



# HEIDECKE LAKE

## FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

**LOCATION** – Heidecke Lake is located in Grundy County approximately 1 mile south and 8 miles east of Morris, between Illinois Route 47 and Interstate 55 on Lorenzo/Pine Bluff Road.

**DESCRIPTION** – Formerly a cooling reservoir, Heidecke Lake has 1,955 surface acres of water with 75% of shoreline comprised of rock rip-rapped dikes. A "safe harbor" created by breakwaters was constructed in 1993. There are no horsepower limitations; maximum speed is 40 mph except in designated "no wake" areas; working gasoline engine required as main propulsion unit; boats under 14' are not recommended. Zebra mussels have been found in Heidecke Lake and boaters should take appropriate measures upon departure. Shore angler access is located on the east side of lake off Dresden Road with portions of the center and east dike open to bank fishing. A handicapped fishing pier is located on the east side of the lake as well.

**HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY** – The fishery is evaluated via biennial major surveys and annual species-specific surveys. Attempts to introduce aquatic vegetation have generally failed. Bass spawning habitat has been installed at various locations and other habitat enhancement projects are planned. Heidecke Lake receives annual stockings of walleye and hybrid striped bass. Pure muskellunge are stocked every third year, while black crappie and largemouth bass are released based upon availability. *A special mercury advisory is in effect for Smallmouth Bass 18" and larger which limits consumption to one meal per week for the most sensitive populations.*

Heidecke Lake is maintained by periodically pumping water from the Illinois River. As a result, the lake supports a variety of fish species in addition to those listed above, including common carp, quillback, freshwater drum and others. Heidecke Lake is supported by a thriving gizzard shad forage base as well as various other minnow species. Round gobies have been recently discovered as well.

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**LARGEMOUTH BASS** – Largemouth Bass catch rates greatly improved in the 2020 survey. While the number of fish over 8 inches declined slightly, it was still well above the long-term average. Young fish (particularly young-of-year) contributed greatly to the total catch. It appears the 2017 supplemental stocking of 30,000 fingerlings has had some initial success at revitalizing the population. Overall, 47% of the adult fish caught were over 15 inches and 2% were over 18 inches. All size groups had good body condition (i.e., plumpness). **Site Regulation: 12 to 18 inch protected slot; 2 fish under 12 inches, 1 fish over 18 inches.**

**SMALLMOUTH BASS** – Smallmouth Bass experienced a comeback in the 2020 survey, as the overall catch increased by 220%. While 66% of the total catch fell within the protected slot limit (12 – 18 inches), 45% of the adults were over 14 inches and 9% were ~17 inches. Other than an

improvement in overall numbers, the size distribution remains largely unchanged. **Site Regulation: 12 to 18 inch protected slot; 2 fish under 12 inches, 1 fish over 18 inches.**

**BLUEGILL-** The 2020 survey had another good Bluegill collection, with 9% of the adult fish over 8 inches. Body condition was good for all size groups.

**CHANNEL CATFISH** – Since 2008, there has been little evidence of Channel Catfish reproduction and/or recruitment. The average size for Channel Catfish collected in IDNR surveys has steadily increased. **Site Regulation: 6 fish daily creel.**

**WALLEYE** – Walleye catch rates improved in the 2020 survey, and 92% of adult fish were legal size. Six percent (6%) of the adult fish were over 25 inches. Average length of all fish was 16.3 inches. Body condition was good for most sized groups. Walleye from the state hatchery system are stocked annually. **Site Regulation: 16 inch minimum length limit; 3 fish daily creel.**

**HYBRID STRIPED BASS** – Electrofishing catch rates fell slightly in the 2020 survey, but 12% of the adult fish were trophy size (over 25 inches). The average size of all fish was 21.5 inches. Body condition was good for most size groups. Hybrid Striped Bass from the state hatchery system are stocked annually. **Site Regulation: 10 fish aggregate “striper” daily creel with only 3 fish 17 inches or longer.**

**WHITE BASS** – White Bass catch rates remained unchanged in 2020. Average size of all fish was 12 inches, and 19% of the adult fish were over 15 inches. Body condition was good for all size groups. **Site Regulation: 10 fish aggregate “striper” daily creel with only 3 fish 17 inches or longer.**

**YELLOW BASS** – Largest Yellow Bass caught in 2020 was 11.7 inches (state average is 6.5 inches). Heidecke Lake has historically had a solid Yellow Bass population. **Note: Yellow Bass are not included in the aggregate “striper” limit.**

**MUSKELLUNGE** – Sizes ranged from 21.1 to 46.7 inches in the Fall 2020 survey. Muskie from the state hatchery system are stocked on a triennial basis, with the next stocking scheduled for 2022. **Site Regulation: 48 inch minimum length limit.**

**CRAPPIE** – In a turn of events, Black Crappie greatly outnumbered White Crappie in the 2020 survey. The biggest Crappie for both species were ~13 inches. The Crappie fishery appears to exhibit respectable growth. Black Crappie from the state hatchery system are stocked on an annual basis. **Site Regulation: 15 fish daily creel.**

**ADDITIONAL LAKE INFORMATION:** Swimming, wading, water skiing and sail boating are prohibited. Heidecke Lake is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to sunset from April 1 to ten days prior to the opening of the waterfowl season. There are no horsepower limitations; maximum speed is 40 mph except in designated "no wake" areas; working gasoline engine required as main propulsion unit; boats under 14' are not recommended. A recently refurbished three-lane concrete boat ramp with fully blacktopped 100+ car/trailer parking is available. Boat launch is handicapped accessible. The boat access is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to sunset; bank fishing access on the center and eastern dikes opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at sunset. Since windy conditions can produce treacherous waves, the lake can be closed at the discretion of the site superintendent. **Boaters are required to have operational gasoline motors. No horsepower limitations.**

**Additional Site-Specific Fishing Regulations:**

All fish species - Two Pole and Line Fishing Only.

**Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass** – 12” to 18” protected slot; 2 fish under 12”, 1 fish over 18” daily creel

**Channel Catfish** – 6 fish daily creel

**White, Hybrid and/or Striped Bass** – 10 fish daily aggregate creel; only 3 fish 17” or longer

**Crappie** – 15 fish daily creel

**Muskellunge** – 48” minimum length limit

**Walleye** – 16” minimum length limit; 3 fish daily creel

**CONTACT INFORMATION** – Heidecke Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area: 815/942-6352.  
IDNR Fisheries County Biologist: 630/553-6680.