



BRAIDWOOD LAKE FISHERIES FACT SHEET

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has the responsibility to provide diverse, outdoor recreation for the citizens of, and visitors to the State of Illinois. One means of providing for recreational opportunity has been to lease valuable recreational land and water from utility companies. Braidwood Lake is one such area operated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Exelon Company.

LOCATION: Braidwood Lake is located approximately 1¼ miles south of the Village of Braidwood adjacent to U.S. Route 53.

DESCRIPTION: Braidwood Lake is a 2,640 acre, partially perched cooling lake. When impounded in 1981 several old strip-mine pits were flooded within the lake proper. No horsepower limitations; maximum speed limit is 40 mph except in designated "no wake" and "hazard" areas; working gasoline engine required as main propulsion unit; boats under 14' are not recommended. County Line Road Access (south access) has a four-lane concrete boat ramp with 35 car/trailer parking. An additional 75+ car lot is located adjacent to the ramp area. Cemetery Road Access (north access) has a two-lane concrete boat ramp with parking for 35 car/trailers. A majority of the shoreline is open to bank fishing, and these areas are clearly marked. Access to the interior islands by anglers is prohibited. Supported by a thriving gizzard and threadfin shad forage base, Braidwood Lake offers anglers a variety of fish species as well as structural elements. Steep drop-offs, rock piles, man-made habitat, current and thermal breaks and woody cover are all present. The nature of this lake requires extreme care in boating and a good topographic map is well worth the expense.

HISTORY & STATUS of the SPORT FISHERY: Braidwood Lake was constructed in the late 1970's and impounded with water pumped from the Kankakee River in 1980-81. Fisheries management activities were initiated in 1978 involving the strip-mine lakes and dry lake basin. From the late '70's to the present time, Braidwood Lake has been supplementally stocked with a variety of warm- and coolwater fish species. These included largemouth and smallmouth bass, blue catfish, pure striped bass, walleye, crappie and tiger muskie. Intensive monitoring programs documented the failure of coolwater stockings to create a significant fishery, which is likely due to extreme water temperatures which are common during the summer months. Further increases in electrical output at the generating station have resulted in even warmer water temperatures during the past summers. Once supporting a variety of rooted and emergent aquatic plant species, Braidwood Lake is now dominated by an almost year 'round phytoplankton bloom. In an excellent example of cooperation between corporate partners, constituents and the IDNR, a fish habitat enhancement project was completed in 2007. This project, which was funded by Exelon's Braidwood Generating Station, resulted in the placement of over 70 man-made habitat units at various locations throughout the lake. Officials from local bass fishing organizations assisted in the selection of sites and also aided in their deployment.

Largemouth Bass: In recent years, largemouth bass sampled in fall surveys tended to be of larger average size but the number of fish collected began to decline. In 2005 largemouth bass electrofishing catch rates fell to 0.17/minute. To augment the shortfall in natural production of largemouth bass, a supplemental stocking program was initiated in 2006 which saw a total of 61,160 bass fingerlings at an average length of 4 inches released. The following year this total increased to 73,692 with stocked fingerlings ranging from 2.6 to 5.6 inches (overall average length of 3.6 inches). Results from the 2007 survey were somewhat disappointing as although the total number of largemouth collected increased, many of these were cohorts from that year's stocking. The actual number of bass greater than 8 inches in length actually declined from 2005 to 2007 which would suggest poor recruitment of fish stocked in 2005. **Smallmouth bass** have been incidental in most all IDNR sampling efforts.

Bluegill: A mainstay for bank anglers, this species is present in good numbers with quality fish in fair abundance. The average size for bluegills was unchanged from the 2005 to the 2007 survey.

Channel Catfish: While the population remains dominated by younger fish, the average size has increased over the past several years and is much improved from the late 1990's when the population was comprised primarily of smaller fish. Channel catfish collected in the 2007 fall survey averaged 13.2". **Flathead catfish** are present as well, but their population at the present time is fairly low. **Blue catfish** have been stocked on multiple occasions and should enhance the catfish fishery.

FISHING REGULATIONS: Site specific angling regulations. Two pole and line fishing only, all other statewide regulations apply.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
All Fish	2 pole and line only	
Largemouth/Smallmouth Bass	1	18"
White/Black Crappie	10	none

Swimming, wading, water skiing and sail boating are prohibited.

Braidwood Lake is open to fishing daily from 6:00 a.m. till sunset from March 1 until seven days prior to the opening of the waterfowl season (central zone). Portions of Braidwood Lake are restricted to unauthorized access; these areas are clearly marked. Bank fishing boundaries are posted. Since windy conditions can produce treacherous waves, the lake can be closed at the discretion of the site superintendent.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Site Superintendent
Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Area
P.O. Box 126
Braceville, Illinois 60914
815/237-0063

