

CEDAR LAKE

2024 FISHERIES FACT SHEET

LOCATION: Cedar Lake is located five miles southwest of Carbondale in Jackson County. The City of Carbondale boat access area is located at the end of Cedar Creek Road off of Old Route 51 South. Another boat access area can be found south of Murphysboro off of State Route 127. There is a 10 HP motor limit on Cedar Lake. Boat trailer parking areas can fill up quickly during the peak spring and fall fishing seasons especially on weekends.

DESCRIPTION: Cedar Lake is 1750 acres in size with a maximum depth of 60 feet. The northern half of the shoreline is owned by the City of Carbondale. The southern half of the shoreline is surrounded by Shawnee National Forest which is owned by the US Forest Service. There is no marina on Cedar Lake.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – The following is a brief summary of the major sport fish species based the Illinois Department of Natural Resources annual fish population surveys.

Largemouth Bass (LMB) - Anglers are encouraged to keep their daily limit of 5 LMB under 14 inches to help thin out the smaller LMB at Cedar Lake. This will increase growth rates, allow more LMB to reach the protected slot limit, and lead to more trophy-sized LMB in the future. During the 2023 spring electrofishing sample LMB were collected at a rate of 160 fish/hr. The catch rate (31 fish/hr) and percent (19%) of LMB collected over 18 inches were the highest in the last ten years. LMB within the protected slot limit (14-18 inches) were collected at a rate of 51 fish/hr representing 32% of all LMB collected. This represents the third highest catch rate and percentage of bass within the protected slot limit on record. Cedar Lake has one of the best LMB populations of any lake in Illinois with respect to the total number of LMB and LMB over 18 inches. The largest bass collected in the 2023 survey was 6.0 pounds.

Striped Bass (STB) - IDNR stocks STB into Cedar Lake when available. A total of 4750 STB (3 inches) were stocked in June 2023. One 27 inch STB was collected in the 2023 survey. Striped bass are an open-water fish and are rarely collected during INDR annual surveys. A tagging study is now underway at Cedar Lake. If you catch a floy-tagged STB please contact IDNR Fisheries Biologist Shawn Hirst at 618-559-5009 (or email at Shawn.Hirst@illinois.gov). Please provide tag number (5 digits), length, and if you kept or released the STB. If releasing the STB please do not remove the tag.

Crappie – Cedar Lake has an excellent crappie population consisting of both black and white crappie. Crappie over 2 pounds are caught each year. Of the 93 crappie collected in the 2023 spring survey, 83% were over 9 inches, 65% were over 10 inches, and 17% were over 12 inches. The largest crappie collected in the 2023 survey was a black crappie that measured 15 inches and weighed 1.7 pounds.

Bluegill Sunfish – Despite the high density largemouth bass population, the bluegill population structure can only be described as average. A few bluegill over 8 inches were collected in the 2023 spring survey.

Redear Sunfish – While the bluegill population can only be described as average, the redear population is outstanding for a larger lake. Fifty-two percent of the redear sunfish collected during the 2023 spring survey were over 8 inches. Twenty-eight percent were over 9 inches.

Catfish – Four channel catfish (20-22 inches) and two flathead catfish (8-18 inches) were collected in the 2023 survey. Neither catfish species have ever been collected in great numbers in previous annual surveys. Channel catfish were stocked in August and September 2022 (a total of 12,615 channel catfish averaging 8 inches). No channel catfish were stocked in 2023.

Fishing regulations:

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	5 under 14" and 1 over 18"	14-18 inch protected slot (no possession)
Striped, White or Hybrid Bass	3	17"
White, Black, Hybrid Crappie	25	None
All Fish	2 Pole and Line Fishing Only	

FISHING TOURNAMENTS: Permits for fishing tournaments are required from the City of Carbondale and can be obtained by contacting the City of Carbondale/Lake Manager – Cedar Lake 618-549-8441 beginning on January 2 of each year. No IDNR fish tournament permits will be issued until a City of Carbondale permit is obtained. Tournaments are limited to a 20 boat maximum with one tournament per day per ramp.

FISH ATTRACTORS – A map of the 30 permanent Cedar Lake fish attractor locations can be obtained via email by sending a request to Shawn.Hirst@Illinois.gov

GENERAL FISHING INFORMATION – With a 10 HP motor limit and no swimming allowed (except at a designated beach), Cedar Lake receives very little recreational boat traffic throughout the year. However, parking at the two boat ramps can be a problem during peak fishing months in the spring and fall especially on the weekends.

PHONE NUMBERS: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fish Biologist – Shawn Hirst 618-559-5009. City of Carbondale/Lake Manager – Cedar Lake 618-549-8441.