



Sahara Woods State Fish & 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. 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 (3-18 inches) were collected at a rate of 58 fish/hr in the 2024 survey. Of the bass collected, 24% were over 14 inches and 10% were over 18 inches. Bass fishing should be good in 2025. There is an 18-inch minimum length limit and daily harvest limit of 1 fish per day at Sahara Lake.

Sunfish – Sunfish fishing is expected to be fair. No bluegill or redear sunfish over 5 inches were collected in the 2024 survey. There is a 15 fish per day harvest limit for bluegill and redear sunfish at Sahara Woods.

Crappie – No black crappie over 6 inches were collected in the 2024 survey. Although present, no white crappie were collected in the 2024 survey. There is a 15 fish per day harvest limit for crappie at Sahara Woods.

Channel catfish – Fishing for channel catfish at Sahara Lake should be fair. Three channel catfish (13-16 inches) were collected in the 2024 survey. Three-thousand (6.5 inch) channel catfish were stocked in 2024. There is a daily harvest limit of 6 fish per day.

Additional information can be obtained on the I Fish Illinois web site: <http://www.ifishillinois.org>

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