



NORTH SPRING LAKE

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION: North Spring Lake is located 6 miles northwest of the town of Manito in Mason County.

DESCRIPTION : In 1978, Spring Lake was divided into two distinct waters for the purpose of capital improvement and the restructuring of the fish population. Prior to 1916, Spring Lake was part of the Illinois River system as a lateral freshwater marsh. In 1916, it was separated from the river by a high levee and has remained a separate body of water. From 1916 until 1981, the quality of the fishery habitat and the fish population declined due to rough fish populations such as carp and bullheads. In 1981, the lake was treated with Rotenone to remove the existing fish population and encourage the growth of aquatic vegetation. The key to the rehabilitation was the re-establishment of lush aquatic vegetation which had occurred by summer of 1983.

Always a shallow water, Spring Lake today has an average depth of 2.9 feet. Of the 578 acres of water, at least 75% is covered with 17 different species of aquatic vegetation by late May of each year. The majority of this coverage now consists of Eurasian milfoil, curlyleaf pondweed, lily and lotus. The tremendous spring recharge from the bed of the lake amounts to 52 acre feet a day, creating very cold water temperatures under the insulating layer of vegetation for the majority of the summer months. This is a unique situation and only occurs in Spring Lake within the State of Illinois. North Spring Lake has two boat ramps and there is a 25 horsepower limit.

Status of the Sport Fishery: In 2017 the boat navigation area was still impacted by the growth of white water lily and lotus as well as Eurasian milfoil from June until the lake closed for regular duck season. Aquatic vegetation control in 2017 was performed on 5/11/2017 in the area of the North Lake narrows. Because of the abundance of this vegetative mass, boat traffic is being severely affected. The tremendous growth of milfoil, has, in the past, been partly responsible for less angling effort and poor bluegill population condition. The density of aquatic vegetation will continue to negatively impact growth and condition of all Centrarchid fishes for the foreseeable future. We will treat Eurasian milfoil and lotus and lily with 2,4D-DMA 4 and glyphosate in 2018 as the manpower and commodity budget will allow.

Largemouth Bass: The 2017 fall electrofishing survey revealed a largemouth bass population that was concentrated from 2.8 to 16 inches in length. The body condition was average with an average value of 89. Good year classes of bass have been produced at North Spring Lake for each of the past 8 years. In 2018 a new harvest regulation will start for largemouth bass. The regulation is a protected slot from 12 to 18 inches with 3 fish per day harvest. This is an attempt to restructure to bass population to a larger percent of fish over 16 inches. Growth and condition have also been tremendously impacted by the dense growth of Eurasian milfoil in the past. The management of North Spring Lake was geared toward opening forage "edge" in these solid growth milfoil beds and shifting vegetation types to native species. The density of the milfoil has led to less than desirable age and growth relationships for largemouth.

Muskellunge: The muskie population was evaluated by 198 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices showed the majority of the population is from 30 to 41 inches in length and in poor body condition with a value of 83. Only 1 percent of the sampled population was over 42 inches in length. The combination of the thick vegetation growth and the loss of the entire gizzard shad population in the winter of 2013/2014 have negatively impacted the muskie growth and condition. An attempt was made to reestablish the gizzard shad population in 2017 with the introduction of 400 brood fish in May. The fall electrofishing surveys did find large gizzard shad surviving in the

lake in 2017.

North Spring Lake will again serve as the initial brood stock collection site for muskie for Jake Wolf Hatchery in 2018.

Bluegill: The bluegill population was evaluated by 226 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices are not good with 1 percent of the population over 7 inches and the poor body condition value of 81.

Redear sunfish: The redear sunfish population was evaluated by 107 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices are not good with 9 percent of the population over 8 inches and the poor body condition value of 76.

Black Crappie: The black crappie population was evaluated by 347 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices showed only 18 percent of the fish were over 9 inches and the body condition was average at 89. In 2018 a new harvest regulation will start for crappie. This regulation is a harvest limit of 25 fish per day with only 10 fish over 10 inches allowed. This regulation will allow harvest pressure on the large percentage of crappie that are under 9 inches in length.

Channel Catfish: No channel catfish were sampled in 2017 and the numbers have been low for the last 8 years. A request will be made to add channel catfish to the nonvulnerable size stocking list for 2018.

Other Fish Species: The following species have been historically collected in limited numbers: warmouth sunfish, white crappie, gizzard shad, common carp, brown bullhead, black bullhead, yellow bullhead, grass pike, spotted gar and green sunfish.

Fishing Regulations:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Size Limit</u>	<u>Creel Limit</u>
Large or Smallmouth Bass	12" to 18" protected slot	3 fish/day
Muskie	42" minimum size	1 fish/day
Channel catfish	None	6 fish/day
White, Black, Hybrid Crappie	No more than 10 fish greater than or equal to 10 inches	25 fish/day

All fish 2 Pole and line fishing only.

Recreational Use Restriction: All live bait greater than 8 inches must be rigged with a quick set rig. Waterfowl Refuge or Hunting Area.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Spring Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area: (309) 968-7135

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

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