



Nearly Time for Tailwater Action

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Though recent temperatures have been cooler than normal, anglers fishing the Carlyle Lake tailwaters are preparing for some truly hot action. Excellent catches of fish will soon be coming from this popular angling area. In fact, this is something that happens virtually every year at this time.

According to Illinois fisheries biologists, very few public fishing waters in our state can match the fish-producing capabilities of the tailwater fisheries. These relatively small areas of water are generally teeming with various species of

freshwater fish. It's no wonder that good numbers of anglers can be found fishing these areas almost every day of the year.

This year, in particular, is expected to be a good one for tailwater anglers. Recent heavy rains have filled most reservoirs to near capacity and water flow through the dams is, or will soon, become heavy. This heavy flow is often associated with the best fishing.

Experts say the tailwater areas offer ideal conditions for supporting large populations of fish. Compared to a tailwater area, most normal lakes are unable to support these concentrated fish populations.

Biologists report that these tailwater areas contain large populations of forage fish (a food source for larger species). With easy access to plenty of food, fish typically grow quickly in these areas.

And, because of the turbulent waters, oxygen levels are also much higher in these areas. These oxygen-rich waters are much better suited for supporting large numbers of fish.

As another reason, most all fish have a tendency to migrate upstream at one time or another. The dams serve as barriers keeping fish concentrated in a relatively small area.

Tailwater anglers also benefit from regular natural fish stockings. Fish passing through the dams enhance the populations already residing in these tailwater areas.

This is expected to become the case again this year. Above average waterflow typically has tailwater fish populations running well ahead of other areas of the lake.

Excellent tailwater fisheries can be found below each of Illinois three large Corps of Engineer reservoirs. The Lake Carlyle tailwater, for example, is rated as one of the best fishing waters in the state.

Action here often becomes superb during late April and early May. Anglers begin catching good numbers of sauger, crappie and occasional catfish. The white bass action is also expected to catch on fire within the next week or so.

The Lake Shelbyville tailwater is yet another hotspot for anglers. Here, catches of walleye, crappie and muskies are common occurrences.

Other excellent tailwaters can be found below each of the navigational dams on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. In addition to yielding great summer fishing action, these areas are well known as winter fishing hotspots.

Tailwater areas also provide some of the state's finest shoreline fishing. Shoreline anglers will generally find good access to good fishing at these locations.

Most tailwater areas contain dozens of species of fish. However, white bass, sauger, walleye and huge catfish are generally the common catches from these areas.

Biologists say the area below the Melvin Price Lock and Dam at Alton will soon be proving to be yet another popular fishing area for Illinois anglers. The site is already famous for producing huge flathead and blue catfish.

Biologists say that fishermen will continue to find the Melvin Price tailwaters yet another fishing hotspot. These experts are anxious to see what type of angling success this area will produce this year.