

# Carlyle Lake Fishing Fact Sheet

## Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1967, Carlyle Lake was formed by damming the Kaskaskia River and is the largest manmade lake within Illinois. Carlyle Lake is home to many different species of fish. The primary sport fish include: largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, crappie, white bass, sauger, channel catfish, and flathead catfish. Carlyle Lake provides good fishing for most of these species. The populations of some of the primary sport fish tend to cycle year to year. Currently the lake supports excellent populations of crappie, catfish, and white bass. Fish population surveys are conducted annually. The lake is located in southwestern Illinois, 50 miles east of St. Louis, principally in Clinton County, with Carlyle being the largest city bordering the water. Fish that are stocked annually include sauger, largemouth bass, and redear sunfish. Hybrid striped bass and Blue Catfish were stocked in 2021. These species will continue to be stocked when available.

**Concessions:** There are two bait shops located in town and three full service marinas.

<b>Sport Fishing Statistics</b>					
	<b>Largemouth Bass</b>	<b>Crappie</b>	<b>White Bass</b>	<b>Bluegill</b>	<b>Channel Catfish</b>
<b>Biologist Ranking</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Fish per Hour (electrofishing)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Average Catch Size (inches)</b>	<b>12-20</b>	<b>6-14</b>	<b>10-16</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>15-30</b>

<b>Carlyle Lake Stocking 2021</b>				
<b>Stock Date</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Size (inches)</b>	
05/20/2021	Sauger	182,115	1.2	
05/28/2021	Sauger	101,772	1.4	
06/01/2021	Hybrid Striped Bass	5,000	5	
06/08/2021	Sauger	50,523	1.8	
06/17/2021	Largemouth Bass	14,130	1	
06/17/2021	Hybrid Striped Bass	48,483	1.3	
06/17/2021	Sauger	3,936	1.7	
08/19/2021	Hybrid Striped Bass	16,530	4	
09/30/2021	Largemouth Bass	6,000	5-7	
10/01/2021	Blue Catfish	21,186	5.3	
10/07/2021	Redear Sunfish	88,086	1.1	
10/14/2021	Redear Sunfish	70,587	1.2	
10/20/2021	Largemouth Bass	6,842	8.3	

10/27/2021	White Crappie	5,000	3-4
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**Additional Site Information:**

**AREA:** 24,580 Acres; maximum depth 35 feet; average depth 11 feet.

**WATERCRAFT:** No outboard motor size limit. Eleven boat ramps are located at various recreational areas around the lake. In addition, there are three boat ramps on the Kaskaskia River, one just above and two below the reservoir.

**FISHING REGULATIONS:** Largemouth or smallmouth bass, 14" minimum length limit, 6 fish per day. White, black, or hybrid crappie, 10" minimum length limit, 15 fish per day. Sauger, walleye, or hybrid, 14" minimum length limit, 6 fish/day. Visit the [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org) website for more information.

**AMENITIES:** Carlyle Lake offers several camping facilities as well as cottages. Three full service marinas are located around the lake. See the ifishillinois website for more information.

**CARLYLE LAKE FISHING PROSPECTS FOR 2022**

**LARGEMOUTH BASS – 14" minimum length limit/6 fish per day creel**

The catch rate for largemouth bass was down a little in the 2021 survey. The catch rate was 22 per hour compared to 35 per hour in 2020. This lower catch rate could be the result of low water levels and windy conditions during the 2021 survey. However the largemouth bass numbers still appear lower than we would like. Many of the fish collected were in the smaller size classes. Seventeen percent of the stock sized fish collected were over 15 inches and four percent were over 18 inches. The largemouth bass collected were in excellent condition due to an abundant shad population. The smaller size classes of fish should grow quickly and provide improved numbers of quality sized fish in the coming years. Stable high water levels throughout the spawning and recruitment period appears to be a primary factor in the improvement of the largemouth bass numbers. Angling opportunities for largemouth bass during 2022 should be fair/good.

**WHITE BASS**

White bass numbers are down from the previous survey. Catch rate for white bass was 28 per hour compared to 67 per hour in 2020. The lower catch rate for white bass may also be a result of the poor conditions during the 2021 survey. Multiple year classes were collected in 2021 including young of the year, indicating a successful spawning effort. There are plenty of quality sized fish in the population with 64 percent of the stock sized fish over 12 inches. These fish should provide a good fishing opportunity. The fish are in good condition with thirteen inch fish averaging over a pound in weight. I would expect good white bass fishing in 2022 as these fish continue to feed and grow.

### **CRAPPIE –10 inch minimum length limit/15 fish per day creel**

The crappie population in Carlyle Lake remains very good. The catch rate has increased from the previous survey. The combined catch rate of white and black crappie was 39 fish per hour of electrofishing compared to 30 fish per hour in 2020. Twenty five percent of the stock sized white crappie were over the minimum length limit of 10 inches and 48 percent of the black crappie were over 10 inches. This shows a high percent of quality sized fish present. A good number of young of the year crappie were collected in the 2021 survey. This should help ensure the quality of the crappie population in coming years. Crappie fishing should be very good in 2022 with very good numbers of quality sized fish and good numbers of smaller fish.

### **CHANNEL CATFISH**

The channel catfish population is very consistent in Carlyle Lake. Catches of channel catfish in the fall population survey were good with 7 channel catfish collected per hour. This is very similar to the numbers collected in the past 5 surveys. There is still an abundance of large fish in the population that should provide angling opportunities for quality size fish. Catfish fishing should be good in Carlyle Lake in 2022.

### **BLUEGILL**

The bluegill population at Carlyle remains fair. Catch rates during the fall survey in 2021 were lower than the previous survey with 141 fish collected per hour of electrofishing compared to 328 fish per hour in 2020. There is a good number of fish in the population reaching 6 inches but very few over 7 inches. These fish should provide decent angling opportunities in the upcoming year. Bluegill fishing should be fair in Carlyle Lake in 2022.