



SOUTH SPRING LAKE

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION: South Spring Lake is located 6 miles northwest of the town of Manito in Mason County.

DESCRIPTION : In 1978, Spring Lake was divided into two distinct waters for the purpose of capital improvement and the restructuring of the fish population. Prior to 1916, Spring Lake was part of the Illinois River system as a lateral freshwater marsh. In 1916, it was separated from the river by a high levee and has remained a separate body of water. From 1916 until 1981, the quality of the fishery habitat and the fish population declined due to rough fish populations such as carp and bullheads. South Spring Lake was rehabilitated in 1986 to remove an undesirable carp-gizzard shad fish population. As a result of the rehabilitation, an excellent fish population resulted and the water clarity improved and aquatic plants flourished. South Spring Lake receives 103 acre feet of recharge daily from springs and seeps. Spring Lake currently has a 25 horsepower limit for outboard motors. It has a 60% coverage of aquatic vegetation after April and until November of each year.

Status of the Sport Fishery: In 2017 the boat navigation area was still impacted by the growth of white water lily and lotus as well as Eurasian milfoil from June until the lake closed for regular duck season. Sportfish growth and condition have also been tremendously impacted by the dense growth of Eurasian milfoil in the past. Only limited aquatic weed treatments were possible in 2017 in the Pike hole to the boat ramp access due to manpower and budget priorities. The aquatic macrophytes at South Spring Lake were composed of large areas of lily, lotus and Eurasian milfoil as well as a new and expanding infestation of curlyleaf pondweed.

Largemouth Bass: There has been much concern on the part of bass fishermen that the largemouth bass population structure was declining on South Spring Lake. In 2014 and 2015 we noted in the fall sample that some of our quality indices were improving for largemouth bass. However in 2016 and 2017 indices were again in decline. The 2017 fall electrofishing survey revealed a largemouth bass population that was concentrated from 2.8 to 16 inches in length. The percentage of bass over 18 inches was 2. The body condition was average with an average value of 88. Good year classes of bass have been produced at South Spring Lake for 4 out of the past 8 years. In 2018 a new harvest regulation will start for largemouth bass. The regulation is a protected slot from 12 to 18 inches with 3 fish per day harvest. This is an attempt to restructure to bass population to a larger percent of fish over 16 inches.

Northern Pike: The northern pike population was evaluated by 17 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices showed the majority of the population is from 20 to 28.7 inches in length and in poor body condition with a value of 80. Currently the northern pike stocking program has ended in Illinois and South Spring Lake has not received a stocking since 2015. A muskie stocking program maybe considered for South Spring Lake in the future as the northern pike population diminishes.

Bluegill: The bluegill population was evaluated by 234 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices are not good with 5 percent of the population over 7 inches and the average body condition value of 87.

Redear sunfish: The redear sunfish population was evaluated by 89 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices are not good with 0 percent of the population over 8 inches and the average body condition value of 88.

Black Crappie: The black crappie population was evaluated by 26 stock size fish from the 2017 surveys. The indices showed only 35 percent of the fish were over 9 inches and 8 percent were over 10 inches. The body condition was average rating at 89. In 2018 a new harvest regulation will start for crappie. This regulation is a harvest limit of 25 fish per day with only 10 fish over 10 inches allowed. This regulation will allow harvest pressure on the large percentage of crappie that are under 9 inches in length.

Channel Catfish: The channel catfish population was surveyed by just 3 fish in 2017. The annual stocking of channel catfish provides a population that many Spring Lake anglers target from the shoreline. An annual stocking of 9,000 nonvulnerable size fish is anticipated.

Other Fish Species: The following species have been historically collected in limited numbers: warmouth sunfish, white crappie, gizzard shad, yellow bass, common carp, brown bullhead, black bullhead, yellow bullhead, grass pike, spotted gar and green sunfish.

Fishing Regulations:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Size Limit</u>	<u>Creel Limit</u>
Large or Smallmouth Bass	12" to 18" protected slot	3 fish/day
Muskie	42" minimum size	1 fish/day
Channel catfish	None	6 fish/day
White, Black, Hybrid Crappie	No more than 10 fish greater than or equal to 10 inches	25 fish/day

All fish 2 Pole and line fishing only.

Recreational Use Restriction: All live bait greater than 8 inches must be rigged with a quick set rig. Waterfowl Refuge or Hunting Area.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Spring Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area: (309) 968-7135

IDNR Fisheries County Fish Biologist: (309) 446-9143.

Illinois Fishing Information booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/>