



BRAIDWOOD LAKE

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Braidwood Lake is located in Will County approximately 1¼ miles south of the Village of Braidwood adjacent to U.S. Route 53.

DESCRIPTION – Braidwood Lake is a 2,640 acre, partially perched cooling lake. When impounded in 1981 several old strip-mine pits were flooded within the lake proper. No horsepower limitations; maximum speed limit is 40 mph except in designated "no wake" and "hazard" areas; working gasoline engine required as main propulsion unit; boats under 14' are not recommended. The County Line Road access (South Ramp) has a four-lane concrete boat ramp with 35 car/trailer parking. An additional 75+ car lot is located adjacent to the ramp area. The Cemetery Road access (North Ramp) has a two-lane concrete boat ramp with parking for 35 car/trailers. A majority of the shoreline is open to bank fishing, and these areas are clearly marked. Access to the interior islands by anglers is prohibited. Steep drop-offs, rock piles, man-made habitat, current and thermal breaks and woody cover are all present. The nature of this lake requires extreme care in boating and a good topographic map is well worth the expense.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES - The fishery is evaluated via biennial major surveys and species-specific ancillary surveys. Fish habitat enhancement has been conducted for several years and most recently involves the installation of commercially made units. Braidwood Lake supports a persistent phytoplankton bloom which suppresses rooted aquatic vegetation.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY –Braidwood Lake receives annual stockings of largemouth bass, blue catfish and hybrid striped bass. *No special mercury advisory or other contaminant-related consumption advisories pertain.* Below is a brief description of the major sportfish species in this water body.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Stocked annually since 2006, a total of nearly 26,000 bass fingerlings were released in 2015 and these fish were very prevalent in the fall survey. Catch rates for all sizes of largemouth bass were nearly double the long-term average while bass which were 6" and larger were collected at an excellent rate of nearly 56 per hour of electrofishing. Larger bass were not common in the 2015 survey although a few fish approaching 20" were collected.

BLUEGILL – Collected with regularity throughout the lake, bluegills tend to be more prevalent along rip-rapped shorelines. In a continuing trend bluegills collected in 2015 were generally smaller fish, only 17% of which were 6" and larger with few collected exceeding 7".

CHANNEL CATFISH –A combination of successful natural reproduction and high survival of young fish results in Braidwood Lake functioning as a "catfish factory". This combination has led to a population which is dominated by smaller fish. Channel catfish collected in the 2015 survey ranged from 4" to 30" and 13.4 lbs. Although collection rates increased from the previous survey the average size channel catfish declined to just 11".

BLUE CATFISH –The 2015 survey yielded very poor results, which are likely not indicative of the population as site reports indicated that excellent catches were made during the 2015 angling season with fish exceeding 30 lbs. being caught. Initially stocked in 2008, blue catfish have shown excellent growth rates and provide an exciting compliment to species available to the angler at Braidwood Lake.

HYBRID STRIPED BASS – Stocked annually since 2011, striped bass hybrids have developed into an excellent addition to the lake’s fishery. Several year classes were represented in the 2015 survey collection with fish ranging from recently-stocked 4” fingerlings to fish reaching 34” and 7½lbs.

ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES – Excess production at the IDNR hatchery systems has allowed for the stocking of redear sunfish on a few occasions and while not as prevalent as bluegill, larger specimens are caught. Flathead catfish were also stocked several years ago and a remnant population exists today. Braidwood Lake is maintained by periodically pumping water from the Kankakee River. As a result, the lake supports a variety of fish species which include common carp, quillback, freshwater drum and others. Braidwood Lake is supported by a thriving gizzard and threadfin shad forage base as well as various other minnow species.

FISHING REGULATIONS – Statewide fishing regulations apply at this lake (see current Illinois Fishing Information booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/> for specific details).

Additional Site Specific fishing regulations:

Open daily from 6:00 a.m. to sunset from March 1 to ten days prior to the opening of the waterfowl season.

All fish species - Two pole and line fishing only.

Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass – 15” minimum length limit ; 3 fish daily creel limit.

Hybrid Striped Bass – 10 fish daily creel/3 fish 17” or longer

CONTACT INFORMATION – Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Area: 815/263-0063.
IDNR Fisheries County Biologist: 630/553-6680.

Braidwood Lake Map

