



Defiance Lake

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Defiance Lake is a 48 acre natural lake in Moraine Hills State Park located three miles south of McHenry off of River Rd. between Illinois Rt. 120 and 176 in McHenry County.

DESCRIPTION – Defiance Lake is one of a handful of natural glacial lakes in Illinois that has remained relatively undeveloped. Its maximum depth is 18 feet. The lake stays fairly clear for most of the year but vegetation does become quite thick. Treatment of vegetation is not an option due to threatened plant species. The lake provides a scenic and relaxing year-round fishing opportunity for northern pike, largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegill, and black crappie. There is no boat launch at the lake but carry in boats/canoes/kayaks are allowed. Rental boats are available. Bank fishing is prohibited due to hazardous peat soils that surround the lake, except for designated piers along the boardwalk.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: Defiance Lake is stocked annually with largemouth bass and channel catfish. The lake is surveyed by IDNR every two years to four and supplemental sampling for northern pike occurs when conditions allow. Fish attractors were installed and fish have been observed using them (see map on reverse side).

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – Unfortunately several harsh winters have taken their toll on the bass population. Defiance Lake is difficult to sample effectively with electrofishing gear as the vegetation becomes very thick early in the year. Due to this reason, catch rates for most species are low. While abundance may be underestimated, species richness seems to be pretty consistent throughout the years. Defiance Lake should provide something for the angler who wants to catch something other than bass and bluegill!

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Largemouth bass have not been abundant during any of the last four surveys in the past 11 years. Three bass less were caught in the 2018 survey. None were over 14 inches.

BLUEGILL – Bluegill catch rate was also low in the last survey. While it has been as high as 80 fish per hour, the 2018 catch rate was only 54 fish per hour. Bluegill ranged in length from 3.6 to 7.2 inches with the average fish measuring 5.4 inches. Other panfish species in Defiance Lake include; black crappie, green sunfish, pumpkinseed and warmouth, and yellow perch.

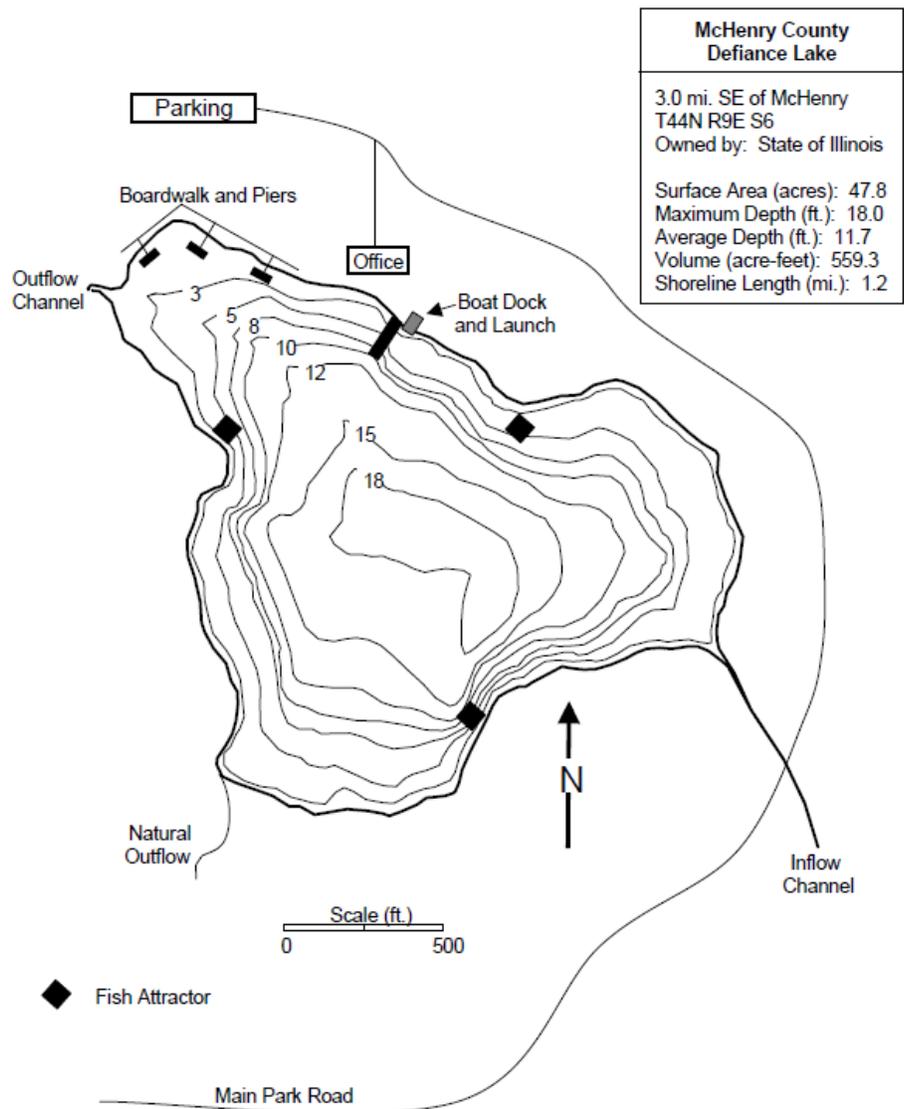
CHANNEL CATFISH – Non-vulnerable sized (8-12 inches) channel catfish are stocked annually in Defiance Lake. No channel catfish were sampled in the 2018 survey. Previous surveys have reported channel catfish greater than 20 inches in Defiance.

NORTHERN PIKE – Northern Pike – A spring netting survey took place in March of 2018. Northern pike catch rate was over six fish per net night. Abundance, based on catch rate, was higher in 2018 than in the previous three surveys. The pike in survey ranged in length from 17.6 to 30.5 fish, the largest weighing 5.5 pounds. Unfortunately, the hatchery system stopped producing northern pike in 2015. Future surveys will take place to determine if natural reproduction can maintain the pike in Defiance.

ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES: Also captured in 2018 were brown bullhead, bowfin, yellow perch, grass pickerel, common carp and pumpkinseed. Previous surveys have shown black crappie, black bullhead, brook silverside, central mudminnow, golden shiner, green sunfish, lake chubsucker, longnose gar, warmouth and yellow bullhead to be present in Defiance Lake.

Defiance Lake Survey - 30 minutes DC electrofishing - 5/29/18

Species	Number Collected	Length (Inches)			Weight (pounds)	
		Min	Max	Avg.	Min	Max
Bluegill	27	3.6	7.2	5.4	0.0	0.2
Brown bullhead	13	9.2	12.4	10.7	0.3	0.8
Bowfin	7	8.4	22.4	17.0	0.8	3.4
Yellow perch	5	5.6	6.1	5.9	0.1	0.1
Grass pickerel	3	6.4	7.7	7.2	0.1	0.1
Largemouth bass	3	3.3	13.9	10.0	0.9	1.2
Common carp	2	19.5	23.5	21.5	5.5	5.8
Pumpkinseed	1	6.4	6.4	6.4	0.2	0.2
Total # fish caught	61					



-For more information call **IDNR Fisheries** at (815) 675-2386 ext. 214

-For general information about fishing in Illinois go to: www.ifishillinois.org

-To purchase your fishing license go to: www.dnr.illinois.gov

Soundings (ft.) - 1987
Illinois Natural History Survey

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fisheries 2006 - V.S.