

# Flood could make for better fishing

By TED SULLIVAN

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## Photo Gallery

### Flooding photos



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JANESVILLE — Although an avalanche of water has swamped homes and businesses, the flooding could have a benefit: pretty darn good fishing.

“Overall, the fishing opportunity is going to be greater than in past years,” said Brent Northup of Uncle Josh Bait Co. in Fort Atkinson. “They’re going to be biting for sure.”

Flood conditions increase the number of newborn fish during hatches, said Don Bush, fisheries biologist for the state Department of Natural Resources.

And fish can find new habitat and food that they never had access to before floods, he said.

The result could be trophy lunkers in years to come.

“All in all, it’s a very good thing in big river systems to have these periodic floods,” Bush said. “There should be some good fishing.”

Slow, no-wake policies and deeper water should help anglers on lakes, Northup said. Fishermen likely will enjoy the water because fewer jet skis and speedboats will be out.

“It’s more peaceful for the guys who go out there fishing,” he said.

George Powers, who was hanging out at Lake Ripley Dead End Bar & Bait early Thursday morning, said the minnows are hatching like crazy in Lake Koshkonong.

He said the minnows are swimming in parts of the lake where he has never seen them before.

“I just figure with the high water and with the less boat traffic ... it’s going to improve the waterways,” Powers said.

But the flooding will hinder anglers from rushing back to their local fishing spots.

Bob Clark of Trep’s Bait & Tackle in Indianford said the fishing business has been slow lately, but he expects anglers likely will return when the water recedes.

“People haven’t been coming in and buying bait like they used to,” Clark said.

Debbie Kortte, who works at Carl’s Shell in Newville, said fishermen can’t use the boat ramps on nearby lakes.

She said the bait shop has been selling night crawlers, but the minnow sales are dragging.

But the only 24-hour bait shop in Newville will survive the flood, Kortte said.

“The fishermen, they’re always die-hards; they’re going to go fishing anyway,” she said.

Along the Rock River, no one is fishing, Bush said. Access is nearly impossible.

“I think the next month or so will be pretty difficult for fishing,” he said.

Matt Henn, co-owner of Watersedge Bait & Tackle in Janesville, said not many anglers are coming in his shop. People who stop by are going fishing at lakes in Dane or Walworth counties.

Once the water recedes, fishing along the river shouldn’t change much, Henn said.

“It will be just as good as it’s always been,” he said.

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