



Sam Parr Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Sam Parr Lake was constructed in Sam Parr State Park in 1971 through the cooperative efforts of the Illinois Department of Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Location: Sam Parr Lake is located in Jasper County, approximately 3 miles northeast of Newton Illinois on Illinois Route 33.

Area: Sam Parr Lake has a surface area of 180 acres, a maximum depth of 28 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake has 9.5 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 3,950 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Sam Parr Lake is comprised of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, white crappie, and channel catfish. The lake also contains common carp and gizzard shad. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries below are based on the results of the most recent population survey and four-year trends in the population indices.

Largemouth Bass: The percentage of adult bass in the 12” – 15” size range remained below the lake management plan target in the 2023 survey. The electrofishing catch rate remained well above the minimum target. Approximately 31% of the adult bass in the sample were larger than the 14” minimum length limit. Approximately 25% of the adult bass collected were greater than 15” and 11% exceeded 18” in length. Average body condition improved to above the lake management plan target, and the body condition of bass over 16” was very good. The discrepancy in body condition between bass shorter than 16” and those longer than 16” is likely a result of the strong gizzard shad population in the lake. Nearly 83% of the gizzard shad collected in 2023 exceeded 7” in length and are not available as a prey source for smaller bass. In 2024, anglers can expect most bass over the minimum length limit to be 1.4 – 6 pounds.

Bluegill: Size structure of the bluegill population remained stable and poor. Average body condition remained above the lake management plan target. Very few bluegill over 7” have been collected in recent years and only a single bluegill over 7” was collected in 2023. The precipitous decline in the quality of the bluegill population coincided with the 2005 appearance of gizzard shad, and the bluegill population will likely always be hindered by the presence shad. Anglers can expect most fish to range from 5” – 7” and weigh 0.1 – 0.2 pounds.

Crappie: Sam Parr Lake contains both white and black crappies, but the size structures of the populations are different. Average body condition was below the lake management plan minimum target for both species. Black crappie had been the more dominant species in recent surveys, but in 2022 and 2023, white crappie were more numerous. Approximately 60% of the adult black crappie collected were in the 8” – 10” size range and only 13% exceeded 9”, while 35% of white crappie were in the 8” – 10” size range and 24% exceeded 9”. Crappie fishing should remain fair/good in the coming year with many black and white crappie in the 7” – 9” range weighing 0.18 - 0.38 pounds, and a few larger white crappie exceeding 1 pound. **Small fish of both species will also be abundant, and harvest of these smaller fish is encouraged.**

Channel Catfish: Catfish remain relatively abundant in Sam Parr Lake and should provide good fishing opportunities in the coming year. Nearly 70% of adult catfish collected were 14” or longer and approximately 7% exceeded 18” long. Most fish in 2024 should range from 1 – 3 pounds with a few larger fish over 5 pounds. This lake provides many bank fishing opportunities. The best places to fish include the riprap along the dam, the upper ends of the two main arms of the lake, along the tent camping shoreline, and in the backs of coves.

Fishing Regulations: Pole and line fishing only; no more than two poles with two or less hooks or lures per pole.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	14”
Channel Catfish	6	

Additional Regulations: **Boats with outboard motors must operate at No-Wake/Idle Speed in all parts of the lake, regardless of motor size (no horsepower limit).** IDNR tournament permit applications must be submitted on ifishillinois.org.

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