



East Fork Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

East Fork Lake was constructed by the City of Olney in 1971 to serve as a water supply reservoir. Annual boat stickers and City of Olney tournament permits are required.

Location: East Fork Lake is located in Richland County, approximately 1 mile north of Olney Illinois.

Area: East Fork Lake has a surface area of 935 acres, a maximum depth of 40 feet, and a mean depth of 15 feet. The lake has 25 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 9,982 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in East Fork Lake is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, white and black crappie, channel catfish, and is stocked annually with walleye. The lake also contains common carp and large yellow bullheads. 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 size structure of the bass population improved slightly from last year. There was an increase in the percentage of bass in the 12" – 15" size range, but the percentage of adult bass exceeding the 15" minimum length limit remained constant at 33%. The electrofishing catch rate and the average body condition for all sizes of bass remained constant and above their lake management targets. Fishing prospects for the coming year should be good and similar to last year with most keeper bass ranging from 15" – 20" in length and weighing between 1.5 – 4 pounds.

Bluegill – The bluegill population structure remained in good shape and consistent with recent trends. Average bluegill body condition remained at the lake management target. There was an increase in the number of bluegill greater than 7" (RSD-7=15). However, the number of bluegill exceeding 8" remained low at only 1% of adult bluegill sampled. Angling for bluegill in the coming year should be good with most keepers 5" – 8" in length and 0.10 – 0.33 pounds.

Crappie - The white crappie population structure remained good. The average body condition for all sizes of white crappie improved and remained above target. The percentage of white crappie over 10" in length remained good at 15%, while approximately 40% of white crappie exceeded 9" in length. Black crappie are the dominant species in East Fork Lake and their population also appeared to also be doing well. Body condition decreased to the minimum lake management target. Black crappie electrofishing catch rates remained high and the majority of the fish were between 8" – 10". Approximately 15% of the adult black crappie collected in 2021 exceeded 9" long and only 1% exceeded 10" long. If growth rates remain good, the size structure of the populations should improve further in the coming years. Most angler catches in 2022 are likely to be black crappie in the 8" – 9" range weighing 0.2 – 0.4 pounds, with some larger white crappie exceeding 10" and 0.5 pounds.

Channel Catfish – Catfish numbers improved but remained low in East Fork Lake. The average size of the fish was good. Average body condition for these fish also remained good and above target. Most fish in 2022 will range from 15” – 20” inches and 1 – 2.5 pounds, with larger fish up to 10 pounds. This lake provides good bank fishing opportunities. Drift fishing the main lake is also very productive.

Walleye – The size structure and size of the walleye population remained good this year. Five year classes were collected in this year’s survey. The catch rate was almost 8 per hour during the electrofishing survey, 4.5 fish per net-night in the fall net survey, and just under 30 fish per net-night in the spring netting survey. Approximately 84% of the adult fish were 15” or longer and 95% exceeded the 14% minimum length limit. With many fish in the 2 – 5 lb. range, this lake should provide good fishing opportunities for walleye in the coming year.

Fishing Regulations: Two pole and line fishing only

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	15”
Walleye	6	14”
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie	25 collectively	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	25 collectively	None
Channel Catfish	6	None

Additional Regulations: City boat stickers and tournament permits are required. Boat stickers are available at Olney City Hall and local bait shops. Tournament permits are available at Olney City Hall.

Contacts: Olney City Hall 618/393-2130; IDNR Fisheries 618/393-6732.

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