



# SPRING LAKE

## McDonough County

### FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

#### **LOCATION:**

Spring Lake is located approximately 2 miles northwest of Macomb in McDonough County with access off of County Highway 20.

#### **DESCRIPTION :**

Spring Lake is a medium sized watershed impoundment owned by the City of Macomb as their water supply reservoir. The lake is managed for fishing by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

The original lake was constructed in 1927 by the damming of Spring Creek. In 1969, a new and larger dam was constructed to form a reservoir of 277 acres. Currently, Spring Lake has a size of 244 acres, maximum depth of 32 feet, a shoreline of 6.1 miles and a centerline of 2.2 miles. A boat ramp and parking area is located at the east end of the lake. Other facilities provided at the Spring Lake Park include: camping, concessionaire, lodging, boat rental, hiking trails and picnic areas.

#### **MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:**

Spring Lake and its sport fishery are evaluated annually by spring trapnetting and electrofishing which direct fish stockings, fishing regulations and management.

#### **Largemouth Bass:**

In 2020, only fall D.C. electrofishing was used to survey the fish population. The largemouth bass population was evaluated by 196 bass from electrofishing.

The largemouth bass population appears to be defined by a high percentage of fish from 4 to 20 inches in length with good average Relative weights.

The 5 year averages from 2012 to 2016 were PSD of 61, RSD15 of 33, RSD16 of 23, and RSD18 of 10. And a 5 year average CPUE .9 fish per minute over 8 inches with pulse D.C. electrofishing.

The 2020 electrofishing survey indicated a size structure that was at a PSD of 79, RSD15 of 47, RSD16 of 31 and the RSD18 of 16. The average body condition was at a Wr of 103. These are all extremely good indices and a collection rate of 1.6 fish per minute over 8 inches in length. The current bass population is present in a moderate density of fast growing fish.

This is a very good largemouth bass population!

#### **Bluegill:**

The bluegill population was sampled by 38 fish in fall electrofishing survey. The current bluegill population is rated as average with the larger fish up to 7.5 inches in length. This population is of moderate density and in good body condition with a Wr average of 100. The competition with the gizzard shad and carp have not greatly reduced the bluegill condition and growth. Usually the bluegill condition will suffer more with these competitors.

**Yellow Bass:**

The yellow bass population was sampled by 4 fish from 6.7 to 8.3 inches in length. The current size structure can allow the harvest of yellow bass by anglers. Typically the yellow bass populations can be very cyclic from a high density of small fish to a low density of fish over 7 inches.

**White Crappie:**

The white crappie population has been very dense in recent years. The 5 year averages from 2015 to 2019 were an RSD10 of 35 and an RSD11 of 23. Only 45 black crappie have been sampled in 2015 thru 2020.

In 2020, the white crappie population was sampled by 224 fish in the fall electrofishing survey. The size structure was lower with only 10% of the collected fish over 10 inches and 7% over 11 inches in length. I believe this lower size structure in the 2020 survey is primarily due to the use of electrofishing data only, without the spring trapnet data to reveal the larger part of the white crappie population present in Spring Lake. The average WR value of 93 was also good.

**Walleye:**

The walleye population was sampled by 4 fish in the fall electrofishing survey. The size range was from 5.5 to 18.9 inches in length. The body condition was good with a Wr value of 100. And fish from both the 2020 and 2018 stockings were sampled. The 2018 stocking appears to be growing well and had reached 17 to 19 inches in length. In 2017, the walleye regulation was increased to an 18 inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily harvest limit. The spring trapnets, fall electrofishing and angler harvest reports should allow a continued evaluation of the walleye population.

**Muskie:**

A total of 2 muskie were sampled in the fall electrofishing survey in 2020. These fish ranged from 24 to 26 inches long. The body condition of these fish was very good at an average Wr of 97. A low density population, of quality size muskie are present in Spring Lake. Jake Wolf Hatchery stocked 281 muskie at 10.75 inches in 2016, 279 fish at 12.5 inches in 2017, 281 fish at 12.5 inches in 2018, 281 fish at 13.5 inches in 2019 and no muskie were stocked in 2020. An annual stocking is now scheduled to maintain a low density of healthy muskie. In 2017, the muskie harvest regulation was changed from the statewide 1 fish daily harvest at a 36 inch minimum size, to a 42 inch minimum and 1 fish per day harvest limit. The goal of the new regulation is to protect the fish for at least 1 more year from angler harvest.

**Channel Catfish:**

The channel catfish population was sampled by 17 fish in the fall electrofishing survey. The current channel catfish population is rated as excellent with the larger fish up to 30 inches in length! This population is of high density and in good body condition. The fish from 9 to 18 inches have Wr values in the 80's, while fish over 20 inches have Wr values over 100. No annual stocking of non-vulnerable channel catfish has occurred in Spring Lake. A natural reproducing population is well established.

**Blue Catfish:**

In 2018, the stocking of 5,976 blue catfish at 5.9 inches occurred in Spring Lake! The IDNR Little Grassy Hatchery began production in 2018 using brood fish obtained from Powerton Lake and the Mississippi River near Grafton. It will be exciting to evaluate this introduction. In 2020, no blue catfish were collected in the fall electrofishing survey, but anglers did report catching them. In 2020, Little Grassy hatchery stocked an additional 2,490 blue catfish at 4.8 inches on 10/8/2020.

A natural reproducing population has been established in Canton Lake with a 1 time stocking of non-vulnerable blue catfish at a rate of 20 per surface acre.

**Hybrid Striped Bass:**

In 2020, 3 hybrid striped bass were sampled in the fall electrofishing survey. They ranged in size from 9 to 13 inches in length. The average body condition was low for these younger fish at a Wr of 84. A low density population of hybrid striped bass up to trophy size will be available in Spring Lake. Competition

from the dense yellow bass and crappie populations for the appropriate size food will be the biggest challenge for the annual stocking of hybrid striped bass in Spring Lake.

**Fishing Regulations:**

All Fish - 2 pole and line fishing only.

Walleye, Sauger, or Hybrid Walleye: - 18 inch minimum length limit, 3 Fish Daily Harvest Limit.

Muskie: - 42 inch minimum and 1 fish per day harvest limit.

Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass: - 15 inch minimum length limit with 3 fish daily harvest limit.

Channel or Blue Catfish: - 6 Fish daily harvest limit.

Striped, White or Hybrid Striped Bass: - 17 inch minimum size limit with 3 fish daily harvest limit.

Recreational Use Restrictions:

- All live bait greater than 8 inches must be rigged with a quick set rig.

-No horsepower limit with a “no wake” restriction.

-Swimming is not permitted

**CONTACT INFORMATION –** Spring Lake Park: (309) 833-2052.

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

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