

DAWSON LAKE

Lake Status Summary



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, Redear Sunfish, and Channel Catfish. 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 158 bass per hour. Of the bass collected over 8 inches, 53% were over 12 inches and 32% 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. Gizzard shad were first collected in 2018 and may improve the growth rate and size structure of the bass population. The catch rate for bass over 15 inches in 2023 was the highest catch rate recorded in over 20 years.

Bluegill – During the most recent survey, Bluegill were collected at a rate of 171 per hour. Of the Bluegill over 3 inches, 35% were over 6 inches and none were over 8 inches. The Bluegill fishery is rated as fair. 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. It is important to not overharvest large Bluegill from the fishery.

Black Crappie – During the most recent survey, Black Crappie were collected at a rate of 64 per hour and the average catch rate is 58.9 per hour. Of the Black Crappie collected over 5”, 100% were over 8” and 11% were over 10”. The crappie fishery is dominated by crappie just above 9 inches.

Saugeye – Saugeye have been stocked into Dawson Lake since 2003. During the most recent Saugeye electrofishing survey, 57 Saugeye were collected per hour of sampling. The Saugeye ranged in length from 14 inches to 26.6 inches. The heaviest Saugeye weighed 7.98 pounds and the average weight for all Saugeye was 3 pounds. Dawson has an excellent Saugeye fishery.

Channel Catfish – Channel Catfish are stocked each year from the State Hatchery System. The latest survey collected 16 catfish per hour and represents a high number of catfish in Dawson. The average catch rate for the past 10 surveys is 27.4 per hour. Approximately 23% of the catfish collected were over 16 inches. The catfish population is maintained from annual stockings.

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

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>SIZE LIMIT</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>
Largemouth Bass	2 < 15" and 1 ≥ 15"	3
Walleye/Saugeye	15" minimum length limit; 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