



Centralia Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Centralia Lake was constructed in 1910 to serve as a water supply reservoir for the city of Centralia. Annual boat stickers and City/IDNR tournament permits are required.

Location: Centralia Lake is located in Marion County approximately 2 miles west and 5 miles south of Salem, Illinois.

Area: Centralia Lake has a surface area of 254 acres, a maximum depth of 23 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake has 12.9 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 4,480 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Centralia Lake is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappies, and channel catfish. Other common species include redear sunfish, common carp, and yellow bullhead. 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 overall size structure of the bass population was good and relatively stable. All of the population metrics met, or exceeded, the lake management plan targets. There was an increase in the number of bass under 12" collected in 2023. Approximately 25% of the adult bass in the sample exceeded the 15" minimum length limit. The catch rate was high at 131 fish per hour and was well above the goal of 60 per hour. Body condition remained stable and good ($W_r = 94$). Fishing prospects for the coming year should be very good with most bass over the minimum length limit ranging from 15" – 20" in length and weighing between 1.8 – 5 pounds.

Bluegill: The size structure of the bluegill population continued to remain poor. The number of larger bluegill was well below optimal ($RSD-7 = 4$). Many bluegill between 5" – 7" were collected, and only a single bluegill over 7.5" was sampled. In 2024, anglers can expect to catch an abundance of bluegill 5" – 7" in length weighing 0.1 to 0.25 pounds. Unfortunately, the bluegill population in this lake will likely always be hindered by the presence of gizzard shad.

Redear: The size structure of the redear sunfish collected in 2023 was good and the electrofishing catch rate increased to 93 per hour. Approximately 27% of the adult redear were 9" or longer and 10% were 10" or longer. Expect most redear caught to be between 7" – 10" and 0.25 – 0.65 pounds, with some larger fish exceeding 10" and approaching 0.75 pounds. Redear fishing should be good in 2024.

Crappie: The size structure of the white crappie population continued to look good, while the size structure of the black crappie population remained poor. Approximately 31% of the adult white crappie in the sample exceeded 9" in length and 20% exceeded 10". Nearly 50% of the adult white crappie in the sample were between 8" – 10". Most black crappie were in the 7" – 9" range with no fish exceeding 10" in length. Only 5% of the adult black crappie in the sample exceeded 9" in length. Body condition for white crappie remained poor and below the lake management plan target and black crappie body condition remained above target. Crappie fishing should be good in the coming year with the best fish ranging between 0.5 – 1.3 pounds.

Channel Catfish: As a result of recent stocking efforts, the channel catfish population density is improving. The current population exhibits good growth rates and body condition ($W_r = 101$). Approximately 97% of the adult channel catfish collected in 2023 were over 14” long and 86% exceeded 18”. Fishing in the coming year should be fair to good with the majority of fish ranging from 1 – 6 pounds.

Fishing Regulations: Pole and line fishing only; no more than two poles with two or less hooks or lures per pole. (Beginning April 1st, 2024)

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	15”
Channel Catfish	6	None

Additional Regulations: City of Centralia boat and tournament permits are required and may be obtained at the City Clerk’s office at 101 S. Locust, Centralia. IDNR tournament applications can be submitted on ifishillinois.org.

Contacts: Centralia City Clerk’s office 618/533-7625; IDNR Fisheries 618/393-6732.

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