



Mermet Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Mermet Lake is a shallow, 452-acre, IDNR-owned impoundment located in Massac County approximately 10 miles north of Metropolis. Mermet was originally built as a water supply for flooding adjacent wetland compartments for waterfowl hunting, but sport fish flourished when stocked, and the lake has been managed for fishing for more than 50 years. Curlyleaf pondweed, an exotic aquatic plant, invaded Mermet in 1999, and has caused occasional summer fish kills since then, but annual herbicide treatments have generally been successful at controlling the impacts of this plant in recent years, allowing the sport fish population to slowly recover.

Largemouth bass: Largemouth bass were collected at a rate of 15 per hour in fall 2018, which the lowest its been since 2007. 100% of these fish were larger than 12 inches, up from 77%, which easily met the management plan goal. Bass larger than the old 14 inch minimum size limit made up 100% of the sample, while 21% exceeded the newly implemented length limit of 16 inches (April 1, 2016). Bass condition remained excellent.

Bluegill: Bluegill were more abundant in 2018 than in the previous year at 68 per hour of electrofishing, 21% were larger than 6 inches (just meeting the management goal), but no fish exceeded 7 inches. Bluegill body condition was still excellent.

Redear: As usual, redear were scarce in the 2018 fall sample, as only two fish were collected. Both these fish were over 11 inches in length and weighed over 1 pound. It is assumed that these fish are not scarce, but their location at the time of sampling does not overlap with sample locations. Future surveys will monitor the status of this species.

Crappie: No black or white crappie were sampled in 2018. However, as a note, crappie weighing more than 2 pounds have been fairly regularly reported by Mermet Lake anglers.

Channel catfish: Channel catfish are generally not a large component of the annual Mermet Lake electrofishing sample, and 2018 followed this trend. Only two fish were sampled, one 23 inches and one 25 inches, and both fish exhibited good body condition. Annual channel catfish stockings help support a fishery which is very popular with the angling public.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – 16” minimum length limit, 3 per day creel (effective 4-1-16). Black and white crappie – 25 per day creel. Channel catfish – 6 per day creel. Outboard motor limit is 10 hp, but boats with larger outboards are allowed to operate at no-wake speed. Mermet Lake is closed to fishing during the duck season. 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 618-524-5577.