

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will begin collecting walleye eggs earlier than usual this spring because of the recent warm weather. Closures and warnings for boaters and anglers again will be in place.

Game and Parks staff began collecting walleyes the night of March 26 at Sherman Reservoir, when the dam is closed, and then during that week at Merritt Reservoir and Lake McConaughy. Closures and warnings are needed to keep fishing lures and boat props from becoming entangled in nets. Anglers and boaters must avoid Game and Parks boats and nets at all three reservoirs.

At Lake McConaughy, a portion of the face of Kingsley Dam will be closed temporarily to fishing from sunset to sunrise. The northern third of the dam – approximately a half mile – will be off limits to bank and boat anglers.

The area of the dam closed during egg collection will include the area from the beginning of the rocks on the north end to a point south on the dam that Game and Parks will mark with a flashing hazard light.

In addition, there is a special boating regulation on Lake McConaughy that applies to anglers fishing the dam area April 1-30. From sunrise to sunset, fishing from a boat within 30 yards of the dam is allowed only on that portion of the dam 200 feet north of the outlet, with travel in a counterclockwise direction required.

Walleye netting will take place until the egg quota has been met. Gill netting along the dams at night will capture females while electroshocking boats will collect male walleyes. Spawning operations will take place on the reservoirs during the morning, then the fertilized eggs will be transferred to Nebraska state fish hatcheries for hatching.

It should take 5-10 days for the eggs needed to be collected, but inclement weather or poor catch could extend efforts and dam closures. Nearly 73.5 million walleye eggs will be collected to satisfy walleye stocking requests for Nebraska waters in 2012.