

## 2017 Northeast Glacial Lakes Fishing Forecast – Week 4

Presented by Fishermens Net Guide Service LLC

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The boat and sport shows are all but through and most people are waiting for the area lakes to be ice free. Open water is my favorite time of the year.

What I plan to do here for the next few weeks is not to give a fishing report (because we're entering a transition period, ice to open water) but to highlight a lake or two every week and a lake survey history along with my 2017 fishing forecast. Not only will we visit the more popular lakes, I'll hit some of the lakes that are more off the beaten path.

**Big Stone Lake (SD/MN Border Water)** – At 27 miles long Big Stone is a great lake. The walleye and perch population are very strong with many trophy size fish. Especially walleye! The walleye population benefits from natural reproduction along with walleye fry stocking from both Minnesota and South Dakota.

Minnesota stocked 6 million walleye fry each year in 2008, 2009, 2012 and 2016 along with 17,000 fingerling Lake Sturgeon over the last 3 years. South Dakota stocked 6 million fry in 2010 and 2014. They also put in 7,600 Lake Sturgeon in 2015.

MN DNR last surveyed the lake in 2014 and results show a very healthy population of walleye, perch, white bass and other species. I don't have the information on the number of trap or gill nets used, but the number of walleye captured is above the normal range compared to lakes with similar characteristics. The average weight of captured walleyes was 1.81 lbs compared to a normal average of similar lakes of .9 to 1.9 lbs. Again, nice fish!

The border water spring opener is April 22<sup>nd</sup> and should be a good one providing we have decent weather. Casting 1/8 oz Northland Fireball jigs and minnow along the rocky shoreline is a killer presentation. Another good option is use a slip bobber and minnow or leech off the dock at sunset.

Big Stone Lake is probably the premier lake for perch in both Minnesota and South Dakota. Especially in terms of numbers. Size is good too with a lot of perch in the 9" to 11" range. Many anglers keep the 10 inchers and above but harvesting the larger ones take out the good spawning population. Big Stone's perch population is high and hopefully so for many years.

The last survey results show why Big Stone is a premier perch destination. The MN DNR's trap nets averaged 5 perch vs .3 – 2.6 normal catch for a similar lake with the same characteristics. Gill nets on the other hand had 231.33 perch vs 3.0 – 22.5 normal catch in similar lakes. The nets are set for a 24 hour period. Without any proof I would guess that Big Stone is the number 1 perch lake in Minnesota and South Dakota. There are lakes in South Dakota where jumbo perch are larger than Big Stone perch but their population is smaller. Usually the hot perch bite takes off in September but anglers using the proper presentation and technique can get into them the first week of August.

Big Stone also has a strong population of White Bass and they are good table fare. After you filet them just keep the loin (the back strap above the rib cage to the tail) and make sure you trim off the red meat mud line. Catch rates were also above average of comparable lakes. It's a great fish to use at a neighborhood fish fry and there is NO daily limit of white bass on Big Stone Lake.

Didn't see your favorite lake? Check in next week as we'll highlight other lakes in Northeast South Dakota. Also, check out our Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/fishermensnetsd/>