



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 crappie, 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. In 2020, the percentage of the adult bass in the sample over 15” improved to 27%. Bass numbers within the slot improved and those fish were in good condition. The percentage of fish above the slot increased slightly (RSD-18 = 5) and they were in very good condition. Bass numbers below the slot remained high and body condition was still poor, but should improve with time. For 2021, 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. **Harvest of bass below the slot limit (less than 15”) is encouraged.**

Bluegill: The size structure of the bluegill population remained poor. Most of the sample was comprised of fish less than 7” in length. Body condition remained nearly stable, but poor and growth rates remained 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 indicated that 40% of the adult white crappie were greater than 10” in length. Body condition for white crappie decreased and was below the lake management plan target. Very few black crappie were collected and their average body condition was less than the minimum target. Together these two species should provide good angling opportunities in the coming year.

Channel Catfish: The channel catfish population was mostly comprised of older and larger fish. Natural recruitment remains low, keeping total numbers down. Growth rates remained average and body condition was just above target. Anglers can expect to see most fish in the 2 – 4 lbs. range, with some fish over 10 lbs.

White Bass: White bass numbers increased in 2020. However, average body condition was very poor. Angling opportunities for white bass should be fair/good in 2021. **Harvest of white bass in Lake Sara is encouraged.**

Fishing Regulations:

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 Marinas, the Mach 1 gas station on Rt. 33, or Lake Sara Marina in Effingham.

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