Lake Minnewashta is located in Carver County. It is 738 acres and has a maximum depth of 70 feet. Water quality in Lake Minnewashta is fair, compared to other West Metro lakes. By late summer most species of fish cannot inhabit water deeper than 14 feet for extended periods of time. The predator community in Lake Minnewashta reflects a natural state. No stocking occurs.
Fish Species

Bluegill

Scientific name: Lepomis macrochirus
(Lepomis means "scaled cheek"; macrochirus means "large hand", possibly in reference to the size of the pectoral fin).

Distribution: Bluegill are one of the most widespread fish in Minnesota. They are common in ponds, lakes, and slow moving rivers. In 2011, 1152 bluegill were caught in Lake Minnewashta, mostly less than 8 inches long. The state record bluegill was 2 pounds and 13 ounces, caught in 1984 in Hubbard County.

Spawning: Spawning takes place from late May to early August (peaking in June) at water temperatures between 67 - 80° F. Males select a sand or gravel bar that can be hollowed out to form a nest. Before and after spawning, the male bluegill defends the nest against all species, but most vigorously against other male sunfishes. Females lay upwards of 50,000 eggs in the nest.

Angling: Spawning bluegills protect their nests aggressively and attack anything that comes near, often making them easy to catch in the springtime. When not spawning, bluegills can be found among shoreline vegetation or around the pylons of a fishing pier where they spend their time in loosely-knit groups of 20-30 individuals. They can be enticed with a piece of nightcrawler on a small hook with lightweight (6 lb) line. Bluegills seem to be curious, and can sometimes be attracted by lightly “splashing” your bobber on the water’s surface next to the pier. Although they feed all day, the best bluegill fishing is usually in the morning or evening. Because they do not see well in low light, bluegill fishing is poor after dark.
Northern Pike

![Illustration of a Northern Pike](image)

Illustration by Virgil Beck

**Scientific name:** Esox lucius (Esox comes from the old name for pike in Europe and lucius comes from the supposed Latin name for the species).

**Distribution:** The northern pike occurs in nearly all Minnesota's lakes and streams except for the lower reaches of the North Shore creeks and the well-drained watersheds of the southeast. In 2011, 297 Northern Pike were caught in Lake Minnewashta, mostly in the 15-30” range.

**Spawning:** Spawning may occur from late March to early April, as soon as the ice begins to break up in the spring. Migrations into the spawning areas take place during the night. Spawning occurs at temperatures between 34 and 40° F, but 36 - 37° F seems to be the preferred range. Spawning takes place in flooded areas with emergent vegetation and involves one female and from one to three attendant males. Eggs are deposited on vegetation to which they adhere. There is no parental care.

**Angling:** Unlike other common species of game fish, northern pike are most active when the water is cool. The northern pike is quite accommodating to anglers, biting best during the daylight hours. Being a predator, northerns prefer live fish baits, and wobbling spoons. They are a favorite target of ice fisherman with tip-ups.
Yellow Bullhead

Scientific Name: Ameriurus natalis: from the Greek word ameiurus, meaning unforked caudal fin; and the Latin word natalis, meaning "having large buttocks".

Distribution: Bullheads are common throughout Minnesota’s many lakes, rivers, and streams, but they are more common in the southern half of the state. They prefer slow moving, quiet waters that have soft bottoms made up of mud, sand, and gravel. They are able to tolerate turbid or murky/muddy water that many fish cannot. Bullheads are able to survive water with low oxygen content and often occur in large numbers in lakes that winter kill when other fish die out. In short, bullheads can live in just about any aquatic habitat. In Lake Minnewashta 104 yellow bullheads were caught in 2011, mostly 9-14 inches in length.

Spawning: In Minnesota, the spawning season for the bullheads starts in late spring and goes through early summer, when water temperatures are about 68-70° F. The female uses her fins to clean out a saucer-shaped nest in shallow water. She will seek out a location underneath matted vegetation, fallen trees, or overhanging banks. When the male swims near the nest, the female pokes his stomach with her head. Eventually, the two fish sit in the nest next to each other, facing opposite directions. The male touches the female’s head with his tail fin repeatedly until she releases eggs. The male fertilizes them immediately. They repeat this spawning act several times over an hour or more and then again over the next few days until the female has laid all her eggs. Both parents fan and guard the eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the male takes over parental care. He will continue to protect the young until they reach the size of about 1 inch in length. The young fish swim around in a tight little ball and any stragglers are chased back into the ball by the parents. Even after the parents leave, the young will continue to swim in a group (called a school) for many days as they begin to feed. Watch for these schools in the shallows of most lakes in early summer.

Angling: Being bottom feeders, bobbers are often unnecessary for bullheads – especially on a windy day when moving bobbers can lift bait off the bottom and away from the fish. And you usually won’t need a bobber to tell you when a determined bullhead hits
your line! For bullheads, use about a 6 lb. test line, and smaller hooks (sized 2 to 1/0) with long shanks. Bullheads often swallow hooks and longer shanked hooks are easier to remove. For bullheads, angle worms and night crawlers are standard baits but these fish—will eat just about anything they can swallow. Use up your leeches, live and dead minnows, pieces of chicken, beef, hotdogs, marshmallows left over from last night’s dinner, dough balls, stink bait. Avoid using artificial lures as these fishes forage by smell and taste.

Black Crappie

Scientific name: Pomoxis nigromaculatus (Pomoxis means "sharp opercle (cheek)"; nigromaculatus means "black spotted")

Distribution: Crappies are widespread in Minnesota, occurring in most lakes throughout the state. They are most abundant in the central part of the state. Ninety nine of these fish were caught in Minnewashta in 2011, mostly less than 9” long.

Spawning: The black crappie usually spawns in May and June; however, during a colder season, spawning may be delayed until July. Favorable spawning temperatures range from 64 to 68°F. The male sweeps out a nest in sand or fine gravel and guards the nest and defends the young until they start to feed.

Angling: The black crappie is considered an excellent game fish when taken on light tackle. Extreme care must be taken in landing these fish because their mouths are very tender. Anglers specializing in catching black crappie know that to be successful the bait must be kept constantly moving. The best baits are small minnows, small maribou-covered jigs, plastic minnows, or small streamer flies cast along the outer edges of weed beds. The crappie lies in weed beds in deep water during the day and bite best in early morning or toward evening. In summer, with the abundance of small fish for feed, they are more difficult to catch. Small minnows are used as bait in winter.
Pumpkinseed

**Scientific name:** Lepomis gibbosus

(Lepomis means “scaled gill cover”, gibbosus means “wide margin”)

**Distribution:** Pumpkinseeds occur in all major drainages of Minnesota, but are more common in the central and north-central parts of the state. Pumpkinseeds prefer cool to moderately-warm water, and are most prevalent in small lakes and ponds. They are also found in Mississippi River backwaters, impoundments of smaller rivers and streams, and in bays Lake Superior. The pumpkinseed’s native range was originally limited to eastern North America, from Manitoba, Canada, east to the Atlantic seaboard, south as far as Georgia, and west through the Ohio Valley. Stocking has extended its range west of the Mississippi Valley as far as the West Coast. Nineteen pumpkinseed were caught in Minnewashta in 2011, mostly less than 8” long.

**Spawning:** In like other members of the sunfish family, the pumpkinseed builds a nest in which to spawn. Males are responsible for nest building, a chore they take on in late spring or early summer when water temperature reaches 55 to 63 degrees Fahrenheit. Nest sites are generally in shallow water, anywhere from 6 inches to several feet deep, on sand or gravel bottoms. Using its caudal tail as a broom, the male will sweep out a shallow, saucer-shaped depression 4 to 15 inches in diameter (usually about twice the length of the fish). While sweeping, the males holds his sharp pectoral (side) fins out and pushes water forward to remain stationary. The male will remove stubborn objects from the nest by pulling them out with his mouth. The nests are built in colonies that may range from just a few to as many as 10 to 15 nests. Occasionally, pumpkinseeds will build nests in bluegill nest colonies. Crossbreeding between pumpkinseeds and bluegills or other sunfish is fairly common. Once constructed, the nest is vigorously defended by the male, who chases off intruders by charging and occasionally biting. Females remain in deeper water until nests are completed and then move in toward colonies. A male will swim out from its nest as a female approaches and attempt to drive her into his nest. If the male is successful, the pair begin swimming in circles, side by side, with the female inclined to one side and the bellies of both fish touching. The female then releases some eggs and the male some milt (sperm). Females may spawn in more than one nest and more than one female may use the same nest. Occasionally, more than one female will spawn with a male simultaneously. Depending on size and age, a female may produce between 1,500 and 7,000 eggs. The small, amber-colored eggs adhere to gravel, sand or debris in the nest. The eggs hatch in two to three days, or longer.
depending on conditions. One nest may produce anywhere from 1,500 to almost 15,000 fry (newly hatched fish), with the average about 8,000. Females leave the nest after spawning but males stay and are highly protective of the eggs. Male pumpkinseeds will even nip at hands or feet that come close to their nests. This protective behavior may continue after the eggs hatch and in some cases, if a fry strays from the nest, a male may capture it in his mouth and return it to the nest. Young pumpkinseeds live on or near the shallow breeding ground and grow rapidly, reaching about 2 inches in the first year. Most pumpkinseeds mature and begin reproducing in their second or third year. Maximum age of the species is between 8-10 years. Growth rates and weights can vary considerably depending on water quality and temperature, population density and other factors. Generally, mature pumpkinseeds average 5-8 inches and weigh from 8-12 ounces. Stunted pumpkinseeds may grow no longer than 2 1/2 inches. The world record pumpkinseed, caught in South Carolina in 1997, weighed 2 pounds, 4 ounces.

**Angling:** With their fondness for hanging out in shallow water and their tendency to remain active throughout the day, pumpkinseeds are truly a species that anyone can pursue. Anglers don’t need boats or special equipment to fish prime pumpkinseed habitat. A simple cane pole, or an inexpensive rod and reel are sufficient for getting bait into the shallow weed beds preferred by pumpkinseeds. Garden worms makes an excellent bait, but pumpkinseeds will bite at almost any small bait, such as insects, leeches or pieces of fish. Pumpkinseeds will also hit small artificial lures and can be fished for with a fly rod with wet flies or dry flies. Pumpkinseeds are particularly active in the spring and summer when they are aggressively defending their nests. Pumpkinseeds will hit at grubs - the larvae of insects - early in the winter, but they are less active from mid to late winter.

**Sunfish (Green and Hybrid)**

**Scientific Name:** Lepomis cyanellus, (Lepomis means “scaled gill cover”, cyanellus means “blue”)

**Distribution:** Green sunfish occur in all major drainages of Minnesota. They inhabit lakes and streams of all sizes, but prefer the quiet water of shallow, weedy lakes and small streams. They can be extremely abundant in one lake and totally absent from another nearby. Green sunfish are known to gather around or in
piles of brush in the water and in thick entanglements of floating vegetation. Only 13 green and hybrid sunfish were caught in Lake Minnewashta in 2011,, mostly less than 8" long.

**Spawning:** Green sunfish spawn in the late spring and summer in Minnesota (late May to early August). The male builds a nest by clearing a depression in the lake or stream bottom to expose gravel. The nest usually is situated near the shelter of rocks, logs, or clumps of grass. Once the nest is complete, the male defends it using a variety of displays and actual attacks when necessary. Sometimes the mere sight of a male balancing himself over a nest is enough to make a female enter to spawn. At other times, the male courts the female by producing a series of grunts as he leads her to the nest. Once in the nest the two fish circle above it for a short period before the female descends to spawn. Several females are likely to spawn in a male's nest. The male guards the nest, fanning it with his fins to keep it clean and well oxygenated. Depending on the water temperature, the embryos hatch in 2-4 days. The free-embryos stay in the nest and continue developing for another 5 days before they swim up and begin feeding. Green sunfish typically bring off multiple broods each season, spawning every 8-10 days.

**Angling:** Sunfish are easy to catch and can often be found in brush, weeds, and rock cover in shallow water. They will take most baits.

Fishing

**Anatomy of a Fishing Pole**

**How to Bait, Cast, and Reel**

Source:


http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/showreport.html?downnum=10000900

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/minnagqua/speciesprofile


http://hatch.cehd.umn.edu/research/fish/fishes