



Iroquois River

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

The Iroquois River originates in Indiana and flows in a northwest direction for 55.4 miles through Illinois to its confluence with the Kankakee River near Aroma Park. The drainage area of the Iroquois River basin is 2137 square miles with 1240 square miles of that area being in Illinois. There are 11 named tributaries to the Iroquois River in Illinois, Spring Creek at 65 miles in length and Sugar Creek at 38.9 miles in length being the two largest. The mainstem Iroquois River is a relatively low gradient, slow moving river that is prone to diatom algae blooms in recent years.

Access – The Iroquois River is limited in the number of public access points it has to offer. The only public boat launch on the river is located at the northwest edge of Watseka. The lower parts of the river can be reached by traveling upstream from the public boat launch on the Kankakee River at Aroma Park. There are a few additional bridge crossings and roadside areas that are popular with local residents.

Status of the Sport Fishery – The Iroquois River has a diverse sport fishery including channel catfish, northern pike, walleye, flathead catfish, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, white crappie, black crappie, and bluegill (see summaries below).

Channel Catfish – Electrofishing surveys in 2010 produced an average 19.8 channel catfish per hour. This excellent catch rate was highlighted by the 74 channel catfish collected at Sugar Island, east of Chebanse. The largest channel catfish of the 2010 surveys was 24 inches, collected from Sugar Creek near Milford.

Northern Pike – 11 northern pike were collected in the 2010 surveys. The largest was a 36-inch pike collected from the Iroquois River at Sugar Island. Other locations northern pike were collected include the Iroquois River near the town of Iroquois, Mud Creek near Milford, Sugar Creek near Milford, Spring Creek near Onarga and Crescent City, and Beaver Creek near Papineau.

Walleye – The Iroquois River has been stocked annually since 2007, except 2012, with an average of 32,683 walleye. These stockings have created a popular fishery. 11 walleye were collected in the 2010 surveys. The largest walleye collected was a 27-incher from the Iroquois River at Sugar Island. Other locations walleye were collected include the Iroquois River near the town of Iroquois, Pike Creek, Sugar Creek, and Beaver Creek.

Flathead Catfish – The 2010 electrofishing surveys produced an average of 1.4 flathead catfish per hour of sampling. The largest flathead catfish was a 21-incher collected from the Iroquois River east of Ashkum.

Smallmouth Bass – The Iroquois River produced 1.6 smallmouth bass per hour of electrofishing and the tributary sites produced an average of two per site in 2010. Smallmouth bass were most abundant in Sugar Creek near Milford. The largest smallmouth bass of the 2010 surveys was 14.9 inches, collected from Mud Creek near Stockland.

Largemouth Bass – The Iroquois River sites produced up to eight largemouth bass, averaging 5.4 per hour of electrofishing in 2010. The tributaries produced an average of 4.1 largemouth bass per site. They were most abundant in Beaver Creek near Papineau. The largest individual was 15.5 inches from the Iroquois River near L'Erable.

Crappie – The 2010 surveys produced 44 crappie, with black crappie outnumbering white 39 to 5. Crappie were found at three of the Iroquois River sites and five tributary sites. They were most abundant in the Iroquois River east of Ashkum, with a catch rate of 15 per hour of electrofishing. Beaver Creek and Prairie Creek both produced 10 black crappie.

Bluegill – 76 bluegill were collected in the 2010 surveys. They were found at only two Iroquois River sites and 12 tributary sites. Bluegill were most abundant in Sugar Creek near Stockland.

Fishing Regulations: Statewide regulations apply for all species except walleye, sauger, and their hybrids, which have a 14-inch minimum length limit and a protected slot of 18 to 26 inches, with a 3 fish daily creel limit of which only 1 can be over 26 inches. See Illinois Fishing Information Booklet for regulations and www.ifishillinois.org for complete fishery reports.