



Horseshoe Lake – Alexander County

2022 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION: Horseshoe Lake is located in Alexander County at the Horseshoe Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area just south of Olive Branch, IL.

DESCRIPTION: Horseshoe Lake is 1890 acres in size with a maximum depth of 5-6 feet. There are several boat ramps and campgrounds around the lake. The lake resembles a southern swamp with bald cypress and tupelo gum trees growing throughout

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – The following is a summary of game fish populations based on a spring electrofishing survey and a fall trap netting survey.

Crappie – Horseshoe Lake contains a crappie population consisting of both Black and White Crappie, although White Crappie are much more numerous than Black Crappie. Anglers report that the lake still supports a good crappie fishery. During 2021, a total of 61 crappie were collected during the fall trap netting survey. Crappie up to 12 inches in length were collected. Over half of the crappie collected were between 3 to 4 inches, likely young-of-year. Trap netting effort during 2022 will be increased from 6 net nights to 12 net nights in an effort to gather a more robust data set.

Bluegill – A total of 49 Bluegill were collected during 2021 surveys. Of those Bluegill, 22% were over 7 inches. One individual was over 8 inches in length. Horseshoe Lake used to harbor one of the premier Bluegill fisheries in Illinois. However, a variety of environmental factors and an influx of riverine species have severely impacted the Bluegill fishery.

Spotted Gar – Spotted Gar are numerous in Horseshoe Lake and should provide excellent opportunities for bow fishing. Individuals over 5 lbs. were collected during 2021.

Buffalo – Smallmouth, Bigmouth, and Black Buffalo abundant in Horseshoe Lake and should provide excellent opportunities for bow fishing.

Fishing regulations:

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
All Fish	2 Pole and Line Fishing Only	None
Channel Catfish	6	None
Largemouth Bass	6	14"

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