

Wipers abound at Swanson

Colby resident Thurman Cox has been fishing Swanson (Trenton) Reservoir since 1953.

The lake is located two miles west of Trenton, Neb. The 5,000 acre lake is inhabited by channel catfish, flathead catfish, crappie, walleye, white bass and wipers among other things.

Over the years Cox has fished for several of these species including including walleye, channel catfish, white bass and wipers (a hybrid between a white bass and a striper).

He had a tremendous day fishing for wipers last year. Cox and a friend caught 75 wipers at Swanson last year and only four of them were under 18 inches. He said shrimp was their bait of choice that day. While Cox also enjoys fishing for walleye and crappie, he said wiper fight harder than any fish he has ever hooked into.

While walleye fishing at the reservoir has shown the potential for improvement, Cox remembers when Swanson Reservoir was a walleye fisherman's paradise.

"There was a time when it was one of the best walleye lakes in the country," said Cox. "My grandson and I could always go out in the morning and catch the limit."

But that was about 20 years ago and the drought the region has experienced over the years has negatively impacted the walleye population, he said.

"The water has been so shallow that walleyes have not had a chance to spawn," Cox said.

But Cox said the extra rain the region has experienced over the last several years has allowed the fish to spawn for three straight

years. He said he hopes this will improve future fishing.

Cox and a friend were able to land 21 earlier this year, although only three were big enough to keep. One of the walleye weighed about two and a half pounds. He said most of the walleye hovered between 13 and 14 inches. The minimum size walleye a fisherman can keep is 15 inches. Cox said that Most of the fish he caught were about one-half mile east of the middle of the lake near brush in about 13 feet of water that ran for a stretch of about a mile and a half.

While Cox enjoys fishing for walleye and wiper, his favorite species to fish for at the reservoir is crappie. His lure of choice when fishing for the tasty panfish is a jig with a chartreuse skirt and a black head. The skirt is a piece of rubber cut like a hula skirt, he said. The hook is hidden up in the skirt so it cannot be detected by the fish. Cox has his own strategy for catching crappie.

"I drop the jig down to the bottom of the lake and lift up very slowly," he said.

Another species Cox fishes for at Swanson is the white bass. The stocky, hard-fighting fish is the smallest member of the bass family that includes its bigger family members the wipers and stripers. Cox said after July 4, the white bass begin to run up the river to feed on schools of shad that have reached eating size.

During this time, they are particularly aggressive. Cox said he uses about an inch long silver spoon when angling for white bass. When he finds them feeding on shad on the water's surface, he casts his spoon into the school in hopes of getting one to hit.

Prairie Dog State Park fees set for 2009 season

April 1-September 30, 2009

VEHICLE — Annual-\$24.70; Second-14.70; Daily-4.20; Senior Discount/Annual-13.60; Senior Discount/Second-8.60; Senior Discount Daily-2.85; Duplicate Vehicle-12.50; KOALS Fee-1.50; KOALS Fee-.50.

CAMPING — Annual Camp-\$152.50; 14 Day Camp-101.50; Daily Camp-8.50; Electric-7.00; Electric/Water-9.00; Reservation-11.50; Cabin Rent-45.00; Prime Site Fee-2.50; 30 Day Camping-261.50.

HUNTING/FISHING — Fish resident-\$20.50; Hunting resident-20.50; Combo resident-38.50; Furharvester resident-20.50; Youth furharvester resident-12.50; Fish no resident-42.50; Hunting no resident-72.50; Combo no resident-112.50; Furharvester no resident-252.50; Youth Hunt no resident-37.50; 5 day fish-22.50; 24 hour fish-5.50; 3rd pole-6.50; Bass Pass-12.50; No resident Bob Cat-102.50.

TURKEY — General resident-\$22.50;

Landowner/Tenant-12.50; General non-resident-32.50; Game Tag no-resident-22.50; Res Youth-12.50.

DEER — Archery General resident-\$32.50; Archery L/T-17.50; Archery Youth General Resident-17.50; Archery No Resident Tenant-17.50; WTES General Resident-32.50; WTES Youth General Resident-17.50; WTES No Resident Tenant-17.50; HOL Resident-17.50; HOL No Resident-77.50; Special HOL Relative-32.50; WT Antlerless General Resident-17.50; WT Antlerless No Resident-77.50; WT Antlerless Youth General-10.00; Muzzleloader General Resident-32.50; Muzzleloader L/T-17.50; Muzzleloader Youth Resident-17.50; Muzzleloader No Resident-17.50; Any Deer App-37.50; Any Deer App LO/T-22.50.

MISCELLANEOUS — HIP-2.50; State Duck-7.00; Federal Duck-16.50; Trout-12.50; Summons-15.00; Hunter ED-11.50; All Other Duplicates-12.50; Boat Registrations-32.50.

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