

West Central Regional Forecast

Adams County

Neenah Creek - The 2008 survey in Neenah Creek captured 128 brown trout ranging from 4 to 16.9 inches with an average length of 8.3 inches. This creek has a healthy naturally reproducing population. Good trout fishing should be expected in this stream during 2009.

Big Roche-a-Cri Creek - A 2008 survey captured 345 brook trout and 12 brown trout. The healthy brook trout population ranged from 4 to 14.4 inches with an average length of 7.8 inches, and good natural reproduction was observed. The brown trout ranged from 7 to 15.9 inches. Good trout fishing should be expected in this stream during 2009.

- *Justine Hasz, senior fisheries biologist, Wisconsin Rapids*

Buffalo, Clark, Jackson, and Trempealeau counties

Rivers and streams - Ongoing surveys of area trout streams found better reproduction of both brook and brown trout and more 10- to 12-inch brook trout in area streams in 2008 than in previous years. Overall adult trout densities were stable. Higher catch rates of young trout last year will provide more adult fish for anglers in 2009 and hopefully more legal and larger trout in years to come.

Also waiting for anglers next spring are improved fishing conditions as a result of habitat restoration projects on Pine Creek, Traverse Valley Creek, Borst Valley Creek, and Bruce Valley Creek. Each project area has a public fishing easement, graciously granted by the landowners, which allow anglers to access the stream by land as well as water. –

Dan Hatleli, fisheries biologist, Black River Falls

Crawford County

Several large trout were reported caught in 2008 including a 30-inch brown trout from the Kickapoo River system. In addition, DNR survey crews reported several brown trout topping 25 inches and brook trout nearly 17 inches in area streams. DNR crews continue to improve access, stabilize streambanks, and create habitat for trout.

Tainter Creek – Surveys in 2008 show healthy populations of brown trout are available for anglers to catch. This stream is particularly good due to numerous fishing easements and habitat improvement sites, along with beautiful scenery and large trout. Fish in the 12- to 18-inch range were captured by survey crews.

Plum Creek - This small stream is ideal for those looking to catch brook trout. While not exclusively brookie water, these gorgeous salmonids dominate the fishery and can provide some great angling action for fish up to 12 inches.

Rush Creek - Located in the northwest part of the county, Rush Creek provides anglers long stretches of stream in public ownership and that backcountry feel some anglers enjoy. Oh, and you might even hook into one of the 20-plus inch brown trout swimming there. - *Jordan Weeks, senior inland fisheries biologist, La Crosse*

Dunn County

Dunn County is home to brook trout, with more than 93 individual brook trout streams scattered throughout the county. With the tremendous hatch during spring 2008, adult brook trout should reach a high point during 2009 when compared to the last five years. Some of the best trout streams in Dunn County include the South Fork of the Hay River, Wilson Creek, Gilbert Creek, Knights Creek, Elk Creek and Sand Creek. The headwater areas will provide the best fishing opportunities and many of these streams will produce some quality brown trout as a bonus.

Projects completed several years ago on the headwaters of Gilbert Creek are now providing densities up to 6,000 trout per mile, of which 700 per mile exceed the legal length limit of 8 inches. - *Marty Engel, senior fisheries biologist, Baldwin*

Pepin County

Trout fishing opportunities in Pepin County are mostly limited to a few small streams. however, Bear Creek is an exception. A fall 2008 survey conducted by DNR crews revealed some exceptional results for both brook and brown trout. While overall trout densities are moderate to low (less than 500 per mile), the stream boasts good numbers of fish larger than 10 inches and trophy sized fish exceeding 14 inches. This is some of the best brook trout water for larger fish seen in west central Wisconsin. In addition, the number of quality (greater than 12 inches) brown trout looked pretty darn good also. - *Marty Engel, senior fisheries biologist, Baldwin*

Pierce County

Just about every major stream in Pierce County contains quality trout fishing opportunities and public accesses off roadways are abundant. Longterm monitoring surveys conducted by DNR crews during summer 2008 on more than 50 trout streams show natural reproduction of both brook and brown to be excellent, which means adult populations should prove plentiful during the 2009 and 2010 fishing seasons. The Rush River, Kinnickinnic River and Cady Creek are famous trout streams throughout the Midwest. However the Trimbelle River, Eau Galle River, Plum Creek, Lost Creek, Cave Creek, Big River, South Fork of the Kinnickinnic and Pine Creek are also great choices. The Big River and South Fork are small and often brushy streams, but both will provide good spring fishing opportunities before vegetation gets thick. Recent in-stream habitat improvement projects completed by DNR trout habitat crews on the South Fork of Kinnickinnic River near River Falls and Pine Creek near Maiden Rock have resulted in more than 2.5 miles of new brook trout fishing opportunities. Field surveys conducted during summer 2009 show phenomenal size structure (500 to 1,000 per mile greater than 8 inches) and overall densities approaching 5,000. If you're looking for that rare 20-plus inch brown trout, give the Eau Galle River in the Spring Valley or Elmwood area a try.

Recently, nine fishing easements have been purchased on the Rush River. Look for the DNR Streambank Fishing Easement or Rush River Fishing Path Initiative signs for access to private lands open to public fishing. In addition, several other large parcels have been purchased by West Wisconsin Land Trust and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Koch Family Trust Lands donated to the Eau Galle/Rush River Rod & Gun Club.

These are now open to public fishing. Look for the appropriate signage. For handicapped access check out the new facility on the Rush River just south of El Paso. - *Marty Engel, senior fisheries biologist, Baldwin*

St. Croix County

Kinnickinnic River - Trout fishing is always popular on the famous Kinnickinnic River near River Falls with more than 25 miles of excellent brown trout habitat. Anglers, however, may want to consider giving the upper Willow River a try near County Highway T east of New Richmond a try. This area is known for trophy 20-plus inch trophy brown trout. DNR field surveys conducted from 2005 to 2008 found consistent production of 16- to 20-inch brown trout and an occasional fish larger than 20 inches. The South Fork, a tributary stream to the upper Willow River, is often over looked but has a mixed brook and brown trout fishery of good quality and size structure. – *Marty Engel, senior fisheries biologist, Baldwin*

Vernon County

Trout anglers should see excellent fishing opportunities in the coulee region in 2009. After another round of flooding in June of 2008, streams remain in good shape with abundant spawning substrate exposed from high water. Young-of-the-year trout hatched in 2008 are abundant and another banner year class is expected in 2009, ensuring great fishing in the future.

Timber Coulee Creek (Coon Creek) - A creel survey where anglers were asked questions about their catch and fishing experience was performed in 2008. Initial results indicate that anglers fishing the stream mostly practiced catch and release, consider 20-plus inch brown trout a trophy, and prefer to fish with artificial lures. Anglers also indicated that Timber Coulee Creek is a good place to catch quality fish (12 to 18 inches) and provides opportunity to harvest some fish under 12 inches. Final survey results will be available in fall 2009. - *Jordan Weeks, senior inland fisheries biologist, La Crosse*