



Sam Dale Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Sam Dale Lake is a relatively fertile, 194-acre, IDNR-owned impoundment located within Sam Dale Lake Conservation Area in northwestern Wayne County. The lake is largely surrounded by forest and has two boat ramps.

Largemouth bass: Largemouth bass were collected in Sam Dale Lake at a reduced rate of 91 per hour of electrofishing in fall 2018, and 69% were larger than 12 inches. Approximately 37% of these fish were also larger than the 14-inch minimum size limit. Body condition of Sam Dale largemouth bass was very good.

Bluegill: Fewer bluegill were collected in 2018 (78 per hour) than in the previous year. Bluegill quality remained essentially the same. Fish over 6 inches comprised 44% of the sample. Body condition of bluegill was acceptable and easily within the management plan goal range.

Redear: Similar to the previous year, redear were much less abundant than bluegill in 2018, and just 12 were collected per hour of electrofishing. Quality of these fish increased drastically, with the proportion of 8-inch fish jumping from 15 to 75%. Redear body condition was similar to bluegill and easily within the goal range.

Channel catfish: Twenty channel catfish were collected per hour in Sam Dale Lake during the 2018 survey, which was more than double the previous year. These fish ranged in size from 17 to 27 inches and displayed excellent body condition. Channel catfish are stocked annually to maintain the population.

Crappie: The white crappie population in Sam Dale Lake is somewhat stunted with many fish 6 to 9 inches in length range. The fall 2017 survey produced white crappie 7 to 14 inches in length with 44% larger than 8 inches and 22% over 10 inches. Crappie body condition was near the low end of the management plan goal range.

Muskellunge: A remnant population of pure muskellunge exists in Sam Dale Lake as a result of stockings related to a statewide research project. However, no muskies were collected during the fall 2018 survey.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – 14 inch length limit, 6 per day creel. Channel catfish – 6 per day creel. muskellunge – 48 inch length limit, 1 per day creel. There is a 10 horsepower outboard motor limit. Consult the Illinois Fishing Information booklet for additional regulation information.

Additional Fisheries Information can be obtained by calling IDNR District Biologist Luke Nelson at 618-364-5381, or by contacting the site at 618-835-2292.