

IDNR – Fisheries

2018 Lake Status Summary

Horton Lake – Nauvoo State Park



Location: Located on Nauvoo State Park in Nauvoo, IL east of Rt. 96

Area: 13 acres

Lake history and characteristics: Horton Lake was built in 1967 to provide fishing opportunity to patrons of Nauvoo State Park. A primitive boat ramp and bank fishing are available. Only electric trolling motors are allowed and no swimming is allowed. The lake features clear water and a peaceful setting that also offers camping, picnic areas, hiking trails and even a museum. Horton Lake is one of several lakes across IL that offers the Catchable Trout Program. Catchable size rainbow trout are stocked every spring and fall for anglers to enjoy catch and release fly fishing prior to opening day and harvest of 5 trout/day after opening day. Anglers must possess an inland trout stamp, in addition to a valid sportfishing license to participate in this program.

Largemouth bass: The largemouth bass population consists of only brood fish stocked from the State Hatchery system in June, 2016. The brood fish range in size from 18 – 20” weighing up to 5.9 lbs. The largemouth bass regulation for Horton Lake has changed to one bass per day with a minimum length limit of 18” to protect the brood bass. The 2017 fish community survey showed no bass other than the brood fish stocked in 2016, which suggests that bass fry produced by the brood bass or the bass fry stocked by the hatchery system did not recruit to larger sizes. The lack of recruitment may be a result of high predation pressure by the dense black crappie population. Anglers are asked to practice catch and release with largemouth bass for the next few years until the population becomes established and stable. Anglers can catch largemouth bass off of points, deadfalls, and stickups in the warmer months of the year with plastic worms, jigs, spinners, crank baits, minnows, crayfish and worms.

Black crappie: A group of black crappie survived the winter kill in 2013/14 and are now measuring 9-12”. We collected a few YOY in the 2016 and 2017 fall surveys. Our 2017 survey showed a catch rate of 21 crappie/hr of electrofishing, where 46% of the catchable population measured over 9” and 0 measured over 10”. There is currently no restriction on crappie harvest at Horton Lake. Anglers can catch crappie around submerged structures throughout the lake in the spring and fall with spinners, jigs and minnows.


Channel catfish: Little is known about the channel catfish population following the winter 2013/14 fish kill. We collected 3 channel catfish/hr of electrofishing ranging in size from 17 – 22” weighing up to 3.7 lbs in the 2017 survey. Channel catfish are stocked from the State Hatchery system on an annual basis, so the population should recover well. The current channel catfish regulation is 6 fish/day with no minimum length limit. Anglers can catch channel catfish near deadfalls and stickups in the warmer months throughout the lake using bottom fishing techniques with cut bait, shrimp, chicken livers or night crawlers.


Bluegill: The bluegill population at Horton Lake is currently characterized by a high density of fish measuring 3-4” with a few measuring between 7-8” in less than desirable body condition. The bluegill population should provide better fishing opportunities in the future with continued establishment of predator species. Anglers can catch bluegill on their spawning beds in the spring or near shoreline cover year round with worms, crickets, or night crawlers.


Northern Pike: Two groups of northern pike were stocked into Horton Lake following the 2013/14 winter fish kill with an attempt to establish a northern pike fishery. We collected 5 pike/hr electrofishing in the 2016 survey ranging from 13 – 20” and 5 pike/hr electrofishing in the 2017 survey ranging from 21.5 – 28”. The 2017 survey showed poor growth rates and body condition (Wr = 75). Anglers can catch pike in the spring and fall around beds of aquatic vegetation using minnows, spinners, spoons, jigs, jerk and crank baits.


Fishing Regulations: see the Fishing Regulation Booklet or IFISHILLINOIS.org for updates


2 pole and line fishing only

Largemouth bass – 18” minimum length limit with a creel of 1/day. 

Crappie – none 

Channel catfish – 6 fish/day creel limit. 

Northern Pike – state wide – 36” minimum length limit with a creel limit of 1/day. 

Trout - Spring closed season (no harvest with hook and line, but catch and release fly fishing permitted from March 15 – first Sat. in April); Fall closed season (no harvest with hook and line, but catch and release fly fishing permitted from Oct. 1 – third Saturday in Oct.) 



Largemouth Bass	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Management Objectives
% >12"								-	-	100	100	40-60
% >15"								-	-	100	100	10-25
% >18"								-	-	25	100	1-5
% >20"								-	-	8	0	1-5
condition								-	-	123	129	90-110
fish/hr EF								0	0	14	21	>60
Black Crappie												
% >8"								0	82	86	77	50-70
% >10"								0	0	21	0	15-30
% >12"								0	0	0	0	1-5
condition								147	102	94	86	90-100
fish/hr EF								6	27	37	21	70-120
Channel Catfish												
% >16"								-	-	100	100	50-70
% >18"								-	-	67	50	15-30
% >22"								-	-	33	50	5-10
condition								-	-	148	93	90-100
fish/hr EF								0	0	4	2	10-15
Bluegill												
% >6"								-	45	3	5	20-40
% >7"								-	0	1	5	10-20
% >8"								-	0	0	1	1-5
condition								-	106	89	91	90-100
fish/hr EF								0	67	197	161	80-100
Northern Pike												
% >28"								0	0	0	100	60-80
% >34"								0	0	0	0	30-50
% >44"								0	0	0	0	5-15
condition								121	75	70	75	90-110
fish/hr EF								16.4	5	5	5	2-5

Aquatic vegetation and/or chemical treatment: none

Fisheries management activities completed:
-stocked 700 lbs of rainbow trout 3/16

-stocked 1,500 fingerling largemouth bass – June

-Stocked 1,260 – 8” channel catfish – July

-conducted a fall fish population survey (1 – 40 min pulsed-DC electrofishing survey) 9/5

-stocked 700 lbs of rainbow trout 10/5



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