

KINKAID LAKE

2023 FISHERIES FACT SHEET

LOCATION/DESCRIPTION: Kinkaid Lake is located in Jackson County three miles northwest of Murphysboro off of State Route 149. There are 3 public boat launching facilities around the Lake. Kinkaid Lake is 2750 acres in size, has a shoreline length of 82 miles, and a maximum depth of 80 feet. The NW portion of the Lake consists of a 3 mile no wake zone.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – The following is a brief summary of the major sport fish species based the Illinois Department of Natural Resources annual fish population surveys

Largemouth Bass (LMB) - During the 2022 spring survey, LMB were collected at a rate of 85 fish per hour. Of the 339 bass collected during the 2022 spring survey, 29% were over the minimum 16 inch size limit and 16% were over 18 inches. Five percent of all largemouth bass collected were between 15-16 inches or just below the minimum length limit. The largemouth bass population continues to look very good. The largest bass collected in the 2022 survey was 6.4 pounds.

Smallmouth Bass (SMB) - IDNR stocked SMB into Kinkaid Lake from 2005-2015. The first documented legal-sized SMB ($\geq 16''$) was observed in 2010. During 2012 numerous legal-sized SMB were caught with the largest reported fish measuring 18 inches. SMB do not appear to be recruiting in Kinkaid Lake and no additional SMB stockings are planned. If you catch a SMB at Kinkaid Lake please contact IDNR Fisheries Biologist Shawn Hirst at 618-559-5009 or email at Shawn.Hirst@illinois.gov

Crappie – Kinkaid Lake is known for producing large crappie. Crappie over 2 pounds are caught each year. In March 2017 a new state record hybrid crappie was caught at Kinkaid Lake. The crappie measured 18.1 inches in length and weighed 4.55 pounds. It represents the largest documented crappie ever caught in Illinois. However, the number of legal-sized crappie collected in the 2022 survey was down markedly from the 2019 and 2021 surveys (no survey was conducted in 2020 as a result of COVID restrictions).

Of the white crappie (WHC) collected during the 2022 survey, only 10% were over 9 inches (down from 87% in 2019 and 65% in 2021). Only 6% of the WHC were over 10 inches (down from 76% in 2019 and 15% in 2021). The 2022 WHC sample catch rate was 72 fish/hr (up from 47 fish/hr in 2021). However, the 2022 WHC sample catch rate of crappie over 9 inches was only 8 fish/hr (down from 87 fish/hr in 2019 and 68 in 2021). The 2022 WHC sample catch rate of crappie over 10 inches was only 4 fish/hr (down from 76 fish/hr in 2019 and 15 fish/hr in 2021). The 2022 WHC sample catch rate of crappie over 12 inches was 1 fish/hr (down from 11 fish/hr in 2019 and 6 fish/hr in 2021).

The black crappie (BLC) catch rate was 25 fish/hr. The ten-year average BLC CPUE is 20 fish/hr. Although the catch rate of BLC was very similar to the ten-year average, the number of larger fish dropped from the 1999 and 2021 surveys. During the 2022 survey, 56% of the BLC collected were over 9 inches (down from 83% in 2019 and 60% in 2021), 16% were over 10 inches (down from 72% in 2019 and 20% in 2021), and 8% were over 12 inches (down from 22% in 2019 and 10% in 2021).

The decrease in the number and percentages of larger crappie collected in the 2022 survey continues a trend that suggests overharvest of larger (>9 inch crappie) and could be result of increased fishing pressure/harvest and dramatic advances in fisheries electronics (depth finders). In an attempt to protect the existing Kinkaid Lake crappie population, a more restrictive crappie regulation will go into effect on April 1, 2023. The current regulation of 25 fish per day, nine-inch minimum length limit will change to 15 fish per day of which no more than 10 can be over 10 inches. The Kinkaid Lake crappie population will be sampled annually to determine the results of the new regulation.

Muskie (MUE) – Kinkaid Lake is one of the premier muskie lakes in Illinois. Muskie are stocked annually and many are caught each year in excess of 40 inches. During the 2022 spring survey 187 MUE were collected with the largest measuring 46.7 inches in length. The total catch was more than double the 2021 survey total of 89 muskies. Anglers are encouraged to **NOT** fish for MUE in the warmer summer months as angling mortality is believed to be very high especially for larger MUE. Please report tagged MUE to IDNR Fish Biologist Shawn Hirst at 618-559-5009 (or email Shawn.Hirst@illinois.gov). Anglers reporting a tagged MUE will receive information on the history of that fish. If the tag number is covered with algae simply remove the algae with your fingernail or a knife. Please provide tag number (5 digits), length of MUE and catch date. Please do not remove the tag.

Walleye (WAE) – IDNR annually stocks WAE into Kinkaid Lake. Walleye up to 11 pounds have been collected in previous netting surveys. Walleye numbers are not high but some larger fish can be caught. The best areas are in front of the dam and spillway during the spring especially at night. No WAE were collected during spring trap netting. The best WAE net is set in front of the spillway barrier. As a result of inclement weather forecasts and high water flows IDNR was not able to set a net at this location for 3 of the 4 sampling dates.

Catfish – Kinkaid Lake has an average channel catfish population. Nine channel catfish (20-28 inches) were collected in the 2022 spring survey. One flathead catfish (12 inches) was also collected.

Bluegill Sunfish – The bluegill population structure can only be described as poor. During the 2022 spring electrofishing survey no bluegill over 8 inches were collected.

Redear Sunfish – The redear population is average. Redear sunfish over 8 inches are present in small numbers.

Fishing regulations:

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass	3	16"
Muskie	1	48"
White, Black, Hybrid Crappie ^A	25 ^A 15 – effective 4/1/2023	9" ^A Only 10 \geq 10 inches
Walleye	6	14"
Live Bait	All live bait in excess of 8" must be rigged with a quick set rig.	

^ANew crappie regulation of 15 fish per day (no more than 10 can be \geq 10 inches) will take effect 4/1/2023.

FISHING TOURNAMENTS: Any fishing tournament over 39 boats and/or 78 anglers must obtain a permit from the Kinkaid-Reed’s Creek Conservancy District (618-687-1722) in addition to the required IDNR permit. No tournaments over 40 boats are allowed during June-July-August.

FISH ATTRACTORS – A map of the 50 permanent Kinkaid Lake fish attractor locations can be obtained via email by sending a request to Shawn.Hirst@Illinois.gov

GENERAL FISHING INFORMATION – Kinkaid Lake receives a tremendous amount of recreational boat traffic during the hot summer months especially on the weekends and holidays. To avoid the crowds, anglers may consider fishing early in the morning and/or during the week. The upper NW portion of Kinkaid Lake is referred to as the Johnson Creek Area. About 3 miles of this area is a no wake zone that gets very turbid for multiple days after heavy rain events.

PHONE NUMBERS: IDNR Fish Biologist – Shawn Hirst 618-559-5009. Kinkaid Lake Fish and Wildlife Area 618-684-2867. Kinkaid-Reed’s Creek Conservancy District 618-687-1722.