



Raccoon Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Raccoon Lake was constructed in 1942 to serve as a water supply reservoir for the city of Centralia. Annual boat stickers and City/IDNR tournament permits are required.

Location: Raccoon Lake is located in Marion County on the East side of Centralia, Illinois approximately 1 mile north of Route 161.

Area: Raccoon Lake has a surface area of 970 acres, a maximum depth of 17 feet, and a mean depth of 3.9 feet. The lake has 16.4 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 39,974 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Raccoon Lake is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappies, and channel catfish. Other common species include common carp, yellow and brown bullheads, bowfin, and spotted sucker. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries below are based on the results of the most recent population survey and four-year trends in the population indices.

Largemouth Bass: Data from the 2023 population survey showed that all the population indices met or exceeded their target goals. The average body condition for all sizes of bass remained very good. Approximately 19% of the adult bass sampled exceeded the 15” minimum length. Poor bass reproduction and recruitment continue to be a major concern in this lake. Following significant improvement in 2012 and 2013, bass densities significantly declined in 2014. To help improve bass population numbers, over 35,500 largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked in the lake in June of 2017. Since 2017, the bass population has continued to fluctuate, but has showed signs of improvement. Hopefully these improvements will translate to more consistent and successful reproduction and recruitment in the coming years. For 2024, most bass over the minimum length limit will range from 15” – 20” and weigh 1.8 – 4 pounds.

Bluegill: The size structure of the bluegill population remained poor. Approximately, 34% of the adult bluegill exceeded 6” in length but only 2% exceeded 7” in length. Despite the poor size structure, average body condition was very good. It is unlikely that the size structure of the bluegill population will improve, and it will likely always be hindered by the presence of gizzard shad. Anglers can expect to catch an abundance of fish 5” – 7” in length weighing 0.1 – 0.25 pounds.

Channel Catfish: Catfish in Raccoon Lake should continue to provide good fishing opportunities in the coming year. Average body condition improved to over the lake management plan target, but the electrofishing catch rate decreased. All of the of the adult channel catfish sampled in 2023 were 18” or longer. Recent supplemental catfish stockings, along with the elimination of trot lining and jug fishing, should help to improve the size structure of the channel catfish population in the coming years. Most channel catfish caught in 2024 will be between 2 – 4 pounds, with some fish approaching 10 pounds.

Crappie: Both black crappie and white crappie are present in Raccoon Lake, but white crappie remained more abundant than black crappie. Data collected from the annual population survey indicated 18% of the adult white crappie population exceeded 10” in length and an additional 69% of the adult population were between 8” – 10” in length. Average body condition fell to below the minimum lake management plan target. Catch rate remained very high. Black crappie were less numerous in the 2023 sample, but their electrofishing catch rate more than doubled from the 2022 survey. Their population was in fair shape and average body condition remained above target. Approximately 10% of the adult black crappie in the sample exceeded 10” in length and 22% exceeded 9” in length. This lake should continue to provide good crappie fishing in the coming year. Most angler catches in 2024 will likely weigh 0.15–0.50 pounds with white crappie in the 7” – 10” range and black crappie in the 6” – 9” range, and the largest fish over 1 pound.

Fishing Regulations: Pole and line fishing only; no more than two poles with two or less hooks or lures per pole.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	15”
Channel Catfish	6	None

Additional Regulations: City of Centralia boat and tournament permits are required and may be obtained at the City Clerk’s office at 101 S. Locust, Centralia. IDNR tournament applications can be submitted on ifishillinois.org.

Contacts: Centralia City Clerk’s office 618/533-7625; IDNR Fisheries 618/393-6732

Updated 12/14/2023