

CLINTON LAKE

LAKE STATUS SUMMARY

One of the responsibilities of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the residents of Illinois. One means of increasing this opportunity has been through the leasing of valuable recreation land and water from utility companies. The Clinton Lake State Recreation Area is operated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources with the cooperation of Exelon Corporation. This site has greatly increased the fishing opportunity, as well as other major water recreational activities, for residents of Illinois.

LOCATION: Clinton Lake is located in DeWitt County 10 miles east of Clinton, IL.

DESCRIPTION: This 4,895 acre lake was constructed to serve as a cooling reservoir for the Clinton Nuclear Power Station. The lake has a maximum depth of 60 feet and an average depth of 15 feet. Clinton Lake is No Wake for all boats from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise with the exception of waterfowl hunters. Various portions of the lake are designated as no-wake, electric motor only, or no boat areas for safety and security reasons. All IDNR ramps are now equipped with wheelchair accessible boat docks. There are 17 Class AA campsites, 286 Class A campsites and 5 Class B/S campsites at Clinton Lake with showers and almost all are adaptable to either tents, trailers or motor homes. Bowfishing is allowed on certain areas of the lake.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY: The IDNR Division of Fisheries has been active in the management of the fisheries in Clinton Lake since the lake opened in 1979. The lake receives stockings of walleye, hybrid striped bass, blue catfish, and crappie. The following information is a summary of the major sport fisheries based on periodic fish population surveys.

Largemouth Bass - The most recent survey resulted in a catch rate of 117.4 bass per hour and was above the management objective of 80 bass per hour. The average catch rate since 2011 is 91.6 bass per hour. The largest bass collected during the 2022 survey weighed 5.98 pounds. There are good numbers of quality bass in the lake, with 64% being over 12 inches in length and 29% over 15 inches. Clinton Lake has an excellent bass population.

Walleye – The catch rate for walleye during the most recent survey was 9.1 walleye per hour. The average catch rate since 2011 is 5.3 walleye per hour. Of the walleye collected over 10 inches, 74% were longer than 15 inches and 15% were longer than 20 inches. In an attempt to increase the number of walleye in the lake, the regulation was changed to an 18” minimum length limit and 3 per day harvest limit in 2017. The fishery is maintained from annual stockings.

Hybrid Striped Bass - Hybrid striped bass were first stocked in Clinton Lake in 1978. During the last spring gill netting survey, hybrid striped bass were collected at a rate of 2.4 per net. The average catch rate is 17.2 hybrids per net. The hybrid striped bass ranged in size from 14.5 inches to 27 inches. The heaviest hybrid weighed 13.84 pounds and the average weight was 5.54 pounds. Clinton Lake has a good hybrid striped bass fishery and is maintained by annual stockings.

White Bass – There were strong year classes in 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2019 which produced a great white bass fishery. Even though there have been recent strong year classes, the catch rate in the most recent survey was only 6.3 white bass per hour. The average catch rate is 13.5 white bass per hour.

Crappie –During the most recent survey, the catch rate for black crappie was 10.6 black crappie per hour and the catch rate for blacknose crappie was 5.1 per hour. The white crappie catch rate went from 3.1 per hour in 2011 to 62.7 crappie per hour in 2018. In 2022, the catch rate was 46.3 crappie per hour. The catch rate objective is 25 per hour for white crappie and 15 per hour for black crappie and blacknose crappie. Approximately 21% of the white crappie were longer than 10 inches and 49% of the black crappie were longer than 10 inches. Clinton Lake is producing a high-density crappie fishery.

Channel Catfish/Blue Catfish – A catfish survey was conducted in the fall of 2018 to assess the stocking of blue catfish. Blue catfish ranged in size from 9 inches to 29 inches. Blue catfish have been stocked at a low rate into Clinton Lake since 2014.

FISHING REGULATIONS FOR CLINTON LAKE

| Species | Daily Limit | Length Limit |
|---|-------------|---|
| Largemouth/Smallmouth Bass | 3 | 16 inches |
| Walleye | 3 | 18 inches |
| Hybrid Striped Bass/ White Bass/Striped Bass | 10 | Only three may be over 17 inches |
| Crappie | 15 | No more than 10 fish greater than or equal to 10 inches and 5 less than 10 inches |
| Channel Catfish/Blue Catfish | 10 | None |

For other species, statewide regulations are in effect. For further regulation information, please consult the current Illinois Fishing Regulation Booklet.

For further information:

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