

Wild Rice Harvesting Season Outlook

2 August 2019

Northwest Minnesota

- **Detroit Lakes**

The wild rice crop appears to be average in the Detroit Lakes area this year. Spring rains kept some water levels higher than normal, but the area has missed any large rain events that would have uprooted the rice. The cool spring has also delayed timing; peak harvest will likely be later than normal this year.

- **Park Rapids**

Wild rice stands appear to be about average this year on local lakes and rivers. Water levels have been higher than normal through the spring and early summer due to abundant rainfall, but this area has missed most of the significant storm events to date.

Northeast Minnesota

- **Aitkin**

Wild rice stands in the Aitkin area are poor to above average, depending on the water body. Some lakes in the area are looking great. But other lakes were impacted by rain storms and high water in June and July, which uprooted plants, resulting in thin stands. Due to the late spring, rice development is behind normal, so harvesting will be later than usual. And some beds have short stems this year, which means it may not be possible to bend the rice stalks over the side of the canoe. Harvesters will have the most success if they can make time to check out rice beds in advance.

- **Brainerd**

The wild rice crop will be average to above average for most of the Brainerd Area. Most of the wild rice crop survived the mid-July rain events, but some rice might ripen later than usual due to the late spring. As always, scouting lakes in advance will be key to locate the best wild rice for harvest.

- **Grand Rapids**

Rice growth looked good in mid-July, but there have been several extreme storm events, with several inches of rain falling rapidly in isolated areas. And last fall's saturated ground conditions and heavy snowfall combined with continued rain events have kept water levels very high. High water could result in thin rice beds and/or short rice stalks.

- **Orr, Tower, & Two Harbors**

Rice abundance is average to above average for many rice lakes and rivers. On average, rice has been a week behind normal growth throughout the summer. Water levels have been ideal for rice, and while there has been some scattered larger precipitation events in the area, most lakes and rivers have not been impacted. Overall access to wild rice waters should be ideal as we progress through the remainder of the growing season.

Central Minnesota

- **Cambridge**

The wild rice crop is poor to average. Some of the larger shallow lakes in the northern part of the work area have average rice, but the majority of the shallow lakes in the rest of the work area are poor. This is due to excessive rain amounts that still have not receded.

- **Fergus Falls**

Rice is growing in the usual places around Otter Tail County, but seems to be behind – lots of floating leaf plants still present at the end of July. Heavy rains in early July may end up putting a damper on the rice crop later this summer.

- **Little Falls**

There was some flooding in mid-June that pulled up some rice, but nowhere did it wipe out the stands. Phenology was delayed this spring with the cold temperatures. A few sites have suffered from chronic high water and won't have great production, but for the most part we're seeing relatively good rice production this year.

- **North Metro area**

Because of the cold wet spring, wild rice maturity in the North Metro Area appears to be one to two weeks behind normal. High water persisted until early June, but because the rice was delayed, the high water did not appear to damage the rice crop as much as expected. The North Metro Area wild rice crop is generally above average and similar to 2018.