



IDNR Fisheries Lake Status Summary Otter Lake

Location: Six miles west of Girard, IL in north-central Macoupin County.

Area: 765 acres **Shoreline length:** 39 miles **Max Depth:** 51 feet **Average Depth:** 20 feet

Lake History and Characteristics: This water supply lake was built in 1968 by damming the west fork of Otter Creek. A sediment basin was created in the upper end of the lake in 2004 to improve water quality of the main lake. The lake is managed by the Otter Lake Water Commission. Most banks are steep-sided, and many are lined with riprap. The boat ramp is located at mid-lake, on the north side of Emerson Airline Road, and the park office/bait shop is on the south side of the road. Boat permits are required and may be purchased at the office/bait shop. Otter Lake has a 115 hp motor size limit.

Largemouth Bass: The 2021 electrofishing survey yielded 113 Largemouth Bass/hour of electrofishing, which indicates a strong bass population. The size structure of the bass population is good, with 62% of the bass over 12 inches in length, 25% over 15 inches, 9% over 18 inches, and 2% over 20 inches.

Bluegill: Approximately 23% of the Bluegill collected in our 2021 electrofishing survey were of quality size (6 inches and longer); however, only 5% were over 7 inches, and none were over 8 inches.

Channel Catfish: We collected 14 Channel Catfish in our 2021 survey, ranging from 17 to 23 inches. A healthy Channel Catfish population exists in this lake.

White Crappie: White Crappie were numerous in our survey and ranged in length from 6 to 12.5 inches. Approximately 20% of the crappie collected were over 9 inches, 9% were over 10 inches, and 1% were over 12.

Hybrid Striped Bass: These fish inhabit open water and are not often collected in our electrofishing surveys (1 fish in our 2021 survey and 1 in 2019), but a robust population occurs in the lake. In our spring 2022 Muskie survey we collected 5 Hybrid Striped Bass ranging from 19.5 inches/4 lbs to 27 inches/13 lbs.

Muskellunge: These solitary fish are rarely collected by electrofishing, however our netting surveys consistently catch these fish in good numbers. We collected 14 Muskies by netting in spring 2021, and 16 in spring 2022. Sizes ranged from 24 inches/5 lbs to 39 inches/15 lbs.

Fishing Regulations:

All Fish – 2 pole and line fishing only

Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass - 15" Minimum Length Limit, 3 Fish Daily Harvest Limit

Channel Catfish – 6 Fish Daily Harvest Limit

Recreational Use Restrictions – All live bait in excess of 8" must be rigged with a quick set rig

Striped, White, or Hybrid Striped Bass – 3 fish 17" or longer; 10 fish daily creel limit

Muskie – 48" minimum length limit; 1 fish daily creel limit

Contacts: IDNR Fisheries Biologist Eric Ratcliff, (618)-931-4217; Otter Lake Water Commission, (217) 965-1566.