



WHALON LAKE

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Whalon Lake is located in Bolingbrook, 2 miles west of Route 53 off Royce Road and just minutes from Interstate 55.

DESCRIPTION – Located in northeastern Illinois, Whalon Lake is a gravel pit lake which was purchased in the 1990's by the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) and is cooperatively managed by the IDNR. Following the completion of the site development project, the lake was opened to the public in 2008. Whalon Lake has a maximum depth of 100.0 feet with an average depth of 15.0 feet. The watershed is somewhat limited but the lake is fed by groundwater. During flood events, water has entered the lake from the adjacent DuPage River. An excellent two-lane boat ramp is available and boat fishing is restricted to electric trolling motors only. The majority of the shoreline of the lake is angler-accessible. A barrier-free fishing pier is available on the east side near the parking lot. Fishing is open daily during open water - ice fishing is not allowed.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: Whalon Lake is surveyed on a biennial basis, incorporating various gear types. Aquatic vegetation is managed by the Forest Preserve District, in cooperation with the IDNR. Fish stockings are completed as recommended/required.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – Whalon Lake supports a very good largemouth bass fishery as well as a diverse panfish population consisting of fair populations of bluegill and redear sunfish. Crappie have shown a decline in recent surveys. Channel catfish are present but in somewhat low density. A walleye stocking program has been successful and fish exceeding 24" have been collected in recent IDNR surveys. The fishery also supports riverine species which have been introduced from the DuPage River during high water events.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – In the 2017 fall survey, largemouth bass were collected at the rate of 78 per hour of electrofishing, ranging from 2.0" to 18.5" with an average size of 9.4". The collection of young-of-the-year bass suggests successful natural reproduction. The survival of the 2016 year class is somewhat skewed by the addition of more than 2,000 fingerlings that year, which became available due to surplus production at the state hatchery. Although the density of legal-size bass collected in 2017 declined slightly they are still present in good numbers. Fair numbers of bass which were 18 inches or larger were collected as well.

SMALLMOUTH BASS – Very few smallmouth bass were collected in 2017 with those captured ranging from 3.5" to 16.1". A small but naturally reproducing population, smallmouth bass have never been collected in any number in IDNR surveys.

BLUEGILL – After a very poor showing in 2015, the bluegill sample rebounded in 2017 and fell more in line with what has been observed in the majority of the fall surveys. Bluegills ranged from 3.5" to 7.9" at an average length of 5.0". No bluegills which are 8 inches or larger have ever been collected in a fall survey. With a fairly dominant gizzard shad population present in Whalon Lake, it is doubtful that the bluegill population will ever produce consistently good angling for larger fish.

REDEAR SUNFISH – This species continues to prove difficult to sample, as once again no redear sunfish were collected in either the spring or fall surveys in 2017. This may reflect low population density or poor survival of stocked fish. Redear sunfish have been stocked twice, in 2005 (39,871 1" fingerlings) and 2015 (42,228 1.2" fingerlings).

CRAPPIE – The crappie population appears to be in a “down cycle” at the present time as collection efforts have generally shown decreasing numbers. Black crappie have never been collected in any significant number in a DNR survey and 2017 was no different. Only one black crappie was collected in the fall survey and very few during early spring trap netting. First collected in 2015, three white crappie were collected in the 2017 fall survey. Supplemental stocking may be required to produce a population of any significance.

CHANNEL CATFISH – The fall 2017 survey yielded very few fish, ranging in length from 9.4” to 26.4”. Since the initial release of 6,500 3-inch fish in 2005, non-vulnerable size channel catfish fingerlings have been requested and stocked annually since 2011 with a total of 11,483 fish stocked during this period. Stocking rates from 2011 to 2014 had remained somewhat consistent, averaging 861 fingerlings at a rate of 10.7 per acre. Hatchery production, which dictates the availability of fish, decreased in 2014 which saw the stocking rate fall to just over 3 per acre. Since then stocking rates have edged closer to the requested number. It will continue take several years of stocking to improve the standing stock of channel catfish and thereby enhance angling opportunities for this popular sport fish.

WALLEYE - Combined fall sampling effort yielded a total of 17 walleyes, the most collected in a fall survey since 2013. Walleyes collected in the 2017 fall survey ranged from 13.4” to 24.0”, averaging 17.9”. The average length for walleyes collected in IDNR fall sampling has steadily increased which suggests the growth and development of the population. A total of 23 walleyes were captured during early spring trap netting and were split almost 50/50 between sexes (12 females, 11 males). Length frequency distribution was fairly similar to that of the fall survey; males averaged 17.2”, females 20.0” with the largest fish measuring 23.9” weighing 4.7lbs. Stocking rates have been variable, influenced by hatchery production, but generally in keeping with the minimum recommended rate of 25 per acre. This population is slowly reaching densities which are commensurate with good angling success and walleye catches are becoming more common. The walleye population continues to develop and expand, with stocked fish exhibiting acceptable growth and survival which should result in increased angling success.

Length of Selected Species Collected in the 2017 Fall Survey (all gear types combined)

Species	Number of Fish Caught in Each Length Group (Inches)								
	0-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+	Total
Largemouth bass	36	7	7	7	26	0	0	0	83
Bluegill	110	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	121
Smallmouth bass	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	8
Black/white crappie	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Walleye	0	0	0	2	8	7	0	0	17
Channel catfish	0	0	2	0	3	3	2	0	10
Yellow bass	1	28	1	0	0	0	0	0	30
White sucker	0	0	0	13	98	15	0	0	126

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

All fish species - Two pole and line fishing only.

Channel Catfish – 3 fish daily creel limit.

Largemouth Bass – 18” minimum length limit; 1 fish daily creel limit.

White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie – 15 fish daily creel limit

Bluegill or Redear Sunfish – 15 fish daily creel limit

CONTACT INFORMATION –

Whalon Lake: 815/727-8700

or visit the Will County Forest Preserve website at

<http://www.reconnectwithnature.org/>

IDNR Fisheries County Fish Biologist: 630/553-6680.