

## Fishing? In the Fall?

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Nebraska is a state of variety. The geography of the state, climate, habitats, fish and wildlife vary greatly from one corner of the state to another. Fall is a great time to hit the state's waters and sample some of that variety, but too many folks think fall is time to put away rods and reels and get out the shotguns, bows, and rifles. It's not, and in fact fall is one of the best times of the year to fish Nebraska waters. At the very least, outdoorsfolks should plan to include some time on the water in conjunction with their hunting trips. Here are some of the best places to look for excellent fall fishing in Nebraska.

### **Irrigation Reservoirs**

Large reservoirs are the best habitats in Nebraska for a variety of open-water fish like walleyes, hybrid striped bass (i.e. wipers), white bass and others. As baitfish begin to gather in deeper water for the winter, anglers can experience some great fishing for some of the biggest and fattest predator fish that follow and prey on those baitfish. In the fall, anglers are successful vertically jigging a variety of baits that imitate stressed and dying baitfish on reservoirs like McConaughy, Merritt, Sherman, and others.

### **Pine Ridge Trout Streams**

The buttes and pines of Nebraska's Pine Ridge offer some of the prettiest country in the state. Nestled in the canyons and valleys between those buttes are some cold-water streams that contain reproducing populations of brown and brook trout. Those trout species spawn in the fall and their intense spawning colors match the beauty of the fall scenery around them. In the fall with the insects being gone, cooler weather and less vegetation and brush, a person can experience a pleasant day hiking along a Pine Ridge creek catching beautiful trout. Try both the middle and south fork of Soldiers Creek on the Soldier Creek Wilderness area, the White River or Big Bordeaux Creek.

### **Sandhills Lakes**

The lakes in the Sandhills are some of the only true natural lakes found in the state and are uniquely Nebraskan. All of the lakes are relatively shallow and extremely productive. Aquatic vegetation can be extensive during mid- and late-summer and that can make fishing a challenge. But, in the fall the aquatic vegetation begins to die back and the fish feed heavily. Lakes on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Goose Lake, Smith Lake and many others bodies of water offer some of the state's best fishing for northern pike, panfish and some of the fattest, prettiest largemouth bass found anywhere.

For more information see <http://www.outdoornebraska.ne.gov/fishing/> or contact Fisheries Outreach Program Manager Daryl Bauer at 402-471-5005 or [daryl.bauer@nebraska.gov](mailto:daryl.bauer@nebraska.gov).