



Newton Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Newton Lake is a cooling reservoir currently owned by Luminant. It was constructed by Central Illinois Power Company in 1975, and was leased by the IDNR and opened for fishing in 1980.

Location - Newton Lake is located in Jasper County, approximately 6 miles southwest of Newton Illinois and 18 miles southeast of Effingham Illinois.

Area - Newton Lake has a surface area of 1,750 acres, an average depth of 16 feet, and a maximum depth of 40 feet. The lake has 52 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 30,720 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fishery in Newton Lake is best known for the largemouth bass fishery. Other conventional sport fish include white bass, channel catfish, crappie, and bluegill. The lake also contains large numbers of common carp and gizzard shad. Newton Lake is open year-round with the best fishing opportunities from fall through spring. 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 size structure of the bass population in Newton Lake remained relatively stable over the last year. The percentage of adult bass greater than the 18" minimum remained stable at 12% of the sample for the second straight year. The CPUE increased to 207 bass per hour, well above the target value. This lake continues to support a very good bass population. However, the fishery is slowly beginning to show signs of change. Recent changes to regulations governing coal fired power plants have significantly reduced the amount of hot water discharged into the lake. This has resulted in a reduced growing season, and a shorter spawning season for prey species, especially gizzard shad. In short, it is transitioning from a cooling lake to an ambient lake. However, bass recruitment continues to be high, body condition is good ($Wr = 95$), and growth rates remain at or above average. For 2020, Newton Lake will still provide very good angling opportunities. Anglers can expect to catch large numbers of fish from 15" – 20" in length ranging from 2 – 6 pounds. The majority of bass exceeding the 18" minimum will weigh between 3.5 – 7 pounds.

Channel Catfish: Channel catfish PSD increased this year ($PSD = 38$). Channel catfish body condition improved this year from $Wr = 96$ in 2018 to $Wr = 103$ in 2019, remaining very good. High natural reproduction and recruitment in Newton Lake have historically produced large numbers of channel catfish annually. More recently, the growth rate and size structure of the population has improved. Although still dominated by smaller fish, the population contains an adequate number of large fish to provide a good quality fishery. For 2020, the majority of the catch will be comprised of fish 1 - 4 lbs. with some larger fish up to 5.5 lbs.

White Bass: The white bass population has successfully recruited each year since they were first discovered in 1994. With few exceptions, their numbers have remained relatively constant. The electrofishing catch rate in 2019 increased and was above the historic average. The population continues to exhibit good growth rates and body condition ($Wr = 96$). One large class of fish will contribute to most the fishery in 2020. Most of these fish will range from 10" – 13" with larger fish up to 17". Fish the main lake points or troll the flats to locate fish and then cast to schools.

Crappie: Black crappie numbers continued to improve, but remained low. Growth rates were good and body condition remained above target (Wr = 93). In spite of the relatively low numbers, some anglers successfully target crappie each spring and consistently catch limits. Best fishing is around tree tops and the docks in the warm arm.

Bluegill: The bluegill population is in extremely poor condition. High summer temperatures (Newton Lake has very little thermal refuge) and a dense population of shad contribute to poor reproduction and slow growth. The majority of the bluegill collected were less than 6” in length and no bluegill over 7.5” were collected. This lake is not recommended for bluegill.

Fishing Regulations: Two pole and line fishing only

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted Bass	3 daily	18”
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie	10 daily	10”
White Bass	Unlimited; except no more than 3 over 17”	None
Channel Catfish	None	None

Additional Regulations: Newton Lake is closed to fishing during the 7 days of the regular shotgun deer season. The cold arm of the lake is closed daily to fishing during the regular duck and Canada goose seasons from one-half hour before sunrise until 1:00 pm. Tournaments are prohibited in June, July, and August.

*Consult the current Illinois Fishing Regulations Booklet for more detailed information.

Contacts: Newton Lake State Park 618/783-3478; IDNR Fisheries – 618/393-6732.

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