

# DEFIANCE LAKE

## MORAIN HILLS STATE PARK ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF FISHERIES

This 48-acre lake is located at Moraine Hills State Park in northeastern Illinois. It is one of a handful of natural glacial lakes in Illinois that has remained relatively undeveloped. In addition to the lake, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources manages 2,200 acres of land and water in the park, including glacial uplands and wetlands. The lake provides a scenic and relaxing fishing opportunity for northern pike, largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegill, and black crappie during the warmer summer months and through the ice in winter.

In addition to the lake, this site offers a very scenic 11-mile trail system through diverse glacial settings and fishing access to the Fox River at the McHenry Dam. This fact sheet provides information to help familiarize visitors with the Defiance Lake, its fishery, and associated site regulations.

**Location:** Three miles S of McHenry off of River Rd. between Illinois Rt. 120 and 176 in McHenry County.

**Status of the Sport Fishery:** Status of the fishery is based on IDNR surveys from spring 2005 through 2007.

**Largemouth bass** – Electrofishing surveys have indicated an improving bass population. We captured 31 bass in 60 minutes of electrofishing during 2005, and the good news for anglers is that a high proportion of the sampled fish were large. Over 75% of bass larger than 8 in. long were over 15 in. long and 31% of stock-sized bass were over 18 in. long. The largest fish sampled was 19.5 in. long and nearly 4 lbs. Size structure was similar for the 2006 and 2007 samples. Approximately 1200 bass fingerlings have been stocked annually since 2001 to bolster bass recruitment. Biennial stocking will continue as a supplement to natural reproduction.

**Northern pike** – This lake continues to support a strong northern pike fishery. All sizes of fish are present but most of those sampled in 2006 (82%) were larger than 20 in. long. Twelve percent of the sample was over the 24-in. minimum length limit. About 150 hatchery-raised pike fingerlings (9 in. long) are stocked annually.

**Bluegill** – Numbers of bluegill in the lake have increased in the past two years. The population still contains larger bluegills up to 8 in. long, but there has been an increase in intermediate-sized fish between 4 and 6 in. long. The 2006 sample indicated 14% of the population was made up of fish longer than 6 in.

**Black crappie** – Abundance of the black crappie population appears stable compared to samples in past years. The spring 2005 survey caught several crappie between 10 and 12 in. long ( $N = 6$  of the 9 crappie sampled). Crappies up to 10 in. long also were caught during the spring 2006 survey.

**Channel catfish** – Consistent stocking of about 650 non-vulnerable channel catfish fingerlings annually has resulted in an abundant catfish population that consistently produces fish up to 24 in. long and over 5 lbs.

Fishing for all species is best in shallow areas during spring and in deeper waters and shaded areas during summer. Fall and winter (ice) fishing is best around brush-pile fish attractors installed by IDNR personnel in early spring 2006. The edges of weed beds are typically good locations to catch fish in any season.

**Fishing Regulations for Defiance Lake:** Anglers may use no more than two lines or poles when fishing at Defiance Lake. Site-specific regulations are given below; statewide regulations are in effect for other species.

Species	Daily Limit	Length limit
Largemouth bass	3	14 inches
Channel catfish	6	None

Rental boats are available and a rod and reel loaner program has been established at the park office. Carry-in canoes and kayaks may be launched at the boat ramp located behind the office. Bank fishing is prohibited due to hazardous peat soils that surround the lake, except for designated piers along the boardwalk. Note that piers quickly become surrounded by dense aquatic vegetation during summer months and vegetation treatment is not an option at this lake due to the presence of rare and sensitive plant species. Electric trolling motors are allowed.

**For Further Information Contact:** Greg Kelly, Site Superintendent  
Moraine Hills State Park  
914 South River Road  
McHenry, Illinois 60050

# Defiance Lake

McHenry County Defiance Lake
3.0 mi. SE of McHenry T44N R9E S6 Owned by: State of Illinois
Surface Area (acres): 47.8 Maximum Depth (ft.): 18.0 Average Depth (ft.): 11.7 Volume (acre-feet): 559.3 Shoreline Length (mi.): 1.2

