



MAZONIA STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA

Ponderosa Lake FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Ponderosa Lake is located within the Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area South Unit, 2 miles northeast of South Wilmington in Kankakee County off West 5000 Road.

DESCRIPTION – Ponderosa Lake is the largest impoundment within the Mazonia complex, covering 148.9 surface acres, with depths to 60 feet. It is isolated from all other water areas. Likely one of the most scenic of the Mazonia lakes, Ponderosa is characterized by cedar-lined shorelines, gin-clear water and a myriad of coves, cuts and large bays. Ponderosa Lake also supports a diverse aquatic plant community. Anglers are permitted to use boats powered by gasoline engines with an unlimited horsepower restriction. A no-wake regulation is in effect. A two-lane unimproved gravel ramp serves as boat access. Very little shore access is available.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: Surveys are conducted on Ponderosa Lake on an alternating year basis. The lake has received stockings of channel catfish, redear sunfish, northern pike, yellow perch and walleye. Neither walleye nor northern pike stockings were successful and those programs were terminated.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – *No special mercury advisory or other contaminant-related consumption advisories pertain.*

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Although the number 8" and larger bass collected in 2016 still remained well below the long-term average, the overall number of bass collected increased from the previous survey. Size distribution has stayed consistent as the majority of the collection falls between 8.0" and 15.0" and this size group accounted for 80.0% of the 2016 collection. Body condition was below average, a reflection of the low productivity of the lake as it relates to supporting a sufficient forage base. This largemouth population is slow-growing and anglers should expect to catch smaller bass on average although larger fish are occasionally sampled and therefore present to some degree.

BLUEGILL – The 2016 collection of bluegill showed a slight increase from the previous survey but the number of fish which were sampled continues to fall well below the long term average for 3"-plus bluegills and larger fish. Fall-caught bluegills averaged 4.1" while those collected in spring trap netting tended to be larger and the average size bluegill sampled measuring 7.2". Population structural indices tend to reflect the impact of angling harvest on this population.

CRAPPIE - Black crappie were not common in either the 2016 fall survey or spring trap netting. Three were collected in trap nets in the spring and only five (5) were sampled in the fall. Fall sampled fish ranged from 5.9" to 12.7" and larger adults compromised that collection. Reproduction and recruitment appear to be occurring at reduced rates.

REDEAR SUNFISH – The 2016 fall survey yielded a fair sample of redear sunfish ranging from 7.1" to 12.2". Size distribution has shown little variation over the past several surveys and reproduction and recruitment appear to occur at reasonable rates. Redear sunfish comprised a major portion of the spring trap netting collection (65.6% of total). These fish ranged from 7.8" to 11.5" at an average length of 9.7". Redear sunfish provide an excellent, but challenging, fishery.

YELLOW BULLHEAD – An underutilized fishery, an excellent yellow bullhead population exists with fish available in excess of 10". Bullheads collected in the 2016 survey averaged 9"-plus with the largest fish weighing 0.6 lb.

ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES: Channel catfish are stocked on a rotational basis and are present, but at low density.

IDNR 2016 Fall Survey Results

Species	Number of Fish Collected in each Length Category (Inch)								
	0-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+	Total
Largemouth Bass	2	5	23	12	5	0	0	0	47
Bluegill	32	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
Redear Sunfish	0	6	18	1	0	0	0	0	25
Black Crappie	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	5
Channel Catfish	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
Yellow Bullhead	1	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	13
Yellow Perch	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Grass Pickerel	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	4

FISHING REGULATIONS – Statewide fishing regulations apply at this lake (see current Illinois Fishing Information booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/> for specific details).

Additional Site Specific fishing regulations:

Boaters - Trolling motor only, except Monster and Ponderosa Lake – gasoline outboards allowed, no wake

All fish species - Two pole and line fishing only.

Bluegill or Redear Sunfish – 10 fish daily creel limit on Ponderosa, unlimited elsewhere

Channel Catfish – 6 fish daily creel limit.

Largemouth Bass – 15” minimum length limit; 3 fish daily creel limit.

White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie – 10 fish daily creel limit

CONTACT INFORMATION – Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish & Wildlife Area: 815/237-0063.
IDNR Fisheries County Fish Biologist: 630/553-6680.