



# Giant City State Park – Horse Camp Pond

## 2023 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

**LOCATION:** Giant City State Park is located in Jackson and Union Counties south of Carbondale, IL. Horse Camp Pond is located adjacent to the horse campground on the southwest side of the park.

**DESCRIPTION:** Horse Camp Pond is a 2-acre pond managed for recreational fishing. Two mowed paths lead to the pond from the campground. Most of the shoreline is clear and maintained to provide easy access for anglers. There are no docks or restrooms on site, although restrooms are available at the Giant City Visitors Center.

**STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY** – The following is a summary of game fish populations based on a fish community electrofishing survey conducted during May of 2021 by IDNR:

**Bluegill** – During the 2021 spring survey, a total of 36 Bluegill were collected during 10 minutes of electrofishing. Bluegill in the sample ranged from 4.5 inches up to 8 inches in length. The largest Bluegill were just over 8 inches in length. In summary, the Bluegill fishery in Horse Camp Pond is characterized by moderate abundance and growth. All 36 Bluegill in the sample were retained for aging using otoliths. Bluegill growth was minimal after age 4, at which they reached 8 inches in length. Bluegill up to 9 years old were still barely over 8 inches. Fortunately, Bluegill growth plateaued at a desirable length. Therefore, the current population structure for Bluegill is desirable in Horse Camp Pond, as the primary management goal is to maintain a quality panfish fishery with opportunities for Bluegill at least 8 inches in length. Habitat enhancements (brush piles and gravel beds) are planned for the winter of 2021/2022 to further improve Bluegill growth and recruitment.

**Redear Sunfish** – No Redear have ever been collected from Horse Camp Pond. Redear are commonly stocked in ponds to provide additional angling opportunities with little impact to other species. Redear should be stocked in Horse Camp Pond to establish a fishable population.

**Largemouth Bass** – During the 2021 spring survey, a total of 48 Largemouth Bass were collected during 10 minutes of electrofishing. The majority of bass were between 10 and 14 inches in length. The largest bass was just over 14 inches and weighed 1.3 lbs. The electrofishing catch rate for Largemouth Bass was high at 288/hour. In summary, Largemouth Bass are very abundant in Horse Camp Pond, but growth is relatively poor. However, the current population structure for bass is desirable, as high bass abundance helps drive a quality size structure for Bluegill, which is the primary management goal in Horse Camp Pond.

**Channel Catfish** – During the 2021 spring survey, 5 Channel Catfish were collected during 10 minutes of electrofishing. Lengths ranged from 16 to 17.5 inches. The largest catfish was just under 17.5 inches and weighed 1.7 lbs. The fishery for Channel Catfish is popular among anglers and is maintained by annual stockings.

### **Fishing regulations:**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Creel Limit</b>	<b>Minimum Length Limit</b>
Channel Catfish	6	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	15	None
Largemouth Bass	6	15 inches
All Fish	2 Pole and Line Fishing Only	

**PHONE NUMBERS:** Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fish Biologist – Nick Abell 618-967-0952.