



Sahara Woods Fish and Wildlife Area

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Sahara Woods is located 5 miles west of Harrisburg, Illinois; south of State Route 13. The site is made up of vacated strip mine land, and encompasses approximately 4000 acres. Sahara Lake and numerous strip cuts make up approximately 270 acres of fishable water. In July of 2011 the site was opened for the first time to public fishing. Currently only two boat ramps are located at Sahara Woods, one on the 98 acre Sahara Lake, and one on a 15 acre strip cut located to the east of Sahara Lake. Sahara Lake has a 10 horsepower or less motor restriction and all other strip cuts are electric motor only. Anglers are allowed to use "carry in" boats such as canoes, kayaks and small boats on all strip pits currently open to bank fishing. Users should be extremely cautious as this site is extremely rugged and shoreline areas drop off very quickly. Anglers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with site boundaries and remain on open roads and parking lots while fishing at Sahara Woods.

Sahara Lake is approximately 98 acres with a handicap accessible boat ramp, parking lot and restroom. Sportfish in the lake include largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, redear and channel catfish.

Largemouth bass - Survey data suggests a quality bass fishery exists in Sahara Lake. Bass sampled ranged in size from 8" to 22" in length. A large number of bass measured between 15 – 18 inches. An 18 inch length limit, one bass per day regulation is in place at Sahara Woods. Good to excellent catches of bass should be expected at Sahara Lake.

Bluegill – Bluegill range in size from 4 to just under 8 inches in length. The majority of harvestable bluegill sampled was between 6.5 and 7.5 inches. A 15 fish per day creel limit applies for bluegill and redear sunfish at Sahara Woods. Bluegill and redear fishing is expected to be good to excellent.

Crappie – Black and white crappie are present in Sahara Lake and fishing as reported from anglers has been good. Anglers should target crappie around structure using minnows and jigs. A 15 fish per day creel limit applies to crappie at Sahara Woods.

Channel catfish – Fishing for channel catfish at Sahara Lake should be good to excellent. Fish collected in recent samples measured up to 18 inches in total length. A six fish per day creel limit applies for channel catfish.

Sahara Woods offers an excellent opportunity for the adventuresome angler to fish waters that have had very limited public fishing pressure and the angler should expect to be rewarded with a quality fishing experience. Additional fisheries information can be obtained on the I Fish Illinois web site, <http://www.ifishillinois.org> or by consulting the Illinois Fishing Information booklet or by calling IDNR District Biologist Kurt Daine at 618-949-3432.

