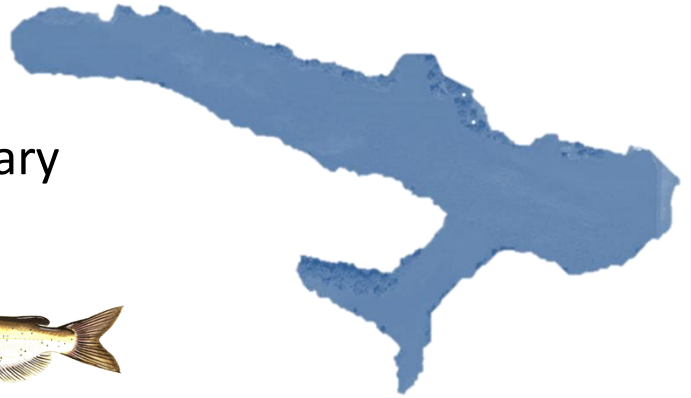


IDNR – Fisheries

2018 Lake Status Summary

Mt. Sterling Lake



Location: 1.5 miles north of Mt. Sterling off of Route 99

Area: 26.1 acres

Lake history and characteristics: Mt. Sterling Lake is an artificial impoundment constructed in 1935 for use as a city water reservoir. A complete rehabilitation of the lake occurred in 1983 following a partial winter kill. The lake is no longer used as a water supply and has been developed as a recreational area. The lake has a maximum depth of approximately 20 feet with an average depth of approximately 9 ft. the shoreline is 1.7 miles long. It has a large watershed, which contributes to a siltation problem. The fish population is currently recovering from a partial winter kill that occurred in 2013/14. The City of Mt. Sterling and the IDNR Hatchery System has introduced supplemental stock of redear sunfish, redear sunfish x bluegill hybrid, largemouth bass, and channel catfish to facilitate the recovery of the fish population.

Largemouth bass: The largemouth bass population is starting to rebound following the winter fish kill in 2013/14 and restocking by the city. We collected 158 bass/hr electrofishing in the 2017 survey, which is within the management goal for the lake. We observed many fish under 10", which were most likely the year class that was stocked in 2016. We surveyed a very small number of larger fish, unlike the 2016 survey where we collected more fish over 12" and over 16". The population structure is currently skewed towards smaller fish, but should stabilize over the next few years and produce a quality bass fishery. The current bass regulation is a protected slot, no possession of fish measuring between 12-15" and a creel limit of 6 bass/day. Anglers are encouraged to practice catch and release of the larger breeder bass for the next few years and allow them to spawn and add to the establishing population. Anglers can catch largemouth bass off of points, deadfalls, and stickups in the warmer months of the year with plastic worms, jigs, spinners, crank baits, minnows, crayfish and worms.

Bluegill/Redear: Bluegill catch rates were below the management goal of >200/hr of electrofishing (89/hr in 2017), but were an improvement over 2016, which resulted in only 25 bluegill/hr electrofishing. This population is still recovering following the winter kill in 2013/14. The bluegill are however growing at a fast rate and are reaching harvestable sizes quickly. Twenty-three percent of the population measured over 7" in the 2017 survey. While bluegill numbers are lower than desired, there are other sunfish species within the population, including bluegill/redear sunfish hybrids and green sunfish. Only two redear sunfish were collected in the 2017 survey. Redear fingerlings were stocked by the IDNR hatchery system in October 2016. The fingerling fish should grow quickly and recruit into the catchable population, unless predation pressure by the 8-10" largemouth bass year class was too high. Anglers can catch bluegill on their spawning beds in the spring or near shoreline cover year round with worms, crickets, or night crawlers.

Channel catfish: We collected 34 channel catfish during the 2017 survey ranging from 15 – 18". These fish are a result of supplemental stocking by the city. Average body condition of these channel catfish was very good ($W_r = 105$). The supplemental stocking of channel catfish by the city should provide excellent catfish angling opportunities. Catfish are regulated with a 6 fish/day creel limit. Anglers can catch channel catfish near deadfalls and stickups in the warmer months throughout the lake using bottom fishing techniques with cut bait, shrimp, chicken livers or night crawlers.

Fishing Regulations: see the Fishing Regulation Booklet or IFISHILLINOIS.org for updates

2 pole and line fishing only - each pole must not have more than 2 hooks or lures attached while fishing.

Largemouth bass – protected slot, no possession of bass measuring between 12-15”, 6 bass/day creel limit.

Channel catfish – creel limit of 6 per day.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	Management Objectives
Largemouth Bass					
% >12"			59	8	30-50
% >15"			24	4	10-22
% >18"			3	3	5-10
condition			96	95	90-110
fish/hr EF			104	158	>100
Bluegill					
% >6"			41	52	30-50
% >7"			32	23	10-20
% >8"			5	4	5-10
condition			106	105	90-110
fish/hr EF			25	89	>200
Channel Catfish					
% >16"			0	62	50-60
% >18"			0	3	10-20
% >20"			0	0	5-15
condition			106	105	90-100
fish/hr EF			35	41	10-20

Aquatic vegetation and/or chemical treatment: none

Fisheries Management Activities Completed:

-conducted a summer electrofishing population survey
6/8/17

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