



Willow Lake 2020 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Willow Lake is located on the west side of North Aurora. From Randall Road, head east on Dogwood Drive, then turn south (right) on N. Juniper Drive. Park on the street at Willow Lake Park.

DESCRIPTION – Willow Lake is a 3 acre dug retention pond. The lake is owned and maintained by the Fox Valley Park District (FVPD) as a community park in a residential setting. Flow through from adjacent storm sewers help keep this lake from serious winter kill. The shoreline is mowed in several areas to allow access for shore fishing and a path encircles the lake. A playground is located at the adjacent park. See the reverse side for an aerial photo. Maximum depth is 12.5 feet.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: The FVPD has entered into a cooperative management agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to facilitate fisheries management activities. Site specific regulations apply (Six fish daily creel on channel catfish and a three fish, 15 inch minimum limit on largemouth bass). A 15-minute electrofishing survey took place on September 16th, 2020. An IDNR channel catfish stocking program (600 four-inch catfish every other year) should offer great fishing for this species in the future.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – Abundant largemouth bass and bluegill should offer anglers plenty of action in this residential park. Easy access at Willow Lake Park makes the Lake a family friendly fishing location with the chance at catching some nice fish!

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Largemouth bass were very abundant and caught at a rate of 224 fish per hour (Catch rate was 196 fish per hour in 2016). We consider anything over 60 fish per hour to be a healthy abundance measure. The average bass was 10.3 inches long, but length ranged from 2.3 to 19.3 inches. The heaviest bass weighed 3.9 pounds. Thirty percent of the catch was over twelve inches in length and 13% were over the legal length limit (15 inches). Multiple sizes (year classes) indicate successful reproduction in this lake and plenty of small fish were observed. Abundant forage species (bluegill, gizzard shad and golden shiner) keep the bass in this lake fat and healthy.

BLUEGILL – While not as abundant as they were in the previous survey, Bluegill were captured at a rate of 188 fish per hour (328 fish per hour in 2016). The management goal for Bluegill is 120 fish per hour. Bluegill ranged in length from 2.1 to 7.3 inches, with an average size of 5.3 inches. Nineteen percent of the catch was longer than six inches.

CHANNEL CATFISH – No Channel Catfish were captured in this survey. This pond is scheduled to receive Channel Catfish every other year from the IDNR's catfish stocking program. Channel catfish are difficult to sample with our electrofishing gear as they are typically using deeper habitat than we sample. Since catfish stocking began in 2012, there should be plenty of large Channel in Willow Lake.

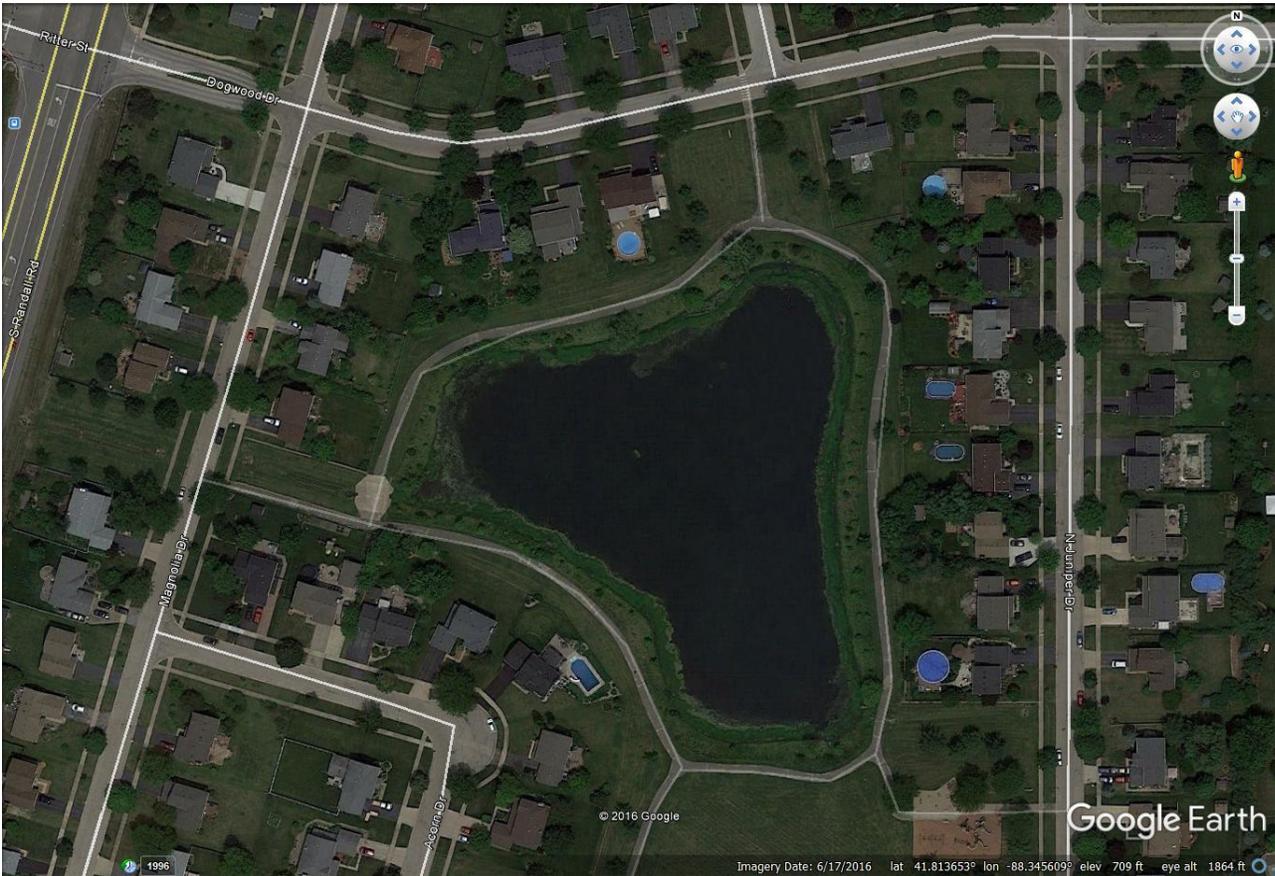
COMMON CARP – Common carp were not captured in the most recent survey, but they are present in Willow Lake. Carp tend to stir up sediments through their feeding behavior. This tends to increase turbidity which can lead to many other problems in small lakes. Carp should be removed from the lake whenever possible.

ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES: Black Crappie, Gizzard Shad, and Yellow Perch were also captured in 2020. Bluntnose Minnow, Common Carp, Golden Shiner, Green Sunfish and Yellow Bass have been caught in previous surveys of Willow Lake.

Summary of Catch - Willow Lake – 15 DC electrofishing – September 16th, 2020

Species	Number Collected	Length (Inches)			Weight (pounds)	
		Min	Max	Avg.	Min	Max
Largemouth Bass	55	2.3	19.3	10.3	0.1	3.9
Bluegill	47	2.1	7.3	5.3	0.0	0.2
Black Crappie	6	8.3	10.0	9.1	0.3	0.5
Gizzard Shad	1	10.9	10.9	10.9	0.5	0.5
Yellow Perch	1	8.7	8.7	8.7	0.3	0.3
Total # fish collected	110					

Aerial Photo of Willow Lake Park in North Aurora



For more information call the Fox Valley Park District at (630) 897-0516 or IDNR Fisheries at (815) 675-2386 ext. 214 or visit: <http://www.foxvalleyparkdistrict.org/lakes-and-fishing-2/>
 For general information on fishing in Illinois visit the IDNR Fisheries Division at: www.ifishillinois.org
 To purchase your fishing license go to: www.dnr.illinois.gov