FRESHWATER CAST · MONDAY CAST

Monday Cast live · Nov 16–18, 2026

Weather
National Weather Service forecast for Crab Orchard Lake area

Crab Orchard Lake

Illinois

Mon Nov 16 – Wed Nov 18, 2026 · Central Time · Largemouth

BITE ODDS · THIS CAST

Strong odds

9/10

0 2 4 6 8 10

PRESSURE	STORMS	WIND	SKY / RAIN	BASS STAGE	CROWD
+ Mostly stable	+ No lightning	+ 3–7 mph usable ripple	+ Clear / sunny (~0%)	+ Fall transition	+ Weekday · lighter traffic

WEEK Early-week setup on this water — highs **58–64°F**, lows **35–44°F**, rain chance up to **~0%**. Story is light and bait position — dawn and last light carry the window.

THREE-DAY WEATHER

MONDAY NOV 16

58° F high

LOW	35°F
SKY	Sunny
WIND	ENE 0–3 mph
RAIN	~0%
SUN	6:37 AM / 4:44 PM

Frame: Cold start — let the sun warm the shallows; the better bite often comes later in the day.

TUESDAY NOV 17

62° F high

LOW	38°F
SKY	Sunny
WIND	SE 0–3 mph
RAIN	~0%
SUN	6:38 AM / 4:43 PM

Frame: Cold start — let the sun warm the shallows; the better bite often comes later in the day.

WEDNESDAY NOV 18

64° F high

LOW	44°F
SKY	Sunny
WIND	SSE 2–7 mph
RAIN	~0%
SUN	6:39 AM / 4:43 PM

Frame: Stable day — first-light moving bait, then slow down around shade and cover once the sun is up.

Window: Mon–Wed · Air: ENE → SE → SSE · Bite window: dawn + last light

HOW TO FISH THIS WEATHER

MORNING

- Shallow cover, points, creek mouths
- **First light (6:37 AM CST) → ~9 AM**
- Use any ripple as cover

MIDDAY

- Shade lines, docks, deeper edges
- Electronics for bait height first
- Slow down once the sun is overhead

EVENING

- Revisit shallow shade as sun drops
- Topwater if the surface lays down
- Weekday traffic is lighter — work quiet pockets

FALL TRANSITION **Largemouth plan: Follow shad into the backs of creeks and flats 1-10 ft; spinnerbait, squarebill and topwater at a fast pace.**

BIOLOGY

BASS STAGE

Largemouth are in the fall transition — following bait into creeks and onto flats as water cools.

Basis: estimated water ~58°F — 75-day observed air record (NOAA ACIS) lagged for a lake (14-day response); no water-temperature gauge on the lake; air record trending falling

NATURAL FORAGE

Bass are following shad into the creek mouths and onto shallow wood, and crappie are moving onto brush and stumps. What's on the menu: Gizzard and threadfin shad are the main forage, with bluegill around the wood and crawfish on the causeway riprap.

ALSO BITING

Largemouth — primary; stumps, laydowns and causeway riprap. Crappie — co-primary; brush and stumps 6–12 ft.

PRESSURE

Weekday traffic — lighter than the weekend. Fish early, give ramps and swim areas room.

DAM & WATER — CONFIRM BEFORE YOU LAUNCH

FIXED Dam-controlled water. No shared generation/level feed this cycle — check the agency page the morning you fish; releases and pool levels change daily. Stay outside buoyed restricted zones.

ITEM	NOTE	SOURCE
Confirm	Illinois DNR fishing	dnr.illinois.gov
Confirm	Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge	fws.gov
Permit / regs	Regulations: check current Illinois DNR fishing rules and the refuge's own rules before fishing or keeping fish.	
Clarity	Water clarity / depth.	

ACCESS — BANK / KAYAK / BOAT

BANK

The best bank fishing on Crab Orchard is along the Wolf Creek Road causeway and the Route 148 causeway, where the refuge keeps shore fishing open all year and the riprap drops into deeper water. Fish the wind-facing side of the causeway rock with a squarebill or spinnerbait.

KAYAK

Is the paddle day. Launch at an open refuge ramp on the west end, near the Wolf Creek Road causeway, and work the coves, stumps and laydowns with a jig or a Texas-rigged creature bait for largemouth. A small jig and minnow beside brush will catch crappie.

BOAT

Crab Orchard fishes like a shallow, stump-filled lake with a few defined creek channels and a deeper west end near the dam. At first light, start on stump flats, laydowns and causeway riprap with a squarebill, spinnerbait or buzzbait.

LURE BOX

TOP

Buzzbait on stump flats at dawn.
Walking bait on the calm water.
Popper along causeway riprap.

MID

Squarebill on riprap and stumps.
Spinnerbait on the breeze.
Weightless soft stick for spooky fish.

BOTTOM

Jig in black and blue or green pumpkin. Texas-rigged creature bait in laydowns. Jig and minnow for crappie on brush.