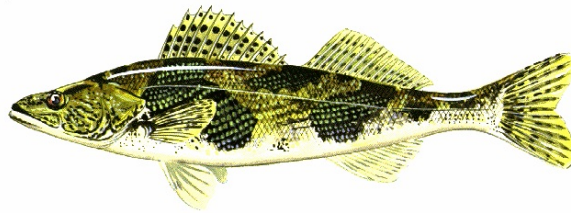


STATUS OF THE WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

MARCH 2009

STATUS OF WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION I

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

SHABBONA LAKE - Shabbona Lake is located in the 1,550 acre Shabbona Lake State Park in the DeKalb area. The lake was built in 1974 and first opened to fishing in 1977.

Walleye stocking was initiated in 1975 but reliable, yearly stocks began in earnest in 1983 from the state hatchery system, rearing ponds, and local sportsmen's club donations.

From 1992 through 2008 small fingerlings have been added yearly from the state hatchery system, and 19,915, 4 - 8" large fingerlings have been periodically stocked through angler donations and from a rearing pond located in the park. Additional large fingerlings were stocked in late 2002 through Sportsmen's Club donations.

Creel census data were taken in 1988, 1990, 1997 and 2002.

The 1988 creel revealed a harvest of 10.2 pounds per acre of walleye that averaged 1.25 pounds under a catch rate of .038 fish per hour. With this catch rate and the publicity it generated, 1989 was a banner fishing year. The 1990 creel census found a lesser harvest of 2.6 pounds per acre of slightly smaller fish that averaged 1.17 pounds under a catch rate of .01 fish per hour.

The 1997 creel data found an estimated 1,623 walleye caught (5.3 per acre) that weighed 1,316.4 pounds (4.3 pounds per acre) of fish that averaged .81 pounds. Seventeen and one-half percent of these fish were harvested or an estimated 284 walleye (1 per acre) that weighed 763 pounds (2.5 pounds per acre) of fish that averaged 2.7 pounds. In 2002 anglers caught 11 pounds per acre. The average size of harvested walleye was 1.6 pounds.

Shabbona Lake was first explored as a source for brood fish in 1989 when 192 walleye were netted and electrofished in April. The lake became a reliable source of brood fish in 1995 when 42 females between 2.5 to 11 pounds and 107 males between 15.5 to 25.9" up to 6 pounds were taken as brood stock to the LaSalle Hatchery.

From 1996 through 2001, 360 males and 293 females produced 15.9 million walleye and saugeye fry at the LaSalle Hatchery. With other lake being explored as a source of brood fish, Shabbona Lake's 25 females produced 1,498,000 fry in 2002, and 14 females produced 1,040,000 fry in 2003. A total of 3,024,772 fry were produced in 2004. Shabbona was not used as a brood lake in 2005 OR 2006 after the State closed Spring Grove Hatchery. Walleye were brought down from the Chain of Lakes. In 2007 Shabbona

Lake was once again used for a source of walleye brood fish. Twenty-five females resulted in 2,408,000 fry.

The lake's largest walleye at 9.9 pounds was taken in 2001 with good catches made throughout 2003, and a very good outlook expected for 2008. Most walleye will again be taken on the outer edge of the weed line, in deep timber, and along the dam. There is a minimum size limit of 18" with a catch limit of six per day.

PIERCE LAKE - Pierce Lake is a 162 acre impoundment in the 3,092 acre Rock Cut State Park located northeast of Rockford. The lake was built in 1960 and completely rehabilitated in 1970 following the entire lake drainage due to a faulty valve.

Walleye stocks were sporadic until 1985 when they began appearing on a yearly basis. A walleye study was initiated in 1987 and a muskie study initiated in 1990 by the Illinois Natural History Survey.

From 1992 through 2002, the lake has been stocked with 78,704 - 1 to 2" fingerlings.

A creel survey in 1999 found a harvest of 6.49 pounds per acre of walleye that averaged 1.57 pounds under a catch rate of .013 fish per hour.

Fall day electrofishing typically produces from 5 to 20 walleye per hour. Night electrofishing typically produces about 60 walleye per hour. An April netting survey was first conducted in 2002 to determine if brood fish could be collected. A total of 113 walleye were collected with one female weighing in at 13 pounds. The 2003 survey produced 150 walleye providing nearly 2,000,000 eggs.

One survey below the dam in the tailwaters in July 1998 found 74 walleye up to 22", two surveys in 1999 produced 61 walleye up to 25.7", and three surveys in 2000 again found 61 walleye up to 28.0". With low discharges in 2001 and a 3' drawdown, only 5 walleye were collected below the dam, but the 2002 collections found 55 walleye below the dam with most of them taken after the heavy rain in June. The dry conditions in 2003 with little lake discharge found only one walleye in the tailwaters. Seven trapnets set in April of 2007 resulted in the collection of 35 walleye between 1.4 and 8.3 pounds.

Fishing should be good at Pierce Lake for walleye in 2008 with the best catches off the gravel points, off the submerged island, and along the dam.

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

LAKE CARLTON - 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 a fairly good saugeye fishery. Lake Carlton was stocked annually with 1,900 - 4 inch walleye or 25 per acre until 1992. In 1992, this changed as the lake became

a saugeye research lake. Since 1992, the lake has been stocked annually with approximately 25 - 50, 4 inch saugeye per acre. The creel report conducted in 1994 reported 606 man-hours per acre fishing pressure.

Only 122 walleye were caught in 1994 of which 15 were harvested. They averaged 4.9 pounds. Saugeye in the fall of 1997 were collected by night electrofishing at a rate of 13 fish per hour. This is the highest rate walleye or saugeye had been collected. In 1998, saugeye were collected at a new high rate of 37.5 per hour. In 1999, saugeye were collected at a new night rate of 51 fish per hour. In 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004, saugeye were collected at 40, 20, 26, 58, and 25 fish per hour, respectively. Lake Carlton will be stocked with saugeye again in 2009. The numbers of quality-size saugeye are improving and 2009 should provide anglers with an excellent saugeye fishery.

LAKE GEORGE - 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 lake also has a fair population of large walleye. The fishing pressure derived from creels conducted in 1989, 1993, and 1994 reported the fishing pressure to be about 200 man-hours per acre. The creel survey in 1993 reported 86 walleye caught and only 31 harvested. Harvested walleye averaged over 6 pounds.

Lake George was trapnetted for 4 nights in the spring of 1996. This resulted in the collection of 30 walleye between 1.9 and 9.0 pounds. In 1998, 25 walleye between 3 and 7 pounds were caught in only 10 trapnets. The night electrofishing survey resulted in a record 35 walleye per hour. In 2002, 28 trapnets set overnight resulted in the collection of 45 walleye greater than 14.5 inches.

The walleye population appears to be improving as a result of the lake being stocked annually with approximately 6,680 - 2 inch walleye. Angler harvest has been hampered by someone stocking gizzard shad in the lake in 1990. The shad population has exploded. As a result, the walleye are well-fed and more difficult to catch. Trophy walleye should be available in Lake George in 2009. This lake has a 14 inch minimum length limit with a statewide 6 fish per day creel limit.

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

ARGYLE LAKE - This 92.7 acre state lake, located west of Macomb in McDonough County, has been stocked with saugeye since 1992. The saugeye is the hybrid of walleye and sauger and must be stocked on an annual basis to maintain a population. The 2008 spring trap net and fall electrofishing surveys have revealed a quality saugeye population. The two surveys revealed 8 age groups with fish up to the 9.4 pound size. During the 2006 spring survey, a female saugeye of 11.2 pounds was collected, which is 1.5 pounds larger than the current state record of 9.7 pounds. The lake has a daily limit of 3 saugeye per person with a minimum size of 14 inches.

LAKE STOREY - This 132.5 acre public lake, located at the northwest edge of Galesburg in Knox County, has been stocked with walleye since 1993. Walleye are stocked annually at an average rate of 6.5 fish/acre (6.2 inch avg. size) due to no natural spawning and recruitment. The walleye management goal at Lake Storey is to maintain a low density fishery that will produce a few trophy fish larger than 6 pounds.

Spring trap net data for 2008 revealed a favorable walleye catch rate of 3.00 fish/net night with the largest fish at 8.7 pounds. Walleye anglers in 2009 can expect Lake Storey to offer a fair supply of 1.0 to 5.5 pound fish with a limited number of female fish in the 6.0 to 8.5 pound range. The lake has a daily limit of 3 walleye per person with a minimum size of 14 inches.

LAKE MC MASTER - This 160 acre watershed impoundment, located in the center of the 2,500 acre Snakeden Hollow State Fish & Wildlife Area, has several unique physical and chemical features that support a limited walleye fishery. The lake's physical habitat consists of a maximum depth of 65 feet in the main lake basin with adjacent shallow bars and abrupt drop-offs, numerous bays and points, flooded timber, and extensive shallow flats of submerged vegetation and cattails. The lake also has very clear water with clarity occasionally extending to the 25 foot depth.

Since the 1st stocking in 1991, the lake has been stocked annually with walleye at an average rate of 15.8 fish/acre (4.4 inch avg. size) due to no natural spawning and recruitment. The walleye management goal of Lake McMaster is to maintain a low density fishery that will produce a few trophy fish larger than 6 pounds.

Spring trap net survey data for 2008 revealed a favorable walleye catch rate of 1.25 fish/net night with the largest fish at 7.5 pounds. Walleye anglers in 2009 can expect Lake McMaster to offer a fair supply of 1.0 to 4.0 pound fish with a limited number of female fish in the 6.0 to 8.0 pound range. The lake has a daily limit of 3 walleye per person with a minimum size of 14 inches.

DISTRICT 4: PEORIA, FULTON, AND STARK COUNTIES

BANNER MARSH - Walleye have been stocked in Johnson Lake each year since 1987. Fisheries data from 1995-2008 spring trapnet surveys indicate an average walleye population exists. In Johnson Lake, 28 walleye from 16 to 24 inches were sampled with 20 net nights of effort in 2008.

Johnson Lake has clear water, extensive aquatic vegetation, rocky points and water depths up to 60 feet. In 2009, the walleye should average 2-7 pounds, with a 10 pound fish possible! A 14 inch minimum length limit and the statewide 6 fish per day creel limit is enforced. The lake has a concrete boat ramp and a 25 hp limit.

STATUS OF THE WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 2

DISTRICT 7: LAKE COUNTY

FOX CHAIN O'LAKES - Walleye have been collected in the Chain by IDNR staff since 1954. Fry stockings were initiated in 1978 to supplement any natural reproduction that sustained the population up to then and to help expand the fishery. Since 1984 brood stock from the Fox Chain O'Lakes have been used by the State Hatchery System for walleye production. Catch rates in 2008 exceeded 39 fish per trap net night which far exceeded management objectives of 2.5 fish per trap net night.

The slot limit established in 1996 appears to be doing its job of protecting female walleye while allowing harvest of smaller, more abundant male fish. Females averaged 22.6" and males 16.7" in 2008. Both sizes fit nicely into the goals of the protective slot limit.

Since the Chain is a "brood-lake," it is important to protect female walleye of quality reproductive size. The walleye regulation (adjusted April 1, 2009) on the Chain O'Lakes allows the harvest of 3 fish between 14" and 18" and 1 over 24". Male fish rarely exceed 18" long and females grow right through 18" so are protected by the slot. In 2008, 11.2 million eggs were collected producing 7.0 million fry. Of those 4.8 million fry were stocked in the Chain the rest were stocked in hatchery ponds for fingerling production. The Chain O'Lakes was stocked with 313,000 (1.5" to 2.0") fingerlings, rest were used to stock various Public Coop lakes and rivers throughout northern Illinois on the walleye stocking list.

STERLING LAKE - This 74.4 acre lake is managed in cooperation with the Lake County Forest Preserve District and began receiving fingerling stockings in 1985 with the goal of establishing a walleye fishery. In 2001, the length limit was raised to 16 inches from 14" to provide an additional year of predation on forage species. Sterling Lake receives annual stockings of 2" fingerlings to maintain their presence. In 2008 Sterling Lake was stocked with 6,510 two inch fingerlings. A recent creel report ranked walleye as the most sought after game fish in the lake. Crappie and bluegill were ranked high on the panfish list. The concession stand has been closed so bait will have to be purchased off-site and no boat rental is available.

DISTRICT 8: COOK COUNTY

BUSSE LAKE (Main & South Pools) - Busse Lake Main and South Pools are two of the best places to target walleye in Cook County. The supplemental stocking of walleye in Busse Lake has been very successful. Initial stockings took place in 1986 and over the years Busse Lake has developed into a respectable walleye fishery. Recent survey data indicates a well structured population represented by several year classes present. Busse Main (410.0 acres) lake is larger than the South Pool (146.0 acres) and offers more

desirable habitat and subsequently better walleye fishing. The lake has an 18 inch length limit, 6 fish creel, and a 2 pole and line limit on gear. Walleye larger than 18 inches were collected in recent surveys so legal fish are present in the lake! Approximately 22,000 two inch fingerlings were stocked in 2008, fish were split between the North and South Pools. Busse Lake is located in northwestern Cook County and is heavily utilized by both shore fishermen and small boaters. Several parking lots offer access to different parts of the lake. Electric motors are allowed but gas powered motors must be removed from a boat. A concessionaire offers boat rentals, bait and food in summer.

TAMPIER LAKE - Tampier Lake is known for its large walleye. It has been stocked with walleye fry and fingerlings since 1986 and offers the opportunity to catch fish over 10 pounds (a rarity in northern Illinois). Fish can be difficult to catch because of an abundant gizzard shad population but worth the effort if you have skill and a little luck. Water is generally turbid so walleye can be caught in 3 - 4 feet of water. Concentrate on edges of weed beds. Tampier Lake has an 18 inch minimum length limit and a 2 pole and line limit on gear. In 2008 it was stocked with approximately 11,400 two inch fingerlings from Chain O' Lakes broodstock and some fry produced from Tampier Lake broodstock.

SKOKIE LAGOONS - Skokie Lagoon's were rehabilitated in 1994 to remove rough fish and give the system a fresh start. Since then the Lagoons have received annual stockings of walleye fingerlings to build and maintain a strong predatory base and provide a quality sportfishery. Gizzard shad are the dominant forage. Seventeen walleye ranging from 16" to 27" were collected during a 2007 electrofishing survey of the system. This catch rate exceeded the management objective of greater than 10 fish per hour (any size) by electrofishing and indicates stockings were and are successful. Fish were collected along weed edges in shallow water and around some of the many fish attractors placed along the main channel. The lake has an 18" length limit, 6 fish creel and a 2 pole and line gear limit. In 2008 Skokie Lagoons was stocked with approximately 12,154 two inch fingerlings.

WOLF LAKE - Wolf Lake has been stocked on and off with walleye fry/fingerlings since 1979. Illinois stocked approximately 15,810 two inch fingerlings in 2008 to supplement the current population. Walleye are difficult to collect during summer surveys so little data exists and much of the information we have is based on fishermen's catches. Fishermen targeting walleye concentrate on current areas and constrictions between pools to find fish. Fish approaching 10 pounds have been reported by reputable fishermen. Wolf Lake has a 14 inch minimum length limit and six fish per day creel for walleye (Statewide Regulations) and a two pole and line gear restriction. Motor size is not restricted on Wolf Lake but boats with motors over 10 hp are restricted to no wake. Between the walleye fingerlings stocked in Indiana by the City of Hammond and the IDNR the walleye population throughout Wolf Lake is expanding nicely.

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

HEIDECKE LAKE - This 1,955 acre former cooling lake located in Grundy County 2½ miles southeast of Morris has received annual stockings of walleye since 1980. Impounded in the late 1970's, it once served as a cooling reservoir for Midwest Generation's Collins Station, a fossil fuel peaking plant. However, the generating station was decommissioned in December 2004 and has since been razed. Subsequently, thermal loading as well as any current which was created by the circulation of cooling water through the plant has been eliminated.

Since 2002, annual stockings have averaged 57 fingerlings per acre. Heidecke Lake generally develops a strong plankton bloom in the early spring and also supports a thriving gizzard shad population which has been documented to show multiple spawn pulses. These shad spawns, while benefitting the feeding success and growth of walleyes, can make angling extremely tough.

While walleye stocking rates have remained fairly consistent, 2005 saw a higher than normal number of fish released. At a rate which approached 70 per acre, the 2005 year class recruited well and greatly influenced the walleye population as well as IDNR collection efforts and angling success. The 2008 fall survey, while not producing the number of walleyes which the record-setting survey of 2006 did, still yielded an excellent collection. Electrofishing catch rates were second only to 2006 and greatly exceeded the long-term average (1995-2004) for that specific gear type. Gill netting produced walleyes in numbers which were comparable to the long-term average for the same time period. The average size for walleyes collected in 2008 was 16.0" which is very near the long-term average. Legal size fish and larger comprised 63% of the 2008 collection and nearly 10% were of preferred size (20" or larger). Generally speaking, walleyes attain legal size (16.0") by their third growing season. Walleye rated as the top fish caught during the 2006 creel survey and were the preferred quarry among anglers who expressed a preference. Compared to the previous creel which was conducted in 1997, more than three times as many walleyes were caught in 2006 and these fish had an average weight of 0.9 pounds. In terms of harvest, walleye ranked third overall with an estimated harvest of 2.09 pounds per acre with the average size harvested walleye weighing 2.42 pounds (roughly a 19 inch fish). A secondary source of walleye broodstock, Heidecke Lake walleye harvest is regulated by a 16 inch minimum length limit with a daily creel limit of three (3) fish.

Heidecke Lake is a partially perched cooling lake and can become very hazardous in windy conditions. Heidecke Lake is open to fishing from April 1st until ten days prior to the opening of the North Zone waterfowl season. The lake is open daily at 6:00 a.m. and closes at sunset. A concessionaire located at the boat ramp offers bait and tackle as well as boat and motor rentals. There are no boat motor horsepower restrictions but boats must have a working gas-powered motor. Water level fluctuations can restrict boat access to the north side of the lake due to restricted clearance beneath the trestle. The bank fishing area

access is located at the eastern side of the lake and is handicapped accessible, featuring a barrier-free fishing pier.

STATUS OF THE WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 3

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

CLINTON LAKE - In 2008, the State Hatchery System stocked approximately 186,598 2-inch walleye. High water during the 2008 survey resulted in low catch rates, but the catch rate in 2007 was the 6th highest out of the last 14 surveys. The catch rate almost tripled from the 2006 survey results. Approximately 40% of the walleye collected were longer than the length limit. The fishing regulation for walleye is a 14" minimum length limit with a 6 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, the spillway and dam areas east of the spillway, and the bank of 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 water fowl 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.

LAKE BLOOMINGTON - Walleye were first stocked into this lake in 1984 and has received approximately 25,000 two-inch walleye every year, except in 1985. From 1998 to 2005, 2400 8-inch walleye were stocked. The 2008 night survey resulted in 25 walleye per hour of sampling. Based on the 2008 survey, size structure is dominated by smaller walleye. Approximately 20% of the walleye collected were larger than 15 inches. There have been several 10-pound plus walleye caught in Lake Bloomington since 2001. The fishing regulation for walleye is a 14" 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.

EVERGREEN LAKE - Home of the current State Record Saugeye! The State Record Saugeye was caught in 2001. The lake still holds fish capable of breaking the new record.

This lake was selected for experimental stocking of saugeye. The saugeye is a hybrid made by crossing female walleye with male sauger. The saugeye is more adaptable to turbid conditions and easier to catch than walleye. The saugeye appear to have adapted quite well to Evergreen Lake. Stocking of this hybrid started in 1992 and the lake has been stocked every year since. Anglers really started catching saugeye in 1998. In 2008, a night survey was conducted and resulted in 60 saugeye per hour of electrofishing. Of the saugeye collected in the survey, 9 percent were larger than 15", and 2 percent were larger than 20". During the spring netting survey in 2007, 68% of saugeye collected were larger than 15 inches, 33% larger than 20 inches, and 4% larger than 25 inches. The fishing regulation for saugeye is a 14" 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.

DAWSON LAKE - In 2003, the walleye stocking program was changed to a saugeye fishery. The saugeye favors more turbid water and tolerates eutrophic waters better than walleye. During the 2007 night survey 115 walleye/saugeye were collected per hour of sampling. The largest walleye collected was almost 25 inches. The walleye/saugeye population at Dawson Lake is a great fishery in a small lake. Dawson Lake has a 14" minimum length limit and a harvest limit of 3 per day on walleye and saugeye.

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

LAKE DECATUR - Is located on the east side of the City of Decatur, in Macon County. The lake covers 3,093 surface acres with a maximum depth of 22 feet and average depth of six feet. Several public boat launching facilities are available and the City of Decatur (217/424-2837) collects a boating access fee. The statewide 14 inch minimum length limit and creel limit of six fish daily is in effect.

An abundance of gizzard shad forage in Lake Decatur allows for the stocking of additional predator species to diversify the fishery. The stocking of 2-inch fingerling walleye from 2000 through 2008 appears to be developing a good fishery. However, stocking success survey results for fall 2008 were very poor (4/hr) and much lower than anticipated. Record rainfall may have contributed to high escapement levels, which may have reduced the population in the lake, however a number of other factors could explain these results as well. Collection rates for fall 2007 (14+/hr.), 2006 (26+/hr.), and 2005 (37+/hr.) exceeded standard goals. Collection rates in '06 and '05 were substantially higher than catch rates on Lake Shelbyville for these two years. Walleye collected were scattered along the rip-rap shorelines on or near bridges. The walleye collected ranged from 15 to 23 inches, with the largest weighing 4.4 lbs. Walleye fishing prospects for Lake Decatur are rated as fair to good for 2009.

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 16 feet and average depth of 7.7 feet. Free public boat launching facilities are available. There is a no wake regulation in effect on the entire lake. The statewide 14 inch minimum length limit and creel limit of six fish daily is in effect.

Saugeye (sauger x walleye hybrid) have been stocked annually since summer 2000. The collection rates from fall 2008 (38/hr), 2007 (31/hr), 2006 (26+/hr.), and 2005 (11/hr.) met standard stocking success goals and exhibit a positive trend. Numerous saugeye from 6 to 26+ inches were collected in this survey, with the largest weighing 7.6 lbs. Excellent catches by fishermen have been reported from this lake. Saugeye fishing prospects are rated as very good to excellent in 2009.

LAKE SHELBYVILLE - Is 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. Public boat launching facilities are available, with a fee assessed on U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' (217/774-3951) boat ramps, and free access on state or gravel ramps. The statewide 14 inch minimum length limit and creel limit of six fish daily is in effect.

Consistent stockings of fingerling walleye since 1994 have resulted in the development of a good to excellent walleye fishery. In recent years, knowledgeable fishermen have been able to catch limits of fish from April through mid-June. Some fishermen believe that July and August are the better months, but most reports of good catches are from earlier months. Good numbers of fish to 25 inches are present with fish over eight pounds collected in the 2003 stocking success survey. Survey results were hindered in 2006 by strong thunderstorms with high winds. Catch rates during the 2008 (19+/hr), 2007 (34/hr), 2006 (11+/hr.), and 2005 (24/hr.) stocking success survey exceeded standard stocking success goals. The walleye collected in the stocking success survey ranged from 7 to 24+ inches, with the largest weighing 6.1 lbs. A wide size range of fish were collected in the standard fall survey, with high numbers of young-of-the-year and yearling fish collected. The walleye collected in the standard fall survey ranged from 6 to 27.6 inches, with the largest weighing 8.7 lbs. This fishery is becoming increasingly popular with walleye fishing prospects for Lake Shelbyville are rated as good to excellent for 2009.

A relatively small number of sauger have been stocked annually for the past three years. These are introductory stocking designed to determine if sauger have the potential to spawn successfully in the Kaskaskia River or reservoir. Twelve young-of-the-year sauger were collected in the 2008 standard fall survey while no sauger were collected in the stocking success survey. Five yearling sauger were collected in the 2007 fall stocking success survey. A few reports from fishermen catching the odd sauger have been received. Stocking densities are not high enough to warrant any potential to develop a fishery.

STATUS OF WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 4

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

PITTSFIELD LAKE - Walleye continue to do well in this relatively small lake located in Pike County in Western Illinois. Pittsfield Lake is a 240 acre, city owned lake, and serves the area as a major recreational area, flood control reservoir and primary water source. Steep drop-offs and gradual slopes, to maximum depths of 34 feet offshore of the west bank, provide ideal conditions and habitat for this species during the warmer months. As water temperatures begin to cool, the eastern shallow flats seem to attract this species and may be caught in as little as 1.5 feet of water. In the springtime when water temperatures begin to creep toward the low 50's, the walleye in Pittsfield Lake migrate toward the dam.

This lake has received annual, supplemental stockings of 2 inch walleye fingerlings (# 9640) since 1985. These stockings have produced multiple year classes resulting in a well structured population. In 2008, during the spring netting survey, a total of 60 walleye were collected representing 5 year classes. Individuals collected represented 0+ and 4+ thru 7+ years of age. The 0+ individuals (#2) were believed to be inadvertently captured in the 2.5 inch gill nets. The 2002 year class (5+) comprised the largest percent at 37%. This year class averaged 21 inches in length and weighed 3.5 pounds. The 2000 year class (7+) only comprised 15%; however, these individuals averaged 26 inches in length and weighed nearly 8.0 pounds.

This population is expected to continue to be rated as "good", assuming that their numbers are maintained by annual stockings from the Hatchery system. Although Pittsfield Lake maintains a good, strong walleye population, fishing for this species is fairly light. Most walleye are incidentally caught by anglers fishing for crappie. A 14" minimum length limit and 6 fish per day creel limit is in effect. There is a 25 horsepower, "NO WAKE" motor restriction. At this time, any motor larger than 25 Hp must be tipped up and out of the water with prop removed.

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

CARLYLE LAKE - Numbers of sauger collected during our 2008 survey were the highest yet. Most were young of the year fish that were originally stocked as fry. This is great news, as it shows that the early spring fry stocking had excellent survival. The high water also seems to have helped this species. The average legal sauger (14 inch minimum length limit) weighed 2 lbs and was 18 inches in length. This is an increase over 2007 where the average legal fish weighed 1.7 lbs and was 16 inches in length. The great shad population was probably responsible for this increase in size. The largest sauger observed weighed 2.3 lbs. Condition of the sauger population was excellent overall. Trolling seems to be a good way to catch this species in Carlyle Lake. The spillway has a dense

concentration of sauger and offers the best fishing, while sauger fishing in the lake should be improving.

RANDOLPH COUNTY LAKE - The hybrid walleye population in this clear water/steep sided lake seems to be doing well. Many fish are caught by anglers who are fishing for other species such as crappie or bass during the spring and fall. Some anglers specialize in catching walleye, using trolling methods in the lake with good success. Walleye in this lake occur in various sizes, from young of the year fish running around 10 inches in length and weighing several ounces, to big fish weighing 7 or 8 pounds. During our population assessment, we collected fish ranging in weight from 1.3 to 3 lbs, plus a young fish that was stocked in 2008. Fishing is rated as good for this species, especially if traditional walleye/sauger angling methods are used. A 6 fish daily creel limit and 14 inch minimum length limit applies.

STATUS OF WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 5

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

FORBES LAKE - The fishery for saugeye continues to do well, during surveys conducted in both spring and fall and fish from five or six year-classes were observed. Fish ranging from 15 to 18 inches in length were most abundant and the largest sampled was 22.2 inches in length at 4.67 pounds. Since reproduction is not expected 32,284 fingerlings were stocked.

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

EAST FORK LAKE - Consistent recruitment and good growth rates have produced a quality population of walleye in 935 acre East Fork Lake. Walleye recruitment has been good for several years in a row, and as a result walleye numbers have steadily increased to an all-time high. The majority of fish in East Fork Lake range from 18-22 inches in length and weigh from 2 - 4 pounds. However, the number of larger walleye has also improved over the last three years, offering anglers a good opportunity to catch fish over 5 lbs. Fishing was above average this past year with many anglers catching limits of walleye, and East Fork should continue to provide quality fishing opportunities for walleye in 2009. Jigging and trolling along main lake points and the rip-rap areas along the dam continue to be the most productive. Deep diving crank baits on main lake points are also effective. If recruitment and growth rates remain good, this lake could provide excellent fishing for several years to come. City boat permits are required and may be purchased in advanced. For permit information contact the Olney City Clerks office at 618/395-7302.

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

KINKAID LAKE - Walleye stockings over many years have periodically produced good year classes of 14 to 16 inch walleye. Growth has been excellent. In the past, walleye would commonly reach 2 to 2.5 pounds and exit the lake via the spillway during spawning season which corresponds to periods of heavy water flow over the spillway. The construction of a spillway barrier was completed in the fall of 1998 and should alleviate escapement of walleye just as they reach quality size.

The majority of walleye sampled in nets are typically in front of the spillway during heavy water flow in late March and early April. Spring gill netting (1-2 hour sets at dusk) will continue to assess WAE populations and the effectiveness of the spillway barrier and the resultant effect on the Lake's WAE population.

The largest walleye collected by IDNR biologists was collected during 2002 and weighed just over 10 pounds. During 2007, thirty-eight WAE (up to 26 inches and eight pounds) were collected from in gill nets. Another attempt to sample the walleye population will take place in spring 2009.

During the spring of 2008 55,000 two inch walleye were stocked into Kinkaid Lake. An additional stocking of 1000 four-inch fish was completed in September 2008

MALLARD LAKE - This 50 acre strip cut is located in the Denmark Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Walleye were first stocked in August 2002 and have been stocked annually since that time. This lake is still in the process of filling with water. As a result this lake does not have a boat ramp. No other information is available for the walleye in this lake.

GREEN WING LAKE - This 50 acre strip cut is located in the Denmark Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Walleye were first stocked in August 2002 and have been stocked annually since that time. This lake has a concrete boat ramp and a 10 HP motor limit. One 25 inch walleye was collected in 2008 during spring trap netting. An attempt to sample the walleye in this lake will be made in the spring of 2009.

STATUS OF WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY IN ILLINOIS RIVERS

ILLINOIS RIVER - The sauger population on the Illinois River continues to expand, both in quality and quantity. While not as numerous as in the middle and lower reaches of the River, anglers can still expect to find good numbers of sauger and walleye in the upper pools below the dams at Dresden and Marseilles. The major portion of the sauger population lies below the Starved Rock Dam and extends all the way down to the

Mississippi River. The area around the Starved Rock Dam receives a lot of media attention owing to the very successful tournaments held there, but there our sampling indicates that much stronger numbers of fish are found farther downstream. CPUE's in the lower part of Peoria Pool in the Narrows were as high as 147.5 fish/hour.

Tournament anglers have had, and continue to have a very good year. At the MWC tournament held at Spring Valley in March, 2001, 205 boats brought in 1,395 fish that weighed in at 3355.85 pounds - not bad for a 5 fish per day limit per boat. In 2002, 208 boats caught 1,420 fish that weighed 3508.36 pounds. In 2003, 210 boats brought in 1,148 fish that weighed a total of 2049.19 pounds. Tournaments continue to enjoy good fishing even during the fall and winter months. At a recent tournament in that same area, the winning total of 5 fish weighed in at 14.6 pounds, with the big fish coming in at 3 pounds, 13.5 ounces.

Sampling this fall, many smaller fish were collected indicating that the population should remain strong for the next several years. We also collected some of the bigger walleye that we have ever taken at Starved Rock with several fish ranging from 23 to 27 inches in length. There is a 14 inch size limit on walleye and sauger in the Illinois River. The creel is six fish per day.

ROCK RIVER - Walleye were collected by night electrofishing on October 23, 24, and November 8, 2006. In addition, incidental walleye were collected and recorded during the smallmouth bass survey in September 2006. The combined data are presented below.

Station	Total #	Stock >250mm (10 in.)	Quality >380mm (15 in.)	Mature > 410mm (16 in.)
Oregon	54	30	9	6
Dixon	77	48	17	13
Sterling	4	2	0	0
Prophetstown	12	13	13	12
Total	148	93	39	31

PSD - $39/93 \times 100 = 42\%$ (Target 40 - 60%)

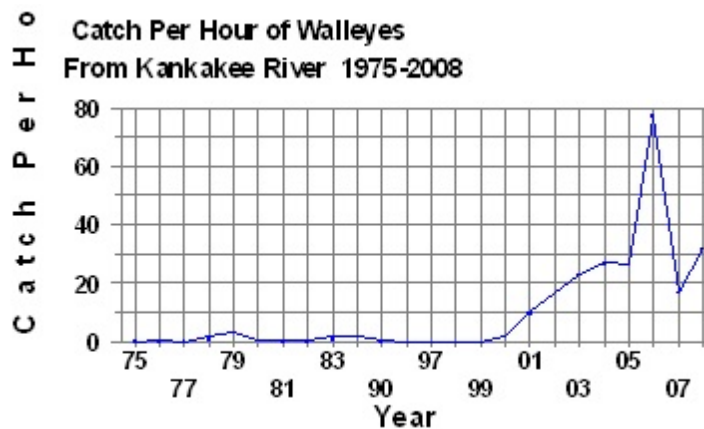
RSD16 = $31/93 \times 100 = 33.3\%$ (Target 10%)

Total shock time: 339 minutes CPUE = $148/339 = .44$ fish / minute.

The data seems to indicate excellent numbers of mature fish in the population which is surprising since the 2004 data showed good numbers of smaller fish but few fish larger than 16". The PSD in 2004 was 29.5%, quite a bit lower than the 42% found this year. The CPUE in 2006 of .44 fish/ minute was lower than the .96 fish/ minute seen in 2004. This could perhaps be attributed to the colder than average fall temperatures which may have changed the movement patterns of the fish, i.e. the fish may have been holding in deeper water making them more difficult to collect. Regardless, the walleye in the Rock River appear to be doing well. Good numbers of both young and mature fish are present, indicating the stocked fish are surviving and growing well. It is impossible to determine if

any naturally reproduced fish are present in the population since the stocked fish are not marked. Perhaps a marking program should be undertaken to assess the abundance of naturally reproduced fish in the population.

KANKAKEE RIVER - The State Record walleye was caught from the Kankakee River in 1961. This once great walleye fishery collapsed during the late 60's and 70's and remained low through the 90's. In 2000 a stocking program was instituted to re-establish this fishery by using walleyes collected from the Kankakee River. Between 2000 and 2008 the DNR has stocked between 78,000 and 94,000 walleye fingerlings every years except in 2002 when the river was too high to collected adults. Catch rates have increase each year since the stocking program began, reaching a high of almost 80 fish per hour of electrofishing in 2006 (see graph). This number dropped back to almost 20 per hour in 2007, but increased again in 2008 to 32 walleyes per hour, which exceeds the goals of the project. A good walleye population will generally have a catch rate of 10-20 fish per hour.

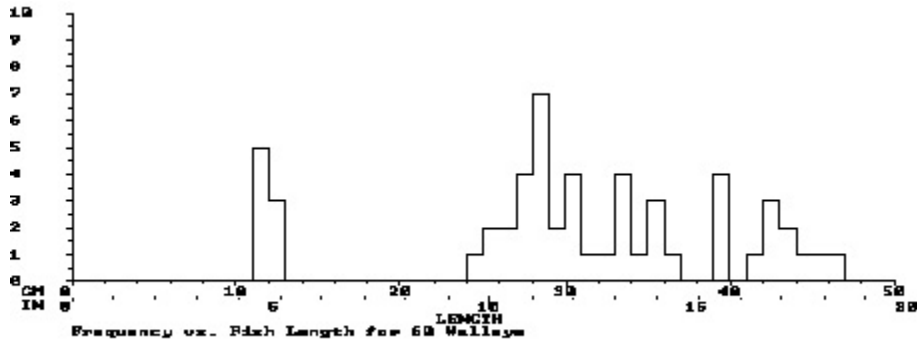


The walleye population has a good size distribution with 44% of the catch in 2008 being over the legal length limit of 16 inches. In 2007 twenty-four percent were over 21 inches in length and 6% over 24 inches. So besides the river having good number of fish in it, also has a lot of big walleye.

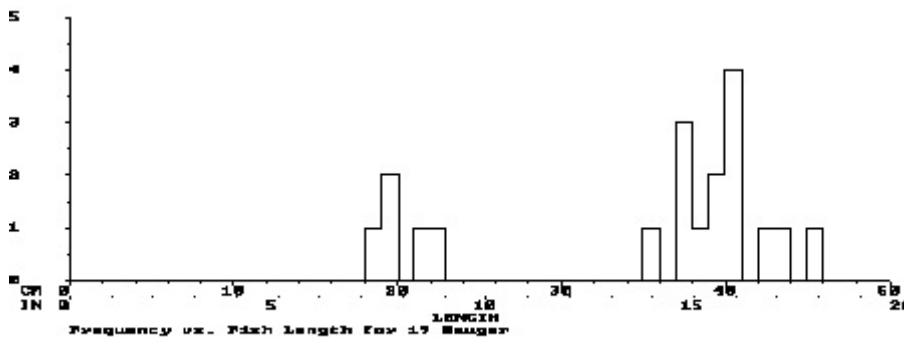
The stocked walleyes are marked so that they can be distinguished from walleye naturally reproduced in the river. In 2006, 80% of the walleyes collected were marked fish indicating that the stocking program currently is supporting most of the fishery in the river. Hopefully we will see this number go down, to the point that the walleye population will once again be supported through natural reproduction.

FOX RIVER - In 2007, a total of 13 stations were sampled on the mainstem of the Fox River between the McHenry Dam and the Illinois River. Catch rate of walleye was 4.6 fish per hour of boat electrofishing, compared 5.7 per hour for the period from 2000 to 2005. Although walleye were found throughout the river, higher densities (10 - 15 per hour) were found at McHenry, Geneva and, Sheridan. Most of the fish were between 9 and 14 inches (see graph below), and no fish larger than 19 inches was captured. Young fish were

present, resulting from recent spawning or downstream movement from the Chain O'Lakes stocking program. Walleye are also stocked each year between Yorkville and Wedron (15,000, 2 - inch).



DES PLAINES RIVER - The Des Plaines River has been stocked with 5,000 -10,000 2 - inch sauger every year since 2001. Stocking locations rotate around 3 locations in the lower Des Plaines downstream of Hoffman. Evaluations have been done routinely at the Riverside location which is stocked every 2 - 3 years. The evaluation for 2007 yielded 19 sauger in one hour of electrofishing. The average catch rate over the previous three collections was 31 per hour. The length frequency graph below shows distinct age groups including those stocking in spring of 2007 (8 - 9 inch group) and several groups from earlier stocking events (14 -18 inches). This program has been very successful judging by the electrofishing results and reports from anglers who have reported catching large numbers of sauger.



UPPER SANGAMON RIVER - A basin survey was conducted in 2003 on the Sangamon River Basin. Walleye were collected at three mainstem sites upstream from Lake Decatur. Average size was about two pounds. The largest walleye collected was 3.4 pounds at Mahomet. Catch rates were also highest at Mahomet, yielding three walleye per hour.

2005 sampling in the tailwaters of Lake Decatur produced six walleye per hour. The fish averaged two pounds with a maximum of 3.5 pounds. Walleye fishing in the tailwaters of Lake Decatur should be good in the spring and fall, while water is flowing.

2005 sampling in Salt Creek in the tailwaters of Clinton Lake produced twelve walleye per hour, all were in the one to three pound range. Tailwater fishing should be good here in the spring and fall also.

KASKASKIA RIVER - Fishermen continue to report extremely high catch rates for walleye and sauger below the Lake Shelbyville Dam. These fish stack up in the tailwaters of Lake Shelbyville, where fishermen frequently catch their limit in the spring and fall. High volumes of water released from Lake Shelbyville throughout 2008 have made the tailwaters an exceptional fishing destination for these species during the winter of 2008-2009. 2007 sauger catch rates from the Kaskaskia River between Lake Shelbyville and Carlyle Lake ranged from 2 to 16 per hour. The highest catch rate came a short distance downstream from the Lake Shelbyville dam. Collected sauger were in the one-pound range.