



Red Hills Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Red Hills Lake was constructed in Red Hills State Fish and Wildlife Area near Sumner, Illinois in 1953. The lake was drained and rehabilitated in 2008 and restocked with fish in 2009.

Location: Red Hills Lake is located approximately midway between Lawrenceville and Olney on U.S. Route 50. The lake is located on the south side of the road. The boat launch is located on the southwest corner of the dam.

Area: Red Hills Lake has a surface area of 40 acres, a maximum depth of 22 feet, and an average depth of 8 feet. The lake has 2 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 618 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish in Red Hills Lake include largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and black crappie. The lake also contains a small population of redear sunfish, some very large warmouth, yellow bullhead, and golden shiner. Red Hills Lake is open year-round. 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: The overall size structure of the largemouth bass population was poor, but bass numbers were above target. In the 2024 survey, approximately 58% of the adult bass collected were between 12” – 15” in length, 42% were between 8” – 12” in length, and no bass over 15” were collected. The large number of smaller bass in this lake is consistent with the lake management plan for this lake, which emphasizes the panfish populations. Bass fishing should be fair in 2025.

Bluegill: The 2024 survey showed the bluegill population to be in good shape. Catch rates improved and all size structure indices met, or exceeded, their targets. Average body condition was very high ($W_r=112$) and approximately 48% of the adult bluegill in the sample were 8” or longer. Bluegill fishing should be good in 2025. **Please practice selective harvest. Bluegill over 8” (especially males) are important for maintaining the size structure of the population. We ask that you consider returning those fish to the water and harvest smaller bluegill instead.**

Channel Catfish: Channel catfish numbers in Red Hills Lake are relatively low, but the population is supplemented by annual stocking efforts. Two of the three channel catfish sampled in 2024 were over 18” long. The lake provides many bank fishing opportunities. Some popular locations include the campgrounds, near the dam, and by the restaurant.

Crappie: Black crappie are also sampled in relatively low numbers at Red Hills Lake. However, fish collected in the surveys generally have good average body condition. Popular crappie bank fishing areas include Veteran’s Point, the fishing dock, and near the restaurant. Crappie fishing in Red Hills Lake should be fair in 2025.

Fishing Regulations: Pole and line fishing only; no more than two poles with two or less hooks or lures per pole.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	15”
Channel Catfish	6	None

Additional Regulations: Operation of gas motors on the lake is prohibited, but they can be used for loading and unloading of boats. Electric trolling motors may be used on the lake.

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