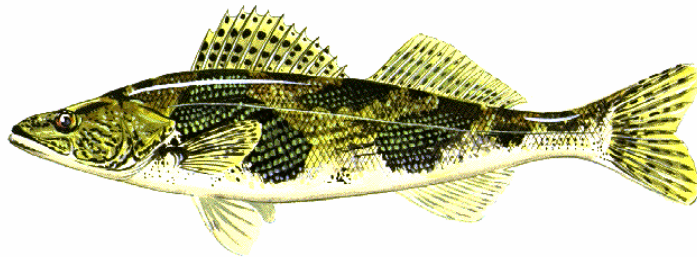


STATUS OF THE WALLEYE AND SAUGER FISHERY



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

MARCH 2011

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 2010 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 and 2009 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 1316.4 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 2011. 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 2011. The numbers of quality-size saugeye are improving and 2011 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 trap-netted 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 2011. 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 a periodic basis to maintain a population at Argyle Lake. The 2010 spring trap net survey and the fall electrofishing survey at Argyle Lake revealed a continued quality in the saugeye population. The spring trap net survey resulted in a collection rate of 1.93 fish/net night, which is slightly lower than the

historic lake collection rate of 2.55 fish/net night. The largest survey collected saugeye in 2010, was a 10.50 pound female. The 2006 spring trap net survey resulted in the collection of an 11.20 pound female saugeye, which is 1.55 pounds larger than the current state record of 9.653 pounds. Argyle 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 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 2010 trap net survey data and fall electrofishing survey data revealed a favorable walleye population with most fish in the one to six pound range. In 2010, the largest survey collected walleye was a 9.26 pound female. Lake Storey has a daily limit of 3 walleye with a minimum size limit of 14 inches.

LAKE MC MASTER - This 165 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 non-vulnerable sized fish at a rate of 15.8 fish/acre due to no natural spawning and recruitment. The walleye management goal at Lake McMaster is to maintain a low density fishery that will produce a few trophy fish larger than 5 pounds. The 2009 creel survey at Lake McMaster (218 day period) revealed that only 55 walleye having an average size of 1.08 pounds were harvested and another 121 walleye were caught and released. The 2010 spring trap net survey at Lake McMaster resulted in a low collection rate of 0.69 fish/net night which is well below the historical lake average rate of 1.98 fish/net night. Walleye anglers at Lake McMaster in 2011 can expect a low catch rate of one to four pound fish with very limited numbers of five to seven pound fish. Lake McMaster has a daily limit of 3 walleye with a minimum size limit 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 - 2010 spring trapnet surveys indicate an average walleye population exists. In Johnson Lake, 7 walleye from 18 to 25 inches were sampled with 10 net nights of effort in 2010. Johnson Lake has clear water, extensive aquatic vegetation, rocky points and water depths up to 60 feet. In 2011, 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 are 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. Spring trapnets set for broodstock had catch rates of 36.6 fish per trap net night which far exceeded management objectives of 2.5 fish per trap net night. Eighty-four percent of the spring catch were males in or near the "harvestable" size of 14" to 18" long.

The slot limit established in 1996 appears to be doing its job of protecting female walleye, which the IDNR Hatchery system uses for production, yet allows for more abundant males to be harvested. In 2010, female walleye averaged 21" long and males 15" long; both groups fit nicely into the goals of the protective slot limit. Walleye fishermen are encouraged to enjoy the harvestable component of the fishery and can keep 3 fish between 14" and 18" long (which are mostly males) and 1 fish over 24" (trophy size) which is an older female fish (past its reproductive prime).

In 2010, 8.7 million eggs were collected producing 5.0 million fry. Of those 2.96 million fry were stocked in the Chain and the rest were stocked in various Hatchery ponds for fingerling production. The Chain O' Lakes was stocked with 274,144 (2.0") fingerlings, and the rest were stocked into various Public Coop lakes and rivers throughout northern Illinois.

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" from 14" to keep fish in the lake one additional year so they could prey on large size forage before reaching harvestable size. Sterling Lake receives annual stockings of 2" fingerlings to maintain their presence. In 2010 Sterling Lake was stocked with 4,712 two inch fingerlings. The lake has black crappie, bluegill, yellow perch, gizzard shad, yellow bass and a host of other species which provide forage for walleye. The lake has a no gas-motor regulation, an undeveloped carry-in type (car-top, canoe, kayak) access area, and no concession stand. Bait has 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! Between 25,000 and 30,000 two inch fingerlings from Fox Chain O' Lakes broodstock are stocked annually (split between the North and South Pools) to maintain the fishery

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. Tampier Lake is usually stocked with about 10,000 two inch fingerlings from Chain O' Lakes broodstock and some fry produced from Tampier Lake Broodstock to maintain the fishery.

SKOKIE LAGOONS - Skokie Lagoon's was 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 and 6 fish creel limit, and a 2 pole and line gear limit. Skokie Lagoons is stocked annually with approximately 13,000 two inch walleye produced from Fox Chain broodstock to maintain their population.

WOLF LAKE - Wolf Lake has been stocked on and off with walleye fry/fingerlings since 1979. The IDNR stocks approximately 33,000 two inch fingerlings annually to supplement the current population. Fingerlings come from broodstock collected from Fox Chain O' Lakes and produced at LaSalle State Fish Hatchery. Fishermen targeting walleye concentrate on current areas and constrictions between pools to find fish. 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 in Wolf Lake (as a whole) should be developing nicely.

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

HEIDECHE 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. The 2006 IDNR fall survey saw record-setting numbers of walleye collected. Since that time, the last two preceding surveys have shown diminishing returns. The 2010 survey collection numbers, while lower than either 2006 or 2008, were more reflective of collection numbers of the earlier surveys. If the 2006 survey numbers are eliminated, catch rates for 2010 fall more in line with long-term averages; electrofishing and gill net catch rates for 2010 were 4.4 fish/minute and 2.9 fish/net night compared to the long-term averages of 4.1 fish/minute and 2.9 fish/net night. Since 2002, annual stockings of walleye fingerlings have averaged 58/acre. In 2008 this number dropped to 41/acre which may have impacted year class strength and contributed to the decreased number of walleyes sampled in 2010. However, the number of walleyes stocked in 2009 was more in line with the long term average as fingerlings were stocked at the rate of 68/acre. The number of walleye stocked in 2010 once again fell short of the long-term average, stocked at the rate of 37/acre. The average size for walleyes collected in 2010 was 15.5", 0.4" lower than the previous survey and nearly a full inch less than the long-term average. Legal size fish and larger comprised 44% of the 2010 collection and nearly 15% 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 is a no boat motor horsepower restriction 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 2010, the State Hatchery System stocked approximately 172,099 1.3-inch walleye. The catch rate of walleye from the 2010 electrofishing survey was 3.5 walleye per hour. The catch rate in 2010 was the 6th highest catch rate in 18 surveys. The average catch rate for the past 18 surveys is 3 walleye per hour. Walleye collected in 2010 ranged in length from 7.5 inches to 25 inches and the heaviest walleye weighed 5.35 pounds. The average weight for all of the walleye was 3.35 pounds. Approximately 77% of the walleye collected in 2010 were longer than 20 inches.

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 31st. 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. From 1998 to 2006, 2400 8-inch walleye were stocked. In 2010, the State Hatchery System stocked 23,443 1.6" walleye. The 2010 fall survey resulted in 17 walleye per hour of sampling. Walleye collected during the survey ranged in size from 8 inches to 21.5 inches. The heaviest walleye collected weighed 3.43 pounds and the average weight was 1.98 pounds. Based on the 2010 survey, 64% 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 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 2010, a night survey was conducted and resulted in a catch rate of 35 saugeye per hour of electrofishing. The saugeye ranged in size from 8 inches to 20.5 inches and the heaviest saugeye weighed 3.01 pounds. The average weight for all saugeye collected was 1.06 pounds. During the spring netting survey in 2009, 68% of saugeye collected were larger than 15 inches, 16% 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 2010 night survey, 82 saugeye were collected per hour of sampling. The saugeye ranged in length from 7 inches to 22 inches. The heaviest saugeye weighed 2.98 pounds and the average weight for all saugeye was 1.05 pounds. A spring netting survey was conducted in 2009 and resulted in the collection of 10.5 saugeye per net. Sixty-two percent of the saugeye collected were longer than 15 inches and six percent were longer than 20 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 2011 appears to be developing a good fishery. However, stocking success survey results for fall 2010 were improved over the 2009 survey and most other recent surveys, with 36 walleye collected per hour. Record rainfalls and poor weather contributed to recent poor collection rates, but high rainfall in 2010 did not appear to cause any problems. Young-of-the-year walleye, ranging from 8 to 11 inches, comprised the majority of the catch in 2010 with 29 fish collected. This should produce a strong year class which will recruit to legal size in 2012. Collection rates for fall 2009 (18/hr.), 2007 (14/hr.), 2006 (26/hr.), and 2005 (37/hr.) exceeded standard goals. The collection rate in fall 2008 (4/hr.) fell below stocking success goals, but catch rates were poor in part due to poor weather. Collection rates in '10, '08, '06 and '05 were higher than catch rates on Lake Shelbyville for these four years. Walleye collected were scattered along rip-rap shorelines on or near bridges. The walleye collected ranged from 8 to 19 inches, with the largest weighing 2.6 lbs. Fourteen walleye were collected in the standardized fall survey with the largest being 24 inches and 4.6 lbs. Walleye fishing prospects for Lake Decatur are rated as fair to good for 2011 and should improve in 2012.

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 2010 (35/hr), 2009 (60/hr), 2008 (38/hr), 2007 (31/hr), 2006 (26/hr.), and 2005 (11/hr.) met or exceeded standard stocking success goals. Numerous saugeye from 6 to 22+ inches were collected in this survey, with the largest weighing 3.8 lbs. Outstanding catches by fishermen were observed from this lake in 2009, but reduced in 2010. Saugeye fishing prospects are rated as good to excellent in 2011.

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. Catch rates during the 2010 (18/hr), 2009 (64/hr), 2008 (19/hr), 2007 (34/hr), 2006 (11/hr.), and 2005 (24/hr.) stocking success survey all exceeded standard stocking success goals.

The walleye collected in the 2010 stocking success survey ranged from 8 to 20+ inches, with the largest weighing 2.8 lbs. This sample was comprised primarily of age-1+ walleye. A fair number of walleye (56 total) with a wide size range were collected in the standard fall survey, with high numbers of age-1+ (20) and age-2+ (24) fish collected. The walleye collected in the standard fall survey ranged from 7 to 25+ inches, with the largest weighing 4.6 lbs. This fishery is becoming increasingly popular with walleye fishing prospects for Lake Shelbyville rated as excellent for 2011!

A relatively small number of sauger have been stocked annually for the past five years. However, 91,000+ sauger were produced in the Fins & Feathers Nursery Pond in 2010 and stocked into the lake. An additional 11,000 sauger were stocked by the IDNR's LaSalle Fish Hatchery. These are introductory stockings designed to determine if sauger have the potential to spawn successfully in the Kaskaskia River or the reservoir. In the 2010 stocking success survey 28 sauger, ranging from 7 to 14 inches, were collected. This is a catch rate of 25 per hour which was greater than the walleye catch rate. Most of these fish (21) were young-of-the-year. In addition, 20 sauger were collected in the 2010 standard fall survey, ranging from 6 to 14 inches. The largest fish collected weighed just under one pound. A few reports from fishermen catching the odd sauger have been received. Stocking densities have just reached high enough to rate any potential to develop a fishery. Fishing prospects for sauger should be fair in 2011 and improve in 2012.

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 2009, during a two day spring netting survey, an extremely small sample was collected (3) representing 3 year classes. Individuals collected represented 5+, 6+ and 7+ year classes. The 2004 year class (5+) measured 22 inches in length and weighed 4.6 pounds. The 6+ individual measured 23 inches in length and weighed 4.6 pounds as well. The 2002 year class (7+) measured nearly 26 inches in length and weighed nearly 8.0 pounds. The weather in the spring of 2009 was not conducive to walleye movement due the large fluctuations in daytime versus nighttime temperatures. It appeared that the walleye stayed offshore in deeper water during sampling hours. The individuals collected were all "tight", green, females. Under ideal sampling conditions males are usually captured first cruising the shallows.

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 - Sauger are doing well in the lake. Several year classes are present and condition is good. During our population survey, we collected fish ranging in length from 6 to 20 inches. Thirty-six percent of the adult fish were 15 inches or more in length. The largest sauger observed during our survey weighed 2 lbs. Based upon past population surveys, fish weighing 3 lbs and more are present in the lake. Most of the sauger originally came from our annual spring fry stocking program. The spillway area has a dense concentration of sauger and offers excellent fishing. A 14 inch minimum length limit/6 fish per day creel applies.

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. 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, good numbers of fish were observed in the spring survey, fish from five or six year-classes were observed. Fish ranging from 13 to 22 inches in length were most abundant and the largest sampled was 22.3 inches in length at 5.12 pounds. Since reproduction is not expected 28,710 fingerlings 2.0 inches in length were stocked.

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

EAST FORK LAKE - The number of walleye collected in the 2010 population survey fell from the record highs of the previous two years, but in spite of this decline the population remains in very good condition. Walleye growth rates and recruitment have been good for several years in a row, and as a result data from last year's survey included fish from five different year classes. The majority of fish in East Fork Lake currently range from 16-24 inches in length and weigh from 2 - 6 pounds. However, larger walleye up to 30 inches in length and weighing over 9 pounds are also present. Fishing continued to be good this past year with many anglers catching limits of walleye, and East Fork should continue to provide quality fishing opportunities for walleye in 2011. Jigging and trolling along main lake points and the rip-rap areas along the dam and St. Marie Road continue to be the most productive. Deep diving crank baits on main lake points are also effective, especially in the summer months. If recruitment remains good, this lake should continue to 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 Clerk's office at 618/393-2130.

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

KINKAID LAKE - Kinkaid Lake is located just west of Murphysboro in Jackson County. This 2750-acre lake was built in 1972 and first stocked with walleye in the late 70's. Walleye stockings over many years have periodically produced good year classes of 14 to 16 inch walleye. Growth has been excellent.

The majority of walleye observed by IDNR are collected in nets set 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 walleye populations and the effectiveness of the spillway barrier and the resultant effect on the Lake's walleye population.

The largest Kinkaid Lake walleye collected by IDNR biologists was collected during 2010. This walleye measured 28 inches and weighed eleven pounds. During 2010

nine walleye (up to 25 inches and seven pounds) were collected in gill nets and eleven walleye (up to 28 inches and eleven pounds) were collected in trap nets. No walleye were collected during 2010 spring electrofishing.

Walleye are stocked annually into Kinkaid Lake. In the spring of 2010 55,000 two-inch walleye were stocked into Kinkaid Lake.

SCAUP LAKE - This 50 acre strip cut is located in the Galum Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Walleye were first stocked in August 2002 and have been stocked annually since that time. Twenty-five hundred 1-2 inch walleye were stocked in 2010. This lake does not have a boat ramp and no other information is available for the walleye in this lake. Fishing is prohibited from October 28 through February 28.

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. Twenty-five hundred 1-2 inch WAE were stocked in 2010. No walleye were collected in 2010 during spring trap netting. This lake has a concrete boat ramp and a 10 HP motor limit. From October 28 through February 28 fishing is permitted in designated areas only, and fishing hours are from ½ hour before sunrise to 2 pm. Fishing is allowed lake wide the rest of the year.

CANVASBACK LAKE - This 60 acre strip cut is located in the Denmark Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Walleye have never been stocked into this lake. However, walleye have been collected the last two years from this lake during spring trap netting including a single 25 inch walleye collected in 2010. It is possibly that walleye entered this lake from Green Wing Lake during flood events in spring 2009. Canvasback Lake has a concrete boat ramp and a 10 HP motor limit. Fishing is prohibited from October 28 through February 28.

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 - The Rock River is regularly stocked with hatchery raised walleye. In 2009 a total of 164,674 fingerling walleye were stocked, and in 2010, 898 walleye of approximately 8", and another 110,665 walleye fingerlings were stocked into the Rock River at several different locations. Surveys for walleye in the Rock River are conducted every other year to determine if the hatchery stockings have been successful. The data from the 2010 survey is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Rock River Walleye Survey Results.

Sample	Location	Time (minutes)	<10"	>10"	>15"	>20"	Total
21587	Oregon	44	1	1	0	0	2
21588	Dixon	45	2	0	0	0	2
21589	Sterling	35	0	2	2	1	2
21590	Prophetstown	32	0	1	0	0	1
21592	Grand Detour	45	8	0	0	0	8
21593	Dixon	100	28	7	2	0	35
21594	Oregon	71	5	0	0	0	5
21595	Sterling	90	7	6	1	0	13
TOTALS		462 (261 night)	51	17	5	1	68

PSD = 5/17 X 100 = 29% (Target 30-60)

RSD20 = 1/17 X 100 = 5.9% (Target 10%)

Y/A ratio = 51/5 = 10.2 (Target 1-10)

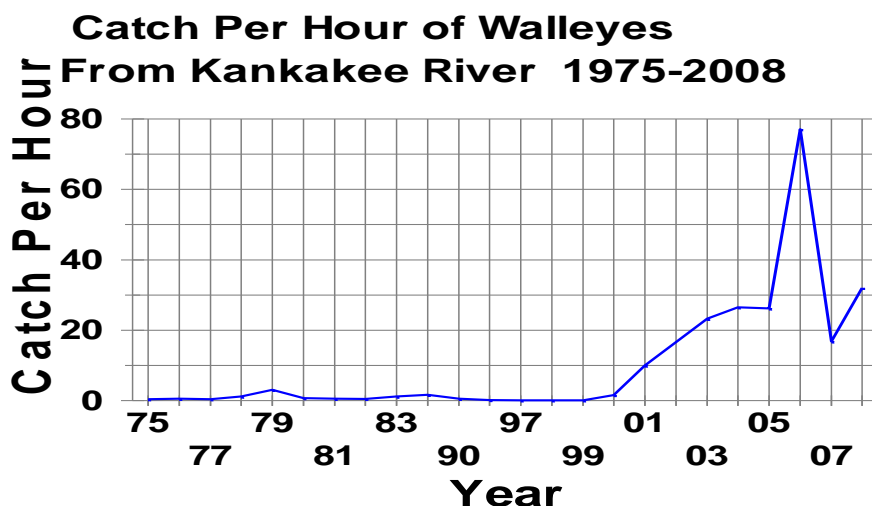
CPUE overall = 68/462 = .15

CPUE night only = 53/261 = .20

The results from the 2010 survey appear to indicate that the walleye population is somewhat skewed towards the small end with the majority of fish collected either young fish <10" or just slightly larger. The Catch/Unit of Effort (CPUE) is low, even during the nighttime survey, with a total of only 68 walleye collected, and only 5 of the 68 fish collected are over 15". However, even though the catch rate is low, the PSD of 29% (percentage of fish greater than 15") is only slightly down (target range 30-60). High, turbid water during most of the collection time limited visibility and most likely lowered the CPUE drastically.

Despite the poor survey results, the local fishermen are painting a vastly different picture. Anglers are reporting very good catches of large walleye from deep water, with many smaller fish, even fingerlings, biting well. According to the walleye fishermen, excellent numbers of very large walleye (>10 pounds) can be found below the Sterling lower dam and at Dixon. For the best results, look for current breaks near areas of fast water, such as behind wing dams or rocky outcrops.

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 year except in 2002 when the river was too high to collect adults. Catch rates have increased 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.

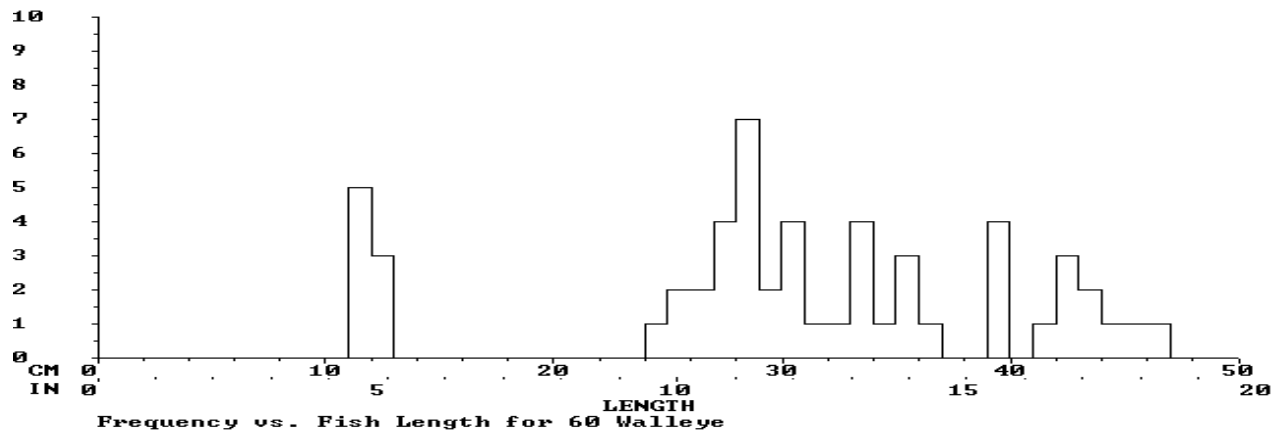


The walleye population has a good size distribution with 44% of the catch in 2008 being over the legal length limit of 16 inches. In 2007 twenty-four percent were over 21 inches in length and 6% over 24 inches. So besides the river having good number of fish in it, it also has a lot of big walleye.

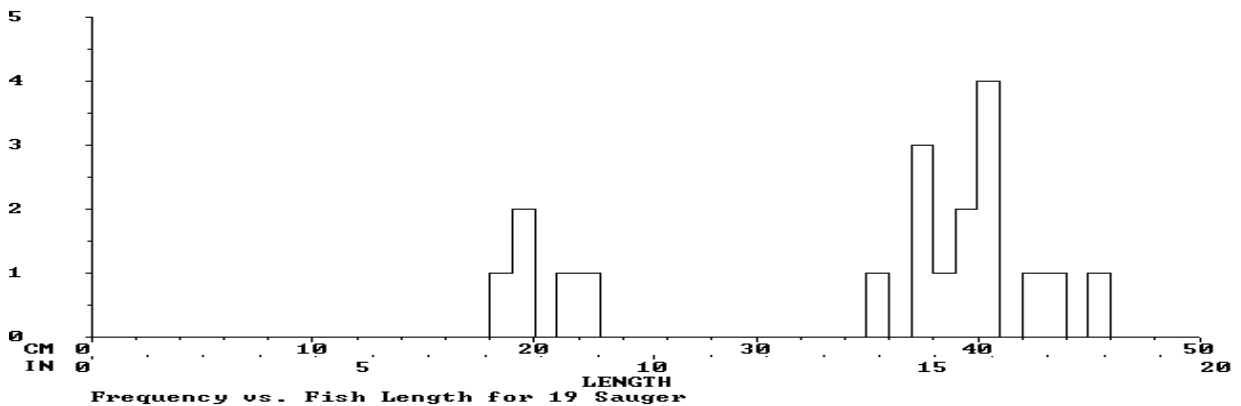
The stocked walleyes are marked so that they can be distinguished from walleye naturally reproduced in the river. In 2006, 80% of the walleyes collected were marked fish indicating that the stocking program currently is supporting most of the fishery in the river. Hopefully we will see this number go 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 5000-10,000 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.



IROQUOIS RIVER - A basin survey was conducted on the Iroquois River this year. Five mainstem river sites and 18 tributary sites were sampled. These surveys produced 11 walleye. The mainstem Iroquois River sites produced 0 to 2 walleye per site, with most notable catches of a 15-inch walleye near the town of Iroquois and two walleye 17 and 27 inches collected at Sugar Island east of Chebanse. Walleye were also collected from three tributary streams, with a 5-inch fish from Pike Creek, 15 and 21-inch fish from Sugar Creek, and three fish 6 to 20 inches from Beaver Creek. Most of the basin is in private property. There is one public boat ramp on the Iroquois River at Watseka. The river is also accessible from a public boat ramp at Aroma Park.

UPPER MACKINAW RIVER - A basin survey was conducted on the Mackinaw River this year. In McLean County, four mainstem river sites and seven tributary sites were sampled. Only three walleye and one sauger were collected from these sites. The walleye were all about 16 inches, while the sauger was 13 inches long. Most of the upper river is in private ownership, but the public can access the river at a couple of canoe launches on Parklands Foundation property.

UPPER SANGAMON RIVER - A basin survey was conducted in 2008 on the Sangamon River Basin. Walleye were only collected at the Monticello mainstem river site upstream from Lake Decatur. The walleye catch rate was 4 per hour at Monticello, and the fish ranged from 12 to 20.5 inches long.

The tailwaters of Lake Decatur and Clinton Lake were not sampled in 2009, but should be good in the spring and fall, while water is flowing.

UPPER 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 when a high volume of water is released from the lake.

2007 sauger catch rates from the Kaskaskia River Basin Survey 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. Sauger were in the one-pound range. A 2009 survey at Vandalia produced only a single sauger at less than a pound.

LOWER 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 2009 should make the tailwaters an exceptional fishing destination.

2007 sauger catch rates from the Kaskaskia River Basin Survey 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.

A 2009 survey at Vandalia produced only a single sauger at less than a pound.