

STATUS OF THE BASS FISHERY



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

JANUARY 2008

STATUS OF BASS FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION I

DISTRICT 1: JO DAVIESS, STEPHENSON, WINNEBAGO, BOONE, DEKALB, OGLE, AND CARROLL COUNTIES

SHABBONA LAKE - This 319-acre lake was built in 1974 and partially funded with Sport Fish Restoration monies. With fishing as the main purpose of the lake, it was first opened to anglers in 1977 with standing timber, stump fields, fish cribs, anchored trees, rock piles, and earthen fishing piers in place.

In addition to largemouth bass, Shabbona Lake's predator population includes sizeable walleye and muskie populations along with the recently-introduced hybrid striped bass.

Shabbona Lake was opened with a 14" size limit in effect, but as time passed and the exploitation rate increased, a daily limit of one bass per day was implemented.

Creel census data from 1990 documented a fishing effort of 624 man-hours per acre. The largemouth bass catch totaled 12,784 fish weighing 8,300 pounds with a harvest of 1,431 bass (11%) weighing 2,639 pounds. The average size of bass caught weighed 3/4 of a pound and those harvested weighed 1.85 pounds for a total of 8.3 pounds per acre.

The 1997 creel census found a fishing effort of 502 man-hours per acre. The largemouth bass catch was estimated to be 29.9 bass per acre or 36.3 pounds per acre of fish that averaged 1.21 pounds while harvest was 1.4 bass per acre (4.7%) or 3.96 pounds per acre of bass that averaged 2.8 pounds. The 2002 creel census reported a fishing effort of 534 man hours per acre. Largemouth bass were caught at 49 pounds per acre and the average size of harvested bass was 2.5 pounds.

There are three fish rearing ponds at Shabbona Lake. From 1996 through 2002, at least one or two ponds have produced 11,810 largemouth bass 4.5" to 5.5" and 21,172 smallmouth bass 3.5" to 5.5". In 2003, two ponds produced 4,268 largemouth bass at 4.4" and the smallmouth bass pond produced 2,226 fish at 5.2". In 2005, two ponds produced 3,522 largemouth bass that averaged 5 inches. In 2006, one pond produced 1599, averaging 3.8" largemouth bass and 785 smallmouth bass that averaged 6 inches. In 2007, the two ponds produced 1,303, 7.9" smallmouth bass and 489, 8.1 inch largemouth bass.

The largemouth bass population of Shabbona Lake is continually improving. Fall electrofishing surveys find 8 to 9 year classes of bass with several individuals up to 20" in size.

From 1990 through 1994, bass were electrofished at a rate of 100 per hour with 23 per hour of these fish 8" in size or larger.

From 1995 through 1999, bass were electrofished at an average rate of 161 per hour with 39 per hour of these fish 8" and larger in size. From 2000 to the present, bass were electrofished at an average rate of 147 per hour with 55 per hour 8" or larger. Smallmouth

bass have shown greater numbers yearly with increasing size. In 2006 bass greater than 12 inches were sampled at 90 per hour

Bass fishing has been good for the past several years and it will be good this year with many large fish taken.

PIERCE LAKE - This 162-acre lake was constructed in 1960 by damming Willow Creek, a tributary of the Rock River. The lake was completely drained in 1970 due to a rupture in the drain valve. The lake was restocked in 1971 and from then to 1986 the lake had a strong bass population. Fall electrofishing catch rates averaged 145 bass per hour over this period. Surveys from 1987 to 1992 documented a serious decline in the catch rate of bass to an average of 31 per hour with 19 of these being young-of-the-year.

A lake creel survey conducted in 1992 indicated that the bass harvest was zero. The catch-and-release of bass was also extremely low with only 0.52 bass per acre reported caught at only 0.15 pounds per acre. A research project conducted by the Illinois Natural History Survey included a population estimate of largemouth bass. This estimate indicated there were only 149 bass 8" and larger for the entire lake.

A supplemental stocking of fingerling largemouth and smallmouth bass was made in 1993. Fall electrofishing surveys from 1994 to the present have determined that the lake's bass fishery has shown a great recovery. An upward trend continued in 2002 with 173 bass per hour collected with 44 per hour 8" or larger. Of these 8" plus bass, 55% were greater than 12".

Pierce Lake is participating in a statewide bluegill study in which a harvest restriction of ten bluegill per day may be taken at a minimum size of 8". Along with this bluegill restriction, 21,755 bass 4" and larger with a distinctive fin clip were stocked from 1999 to 2006.

To go along with the enhanced largemouth bass population, smallmouth bass are gaining in prominence. A total of 24,315 smallmouth bass at 2" have been stocked from 2000 to the present time (4,860 yearly). Smallmouth are typically electrofished at 44 per hour in the fall.

There is a 14" minimum size limit with a harvest rate of one per day of large or smallmouth bass.

LAKE LE-AQUA-NA - This 43-acre lake was built in 1955 and first opened to fishing in 1957. It was rehabilitated and restocked in 1977 following a severe winter fish kill. In addition to largemouth bass, northern pike is the only other predator. The forage base is comprised of warmouth sunfish, bullheads, brook silversides, bluegill, black crappie, golden shiners, and shad.

The 1989 creel survey documented an effort of 545 man-hours per acre with a harvest of 3.23 largemouth bass per acre weighing 2.2 pounds. The overall harvest of bass was 7.2 pounds per acre. The combined harvest and catch-and-release was found to be 23.9 bass

per acre weighing 23.7 pounds per acre.

The 1994 creel found an increase in fishing pressure to 742 man-hours per acre with a decline in harvest of bass to 2.13 bass per acre again weighing 2.2 pounds. The overall harvest of bass was 4.7 pounds per acre. The combined harvest and catch-and-release was found to be 47.34 bass per acre weighing 20.1 pounds per acre.

Fall electrofishing data 1995 through 1998 found an average catch rate of 8" and larger bass at 16 per hour. From 1999 to the present, the fall surveys found an average catch rate of 8" and larger bass at 26 per hour. In 2006 the fall survey resulted in 65 per hour greater than 8 inches and of these 40 were greater than 12 inches.

A statewide bluegill study beginning in 1999 involves this lake with no catch or size limit on bluegill and a yearly stocking of bass. From 1999 to the present, 6,089 - 4" bass with a distinctive fin clip have been stocked.

A 14" minimum size limit was enacted in the 1970's and a daily creel limit of one bass was implemented in 1990. Although large bass are not common in this lake, they can always be found by the dedicated angler.

DISTRICT 2: ROCK ISLAND, HENRY, BUREAU, LASALLE, LEE, AND WHITESIDE COUNTIES

LASALLE LAKE - The 2,058 acre cooling lake in LaSalle County was opened for public fishing in 1987. LaSalle Lake is like most cooling lakes; there is excellent growth but poor reproduction and recruitment of largemouth bass. Despite the excellent growth of largemouth bass in LaSalle Lake, the lake was on the brink of disaster by the mid -1980's. To protect the precarious bass population two strategies were employed: 1) a stringent creel of one bass over 18 inches and, 2) an aggressive stocking program.

Between the years 1986 and 1990, the lake was stocked annually with approximately 10, 1 to 2 inch bass fingerlings per acre or approximately 20,000 fish. This program was not very successful. In 1991 - 79,746 (39/A) 4 inch largemouth bass were stocked into LaSalle Lake. Thanks to local Bass Clubs approximately 56% of these fish were either marked by a fin clip or a freeze brand. By marking we were able to ascertain more accurately the contribution this program was having on the bass population.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>4" LMB STOCKED</u>
1998	40,926
1999	50,175
2000	63,796
2001	44,477
2002	44,146
2003	39,908
2003	38,241 (2.7")
2004	51,901 (3.0-4.5")
2005	51,645 (3.5-4.3")
2006	62,051 (2.4-5.0")
2007	60,891 (2.6-4.4")

Approximately 50 percent of the bass were marked with a freeze brand between 1991 and 1997. No bass were marked after 1999. The results for the past nine years have been tremendous. Young-of-year largemouth were collected at a rate of 30 to 40 times the lakes historical average. The stockings have accounted for up to 96% of the YOY bass. LaSalle Cooling Lake is scheduled to be stocked annually with 40,000 - 4" largemouth bass fingerlings.

The bass fishery looks promising especially for the chance of catching a trophy bass. Bass from the 1991 year-class started reaching legal size (18") as early as the fall of 1993. The largemouth bass population declined dramatically in 1997, 1998, and 1999. In 2000 - 2003, the largemouth bass population was much stronger. There is still an excellent population of 4 to 7 pound bass.

LaSalle Cooling Lake also receives a reduced stocking of smallmouth bass about 20,000 a year or 10 per acre. This program also appears to be working, with an excellent population of trophy-sized smallmouth bass. Excellent numbers of smallmouth bass were collected in the 1999 - 2007 fall surveys. Gizzard and threadfin shad are the main forage in LaSalle Cooling Lake.

Remember when fishing LaSalle Cooling Lake that it is a perched lake and gets very rough when the wind picks up.

LAKE CARLTON - Is a small 78 acre lake that has gained its reputation as being the premiere muskie lake in the State. Although the lake has an excellent muskie fishery it also has an excellent largemouth bass fishery. The lake has a number of 4 to 6 pound bass present and every spring a few 6 to 8 pound bass are caught.

In 1998, stock size bass were collected at a rate of 106 bass per hour and the PSD had improved to 35.2. In 1999, stock size bass were collected at a rate of 77 bass per hour and the PSD continued to 38.5. In 2000, stocked size bass were collected at a rate of 72 bass per hour and the PSD was 28.7. In 2001, stocked size bass were collected at a rate of 151 bass per hour and the PSD was 20.5 and in 2002, they were collected at a rate of 119 bass per hour and the PSD was 20.2. In 2003, they were collected at a rate of 74 bass per hour and the PSD was 15.5. In 2004, they were collected at a rate of 137 bass per hour and the PSD was 28.5. In 2005 bass were collected at a rate of 109 bass per hour and the PSD had improved to 48.0. In 2006 bass were collected at a rate of 196 bass per hour and the PSD was 32.1. In 2007 bass were collected at a rate of 175 bass per hour and the PSD 53.9.

In 1994 a population estimate put the number of bass greater than 8 inches at approximately 50 pounds/acre. The number of stock-sized bass collected in the fall survey in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 were 106, 77, 72, 151, 119, 74, 137, 100, 168, 89 respectively. Quality sized bass during the same period were collected at a rate of 23, 28, 22, 15, 24, 12, 39, 48, 54 and 48 fish per hour, respectively. Six strong year-classes were present.

The black bass fishing regulations for Lake Carlton are a 14 inch minimum length limit and a one per day creel. These stringent regulations were enacted because Lake Carlton receives annually between 600 and 800 man-hours fishing pressure per acre. Lake Carlton should have an excellent bass fishery for years to come. Prime fishing areas include the edge of the weed beds and the brush piles or fish cribs.

JOHNSON SAUK TRAIL LAKE - Is a shallow, very fertile 58 acre lake in Henry County. Dense vegetation had plagued this lake until the introduction of 115 triploid grass carp in 1990. The results were excellent in 1991 and in 1992 until late fall when Eurasian milfoil started to establish itself.

The lake has an excellent bass population with good numbers of 4-6 pound fish available to the angler. Stock and quality size largemouth bass were collected at an excellent rate (100 and 59/hour respectively) in the fall 1997 survey. In 1998, the numbers were 78 and 35 per hour respectively. In 1999, the numbers were 100 and 65 per hour respectively. In 2000, the numbers were 116 and 80 per hour. In 2001, the numbers were 169 and 44 per hour respectively and in 2002, the numbers were 146 and 83 per hour. In 2003, the numbers were 158 and 85 per hour, respectively. In 2004, the numbers were 124 and 34 per hour respectively. In 2005, 2006 and 2007 the numbers were 183, 153, 81 and 69, 57, 32 per hour, respectively. The lake currently has a 14 inch minimum length limit. The lake was stocked with 4,343 - 4.7 inch largemouth bass in 2001.

Sauk Trail has an excellent bass fishery with 5 to 6 strong year-classes present. Prime bass fishing areas include edge of the weed beds and the brush piles. Most trophy bass are caught in the spring and late fall.

LAKE GEORGE - Is a 167 acre lake in Rock Island County. Lake George is developing into one of the premiere muskie lakes in the State. The Illinois Natural History Survey completed research projects on both the walleye and muskie stocking programs in 1994. While the muskie population steadily improved in the early 1990's, the bass and bluegill populations began to deteriorate. The exact cause of the deterioration is not understood at this time. Lake George has historically had an excellent bass population until the late 1980's. The lake historically had a good population of extremely large bass, and reproduction and recruitment were always consistent.

In 1992 largemouth bass fingerlings became available when the State purchased Sand Prairie property. This property contained a few extremely shallow ponds that contained bass of different sizes. In October of 1992, Region 1 personnel were able to harvest 540 of these bass and stock them in Lake George. These bass ranged from 4 to 16 inches. In 1993 and 1994 Lake George was stocked with 1,670 - 4 inch bass fingerlings. In 1995 and 1996, the stocking was doubled to 3,340 - 4 inch bass fingerlings or 20 per acre. In 1997, the lake was once again stocked with 1,670 - 4" bass fingerlings. In 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001, the number was doubled again to 3,468; 3,610; 3,489; 3,340 - 4 inch bass. In 2002 - 3,500 - 4.5 inch bass; in 2003, 2,754 - 4.0 inch; in 2004, 3,344 - 3.6 inch bass were stocked and in 2005 - 3,480 - 4.2 inch bass were stocked.

The results have been encouraging with bass levels back to historical levels. In 1995 and 1996 largemouth bass of all sizes were collected at a rate of 77 and 76 bass per hour respectively. In 1997, largemouth bass of all sizes were collected at a rate of 134 bass/hour. Bass 14" and larger were collected at a rate of 52/hour. In 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 largemouth bass of all sizes were collected at a rate of 232, 238, 255, 146, 121, 89, 135, 85, 220 and 204 per hour. Bass 14" and larger were collected at a rate of 22 per hour in 1999, 25 in 2000, 18 in 2001, 22 per hour in 2002, 29 per hour in 2003, 30 per hour in 2005, 16 per hour in 2006 and 26 per hour in 2007. Bass quality size and larger were collected at 94 per hour at night in 2002 and 88 per hour in 2004.

Currently on Lake George there is a 14 inch minimum length limit. The fishing pressure derived from creels conducted in 1989, 1993, and 1994 reported the fishing pressure to be at approximately 200 man-hours per acre. Fishing for largemouth bass in the early 90's was tough. The two main reasons were 1) a decrease in the bass population and 2) someone introduced gizzard shad in the lake in 1990 and the shad population exploded. As a result, the bass have an over abundance of forage. The bass population has dramatically improved over the last 7 years. Bass numbers are back to historical levels. Bass fishing should be excellent in 2008.

HENNEPIN CANAL - Is a 96 mile long canal which travels through 4 counties. The canal is very shallow, averaging between 4 and 5 feet and approximately 80 feet wide. The canal had an excellent bass fishery. Prime bass fishing areas were the brush piles and water lotus bed. Water was reintroduced to different sections of the far east end in 1986 and 1996. Bass and walleye have been stocked annually in these pools to try and prevent the overpopulation of bullheads and bluegill. The program appears to be working with numerous 2 to 4 pound bass available to anglers. The mouth of the feeder has suffered several fish kills of various degrees of severity in recent years due to low dissolved oxygen levels during the summer. The whole western half of the Canal suffered a severe fish kill during the 2000 and 2001 winter. This section was restocked in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2007. The bass fishing on the west end has greatly improved. The eastern half of the Canal still has excellent bass fishing.

Marked bass fingerlings were stocked in this area of the canal in 1991-1994, and 1996 - 2000. Additional bass were stocked in 1994, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2005 from money given to the Chris Harris Memorial. Preliminary results from stocking the feeder have been encouraging as many of the bass are remaining in this area. Largemouth bass were stocked in the east end in 1996 through 2007 where water was reintroduced in 1996. In 2002 - 82,342 largemouth bass between 1.4 and 4.3 inches were stocked in different sections of the Canal to replace bass lost in winter kill. In 2003, 96,631 largemouth bass between 2 and 4 inches were stocked in different sections of the Canal. In 2004 - 34,446, 1.6" and 1,035 - 3.5 inch largemouth bass were stocked. In 2005 - 77,404, 1.7", 5,906, 3.4" and 3,000, 5.5 inch bass were stocked. In 2006-46,467, 1.7' and 1,488, 5.3" inch bass were stocked. In 2007 - 76,828, 2.0" and 656.

Several of the boat ramps were improved in 1991 and 1992. The location of the boat ramps can be obtained by writing the Hennepin Canal Parkway Office or stopping in at the Visitors Center. Because the water level in the Canal is controlled at the mouth of the feeder, the water level remains constant year round. This results in the Canal having consistent fishing year round. The Visitors Center and the Izaak Walton Camp Ground offer two of the Canal's favorite ice fishing areas.

The Hennepin Canal currently has a minimum length limit of 14 inches. The Canal offers many anglers enjoyment fishing for largemouth bass. The Better Fishing Association and Izaak Walton have been very instrumental in working for Canal improvements.

LAKE KAKUSHA - This is a shallow 52 acre watershed lake on the edge of Mendota in LaSalle County. The lake has an excellent bass population with an abundant number of 2 to 4 pound largemouth bass available for the anglers. Bass of all sizes were collected at a rate of 105, 97, 135, 50, 127, 67, 57, 84 and 166 per hour in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007, respectively. Because the lake was too low to effectively sample in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Bass over 12 inches were collected at a rate of 39 bass per hour during the fall survey in 1997, 29 per hour in 1999, 28 per hour in 2000, 18 per hour in 2001, 33 per hour in 2002, 31 per hour in 2003, 22 per hour in 2004, 42 per hour in 2006 and 66 per hour in 2007. The lake currently has a 14 inch minimum length limit with a three fish a day creel limit. The bass fishing should be strong for several years.

The boat ramp on the north side of the lake has been dredged to make launching much easier. When the lake level is low, boating can be difficult because of the shallow littoral areas. In 1999, Lake Kakusha became part of the Illinois Natural History Survey Bluegill study. As a result, the lake got stocked annually with between 1,300 and 1,700 - 4 inch largemouth bass fingerlings. In 2002 - 1,377 - 4.1 inch bass were stocked. In 2003, - 1,587 - 4.0 inch bass and in 2004, 1,414 - 3.5 inch bass were stocked in Lake Kakusha.

DISTRICT 3: HENDERSON, KNOX, MCDONOUGH, MERCER, AND WARREN COUNTIES

ARGYLE LAKE - This 92.7 acre state lake located in McDonough County west of Macomb, has been a popular fishing area since 1951. The most recent 2002 creel census shows the overall fishing pressure at 154 hours/acre (down from 378 hours/acre in 1995). The 2002 survey also revealed 3,517 (4724 in 1995) largemouth bass being caught and released (1.23 lb. avg.) with 541 (457 in 1995) being harvested at an average weight of 2.23 pounds.

Historical data for the largemouth bass population over a 33 year period at Argyle Lake has revealed a "boom-bust" phenomenon with the fishery. Attempts to decrease the effects of this phenomenon were made in 1979 with a 12 to 15 inch slot limit and in 1988 with a modified 12 to 15 inch slot limit, where only one largemouth bass larger than 15 inches could be kept. The current 2007 largemouth bass data reflects a good response to these regulations. Bass anglers in 2008 should have an ample supply of 13.5 to 18.0 inch fish (1.25 to 3.25 lbs.) and a limited supply of larger fish.

SNAKEDEN HOLLOW STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA - This 2,500 acre coal surface-mined area located in Knox county near Victoria, was purchased by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in 1987. The site contains 112 water impoundments (282 total acres of water) of various sizes up to 142 acres. Providing public sport fishing opportunity is one of the secondary site objectives. At the time of purchase, many of the lakes and ponds on the site contained stunted populations of 7 to 12 inch largemouth bass. The management strategy during the 1987 through 1991 period included the stocking of prey species (bluegill and redear) and providing regulations that encouraged the angler harvest of bass under 12 inches while protecting fish over 12 inches (modified 12 to 15 inch slot limit). The management strategy achieved its goal in 1992 by restructuring the bass population toward larger sizes. To protect and further enhance this improved bass resource, the site regulation was changed in 2005 to an overall 3 fish daily limit with only 1 fish over 15 inches. Other lakes in the District and the Region continue to outperform Snakeden Hollow in terms of quality, but Snakeden Hollow provides an excellent opportunity for slot size fish. Fair catches of largemouth bass above the slot are expected in 2008.

During 2005 and 2006, the site's largest impoundment, Lake McMaster, had a new spillway installed which will increase the lake size to an estimated 160 acres and the water depth by 5 feet. To facilitate spillway construction, the lake was lowered 10 feet making boat access impossible. The boat ramp was extended in 2007, restoring boat access to the lake.

Snakeden Hollow State Fish & Wildlife Area is closed to all fishing each year during the waterfowl hunting season (starting October 1st and usually ending in late January).

LAKE STOREY - This 133 acre public co-op lake located in Knox County at the northwest edge of Galesburg, is a fertile watershed impoundment having a high carrying capacity of fish. The lake is estimated to have a very high overall annual fishing pressure in the range of 400 to 800 man hours/acre.

Historical data for the largemouth bass population over a 33 year period (1974 - 2006) at Lake Storey has revealed a cycle of high quality followed by a period (2 - 4 years) of low quality. A largemouth bass fishery possessing high quality in its structural indices will always be followed by a period of intense fishing pressure and harvest (overfishing) and then followed by a period of low quality and low fishing pressure.. This phenomenon may be called the "boom-bust-build-cycle". To decrease the effects of this phenomenon, a 12 to 15 inch slot limit went into effect in 1986. To further enhance the bass fishery, the size limit was changed in 2005 to a modified 12 to 15 inch slot limit with only 1 fish daily over 15 inches.

The current 2007 fish population data at Lake Storey, shows a slight increase in the supply of 15 inch and larger bass over the preceding year, and within the goals for the lake. The 2008 fishing season at Lake Storey will offer bass anglers an excellent supply of 1.25 to 2.00 pound fish for catch & release (within the 12 to 15 inch slot limit) and a fair supply of

fish larger than 3.0 pounds.

DISTRICT 4: PEORIA, FULTON, AND STARK COUNTIES

ANDERSON LAKE STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA - Due to the annual inundation of Anderson Lake by the Illinois River, fish species management is a difficult objective. The associated sedimentation, loss of lake water volume, and loss of aquatic plants have all negatively impacted the sportfish habitat present.

Fishery data from the 2007 fall survey indicated a low density of bass from 10 to 16 inches in Anderson Lake, with 21 fish collected per minute of electrofishing.

Illinois River bass regulations are in effect at Anderson Lake with a 12 inch minimum size in effect. The lake has no horsepower motor limit, but caution is advised due to numerous stumps. Contact the site staff, in advance, at 309/759-4484 about water conditions.

BANNER MARSH - The 2007 fall survey and angler success indicated the largemouth bass 12" - 18" protected slot length limit (no possession) and a 3 fish daily creel limit were having a positive effect on the bass population. The RSD 14, RSD 16, and RSD 18 values have remained high with 23% of the bass sampled over 16 inches in length. The overall water level in the marsh was down approximately 2 feet by fall due to the drought conditions in central Illinois.

East Point Access, Wheel Lake: At normal pool the 350 acre lake is composed of a deep final cut section and a large series of strip mine wheel cut lakes. The wheel cut portion (280 acres) contains a maze of points, islands, flooded brush and diverse aquatic vegetation, while the final cut portion (70 acres) has a maximum depth of 60 feet and rocky structure. This lake has a water clarity average of 1 foot and the least rooted aquatic plants on the site. The fall 2007 survey showed a strong bass population from 8 inches to 22 inches. The RSD18 value showed 10% of the bass were over 18 inches with an overall collection rate of 1.48 bass per minute of electrofishing. The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, muskie, channel catfish, walleye, carp and gizzard shad.

Bell's Landing Access, Shovel Lake was enlarged to over 200 acres by the end of 2000. It is a "T" shaped final cut strip mine lake (74 acres) with a maximum depth of 65 feet that was attached to approximately 100 acres of littoral zone surrounding deep water pockets (25 acres of strip mine ponds). This lake has a water clarity average of 4 feet and good rooted aquatic plant growth. The fall 2007 survey showed a strong bass population from 7 inches to 19 inches. The RSD value showed 11% of the bass were over 18 inches with an overall collection rate of 1.52 bass per minute of electrofishing. The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, muskie, walleye, channel catfish, carp, and gizzard shad.

Main Access, Johnson Lake is approximately 600 acres and is composed of a maze of deep strip mine water connected to shallow flats of flooded trees. This lake has a water clarity average of 4 feet and good rooted aquatic plant growth. The fall 2007 survey showed a strong bass population from 8 inches to 18 inches. The RSD 18 values showed 1% of the bass were over 18 inches with an overall collection rate of 1.32 bass per minute of electrofishing. The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, walleye, channel catfish, northern pike, muskie, carp, and gizzard shad.

There is a 25 horse power limit at Banner Marsh.

The 2008 fishing season at Banner Marsh will offer a good supply of 1 to 4 pound bass with a limited number of trophy fish from 5 to 8 pounds. Weedlines and large areas of aquatic vegetation are present in summer, so bring your weedless lures.

Organized bass fishing tournaments need to register the date and location with Rob Hilsabeck at (309) 446-9143.

CANTON LAKE - Canton Lake has produced its share of trophy largemouth bass over the years. The 2007 spring survey revealed a diverse fishery composed of yellow bass, white and black crappie, and a numerous carp population. Gizzard shad have also been introduced into the lake from an unknown source. The gizzard shad may provide additional forage for the larger bass, but may also hinder bass recruitment.

The overall bass fishery in 2007 was characterized by a medium density population but, the size structure and body condition of the bass population is very good. Sixty percent of the bass sampled were over 15 inches in length with an overall collection rate of .72 bass per minute of electrofishing. In 2008 dedicated anglers can expect fish over twelve inches (1 to 2 lbs.) and a limited number of trophy bass (4 to 8 lbs.). The combination of sedimentation, lack of aquatic vegetation, and competition from other fish species is the cause for poor bass recruitment and average bass density. In 2004, a stocking of 5000, 2.9 inch bass was completed to assist natural reproduction. In 2006, 1 million fry bass were stocked. In 2007, a bass stocking of 36,000 fish at 2.2 inches long and a stocking of 6,250 fish at 4.5 inches long were completed. The lake regulations include a 15 inch minimum length limit and a daily creel limit of three largemouth and/or smallmouth bass per day.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, muskie crappie, bluegill, yellow bass, channel catfish, carp, and gizzard shad. The City of Canton has various user fees for boat use and an 85 horse power motor limit.

DOUBLE T SFWA - This site is located 3 miles northwest of Canton and was acquired by the state of Illinois in September 2001. The big lake is approximately 64 surface acres in size and has very steep and deep profile that is typical of a stripmine lake. The largemouth bass population is defined by a high density of fish from 8 to 18 inches long with average Relative weight values.

The 2006 electrofishing survey collected 2.5 fish per minute. The current bass regulation is a 21 inch minimum size limit and 1 fish per day. A concrete boat ramp was installed in

2005 and the lake is electric motors only. Organized bass tournaments need to register with Rob Hilsabeck at (309) 446-9143.

DISTRICT 5: MARSHALL, PUTNAM, TAZEWELL, AND WOODFORD COUNTIES

POWERTON LAKE - This 1,426 acre lake was opened for fishing in 1983. It has a history of very limited largemouth bass populations. Almost no aquatic vegetation resulted in very limited successful reproduction and survival of young bass. Many attempts to initiate good populations through stocking and other management techniques had only marginal success. The fishery was characterized by numerous white bass, channel catfish and green sunfish with gizzard shad as a forage base.

In 1987, a stocking of smallmouth bass was made to ascertain if they would be able to reproduce, survive and create a black bass fishery. Since the available fish habitat includes large rock along most of the shoreline, and appropriate sized forage was available, this initial stocking prospered. Smallmouth bass were stocked at a rate of 10 fingerling fish per acre each year until 1991, when it was determined that the smallmouth bass population was being maintained by strong natural reproduction.

As a result of the initial stocking success, numerous smallmouth bass in excess of five pounds were caught during the 2007 fishing season. Fast growth and better body condition of smallmouth was promoted by the survival and reproduction of threadfin shad and brook silversides this year in Powerton Lake. During the fall population sample, 37 percent of all smallmouth collected were 16 inches long or longer. A collection rate of almost .82 fish per minute of electrofishing indicates a good abundance of smallmouth bass. Reproduction of smallmouth bass was excellent! The good level of reproduction and recruitment of smallmouth bass shown by this year's sample bodes well for the smallmouth bass fishery in 2007 and 2008. It take three years growth in Powerton Lake to produce a "legal" fish.

As a result of the review of population survey data trends, the outlook for smallmouth bass fishing in 2008 is good. Because of the restrictive harvest regulations of 1 fish per day with a minimum size of 18 inches, Powerton Lake has a reputation as a trophy smallmouth bass fishery. Even shoreline casting is an effective way of fishing smallmouth at Powerton. Best months are March and April with early October also good. Best baits are jigs or shad imitators fished off the rock ledges along the levees in the coolest water available. Fly fishing has proven effective when a hatch of midges is occurring. The use of streamers and fly fishing tackle has also proven effective early in the season.

No services, food, or gas are available at Powerton Lake. A double concrete ramp provides boating access, and there is no horsepower restriction in effect at Powerton.

SPRING LAKE - In 1978, Spring Lake (Tazewell County) was divided into two distinct waters for the purpose of major rehabilitative management of fish and wildlife populations. North Spring Lake consists of 578 acres and South Spring Lake has an area of 610 acres. Both Lakes have an average depth of 2.9 feet. Historically, they were part of the Illinois River and as such was a lateral, freshwater marsh with luxuriant aquatic vegetation growth.

The management of these lakes was intended to result in a "recreation" of this marsh environment. North Lake was rehabilitated in 1981 and South Lake in 1986. For the purpose of defining the largemouth bass populations, they need to be considered separately.

SPRING LAKE (NORTH) - This lake is characterized by heavy growth of aquatic vegetation for much of the spring, summer and fall. There is an excellent population of intermediate to large bass, mainly in the 2 to 5 pound range. A window of opportunity for fishing exists from March 15 through April 30 or until aquatic vegetation becomes excessively abundant. At that time of year, largemouth bass fishing could be rated as excellent. In May, largemouth bass fishing becomes much more difficult due to the tremendous coverage of aquatic weeds and very clear water. Many bass fishermen select the hours of darkness to fish during the warm summer months. They catch a large number of big bass on weedless surface lures at that time. The extensive weed beds serve as a fish preserve, creating growth problems for intermediate and larger sized bass. Aquatic vegetation consists of lily, lotus and heavy growths of Eurasian milfoil, coontail and algae.

As a result of the review of data generated by field surveys in 2007, fishing for largemouth bass should be excellent on North Spring Lake in 2008. The 2007 fish population survey showed, however that 35% of the largemouth bass collected were 15 inches or longer. In the past condition and growth have been impacted by the extremely dense Eurasian milfoil beds. This has resulted in a slower growth rate than was demonstrated over the past several years. Because of vegetation treatments, more open area was created in 2007, resulting in better growth. A 3 fish daily limit and a minimum size of 15 inches is in effect.

The best largemouth bass fishing at North Spring Lake occurs early, before weeds become a problem. Try fishing this Spring along the levees and around duck blinds using crank baits or after dark using surface plugs later in the summer.

SPRING LAKE (SOUTH) - The coverage of aquatic vegetation in 2007 was much less abundant than was seen in previous years. The Eurasian milfoil was treated in 2007 using 2,4-D DMA 4. This treatment using 90 gallons helped to suppress the milfoil until late in the year. The South Lake's largemouth bass population size structure in 2007 was characterized by numerous intermediate sized fish, good reproduction, and good numbers of largemouth (18% of fish sampled) over 15 inches in length. The numbers of larger fish had been declining due to past harvest levels and competition between yellow bass and largemouth at a smaller size. A 3 fish daily limit and a minimum size of 15 inches is in effect. This change has been made necessary to improve predator pressure on small bluegill and, more recently, yellow bass. The catch per unit of effort of electro-fishing has declined somewhat over past levels.

Based on the results of sampling efforts in 2008, the fishing prospects for largemouth bass in South Spring Lake are fair to good. The best results for bass fishing in 2008 will be early in the spring before weeds become a problem. Best areas will be along the center ditch and the spring hole areas along the bluff. Best baits will be crank baits, spinners and top-water plugs.

All bass tournaments must pre-register at the site on a first come, first served basis at least 60 days prior to the event. A 25 horsepower restriction is in place at Spring Lake. Food, bait and boat rental are available at the lake.

STATUS OF BASS FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 2

DISTRICT 6: DUPAGE, KANE, AND McHENRY COUNTIES

McCULLOM LAKE - Recent surveys indicate that anglers will find a mature and balanced population of largemouth bass in McCullom Lake. The electrofishing catch during fall 2006 (35 bass/hour) was down compared to the fall 2004 sample (47 bass/hour), but size structure remained in good shape for anglers seeking large fish (RSD-15 = 33% and RSD-18 = 11%). The largest bass sampled measured 19.6 in. long and weighed 4.5 lbs. Growth of bass in this glacial lake was right at the average for northern Illinois and fish typically were in good condition. The catch of several young-of-year ($N = 17$) showed that natural reproduction of bass occurs in the lake. However, declining numbers in surveys and reports of lower catches of bass by anglers suggests the lake may benefit from supplemental stocking. IDNR stocked nearly 5,000 advanced largemouth bass fingerlings (4.0 in. long) in August 2006 and again in 2007. Scheduled fish population surveys during fall 2008 and in future years will provide data necessary to assess the success of the supplemental bass introductions. A one fish daily creel and 15 in. minimum length limit for largemouth bass is enforced at the lake. The high proportion of legal fish in past samples suggests that the regulations are helping to reduce bass over harvest.

Access at this lake is limited to shoreline fishing at several small parks and there is a single narrow, public boat ramp on the lake's south shore. Outboard motors are limited to 9.9 horsepower. A handicap-accessible fishing pier is available in Petersen Park on the lake's northeastern shoreline. The lake is moderate in size (244 acres), shallow (average depth = 5.3 ft.), and lacking in good structure for bass. Try targeting the edges of lily pad beds on the north and west end of the lake, the overhanging trees at the northeast end, or any submerged logs or deadfalls where the water is deep enough to hold fish. This lake also supports a strong northern pike population so be prepared to hook into some healthy northerns while fishing for bass. Ice fishing is very popular here, in part, because of improved access on the ice. There is an aerator that runs when needed so beware of open water and areas of thin ice.

SILVER LAKE - This DuPage County Forest Preserve lake has an abundant bass population. Good natural recruitment combined with abundant vegetation and low angler harvest has resulted in density dependant "stunting" of several abundant largemouth bass year classes. This slow growing population has a size structure skewed toward intermediate-sized fish (8-12 in. long; PSD = 3.3%; PSD management goal = 40-60%). Scale aging indicated that growth rates were well below the northern Illinois average and that 6 years is needed for bass to reach the 12-in. mark. A bass removal program (via electrofishing) was initiated in 2006 to reduce the number of

intermediate bass present and allow for faster growth of remaining fish. To date, we have removed 185 bass less than 13 in. long that had a combined weight of 121 lbs. Removed bass are being stocked in other district lakes.

Angling restrictions at Silver Lake include two pole and line only fishing for all fish and a 15-in. minimum length limit and three fish daily creel for bass. An improved launch, rental boats, and handicap accessible fishing piers are available at this 62-acre lake. Anglers can launch their own non-gasoline-powered boats up to 20 ft. in length.

DEFIANCE LAKE - Located in a beautiful natural setting in Moraine Hills State Park, Defiance Lake is popular with largemouth bass and northern pike anglers. Shoreline fishing is limited during summer due to dense shoreline vegetation and abundant submersed plants in shallow areas around fishing piers. Vegetation treatment is not an option due to the presence of State endangered and threatened plants. Boat rental is available through a concessionaire and electric trolling motors are allowed at the lake. Outside boats have been excluded in the past, but anglers can now bring in canoes and kayaks to fish the lake.

A combination of poor sampling efficiency for bass and low natural recruitment has resulted in low catches of largemouth bass ($N < 10$ fish/hr.) in past annual electrofishing surveys. Similarly, a spring 2006 survey produced only seven bass in 55 min. of electrofishing. Several sizes of bass were represented in the sample and the largest fish was 19.4 in. long and nearly 4 lbs. Anglers continue to report catches of large bass from this lake.

LAKE ATWOOD - The McHenry County Conservation District owns this 20-acre reclaimed quarry that offers an opportunity to fish for bass from shore or non-motorized boats (no gas or electric motors allowed). An improved boat launch and handicap-accessible fishing pier are available at the site. The lake is deep and clear (30-ft. maximum depth; 18-ft. visibility is typical) and heavily vegetated. These conditions make for some challenging fishing, but local anglers flock to this lake because it holds nice-sized bass up to 20 in. long and over 4 lbs. Based on a spring 2007 survey, bass were very abundant (electrofishing catch = 1.6 bass/min.) and population size structure was excellent (Proportional Stock Density = 59%). The lake is stocked annually with about 500 bass fingerlings to supplement natural reproduction and the program appears to be very successful. There is a one fish daily creel limit and 15 in. minimum length limit for largemouth bass at the lake. Easy access and numerous fish make this a great place to take a kid fishing.

MALLARD LAKE - At 89 acres, Mallard Lake is the largest fishing lake in the DuPage County Forest Preserve system, and it supports an excellent largemouth bass population. We captured 88 bass in 90 minutes of electrofishing during May 2007. Small and large fish were well represented in the sample. About 17% of the sampled bass were yearlings, which indicated adequate natural reproduction. A good proportion of the bass 8 in. and larger were over 12 in. long (PSD = 56%) and 10% were over 15 in. long. The biggest bass captured was 17 in. long and weighed 2.7 lbs. Regulations include two pole and line only fishing for all fish and a 15-in. minimum length limit and three fish daily creel for largemouth bass.

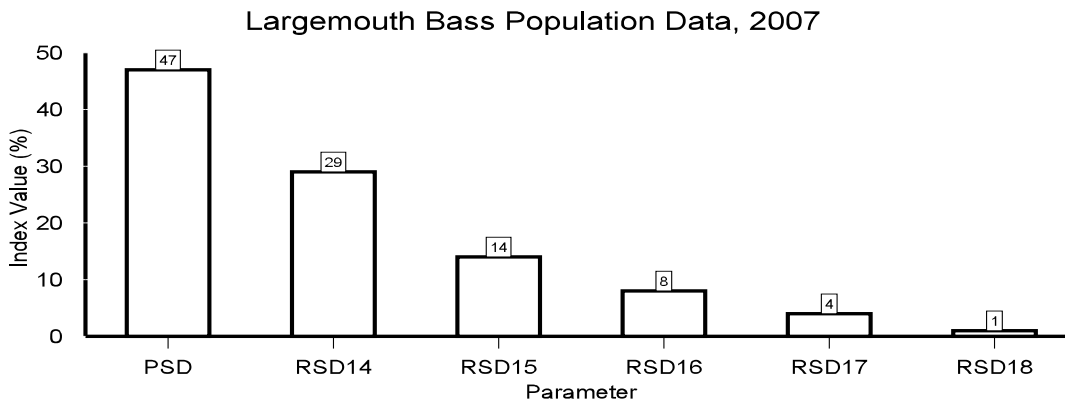
At this time, only shoreline fishing is allowed at Mallard Lake, but an extensive trail system and bridges to islands make for plenty of good fishing spots. Handicap accessible fishing piers are available and further access development is likely in the future.

DEEP QUARRY LAKE - This 40-acre reclaimed quarry in DuPage County is being managed for trophy bass fishing. Hence, an 18-in. minimum length limit and one fish daily creel are being enforced at the lake. A spring 2007 survey produced a catch of 105 bass in 60 min. of electrofishing. Many of these fish were yearlings ($N = 59$), but other year classes were well represented in the sample. Proportional Stock Density was 36%, but Relative Stock Density (RSD-15) was 0%. The absence of big bass in the survey does not mean they are gone from the lake. Many large bass were seen avoiding the AC electroshocker by swimming to deep water in this steep-sided, clear water quarry lake.

Shoreline fishing is popular and carry-in boats and electric trolling motors are allowed. Try fishing the edge of the shallow, gradually sloping shelf created off the west shore and the numerous man-made fish cribs and reef structures located throughout. A “Fishing in DuPage County” booklet will help locate drop offs and other structures that hold bass.

DISTRICT 7: LAKE COUNTY

FOX CHAIN O’LAKES - Bass fishing is very popular on the Chain O’ Lakes. Tournaments are numerous. The intense fishing pressure targeting a resource limited to backwaters, channels, and vegetated lakes means fishermen target basically the same resource whether they are a weekly tournament angler or an occasional fishermen. Catch data shows fish survive fairly well to 12” (maturity- PSD Value) then become nearly half as abundant at legal size (14”- RSD14) and become, again, become less abundant at each inch beyond. We only occasionally collect bass over 18” long while electrofishing in the Chain however large bass are present and caught by patient (and good) anglers fairly often.



The above graph illustrates population indices derived from recent catch data. From the management perspective this population doesn't look too bad. It shows a population with high reproductive potential that could expand if fish nested successfully. **Practicing catch and immediate release, in May, would go a long way to increasing the number of successful nests and ultimately bass.** Electrofishing catch rates were just below management objectives of 0.5 fish per minute at 0.38 fish per minute so even though population statistics are acceptable, catch rates were below objectives. Sampling error explains some of the low catch rates with sample runs occurring in both good and poor bass habitats not just good habitats. Survey goals are to look for species diversity in the "systems" fishery and not just specific species.

Supplemental bass stockings which began in 1989 have helped offset reproductive limitations and will continue to maintain the population at current levels. Abundance varies lake to lake depending on the amount and type of vegetation and the quality of the near shore habitat.

Smallmouth bass are present in the system but represent only a small proportion of the bass population. Fishermen have reported smallmouth bass to 18". Smallmouth bass have a "Catch and Release" season from April 1 to June 15 because the Chain is ultimately an impounded portion of the Fox River which starts near Waukesha Wisconsin and flows south through the Chain O' Lakes and ultimately into the Illinois River.

Bass stockings are concentrated in backwater lakes and deeper channels where habitat is more appropriate to fingerling survival and away from larger predators.

In 2007, the Chain O' Lakes was stocked with approximately 94,921 four inch fingerlings and approximately 126,237 (1.5" to 3") fingerlings.

INDEPENDENCE GROVE LAKE (LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT) -

The Lake County Forest Preserve District developed this lake with fishing in mind and provides ample shorefishing access. The lake was stocked with a compliment of panfish and predators so that a balanced fishery exists. Lake County opened the Park with a users-fee for non-County residents and a "Catch and Release" management philosophy in spring 2001.

A standardized fish survey in May 2006 yielded 1.8 per minute of electrofishing. This exceeded the Management goal of 1 fish per minute. Bass ranged in size from 2.5" to 21" and had a Proportional Stock Density (PSD) of 88. PSD Management Objectives for a balanced fishery generally fall between 40 and 60 so you can see the population is composed of larger sized fish and is unbalanced. In a Catch and Release system this may not pose the same collapse potential as in a harvest system but there is some concern about sustainability of the system and the current regulations effects. The Relative Stock Density value for fish greater than 14" (RSD-14) was 48. What do these population indices numbers mean? It means bass fishing is really good right now and

there are a bunch of fish from 12" to 15" long with occasional beasts up to 20 inches and in the 4 to 5 pound range.

Independence Lake is an appealing Park to be in, it offers an abundance of shore fishing opportunities, and can provide a lot of action at the end of your fishing pole. This is a great place to take your Mom or Dad fishing. Largemouth bass exceeding 7 pounds have been reported.

STERLING LAKE (LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT) - This lake is offers a varied fishery including panfish, channel catfish, bass, muskie and walleye. It is located east of the intersection of Route 41 and Route 173 in Van Patton Woods Forest Preserve and can be fished from shore or from a car top boat or canoe. Electric motors are allowed but no gas motors.

A fish survey in May 2006 yielded 1.7 largemouth bass per minute of electrofishing. Fish ranged in length from 2" to 17.5" long. The sample's Proportional Stock Density (PSD) was within Management Objective of between 40 and 60 at 58. Catch rates were high and population indices were within target ranges. These data combine to make this a nice lake to fish. There are good numbers of quality-size (12") fish to catch and has a relatively large proportion of fish over legal size (length limit = 15") with an RSD-15 of 20. Sterling Lake offers bass fishermen the chance to catch some decent size fish on public water and from shore: this is a combination that is tough to achieve in northeastern Illinois. When we electrofish we collect our bass near shore in less than 5 feet of water near vegetation.

DISTRICT 8: COOK COUNTY

BUSSE LAKE (COOK COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT) - This 590 acre lake system is divided into two portions; the Main Lake and South Pool. Both lakes offer ample opportunity to shore fish or bring a small boat (electric motors only) to get away from the crowds. No outboard motor can be attached to a boat using Cook County Forest Preserve District lakes. There is a 14" inch length limit, 6 fish per day creel on all Cook County Forest Preserve Lakes. Largemouth bass were collected via electrofishing at a rate of 1.0 fish per minute and 0.9 fish per minute in the Main Pool and South Pool, respectfully in 2004. These catch rates meet sampling goals outlined for these lakes. Population indices were also similar for the two lake portions and were within management objectives. The Proportional Stock Density (PSD), which describes the number of fish over 12 inches long compared to the total number of fish over 8 inches long, was 58 in the Main Pool and 67 in the South Pool. The Management objective for this index is for the data to fall between 40 and 60. The interpretation is that 40 to 60 percent of the sample should be at least 12 inches long to maintain a strong reproductive potential and that, conversely, 60 to 40 percent of the sample are at least 8 to 12 inches long and will replace older fish as they experience either hooking or natural mortality. Mortality increases with age. The Relative Stock Density (RSD) index offers a way to evaluate specific lengths. We use an RSD - 14 to evaluate the 14

inches length limit on Busse's Lakes. Our sampling showed that 31 percent of the bass caught in the Main Pool (RSD-14 = 31) and 27 percent of the bass caught in the South Pool (RSD - 14 = 27) were at least 14 inches long. Both these values are slightly above management objectives and suggest bass fishing should be good in both pools. These lakes are maintained through natural reproduction. No bass have been stocked for several years and things look pretty good. Busse Lake has a variety of habitats including deep water, hard substrate and natural shoreline (vs. sheetpiling), all combine to provide adequate habitat for bass to thrive.

SKOKIE LAGOONS (COOK COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT) - This 190 acre lake system contains 7 lagoons, many are divided by low-head dams and are not negotiable by boat. A developed boat launch for small boats (electric motors only with no gas motor attached) is located off Tower Road and a variety of shore fishing access and parking locations are scattered throughout the system. Patches of aquatic vegetation and downed timber offer structure to hold fish as well as many fish cribs spread throughout the system. Forage species include gizzard shad and small bluegill. Bass over 4 pounds were collected during the survey and larger fish have been reported by local anglers so the potential for good action abounds. The electrofishing catch rate for largemouth bass, in 2004, was 1.0 fish per minute, in-line with management objectives. The PSD was 58 and RSD - 14 was 31. These data indicate a balanced fishery with plenty of larger size fish to catch and carry the population forward with natural reproduction. Insight into which portions of Skokie Lagoons offer better shorefishing opportunities than others can be obtained at one of the local bait and tackle stores.

WOLF LAKE (WILLIAM POWERS STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA) - This 390 acre urban lake sits on the Illinois - Indiana border and offers a considerable amount of shoreline fishing. Boats are allowed on the lake (motors over 10 hp must remain at a "No Wake" speed). Both largemouth and smallmouth bass are present in the system. Wolf Lake has a 6 fish, 14" length limit for bass (either singularly or aggregate). Aquatic vegetation in late summer becomes dense and makes motoring around the lake difficult. In spring and fall vegetation is less dense. Bass over four pounds have been collected and reported by anglers. The combined black bass (both largemouth and smallmouth) catch rate was 30 fish per hour in 2005. This was below our target goal of 60 fish per hour but still reasonable for an urban lake with abundant shoreline access. Population statistics indicate a slightly unbalanced fishery tending toward larger individuals with a largemouth PSD of 68 and a smallmouth bass PSD of 69. These data suggest reproduction may be sporadic though it does occur. PSD values give a good indication of the percent of the population that could reproduce naturally if allowed too. Managers use another index to compare fish at specific sizes. Relative Stock Densities allow managers to pick a size and see what proportion of the sample equals or exceeds that value. The RSD - 14 value for largemouth bass at least 14 inches long (legal in Wolf Lake) was 53 and for smallmouth was 38. These data indicate that 53% of the largemouth bass and 38% of smallmouth were at or above legal size so fishing can be quite good. Catch and release fishing and heavy vegetation in late summer probably

combine to protect black bass during summer when fishing pressure can be extremely heavy. With continued restraint on harvest, this fishery should continue to flourish.

Wolf Lake was stocked with approximately 4500 smallmouth bass fingerlings in 2007 to supplement any natural reproduction that occurs.

DISTRICT 9: GRUNDY, KENDALL, WILL, AND KANKAKEE COUNTIES

HEIDECKE LAKE - Located in Grundy County just southeast of Morris and under an hour=s drive from the Chicago metropolitan area, Heidecke Lake offers a diverse angling experience and provides very good black bass fishing opportunities. Impounded in the late 1970's, Heidecke Lake previously served as a cooling reservoir for Midwest Generation=s Collins Station, a fossil fuel peaking plant. However, this generating station was decommissioned at the end of 2004 and has been completely razed. This eliminates thermal loading and any flow which was created by the circulation of cooling water through the plant, resulting in an ambient lake. Water clarity has remained relatively unchanged and as such the rate of expansion of aquatic plant growth has been less than anticipated.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, largemouth bass dominated the black bass fishery but over time this changed. Even though an intensive stocking program attempted to maintain the largemouth bass population, no appreciable improvement was noted in either IDNR fisheries surveys or, more importantly, in angler=s creels. At the same time, the smallmouth bass population was flourishing through natural reproduction and without any assistance of additional hatchery stockings. The supplemental stocking program for largemouth bass was terminated in 1997 and although the population still maintains fair densities through natural reproduction only, the fishery is not what it was back in the early days (an all-time high of 540 largemouth bass were collected in 1980 and many of these fish exceeded 16 inches). If aquatic vegetation proliferates in response to improved water clarity, it will be interesting to see how this will effect the largemouth bass population. To improve spawning efforts for largemouth bass, artificial spawning logs have been placed at various locations in the lake. However, an evaluation of largemouth bass spawning success conducted in August, 2007 failed to produce young-of-the-year largemouth in any number.

The smallmouth bass population has been very strong for the past several years and this species was collected in a greater than 3 to one margin in comparison with largemouth bass in the 2006 fall standardized biennial survey. Incidence of their occurrence in IDNR surveys began to increase in the mid-1980's and by 1992 smallmouth bass outnumbered largemouth bass in fall sampling, this despite the fact that significant numbers of largemouth bass fingerlings were being stocked. The 2006 fall survey electrofishing catch rates for smallmouth bass improved from the previous survey and were the best they have been since 2000 when smallmouth were collected at the rate of 0.8 fish per minute. Nearly one-quarter of all smallmouth bass collected in this survey were legal size and 5.6% were 18 inches and larger. The average size

smallmouth bass collected increased from the previous survey (8.9" to 11.2") and eclipsed the overall long-term average by almost a full inch. Conversely, largemouth bass took a down-turn, collected at the rate of just 0.16 fish per minute which is identical to the catch rate observed in 2000. Largemouth bass collected in the fall 2006 survey exhibited an average length of 7.7" which has virtually remained unchanged since the 2004 survey. No largemouth bass 18 inches or larger were collected and 15.1% of the sample met or exceeded the minimum length limit. Based on the results provided by the 2006 angler creel survey, smallmouth bass are a mainstay of the Heidecke Lake fishery and ranked fourth behind striped bass hybrids, walleye and channel catfish in terms of the total number which were caught; largemouth bass were eighth on this list. Catch-and-release angling for black bass and especially smallmouth was indicated by a low exploitation rate as less than 2.5% of the smallmouth bass caught were kept. (Note: The estimated average size smallmouth caught by anglers weighed 1.47 pounds at an approximate length of 14 inches). Heidecke Lake is open to fishing from April 1st until one week (7 days) prior to the opening of the North Zone waterfowl season. The lake is open daily from 6:00 a.m. and closes at sunset. The bank fishing area access is located at the eastern side of the lake and is handicapped accessible, featuring a barrier-free fishing pier. A concessionaire located at the boat ramp offers bait and tackle as well as boat and motor rentals. Heidecke Lake is a partially perched lake and can become very hazardous in windy conditions. There are no boat motor horsepower restrictions but boats must have a working gas-powered motor. Larger boats and watercraft with high windshields may have difficulty passing under the railroad trestle to access the north side of the lake. Black bass harvest is regulated by a 15-inch minimum length limit and a three (3) fish per day creel (singly or aggregate).

MAZONIA STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA - Located in Grundy and Kankakee Counties, this reclaimed strip-mine area contains water bodies ranging in size from 0.1 to 150 acres. Most all of the larger ponds and lakes have similar fish species composition and support naturally recruiting largemouth bass populations. Smallmouth bass, if present, are incidental. To protect these populations, this entire area is governed by a 15 inch minimum length limit and a three (3) fish daily creel limit. Among the lakes which were surveyed in 2007, Mazonia Lake #7 exhibited a very good largemouth population with bass collected at an overall rate of 1.7/minute of electrofishing effort. The average size bass collected during this survey measured 11.4" with 3.2% of the collection legal size or better. Body condition of sub-legal sized bass suggests foraging competition. Lakes #8 and #9 are connected and their bass populations were fairly similar. Largemouth were captured by electrofishing at a fairly high rate from Lake #8; 2.4/minute for all sizes. Catch rate declined to 1.6/minute from Lake #9. The average size bass collected from Lakes 8 and 9 measured 10.6" and 10.7", respectively. A successful spawn was noted as young-of-the-year largemouth were very prevalent, especially in Lake #8. Bass tournaments at Mazonia typically utilize the parking area near Lake #8 as a weigh-in site and consequently the bass which are processed get released into that lake. For that reason, the percentage of larger size bass tends to be greater in these two lakes. The number of legal size or larger bass collected in the 2007 survey comprised over 12% of the collection for either

lake and there was also a greater number of bass 18 inches and larger present. A high percentage of the bass collected from these lakes also exhibited hooking damage. Largemouth bass populations on Doc's Club Lake and Wilderness Lake are most likely stronger than was indicated by the survey data, due to hostile sampling conditions. Largemouth bass collected from Doc's Club indicated fair reproduction and recruitment with bass sampled up to 20 inches in length. Far fewer bass were collected from Wilderness Lake but the remote location of this water area results in far less exploitation and may be a good bet for excellent angling opportunity. Shoreline access is made difficult by the growth of tall reed grass which encircles most of the Mazonia lakes and ponds. As a result, float tubes or "belly boats" have become a very popular way to fish these areas. Typical of strip mine lakes, water clarity is usually very good and successful anglers take this into consideration in regards to both tackle and tactics. Boat access is available at several of the larger lakes, with propulsion limited to electric trolling motors at the Mazonia Main Unit. The Mazonia South Unit contains several large lakes ranging from 50 to 150 acres and as such gas-powered outboards (no horsepower limit) will be permitted. These lakes are governed by a strict no-wake regulation for boaters. Primitive but serviceable gravel boat ramps are presently available at Monster, Ponderosa and Eagle Lakes only. Best bets for bass fishing success include: in the Main Mazonia Unit Lakes 3, 7, 8 and 9 and Monster and Wilderness Lakes in the South Mazonia Unit. The Doc's Club and Wilderness areas presently offer bank fishing and carry-in boat fishing. With the exception of Monster Lake which offers year 'round fishing opportunity, Mazonia is closed to fishing during upland game and waterfowl season. Following the completion of the hunting seasons, Mazonia reopens for ice fishing dependent upon ice conditions.

BRAIDWOOD LAKE - A 2,308 acre partially perched cooling reservoir, Braidwood Lake is located in Will County near the town of Braidwood. Braidwood Lake has two boat launching facilities, located at the north and south ends of the lake as well as extensive bank fishing areas. Boats must have a gasoline powered motor and there are no horsepower limitations.

A cooling facility for Exelon's Braidwood Nuclear Generating Station, lake temperatures can soar into the high 90's and approach 100 degrees (Fahrenheit) during the summer months. As a result of several consecutive seasons of extended periods of high water temperatures, the aquatic plant community has shifted from one which hosted a variety of both emergent and submersed rooted plants, to one which is almost completely dominated by phytoplankton. These same conditions appear to have had an adverse effect upon the largemouth bass population as well. In recent years, 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 of 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. A formal creel survey was conducted during the 2007 season, the results of which were not available at the time this report was compiled. To further protect the population and increase density, the black bass harvest regulation was amended in April, 2007. Anglers are now restricted to a daily limit of one (1) black bass 18 inches or larger. 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. Hopefully, more of these types of projects will come to fruition which will create additional key habitat elements for largemouth bass.

Braidwood Lake is open daily from 6:00 a.m. until sunset, March 1st until one week (7 days) prior to the opening of waterfowl season in the Central Zone. Like many other cooling lakes, fog can cause problems during the first and latter portions of the fishing seasons. Anglers should also be wary of windy conditions which can make the lake extremely dangerous.

LAKE MILLIKEN - Located near Wilmington within the Des Plaines Conservation Area in Will County, this 26 acre lake is often over-looked, yet supports a very strong largemouth bass population. Largemouth bass provide the majority of the action with smallmouth bass considered incidental. Bass harvest on Lake Milliken is restricted to fish a minimum of 15 inches in length (statewide creel) and float tubes (belly boats) and boat fishing is not allowed. However, shore fishermen will find ample targets in a variety of weed beds, stumps, lay-downs, brush piles and other features which can hold fish. Data from the most recent fall IDNR survey indicated a very stable population, producing good numbers of legal-size bass as well as a few fish of trophy caliber. Average length for bass collected in the 2006 survey was more than 10.7 inches with over 17% of the collection legal size or better. For those bassers who lack the "big rig", bank fishing for trophy bass at Lake Milliken can be very rewarding. Lake Milliken is open to fishing year 'round from 6:00 a.m. until sunset.

MONEE RESERVOIR - A public co-op lake owned and operated by the Forest Preserve District of Will County, Monee Reservoir is a 44 acre water area located near the town of Monee and just off I-55. A minimum length limit of 15 inches coupled with a restrictive daily creel of just one fish has resulted in a substantial bass population which provides fast action for sub-legal fish with some "big fish" potential. No smallmouth bass are present in Monee Reservoir. Electrofishing catch rates for largemouth bass 6 inches and larger showed little change from 2005 to 2007 (falling around 0.8/minute). The average length for bass collected in 2007 (8.8 inches) fell slightly below the long-term average. Higher overall electrofishing catch rates experienced in the 2005 survey

were influenced by the substantial number of young-of-the-year and one year old bass. The 2006 year class which showed strong representation in the 2005 survey did not appear to recruit at a high rate as these fish were not as prevalent in the 2007 survey. Legal size and larger bass were fairly common in the 2007 survey, accounting for nearly 38% of the bass which were at least 8 inches in length. Several trophy-caliber bass were collected as well. Monee Reservoir offers diverse habitats, both natural and man-made. Boat rental is available at the site and boat fishing is restricted to those boats only. Serious bass fishermen are advised to utilize this service. The majority of the shoreline is closed to bank fishing and therefore much of the fishery receives modest angling pressure. Early-spring herbicide treatments have resulted in a shift in the aquatic vegetation component of the lake. Where once dominated by Eurasian milfoil, the reservoir is presently supporting a more diverse collection of native plants. Angling for bass just off the edges of these weed beds reportedly results in good bass action throughout the year, including the “dog days” of summer. Monee Reservoir is open year ‘round but is closed to ice fishing.

STATUS OF BASS FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 3

DISTRICT 10: CHAMPAIGN, DEWITT, FORD, IROQUOIS, LIVINGSTON, MCLEAN, PIATT, AND VERMILION COUNTIES

HOMER LAKE - The largemouth bass population on this lake has been good for the past 5 years. During the 2005 survey, 42 bass per hour of electrofishing were collected. Based on bass collected in 2005 that were larger than 8 inches, 48% were larger than 12 inches and 19% were larger than 15 inches. The bass regulation at Homer Lake is a 14-inch minimum length limit with a 6 fish daily creel limit.

LAKE OF THE WOODS - Lake of the Woods is a 25.5 acre lake in Mahomet and is part of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. During the 2007 fall survey, 90 bass per hour of electrofishing were collected. Approximately 39% of the bass were longer than 12 inches, but only 3% were longer than 15 inches. Bass density is starting to increase from strong year classes in 2003 and 2005. The bass regulation on Lake of the Woods is a 15-inch minimum length limit and a 1 per day harvest restriction. Lake of the Woods has an electric motor only restriction.

SHADOW LAKE (LAKES AT RIVERBEND) - This lake is an old gravel pit that is connected to the Sangamon River by a small drainage outlet. This allows the movement of fish from the lake to the river and vice versa. On rare flood events, the river can flood into this lake. Even with the influence of the river on the fish community, the bass population is very good. In 2002, a catch rate of 88 bass per hour of electrofishing was obtained. Of bass 8 inches and larger, 60% were longer than 12 inches and 13% longer than 15 inches. One bass was collected that weighed over 5 pounds. The bass regulation is a 15-inch minimum length limit with a 1 per day harvest restriction.

SUNSET LAKE (LAKES AT RIVERBEND) - This lake will provide anglers a chance to fish clear water for largemouth bass. This lake is a gravel pit with deep water, but does have some shallow water with vegetation. In 2006, a catch rate of 112 bass per hour of electrofishing was obtained. All of the bass collected were less than 15 inches. Even with the majority of the population being small, there are large bass in this lake. Two

bass over five pounds were collected during the 2004 survey. The largemouth bass regulation is a 15-inch minimum length limit with a 1 per day harvest restriction. Sunset Lake has an electric motor only restriction.

CLINTON LAKE - The fall 2007 survey resulted in a catch rate of 51.8 bass per hour of electrofishing. This is the second highest catch ever obtained on Clinton Lake. There are good numbers of larger bass in the lake, with 65% being over 12 inches in length, 23% over 15 inches, and 1% larger than 20 inches. There was a good spawn in 2006 and produced the second highest catch rate for bass under 6 inches since 1992. However, the spawn in 2007 was the weakest we have seen since 1993. The best spawn was in 2002 and is the year class that is responsible for the majority of the bass larger than 15 inches.

In order to improve the smallmouth bass fishery, the State Hatchery System started stocking smallmouth bass in Clinton Lake in 2001. The highest catch rate for smallmouth bass was obtained in the 2006 survey. The majority of the smallmouth bass were less than 6 inches, but this relates to a strong year class and will provide excellent smallmouth fishing in a few years. The catch rate declined in 2007, but there was an increase in the percentage of smallmouth larger than 15 inches.

The bass regulation on Clinton Lake is a 16" minimum length limit with a 3 fish daily creel limit. Major access areas have bulletin boards with area rules, fish creel and size limit regulations and other visitor information posted. All state boating, hunting, fishing and park regulations remain in full force where applicable. Various portions of the lake are designated as no-wake, electric motor only, or no boat areas for safety and security reasons. Areas closed to public access include: the water intake area for the power plant (new buoy line across lake), the spillway and dam areas east of the spillway, and the bank or water surface of the discharge flume (ditch). Boats and fishermen are not allowed in designated swimming areas when swimming is permitted. Please pay special attention to such areas designated by the maps, posted signs, and buoys. The entire portion of the lake between the DeWitt County Highway 14 Bridge and the Illinois Route 48 Bridge is designated as a fish and waterfowl refuge and is closed to all public use for the period of October 10th through March 31. The land portions of the site in this designated area will still be open for authorized hunting activities (except waterfowl) during this time period. As on all large lakes, Clinton Lake can become very rough when the wind exceeds 15 m.p.h. All boaters are advised to be aware of the weather. Although there is no horsepower or speed limit on Clinton Lake, shallow areas and underwater hazards do exist in numerous portions of the lake. Boaters should operate their craft accordingly.

WELDON SPRINGS - This lake provides an excellent opportunity to catch a big largemouth bass. The catch rate for the 2007 fall survey was 96 bass per hour; even with high catch rates, growth rates are still good. Of the bass 8 inches and longer that were collected, 81% were longer than 12 inches, 40% longer than 15 inches, and 2% were longer than 20 inches. The 2005 and 2006 year classes were very strong and will help maintain the bass population. Weldon Springs has one boat ramp and the lake is

limited to electric motors. The largemouth bass regulation is a 15-inch minimum length limit and a one per day harvest restriction.

LAKE BLOOMINGTON - The fall survey in 2007 depicted an improving bass population. Catch rates were higher than the 12 year average and the catch rate for bass larger than 15 inches was the highest rate in over 12 years. The only negative from the survey was that the 2007 year class is very weak. The year class is almost 1/8th of the 12 year average. The good news is that the 2006 year class was 4 times the 12 year average. The increase in catch rates in 2007 was due to this year class. The catch rate for bass in the 8 to 12-inch size range went from 11 per hour in 2006 to 129 per hour in 2007. The bass regulation on Lake Bloomington is a 15" minimum length limit with a 6 fish daily creel limit. Lake Bloomington has one boat ramp and charges an access fee. Boats are limited to 40 horsepower. For information on fees and Lake Bloomington call 309/747-2615.

DAWSON LAKE - The largemouth bass population on this lake provides anglers with a great opportunity to catch a quality largemouth bass. Based on bass collected during the night survey in 2007, the size structure of the bass population looks good. Approximately 60% of the bass were over 12 inches and 14% were over 15 inches. The catch rate for bass larger than 15 inches was higher than the six year average. The strong 2006 year class increased catch rates in the 8 to 12-inch size range from 18 bass per hour in 2006 to 56 per hour in 2007. The 2007 year class was weak, but if another strong year class is produced in the next 2 years the population will be fine. The bass regulation on Dawson Lake is a 15-inch minimum length limit with a 6 fish daily creel limit. Dawson Lake has a no wake restriction on motors over 10 horsepower.

EVERGREEN LAKE - The catch rate in 2007 was 49 bass per hour and fails to meet the management objective of 60 bass per hour. The number of bass collected below 6 inches was above the 13 year average, but all other sizes were below average. Even though the 2007 year class was above average, it was still a weak year class. Recruitment has been a problem on Evergreen Lake for many years. A vegetation project was initiated to produce cover for small game fish in Evergreen Lake, with the goal of increasing natural recruitment. Starting in 2005, vegetation was planted in Evergreen Lake to increase habitat available to small bass. In the fall of 2007 bass spawning structures were placed in the lake to help bass find better nesting sites. The bass regulation on Evergreen Lake is a 15-inch minimum length limit with a 6 fish daily creel limit. Evergreen Lake has two boat ramps and has a 10 horsepower limit on all boats. In order to launch a boat on Evergreen Lake, a sticker must be purchased. The stickers can be purchased at the boat ramps, Comlara Park Visitor's Center, or by calling 309/726-2022.

WHITE OAKS PARK LAKE - Even though this lake is located in the City of Bloomington, it still provides an angler a good chance of catching a largemouth bass. In 2003 and 2007, a catch rate of 80 bass per hour of electrofishing was obtained. This catch rate exceeded the objective of 65 per hour. The majority of the bass in the lake are less than 15 inches, but the high density will give anglers an easier time at catching a bass. The lake has no boat ramp, but can easily be fished from shore. The bass regulation is a 15-inch minimum length limit with a 1 per day harvest restriction.

MILLER PARK LAKE - This is another lake located in the City of Bloomington and offers a good bass fishery. A catch rate of 97.8 bass per hour was obtained in 2007. Of the bass collected over 8 inches, 54% were longer than 12 inches and 22% were longer than 15 inches. Bass are plump at all sizes, with the largest bass tipping the scale at 4.9 pounds. The lake has no boat ramp, but can be easily fished from shore. The bass regulation at Miller Park Lake is the statewide bass regulation.

TIPTON LAKE - Tipton Lake is a relatively new park lake in Bloomington that provides an angler with a good bass fishery. The catch rate in 2007 was 164 bass per hour. Approximately 46% of the sample was bass less than 6 inches. The bass are producing strong year classes and as this pond gets older it should produce some nice fish. Of the bass collected over 8 inches, 65% were longer than 12 inches and 35% were longer than 15 inches. The lake has no boat ramp and shore access is limited to fishing piers. The bass regulation is the statewide bass regulation.

LAKE MINGO - The catch rate for largemouth bass in Lake Mingo declined during the 1990s but has started to increase in the past few years. Natural recruitment of largemouth bass has been poor for many years, but the State Hatchery System stocks largemouth bass to supplement natural recruitment. Natural recruitment needs to improve to help maintain a good bass fishery. In 2006 catch rates for bass under 6 inches were the highest rate since 2000. Since the Lake Mingo survey is completed in May, these fish were from the 2005 year class. There has been an increase in catch rate for small bass since 2000. The overall catch rate for bass was 56 per hour and failed to meet the objective of 60 per hour. Of the bass collected over 8 inches, 49% were longer than 12 inches and 15 % were longer than 15 inches. The bass regulation on Lake Mingo is a 15-inch minimum length limit with a 6 per day harvest restriction. Lake Mingo has one boat ramp and charges a fee to launch a boat.

LAKE VERMILION - The largemouth bass population continues to be good and should continue to get better, especially with the cooperative stocking program between the Vermilion County Conservation District, Consumer Illinois Water Company and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The total number of bass collected per hour was 41 in 2001 and 54 in 2003. In 2007 the catch rate increased to 76 bass per hour. Approximately 23% of the bass collected were stocked fish. Each year the lake is stocked with 2,400 8-inch bass that are marked. The size structure of the bass population also looks good with 45% being over 12 inches in length and 18% over 15 inches (based on bass collected that were 8 inches and larger). Lake Vermilion has a good number of large bass in the population and with the help of the stocking program bass fishing should be good. The bass regulation on Lake Vermilion is a 15" minimum length limit with a 6 fish daily creel limit. Lake Vermilion has one boat ramp and charges a fee to launch a boat. This lake is part of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Lakes Program. This program will help to improve water quality and fish habitat in Lake Vermilion.

CLEAR LAKE (KICKAPOO STATE PARK) - In 2007, a catch rate of 84 bass per hour of electrofishing was obtained. The density of largemouth bass has increased in this lake over the past ten years. The population is dominated by small bass, but larger bass are present in the lake. Only 8% of the bass collected were larger than 12 inches.

Even though this lake is very clear, it does have shallow areas with aquatic vegetation. The bass regulation is a 14-inch minimum length limit with a 3 per day harvest restriction. This lake does have a boat ramp.

INLAND SEA LAKE (KICKAPOO STATE PARK) - In 2007, a catch rate of 75 bass per hour of electrofishing was obtained. The population is dominated by small bass, but larger bass are present in the lake. Only 7% of the bass collected were larger than 12 inches, but 2% were larger than 20 inches. Even though this lake is very clear, it does have shallow areas with aquatic vegetation. The bass regulation is a 14-inch minimum length limit with a 3 per day harvest restriction. This lake does have a boat ramp.

LONG LAKE (KICKAPOO STATE PARK) - This lake is another deep clear lake that was formed from strip mining. In 2006, a catch rate of 34.8 bass per hour was obtained. Bass density is relatively low but does provide anglers an opportunity to catch a largemouth bass. The bass regulation is a 14-inch minimum length limit and a 3 per day harvest restriction. The lake has two boat ramps.

SPORTSMEN LAKE (KICKAPOO STATE PARK) - This lake has a relatively low density of bass. The bass population is dominated by small bass, but an experienced bass angler may catch a large bass in this lake. In 2005, a catch rate of 48 bass per hour was obtained. Only 2% of those bass captured were larger than 15 inches. The bass regulation is a 14-inch minimum length limit with a 3 per day harvest restriction. This lake does have boat access.

GEORGETOWN RESERVOIR - This lake is an impoundment of the Little Vermilion River and is heavily influenced by the river. The density of bass has increased in the past ten years, but density is still low. This lake resembles a slow moving river and should be treated as such. Anglers wanting to fish a small river for largemouth bass will have an opportunity on this lake. Approximately 24% of the bass collected in 2004 were larger than 15 inches. There are beds of aquatic vegetation that hold fish, but the water is dark to due high loads of suspended sediment. The bass regulation is a 6 per day harvest restriction. There is one boat ramp.

DISTRICT 11: CLARK, COLES, CUMBERLAND, DOUGLAS, EDGAR, MACON, MOULTRIE, AND SHELBY COUNTIES

MILL CREEK LAKE - Is located approximately eight miles west of Marshall, in Clark County. The lake covers 811 surface acres with a maximum depth of 60 feet and average depth of 22.7 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available and the Clark County Park District (217-889-3901) collects a boating access fee. A 12-15 inch protected length limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

This lake supports an abundant self-sustaining bass fishery due to the abundant aquatic vegetation, which grows in the lake. Historically, an excellent largemouth bass population exists with the average catch ranging from 1 to 2 pounds. A good catch and release fishery exists for bass within and above the protected slot length limit of 12-15 inches. Angling pressure on this lake, non-organized and tournament from both Illinois and Indiana residents, is very heavy, attesting to this lake's popularity. A significant fish

kill, comprised primarily of largemouth bass, occurred in late summer 1999. The fishery has recovered very well and catch rates by fishermen have improved significantly in recent years. The results of the fish population survey of fall 2007 resulted in a catch rate of 77 bass, age 1+ or older, per hour. This is slightly lower than 82 per hour in 2005, but still much improved over the 56 per hour in 2003. Bass were collected from 3 to 20 inches, with the largest weighing 4.2 lbs. This bass population appears to have recovered completely, as catch rates of bass in fish population survey significantly exceeded those prior to the fish kill in fall 1997. This fishery ranks with the best in the state. Bass fishing prospects are rated as very good to excellent for catch rates and very good for size.

LINCOLN TRAIL LAKE - Is located within Lincoln Trail State Park, approximately two miles south of Marshall in Clark County. The lake covers 146 surface acres with a maximum depth of 35 feet and average depth of 15.9 feet. Free public boat launching facilities are available. There is a 10 H.P. motor limit on this lake. A 14-18 inch slot length limit for largemouth bass became effective in April 2002. There is a four (4) fish daily creel limit, of which only one (1) can be over 18 inches.

Largemouth bass in this lake have excellent natural recruitment due to abundant aquatic vegetation, resulting in a self-sustaining bass fishery. A good catch and release fishery exists at the present time. The results of the fish population surveys of both fall 2005 and 2007 resulted in a catch rate of 42 bass, age 1+ or older, per hour, which is slightly below average for this lake. Catch rates vary due to abundance of vegetation, water clarity, and less than ideal conductivity levels. A high density of bass occurs in this lake, however the size structure is not as high of quality as desired. The bass collected in the most recent survey ranged from 3 to 21 inches and the largest fish collected weighed 3.9 lbs. Low harvest rates of bass below the slot length limit contributes to slower growth rates and reduced recruitment through the protected range. **This is a lake that would benefit greatly from increased angler harvest of largemouth bass below the slot limit's protected range.** This would increase growth rates and recruitment through the protected range. Bass fishing prospects are rated as good for catch rates, fair to good for size.

LAKE DECATUR - Is located in Decatur in Macon County. The lake covers 3093 surface acres with a maximum depth of 22 feet and average depth of 6.0 feet. Several public boat launching facilities are available and the City of Decatur (217-424-2837) collects a boating access fee. A 14-inch minimum length limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

Due a lack of aquatic vegetation, natural recruitment of bass fry is poor in Lake Decatur. Fingerling bass have been stocked in 1990 and 1992-2004 by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and 1999-2003 by the Decatur Angler's Association to try to boost the bass population. The results of the fish population survey of fall 2006 resulted in a catch rate of 30 bass, age 1+ or older, per hour. This is much improved over the catch rate from the 2004 survey of 18/hr. Bass collected ranged from 3 to 18 inches, with the

largest weighing 3.3 lbs. Catch rates of the 2006, 2005, and 2004 year classes were well represented. The 2006 year class was collected in high numbers, exhibited outstanding growth, and should recruit very well into this fishery. The contribution of these three year classes should provide an outstanding boost to this fishery in the next couple of years. Bass fishing prospects are rated as fair for catch rate and size.

LAKE MATTOON - Is located approximately eight miles southwest of Mattoon and about 1.5 miles northwest of Neoga, in Shelby, Coles, and Cumberland Counties. The lake covers 1050 surface acres with a maximum depth of 31 feet and average depth of 11.4 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available and the City of Mattoon (217-234-3611) collects a boating access fee which covers Lake Paradise as well. A 14-inch minimum length limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

Bass recruitment is not as high as desired due to a lack of suitable aquatic vegetation for nursery habitat in the lake. Catch rates from the standard fish population survey in fall 2006 (32/hr) were below the results of the 2004 survey (56/hr). A very good distribution of fish from 8 through 21 inches was collected with the largest fish weighing 5.2 lbs. A fair number of 1-2 pound bass are available with bass up to 7 pounds caught. Bass fishing reports were pretty good for 2006 and prospects are rated as fair to good for catch rates and good for size.

CHARLESTON SIDE CHANNEL LAKE - Is located approximately three miles southeast of Charleston, in Coles County. The lake covers 330 surface acres with a maximum depth of 10 feet and average depth of 4.7 feet. Free public boat launching facilities are available. The entire lake is designated as a no-wake area. A 14-inch minimum length limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

Fingerling bass have been stocked in 1990 and 1992-2005 due to poor natural recruitment of bass fry in the lake, due to the lack of suitable aquatic vegetation for nursery habitat in the lake. Although bass density is low a wide variety of sizes of bass exist in the lake. Overall the collection rate was very poor in the fish population survey in fall 2007, with only 17, age 1+ and older bass collected per hour. The size of bass collected ranged from 3 to 16 inches, with the largest weighing 2.8 lbs. Despite consistent stocking at high densities, bass fishing prospects are rated as poor to fair for catch rates.

PARIS TWIN LAKES - Are located on Route 1 on the north edge of Paris in Edgar County. The two lakes have a combined surface acreage of 220 acres. Public boat launching facilities are available and the City of Paris (217-465-7601) collects a boating access fee. A 14-inch minimum size limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

Catch rates for age 1+ and older bass were 27 in the east lake and 39 per hour in the west lake. Bass collected ranged from 2 to 21 inches with the largest weighing 5.9 lbs. Bass fishing prospects are rated as fair to good for catch rates and good for size.

PANA LAKE - Is located approximately two miles east of Pana in Christian and Shelby

Counties. The lake covers 219 surface acres with a maximum depth of 36 feet and average depth of 14.7 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available and the City of Pana (217-562-3626) collects a boating access fee. A 14-inch minimum size limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

Although sporadic reproductive success occurs in this lake, a fair to good quality largemouth bass fishery exists. Low catch rates of largemouth bass in biological surveys may be attributed in part to relatively low conductivity levels. Good numbers of bass over the 14-inch minimum length limit are reported caught by anglers in recent creel surveys. In the fish population survey in fall 2006, catch rates for age 1+ and older bass were only 21 per hour, which is well below the results of the previous survey's catch rates of 43/hr. Bass were collected from 3 to 18 inches with the largest weighing 3.1 lbs. Bass fishing prospects are rated as fair to good for catch rate and size.

LAKE PARADISE - Is located approximately four miles south of Mattoon in Coles County. The lake covers 176 surface acres with a maximum depth of 16 feet and average depth of 8.5 feet. A new public boat launching was built in 2006 which should enhance access to this lake. The City of Mattoon (217-234-3611) collects a boating access fee which covers Lake Mattoon as well. A 10-horse power boat motor limit is in effect. A 14-inch minimum length limit exists and compliance appears good.

Although reproductive success is sporadic in this lake, bass population quality remains at least fair. Densities of bass are not as high as desired, with catch rates in the fish population survey in fall 2004 averaging only 40, age 1+ and older, bass per hour. Bass were collected from 4 to 20 inches with the largest weighing 4.7 lbs. Bass fishing prospects are rated as fair for catch rate and good for size.

This lake has been drawn-down throughout 2006 for a ILEPA Clean Lakes Project. This will likely have a negative effect on the 2006 year class, but may result in improved year classes in future years. Aquatic vegetation will be planted as part of the project which may have a positive effect in future years as well.

WALNUT POINT LAKE - Is located in Walnut Point State Park, approximately 3 miles north of Oakland in Douglas County. The lake covers 52 surface acres with a maximum depth of 32 feet and average depth of 12.5 feet. Free public boat launching facilities are available. Only the use of electric motors is allowed on this lake. Largemouth bass in this lake have excellent natural recruitment of bass fry, resulting in a self-sustaining bass fishery. A 12-15 inch slot length limit is in effect for largemouth bass.

Bass collection rates in the fish population surveys of both fall 2005 and fall 2007 were lower than usual, with only 29 and 27 age 1+ and older bass collected per hour of electrofishing, respectively. Catch rates, though lower than usual, likely do not reflect the true density of bass in this lake, which is usually very high. Bass were collected from 2 to 20 inches with the largest weighing 5.1 lbs. Although bass numbers are good, fishing can be difficult. Jig and pig combinations seem to work especially well due to

high numbers of crayfish present. Bass fishing prospects are rated as fair to good for both catch rate and size.

LAKE SHELBYVILLE - Located in Shelby and Moultrie Counties in east-central Illinois. This lake has a surface area of 11,100 acres, with a maximum depth of 67 feet, and an average depth of 18.9 feet. Numerous public boat launching facilities are available, with a fee assessed on U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' (217-774-3951) developed access area boat ramps, and free access on state park or Corp gravel boat ramps. A 14 inch minimum length limit and statewide creel limit of six fish daily is in effect for largemouth bass.

Recent floods and a few well-timed smaller flood pulses have resulted in excellent natural recruitment of largemouth bass. It appears that strong year classes were recruited in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007! Recruitment of the 2007 year class of bass was good despite low water levels due to a prolonged summer drought. The strong year classes produced should sustain this fishery for many years.

This lake has become a very popular tournament destination due to the high quality of the fishery. Fishermen catch rates in 2006 and 2007 were much improved over 2004 and 2005. Fishermen reported catching good numbers of bass both below and above the size limit through the 2007 season. In 2007, total weights reported at two tournaments held in June were 891 lbs. (377 fish) and 603 lbs. (237 fish) weighed in. In general, fisherman catch rates in 2006 and 2007 declined sharply when shad fry began schooling, although one August '07 tournament reported 444 total pound (184 fish). Gizzard shad abundance in 2004, 2005, 2006 were at or exceeded all time highs, which is likely accounting in part to reduced catch rates of bass by fishermen.

The number of bass collected in the 2007 fall survey (31/hr.) was up from 2006 (24/hr.), but slightly lower than 2005 (34/hr.). Poor weather on the first day of sampling resulted in reduced catch rates (18/hr), with the second day of sampling resulting in much higher catch rates (43/hr.). Incidental sampling later in the season indicated the potential for high catch rates. The largest bass collected during the 2007 fall survey was 19 inches and weighed 4.3 lbs, with the largest reported by tournaments being 6+lbs". The largemouth bass fishing prospects for 2008 remain good to excellent for numbers and good to excellent for size and should improve significantly in future years.

A foundling population of smallmouth bass was stocked in both fall 2006 and fall 2007. Approximately 200 fingerling smallmouth, averaging 6.5", were stocked in 2006 and 279, averaging 7.1", were stocked in 2007. All were stocked into the lower part of the lake. Good recruitment of largemouth bass will allow for continued efforts to establish smallmouth bass in Lake Shelbyville.

STATUS OF BASS FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 4

DISTRICT 12: ADAMS, BROWN, CALHOUN, HANCOCK, MORGAN, PIKE, AND SCHUYLER COUNTIES

LAKE JACKSONVILLE - This 476 acre lake was rehabilitated and restocked in 1986. Since the rehabilitation, an above average largemouth bass population has developed. Numbers of bass in the 2 - 5 pound range are quite abundant and larger bass in the 6 - 8 pound range are not uncommon. During the 2007 fish population survey, largemouth bass collection decreased to 60 bass per electrofishing hour, a decrease from 97.5 in 2006. Low water levels had exposed critical shoreline habitat causing the largemouth bass to reside in deeper water off points and drop-offs. Nine year classes were represented in the collection with the exception of 8+ individuals. Largemouth bass in the 11.6" to 17.4" size comprised nearly 69% of the collection. Approximately 16% of the collection was comprised of larger fish greater than 18". In 2007, 47.5% of all largemouth bass collected during the survey were greater than 15". Natural spawning in the early 1990's resulted in insufficient numbers of small bass being produced. In an attempt to improve the overall bass population, the City of Jacksonville built a 2.8 acre nursery pond that produces 4,000 to 7,000 largemouth bass fingerlings each year. In 2007, only 695 largemouth bass fingerlings were produced averaging 7.45 inches. 2007 was the third consecutive year the area has experienced drought conditions. Rearing pond, water level inspections in August indicated that approximately 25% of the normal rearing pond acreage had evaporated and had not been replenished. The nursery pond produced fish are supplemented with an additional fingerling stocking with fingerlings produced from the Illinois Hatchery System. The 2007 annual fish population survey indicated that the collection was slightly dominated with larger individuals. The number of young-of-year (< 6") collected was low but collection of these fish may have been hampered by lower than normal water levels. This lake has consistently produced quality largemouth bass and has attracted the attention of many bass clubs and subsequent tournaments. Since so many anglers wish to fish Lake Jacksonville, the City has adopted a policy where it controls the number of tournaments conducted each year. Applications are accepted beginning January 2 of each year on a first come-first serve basis. If your club wishes to schedule a tournament the number to call is 217/479 - 4641.

LAKE PITTSFIELD - This 240 acre, city owned lake maintains a stable and balanced largemouth bass population year after year. During the 2007 fish population survey, 138.5 largemouth bass were collected per hour of electrofishing indicating a slight decrease from 177.5/hour in 2006. In 2007, the area experienced the third consecutive year of summer drought conditions. Lake Pittsfield was approximately 2 - 2.5 feet below normal water levels exposing critical habitat forcing individuals to deeper water off points and drop-offs decreasing capture-ability. One to three pound individuals dominate the population, but adults in the 5 to 7 pound range are not uncommon. In 2007, largemouth bass from the '04, '05 and '06 year classes comprised 75% of the

collection indicating excellent recruitment into the population. In 2007, 85% of the largemouth bass collected ranged from 9" - 16" with 30% of these fish ranging between 13.5" and 16". Largemouth bass greater than 17" comprised 12% of the 2007 collection. A 14' minimum length limit is in effect with most anglers practicing "catch and release". Overall the largemouth bass population is rated good. Dense beds of coontail on the eastern shoreline providing "refuge" areas for young-of-year, also provide ambush points for feeding adults. Anglers utilizing weedless rigs do best. There is a 25 hp "no wake" regulation in effect.

HORTON LAKE - This picturesque 12.6 acre lake, located in Navoo State Park in Hancock County is a little sleeper. Located adjacent to the camping area, the largemouth bass population is rated as good to excellent. Most recent survey data indicated reproduction is more than adequate with forty-two percent (42%) of the bass collected being 6 inches or less. Slightly above 50% of the bass collected ranged from 9 inches to 20 inches.

SILOAM SPRING LAKE - This small, deep and clear, 58 acre lake has always maintained a strong largemouth bass population comprised mainly of smaller bass 1.5 - 2 pounds. Visibility in this lake ranges from 12 to 15 feet and at this depth the larger individuals suspend. However, in the spring under turbid conditions, when the larger adults are in the pre-spawn condition, several large adults in the 6 to 8 pound range are caught. Largemouth bass collected during the most recent fish population survey indicated fifty-four (54%) of the fish collected were between 8" and 12". There is a 12 to 15 inch slot limit with a three fish per day creel limit. Boat rental is available.

SCHUY-RUSH LAKE - Initially this lake was built to accommodate 225 acres of water and was designed to catch silt from the surrounding watershed. Today, the lake is approximately 185 acres. Steep hillsides leading to the water's edge as well as lakeshore development and forest removal is increasing sedimentation. This has subsequently led to a decrease in visibility and is impacting the spawning activity. Most recent survey data indicated only one young-of-year largemouth bass was collected. In 2006, the largemouth bass population was largely comprised of individuals greater than 16 inches (80%).

BUCKHORN POND #1 - This small and deep lake (3.2 acres) located in the Buckhorn Unit of Siloam Springs State Park is for bank anglers only. The largemouth bass population is strong and still developing; however, this small lake receives extremely heavy fishing pressure. Most recent survey data indicated 69 individuals were collected with sixty-eight (68%) of the collection ranging in length from 9 - 12 inches. There is an 18 inch length with a one fish daily creel.

WEINBERG-KING LAKE - This small 3.8 acre lake located in Schuyler County boasts of a strong, well balanced largemouth fishery. Most recent fish population survey data indicates strong spawning in this State Park lake. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the largemouth bass collected were 12' or larger. Only bank fishing is allowed with 2 pole

and line fishing only.

DISTRICT 13: CASS, CHRISTIAN, LOGAN, MASON, MENARD, MORGAN, AND SANGAMON COUNTIES

LAKE SANGCHRIS - This 2,235 acre lake continues to be one of the best bass lakes in the state. The fall 2005 survey produced a record 142 bass per hour of electrofishing. The fall 2006 survey blew that record away when an incredible 183 bass were collected per hour. The 2007 survey continued that trend when 149 bass were collected per hour. Half that number would have been considered very good. It appears that the total number of bass, based on the past six surveys, may be a little too high for the lake to support. In contrast, the number of bass collected 15" or greater has been declining during that same time period too this year's low of 14% equal to or greater than 15". With five percent were over 18". In essence there are more bass in total but fewer big bass. In addition, the lake is subject to water temperature changes during the summer months that put the bass into situations where they expend more calories than they can take in. Couple that with the problem of an inconsistent shad forage and you get bass in lower than desired body conditions. Many are downright skinny. For that reason, the current bass regulation of 3 fish per day equal to or greater than 15" will be changed. Beginning April 1, 2008 anglers will be allowed two 2 fish under 15" and 1 fish equal to or greater than 15" per day. Ostensibly this will remove many of the smaller bass and protect the larger ones, thereby correcting the current problem.

LAKE SPRINGFIELD - Bass fishing should be very good-to-excellent on this 4,234 acre lake. Since 1992 fish population surveys have consistently produced 100+ bass per hour of electrofishing with the upper third of the lake (west of the I-55 Bridge) producing over 150 bass per hour. In the fall 2006 electrofishing survey the total catch was a record 137 bass per hour. The fall 2007 survey was nearly identical with 134 bass collected per hour. There are no lakes of that size in the state that can boast such high numbers of bass. As in Lake Sangchris, this year's spawn was excellent. Fifteen per cent of the bass collected were over the 15" minimum length limit but, as usual, only 1% were over 18". Additionally, the bass are in excellent body condition with, for example, a 15" bass averaging 2.25 pounds. That is 25% above the statewide average of 1.75 pounds. While the numbers of bass over 18" are unexplainably low, with the total bass density so high and their body conditions so good, the population would be described as excellent. One consideration, the lake gets very high recreational boat, skiing and wave runner traffic in the summer. The best time to fish this lake is in the spring and fall. The winter too can produce excellent fishing opportunities in the warm-water area of the lake.

LAKE TAYLORVILLE - Lake Taylorville is a 1286 acre lake in Christian county that has made a tremendous turn-around in the bass population over the past fifteen years. From 1982-1992 average catches were approximately 25 bass per hour of electrofishing and all fish were over 12". This indicates poor spawns and recruitment. That number steadily increased from 1992 to an all-time high of 100 bass per hour of

electrofishing in 2001. The fall 2007 survey produced a record 132 bass per hour of electrofishing. Twenty per cent of the bass collected were over 15" and 4% were over 18". All of those fish were in excellent body condition due to a strong gizzard shad population. As some of you may know, in 1992 the city and the Department of Natural Resources began a sport fisheries recovery program attempting to increase the numbers of bass in the lake. The city built several nursery ponds on arms of the lake. Initially two were used to raise largemouth bass and one was used to raise young crappie or sauger depending upon what is needed in the lake. Since the bass and crappie are doing so well, in 2007 all three ponds were used to raise sauger. These ponds are drained every fall releasing the young fish into the lake. To date the lake has been stocked with nearly 51,000 largemouth bass fingerlings, 63,000 crappie and over 4,000 sauger from those ponds. Because of the strong shad population bass, crappie and sauger grow very well once they are released. **One note**; the lake is very shallow, averaging less than six feet deep. Caution should be taken when running on the lake to avoid submerged flats and islands. The upper half of the lake averages only three feet deep and little bass habitat exists except for the lotus pads.

JIM EDGAR/PANTHER CREEK FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA LAKES -

PRAIRIE LAKE - At 210 acres, Prairie Lake is the largest of the three lakes recently built on the 15,575 acre site in Cass County. It was initially stocked in the fall of 1999 with bluegill, redear sunfish, channel catfish and muskies. The following summer 21,000 largemouth bass fingerlings were introduced. As in any new lake, growth rates were excellent. In total the number of bass collected per hour has remained constant for years at around 100 per hour (111 in 2006 and 95 in 2007) but the population structure is changing. The first bass stocked are now an elderly seven years old, averaging over 20" but for all practical purposes they are nearly gone. The subsequent year classes are doing well however and good numbers of 15"+ fish have recruited into the fishery. In the 2007 survey, 33% of the bass collected were over 15" and 7% were over 18". So things look pretty good for 2008 and 2009. Very few young were collected in 2007 however. That may be cause for concern but with crystal clear water and acres of coontail, sampling the population of young is very difficult. They may be there but are simply not being seen during the survey. There is a rearing pond on-site that has been used for largemouth bass production since the lake was constructed. That pond will be used for smallmouth bass production beginning in 2008. The smallies will be stocked into the lake annually. It will be interesting to see if they recruit into the fishery. The smallmouth will not reproduce naturally in the lake but it is hoped those stocked from the pond will do well enough to contribute to the lake's fishery.

This lake has an unlimited hp limit for boats but those boats over 10 hp must run at No Wake speed. There is a two-lane concrete ramp at Prairie Lake. In addition, there are camping facilities and rental cabins for those who want an extended stay.

GRIDLEY AND DRAKE LAKES - Both of the smaller lakes at Jim Edgar Panther Creek are being managed for quality panfish (bluegill and redear sunfish) so the bass are

purposely being crowded to keep the sunfish from overpopulating. In other words, there are so many bass in these lakes that they are not growing well. In Gridley, the bass are nearly stunted with most averaging 13". The same is happening at Drake Lake but the bass are not quite in as bad of shape. So the bass catching is very good-to-excellent on those lakes but there are very few quality bass.

DISTRICT 14/15: GREENE, JERSEY, SCOTT, MACOUPIN, AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

MT. OLIVE NEW CITY LAKE - This impoundment endured a massive oxygen depletion fish kill several years ago. Since then IDNR - Fisheries has been supplementally stocking 4" Largemouth Bass in an attempt to strengthen the existing predator base. It looks as though this program will be successful at this point. In May of 2007, IDNR - Fisheries conducted a Largemouth Bass supplemental stocking evaluation. In 55 minutes of daytime electrofishing, 109 fish were seen. These fish measured from 4.5" to 20" in total length, and topped the scale at 4.3 lbs. 47% were less than 8", 33% were 8" to 14", and 16% exceeded 16" in size. It looks as though this bass fishery will be back in business soon. This impoundment is rated good for the 2007 reporting period.

BEAVER DAM LAKE - The spring 2007 sample showed increased numbers of Largemouth Bass in this shallow, fertile impoundment. 170 bass (170 fish/hr.) were boated during one hour of daytime electrofishing effort. These fish measured 3" to 20" and weighed up to 4.1 lbs. Reproduction, and recruitment are fair as 24 bass (22%) were found in the 8" to 12" area. Larger fish are finally showing up in this population. 41 bass (38%) were 14" or longer, and 6 (6%) exceeded 16" in total length. Even bigger fish reside in this water body (greater than 5 lbs.), as they have been collected up to 8 lbs. in the past. On the other hand, their overall abundance is suspect. This is not a dire concern due to the fact high bass densities are wanted to better manage for trophy panfish. This population is rated average for this report period.

LAKE CARLINVILLE #2 - Our May 2007 sample revealed a decent Largemouth Bass fishery residing in this impoundment. 152 bass were seen during 1.5 hours of daytime shocking. These individuals ranged from 4" to 22.5" with the largest weighing 6.83 lbs. Reproduction, and recruitment were outstanding as 82 (54%) fell in the 8" to 12" zone. Trophy Largemouth were also captured during this survey. 17 (11%) attained a size between 16, and 22.5" in length. This fishery is rated good for this report period.

LAKE KA-HO #1 - The 2007 spring sample showed a fair bass population in this small Public-cooperative lake. 41 Largemouth Bass were captured during 30 minutes of daytime electrofishing. Although reproduction appears weak at this time, the remainder of the length frequency looks solid. 2 (5%) were 7" or less. This value reveals reproductive stress, and will be watched closely. 23 (56%) fell in the 8" to 12" area, while 7 (17%) exceeded 15" in size. The Village of Lake Ka-ho recently signed a Cooperative Management Agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Our management strategy has just begun for this lake. I only expect improvement down

the road. This lake is rated fair for 2007.

LAKE KA-HO #2 - The May 2007 field work for this water body was more disappointing. Only 20 Largemouth Bass were captured in 25 minutes of daylight shocking. Reproduction is a bit better with 10% of bass 7" or less in length. Similarly, 60% were grouped in the 8" to 12" area, while only 1 (5%) exceeded 15" in size. It appears this small lake will need supplemental stockings of Largemouth Bass in the future. Additional samples will be needed to ensure this is the case. I rate this lake as below average for the 2007 reporting period.

COFFEEN LAKE - The fall 2007 survey was outstanding for this fish group! 1,053 bass were collected in 6.0 hours of electrofishing (176 fish/hr.). For comparison purposes, the 4 year mean ELF CPUE was 100 bass per hour. This species appears to have exploded since the fall of 2004. The bass measured 3" to 21" and topped the scale at 6.3 lbs. Reproduction is good as 110 fish (10.4%) were seen less than 8" in length. 470 (44.6%) were 12" to 15", and 49 (4.7%) topped 18". This water body has one heck of a bass population, in terms of overall abundance! Huge numbers of intermediate sized bass swim in this impoundment. As well, trophy fish are available for the angling public. I rate this lake excellent for this period.

GILLESPIE NEW CITY LAKE - Our 2007 fall sample for this species was outrageous!! 378 Largemouth Bass were captured via 2.0 hours of daytime shocking (189 fish/hr.). This data compares to the 4 year average of 124 bass per hour of ELF effort. Densities have remained fairly constant since 1992, yet 2007 surely topped all previous surveys. Bass found ranged from 3.9" to 22.0", and weighed up to 6.47 lbs. Reproduction is strong as 13.8% of all bass were less than 8" in total length. 18.5% attained 12" to 15", and 13.2% exceeded 18". To put this in better perspective, 23% of fish collect weighed at least 3 lbs. This impoundment still remains one of the best in the State. I rate this fishery as excellent based off this sample.

GILLESPIE OLD CITY LAKE - During the fall of 2007, IDNR - Fisheries captured 106 Largemouth Bass via one hour of daytime electrofishing (106 per hr.). This value compares to the 5 year average of 56 fish collected per hour. As you can see, this population has solidified over this time frame. Bass found measured 4.3" to 21.3", and topped the scale at 6.23 lbs. Reproduction is outstanding with 37% less than or equal to 8". 11.3% resided in the 12" to 15" zone, while 3.8% topped 18". This particular survey did not represent as many trophy fish as expected. This situation will be monitored. This fishery is rated as average for this report period.

STAUNTON CITY LAKE - The fall 2007 field work for this lake was disappointing. Even though night shocking was not conducted (usually completed), only 74 bass were seen in 90 minutes (49.3 per hr.) of daytime shocking. 74 fish relates to the 5 year mean of 46 bass per hour. If we had time to night shock, densities would have surely increased. This water body is difficult to day shock due to clear water, and it's steep sided nature. Reproduction is awesome with 54.1% of all fish boated measuring 8", or less in size.

28.4% were in the 12" to 15" area, and 1.4% surpassed 18" in length. I believe this population is better than what we're seeing from daytime work. Night sampling will be on the docket for the next survey. I rate this impoundment as average for this species.

DISTRICT 16: MADISON, ST. CLAIR, AND BOND COUNTIES

SILVER LAKE - The 2006 fall survey shows a continued increase in bass numbers from the previous surveys. Seventy four bass per hour were collected as compared to 43 bass per hour in the 2004 fall survey. The number of larger bass has remained good with 18% greater than 15 inches collected in the 2006 survey. This lake received a stocking of 9,350 4 inch largemouth bass in 2004 and 13,750 4 inch largemouth bass in 2006. These stocking combined with an apparent improvement in reproduction and recruitment of bass has resulted in continued improvement in the bass population and size structure in this lake. The angling prospects for bass would be rated as good and improving on this lake. A permit from the city of Highland is required for boat access to the lake. There is a 25 HP motor limit, a 15 inch length limit and 3 fish daily creel limit on largemouth bass.

HORSESHOE LAKE - This is a large, shallow, flood plain lake that floods from the Mississippi River during high water. This flooding results in a very diverse fish community in the lake. The fish community includes lots of carp, buffalo, drum, gar, and yellow bass that compete for space and food with largemouth bass. However, the lake maintains an impressive population of bass. The electrofishing survey conducted in the fall of 2006 showed good numbers of quality largemouth bass. The survey produced 66 bass per hour, of which 49% were greater than 15 inches in length and 10% were greater than 18 inches. These numbers are up from the previous two surveys in 2002 and 2004. The lake gets a lot of shoreline anglers but not a lot of boat fishing targeting largemouth bass. The lake could be considered a "sleeper" bass lake. Quality bass can be found around woody structure, rip-rapped banks and duck blinds. There is a 50 HP motor limit on this lake. There is a 15 inch length limit and 3 fish daily creel limit .

PEABODY RIVER KING STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA (Various Lakes) - This area is a reclaimed strip mine with 504 acres of fishable water. This site has a lot to offer the adventuresome angler. Most of the recent surveys on these lakes have been less than accurate. Very high conductivity, clear, and deep water have prevented reliable survey information. Good numbers of bass are present in most lakes. Some lakes appear to have high numbers with small average size and others have fewer bass but very good average size. In general the number and quality of bass increases with the degree of difficulty of access. Bass over 19 inches in length have been collected from some of the more remote lakes. Anglers willing to hike or take a boat to these remote lakes will be rewarded with good fishing. Use of lighter line and smaller baits would likely increase success in the lakes with very clear water. The larger lakes have a 10 HP motor limit, other lakes are restricted to electric motors only, and others are bank fishing only. A 15 inch length limit and 3 fish daily creel applies to all lakes.

GOVERNOR BOND LAKE (GREENVILLE NEW CITY LAKE) - The largemouth bass population of this lake has improved dramatically over the past few years. The 2006 fall survey produced 77 bass per hour, this is up from 30 in the 2002 fall survey. Of the bass collected in the 2006 survey 16% were over 15 inches and 4% were over 18 inches. Supplemental stockings of largemouth bass by the city of Greenville is likely responsible for this improvement. A permit from the city of Greenville is required for boat access to the lake. There is a 120 HP motor limit, a 15 inch length limit and 3 fish daily creel limit on largemouth bass.

DISTRICT 17: CLINTON, MONROE, RANDOLPH, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES

CARLYLE LAKE - The bass population remains relatively unchanged from previous years. Bass collected during our survey in 2007 had an average weight of 1.5 lbs and a length of 14". The average weight of legal bass (14" minimum length limit) was 2.9 lbs and 17" in length. The largest bass observed was 5.1 lbs, although we have collected bass in the 6 to 7 lb weight range in previous years. Twenty-five percent fewer bass were taken in our survey compared to 2006, but the percentage of larger bass (18" or greater) was slightly higher at 9% of the stock. Numbers of bass in actuality are probably about the same as last year, as many bass were in deep water out of range of our electrofishing gear at the time of the survey. Condition of the bass was superb, very robust fish. A total of 34,500 bass fingerlings were stocked into Carlyle in 2007. The best time to catch the really big ones is in spring. The last two weeks in April is especially good. Bass fishing in 2008 should be similar to that of 2007.

BALDWIN LAKE - Growth rates for bass are exceptional in this cooling lake. Average growth rates for 1+ year old fish are 14.8" and for 2+ year old fish are 17.5". During our 2007 population survey we collected 60 bass/hour, the same as in 2006. The goal is at least 60 fish/hour. Our latest survey showed that the current bass population contains a high percentage of large bass. Fifty-nine percent of the bass stock was 15 inches or greater in length, while 11% of the stock was 18 inches or more in length. The largest bass collected weighed 5 lbs. Bass up to 6+ pounds in weight have been collected in the past. For 2008, I would rate bass fishing as good for large bass. As for the bass population, I would rate as fair since numbers are not particularly high. An 18 inch minimum length limit/3 fish per day creel applies. Most of the good habitat consists of rip-rap. The southern end of the lake is closed annually as a waterfowl refuge from November 1 to February 1.

WASHINGTON COUNTY LAKE - The bass population continues to show improvement. Sampling conditions were near perfect for getting a good look at the bass population structure. Catch per unit effort from our latest survey was 153 bass per hour of electrofishing compared to 115 in 2006. Thirty-nine percent of the stock was 15 inches or greater in length, while 10% was 18" or more. The bass population structure is very well balanced, with several strong year classes ranging from young of the year up to trophy sized fish. Three, four, and five pound fish are common. We also collected a

few 6 lb fish, with the largest bass tipping the scale at 8 lbs. This lake is very fertile and has good woody habitat. The points can hold some really nice fish. Often times the larger bass are fairly deep. Gizzard shad is the principal prey item. I would rate the bass population as excellent, although anglers report that the large bass are very difficult to catch. A 14 inch minimum length limit/3 fish per day creel applies.

RANDOLPH COUNTY LAKE - This lake has always had a population of bass characterized by large numbers of smaller fish due to very successful spawns and recruitment. Our latest survey produced 103 bass/hour of electrofishing which is typical for this lake. Only eleven percent of the stock was 14 inches or greater in length. We typically collect a larger % of 14" plus fish, but many bass were in deeper water at the time of the survey, and the water was very clear making it difficult to sample the bass population. The largest bass collected during our survey weighed 3 lbs. We have collected fish in the past weighing 7 + pounds, so the big bass are here, though relatively rare. Water willow and woody cover provide good habitat, and the points can produce some decent fish. I would rate the fishing as good for smaller bass, with a chance to catch a trophy bass in the spring. A 14 inch minimum length limit/3 fish per day creel applies.

STATUS OF BASS FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 5

DISTRICT 18: CLAY, EFFINGHAM, FAYETTE, JEFFERSON, MARION, AND WAYNE COUNTIES

FORBES LAKE - The fall 2007 fish population survey indicates that the population continues to improve, the catch per effort was good at 86.5 fish per hour. Although reproduction was fair at best as indicated by the YAR of 0.6/1. The growth of fish increased the PSD significantly to well within the preferred range from 36% to 50%, although the RSD-14 at 14.5% was relatively unchanged. No supplemental stockings were made and the contribution of previously stocked fish was 3.5% of bass collected. The big bass of the survey was 25.7 inches in length at 6.9 pounds.

SAME DALE LAKE - The fall 2007 fish population survey indicated that the bass fishery continues to do well. Densities are quite high as indicated by the catch per effort of 112 fish per hour, and reproduction was better. The young adult ratio was 2.1/1 indicating good reproduction. Stock indices were significantly lower indicating reduced numbers of larger sized fish the big bass of the survey was 19.7 inches in length at 3.9 pounds.

LAKE SARA - The fall 2007 fish population survey indicated continued improvements, densities were good. The catch per effort was 86 per hour. Though reproduction was poor, the young adult ration was 0.5/1. And both the PSD and RSD-14 increased indicating continuing growth of fish out of the stock size range. The big bass of the survey was 21.6 inches in length at 5.4 pounds.

DISTRICT 19: CRAWFORD, EDWARDS, JASPER, LAWRENCE, RICHLAND, AND WABASH COUNTIES

NEWTON LAKE - The hot dry conditions in 2007 made sampling extremely difficult at Newton Lake. Water levels were 3.5 ft. below normal pool and water temperatures were 20 degrees warmer than average. The poor sampling conditions were directly responsible for a significant decline in the number of fish collected. However, despite the lower numbers of bass collected, the size structure of the population appears stable and fishing prospects remain good for 2008. The PSD decreased slightly, but remained well within the target range. A large portion of the adult bass population (44%) is currently comprised of bass >15" in length. The percentage of bass greater than 18" in length remained relatively stable. Growth rates for bass in Newton Lake remain above average, and the mean Wr value for bass over 8" in length is 101. If recruitment and growth rates remain good and mortality low, the bass population should remain strong in the coming years. Newton Lake has a 25 H.P. limit, and current regulations include an 18" minimum length limit and three fish daily creel limit for largemouth bass. In addition, the cold arm of the lake is closed to fishing during the waterfowl season and the entire lake is closed to fishing during the regular firearm deer season.

EAST FORK LAKE - Over the past five years, East Fork Lake has produced one of the better bass populations in southern Illinois if not the entire state. This year is no exception. The size structure of the East Fork bass population remains excellent with 42% of the bass population larger than 15" in length. The PSD remains high, and the number of fish 12" - 15" long remains strong as well. All other population indices remained stable, and all met or exceeded their target range. The catch per effort remains high at 121 per hr. This increase was due in part to a second consecutive large year class of age 0 bass. The Wr of bass over 8 inches in length improved to 98 and growth rates are above average. This population is very stable and continues to provide excellent fishing opportunities. Just over 11% of the larger bass in the population exceed 18" in length and these fish provide anglers the opportunity to catch larger fish up to 7+ pounds. If growth rates and recruitment remain good as expected, this lake should continue to provide excellent bass fishing several more years. Boat permits and tournament permits are required on this city-owned lake, and may be purchased in advanced. For permit information contact the Olney City Clerks office at 618/395-7302.

REND LAKE - The size structure of the Rend Lake bass population should remain relatively unchanged in the coming year. After improving steadily for five consecutive years, the Rend Lake bass population appears to show signs of stabilizing. A decline in the Rend Lake bass population in recent years was linked in part to poor recruitment. To address this concern, over 294,000 bass fingerlings have been stocked in the last six years. These fish have had a significant impact on the density and size structure of the population, and population indices have improved significantly. Data from the most recent population survey show all population indices met the target goals, and the condition of all sizes of fish is excellent (Wr 99). Fishing should remain good in the

coming year. The number of fish exceeding the 14" minimum length limit declined slightly over the previous year, but still comprised 41% of the adult bass population. The number of larger fish improved slightly (up 10% from the previous year), and the number of bass over 20" in length remained stable. Bass numbers remain strong, and growth rates continue to be good. Maintaining a steady flow of smaller fish into the population through supplemental stocking has helped to improve and stabilize the size structure of the population. Tournament permits are available at Wayne Fitzgerald State Park, 618/629-2320.

DISTRICT 20: GALLATIN, HAMILTON, HARDIN, POPE, SALINE, AND WHITE COUNTIES

JONES LAKE - This lake is an artificial impoundment located five miles southeast of Equality on the Saline County Conservation Area. The lake has a surface area of 105 acres, maximum depth of 35 feet, with an average depth of 13 feet. Fishing regulations for Jones Lake are as follows:

All Fish	2 pole and line fishing only
Largemouth bass	Largemouth bass between 14 - 18 inches must be released immediately, 5 fish under 14 inches and 1 fish over 18 inches can be harvested daily
Channel catfish	6 fish daily creel limit

Jones Lake has a 10 horsepower or less outboard motor limit

Stock indices from survey data are within recommended ranges for a healthy largemouth bass population. Proportional stock density was 36 which indicates good numbers of quality size fish. Mean relative weights are within recommended ranges and the young adult ratio has increased. The largemouth bass population appears to be in good condition and will provide good fishing opportunities.

HARRISBURG NEW CITY RESERVOIR - This lake is located approximately one mile east of Galatia and has a surface area of 209 acres. The lake has a maximum depth of 30 feet and an average depth of 10 feet. Fishing regulations for Harrisburg New City Reservoir are as follows:

All Fish	2 pole and line fishing only
Channel Catfish	6 fish daily creel limit
Striped, White, or Hybrid Striped Bass	17" minimum length limit
Striped, White, or Hybrid Striped Bass	3 fish daily creel limit

Largemouth bass fishing prospects look very good. Recent survey data revealed a balanced fishery with an abundance of bass 3 - 4 pounds. Population indices are within recommended ranges, and the number of bass greater than 18 inches has increased slightly.

DISTRICT 21: ALEXANDER, JACKSON, PERRY, PULASKI, AND UNION COUNTIES

CEDAR LAKE - Cedar Lake is located five miles southwest of the City of Carbondale in Jackson County off of Route 51 South. Largemouth bass are very abundant in Cedar Lake. There is a 14-18 inch protected slot limit on this lake. In 2002, the daily creel limit on this lake was changed from two bass under 14 inches and two bass over 18 inches to five bass under 14 inches and one bass over 18 inches. Bass anglers are encouraged to harvest bass under 14 inches to improve the overall condition of the bass population. Thinning out the smaller bass will increase bass growth rates and body condition which should result in a faster growing bass population. During the 2007 sample, largemouth bass were collected at a rate of 141 fish per hour which is the second highest on record. The percentage of bass collected that were in the 14-18 inch protected slot was the fourth highest on record. The percentage of bass over 18 inches was the second highest on record. Overall, the 2007 spring bass survey was one of the best samples on record (comparable records began in 1993). There is a 10 HP motor limit on this lake.

KINKAID LAKE - This 2750-acre lake is located five miles northwest of Murphysboro in Jackson County. Largemouth bass fishing in Kinkaid Lake for 2008 should be good. There is an abundance of bass less than 16 inches including numerous bass between 15-16 inches. Bass more than 16 inches are present but tend to be difficult to catch. The bass in this lake are relatively slow growing but they are long-lived. Smaller bass, less than 12 inches, tend to be skinny but once bass reach 12-13 inches the growth rates and body condition greatly improves. The best chance to catch bass in this lake is in the spring and fall as this lake receives a lot of recreational boat traffic during the summer months. Because of excessive angling pressure and lots of recreational boat traffic anglers may have better luck if they fish slower and deeper than most bass anglers typically fish. Largemouth bass were collected at a rate of 83 per hour which is the second highest on record. Of the 330 bass collected during the 2007 spring survey, 21% were over 15 inches and 16% were over 16 inches. The 2007 spring survey was one of the best on record. Approximately 4200 smallmouth bass were stocked (4-8 inches in length) in September 2007.

LAKE MURPHYSBORO - This 145-acre state park lake is located two miles west of Murphysboro in Jackson County. The opportunity to catch bass over 15 inches and weighing 2-3 pounds is excellent. Other bass in the 12"-15" range are also very abundant. Bass were collected at a rate of 84 fish/hr with 20% of the bass measuring 15 inches or better. This lake receives more fishing pressure for crappie and bluegill than for largemouth bass. There is a 10 HP motor limit on this lake.

PINCKNEYVILLE CITY LAKE - This 165-acre lake is located 3 miles northwest of Pinckneyville off of Route 127 West. This lake has an 18" size limit/1 fish per day creel limit which has resulted in excellent bass fishing the past few years. Of the 117 bass collected during the 2007 fall survey, 24% were over 15 inches and 9% were over 18 inches. The number of bass collected was the fourth highest number on record. Pinckneyville remains one of the best bass lakes in southern IL. There is a 10 HP motor limit on this lake.

DISTRICT 22: FRANKLIN, JOHNSON, MASSAC, AND WILLIAMSON COUNTIES

CRAB ORCHARD LAKE - Crab Orchard Lake is a 6,965-acre impoundment located in Williamson County approximately one mile south of Carterville, Illinois. Largemouth bass fishing prospects at Crab Orchard Lake for the 2008 season are very good. A combination of more stringent harvest regulations (implemented in April 2002) coupled with increased stocking effort, habitat enhancement, and designation of a spawning refuge seems to be positively influencing population quality.

During the 2007 fall survey an average of 109 bass were collected per hour of electrofishing, easily exceeding the goal of 60 per hour and the previous year's average of 70. In addition, 22% were larger than the 16 inch minimum size limit, and 11% were larger than 18 inches, nearly identical to data collected in 2006. Growth rates for bass remain good and are attributed to lake productivity and abundant gizzard and threadfin shad. Nearly 40,000 bass fingerlings were stocked in Crab Orchard Lake during 2007 to assist in maintaining the population.

A portion of Crab Orchard Lake east of Wolf Creek Road is closed to boat traffic October 1 to March 15 to reduce disturbance of resting waterfowl, and the extreme southern end of Grassy Bay is closed from April through June for a spawning sanctuary.

LITTLE GRASSY LAKE - Little Grassy Lake is a 1000-acre impoundment located on the south side of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge between Marion and Carbondale, Illinois. Largemouth fishing prospects at Little Grassy Lake for the 2008 season are very good. During the spring 2007 electrofishing survey, 98 bass were collected per hour. Taking into account all bass over 8 inches, 51% were larger than 12 inches, and 29% were larger than 15 inches, the upper end of the protective slot limit. Largemouth bass spawning success in Little Grassy Lake continues to be adequate, so no supplemental bass stocking has been conducted, although threadfin shad are stocked each spring to provide a strong forage base. Little Grassy Lake has a ten horsepower outboard motor limit.

All fishoffs and tournaments are required to be pre-registered with the refuge, and all anglers are required to have a refuge user permit. Write USFWS, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, 8588 Rt. 148, Marion, IL 62959 or call 618/997-3344 for information.

STATUS OF BASS FISHERY IN ILLINOIS RIVERS

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER (POOLS 12 - 22) - The number of largemouth bass collected in 2004 fisheries surveys were equal to or higher than the 2003 surveys and the five year average. All age classes were well represented. Once again largemouth bass had a successful spawn and the 2003 year class survived the winter, pointing to good fishing in the future. Surveys indicate that largemouth bass numbers and size increase upstream of L & D 19, with Pools 13, 18, and 19 the best. However, bass fishing below L & D 19 is also good. A Fall 2004 tournament in Quincy saw several 4 lb.+ bass reach the scale.

Smallmouth bass populations are much lower in the river, but their numbers and size have increased in the last few years. The best smallmouth fishing occurs from the Quad Cities to Savanna. Smallmouth in the 3 to 4 lb. Range have been collected in recent surveys. Pool 19 also has several tributaries with good smallmouth bass populations.

Bass fishing opportunities look bright for 2005 and the foreseeable future on the upper Mississippi River.

MIDDLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER (POOLS 24 - 26) - The number of largemouth bass observed in 2004 summer fisheries surveys in these pools was slightly higher than the 2003 total and was slightly lower than the five year average, but should offer ample largemouth bass fishing opportunities over the coming years. The surveys indicate there was a good spawn in all pools and good recruitment as revealed by the large numbers of smaller size fish. Largemouth bass numbers and size downstream of St. Louis (open river) are much lower and smaller than in the pooled river, but should still provide some good fishing opportunities for the persistent angler.

Although smallmouth bass populations are much lower and more localized than largemouth bass populations, their numbers and size appear to have increased over the past four years and should offer some fishing opportunities in the coming years. Smallmouth bass are rarely seen in the open river. Spotted bass, on the other hand, are only found in the Mississippi River downstream of the Melvin Price Lock and Dam, and their numbers and size are increasing. Harvestable spotted bass have been observed in fisheries surveys for the last three years in this river reach. It should be noted that all three black bass species were collected below the 'Chain of Rocks' Dam (Dam 27) this past summer.

Overall, good black bass fishing opportunities will continue in this river reach.

ILLINOIS RIVER - Bass fishing opportunities look bright for 2006 and the foreseeable future on the Illinois River.

The Illinois River continues to provide excellent bass fishing where suitable habitat and water conditions allow. Sampling on the River over the past few years indicates that bass in general are increasing in numbers up and down the River. Catches in the upper part of the River from Dresden down to Starved Rock were higher than average especially for smallmouth bass and may be the result of favorable water conditions experienced during the late summer-early fall season.

The bass populations in the lower and middle portion of the River remain strong. The species composition of bass appear to break in the Peoria Lakes area with smallmouth dominating the upper River and largemouth being dominant in the lower portion. Smallmouth ranged up to 16 inches in length, while largemouth bass ranged up to 18 inches.

Largemouth bass are taken most frequently in the main channel border and lake habitats, They like the cover of weed beds, brush, stumps, willows and fallen trees where they can hide from their prey. Since, largemouth are sight feeders they are attracted by action and not by smell of the bait or lure. They succumb to the temptations of a variety of lures, plugs, and jigs which must each be retrieved in the manner best suited to the lure. Common lures are Mepps spinners and plastic worms. Minnows hooked below spinners provide more attraction than the lifeless form of a minnow alone, The best fishing is in May, June and September; and once the weather warms to 75 degrees or better, early morning or evenings are best.

Smallmouth bass populations are found in local areas above Peoria especially in rocky and gravel shorelines free of sediment buildup. Areas immediately downstream of the navigation dams (Dresden, Marseilles, and Starved Rock) are the prime targets of smallmouth anglers. Although the smallmouth does not attain the size of largemouth bass, it is more of a scrapper and pound-for-pound provides more heart-pounding action than any other stream species in Illinois.

Largemouth bass dominated the collection this past year and conversations with tournament fishermen who fished the river indicated that the majority of fish weighed in during tournaments were largemouth. Tournaments continue to flourish, especially in the middle reaches of the River in the Peoria area. However, the largest numbers of bass from our collections continue to come from back waters in the lower River such as Myers Ditch, Panther Slough, and Otter Creek.

FOX RIVER - Smallmouth bass surveys for the Fox River are conducted every 2 years during the late fall to determine population density and size structure. Fall surveys were completed in 2004 and 2006 and showed very similar results in terms of average catch rate (78 and 70/ hour, respectively). The areas with the consistently highest catch rates are St. Charles, Batavia, and Oswego, although fish are present throughout the river where habitat is favorable. The population was dominated by fish in the 7-10 inch range, however, larger fish (>15 in.) were very common. Very few young of the year were captured in 2006, which may indicate poor spawning success and/or recruitment during

the drought year of 2005, as described in the 2007 report.

Fish community samples were taken throughout the Fox River Watershed in the summer of 2007, including many mainstem sites. This survey is part of statewide program conducted jointly by EPA and DNR, designed to gauge the current health of rivers and streams. Major watersheds like the Fox River are sampled every five years allowing identification of major changes and long term trends, which is very important, especially in urbanizing watersheds like the Fox. Results from this survey will be available next year. Although the survey was not designed to assess smallmouth bass due to the timing and location of the survey sites, we did observe many yearling and young-of-the-year bass, suggesting recent reproductive success.

DUPAGE RIVER - The DuPage River system typically produces smallmouth bass catch rates lower than the Fox River, however, populations are very good some areas, particularly in the lower West Branch, and the DuPage River mainstem. The last survey was conducted in 2005 near Shorewood, producing 28 stock-sized fish (≥ 7 inches) per hour, including several larger fish up to 17 inches. Reproduction was very good in 2005, as indicated by high number of Y-O-Y (46 per hour). Drought conditions apparently we offset by the high number of wastewater plants which discharge to this system. A survey of the entire watershed in planned for 2008.

DES PLAINES RIVER - Sport fish surveys were conducted near Riverside and Hodgkins in 2007. Largemouth bass were reasonably abundant in the Riverside area, with 24 captured in one hour of electrofishing. No large individuals were collected, although about one-third of the individuals were over 12 inches in length. Largemouth bass were in very low abundance at the Hodgkins locations. The Des Plaines River will also be sampled extensively in 2008.

The Des Plaines River is not well suited for smallmouth bass due to the low gradient channel, and possible water quality problems, especially in the lower stretches. Fish are occasionally taken in the higher gradient area downstream of Hofmann Dam, downstream of Romeoville, and in Salt Creek near Graue Mill. Attempts to stock these higher gradient areas has been largely unsuccessful, presumably because of water quality limitations. These short, isolated segments of higher quality habitat may be unable to sustain populations through natural reproduction. Frequent high flows, and rapidly changing water levels in this urbanized watershed may also have a detrimental effect on spawning.

KANKAKEE RIVER - The most recent sampling for the Kankakee was conducted in the fall of 2006, however, high water levels and lower than normal temperatures were present during the survey. Catch rates were lower and fish were generally smaller than in previous surveys due primarily to poor sampling conditions. More typical results were obtained in 2005 when samples were performed at 13 locations from the State Line to the Des Plaines Conservation Area. The higher gradient areas at Momence and in Kankakee State Park are the most productive, with catch rates ranging from 94 to 110

per hour. The catch rate for fish 14 inches or larger was 19-21 per hour in these well known hot spots. Smaller fish and Y-O-Y were also very abundant in many areas of the mainstem and tributary streams as well, with up to 68 captured per hour. The low gradient areas at the State Line and near the confluence with the Des Plaines River consistently produce the fewest total number of smallmouth bass (5 and 12/hour respectively).

ROCK RIVER - The Rock River continues to have an excellent smallmouth bass fishery. From Prophetstown north to the Wisconsin border, the smallmouth fishing is good to excellent. A survey completed in 2007 revealed that the exceptional year class produced in 2005 is growing well, and is currently in the 11" range. Catch rates for smallmouth bass during this survey were excellent with a catch per unit effort (CPUE) of 104 fish/ hour or 1.74 fish/minute. The catch rate of stock size fish, those greater than 11", was 17 fish/ hour which is very good. The proportional stock density (PSD) of 35% was in the expected range for a healthy population.

Slightly over one third of the larger fish collected were over 14" in length, and the relative stock density of 14" fish (RSD14) was 13% which indicates excellent fishing prospects. The greatest number of large fish were collected, surprisingly, near Prophetstown State Park.

The 2007 year class appears to be strong with 53% of the sample composed of fish smaller than 7". Overall the smallmouth bass population of the Rock River appears to be healthy and doing well.

EMBARRAS RIVER - This river continues to be a strong producer of spotted bass. A few ramps along the river will accommodate small boats and canoes. The river is generally shallow throughout its length as well. Electrofishing catch rates during the 2006 basin survey produced up to 12 spotted bass per hour at the mainstem river sites. Unfortunately, these fish topped out in the 11-inch range. Largemouth bass were much less numerous, but they were bigger. Numbers tended to increase to the south.

KASKASKIA RIVER (Upstream of Carlyle Lake) - 2007 marked the fifth year of a supplemental stocking program for smallmouth bass below Lake Shelbyville. The river appears to be responding well to the program, as Fall electrofishing catch rates continue to increase dramatically. These catch rates have increased from 20.5 smallmouth bass per hour in 2003 to 47.5 in 2004 to 51.5 in 2005 to 67.5 per hour in 2006. Notable increases at all sizes show promise for an increasing adult population, which should translate to general population increases through successful spawning years. However, the current adult smallmouth bass population continues to be relatively small and vulnerable being restricted to about five river miles immediately downstream of Lake Shelbyville. Catch-and-release fishing for smallmouth bass in the Kaskaskia River is strongly recommended.

The Intensive Basin Survey of the Kaskaskia River was conducted in 2007. Many of the tributary streams produced several young largemouth bass. Good sized largemouth

bass in the 13 to 17-inch range were collected at the mainstem river sites above Lake Shelbyville. One year old smallmouth bass, stocked upstream of the lake in 2006, were collected in the 5 to 9-inch range. Below Lake Shelbyville, smallmouth bass continue to be the story. Significant numbers of young fish 3 to 10 inches were collected as far south as Cowden. A 15-incher was the largest collected during the basin survey, but other sampling has produced adults over five pounds! South of Shelby County, the bass population (both largemouth and smallmouth) appeared to decline to near-zero numbers.

KASKASKIA RIVER (Downstream of Carlyle Lake) - Largemouth bass prospects in the lower Kaskaskia River are on the upswing, thanks in part to recent IDNR stocking efforts. Our 2007 surveys show a resurgence in the river's bass fishery; these data are supported by reports from local anglers. As in the past, best opportunities are in the 36 mile navigation channel below Fayetteville and the many miles of oxbow "lakes" still connected to the channel. Electrofishing catch rates were highest in the Evansville reach with Baldwin and New Athens not far behind. Bass stocked as 4" fingerlings in 2004 should contribute heavily to this year's fishery and can be expected to reach 3-4 lbs by summer's end. An excellent representation of younger fish bodes well for the coming years.

Habitat in the navigation channel consists of bank riprap, downed treetops and occasional brushpiles. Although rock is largely absent from the oxbows, there is significantly more woody debris and deeper holes along their banks. Because the navigation channel/oxbow complex is impounded by a lock and dam and relatively devoid of flow, expect fish to follow lake type patterns, i.e. in shallow shoreline cover during spring and fall, further in the main channel (or deeper oxbow pools) in warmer summer months.

Another prime area for bass appears to be the tailwater immediately below Carlyle Lake. Bass are fewer in number here, but larger individuals (to 5 lbs and more) show up due to spillway escapement from the lake. These fish are usually associated with larger riprap due to the lack of woody cover. Between Rte 50 and Fayetteville, the Kaskaskia's flow characteristics and sandy substrate limit opportunities for bass fishing.

WABASH RIVER TRIBUTARIES - The small streams that flow into the Wabash River can produce a nice mix of spotted bass, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass. Brouillets Creek in Clark County is particularly good for smallmouth bass up to 13 inches. Most of the adjacent land is in private ownership along these small streams.

UPPER SANGAMON RIVER - A basin survey was conducted in 2003 on the Sangamon River Basin. Sangamon River mainstem sites produced from zero to 13 largemouth bass per hour. These sites averaged 4.1 largemouth bass per hour. The most productive mainstem site occurred just north of Lake Decatur with the largest fish measuring 21.1 inches. The mainstem sites also produced from zero to 5 smallmouth bass per hour, averaging less than one per hour.

The tributaries produced similar results with up to 14 largemouth bass per site and 2

smallmouth bass per site. Smallmouth bass were widespread throughout the Upper Sangamon River Basin, but they occurred in low numbers. The Salt Creek Basin continues to produce more smallmouth bass than the other parts of the Sangamon River Basin. Fishermen should be conservative with their take of bass from this river basin.

OHIO RIVER - The black bass population on the Ohio River continues to produce excellent fishing. Fall surveys produced many largemouth bass in good condition. Numbers were up from 2003 results and were actually the third highest since 1985. Greater numbers of bass over 14 inches were sampled than in previous surveys. These largemouth bass should provide a strong fishery next year. Big Grand Pierre, Bay, Dog, Lusk, Peters and Big Creek had the highest number of bass in the surveys. High water levels during main channel border surveys resulted in lower numbers of spotted and smallmouth bass collected. Rocky areas near Cave-in -Rock and Wabash Island produced a few spots in the one pound range. Surveys from the Wabash River produced the largest number and size of spots collected in 2004. Smallmouth bass were only found near Wabash Island and were down in numbers from last year.

Bass Tournament Data reported at the Golconda Marina indicated a slight decrease in fishing pressure, total catch and poundage. Over 2100 black bass were reported weighed in with the largest weighing 5.8 pounds and the average size at 1.6 pound. In 2004 the number of black bass reported per hour fished was 0.16 which is slightly down from last year but above 2002 rates.

Survey data and angler generated data indicate a good bass fishery on the Ohio River with excellent angling opportunities for future years to come.

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