



Ferne Clyffe Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Ferne Clyffe Lake is a 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 42 per hour of electrofishing in spring 2019 (a substantial decrease from 2018 that's likely linked to very clear water during the sample), and only 6% were larger than 12 inches. Condition of fish was poorer than the management plan goal. 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 in years past, large fish were observed but not collected during the 2019 sample.

Bluegill: Sampled bluegill abundance was lower in spring 2018; 34 were collected per hour, and 90% of these fish were larger than 6 inches. Forty percent of bluegill were larger than 8 inches, and no bluegill exceeded 9 inches in length. Bluegill body condition was good.

Redear: Redear are usually less abundant than bluegill in Ferne Clyffe Lake, and the 2018 sample followed this trend. Redear were collected at a rate of 8 per hour of electrofishing (a third of the rate in 2018), 25% were larger than 8 inches in length. No redear were sampled over 10 inches, and overall body condition of all fish was 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. 2019 had a relatively good sample, 28 channel catfish per hour were collected, ranging in size from 16 to 20 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 2019 no Crappie were sampled.

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 Luke Nelson at 618-364-5381, or by contacting the site at 618-995-2411.