

Plenty of good bluegill fishing in area

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With crappie spawn in full swing, the next stop on the Illinois fishing calendar is the annual bluegill spawn.

Fortunately, area bluegill anglers will find no shortage of good fishing holes. This prolific panfish can be found in most local waters ranging from small private ponds to larger lakes and rivers.

According to long-time local fisherman Randy Link, bluegill spawning activity usually begins locally during the middle of May. The spawning peak will often occur during the first two weeks in June.

"When the spawn occurs depends on water temperature and clarity," Link said. "In addition to water temperature, there is also some indication that the spawn may also be triggered by the amount of daylight in the day."

Link says, finding spawning bluegill is relatively easy, particularly in clear waters. A sharp eye and a pair of polarized sunglasses are all that is needed.

"If the water is relatively clear, you'll often see large areas of round depressions on the bottom which are bluegill nests," he explained. "All the angler needs to do is fish near these areas and they will find success."

However, he did say that spawning bluegill can be easily spooked, especially in clear waters. An angler should take care to avoid making noise and sudden movements.

"It's best to make fairly long casts to spawning areas," he explained. "By maintaining a relatively decent distance from the spawning area, the fish are less likely to move off the nests."

Best of all, finding good bluegill fishing waters is also no problem. Link says several local waters always show great promise as good fishing locations each spring.

As always, anglers can expect to enjoy excellent bluegill fishing at Beaver Dam State Lake. Here, good populations of six- to eight-inch fish can be found.

"Ramsey and Siloam Springs lakes are two more excellent state-managed waters," he explained. "Bluegill in the seven to eight-inch category are quite common at these locations."

Link also recommends trying many of the city-owned lakes in the area. The Gillespie New Lake, both Carlinville lakes and Otter Lake are all excellent choices for the bluegill fisherman.

"The New Mt. Olive City Lake holds a terrific population of bluegill, as well," said Link. "It is common to hear of good stringers of bluegill coming from this lake."

Carlinville Lake Number 2, one of the area's finest panfish waters, opened to fishing several years ago and can be counted upon to provide some good action. Bluegill anglers heading to this site are sure to enjoy some excellent fishing.

"Many of the river backwaters also offer excellent bluegill fishing," said Link. "Unfortunately, the possibility of spring flood conditions always exists at many locations."

Alton area anglers might be surprised to find the lake at Gordon Moore Park a good bluegill fishing area. Regular stockings by IDNR fisheries personnel ensure catchable panfish populations at this lake.

Farm ponds, too, are great places to find bluegill. In fact, many of the smaller ponds hold superb numbers of bragging-sized panfish.

Portions of large Corps of Engineer lakes also regularly yield good panfish action. The upper reaches of Rend Lake is famous for good bluegill fishing. The flooded standing timber and plentiful rip rap at Carlyle Lake also regularly produces good catches of bluegill.

"There are plenty of first-class bluegill waters in the area," added Link. "Bluegill anglers can expect to find good fishing for the next several weeks."

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