



# FULTON COUNTY CAMPING AND RECREATION AREA LAKES

## FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

**LOCATION:** These small lakes are located in the Fulton County Camping and Recreation Area, 1.5 miles south of St. David, Illinois. The Fulton County Board leases the 440 acres of land, which contains 12 lakes and 134 acres of surface water from the metropolitan sanitary district of greater Chicago. The Illinois Department of Conservation signed a cooperative fisheries management agreement with Fulton County for the lakes in 1985 and then continued this agreement as IDNR in 1995 to the present.

**DESCRIPTION :** The 4 major lakes at the site are described as follows:

Lake #3 has a surface area of 45.6 acres, maximum depth of 20 feet, with an average depth of 10.0 feet. The shoreline length is 6.3 miles with a watershed of 450 acres. The lake is a long, narrow final cut with an aquatic vegetation coverage of less than 10 percent of the surface. The major aquatic vegetation consists of coontail, curlyleaf pondweed, american pondweed, filamentous algae and duckweed.

Lake #3.5 has a surface area of 15.3 acres, maximum depth of 18 feet, with an average depth of 6.0 feet. The shoreline length is 2 miles with a watershed of 450 acres. The lake is a long, narrow final cut with an aquatic vegetation coverage of less than 10 percent of the surface. The major aquatic vegetation consists of coontail, curlyleaf pondweed and duckweed. The average fall water chemistry consists of 1100 us conductivity, 136 alkalinity and a secchi reading of 4.5 feet.

Lake #4 has a surface area of 18.5 acres, maximum depth of 33 feet, with an average depth of 16.51 feet. The shoreline length is 2.1 miles with a watershed of 450 acres. The lake is a long, narrow final cut with an aquatic vegetation coverage of less than 5 percent of the surface. The major aquatic vegetation consists of coontail, curlyleaf pondweed, american pondweed, brittle naiad, water milfoil and small pondweed. The average fall water chemistry consists of 1600 us conductivity, 119 alkalinity and a secchi reading of 10 feet.

Little Sister Lake has a surface area of 35.8 acres, maximum depth of 25 feet, with an average depth of 10.87 feet. Storage capacity is 388.15 acre-feet, with a shoreline length of 11,550 feet and a watershed of 1,556 acres. The lake is characterized by a long (4,290 feet), narrow (330 feet average width) basin. Submerged trees, logs and stumps are abundant in the upper half and coves of the lake. Extensive littoral areas throughout the lake often contain dense growth of coontail, curlyleaf pondweed and filamentous algae. The upper end of the lake and the back of coves have accumulated leaf litter and sedimentation over the last 48 years. This flocculent material has reduced water depth and created anaerobic conditions in these areas. Average late summer water chemistry sample results are a pH of 7.9, a secchi disk depth of 42 inches and a conductivity of 1070 umhos.

**MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:** From 1980 to 1993, IDNR biologist, Ken Russell had assisted the F.C.R.A. with fish management advice for regulations and stocking procedures to establish a quality fishery focusing on Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish and Channel Catfish. Since 1994, the IDNR biologist has completed annual electrofishing surveys and supplemental fish stockings. Due to the deteriorated condition of the sport fishery, a complete removal of the existing fishery was completed on April 20, 1987, and then again on November 27, 2006 for Little Sister Lake.

**Status of the Sport Fishery:** All four of these lakes are in good shape overall with quality largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, crappie and channel catfish available for anglers in each lake. All four lakes receive an annual stocking of non vulnerable channel catfish from the state hatchery system. Lake #3 and Lake #4 were added to the state muskie stocking priority list. Both lakes have received periodic muskie stockings from the state hatchery system since 2007. A low density population population of muskie has been created in each lake with fish over 40 inches present.

**Largemouth Bass:** The largemouth bass have a good distribution from 9 to 15 inches long in the main lakes. These former stripmine lakes have good bass reproduction and recruitment each year. The entire site has a protected slot length of 12 to 15 inches for largemouth bass. The harvest of bass under 12 inches is necessary to thin the bass population and promote faster growth, while maintaining the predation upon the panfish in the lake. The 2019 electrofishing survey showed Lake #4 and Little Sister Lake with the best quality bass populations with fish over 18 inches in length.

**Muskellunge:** In 2019, Two muskie from 35 to 45 inches were collected in Lake #3 by electrofishing. In Lake #4, one muskie was sampled at 25 inches in length by electrofishing in 2019. A low density of muskie are present in these 2 lakes. In 2019, Lake #4 received a stocking of 36, 13.5 inch muskie.

**Bluegill:** Lake #3 and Lake #3.5 have historically been a good bluegill lakes. In 2019, the bluegill body condition was very good and the size was up to 8 inches in these lakes. Lake #4 and Little Sister Lake have bluegill populations of a moderate density of up to 7 inches in length.

**Redear Sunfish:** Little Sister Lake and Lake #4 contain the best populations of redear sunfish. In 2019, the surveys collected fish up to 9 inches long and in excellent body condition.

**Crappie:** Little Sister Lake, Lake #4, Lake #3.5 and Lake #3 contain black crappie populations. In 2019, Lake #4 and Little Sister Lake had the best samples with fish up to 11 inches collected.

**Channel Catfish:** Low density populations of quality size fish are found in each lake. In 2019, the annual channel catfish stocking was 400 fish in Lake #3, 125 fish in Lake#3.5 and 800 fish in Little Sister Lake.

**Other Fish Species:** A low density of warmouth sunfish, and hybrid redear x bluegill sunfish are found in each lake. A low density of very large common carp are found in Lake#3 and Little Sister Lake.

#### **Fishing Regulations:**

All FISH - 2 pole and line fishing only

Largemouth bass

- 12-15 inch protected slot length limit with 3 fish per day harvest limit

Channel Catfish

- 6 fish per day harvest limit

Bluegill and Redear sunfish

- 25 fish per day harvest limit

Muskie

- 42 inch minimum size limit and 1 fish per day harvest limit

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION –**

**Fulton County Camping and Recreation Area:** (309) 668-2931.

IDNR Fisheries County Fish Biologist: (309) 446-9143.

Illinois Fishing Information booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/>

