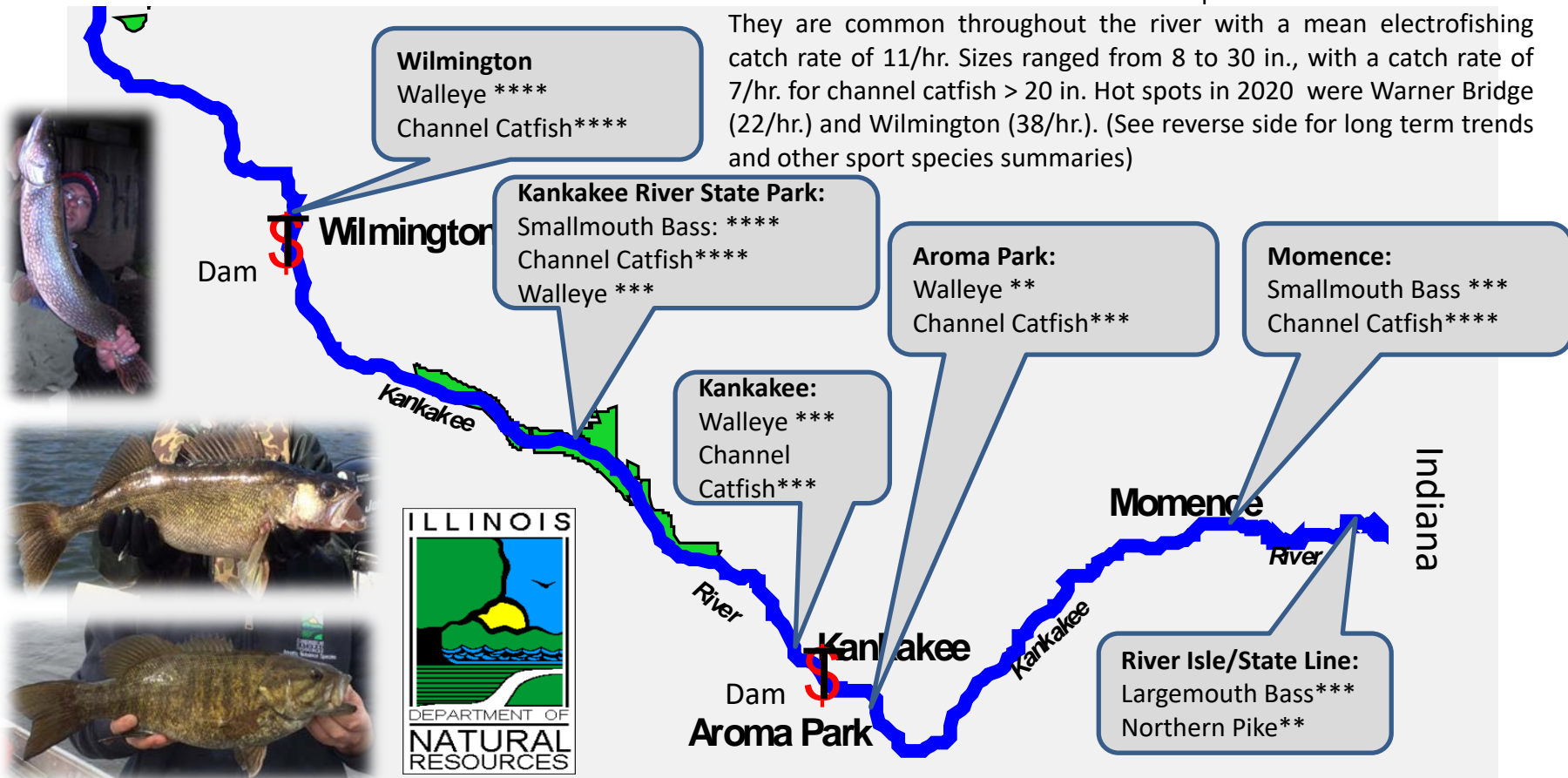


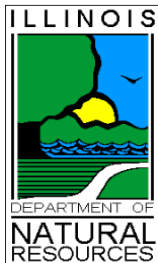
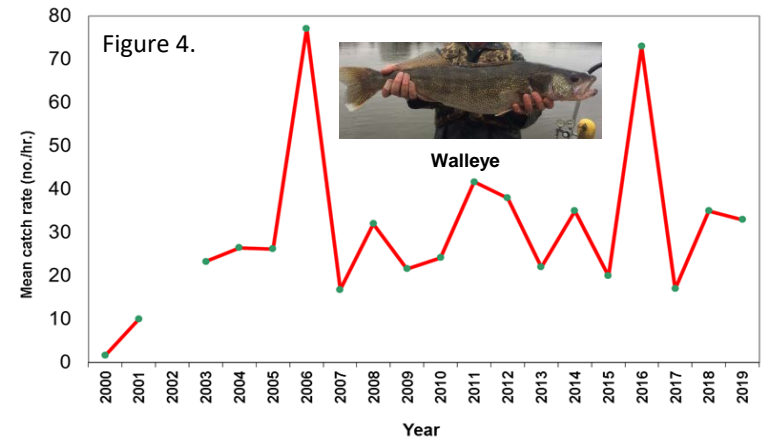
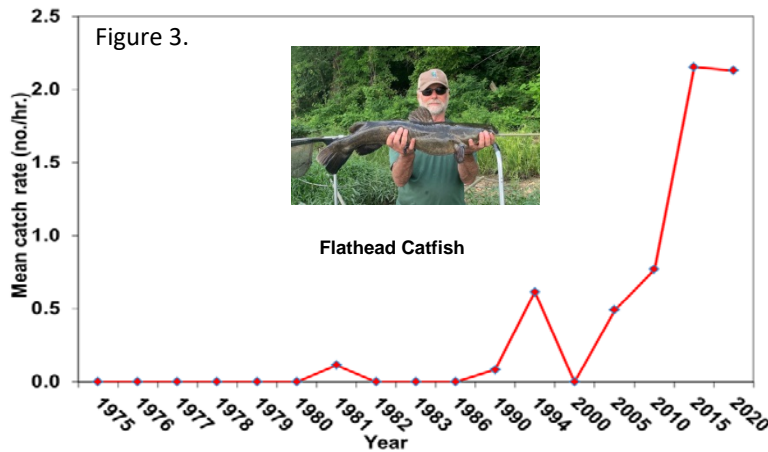
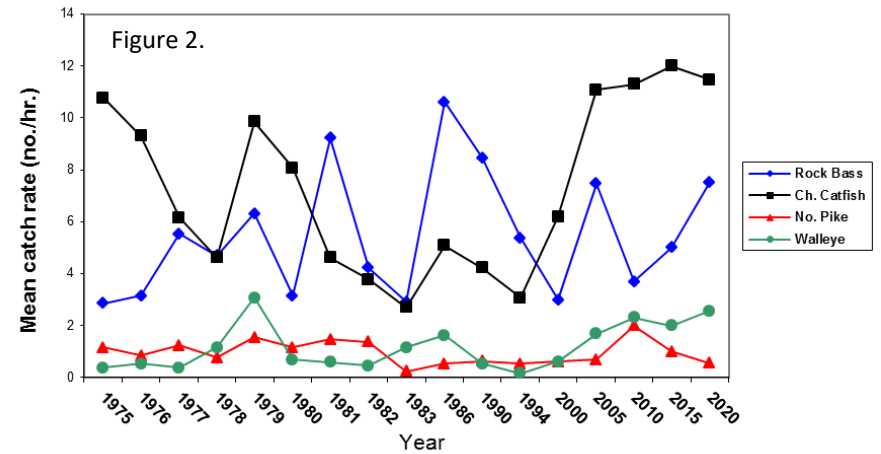
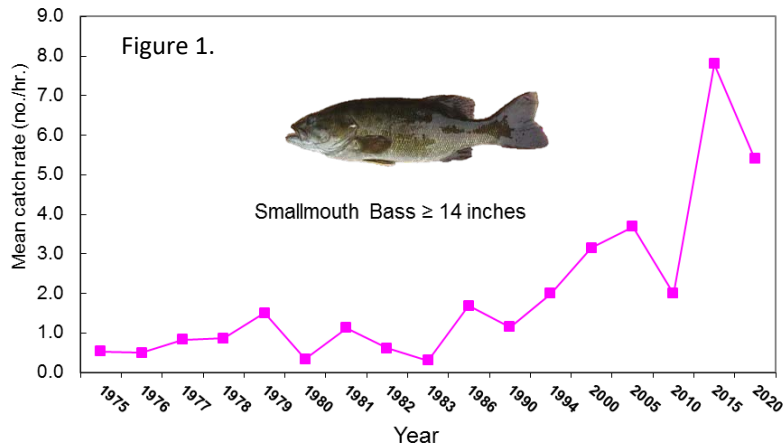
Kankakee River Fishery Fact Sheet - 2021

Flowing for 59 miles in Illinois, the Kankakee River is one of the highest quality streams in the State, offering excellent sportfishing and recreational opportunities. The upper river is lower gradient, running through Momence wetlands, a highly valued floodplain forest. Downstream of Kankakee the gradient increases, flowing over bedrock and cobble through Kankakee River State Park and Wilmington, joining the Des Plaines to form the Illinois River. Shore access and boat ramps can be found in most river towns. Kankakee River State Park offers eleven miles of excellent river access.

- **Smallmouth Bass:** One of the best smallmouth rivers in the State. Hotspots are Momence and Kankakee River State Park where fall boat electrofishing catch rates ranged from 94 to 176/hr. Catch rates for smallmouth ≥ 14 in. were between 15 and 20/hr. Reproduction has been strong in 2 of the last 3 years.
- **Walleye:** The IDNR stocking program, which releases 90,000 fingerlings per year, has produced an excellent fishery. Spring electrofishing catch rates average 33/hr. Brood fish males averaged 18 in. while females averaged 22 in. Females often exceed 26 in. Summer catch rates have also been higher in recent years (see reverse side).
- **Channel Catfish:** It's hard to find a better place to fish for channel cats. They are common throughout the river with a mean electrofishing catch rate of 11/hr. Sizes ranged from 8 to 30 in., with a catch rate of 7/hr. for channel catfish > 20 in. Hot spots in 2020 were Warner Bridge (22/hr.) and Wilmington (38/hr.). (See reverse side for long term trends and other sport species summaries)



Key: Fair** / Good*** / Excellent ****



Smallmouth Bass catch rates for all sizes have increased in recent years; catch rates for larger fish has also been on the rise since 1983 (Figure 1). Angler attitudes regarding harvest and IDNR harvest regulations may have contributed to increased catch rates of larger fish. Catch rates of **Rock Bass** have been variable, but are on the rise overall (Figure 2). Best spots in 2020 were near the State Line and Momence. Rock Bass in the 6 to 10 in. range were fairly common (3/hr.). They were generally more abundant in tributary streams in 2020, especially Rock and Forked Creeks, with many fish in the 6 to 8 in. range. **Channel Catfish** catch rates have stabilized at higher levels over the last few surveys (Figure 2) with larger fish common throughout the river. **Northern Pike** summer catch rates have historically been very low with higher catch rates in the upper river near areas with vegetation. **Walleye** summer catch rates have also been quite low but have increased slightly in recent years (Figure 2) due to the IDNR enhancement program, which stocks 90,000 fingerlings per year. Walleye catch rates in the spring average 33/hr., primarily at Wilmington and Kankakee (Figure 4). IDNR’s target catch rate indicative of a successful stocking program is 15 walleye/hr. Flathead Catfish were mostly absent from collections before 1990. Abundance is still rather low but they have increased in the last few surveys and now are found at most of the 13 mainstem stations.