.25")	15,350 (6.5")
2023				1,812,570 (fry) 90,000 (1.25")	9,000 (5")
2022	180,000 (1.25")	300,000 (fry)			12,320 (5")
2021		250,000 (fry)	59,902 (1.5")	180,430 (1")	5,620 (4")
2020	137,859 (1")	9,250 (1")			

Above is a table of fish stockings over the last 5 years at Medicine Creek Reservoir. The species stocked, number stocked, and fish size are presented in the table. Multiple species are stocked annually, and a comprehensive database of fish stockings can be found at the Nebraska Game and Parks website or by following this link. [Stocking Database](#)

End of Month Elevation, Medicine Creek Reservoir 2010-2024



Medicine Creek is the only Southwest reservoir that provides irrigation water annually but also refills due to high inflows and the NCORPE stream augmentation flow. The dark blue line indicates the top of the conservation pool, the green line indicates the end of month elevation, and the red line indicates the top of the inactive pool. Current lake elevation data can be found at this link. [Current Elevation](#)

Southwest Reservoir Georgia Cube Project



As part of a grant awarded by the Bureau of Reclamation a fish attractor project was completed in the Southwest Reservoirs in 2023. Using this funding, a total of 100 Georgia Cubes (25 at each reservoir) were constructed with the help of the McCook Work Ethic Camp. These cubes were placed in deep water to provide structure for fish as reservoir elevations decline in dry years when habitat becomes limited. To create a larger footprint, 6 to 7 cubes were attached to one another and sunk creating four cube complexes in each reservoir that anglers can target. Below are the GPS locations of each cube complex to assist anglers in finding this new structure.

Enders		Medicine Creek		Red Willow		Swanson	
N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W
40.42028	-101.52442	40.39978	-100.23357	40.35930	-100.68447	40.16356	-101.06689
40.42202	-101.52390	40.39761	-100.23526	40.35819	-100.67515	40.16517	-101.06628
40.42833	-101.52896	40.39441	-100.23548	40.35502	-100.68016	40.16706	-101.06657
40.43204	-101.52546	40.38652	-100.22448	40.36283	-100.67201	40.16874	-101.06654



Aquatic invasive species (AIS) have reached Nebraska! Zebra mussels are currently established in Lewis and Clark Reservoir, Lake Yankton, Offutt AFB pond, Beaver Lake, and the Missouri River. Anglers and boaters should be on the look out for personnel performing boat inspections and decontaminations statewide. Please email: ngpc.ais@nebraska.gov or call 402-471-7602 to report any possible AIS sightings or for more information about AIS in Nebraska.

Preventative Steps and Regulations

- It is unlawful for a boat to arrive at or leave any body of water in Nebraska with water other than from a domestic source except for fire-fighting purposes. Drain water before leaving an area.
- It is unlawful for a boat or trailer to arrive or leave a launch area with any aquatic vegetation from that waterbody still attached. Boat blinds cannot use plants listed as invasive species or noxious weeds.
- Wash mud off waders. Felt-sole waders are not allowed.

Nonresident Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp

Motorized watercraft registered outside Nebraska are required to purchase and display the Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp before launching from any Nebraska boat ramp. Stamps must be affixed on the starboard side toward the rear of the boat above the waterline. The fee for each stamp is \$18 dollars and includes the \$3 issuing fee. Stamps can be purchased online or at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Offices.

Zebra Mussel

Quagga Mussel

Eurasian Watermilfoil

