



Rend Lake

2021 Fisheries Fact Sheet

Rend Lake was completed in 1971 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The lake was formed by constructing a 2 mile long dam across the Big Muddy River floodplain.

Location – Rend Lake is located in Franklin and Jefferson counties along IL Interstate 57 approximately 15 miles south of Mt. Vernon just northwest of Benton.

Area – At normal pool (405.0 feet), Rend Lake has a surface area of 20,633 acres, a maximum depth of 35 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake is thirteen miles long and three miles wide, and has 162 miles of shoreline. It is the second largest impoundment in Illinois.

Status of the Sport Fishery – There are more than 38 species of fish in Rend Lake. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries of some of the more popular sport fisheries below are based on the results of the most recent fall population survey.

Largemouth Bass – Bass fishing at Rend Lake should be good in 2021. During the 2020 survey, bass were collected at a rate of 136 fish/hr which represents a 50% increase from the 2019 rate of 67 fish/hr. The average catch rate during the last 5 surveys is 70 fish/hr. Currently 28% of the bass population exceeds the 14-inch minimum length limit, 13% are greater than 15 inches, and 4% are over 18 inches. No spotted bass were collected in the 2020 survey.

The main problem with largemouth bass in Rend Lake appears to be reproduction. Reproduction is dependent on spring water levels which can vary dramatically at Rend Lake. This results in the need for an annual supplemental LMB stocking to offset poor reproduction years. Almost 426,000 bass fingerlings have been stocked in Rend Lake in the last ten years including 81,476 bass fingerlings (3-6 inches) in 2020. It appears that the 2018 and 2019 LMB year classes are above average and should enter the 14-inch creel in the next 1-2 years.

Crappie – The fishing prospects for crappie remain excellent for the coming year. The 2020 catch rate for crappie (71 fish/net) was just below the five year average catch rate of 73 fish/net. Thirty-percent of the crappie collected during the netting survey were over 10 inches and another 10% were between 9-10 inches. Only 3% of the crappie collected during the netting survey were over 12 inches and no crappie over 15 inches were collected in the electrofishing or netting surveys. The small percentage of crappie over 12 inches and lack of crappie over 15 inches suggests that crappie harvest is high. Eighty-two percent of the crappie collected during the netting survey were white crappie.

Bluegill - Bluegill will be abundant in the coming year with most keepers 6.5"- 8" in length and averaging 1/3 lb or less. A few bluegill over 8 inches were collected during the survey.

Catfish - The 2020 catch rate for channel catfish was 18 fish/hr which was just above the five year average catch rate of 16 fish/hr. In the coming year channel catfish from 1–3 lbs should be abundant with larger fish up to 6 lbs common. Twenty-six flathead catfish were collected during the survey and ranged from 5-28 inches in length with the largest weighing 10 lbs.

Striped Bass Hybrids - Five hybrid striped bass (13-23 inches, 1-7 pounds) were collected in the 2020 survey. The number of hybrid striped bass remains low. Since the stocking program was revived in 2008 a total of 210,981 hybrid stripers have been stocked into Rend Lake.

White Bass – The 2020 catch rate for white bass was 8 fish/hr which was double the five year average catch rate of 4 fish/hr. Anglers can expect the catchable population in the coming year to be largely comprised of fish 12-16 inches and weighing 0.6-1.5 lbs.

Fishing Regulations: *Consult the current Illinois Fishing Regulations Booklet for more detailed information.

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted Bass	6	14”
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie	25 daily, not more than 10 exceeding 10”	
White, Yellow, or Hybrid Striped Bass	20 daily, not more than 3 exceeding 17”	
Channel Catfish	None	None

Additional Contacts: Rend Lake U.S Army Corps of Engineers 618/724-2493

Rend Lake Marina 618/724-7651

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Fish Attractors – for a map showing types and locations of fish habitat added to Rend Lake please visit the following website: visitrendlake.com