

Fishing The Crivitz Area

The Crivitz area offers a classic Northwoods environment with plenty of excellent fishing. This area offers anglers both variety in the type of water they choose to fish, as well as diverse fisheries in these waters. Anglers can choose to fish one of the Peshtigo River Flowages, a small natural lake, 2,400 acre Lake Noquebay or the Menominee River. So whether you choose to fish from a large boat, canoe, kayak or wade along the shoreline you will find some type of water to fit your needs.

In central Marinette County the main focal point for anglers are the Peshtigo River Flowages. Both High Falls Flowage and Caldron Falls Flowage offer a quality angling experience along with a semi wilderness setting. The land surrounding these flowages is part of the Peshtigo River State Forest.

Caldron Falls Flowage, the first flowage on the Peshtigo River, covers 1,100 acres and has a maximum depth of 40 feet. Typical of a northern Wisconsin flowage, plenty of shoreline wood cover, submerged stumps, weeds and offshore structure are present. Caldron Falls is best known for its quality musky fishery although there is also a good population of walleye, bass and panfish.

The walleye population is in good shape and a few large walleyes are taken annually. With most anglers concentrating on either musky or panfish walleye fishing pressure is limited. Walleye action is consistent by May. In late April, walleyes will migrate into the Peshtigo River to spawn. A few isolated points will also attract spawning walleye but the majority of fish use the river. By the first week of May when the season opens spawning is completed and most of the walleye start moving back into the flowage. Fresh weeds are the key to locating May walleyes since they will attract a variety of baitfish and an easy meal. Peak walleye feeding will occur early and late in the day but a warming trend can cause walleyes to remain active throughout the day. A cold front will push walleyes tight to cover.



The best presentation I have found for these weed related walleyes is a jig and minnow. Fathead minnows and shiners are the preferred minnows, with hot jig colors being orange and chartreuse. With weeds being sparse in the spring it is tough to find the actual weedline. You will need to make fan casts and cover as much water as possible. Use a slow steady retrieve with an occasional pause. Once the weed edge develops toss out a minnow on a slip bobber. If the water temperature is slow to warm and you are hit with a series of cold fronts, concentrate on shoreline wood cover. Look for shoreline wood adjacent to the river channel but out of the main current flow. The larger walleyes will hold tight to the deeper edges of the wood while the smaller walleyes will hold closer to the shoreline. Cast a weedless jig and minnow both along the deep edge and shoreline. When fishing the deep edge work the jig as slowly as possible, but use a faster retrieve along the shoreline.

Distinct weedlines will develop by the middle of June and are the key to walleye activity. The weedline will grow down to 8 or 10 feet. Early in the day and in the evening a major feeding period can occur. The morning bite can last through mid morning while the evening

bite is often right at dusk. In summer, this evening bite can last into the night. By September switch back to a jig and minnow for best results.

Musky hunters can expect good musky action on the Memorial Day season opener. The back bays of the flowage warm quickly and musky are on the feed. The two most productive baits for early season musky on Caldron Falls are bucktails and twitch baits. As far as bucktails go, stick with six inch bucktails with orange or chartreuse blades with a black skirt. Wood twitch baits are particularly effective after a cold front. The wood baits are more buoyant and can be easily fished in the fresh cabbage. After you twitch the bait over the weeds, pause and let the twitch bait rise to the surface. The slow rise will trigger the strike. Perch and walleye pattern baits are best in spring. When guiding, I will have one person throw a bucktail and the other a twitch bait. In summer as the water temperature rises, muskies become more aggressive.

Even when we experience a June with erratic weather patterns the musky action can still be good. Muskies will move into the same cabbage beds that attract walleyes. If you are catching walleye and the bite stops it usually means muskie are present. Fish over the top of the weeds with bucktails or topwater baits and if nobody is home concentrate on the weedlines. Jerkbait and crankbaits work best for weedline muskies.

Fall is an excellent time to fish for Caldron Falls muskies. Weedlines remain productive but off shore humps will hold the largest muskies. There is a good sucker bite in mid October that lasts right to ice up. This is prime time to land a trophy. Caldron Falls also has a good crappie population and they cooperate in spring. By early May the many shallow stumpy bays begin to warm. Crappies move into these bays and go on the feed well before spawning. They will spawn on the edges of a bay and remain there through summer. Small jigs with plastics or minnows are the best presentation. Crappie can supply plenty of action when other fish have lock jaw.

High Falls Flowage is the second flowage on the Peshtigo River. Covering 1,500 acres, High Falls is riverine in nature with a higher percentage of deeper water than Caldron Falls. The many rock outcroppings resemble a Canadian Shield lake. High Falls has a diversified fishery which offers trophy musky, smallmouth, walleye, largemouth and panfish. This is one place where anglers will experience a mixed bag and still have a chance at a trophy. If the action is slow with one specie switch to another and you will find action.

May is an excellent month to fish High Falls Flowage. The walleye population is increasing and anglers report increased catches each year. By the season opener walleyes have completed spawning and are on the feed. The bulk of the spawning takes place in the Peshtigo River below the Caldron Falls Dam. By the time the season opens look for walleyes to be holding on the edge of the river channel, holding tight to rock humps and shoreline points. Use a jig and minnow with the lightest possible jig. I will work a 1/16 or 1/8 ounce jighead as deep as 12 feet. Orange and chartreuse are my preferred colors. The best walleye action is in the morning hours but on overcast days walleyes bite throughout the day.

In summer, walleyes hold off deep structure and roam the deep basin. Locating them can be tough so cover water and watch your electronics. Use a controlled drift, electric trolling motor or kicker motor to locate walleyes but stay on the spot once walleyes are found.

Leeches and night crawlers rigged with bottom rigs is the popular presentation. Fall walleye relate to shoreline points and deep rock humps.

By the middle of May, smallmouth bass start to cruise along the rocky shorelines and the action is fantastic. They will hold very tight to the rocks as they feed on crayfish and prepare to spawn. My number one presentation over the years has been a Case Magic Stik rigged wacky style. The slow drop of the Magic Stik drives big smallmouth wild. Under stable weather patterns there is a great topwater bite.



Smallmouth continue to relate to the shorelines until about mid May when they move to deep structure and weedlines. I like to fish the weedlines early in the day and move to the deeper structure after the weedline bite slows. When fishing the weeds use a Case sinking shad rigged on a 4/0 wide gap hook. Toss the sinking shad over the weeds, give it a few vigorous twitches and pause a few seconds. Most smallmouth will strike the bait on the pause so stay alert. Once your retrieve gets to the edge of the weeds let the sinking shad sink for four or five seconds. This is a deadly tactic for big smallmouth.

If you are looking for big smallmouth, fish rocky shorelines close to the main river channel. Small points that break sharply into deep water may not hold high numbers of smallmouth, but the ones you find will be big. If you are looking for action, search out a shallow rocky flat on the back side of one of the many islands. If you hit it just right you will be able to catch both numbers, and, big smallmouth. When fishing the deep structure it is hard to beat a large jumbo leech rigged on a jighead, or a number four hook and a split shot.

High Falls also has an excellent musky fishery that produces trophy class fish annually. After the season opens most anglers have success fishing bucktails and twitch baits in the shallow bays. As summer progresses muskies move out along the weedlines and also to the off shore structure. In fall fish the weedlines, points, and structure with jerkbaits and crankbaits. If you are looking for a 50 inch plus musky try fishing suckers over the deep flats and around structure.

Largemouth bass are abundant on both High Falls Flowage and Caldron Falls Flowage. Fishing the wooded shorelines and weeds with soft plastics

is a reliable pattern on either flowage. Largemouth can supply plenty of action in summer throughout the day when walleye and smallmouth head for deep water.

The Crivitz area offers quality angling regardless of when you plan your trip. Whether you fish for musky, bass, walleye or panfish, anglers will find a home.