



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 – The overall number of largemouth bass collected in 2018 increased from the previous survey while the number of 8" and larger bass was unchanged and remained well below the long-term average. Although an increase in the number of smaller bass was observed, length frequency has stayed consistent as the majority of the collection falls between 8" and 15". This size group accounted for 78.4% of the 2018 collection. 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 collection of bluegills continued to fall well below the long term average for stock size and larger fish (3"-plus). Fall-caught bluegills ranged from 1.6" to 7.9". Bluegills which were collected in spring trap netting tended to be larger, ranging from 5.5" to 9.4" and averaging 7.6". Diminishing values for average length and the density of 8"-plus bluegills reflect the impact of angling harvest on this population, despite a reduced daily creel limit of 10 per day.

CRAPPIE - Black crappie were not common in either the fall survey or spring trap netting, which is typical of these collections. Six (6) were collected in trap nets in the spring and only three (3) were sampled in the fall. Fall sampled fish ranged from 4.3" to 14.2" while spring-caught crappie ranged from 7.5" to 13.4". Reproduction and recruitment appear to be occurring at reduced rates.

REDEAR SUNFISH – A total of 24 redear sunfish were collected in fall sampling ranging from 3.1" to 10.2". Length frequency distribution has shown slight variation over the past several surveys and reproduction and recruitment appear to occur at reasonable rates. Redear sunfish accounted for more than one-half of the spring trap netting collection (54.2% of total). These fish ranged from 6.7" to 10.6" at an average length of 9.7". Redear sunfish exceeding 10 inches were not as common as in past surveys which could indicate that angler pressure/harvest are beginning to impact the population.

YELLOW BULLHEAD – An underutilized fishery, an excellent yellow bullhead population exists with fish available in excess of 10". Bullheads collected in the 2018 survey averaged 9"-plus with the largest fish weighing $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

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

IDNR 2018 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	11	19	18	1	0	0	0	51
Bluegill	26	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
Redear Sunfish	10	9	5	0	0	0	0	0	24
Black Crappie	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Channel Catfish	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Yellow Bullhead	0	7	25	0	0	0	0	0	32
Yellow Perch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grass Pickerel	0	7	15	1	0	0	0	0	23

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.