



**FRESHWATER
CAST**
lakes • rivers • nationwide



FRESHWATER CAST · MONDAY CAST

Crab Orchard: Refuge Bass & Panfish, Rulebook Before Lure Box

Crab Orchard Lake · Mon Sep 21 – Thu Sep 24, 2026 · bank / kayak / boat · times in CT

CT

Refuge rules

Weekday soft

Highs ~85° Mon → ~75° midweek (NWS PAH)

Primary: Largemouth bass

Crab Orchard fishes well and regulates harder — read the refuge board, then flip a jig.

• MIDWEEK OUTLOOK

NWS Paducah / Crab Orchard (NWS forecast grid; pulled Sun Sep 20 evening CT): **Monday**

~85°F — Chance Showers And Thunderstorms then Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms, precip ~26% · **Tuesday** ~77°F — Partly Sunny, precip ~9% · **Wednesday** ~75°F — Mostly Sunny, precip ~0% · **Thursday** ~75°F — Mostly Sunny, precip ~0%. For **Largemouth bass**: Cover/weeds for bass; confirm NWR zones before every launch.

Crowd / Heavy Traffic: Weekday soft. **No named trail event pulled for Mon–Thu.** Obey NWR zoning.

Water clarity: Stained to moderate.

MONDAY SEP 21

~85°F

Low ~64° · ~26% precip · 3 to 7 mph N

Chance Showers And Thunderstorms then
Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms

Sunrise **6:42 AM** · Sunset **6:52 PM** CT (approx
band — confirm local)

Best bite: dawn & dusk CT in cover

A chance of showers and thunderstorms
between 7am and 8am, then a slight chance of
showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy.
High near 85, with temperatures falling to
around 83 in...

TUESDAY SEP 22

~77°F

Low ~58° · ~9% precip · 5 to 9 mph NNE

Partly Sunny

Sunrise **6:43 AM** · Sunset **6:50 PM** CT (approx
band — confirm local)

Best bite: dawn & dusk CT in cover

Partly sunny, with a high near 77. North
northeast wind 5 to 9 mph....

WEDNESDAY SEP 23

~75°F

Low ~55° · ~0% precip · 5 to 9 mph N

Mostly Sunny

Sunrise **6:44 AM** · Sunset **6:49 PM** CT (approx
band — confirm local)

Best bite: dawn & dusk CT in cover

Mostly sunny, with a high near 75. North wind 5
to 9 mph....

THURSDAY SEP 24

~75°F

Low ~—° · ~0% precip · 2 to 7 mph NNE

Mostly Sunny

Sunrise **6:45 AM** · Sunset **6:47 PM** CT (approx
band — confirm local)

Best bite: dawn & dusk CT in cover

Mostly sunny, with a high near 75. North
northeast wind 2 to 7 mph....

● DAM & CURRENT / GENERATOR SCHEDULE CHEAT SHEET

Live/provisional pulls Sun Sep 20 CT. Soft confirm current boards before you go — do not invent unit counts. Schedules change without notice.

PROJECT	OBSERVED	GENERATOR SCHEDULE	HOW TO FISH IT
Crab Orchard Lake USFWS NWR	Refuge rules can change access — check before launch.	N/A	Bass in cover; panfish pockets; respect closed areas.

Schedules change without notice — confirm current boards before you go.

● HOW TO FISH IT — BANK / KAYAK / BOAT

BANK

Refuge-legal banks only.

KAYAK

PFD; respect zones.

BOAT

Weed/cover; shallow draft.

Closed zone = leave. Compliance beats any pattern note.

● LURE BOX

TOP

Buzz/frog

MID

Spinnerbait

Jig

BOTTOM

Texas

Wacky

Stain / clear match: Darker grass colors.

● LIFE STAGE

Bass in cover. Cool nights — slightly deeper edges.

What's on the menu: Bluegill/shad/craw.

● ALSO HOT / ALSO IN SEASON

CRAPPIE/BUEGILL

Strong panfish secondary.

CATFISH

Secondary.

Regs: Illinois DNR — <https://dnr.illinois.gov/fishing.html> — live-check only; do not hardcode lengths. Crab Orchard NWR rules — live-check.

● WINDOW TACTICS IN DEPTH

Through **Mon Sep 21 – Thu Sep 24** (CT), treat this as a **true midweek Cast** — not a weekend recreation summary. Lead with **Largemouth bass** because that is what most anglers can execute on this water this week without inventing a miracle bite. Soft language stays soft: if a board, hatch, or tournament calendar was thin at Sunday pull, we say so instead of filling gaps with fiction.

Refuge compliance first. Bass in cover; panfish secondary. Closed zone = leave.

Bank depth: Refuge-legal only.

Kayak depth: PFD; respect zones.

Boat depth: Weed/cover; shallow draft.

● PRESSURE, SAFETY & HONESTY NOTES

- **Heavy Traffic:** No named trail event pulled. NWR rules are the constraint.
- **Lightning / storms:** Standard.
- **What we did not invent:** pump prices not listed as fake E0 quotes; generator unit counts not fabricated; tournament fields not invented; hatch dates not invented.
- **Shared / border notes:** Illinois + NWR.

● LOOKING AHEAD (NEXT 1–3 WEEKS)

Cool nights — slightly deeper edges.

Next Cast: Friday Cast window Fri–Sun after the Thu local gather. Spot-check any new trail announcements for Heavy Traffic language.

● ETHANOL-FREE FUEL NEAR THIS WATER

PURE-GAS.ORG E0 · THIS WATER

Depth note on E0: Station identity is crowdsourced from Pure-Gas.org. Distances are rough to the map pin. This rewrite does **not** invent pump prices — if a price is not confirmed, the card says verify at the pump.

Source: [Pure-Gas.org](https://pure-gas.org) · Sun Sep 20, 2026 evening CT — verify at pump

Current prices (as of Sun Sep 20, 2026 evening CT — verify at pump) — may change; verify at the pump.

No invented E0 pump prices in this rewrite.

Pure-Gas.org — Carbondale / Marion corridor — Carbondale, IL · ~varies mi · E0 · price not listed — verify at pump · [Pure-Gas](https://pure-gas.org)

Crowdsourced E0 identity; distances rough to pin. Call ahead. Gather notes referenced in CT; Cast clocks use CT.

● CONDITIONS THIS WEEK

Use the day cards as the clock. If a Tuesday cell threat rises on the latest NWS forecast, believe the grid over any lure paragraph in this document. If a dam board is blank at Sunday pull, the Cast says the board is blank — then tells you when to re-check — instead of fabricating a four-day unit schedule.

How to use the sections: Midweek outlook = weather + pressure + clarity. Dam cheat sheet = what is known / unknown and how current (or the lack of it) moves fish. Bank / kayak / boat = three different access realities on the same water. Lure box = top/mid/bottom matched to clarity and primary species. Life stage = seasonal position without pretending a spawn that is not happening. Also hot = secondary species without stealing the lead. Looking ahead = next 1–3 weeks and the Friday Cast handoff. E0 = Pure-Gas identity with verify-at-pump pricing honesty.

● PLATFORM CHECKLISTS (EXPANDED)

BANK CHECKLIST

Confirm public access / park hours before you leave the truck.

First casts at first legal light on the highest-percentage edge for the primary species.

Carry one search bait and one finesse bait — do not empty the box onto one rock.

Leave for lightning; leave for unsafe wakes/wind; leave if an area is posted closed.

Photograph conditions (clarity, wind lanes) so the next trip starts smarter.

KAYAK CHECKLIST

PFD on before paddle hits water.

Pick a protected first hour if wind is already up at the ramp.

Stay out of dam boils / restricted cable zones.

Leash rod/paddle; pack a simple re-entry plan if you dump.

If boat traffic increases, leave the channel and fish inside edges.

BOAT CHECKLIST

Graph before you camp — bait and bottom first.

Idle near ramps, beaches, and timber; no-wake where posted.

Re-check pool / generation / wind before a long midday run.

Keep a second rod ready when sun climbs and fish slide.

Have an exit ramp if the main lake stands up.

● FORAGE & LURE LOGIC (EXPANDED)

Match the primary species' most likely grocery list for late September — then let clarity choose color. Clear water: naturals, smoked greens, translucent baitfish. Stained water: chartreuse, black, white, or opaque baitfish. Wind-blown banks often concentrate forage and give search baits a lane; slick midday clear water often needs smaller profiles and longer pauses.

If the primary species is perch, white bass, hybrids, or crappie, do not force a largemouth magazine intro onto the page. Lead the species that actually pays the weekday bills on that water, then park bass / trout / muskie / catfish in Also hot with short, honest notes.

Regs: Live-check IDNR before you keep fish. This Cast does not hardcode inch limits or season dates that can change.

• SOURCES & RE-CHECK LIST

- NWS forecast grids for the local office named in the outlook (pulled Sun Sep 20 evening CT; re-check morning of launch).
- Agency dam / lake pages cited in the dam table — re-check pool and any generation boards after ~local evening updates.
- Pure-Gas.org for E0 station identity; pump prices verify-on-site.
- State agency regs pages (IDNR) — live-check.
- Local club / trail calendars skimmed for Heavy Traffic — none invented when none were pulled.

Sources: NWS forecast grids (NWS Paducah / Crab Orchard); Pure-Gas.org E0 listings; agency dam/lake pages as cited in table. Pin 37.7252, -89.1053. Schedules change without notice — confirm current boards before you go. Freshwater Cast · Monday **Cast** · Illinois · Crab Orchard Lake · Mon Sep 21 – Thu Sep 24, 2026 · drafted Sun Sep 20, 2026 evening CT.