



Ferne Clyffe Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Ferne Clyffe Lake is a relatively clear, infertile, 16-acre, IDNR-owned impoundment located within Ferne Clyffe State Park approximately one mile south of Goreville, IL in Johnson County. The lake is mostly surrounded by forest, offers bank fishing only, and has a one-mile perimeter walking trail.

Largemouth bass: Largemouth bass are the most abundant species of fish present in Ferne Clyffe Lake. Bass were collected at a rate of 262 per hour of electrofishing in spring 2017, and 49% were larger than 12 inches. Most Ferne Clyffe bass range from 9 to 13 inches in size, but it is not unusual for one or more trophy-sized bass to show up in the spring electrofishing sample. Although fish up to the 10-pound mark have been collected, the largest fish in the spring 2017 sample was 7.9 pounds. Body condition of bass larger than 4 pounds was excellent, but condition of smaller fish was poorer than the management plan goal.

Bluegill: Bluegill abundance was fair in spring 2017; 52 were collected per hour, and 38% of these fish were larger than 7 inches. Twenty-five percent of bluegill were larger than 8 inches, and a few (4%) exceeded 9 inches in length. Bluegill body condition was good.

Redear: Although redear are usually less abundant than bluegill in Ferne Clyffe Lake, the 2016 surveys produced just the opposite. In 2017, redear were collected at a rate of 118 per hour of electrofishing, and 92% were larger than 8 inches in length. Thirty-one percent of redear were also over 10 inches, and body condition was also very good.

Channel catfish: Generally few channel catfish are collected during the annual spring Ferne Clyffe Lake electrofishing survey due to clear, cool water conditions. In spring 2017, 6 channel catfish were collected, ranging in size from 14 to 19 inches. Body condition of these fish was excellent. Channel catfish are stocked annually to maintain the population.

Crappie: As with channel catfish, crappie are rarely represented in the annual electrofishing sample. In 2017, three black crappie were collected, and these fish ranged in size from 7 to 11 inches in length with marginal body condition.

Rainbow trout: Rainbow trout are stocked in Ferne Clyffe Lake in spring and fall to coincide with seasons which begin the first Saturday of April and the third Saturday of October. The Ferne Clyffe trout fishery is very popular with the angling public. Possession of an inland trout stamp is required for harvesting rainbow trout.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – no length limit, 6 per day creel limit. Channel catfish – 6 per day creel limit. Rainbow trout -- 5 per day creel limit. No boats allowed. Consult the Illinois Fishing Information booklet for additional regulation information.

Additional Fisheries Information can be obtained by calling IDNR District Biologist Chris Bickers at 618-993-7094, or by contacting the site at 618-995-2411.