

DAWSON LAKE

FISHERIES FACT SHEET

LOCATION: Dawson Lake is located in Moraine View State Recreation Area. Dawson Lake is located between Bloomington/Normal and Champaign/Urbana north of I-74 at the LeRoy exit.

DESCRIPTION: This fertile 160.8 acre lake was built in 1962 and has a maximum depth of 25.5 feet and an average depth of 10 feet. Presently, an idle-speed/no-wake speed limit exists for boat motors over 10 horsepower and no speed limit for motors 10 horsepower or less. There is a two-lane launching ramp and docking facility. A concession stand, located near the boat dock and launch, offers dock and boat rental, fishing tackle, bait, refreshments and various supplies. A restaurant, seating 60, serves breakfast and lunch. Bowfishing is allowed from a boat.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY: The IDNR Division of Fisheries has been active in the management of the fisheries in Dawson Lake since the lake was constructed in 1962. The lake receives stockings of saugeye, channel catfish, redear sunfish, and black crappie. The following information is a summary of the major sport fisheries based on periodic fish population surveys.

Largemouth Bass – The most recent bass survey resulted in a catch rate of 151 bass per hour. The average catch rate is 177.7 bass per hour. Of the bass collected over 8 inches, 61% were over 12 inches, but only 8% were over 15 inches. A new regulation was implemented in 2015 to increase the number of larger bass in the lake. The regulation will allow anglers to remove 2 bass under 15 inches and only one bass over 15 inches.

Bluegill – During the most recent survey, bluegill were collected at a rate of 283.3 per hour. Approximately 6% of the bluegill collected were over 6 inches and 1% were over 8 inches. The bluegill fishery is rated as average. In order to improve the bluegill fishery, only 5 bluegill over 8 inches will be allowed to be harvested. Anglers will be allowed to harvest 20 bluegill in total, which is an increase from the old regulation of 15 per day.

Black Crappie – The crappie fishery is assessed by using frame nets in the spring. The catch rate in the most recent survey was 30.1 black crappie per net-night. The average catch rate for the past 6 surveys is 45.1 crappie per net-night. The majority of the crappie collected were between 8 and 10 inches. There are good numbers of crappie in Dawson Lake, but most will be less than 10 inches. Approximately 17% were longer than 10 inches in the spring of 2016.

Saugeye – Saugeye have been stocked into Dawson Lake since 2003. During the most recent saugeye electrofishing survey, 75 saugeye were collected per hour of sampling. The saugeye ranged in length from 8 inches to 18 inches. The heaviest saugeye weighed 1.84 pounds and the average weight for all saugeye was 0.93 pounds. During the most recent spring netting survey, a catch rate of 10.5 saugeye per net was obtained. The average catch rate for the past 8 surveys is 16.1 saugeye per net. Approximately 36% of the saugeye collected were longer than 15 inches and 11% were longer than 20 inches. The strategic management plan for walleye/saugeye has a catch rate objective of 2.5 per net. The walleye/saugeye population at Dawson Lake is a great fishery in a small lake.

Channel Catfish – Channel catfish are stocked each year from the State Hatchery System. The latest survey collected 26 catfish per hour. The average catch rate for the past 6 surveys is 28.4 per hour. Approximately 33% of the catfish collected were over 16 inches.

FISHING REGULATIONS: 2 Pole and Line Fishing Only, except that bowfishing is allowed from a boat.

SPECIES	SIZE LIMIT	DAILY LIMIT
Largemouth Bass	2 < 15" and 1 ≥ 15"	3
Walleye/Saugeye	15"; no more than 1 over 20"	3
Channel Catfish	None	6
Crappie	None	15
Redear Sunfish/Bluegill	Only 5 over 8"	20

For other species, statewide regulations are in effect. For further regulation information, please consult the current Illinois Fishing Regulation Booklet.

For more information: Moraine View Recreation Area: 309-724-8032
Fisheries: 217-784-4730

