



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 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 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 improved slightly for the third consecutive year. The fall 2017 data showed a 17% increase in the number of fish exceeding the 15" minimum. Currently 27% of the population exceeds 15" in length. The catch rate rose sharply for the second straight year to an incredible 171 bass per hour (73% increase), and the body condition for all sizes of bass improved to well above the minimum standard ($Wr = 93$). Fishing prospects for the coming year should be slightly improved over last year with most keeper bass ranging from 15" – 20" in length and weighing between 1.7 – 5 pounds.

Bluegill – The bluegill population declined for the second straight year. The bluegill body condition was good ($Wr = 90$), but the size structure of the bluegill population remained fair at best. Only 7% of the population exceeded 7" in length and only 1% exceeded 8". Angling for bluegill in the coming year should be fair with most keepers 6" – 8" in length and 0.2 – 0.33 lbs.

Crappie - The white crappie population showed some improvement in the past year. The population is still dominated by a strong year class of 8" – 9.5" fish. All sizes of fish were in fair condition ($Wr = 89$). The percentage of fish over 10" in length declined over the past year but remains good. If growth rates remain good for the large year class of smaller fish the size structure of the population should improve further in the coming year. For the spring of 2018, most keeper fish will range from 9" – 11" in length and weigh from 0.5 – 0.8 lbs with a few larger fish up to 14".

Channel Catfish – Catfish numbers remain low in East Fork Lake, but the average size of the fish is exceptional. Most fish will range from 3 – 10 pounds with larger fish up to 15 pounds common. Body condition of these fish is excellent. 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 improved for the fourth year in a row. Four year classes were collected in this year's survey, and the catch rate improved to just under 12 per hour during the electrofishing survey and just under 10 fish per net-night in the spring net survey. The size structure of the

population remains good, and with many fish in the 2 – 5 lb. range this lake should provide quality fishing opportunities for walleye in the coming year.

Fishing Regulations:

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

Additional Regulations: Two pole and line fishing only. 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.

Contacts: Olney City Hall 618/393-2130; DNR Fisheries 618/393-6732.

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