



INDEPENDENCE GROVE LAKE

LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Located in central Lake County near Libertyville. At corner of Buckley Road (Route 137) and Milwaukee Avenue (Route 21), go east on Buckley Road to preserve entrance. Lake is within sight of parking lots. A search of “Independence Grove Forest Preserve” will take you to the main entrance. There is parking on north and side of the lake.

DESCRIPTION – Independence Grove Lake, formerly known as Liberty Pits, was filled with water in 2000. The Lake County Forest Preserve District acquired the area in the early 1990's and opened the facility once concessions, picnic areas, and a swimming beach were completed. Rental boats with electric motors are available through seasonal concessions. No outside boats, canoes or kayaks are allowed. No fish cleaning facilities are available. This is a “Catch and Release Only” lake for all species. Independence Grove Lake is 110 acres; maximum depth is 50 feet, average depth is 7.5 feet and shoreline length is 4.3 miles. Shore fishing access is excellent and many amenities are available at the preserve. A parking fee is required for non-Lake County residents.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: Periodic fish surveys are undertaken to track the fishery relative to “Catch and Release” recreational fishing. Very little aquatic plant “management” takes place in the lake, most of it occurs near the swim and boat rental areas. Northern Pike have been stocked by IDNR, most recently in 2020 and 2021. A Spring Electrofishing Survey was conducted on May 23rd, 2023.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – The lake is managed as a no harvest “natural” system. Largemouth Bass and Bluegill are abundant. Below is a brief description of catchable game species in this water body.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – In 2023, 121 Bass were collected in one hour of DC electrofishing. Fish ranged from 8.1 to 19.5 inches and weighed up to 3.6 lbs. Fifty-seven were longer than 12 inches, 26% exceeded 14 inches, 16% exceeded 15 inches, only one fish was longer than 18 inches. While no monsters were collected in the most recent survey, a 6.2-pound Bass was collected in the 2017 survey. Easy access to shore fishing at this lake provides an opportunity at catching high numbers of Largemouth if you’re willing to do some walking!

BLUEGILL – In 2023, we collected 76 Bluegill in a 20-minute sub-sample of this species. This is well above the management goal of 120 fish per hour. Twenty-two percent of the Bluegills collected were longer than six inches. The largest Bluegill was 7.7 inches. Bluegill abundance was higher than in the 2019 survey. Size structure was about the same as the 2019 survey, with just a few larger (over seven inch) fish being collected in 2019. A more diverse predator base and/or some “human predation” would help reduce abundance and increase panfish growth rates.

BLACK CRAPPIE – Black Crappie catch was higher in 2023 than it was in the 2017 or 2019 surveys. Thirty-one Crappie were collected in our most recent survey. Catch rates in the previous surveys were 20 and 21 fish respectively. Over half the catch was longer than nine inches. The largest Crappie was 13.6 inches long.

FISHING REGULATIONS

Catch and Release Only (All Species)

No outside boats allowed - Rentals available at Concessionaire.

No live bait (minnows, shiners, etc)

Independence Grove Catch Summary – 60 minutes DC electrofishing – 5/23/23

Species	Number Collected	% of Catch	Length (Inches)			Weight (pounds)	
			Min	Max	Avg.	Min	Max
Largemouth Bass	121	51.7	8.11	19.45	12.76	0.19	3.63
Bluegill	76	32.5	1.57	7.72	4.71	0.05	0.30
Black Crappie	31	13.2	3.15	11.61	5.86	0.02	0.71
Common Carp	2	0.9	24.53	30.87	27.70	6.76	6.76
White Sucker	1	0.4	12.72	12.72	12.72	0.85	0.85
Northern Pike	1	0.4	27.24	27.24	27.24	4.39	4.39
Channel Catfish	1	0.4	22.28	22.28	22.28		
Yellow Perch	1	0.4	7.13	7.13	7.13	0.18	0.18
Grand Total	234						

CONTACT INFORMATION –

-Lake County Forest Preserve District, General Office: 847-367-6640

<https://www.lcfd.org/things-to-do/recreation/fishing/>

-IDNR District Fisheries Biologist: 815-675-2386 ext. 214

-For general information on fishing in Illinois visit the IDNR Fisheries Division at:

www.ifishillinois.org AND purchase your fishing license online at: www.dnr.illinois.gov

Independence Grove Lake Map

