



Trout sites gearing up for opener

by Lee Keck

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PLAINVIEW - Site personnel at Macoupin County's Beaver Dam State Park are preparing for what will likely be a very busy couple of months.

If not already, the campground will be completely filled during the coming weekends, and even larger crowds are expected in the park beginning about the third weekend of October.

You see, the autumn trout opener is scheduled for that weekend. Combine that with the fact that autumn is one of the best times to enjoy camping at this popular scenic campground. Now, you already have the necessary ingredients for a busy campground.

Better yet, however, the trout are expected to be delivered within a week or so and the stage is set for a huge and enjoyable trout opener.

Officially, Illinois trout anglers will receive the opportunity to pursue their favorite species during the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' annual fall Catchable Trout Season slated to open at 5 a.m. on Oct. 21.

In fact, things often get started rather early at Beaver Dam during the trout opener. Many people begin staking out their favorite fishing holes well before 5 a.m. and, in past years, the restaurant located in the park was also jam packed.

According to rainbow trout experts, Beaver Dam State Lake will be stocked with a couple of thousand trout weighing around 3,000 pounds. In the past, many of the fish were of an impressive size.

IDNR officials have announced that the 2017 Illinois fall trout fishing season will feature rainbow trout fishing at 54 ponds and lakes throughout the state.

Best of all, the fall colors and autumn weather make it a great time of the year to go fishing in Illinois and the catchable trout fishing season is always popular among anglers. Actually, it's a great opportunity to spend time outdoors with the family and enjoy fishing for some tasty trout.

Most of the trout are expected to be stocked at the 54 locations just prior to the opening of the fall trout season. There have been years, however, when warmer-than-normal temperatures delayed the stocking by almost a week, most of the sites in the state's southern reaches are expected to soon see the trout.

This will allow the newly stocked fish ample time to adjust to their new environment and may likely lead to even better fishing action.

Anglers are reminded that no trout may be taken from any of the stocked sites from Oct. 1 until the fall trout season opens at 5 a.m. on Oct. 21.

Local sites participating in the program include Siloam Springs State Park Lake in Adams County, Gridley Lake at Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA in Cass County, Beaver Dam Lake in Macoupin County, Jacksonville's Morgan Lake, the IDOT Lake in Springfield, Southwind Park Pond in Springfield, Washington Park Pond in Springfield, Forest Park Lagoon in Shelbyville, Greenville Old City Lake, Highland Old City Lake, Frank Holten State Recreation Area main lake in St. Clair County, Jones Park Lake in East St. Louis and Willow Lake in the Peabody River King State Fish and Wildlife Area.

Two weeks prior to the fall trout opener, the Fall Catch-and-Release Fly Fishing Season will open at nine sites special sites on Oct. 7. Fly fishing anglers can use fly fishing gear to catch and release trout beginning Oct. 7 at those nine sites. No trout may be kept during the fly fishing period, but anglers can keep trout after the opening of the regular fall trout season beginning Oct. 21.

Local sites open to the early Oct. 7 catch-and-release fly fishing trout season are Siloam Springs State Park, Gridley Lake at the Jim Edgar/Panther Creek area, Jacksonville's Morgan Lake, the IDOT Lake and Willow lake in the Peabody River King area.

When it comes to the Oct. 21 season, most anglers prefer a simple approach to the trout fishing. Locally, many anglers prefer to use light-weight spinning or spincast gear.

When the bite is on, virtually any type of fishing gear catches trout. In fact, more trout are likely caught by the regular bluegill and catfish anglers than by the more dedicated trout enthusiasts.

Nightcrawlers and mealworms seem to work as well as anything at these popular fishing destinations. Many anglers also prefer to use some of the more popular commercial trout baits, like Power Bait. Marshmallows and corn are also popular baits among the trout fishermen.

Angler typically find the action fast and furious. However, there are occasional days when the fishing is a bit slower.

Sometimes it takes a little longer to catch the fish. Still, veteran anglers realize that, with a little effort and dedication, they can still take home a limit of trout. In fact, many anglers experience their best success a little later in the morning, though some insist the early morning hours are best.

Anglers should check the opening time of their favorite trout fishing location if they plan to go fishing on opening day. While regulations allow trout season to open at 5 a.m. on Oct. 21, not all locations are open that early.

To take trout legally beginning Oct. 21, anglers must have a valid Illinois fishing license and a 2017 inland trout stamp. Only those under the age of 16, blind or disabled, or Illinois residents on leave from active duty in the Armed Forces are exempt from the licensing regulations.

The daily catch limit for each angler is five trout. The inland trout stamps, which sell for \$6.50, are available at all IDNR Point of Sale locations. Fishing licenses and trout stamps can also be purchased by using a credit card at DNR Direct online via the IDNR web site at <http://dnr.state.il.us> or by calling DNR Direct toll-free at 1-888-6PERMIT (1-888-673-7648).