

# Interstate 80 Lakes - Grand Island to Gothenburg

## Fisheries Update - Spring 2025

Colton Curtis, Fisheries Biologist  
 Brad Eifert, District Manager



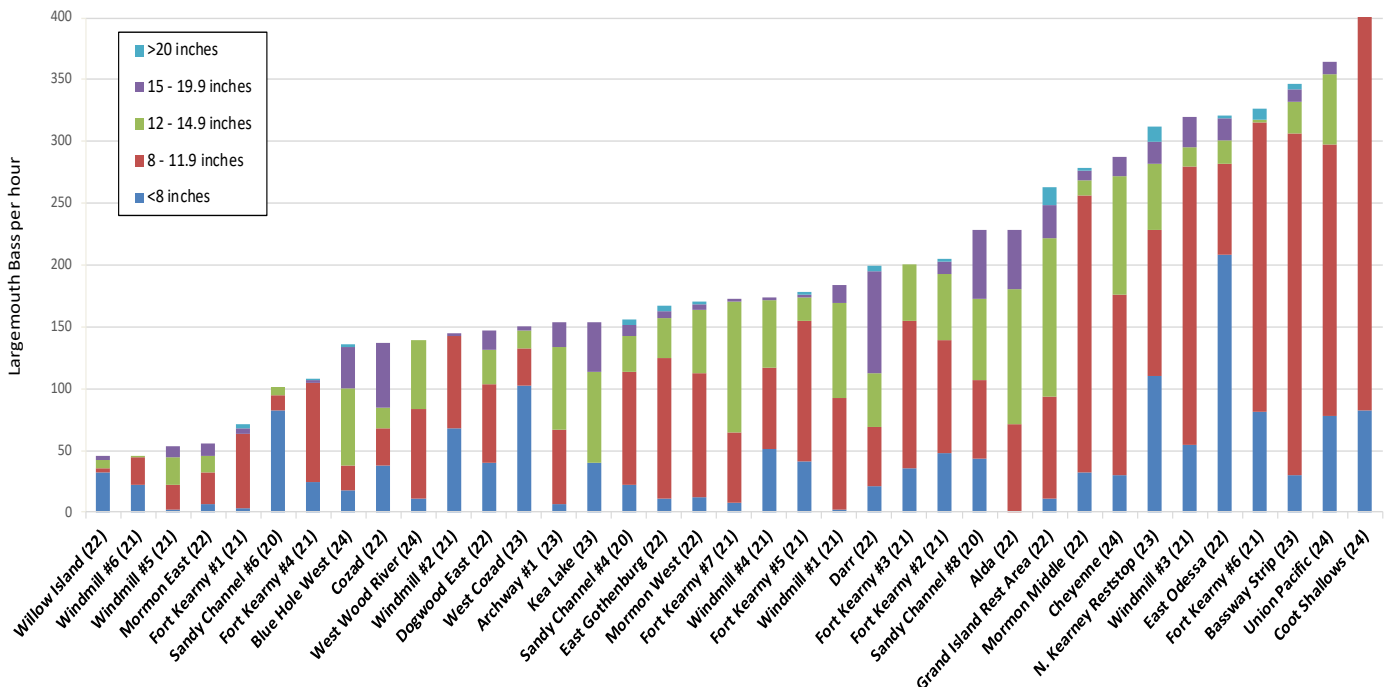
Spanning a stretch of 150 miles along Interstate 80 from Grand Island to Hershey are more than 60 small lakes available for public fishing. Fisheries staff from the Kearney office have the management responsibility for the Interstate lakes located from Grand Island to Gothenburg. These man-made lakes, 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. These ground water fed lakes have excellent shoreline access for anglers and good water quality, providing excellent habitat conditions for largemouth bass and bluegill. In addition, most of the lakes contain channel catfish, while others have crappie, rock bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, and northern pike. Most lakes are surveyed on a five year rotation and the following graphs and text display these results.

### Largemouth Bass

Largemouth bass are present in most of the Interstate lakes in the central portion of Nebraska. Exceptions include; War Axe, Bufflehead, Archway Lakes 2, 3, & 4, Kea West, and Sandy Channel #2, which have been stocked with smallmouth bass. Lakes with high densities of small largemouth bass can be found at Mormon Middle, Windmill SRA, Bassway Strip, Fort Kearny #6, Union Pacific, and Coot Shallows. Lakes with a higher abundance of bass larger than fifteen inches include Grand Island Rest Area, Alda, Cheyenne, Windmill #1, Archway #1, Kea Lake, Blue Hole West, Sandy Channel #8, Darr, and Cozad. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit on bass at Mormon Island SRA, Alda, Cheyenne, West Wood River, War Axe, Windmill SRA, Fort Kearny SRA, Bufflehead, Archway Lakes, and Sandy Channel SRA. In addition, Kea West is designated as a catch and release only lake for all species. Anglers are encouraged to practice selective harvest or catch and release on bass in the I-80 Lakes as bass in these small lakes are easily over-harvested.



Largemouth Bass



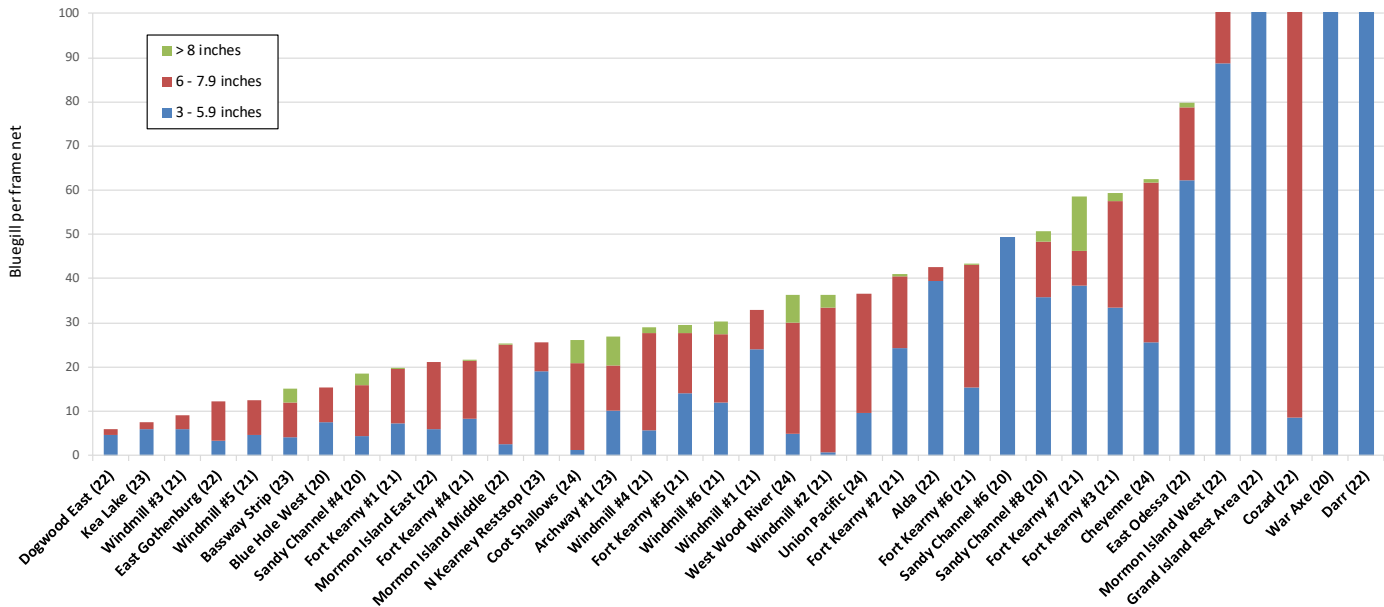
( ) — year lake was last sampled

## Bluegill

Bluegill are abundant 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 West, Cheyenne, Windmill, Fort Kearny, Sandy Channel, and Cozad. Big bluegills, greater than eight inches, can be found in low densities in many of the lakes. Lakes consistently producing larger bluegill include West Wood River, Bassway Strip, Windmill #6, Ft. Kearny #7, Archway #1, East Odessa, and Coot Shallows. Anglers are reminded that the daily bag limit for panfish is 15 fish per day.



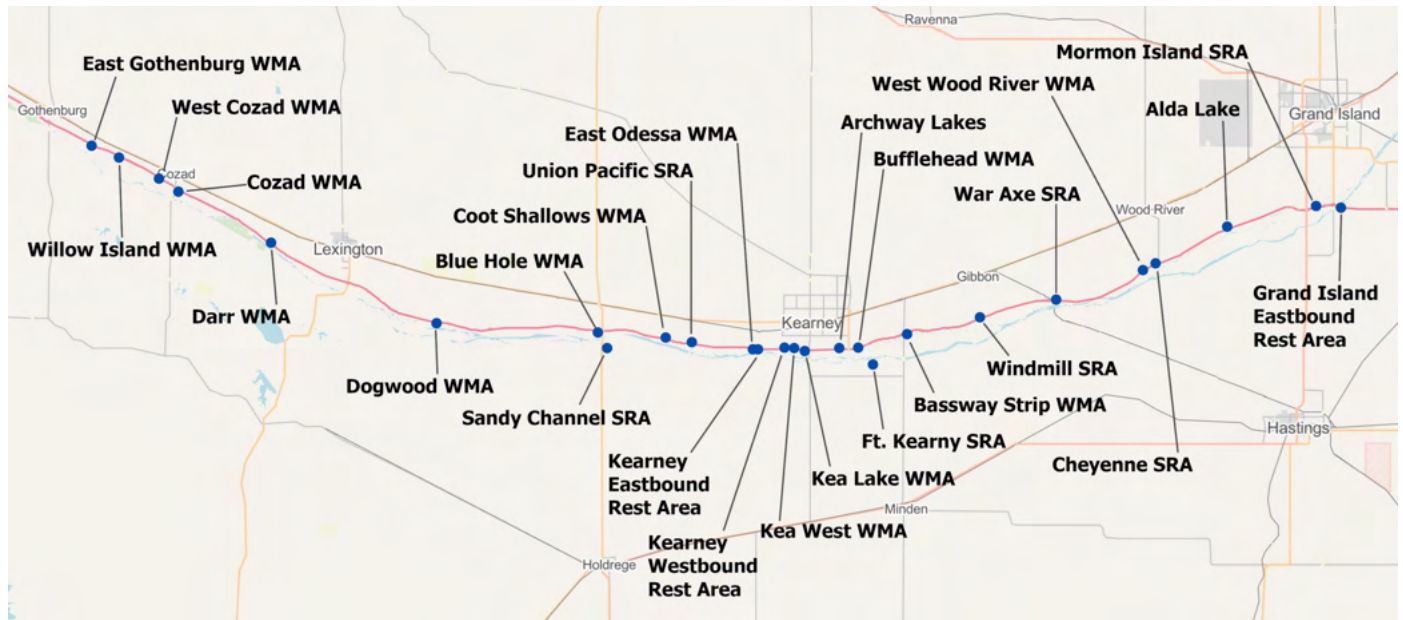
## Bluegill



( ) — year lake was last sampled

## 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 Gothenburg. 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 is a 6-acre lake with a maximum depth of eight feet. It is owned by the Nebraska Department of Transportation. The fishery was renovated in 2004 to remove rough fish and restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. Drought conditions during the summer of 2012 resulted in a substantial fish kill that caused the majority of large fish present in the lake to perish. Low water conditions persisted into 2013 resulting in another small fish kill. Due to the shallow depths of this lake, the likelihood of future fish kills remains high during dry years. Survey results from 2022 indicate that largemouth bass populations have rebounded. Several size classes of bass were collected with a good abundance of 16 to 19 inch bass and some bass greater than 19 inches. Small bluegill were overly abundant as there were 152 per net sampled. Fair numbers of bluegill from 6 to 8 inches were sampled. No channel catfish were captured during the 2022 survey and last stocking of channel catfish was in 2017. Other fish species captured during the survey included low numbers of 3 to 6 inch green sunfish and high numbers of hybrid bluegill x green sunfish, with some larger than 8 inches. Low water levels and abundant aquatic vegetation make fishing difficult during the summer months. To better manage vegetation, grass carp were stocked in 2022. No boating is allowed on this lake. 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. Walleye regulations include a 15-inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 4, with only one fish larger than 22 inches.

**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.gov/lakecontourmaps/>. This fishery was renovated in 2010 to remove rough fish and has been restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, black crappie, walleye, and muskellunge. The most recent fish population survey was completed during the spring of 2022 and it revealed an established multi-species fishery. Largemouth bass abundance was high, but lower than in 2017 with multiple year classes present. Most bass were 8 to 11 inches, 30% were 12 to 14 inches, and a few were over 15 inches. The largest bass collected was 21 inches. No muskellunge were sampled. Muskellunge are stocked at low densities, usually 1 to 2 per acre and tentatively planned to be stocked again in 2027. There have been six year-classes (2011, 13, 15, 17, 22, & 24) of muskies stocked since the renovation and anecdotal reports from anglers indicate good angling success, with fish up to 48 inches reportedly caught. Channel catfish were not sampled in 2022, however 10-inch catfish are stocked every other year and the next stocking is scheduled for 2026.

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**Mormon Island West (continued):**

Panfish populations remain relatively unchanged from the 2017 sample. Bluegill abundance was high and the majority of the fish ranged from 5.5 to 7.5 inches, with no fish greater than 8 inches. Black crappie were abundant, but most were 7 to 8 inches, with only a few larger than nine inches. Seven year-classes of walleye have been stocked since the renovation (2013, 14, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24) providing multiple size classes of walleye to be potentially caught by anglers. Walleye sampled in the 2022 survey were all less than 15 inches. Yellow perch were fairly abundant, with most perch ranging from 7 to 10 inches. Common carp are present as several 20 to 24 inch fish were sampled. Future stockings include 420 8-inch walleye during the fall of 2025. The next fish population survey is scheduled for the spring of 2027.

**Mormon Island Middle:** This 19-acre lake is shallower than the west lake and has a maximum depth of 12 feet. The lake normally has very clear water and abundant submerged aquatic vegetation. A contour map can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/>. 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 most recently surveyed during the spring of 2022, which revealed a healthy population of sport fish. Largemouth bass abundance was high and the majority of the bass ranged from 8 to 12 inches. There was fair abundance of 12 to 15 inch bass, but few fish larger than 15 inches. The largest bass collected was 21 inches. Bluegill abundance was double previous survey results, 25 per net compared to 11.25 per net. Most bluegill ranged from 6 to 8 inches. Redear sunfish were more abundant than bluegill with 30 per net. Redear had a larger size distribution with many measuring 7.5 inches or larger. There were only a few black crappie sampled in the survey, averaging 10 inches. The channel catfish surveyed were of average size, ranging from 11 to 20 inches. Other species captured in the survey included numerous bluegill x redear hybrids, which ranged from 6 to 8.5 inches. Walleye were stocked in 2020 and two 9-inch walleye were sampled. Common carp and gizzard shad were also surveyed in 2022. The carp ranged from 20 to 28 inches. The next fish population survey is scheduled for the spring of 2027.

**Mormon Island East:** Ownership of this 31-acre lake was recently transferred to Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. 2022 marked the first time Mormon Island East was surveyed since 1995. Largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie were present along with large numbers of unwanted fish species, including shortnose gar, quillback, common carp, bigmouth buffalo, and yellow bullheads. Crappie ranged from 5 to 13 inches, bluegill ranged from 3 to 7 inches, and largemouth ranged from 7 to 16 inches. All sportfish were found in low densities and fairly high densities of gar were present. Access to this lake is by walk-in only through Mormon Island SRA. Shoreline access is poor due to dense stands of cattails. Lake depth varies dramatically with sharp drop-offs and shallow flats extending out into the middle. No fish stockings are planned at this time. The next fish population survey is scheduled for the spring of 2027.

**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 Transportation. Maximum depth is 15 feet. The latest fish population survey was completed during the spring of 2022. The quality of the fishery is fairly good, especially for largemouth bass and northern pike. Bass abundance and size structure has improved since the previous survey was completed in 2017. Most bass collected in the shocking survey ranged from 11 to 15 inches compared to 8 to 11 inches in 2017. Good numbers of bass from 15 to 18 inches were sampled, with the largest bass approaching 19 inches. Bluegill are very abundant, but have a poor size distribution. Most bluegill collected ranged from 3 to 5 inches, with only a few larger than 7 inches. Channel catfish were not abundant, but most ranged from 10 to 15 inches.



Channel catfish were stocked in 2024 at 10 inches and will continue to be stocked on alternate years at Alda. Northern pike abundance is good at Alda with most fish ranging from 20 to 24 inches. The largest pike sampled was 33.5 inches. Other species caught during the survey included high abundance of alewife, moderate numbers of 24 to 30 inch common carp and low numbers of four inch bluegill x green sunfish hybrids. Four thousand black crappie were stocked in 2023 to provide additional opportunities for anglers. Future fish stockings include 60 12-inch northern pike in 2025. Anglers should be aware that there is a 21-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass and a 34-inch minimum length limit on northern pike. Both species have a daily bag limit of one fish. The parking area is located on the north side of the lake which provides fair shoreline access for bank anglers. No boats are allowed on this lake and no camping is allowed.

## Cheyenne SRA

**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 latest fish population survey was completed in 2024. Survey results indicated that largemouth bass abundance is high and bass were sampled in a variety of sizes ranging from 4 to 16 inches. Bass from 10 to 12 inches were most abundant, but nearly 40% of the sample ranged from 12 to 15 inches. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass for this lake. Bluegill are abundant and ranged from 3 to 8 inches. Most were 5 to 7 inches and the average length was 6 inches. Black crappie abundance was fair and lengths ranged from 8 to 13 inches. A few channel catfish ranging from 15 to 24 inches were sampled. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 570 10-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2025. Other fish species sampled included high numbers of 15 to 28 inch common carp, fair numbers of 4 to 6 inch green sunfish, and a few shortnose gar and white suckers. Cheyenne receives

floodwater from local drainage ditches during wet periods, allowing for unwanted species to be periodically introduced into the lake. 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. A modern restroom is available and a new campground with electrical hook-ups is currently under construction.



## West Wood River WMA

**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 most recent fish population survey was completed in 2024 and the next survey is scheduled for the spring of 2029. Survey results indicate that largemouth bass abundance and size structure is lower than what is normally found in Interstate Lakes. Bass collected in the survey were 3 to 14 inches, but most ranged from 8 to 12 inches. Historically this lake has produced bass over 20 inches, but none were collected in the 2024 survey. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass for this lake. Bluegill are moderately abundant with lengths ranging from 3 to 9 inches. Bluegill average size has improved since the previous survey and nearly 20% of the sample was 8 inches or larger. Black crappie are present in low abundance, but none were sampled during the 2024 survey. Channel catfish abundance is excellent and lengths ranged from

10 to 30 inches. Big catfish were more common in this survey and 66% of the catfish sampled were larger than 24 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 450 10-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. There is a high abundance of common carp present, ranging from 10 to 30 inches. West Wood River is managed as a Wildlife Management Area and camping is limited to three consecutive days in a six day consecutive time period. A shoreline clearing project to improve angler access was completed in 2022. A gravel boat ramp is present and boating is limited to 5 mph/no wake.



## War Axe SRA

**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 fishery was renovated in 2007 and was restocked with smallmouth bass, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. Bluegill, yellow perch, and walleye have also been introduced in recent years. The fish population was most recently surveyed in the spring of 2020. Results indicate that the quality of the fishery has declined since the previous survey was completed. Smallmouth bass abundance has dropped significantly and catch rates were at a historical low (36 bass/hour compared to 128 bass/hour in 2015). Although abundance is



lower, average size is excellent and most smallmouth ranged from 13 to 17 inches, with the largest being 18 inches. Small bass numbers are lower indicating recruitment issues, possibly due to the high density of small panfish. Redear sunfish have experienced a decline in average size, as most ranged from 4 to 6 inches. The largest redear sampled were 8.5 inches. There continues to be a moderately high abundance of channel catfish, with fish ranging from 12 to 20 inches. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 420 10-inch catfish scheduled for the fall of 2025. Bluegill abundance is extremely high and the size structure is poor; most ranging from 3 to 5 inches. Yellow perch are present in moderate abundance, with most fish ranging from 4 to 6 inches. Advanced eight-inch walleye fingerlings are annually stocked to help assist with panfish control and provide additional angling opportunities. These stockings have created a good walleye population of walleye with fish up to 22 inches present. Walleye are scheduled to be stocked in 2025. In 2023, 30 fish attractors were placed in clusters throughout the lake. A gravel boat ramp is present and boating is restricted to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access for anglers is good and the area is a great place 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. A contour map of the lake can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/>

## 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. The area provides both modern and primitive camping, as well as a shower house and swimming beach. Shoreline access is very good on all of the lakes and the area is an excellent place to introduce youngsters to fishing. There is a 21-inch minimum length limit in effect on all of the lakes for largemouth bass. No boat ramps exist on these lakes, but boats with electric motors and non-powered boats may be used. The fisheries in all of these lakes were last surveyed during the spring of 2021. Cedar tree piles were added to all lakes, except #2 and #5, during the winter of 2022.



**Windmill #1:** This is the largest lake on the area at 7 acres. This lake has good abundance of largemouth bass in all size classes. Survey results indicated high numbers of bass between 12 and 15 inches, with the largest bass topping 18 inches. Bluegill abundance was high and the average size of fish was fair. Most bluegill range from 4.0 to 6.5 inches, with the largest at 7.5 inches. Black crappie are normally abundant in this lake, but none were collected in the 2021 survey. Other gamefish species sampled included a few small green sunfish, bluegill x green sunfish hybrids, and yellow perch. This lake commonly floods, so there are numerous other species present. Common carp, bullheads, gizzard shad, and gar are abundant. Future stockings for Lake #1 include 400 10-inch channel catfish during the fall of 2025. A lake map can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/>

## Windmill State Recreation Area (continued)

**Windmill #2:** This 2-acre lake has a maximum depth of 18 feet. Largemouth bass abundance has improved since the last survey was completed, but most of the bass collected in the sample were less than 12 inches. The number of bass larger than 15 inches has declined considerably from previous surveys. The largest bass collected was 17 inches. Bluegill abundance was lower, but average size showed improvement. Most bluegill range from 6 to 7.5 inches, but there were a few up to 8.5 inches. Black crappie and yellow perch have been sampled in past surveys, but none were collected in 2021. Channel catfish are present but only one 22 inch fish was caught in the survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 100 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2025. This lake also contains a few large common carp, green sunfish, and bluegill x green sunfish hybrids. A handicapped accessible fishing pier is located on the north side of this lake. Georgia cube fish attractors were added to the lake in 2023. Catchable rainbow trout are stocked seasonally. Stocking rates consist of 880 trout in March and 1,000 trout in October. A map of the lake can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/>

**Windmill #3:** This one-acre lake is the smallest at Windmill. Largemouth bass abundance remains high in Lake 3. Although most are less than 12 inches, there were fair numbers of 15 to 18 inch bass sampled in the last survey. Bluegill abundance was much lower this time around and most bluegill collected ranged from 5 to 7 inches. Green sunfish x bluegill hybrids were more abundant than what is normally sampled in Lake 3. These fish had a great size structure with most fish averaging 8 inches. Channel catfish are present, but only one fish was sampled. Fifty 10-inch channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking scheduled for the fall of 2025. 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 with one 10 inch fish collected. Large common carp have been sampled in the past, but none were collected in this survey. A map of Lake #3 can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/>

**Windmill #4:** This three-acre lake has a maximum depth of 24 feet. Largemouth bass abundance was slightly lower, but remains near the long term average for this lake. All of the bass sampled were less than 15 inches. Bluegill catch was slightly lower, but the size structure of the population was very good. Most bluegill range from five to seven inches, with several of them approaching 9 inches. Channel catfish are present in moderate abundance, with most averaging 18 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Black crappie abundance was higher than what has been seen during the past two surveys. While most were less than 8 inches, there was one 12 inch crappie sampled. Low numbers of green sunfish x bluegill hybrids were also sampled. Common carp remain numerous, with most of the fish ranging from 25 to 30 inches. A lake map of Lake #4 can be found here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/>

**Windmill #5:** Windmill #5 is a shallow, six-acre lake with a maximum depth of nine feet. This lake has a designated swimming beach on the west end. The abundance of largemouth bass has been on a downward trend for several years and the latest survey indicated the population is at a historical low. While most bass are less than 12 inches, there were several 16 to 18 inch bass captured. Bluegill abundance was low with fish up to 7.5 inches. Black crappie numbers look improved as several 8-12 inch fish were sampled. Small channel catfish were also abundant. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 300 10-inch fish occurring in the fall of 2025. Common carp remain in high abundance and efforts are being made to remove these from the lake with electrofishing gear. Yellow perch and white bass are also present, but none were sampled in this survey.

**Windmill #6:** This 2.5-acre lake has a maximum depth of 25 feet. Largemouth bass abundance continues to be on a downward trend and the majority collected in the last survey were less than 11 inches. Bluegill were fairly abundant and had a good size structure, ranging from 3 to 8.5 inches. Channel catfish are present, but only one fish was sampled. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 125 10-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2025. Other species sampled included black and yellow bullheads, a few large common carp, shortnose gar, and green sunfish.



## Bassway Strip WMA

**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.gov/lakecontourmaps/>. The fish population was last surveyed in 2023, next survey is scheduled for 2028. Survey results indicated that bass abundance has rebounded since the 2013 survey. The catch rate was 346 bass per hour, six times higher than what was collected in the previous survey. Bass of all size classes were collected, however most were less than 12 inches. Only 12% of the sampled bass were larger than 12 inches and several over 20 inches were caught. The largest bass captured was over 21 inches. Bluegill abundance was lower than previous survey results, likely a result of high bass densities. All sizes of bluegill were sampled, with most ranging from 6 to 8 inches, but 8 to 9 inch bluegill are also present. Black crappie and channel catfish have been sampled in the past, but none were collected during this survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 270 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Other fish showing up in the survey



included common carp, gizzard shad, yellow bullheads, green sunfish, and bluegill x green sunfish hybrids. Carp abundance remains higher than preferred for an Interstate lake, with most fish above 20 inches. Yellow bullhead abundance also remains higher than preferred. Bullheads ranged from 9 to 10 inches and had an average length of 9.8 inches. A concrete boat ramp is available and boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access for angling is good along the north side of the lake. Several smaller lakes are also located on the Bassway Strip Wildlife Management Area. While no active fisheries management occurs on these lakes, they provide fair fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, channel catfish and carp. The area provides excellent access to the north channel of the Platte River and a kayak landing is located near the entrance of the WMA. Camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a consecutive six-day time period.

## 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 1.8 mile hike/bike trail located on the eastern edge



of the park provides access to the Platte River. Shoreline access for angling is very 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 boats with electric motors and non-powered boats may be used. The fish populations were last surveyed in the spring of 2021 and the next survey is scheduled for 2026. Anglers are reminded that there is a 21-inch minimum length limit in effect for black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, spotted) on all of the lakes at Fort Kearny and that Fort Kearny Lake #2 has a catch-and-release regulation for all catfish.

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**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 has slightly declined from results seen during previous surveys. Most bass collected in the survey ranged from 7 to 11 inches. The largest bass sampled was 21 inches. Bluegill abundance was also lower than what is normally sampled in Lake 1. The majority of the bluegill catch was 5 to 7 inches, with some up to 8 inches. Channel catfish abundance is good and fish up to 29 inches were collected. Catfish are stocked in alternate years and the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2026. Black crappie numbers were improved with most ranging from 8 to 10 inches. Other fish collected during the survey included low numbers of very large common carp, green sunfish, and a rock bass.

**Fort Kearny #2:** Lake #2 is a three-acre lake with a maximum depth of 28 feet. The abundance of largemouth bass is very good, with bass sampled in all size categories. Most of the bass are less than 14 inches and the largest collected was 21 inches. Bluegill are very abundant; and while most were less than 5 inches, there were several 7 to 8 inch bluegill sampled. Lake 2 has historically supported a trophy channel catfish population, but only a few were collected in this survey. There is a catch and release 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 2026. Green sunfish were fairly abundant and ranged from 6 to 7 inches. Black crappie are present, but none were collected in the last survey.

**Fort Kearny #3:** Lake #3 is one acre and is the smallest lake on the area. It has a maximum depth of 28 feet. Largemouth bass abundance has improved in recent years and the past survey revealed good numbers of 10 to 14 inch bass. Bluegill abundance is also greatly improved with fish of all size categories collected. Good numbers of 7 to 8.5 inch bluegill are available. Channel catfish are present, but were not collected in this survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 60 ten-inch catfish scheduled for the fall of 2026. Other fish sampled during the survey included a few green sunfish x bluegill hybrids.

**Fort Kearny #4:** Lake #4 is three acres with a maximum depth of 18 feet. This lake had a very high abundance of bass in the previous two surveys, but numbers appear to be down significantly. Most of the bass population currently consists of fish less than 11 inches, but there were several over 16 inches, including a 21-incher collected. Bluegill abundance is improved and the size structure consists primarily of 6 to 7.5 inch fish. Green sunfish and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids are common with some up to 8.5 inches. Black crappie have been collected in previous surveys, but none were encountered during this survey. Channel catfish are present and most ranged from 17 to 22 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 150 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2026.

**Fort Kearny #5:** Lake #5 is 3.25 acres and has a maximum depth of 30 feet. Largemouth bass abundance is high, with most fish ranging from 6 to 12 inches. There were only a few bass larger than 12 inches sampled and the largest was 22 inches. Bluegill abundance is low and most fish ranged from 6 to 8.5 inches. Black crappie are present in low numbers. Channel catfish are present, but only a few up to 28 inches were sampled. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next scheduled stocking of 150 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2026. Other fish captured in low numbers during the survey included large common carp (30-32 inches) and green sunfish. Yellow perch 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. A handicapped accessible fishing dock is located on the west end of this lake.



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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. There is a high density of largemouth bass present and the majority are less than 11 inches. Only a few bass larger than 12 inches were sampled, but a couple exceeded 20 inches. Bluegill abundance has improved and most are 5 to 7.5 inches. Green sunfish x bluegill hybrids have been stocked several times in recent years to enhance angling opportunities for fishing workshops. Abundance of these fish are increasing in the lake with most ranging from 5 to 6 inches, although several greater than 8 inches were sampled. Channel catfish remain abundant, with fish up to 24 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next scheduled stocking of 200 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2026. Black crappie are present, but were not detected in the latest survey. Catchable-sized rainbow trout are stocked in Lake #6 during March and October. There are 900 trout stocked in March and 1,060 trout stocked in October. Other fish encountered during the survey included a few very large common carp, green sunfish, a white sucker and rainbow trout. 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 and most of the bass range from 10 to 13 inches. There were a few bass larger than 15 inches sampled and the largest was 17 inches. Bluegill abundance is high and there are excellent numbers of 7 to 9 inch fish present. Channel catfish are present, but none were sampled during the survey. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next scheduled stocking of 175 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2026. Other fish captured in the survey included several very large 34 to 36 inch common carp. Black crappie are also present, but none were collected in the survey.

## Bufflehead WMA

**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 15-acre lake with a maximum depth of 12 feet. Bufflehead experienced severe flooding from nearby Turkey Creek during 2019. This flood event introduced several unwanted species that were detrimental to aquatic habitat conditions and the quality of the sport fishery. To remove these species, the lake was treated with rotenone in the fall of 2024. Post renovation sampling revealed the lake contained 285 pounds/acre of rough fish (buffalo, common carp and gizzard shad). There was 35 pounds/acre of sportfish, consisting primarily of channel catfish. There was only 11 pounds/acre of largemouth bass present. The lake will be re-stocked in the spring of 2025 with smallmouth bass, yellow perch, and black crappie. It will take approximately three years to re-establish the fishery. Eurasian watermilfoil, an invasive plant, was discovered in 2022. Boaters are advised to inspect boats and remove all aquatic vegetation when leaving this waterbody to prevent the spread of invasive species. A brush clearing project was completed in the fall of 2022 to improve shoreline access for anglers. The area has a concrete boat ramp, and all boats are allowed but are limited to a 5 mph/no wake speed. No camping is allowed on this WMA.



## Archway Lakes

**Location:** NW quadrant of the Kearney East Bypass Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 275); or from the 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. NGPC provides fisheries management on the lakes; which includes fish stocking, habitat improvements and population surveys. There is a 21" minimum length limit for black bass (largemouth, smallmouth) on all of the Archway Lakes. Lake #1 has a gravel boat ramp and powerboats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake. These lakes range in size from 1 to 25 acres. All Archway lakes were sampled using trap nets in the spring of 2023. Additionally, Archway #1 was night electroshocked to sample largemouth bass.



**Lake #1:** At 25 acres, Lake #1 is the largest lake on the Archway Monument campus. The entire lake is open to public fishing access. Lake #1 contains a variety of species including largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, rock bass, channel catfish, common carp, and tiger muskie. Other species may be encountered as this lake has been flooded by nearby Turkey Creek several times, most recently in 2019. Largemouth bass are abundant and the size structure of the population is very good. There were 153 bass per hour sampled in the 2023 survey that ranged from 4 to 18 inches. Approximately 50% were larger than 12 inches. Bluegill abundance was fair and most were 6 inches or larger. Other game fish species sampled included black crappie, green sunfish, green sunfish x bluegill hybrids, channel catfish, white bass, and yellow perch. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 750 10-inch fish scheduled for September 2026. Rough fish are very common in Lake #1; consisting primarily of common carp, carpsuckers, buffalo, and gizzard shad. Most common carp range from 20 to 26 inches. Tiger musky (northern pike x muskellunge hybrid) were introduced into Archway #1 in 2020 and additional stockings occurred in 2021 and 2022. Future tiger musky stockings are planned but are dependent on availability from the hatchery system. Anglers are reminded that there is a 40-inch minimum length limit in effect for muskellunge and tiger muskellunge. Prior to the renovations that took place on the three smaller Archway Lakes during 2020, salvage efforts were made to remove as many sportfish as possible before the lakes were treated. The salvaged fish, which included largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch, redear sunfish, and channel catfish were all placed into Lake #1 to provide additional angling opportunities.



## Archway Lakes (continued)

**Lake #2** is a two-acre lake that was treated with rotenone during April of 2020. The lake has been restocked with smallmouth bass and yellow perch. This fishery was sampled in the spring of 2023 using trap nets. Yellow perch densities were high. Perch ranged from 7.4 to 11 inches and the average length was 9.4 inches. Smallmouth bass ranged from 8 to 15.3 inches. This perch fishery provides anglers good opportunity to catch quality size yellow perch. Anglers are reminded that the daily bag limit for perch is 15. Largemouth bass have been illegally introduced into this lake by anglers. Largemouth are more aggressive predators than smallmouth and are expected to have detrimental impacts on the perch and smallmouth bass populations. Anglers are reminded that is illegal to move fish from one lake to another.



**Lake#3:** This two-acre lake was treated with rotenone during May of 2020. It has been restocked with smallmouth bass, black crappie and channel catfish. The 2023 sample caught 17 smallmouth, two crappie, and one rock bass. Smallmouth ranged from 7.8 to 12.3 inches. Crappie are abundant and average 8 to 9 inches. A few rock bass that were illegally introduced by anglers were also sampled. Both largemouth bass and koi have also been illegally introduced into this lake since the renovation and could have future negative implications for the fishery.



**Lake#4:** This one-acre lake is the smallest on the Archway property. Lake #4 was treated with rotenone during March of 2020. The lake has been restocked with smallmouth bass and rock bass. Rock bass densities are high. Size structure was mediocre as only 3% were larger than 8 inches. Smallmouth up to 16 inches are present. Bluegill have been illegally introduced into this lake by anglers, which will likely have future impacts on both rock bass and smallmouth populations.



### Kea Lake WMA

**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 2023 and survey results revealed that the lake has a good fishery for several species. A high abundance of largemouth bass are present and more than half of all bass caught were larger than 12 inches. The largest bass sampled was 20 inches. Bluegill abundance is high, with most ranging from 4 to 7 inches. Low densities of bluegill x redear hybrids greater than 9 inches are present. No triploid hybrid crappie



were sampled in 2023 but some fish could still be present. Hybrid crappie are no longer being produced in the hatchery system, so black crappie were introduced in 2024 as a replacement. Channel catfish abundance is good and most are larger than 20 inches. The average length of channel catfish in Kea lake was 26 inches and the largest fish sampled was 32 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years with the next stocking of 600 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2025. Several other fish species were captured in low numbers during the survey; including smallmouth bass, walleye, black bullhead, bluegill x green sunfish hybrids, and green sunfish. The City of Kearney manages the land surrounding the lake and a walking trail encircling the lake is available. Shoreline access is very good for anglers, as concentrated spraying efforts to control invasive phragmites the past two years has created more open space for shoreline anglers. A concrete boat ramp is available on the east end of the lake. Boats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake. A lake map is available here: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/lakecontourmaps/> . No camping is allowed on this area.

### Kea West WMA

**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 and has a maximum depth of 20 feet. Kea West received severe damage from the July 2019 flood event that introduced unwanted fish species. To restore the sport fishery, the lake was treated with rotenone in 2020 to remove all fish from the water body. The lake was restocked with smallmouth bass, yellow perch, and triploid hybrid crappie during the summer of 2020.



The 2023 survey found an established smallmouth bass fishery with multiple year-classes and fish ranging from 2.7 to 13.7 inches. Average length was 9.6 inches. Yellow perch ranged from 3.5 to 11 inches. Hybrid crappie were abundant and were up to 12 inches. Green sunfish and bluegill have been illegally introduced by anglers and have become very abundant. Most of these fish are small and do not provide good angling opportunities. They are negatively impacting growth rates of yellow perch and crappie. Walleye were introduced in 2024 to help control bluegill and green sunfish. Another stocking of 150 8-inch walleye is scheduled for 2025.

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 encircles the lake. Kea West has a concrete boat ramp and all boats are allowed but are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Camping is prohibited on this area. The next fish survey is scheduled for 2028.

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 encircles the lake. Kea West has a concrete boat ramp and all boats are allowed but are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Camping is prohibited on this area. The next fish survey is scheduled for 2028.

### North Kearney Rest Area

**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 Area Lake is seven acres with a maximum depth of 14 feet. The lake is located directly north of the westbound Interstate 80 Rest Area and is owned by the Nebraska Department of Transportation. Anglers can access the lake via the rest area 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 most recently surveyed in 2023. Largemouth bass are abundant and have a good size distribution. Bass sampled in the survey ranged from 4 to 22 inches. Seventy-three percent of bass in the survey were less than 12 inches, while the other 27% were larger than 13 inches. Bluegill abundance has decreased since the previous survey, although the size structure has remained similar. The majority of the bluegill collected during the survey ranged from 5 to 7 inches. No bluegill larger than eight inches were sampled. Only one 20-inch channel catfish was collected. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 210 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Rock bass size structure was excellent. Rock bass collected during the survey ranged from 4 to 10 inches and averaged 6.6 inches. North Kearney Rest Area was impacted by the 2019 flood, but sampling results indicate largemouth bass and bluegill populations are similar in abundance and size structure as they were pre-flood. Unfortunately, gizzard shad and a few common carp were introduced, which could have future negative impacts on sportfish growth, recruitment, habitat conditions, and water quality.



### South Kearney Rest Area

**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. Located on the eastbound rest area, this lake is owned by the Nebraska Department of Transportation. No boating is allowed and shoreline access for anglers is fair. Due to its small size and restricted access, limited fisheries management occurs on this lake. The fishery was last surveyed in 2003 which revealed a fair fishery. Largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, bluegill x green sunfish hybrids, and common carp are present. Channel catfish are not currently stocked in this lake.



### East Odessa WMA

**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 2022. Largemouth bass abundance is high and the population contains a variety of sizes, ranging from 3 to 21 inches. Most bass were 6 to 8 inches, but several larger than 15 inches were sampled. Bluegill were abundant, and while most were less than five inches, there were some larger than eight inches. Channel catfish are numerous and the population contained a variety of sizes ranging from 10 to 27 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 210 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Common carp are fairly abundant with most ranging from 15 to 30 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 available on this area. Camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a consecutive three day period.

### Union Pacific SRA

**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.gov/lakecontourmaps/>. The fish population was last surveyed in 2024 and the next survey is scheduled for 2029. Largemouth bass abundance remains high and lots of bass from 3 to 20 inches were collected in the 2024 survey. The majority of the bass ranged from 9 to 11 inches and only 3% were larger than 15 inches. Bluegill are overly abundant and have a small average size. Bluegill lengths ranged from 3 to 7 inches and had an average length of 6 inches. Moderate numbers of black crappie were sampled and had lengths ranging from 6 to 10.5 inches. Channel catfish are abundant and most collected in the survey ranged from 18 to 22 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 360 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Several other miscellaneous species were caught during the survey. Several large 25 to 30 inch common carp were sampled, along with a few green sunfish, shortnose gar, and gizzard shad. Most of these species likely entered the lake during the July 2019 flood event. The presence of gizzard shad could have detrimental impacts on panfish populations if abundance increases. Union Pacific Lake is located on the Union Pacific State Recreation Area and a park entry permit is required to enter. Primitive camping and restroom facilities are available. 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 very good for bank angling.



### Coot Shallows WMA

**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 2024 and will be surveyed again in 2029. Survey results from 2024 indicated a decent fishery for several different species. Largemouth bass remain abundant, especially for small bass. Most of the bass sample consisted of 8 to 12 inch fish and only 4% were larger than 12 inches. Bluegill abundance was slightly lower than average, but the average size was improved. Bluegill lengths ranged from 4 to 8.5 inches and averaged 7.1 inches. Black crappie abundance remains good and fish ranged from 8 to 11 inches and averaged 9 inches. Channel catfish are abundant and sampled fish ranged from 14 to 22 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next scheduled stocking of 480 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Yellow perch have been sampled in the past, but none were collected in this survey. A couple common carp and white suckers were also sampled. A concrete boat ramp is available and boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access along the north side of the lake is very good. Aquatic vegetation is very abundant at Coot Shallows and can interfere with shore angling during the summer months. The area is managed as a wildlife management area and camping is restricted to three consecutive days in a consecutive six day time period.



### 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 most recently surveyed in 2024. The next scheduled survey will take place in the spring of 2029. The fishery provides decent opportunities for a variety of species. Largemouth bass numbers are generally not as high as what is commonly observed in most I-80 lakes, but Blue Hole consistently produces large bass. Bass up to 21 inches were collected in the survey and about 26% of the sampled bass were larger than 15 inches. The average length was 12.7 inches. Bluegill abundance increased since the previous survey and lengths ranged 2.5 to 7.5 inches and averaged 4.4 inches. Both white and black crappie are present in low abundance, with fish up to 11 inches. Channel catfish numbers are high, with fish ranging from 11 to 27 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and the next stocking of 720 ten-inch fish is scheduled for the fall of 2025. Low numbers of white bass, yellow perch, and walleye were also sampled. With the connection to the Platte River, Blue Hole supports a plethora of riverine fish species. Common carp, carsuckers, buffalo, gizzard shad, gar, and white suckers are numerous. 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. Camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a consecutive six-day time period.





## Sandy Channel State Recreation Area

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

Sandy Channel SRA received extensive damage from a flood event during July 2019. Flood water from the south channel of the Platte River flooded most of the lakes on the area and washed out the main entrance road into the park. The road has since been repaired and the main park area has been re-opened. The flood had potentially devastating impacts on several of the lakes as undesirable fish species were introduced. In addition, sediment and excessive nutrients entered these lakes impacting water quality. Post flood sampling indicated that most lakes received at least a few unwanted species, such as common carp, gizzard shad, and carpsuckers. Of all the lakes, Lake #2 was most impacted by the flood in terms of rough fish invasion, which required the lake to be renovated in 2023. Due to this flood event, anglers could possibly see reduced water clarity and increased chances of algae blooms in all the Sandy Channel Lakes, which may impact angling success.



**Waterbody Information:** Ten lakes ranging from 0.5 to 30 acres are available at Sandy Channel State Recreation Area. The area is maintained by the Parks Division, and a park entry permit is required to enter the park. 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 Lakes #2, #4, and #8. Boats are limited to 5 mph/no wake. All the other lakes are open to electric and non-powered boats only. Active fisheries management occurs on Lakes 2, 4, 6, and 8. Many of the remaining lakes are either too shallow or have flooding issues, which limit their potential for quality fisheries. The five lakes listed below provide the majority of the fishing opportunities at Sandy Channel. A fish survey was completed on Lake's 2, 4, 6, and 8 during 2020. The next survey is scheduled for 2025. An angler access project was completed in 2015, which improved shoreline and boating access on Lake's 2, 4 and 8. Anglers are reminded that there is a 21-inch minimum length limit for black bass on all the lakes at Sandy Channel.

**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 opportunities 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 2023 to remove rough fish populations and was re-stocked with smallmouth bass and yellow perch. As of 2024, smallmouth were up to 10 inches and yellow perch were up to 9 inches. It will take three to four years for the fishery to fully develop.



## Sandy Channel SRA (continued)

**Lake #4:** This 5-acre lake has maximum depth of 14 feet. This lake flooded in 2019, but survey results show that rough fish invasion was relatively minimal and sportfish populations remain good. Largemouth bass abundance is high, with most bass ranging from 8 to 12 inches. The number of bass larger than 15 inches was slightly improved from past surveys and several fish larger than 20 inches were collected. Bluegill abundance was lower, but size structure was much improved. Most bluegill ranged from 6 to 8.5 inches. Channel catfish abundance declined, but quality remains excellent and most fish range from 20 to 25 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 250 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2025. Rock bass abundance was slightly lower, but fish up to 9 inches were collected. Black crappie catch was improved with most fish averaging 8 inches. The largest crappie were 12 inches. There were also a few green sunfish x bluegill hybrids sampled in the survey. There was an increase in common carp and carpsucker abundance following the flood. Carp ranged from 12 to 33 inches. One longnose gar was also collected. Shoreline access along the east side of the lake is improved and Lake #4 has an angler node located on the southeast portion of the lake and a concrete boat ramp is available.



**Lake #6:** This 1.5-acre lake was renovated in 2012 and has been restocked with largemouth bass, yellow perch and channel catfish. In addition, the lake also contains bluegill, black crappie, green sunfish and green sunfish x bluegill hybrids. Largemouth bass are moderately abundant and most bass are less than 12 inches. The bluegill, green sunfish, and crappie all small, ranging from 3 to 6 inches. No yellow perch or channel catfish were sampled during this survey. Shoreline access is fair and no other amenities are present on this small lake.

**Lake #8:** At 30 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.gov/lakecontourmaps/>. Lake #8 is known for its crystal clear water and for providing great angling opportunities for several fish species. Largemouth bass abundance has increased since the last survey was completed and the population contains various sizes of bass. Bass collected in the survey ranged from 4 to 20 inches and about 20% of the population was larger than 15 inches. The largest bass collected were 20 inches. Bluegill are abundant, with most fish ranging from 4 to 7 inches, but fish up to 8.5 inches were collected. Rock bass are common in this lake, with several size classes sampled. Most ranged from 5 to 8



inches, with the largest fish nearly 10 inches. Black crappie abundance was improved and fish up to 13 inches were sampled. Bluegill x green sunfish hybrids were numerous, with most ranging from 7 to 8 inches. Yellow perch are present, but all perch collected during the survey were less than 8 inches. Channel catfish were abundant in the survey, with most catfish ranging from 18 to 24 inches. Catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of 840 ten-inch fish scheduled for the fall of 2025. Advanced walleye fingerlings (300 fish per stocking) are also regularly stocked annually. Walleye have been stocked since 2013, so several sizes of walleye are available to anglers. Low numbers of walleye were collected in the latest survey with sizes ranging from 15 to 20 inches. Muskellunge were introduced into this lake during the spring of 2013, when 60 12-inch fish were stocked. They were stocked again in 2015, 2017, 2022, and 2024. Two muskies were collected in the 2020 survey that measured 32 and 34 inches. Muskies are stocked on a triennial basis, when available from the hatchery, and are scheduled for stocking again in 2027. Anglers are reminded that there is a 40-inch minimum length limit in place for muskellunge. Common carp abundance is slightly higher following the flood, with most fish ranging from 18 to 30 inches. There were a few gar sampled, but fortunately there did not appear to be many other unwanted species of fish introduced by the flood. Shoreline access has been improved on this lake with the addition of four angler nodes and selective brush clearing. The angler node next to the boat ramp is handicapped accessible. A handicapped accessible concrete boat ramp is located on the northeast side of the lake.

## Dogwood WMA

**Location:** From Overton I-80 Interchange (Exit 248), 1.5 miles north, 5 miles west on 751 Road, 1 mile South on 439 Road  
Latitude: 40.700664 Longitude: -99.29258

**Waterbody Information:** Two lakes are present on the Dogwood Wildlife Management Area; the 4-acre West Lake and the 8-acre East Lake. The West Lake commonly floods from the nearby Platte River and the fishery is not actively managed. Maximum depth of the West Lake is 20 feet and it contains a variety of species common to the Platte River, as well as largemouth bass and bluegill. The East Lake is actively managed as a sport fishery and is routinely surveyed and stocked. The East Lake is shallow and has a maximum depth of 10 feet. A contour map of the East Lake can be found at <https://outdoornebraska.gov/guides-maps/maps/contour-maps/>.



A fish population survey was most recently completed in 2022 on the East Lake. Results indicated that the fishery consisted of largemouth bass, bluegill and common carp. Largemouth bass abundance was average and sizes ranged from 5 to 16 inches. Most bass were less than 14 inches and the average length was 10.4 inches. Bluegill were not abundant and lengths ranged from 3 to 7 inches and average length was 4.7 inches. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, but none were collected in the latest survey. There are 210 10-inch catfish scheduled for stocking in 2025. Common carp are abundant due to occasional flooding from the nearby Platte River. Most carp range from 20 to 28 inches. Dogwood is scheduled to be surveyed again in 2025. A concrete articulated mat boat ramp is available on the East Lake and boats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake. Shoreline access is fair around the perimeter of the lake. The area is managed as a Wildlife Management Area and camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a six-day consecutive period. Access to the Platte River is available.

## Darr WMA

**Location:** From Darr Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 231), .5 miles north on 24A, .25 miles west on Road 756.  
Latitude 40.785239 Longitude: -99.849254

**Waterbody Information:** This 13-acre lake has maximum depth of 12 feet. The fish population was last surveyed in 2022 and the next survey is scheduled for the spring of 2025. Survey results from 2022 revealed an excellent largemouth bass population that contains high abundance and good size quality. Bass lengths ranged from 4 to 20 inches and 44% of the sample was larger than 15 inches. Bluegill are extremely abundant, but are small and had an average size of 4 inches. Black crappie are present in low abundance and averaged 8 inches, as were bluegill x green sunfish hybrids ranging from 6 to 7.5 inches. Although no channel catfish were sampled, Darr normally produces some large channel catfish. Catfish are stocked on alternate years and 390 10-inch fish are scheduled for stocking in 2025. A few large (32 inches) common carp were also sampled. Darr normally has clear water and becomes heavily vegetated during the summer months which can impede angling. Shoreline access is fair and a primitive gravel boat ramp is available for small craft. The area is managed as a WMA and camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a six-day consecutive period.



### Cozad WMA

**Location:** Southeast quadrant of the Cozad Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 222)

Latitude: 40.840555 Longitude: -99.984833

**Waterbody Information:** This 18-acre lake has a maximum depth of 15 feet and an average depth of 7 feet. The fish population was last surveyed in 2022 and is scheduled to be surveyed again in the spring of 2025. Survey results from 2022 revealed an average abundance of largemouth bass with lengths ranging from 4 to 19 inches. About 50% of the sampled bass were less than 12 inches and 38% were larger than 15 inches. Bluegill were extremely abundant and had a small average size. Bluegill lengths ranged from 3 to 6 inches and averaged 4 inches. Rock bass are present in low abundance and averaged nine inches. Small green sunfish were also sampled. Channel catfish are present but only one 17 inch fish was sampled. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years and 540 ten-inch fish are scheduled for 2025. Cozad generally has clear water and abundant submerged aquatic vegetation. Shoreline access is excellent and a concrete boat ramp is available. Boats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake. The area is managed as a WMA and camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a six-day consecutive period.



### West Cozad WMA

**Location:** From Cozad Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 222), 0.75 miles north on Hwy 21, 0.5 miles west on 2nd Street, 0.3 miles north on O Street, 1 mile west on West Railroad Street, 0.75 miles south on 419 Road, 0.25 miles east on 760 Drive

Latitude: 40.854303 Longitude: -100.010330

**Waterbody Information:** This 18-acre lake is shallow with a maximum depth of 8-feet and an average depth of 4 feet. Due to a flood event, West Cozad was chemically treated with rotenone in 2021 to remove unwanted fish species. It has since been re-stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. It was last surveyed in May 2023 and is scheduled to be surveyed again in the spring of 2025. Survey results show that the fishery is developing quickly as largemouth bass lengths ranged from 3 to 15 inches and bluegill lengths ranged from 2 to 6 inches. Channel catfish were re-introduced in the fall of 2023 and should be approaching 15 inches. Channel catfish are scheduled to be stocked again in 2027 with 500 ten-inch fish. Due to the shallow nature of the lake, aquatic vegetation becomes abundant during the summer. Only a primitive boat launch (suitable for small craft only) is present and shoreline access for anglers is fair. The area is managed as a WMA and camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a six-day consecutive period.



### Willow Island WMA

**Location:** From Gothenburg Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 211), 0.3 miles south, 6.2 miles southeast on Willow Island Road, 0.25 miles north.

Latitude: 40.877729 Longitude: -100.07100

**Waterbody Information:** This 24-acre lake has a maximum depth of 12 feet. Several different drainage ditches flow into the lake which has allowed numerous unwanted species to become established. Aquatic habitat conditions are generally poor and fish kills are commonly reported. The lake was last surveyed in 2022 and is scheduled to be surveyed again in the spring of 2025. Since the flooding issues cannot be controlled, limited fish management occurs on this waterbody. Survey results from 2023 indicated the presence of common carp, gizzard shad, shortnose and longnose gar, and black bullheads. Sportfish species included a low abundance of largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie and channel catfish. Largemouth bass lengths ranged from 4 to 19 inches, although most were less than 8 inches. Bluegill were low in numbers, but a few up to 8 inches were sampled. Crappie abundance was also low, but fish up to 11 inches were sampled. One 17-inch channel catfish was also sampled.



Channel catfish are not routinely stocked into Willow Island as they are many other I-80 Lakes. Shoreline access around the lake is fair and a primitive gravel boat ramp is available for small craft. The area is managed as a WMA and camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a six-day consecutive period.

### East Gothenburg WMA

**Location:** From Gothenburg Interstate 80 Interchange (Exit 211), 0.3 miles south, 3.75 miles southeast on Willow Island Road

Latitude: 40.888326 Longitude: -100.106267

**Waterbody Information:** This 15-acre lake has a maximum depth of 15 feet. A bathymetric map is available at: <https://outdoornebraska.gov/guides-maps/maps/contour-maps/>. The fish population at East Gothenburg was last surveyed in 2022 and the next survey is scheduled for the spring of 2025. Survey results indicate an average abundance of largemouth bass with lengths ranging from 7 to 21 inches. Seventy five percent of the bass sampled in the survey were less than 12 inches and only 6% were larger than 15 inches. Bluegill abundance was average and lengths ranged from 3 to 7.5 inches, with an average length of 6 inches. Numerous bluegill x green sunfish hybrids ranging from 5 to 7 inches were sampled. Although no channel catfish were sampled, a fair population exists. Channel catfish are stocked on alternate years, with the next stocking of



450 ten-inch fish scheduled for 2025. Common carp are abundant with most ranging from 20 to 25 inches. Due to the carp population, aquatic habitat conditions and water clarity are not as good as what is normally observed in most Interstate lakes. Shoreline access is fair and an articulated concrete mat boat ramp is available. Boats are restricted to 5 mph/no wake. The area is managed as a WMA and camping is limited to three consecutive nights in a six-day consecutive period.

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.

District Supervisor: Brad Eifert, [brad.eifert@nebraska.gov](mailto:brad.eifert@nebraska.gov)

Biologist: Colton Curtis, [colton.curtis@nebraska.gov](mailto:colton.curtis@nebraska.gov)