



Little Grassy Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Little Grassy Lake is a deep, clear, 1000-acre impoundment located in the south portion of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge between Marion and Carbondale in Williamson County Illinois. The Little Grassy Lake fishery is cooperatively managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The lake is surrounded by forested land and has three boat ramps plus a marina.

Largemouth bass: The Little Grassy Lake largemouth bass population is generally well balanced, and contains fish ranging in size from fingerlings to trophies. In 2018, bass abundance was lower--54 were collected per hour of electrofishing (goal is 60/hour). Bass quality, as measured by length, was easily within the management plan goal range with 49% larger than 12 inches and 16% over 15 inches. As is often the case in clear, infertile lakes, bass body condition (measured by relative weight) remained somewhat lower than the goal but the 2018 sample included bass over 7 pounds. Threadfin shad stockings are part of an ongoing plan for improving bass body condition, and annual spring stockings will be continued as long as these fish are available.

Bluegill: Little Grassy Lake bluegill abundance in spring 2018, as measured by catch-per-unit-effort, was substantially lower at 37 per hour. However, the proportion of these fish larger than 6 inches was 78%, bluegill larger than 7 inches made up 30% of the sample. Average bluegill body condition fell just below the desirable range.

Redear: Little Grassy Lake redear abundance in the spring 2018 sample was slightly higher than that of bluegill at 40 per hour of electrofishing, which was lower than in the previous nine years. Redear quality, based on length, however, continued to be very impressive, with 82% of fish over 7 inches, and 71% larger than 8 inches. 38% exceeded the 9 inch mark. Redear body condition was acceptable, but at the lower end of the management plan goal range.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – 12 to 15 inch protective slot limit, 6 per day creel. Channel catfish – 6 per day creel limit. No other size or creel limits are in effect. Outboard motor limit is 10 hp. Consult the Illinois Fishing Information booklet for additional regulation information.

Fees: A user permit is required to access the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, and a special use permit is required for competitive events. Information may be obtained by calling the refuge visitor center at 618-997-3344.

Additional Fisheries Information can be obtained by calling IDNR District Biologist Luke Nelson at 618-364-5381.