

# SUNSET LAKE - RIVER BEND FOREST PRESERVE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT LAKE STATUS SUMMARY

Sunset Lake is a gravel pit constructed by the Mid-America Sand & Gravel Company. The lake is located in Champaign County on the edge of the Village of Mahomet. The lake is approximately 125 acres, but the southwestern portion is being actively mined at this time. The lake has a maximum depth of 54 feet and an average depth of 19 feet.

The majority of the lake is owned by the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. The River Bend Forest Preserve is being developed as a natural area, with some recreational amenities, including a bicycle path, hiking trails, picnic area, and fishing.

**LARGEMOUTH BASS:** The 2022 survey resulted in a catch rate of 108 bass per hour of electrofishing, which was below the management objective of 125 bass per hour. The average catch rate since 2002 is 132.3 bass per hour. Based on bass 8 inches and longer; 72% were over 12 inches, and 20% were over 15 inches. Even though the catch rate was low for larger bass, the 2019 survey resulted in the highest catch rate ever obtained at Sunset Lake for bass over 15 inches and the 2022 survey had the second highest catch rate.

**BLUEGILL:** In 2022, the catch rate for bluegill was 268 per hour of electrofishing, which exceeded the management objective of 125 to 210 bluegill per hour. Based on bluegill over 3 inches, only 1% were longer than 6 inches and none were longer than 8 inches. The number of larger bluegill dropped dramatically since the last survey.

**CHANNEL CATFISH:** Sunset Lake is stocked each year with channel catfish from the state hatchery system. The catfish fishery has good numbers and adequate sizes for anglers.

**CRAPPIE:** In 2022, the catch rate of black crappie was 64 per hour. The management objective is 25 per hour. The average catch rate for the past 9 surveys is 11.6 black crappie per hour. Approximately 92% of the black crappie collected were less than 5 inches and suggests a very strong year class was produced in 2021 and should provide great fishing in a few years. There are larger crappie in the lake but not at high numbers.

**FISHING REGULATIONS:**           2 pole and line fishing only.  
  Live Bait is prohibited.   Worms are allowed.  
  Electric motors only.

**Channel catfish** - 6/day,

**Largemouth bass** – 3 fish daily limit with no more than 1 fish >15” and 2 fish < 15”

**Bluegill/Redear Sunfish** – 15 per day.

**White/Black/Hybrid Crappie** – 9” minimum length limit, with a daily harvest limit of 10.

For more information regarding River Bend Forest Preserve:  
(217)586-3360