

SUNSET LAKE - RIVER BEND FOREST PRESERVE
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FISHERIES

Michael Garthaus, Fisheries Biologist

Sunset Lake is a gravel pit constructed by the Mid-America Sand & Gravel Company. The lake is located in Champaign County on the edge of the Village of Mahomet. The lake is approximately 125 acres, but the southwestern portion is being actively mined at this time. The lake has a maximum depth of 54 feet and an average depth of 19 feet.

The majority of the lake is owned by the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. The River Bend Forest Preserve is being developed as a natural area, with some recreational amenities, including a bicycle path, hiking trails, picnic area, and fishing.

LARGEMOUTH BASS: The 2016 survey resulted in a catch rate of 137.3 bass per hour of electrofishing, which exceed the management objective of 125 bass per hour. Based on bass 8 inches and longer; 86% were over 12 inches, and 9% were over 15 inches. Even though the catch rate was low for legal bass, the 2016 survey resulted in the highest catch rate ever obtained at Sunset Lake for legal bass.

BLUEGILL: In 2016, the catch rate for bluegill was 169.3 per hour of electrofishing, which met the management objective of 125 to 210 bluegill per hour. Based on bluegill over 3 inches, 35% were longer than 6 inches and 1% were longer than 8 inches. Overall, the quality of the bluegill population is good. The restrictive length limit will help maintain a quality bluegill fishery.

CHANNEL CATFISH: Sunset Lake is stocked each year with channel catfish from the state hatchery system. The catfish fishery has good numbers and adequate sizes for anglers.

WHITE CRAPPIE: In 2016, the catch rate of white crappie was 18.7 per hour and was below the management objective of 25 per hour. The average catch rate for the past 8 surveys is 6.4 white crappie per hour. Of the crappie collected over 5 inches, 100% were longer than 8 inches, 86% longer than 10 inches, and 21% were longer than 12 inches.

FISHING REGULATIONS: 2 pole and line fishing only.
Live Bait is prohibited. Worms are allowed.
Electric motors only.

Channel catfish - 6/day,

Largemouth bass - 15" Protected Slot Length Limit With no More Than 1 Fish >15" and 2 Fish < 15"

Bluegill/Redear Sunfish – 15 per day.

White/Black/Hybrid Crappie – 9" minimum length limit, with a daily harvest limit of 10.

For more information regarding River Bend Forest Preserve:
(217)586-3360