



East Fork Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

East Fork Lake was constructed by the City of Olney in 1971 to serve as a water supply reservoir. Annual boat stickers and City of Olney tournament permits are required.

Location: East Fork Lake is located in Richland County, approximately 1 mile north of Olney Illinois.

Area: East Fork Lake has a surface area of 935 acres, a maximum depth of 40 feet, and a mean depth of 15 feet. The lake has 25 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 9,982 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in East Fork Lake is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, white crappie, and channel catfish, and is stocked annually with walleye. The lake also contains common carp and large yellow bullheads. 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 shifted slightly from last year. There was a decrease in the percentage of bass in the 12" – 15" size range, but the percentage of adult bass exceeding the 15" minimum length limit remained constant at 33%. The electrofishing catch rate and the average body condition for all sizes of bass both decreased from 2019, but remained above their lake management targets. Fishing prospects for the coming year should be similar to last year with most keeper bass ranging from 15" – 20" in length and weighing between 1.5 – 4.5 pounds.

Bluegill – The bluegill population structure remained in good shape and consistent with four year trends. Average bluegill body condition decreased, but remained above target. There was a decrease in the number of bluegill greater than 7" (RSD-7=8). The number of bluegill over 8" also decreased, but remains within the lake management plan target range (RSD-8=2). Angling for bluegill in the coming year should be fair to good with most keepers 5" – 8" in length and 0.15 – 0.33 pounds.

Crappie - The white crappie population structure remained good. The average body condition for all sizes of white crappie decreased this year, but remained above target. The percentage of white crappie over 10" in length remained good at 15%, while over 30% of white crappie exceeded 9" in length. Black crappie are the dominant species in East Fork Lake and their population appeared to also be doing well. Body condition remained nearly stable and above target. Black crappie electrofishing catch rates remained high and the majority of the fish were between 8" and 10", with some fish approaching 12". Approximately 35% of the black crappie collected in 2020 exceeded 9" long and 11% exceeded 10" long. If growth rates remain good, the size structure of the populations should improve further in the coming years. In 2021, most keeper fish will range from 8" – 11" in length and weigh from 0.25 – 0.7 lbs., with a few larger fish over 12".

Channel Catfish – Catfish numbers remained low in East Fork Lake, but the average size of the fish was very good. Average body condition for these fish also remained good and above target. Most fish in 2021 will range from 2 – 6 pounds with larger fish up to 10 pounds. This lake provides some good bank fishing opportunities. Drift fishing the main lake is also very productive.

Walleye – The size structure and size of the walleye population remained good this year. Five year classes were collected in this year’s survey, and the catch rate was almost 12 per hour during the electrofishing survey and just over 6 fish per net-night in the fall net survey. With many fish in the 2 – 5 lb. range, this lake should provide good fishing opportunities for walleye in the coming year.

Fishing Regulations: Two pole and line fishing only

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	15”
Walleye	6	14”
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie	25 collectively	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	25 collectively	None
Channel Catfish	6	None

Additional Regulations: City boat stickers and tournament permits are required. Boat stickers are available at Olney City Hall and local bait shops. Tournament permits are available at Olney City Hall.

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