

# DAWSON LAKE

## FISHERIES FACT SHEET



**LOCATION:** Dawson Lake is located in Moraine View State Recreation Area. Dawson Lake is located between Bloomington/Normal and Champaign/Urbana north of I-74 at the LeRoy exit.

**DESCRIPTION:** This fertile 160.8 acre lake was built in 1962 and has a maximum depth of 25.5 feet and an average depth of 10 feet. Presently, an idle-speed/no-wake speed limit exists for boat motors over 10 horsepower and no speed limit for motors 10 horsepower or less. There is a two-lane launching ramp and docking facility. A concession stand, located near the boat dock and launch, offers dock and boat rental, fishing tackle, bait, refreshments and various supplies. A restaurant, seating 60, serves breakfast and lunch. Bowfishing is allowed from a boat.

**STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY:** The IDNR Division of Fisheries has been active in the management of the fisheries in Dawson Lake since the lake was constructed in 1962. The lake receives stockings of saugeye, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. The following information is a summary of the major sport fisheries based on periodic fish population surveys.

**Largemouth Bass** – The most recent bass survey resulted in a catch rate of 160 bass per hour. The average catch rate is 180.1 bass per hour. There are a large number of bass less than 15 inches in Dawson Lake. Of the bass collected over 8 inches, 53% were over 12 inches and 15% were over 15 inches. A new regulation was implemented in 2015 to increase the number of larger bass in the lake. The regulation will allow anglers to remove 2 bass under 15 inches and only one bass over 15 inches. Gizzard shad were first collected in 2018 and may improve the growth rate and size structure of the bass population. During the 2019 and 2020 bass surveys, bass over 20 inches were collected for the first time in 20 years.

**Bluegill** – During the most recent survey, bluegill were collected at a rate of 298 per hour and is a very high catch rate. Of the bluegill over 3 inches, only 10% were over 6 inches and none were over 8 inches. The bluegill fishery is rated as poor to fair. In order to improve the bluegill fishery, only 5 bluegill over 8 inches will be allowed to be harvested. Anglers will be allowed to harvest 20 bluegill in total, which is an increase from the old regulation of 15 per day. It is important to not overharvest large bluegill from the fishery.

**Black Crappie** – The crappie fishery is assessed by using frame nets in the spring. The catch rate in the most recent survey increased to 75.4 black crappie per net-night. The average catch rate for the past 9 surveys is 43 crappie per net-night. Of the crappie collected over 5 inches, 99% were longer than 8 inches, but only 5% were longer than 10 inches. The crappie fishery is dominated by young black crappie.

**Saugeye** – Saugeye have been stocked into Dawson Lake since 2003. During the most recent saugeye electrofishing survey, only 13 saugeye were collected per hour of sampling and was a large reduction in the catch rate from 2018. The saugeye ranged in length from 12 inches to 21 inches. The heaviest saugeye weighed 3.8 pounds and the average weight for all saugeye was 2.5 pounds. During the most recent spring netting survey, a catch rate of 13.1 saugeye per net was obtained. The average catch rate for the past 11 surveys is 14.6 saugeye per net. Approximately 84% of the saugeye collected were longer than 14 inches and 21% were longer than 18 inches. The strategic management plan for walleye/saugeye has a catch rate objective of 2.5 per net. The walleye/saugeye population at Dawson Lake is a good fishery in a small lake.

**Channel Catfish** – Channel catfish are stocked each year from the State Hatchery System. The latest survey collected 33 catfish per hour and represents a high number of catfish in Dawson. The average catch rate for the past 9 surveys is 28.6 per hour. Approximately 34% of the catfish collected were over 16 inches. The catfish population is maintained from annual stockings.

**FISHING REGULATIONS:** 2 Pole and Line Fishing Only, except that bowfishing is allowed from a boat.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>SIZE LIMIT</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>
Largemouth Bass	2<15" and 1 ≥ 15"	3
Walleye/Saugeye	15"; no more than 1 over 20"	3
Channel Catfish	None	6
Crappie	None	15
Redear Sunfish/Bluegill	Only 5 over 8"	20

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

**For more information:** Moraine View Recreation Area: 309-724-8032  
Fisheries: 217-784-4730