



# Willow Lake

## 2016 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

**LOCATION** – Willow Lake is located on the west side of North Aurora. From Randall Road, head east on Dogwood Drive, than turn south (right) on N. Juniper Drive. Park on the street at Willow Lake Park.

**DESCRIPTION** – Willow Lake is a 3 acre dug retention pond. The lake is owned and maintained by the Fox Valley Park District (FVPD) as a community park in a residential setting. Flow through from adjacent storm sewers help keep this lake from serious winter kill. The shoreline is mowed in several areas to allow access for shore fishing and a path encircles the lake. A playground is located at the adjacent park. See the reverse side for an aerial photo. No depth information is available at this time.

**MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:** The FVPD has entered into a cooperative management agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to facilitate fisheries management activities. Site specific regulations apply (Six fish daily creel on channel catfish and a three fish, 15 inch minimum limit on largemouth bass). A 15 minute electrofishing survey took place on May 25, 2016. An IDNR channel catfish program (600 four inch catfish every other year) should offer great fishing for this species in the future. A return trip to map depths of this lake is planned for 2017.

**STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY** – Abundant largemouth bass and bluegill should offer anglers plenty of action in this residential park. Easy access at Willow Lake Park makes the Lake a family friendly fishing location with the chance at catching some nice fish!

**LARGEMOUTH BASS** – In our 2016 electrofishing survey, forty-nine largemouth bass were caught in 15 minutes of electrofishing (196 fish per hour). We consider anything over 60 fish per hour to be a healthy abundance measure. The average bass was 11.90 inches long, but length ranged from 6.18 to 19.80 inches. The heaviest bass weighed 5.18 pounds. Twenty percent of the catch was over twelve inches in length and 16% was over the legal length limit (15 inches). We did much better in 2016 than the previous sample in 2009. The bass catch rate was only 39 fish per hour in that sample. Only one fish over 15 inches was caught in 2009. Multiple sizes (year classes) indicate successful reproduction in this lake although no fish under six inches were captured. Abundant forage species (bluegill, gizzard shad and golden shiner) keep the bass in this lake fat and healthy.

**BLUEGILL** – Bluegill were vary abundant and captured at a rate of 328 fish per hour. Bluegill ranged in size from 3.07 to 7.65 inches, with an average size of 5.33 inches. Twenty-nine percent of the catch was longer than six inches. The results of the survey indicated a very healthy bluegill population that could benefit from responsible harvest. It is important to release large bluegills. If no large fish are present bluegill can become sexually mature at a smaller size and not grow.

**CHANNEL CATFISH** – No channel catfish were caught in this survey. Fishing for channel catfish should be better in the future as 600 four inch channel catfish were stocked in 2012 and 2014.

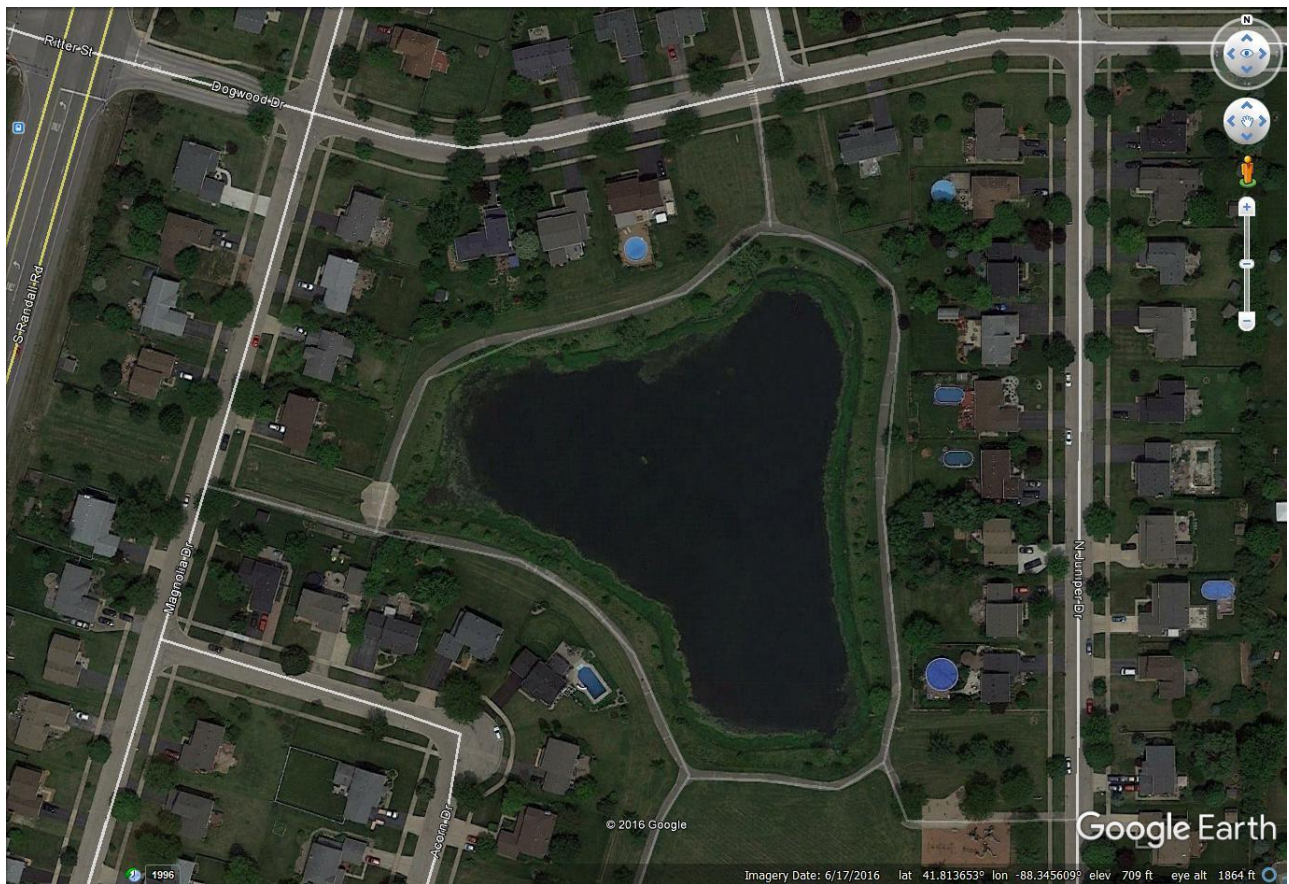
**COMMON CARP** – Common carp were not extremely abundant during this survey. Two common carp were measured and they were both around 18 inches, weighing around three pounds. Carp tend to stir up sediments through their feeding behavior. This tends to increase turbidity which can lead to many other problems in small lakes. Carp should be removed from the lake whenever possible.

**ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES:** Black crappie, gizzard shad, golden shiner and yellow bass were also captured in the survey. Bluntnose minnow and green sunfish were caught in the last survey of Willow Lake but were not present in the 2016 sample.

## Summary of catch from 2016 Electrofishing Survey of Willow Lake – 15 DC electrofishing

Species	Number Collected	Length (Inches)			Weight (pounds)	
		Min	Max	Avg.	Min	Max
Bluegill	83	3.07	7.68	5.33	0.04	0.37
Largemouth bass	49	6.18	19.80	11.90	0.08	5.18
Black crappie	2	5.28	9.49	7.38	0.09	0.43
Common carp	2	18.46	18.82	18.64	3.09	3.29
Gizzard shad	2	12.17	12.99	12.58	0.86	0.98
Golden shiner	1	6.06	6.06	6.06	0.10	0.10
Yellow bass	1	6.26	6.26	6.26	0.12	0.12
Grand Total	140					

Aerial Photo of Willow Lake Park in North Aurora



For more information call the Fox Valley Park District at (630) 897-0516 or IDNR Fisheries at (815) 675-2386 ext. 214 or visit: <http://www.foxvalleyparkdistrict.org/lakes-and-fishing-2/>

For general information on fishing in Illinois visit the IDNR Fisheries Division at: [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org)

To purchase your fishing license go to: [www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov)