



Lake Sara

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Location: Lake Sara is located in Effingham County approximately 5 miles southwest of Effingham Illinois.

Area: Lake Sara was constructed in 1957 and has a surface area of 614 acres, a maximum depth of 47 feet, and a mean depth of 19 feet. The lake has 38 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 7,560 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Lake Sara is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, white and black crappies, white bass, and channel catfish. Other common species include yellow bullheads and common carp. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries below are based on the results of the most recent population survey and four-year trends in the population indices.

Largemouth Bass - In an attempt to improve the size structure of the population, regulations were changed on April 01, 2017 to a 15" – 18" protected slot limit. Early results indicate the new regulation appears to be working. The percentage of the adult bass in the sample over 15" declined slightly to 16% in 2018 from 18% in 2017. The catch rate improved for the second straight year. The number of fish above the slot remained stable for the second year (RSD-18 = 4). Bass numbers below the slot remain high and body condition is still poor, but this should improve with time. For 2019, the majority of bass below the slot will range from 0.5 -1.5 lbs., while those exceeding 18" will be 3.5 pounds or greater.

Bluegill: The size structure of the bluegill population remains poor. Most of the population is comprised of fish less than 7" in length. Body condition improved slightly, but remains poor (Wr = 87), and growth rates remain below average. Anglers can expect to catch an abundance of fish 5" – 7" in length.

Crappie: Both black and white crappie are present in Lake Sara, but white crappie are the dominant species. Data collected from the annual population survey indicate 40% of the adult white crappie are greater than 10" in length. This is a significant improvement over 2017 (RSD-10 = 20). Body condition for white crappie improved and is good (Wr = 93). Together these two species should provide some very good angling opportunities in the coming year.

Channel Catfish: Catfish in Lake Sara should provide good fishing opportunities in the coming year. The channel catfish population is mostly comprised of older and larger fish. Natural recruitment is low keeping total numbers down, but growth rates are good. The majority of fish in the population will range from 2 – 5 lbs. with larger individuals to 12 lbs.

White Bass: White bass numbers declined in the 2017 fall survey. Two year classes were collected and their body condition declined slightly, remaining poor (Wr = 86). Angling opportunities for white bass should be fair in 2018.

Fishing Regulations: Two pole and line fishing only

| Species | Daily Creel Limit | Slot Length Limit |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Largemouth Bass | 6 | 15"-18" protected slot |
| White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie | 25 collectively | |

Additional Regulations: Boat permits are required and may be purchased at either of Lake Sara's two Marina's, the Mach 1 gas station on Rt. 33 west, or Lake Sara Marine in Effingham.

Contacts: Effingham Water Authority 217/868-2787; IDNR Fisheries 618/393-6732

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