



Sam Dale Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Sam Dale Lake is a relatively fertile, 194-acre, IDNR-owned impoundment located within Sam Dale Lake Conservation Area in northwestern Wayne County. The lake is largely surrounded by forest and has two boat ramps.

Largemouth bass: Largemouth bass were collected in Sam Dale Lake at a reduced rate of 122 per hour of electrofishing in fall 2021, and 58% were larger than 12 inches. Approximately 36% of these fish were also larger than the 14-inch minimum size limit. Body condition of Sam Dale largemouth bass was very good.

Bluegill: Fewer bluegill were collected in 2021 at a rate of 57 per hour, comparable to the previous year. Bluegill quality essentially remained essentially the same. Fish over 6 inches comprised 36% of the sample. Body condition of bluegill was acceptable and easily within the management plan goal range.

Redear: Similar to the previous year, redear were much less abundant than bluegill in 2021, and just 6 were collected per hour of electrofishing. Quality of these fish is still very good, with 67% of the sampled population comprised of 8-inch fish. Redear body condition was slightly higher than bluegill and easily within the goal range.

Channel catfish: Five channel catfish were collected per hour in Sam Dale Lake during the 2021 survey, double the previous year. These fish ranged in size from 17 to 24 inches and displayed excellent body condition. Channel catfish are stocked annually to maintain the population.

Crappie: The white crappie population in Sam Dale Lake is normally stunted with many fish 6 to 9 inches in length range. The fall 2021 survey produced white crappie 7 to 11 inches in length with 41% larger than 8 inches and 16% over 10 inches. Crappie body condition was good and within management plan goal range.

Muskellunge: A remnant population of pure muskellunge exists in Sam Dale Lake as a result of stockings related to a statewide research project. However, no muskies were collected during the fall 2021 survey.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – 14 inch length limit, 6 per day creel. Channel catfish – 6 per day creel. muskellunge – 48 inch length limit, 1 per day creel. There is a 10 horsepower outboard motor limit. Consult the Illinois Fishing Information booklet for additional regulation information.

Additional Fisheries Information can be obtained by calling IDNR District Biologist Luke Nelson at 618-364-5381, or by contacting the site at 618-835-2292.