



Du Quoin City Lake

2023 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION: Du Quoin City Lake is located in Perry County north of Du Quoin. From center of town take State Route 51 North for approximately 4 miles and turn east onto City Lake Road.

DESCRIPTION: This 210-acre lake has a shoreline length of 12 miles and a maximum depth of 16 feet. There is a gravel boat ramp. There are no docks or restrooms available and parking in the gravel lot is limited. Much of the shoreline is surrounded by spatterdock (yellow cow lily) which provides excellent fish habitat.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – The following is a summary of game fish populations based on a 1-hour spring electrofishing survey and a fall netting survey. Both trap nets and gill nets were used for the fall netting survey.

Largemouth Bass – During 2022, a total of 71 bass (71/hour) were collected during the spring electrofishing survey, of which 21% were at least 15 inches and 8% were at least 18 inches. Mean relative weight of all bass in the sample was relatively good at 98 and was generally above 90 among size classes over 8 inches. The bass population in Du Quoin City Lake is relatively low density, as demonstrated by catch rates that were below or barely above the goal of 60/hour during past years. However, size structure, relative weight, and otolith length-at-age data indicate good growth potential, likely due to the dense stock of shad present. Given that the population demonstrates low abundance and fast growth, bass regulations will be changed to a reduced creel limit of 3/day and a 15” minimum length limit, which will take effect April 1, 2024. The current protected slot limit is not an appropriate regulation to have in place for a low-density, fast growing bass population like that in Du Quoin City Lake. In an effort to increase bass abundance, advanced fingerling (4”-6”) bass will be stocked beginning in 2024 if fish are available from the state hatchery system. Ideally, at least three year classes of 5,000 bass would be stocked from 2024-2026. Given the dense stock of large Gizzard Shad in the lake, all efforts should be made to increase overall piscivore (fish predator) abundance.

Crappie – Du Quoin City Lake contains a good crappie fishery consisting of Black, White, and Hybrid Crappie. During 2022, a total of 110 crappie were collected during spring electrofishing and an additional 82 were collected during the fall netting survey. Of the 192 crappie captured during surveys, 67 were Black Crappie, 113 were White Crappie, and 12 were hybrids. About 44% of crappie collected during spring electrofishing were over 10 inches, while about 33% collected in nets were over 10 inches. All 82 crappie collected during the fall netting survey were aged using whole otoliths. Black Crappie generally neared 10 inches in length at age 4.5, while White Crappie neared 10 inches at age 2.5. Overall, crappie growth is relatively good in Du Quoin City Lake, especially for White Crappie.

Bluegill – The Bluegill fishery in Du Quoin City Lake is relatively good for a lake containing an abundance of Gizzard Shad. During the 2022 spring electrofishing survey, 293 Bluegill were collected, of which 38% were over 7 inches and 3% were over 8 inches. Body condition appears to decrease rapidly once Bluegills reach 8 inches in length. The abundance of Gizzard Shad in the lake is likely a limiting factor for Bluegill growth. 106 Bluegills from the 2021 survey were aged using otoliths. Bluegill generally reached 7 inches at age 4 and 8 inches at age 6.

Redear Sunfish – The Redear Sunfish population in Du Quoin City Lake is among the best in southern Illinois, containing an abundance of adults in the 9”-11” range. Of the 27 Redear collected during the spring electrofishing survey, 74% were over 9 inches, and 7% were over 10 inches. Mean relative weight was excellent (>100) across nearly all size groups and was 108 for the entire sample, indicating an ample forage base of mollusks in the lake. Anglers should expect excellent angling opportunities for Redear in Du Quoin City Lake.

Channel Catfish – Over 11,000 Channel Catfish have been stocked since 2020 to supplement poor natural recruitment and increase angler satisfaction. Although no Channel Catfish have been collected during electrofishing surveys, experimental gill nets were successful at capturing an adequate sample of catfish during 2021. Therefore, gill nets were set again during 2022 to monitor development of the population as stockings continue. A total of 34 Channel Catfish were collected in 2022 gill net sets, of which 41% were less than 18 inches. In contrast, 90% of catfish in the 2021 sample were under 18 inches, indicating the population is developing well. Several large albino Channel Catfish

were collected in the sample, the largest being 28 inches and weighing over 10 lbs. In summary, observed improvements in size structure suggest stocked catfish are growing well and enhancing the fishery as intended. In addition to enhancing angling opportunities, it is hoped that larger Channel Catfish will actively prey upon overabundant Gizzard Shad. Catfish stockings will continue annually if surplus fish are available from the state hatchery system.

Fishing regulations:

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Crappie	25	None
Channel Catfish	6	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	25	None
Largemouth Bass	5 under 14" and 1 over 18"	14-18 inch protected slot (no possession)

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