



STERLING LAKE

LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

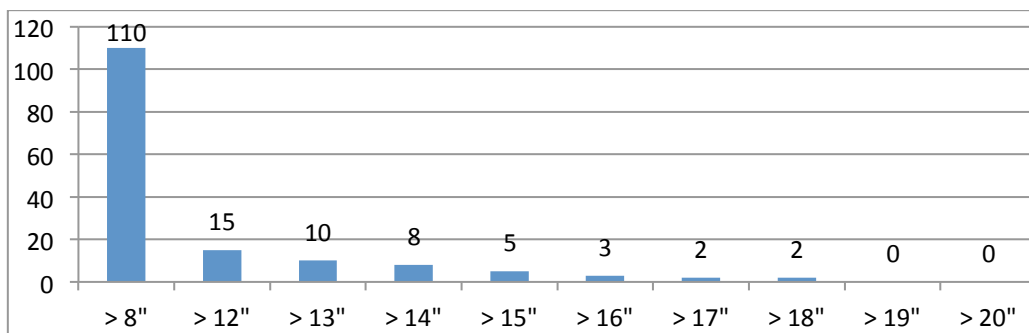
LOCATION – Located east of I-294 north of Rt. 173 in Van Patton Woods Forest Preserve near Wadsworth.

DESCRIPTION – Sterling Lake, formerly known as Vulcan Gravel Pits, was constructed in 1939. The lake is located adjacent to the Des Plaines River and is connected via a 10” to 12” tube with a hinged gate so water can flow-in during high water events. The Lake County Forest Preserve District acquired the area in 1974 with emphasis on providing recreational fishing opportunities. Sterling Lake: 74 acres, maximum depth 23.0 ft., average depth 14 ft., shoreline length is 2.3 miles, crushed limestone multi-use path surrounds the perimeter, handicap accessible fishing piers, gravel ramp for launching a canoe/kayak or electric motor only car-top boats. No concession facilities are available. No fish cleaning station is available.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: In 2017, a D/C electrofishing survey was conducted to assess the overall fishery and to collect Fish Consumption samples as part of the IEPA’s routine sampling.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – Sterling Lake receives periodic stockings of 5000 - 2” walleye, 150 - 11” muskie and annual stockings of 600 - 8” to 10” channel catfish. Below is a brief description of catchable game species in this water body.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – In 2017, 152 bass were collected in one hour of sampling. Fish measured between 6” to 18.6”, and weighed up to 3.5 lbs. 14% were over 12” long, 9% exceeded 14” and 4% exceeded 15” (legal length). Our catch data suggests very good reproduction and over winter survival but our catch of adult fish was sub-par. This size structure suggests a strong future for this lake.



BLUEGILL – In 2017, 65 Bluegill were collected. They ranged from 2” to 7.9”, the biggest weighing 0.33 lbs. 46% were longer than 6”, 2% exceeded 7” long. Bluegill size should improve as the bass population matures. Strong predation grows big bluegills.

MUSKIE – In 2017, 1 muskie were collected. The fish was only 15” long but Sterling has a history of producing trophy size fish! It has been periodically stocked since 1990.

WALLEYE – In 2017, 2 walleye were collected. They ranged from 8.0” to 16”. Larger fish inhabit the lake but they are difficult to sample with our electrofishing boat because of the steep shorelines.

BLACK CRAPPIE – 14 black crappie were collected in 2017. Fish measured from 4.3” to 9.8” and weighed up to 0.59 lb., 12% exceeded 9” but none exceeded 10”. Fishermen report large crappie in the lake!

CHANNEL CATFISH – This species is stocked every year at 8” to 10” and channel catfish are a popular species for weekend fishermen enjoying the quiet of the Park. We rarely collect channel catfish unless the conditions are just right and they move up into the shallow areas of the lake.

Sterling Lake Catch Summary 5/22/2017

(60 minutes DC electrofishing)

Species	Number	Relative Abundance (%)	Minimum (inches)	Average (inches)	Maximum (inches)
LARGEMOUTH BASS	152	46.6	6.0	9.3	18.6
BLUEGILL	65	19.9	2.6	5.1	7.8
PUMPKINSEED SUNFISH	51	15.6	2.0	5.9	7.3
BLACK CRAPPIE	14	4.3	5.1	7.9	9.8
WARMOUTH	13	4.0	4.6	5.9	7.3
YELLOW PERCH	7	2.1	5.3	6.9	8.1
COMMON CARP*	4	1.2	20.5	26.8	30.4
BOWFIN	4	1.2	15.7	20.6	25.0
BLACKSTRIPED TOPMINNOW	4	1.2	1.9	2.2	2.6
BLUNTNOSE MINNOW	3	0.9	1.9	2.0	2.2
WALLEYE	2	0.6	8.3	12.2	16.0
SMALLMOUTH BASS	2	0.6	13.9	16.8	19.7
GREEN SUNFISH	1	0.3		3.1	
MUSKELLUNGE	1	0.3		15.2	
YELLOW BULLHEAD	1	0.3		4.9	
CENTRAL MUDMINNOW	1	0.3		3.5	
WHITE SUCKER	1	0.3		7.7	
SPECIES = 17 TOTAL =	326	100.0			

FISHING REGULATIONS:

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	SIZE LIMIT
LARGEMOUTH BASS	1	15”
WALLEYE	6	16”
MUSKELLUNGE	1	48”
(QUICK SET RIG REQUIRED FOR BAIT OVER 8” LONG)		
CHANNEL CATFISH	6	NONE

TWO POLE AND LINE ONLY FISHING

(See current Illinois Fishing Information Booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website: <http://www.ifishillinois.org/> for specific details).

ADDITIONAL SITE REGULATIONS:

Boaters – kayaks, canoes, car toppers/trolling motor only

CONTACT INFORMATION – Lake County Forest Preserve District, General Number: 847/367-6640.
IDNR District Fisheries Biologist: 815/675-2319.

Sterling Lake Map

