



Devils Kitchen Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Devils Kitchen Lake is a deep, clear, 810-acre impoundment located in the south portion of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge between Marion and Carbondale in Williamson County Illinois. The Devils Kitchen Lake fishery is cooperatively managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The lake is almost entirely surrounded by forest and has three boat ramps. The southern half of Devils Kitchen contains abundant standing timber, and a portion of the lake's southeast end is reserved for electric motors and paddling only.

Largemouth bass: Devils Kitchen Lake has historically contained a bass population consisting of abundant small fish and a few giants, without much in between. Largemouth bass were collected at a rate of 248 per hour in 2017 and 16% were larger than 12 inches, while 4% were larger than 15 inches. Although most bass are generally 9 to 13 inches in length, it is not unusual for bass in the 5 to 10-pound range to show up in spring electrofishing samples and/or tournament weigh-ins. The 2017 survey produced two bass over 6 pounds and the heaviest of these weighed almost 10 pounds. Anglers are encouraged to harvest small bass to boost the average size of fish in the population. Threadfin shad stockings are part of an ongoing plan for improving Devils Kitchen Lake bass growth rates, and annual spring stockings will be continued as long as these fish are available.

Bluegill: As usual, bluegill were less abundant than bass during the 2017 Devils Kitchen Lake survey. The bluegill catch rate was 57 per hour of electrofishing. Quality of the bluegill population was good, as demonstrated by 30% over 6 inches and 9% larger than 8 inches.

Redear: The Devils Kitchen redear population remained fairly impressive in spring 2017. Redear abundance was actually higher than that of bluegill as measured by a catch rate of 63 per hour, and average size of these fish was much larger. Sixty-six percent of redear were larger than 7 inches, 35% exceeded 8 inches, and 4% were over 9 inches.

Rainbow trout: Rainbow trout are stocked in Devils Kitchen Lake each fall to maintain the population, and there is no closed season. The Devils Kitchen trout fishery is very popular with the angling public. Possession of an inland trout stamp is required for harvesting rainbow trout.

Yellow perch: Yellow perch were "officially" stocked in Devils Kitchen Lake in 2014 for the first time in the lake's history, and additional stockings were completed in 2015, 2016, and 2017. A small population of perch (of unknown origin) already existed, and was popular, but few fish ever entered anglers' creels. The goal of the yellow perch stocking program is to produce a viable, self-sustaining fishery, and additional fish will be stocked in 2018, if available and deemed appropriate by results of the spring 2018 fish population survey.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – no length limit, 6 per day creel limit. Bluegill and Redear– 8" length limit, 25 per day creel limit (in aggregate). Rainbow trout – no length limit, 5 per day creel limit. A ten horsepower outboard motor limit is in effect. A user pass must be purchased prior to accessing Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge waters. The refuge visitor center can be reached by calling 618-997-3344.

Additional Fisheries Information may be obtained by calling IDNR District Biologist Chris Bickers at 618-993-7094.