



Ramsey Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Ramsey Lake was constructed in Ramsey Lake State Park near Ramsey, IL in 1949.

Location: Ramsey Lake is located in Fayette County, approximately 2 miles northwest of Ramsey Illinois.

Area: Ramsey Lake has a surface area of 46 acres, a maximum depth of 22 feet, and a mean depth of 8 feet. The lake has 2.8 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 1,500 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Ramsey Lake is comprised of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, and channel catfish. The lake also contains green sunfish and yellow bullhead. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries below are based on the results of the recent population survey and four-year trends in the population indices. *Ramsey Lake experienced a minor fish kill 18 days before the 2024 survey. This highly eutrophic lake typically supports a dense algae bloom in the summer months. The 2024 fish kill appears to have been caused by a lack of oxygen due to a plankton bloom crash after consecutive cloudy days at the end of the summer. This fish kill isn't expected to have lasting negative impacts and the fishery should rebound in the coming years.*

Largemouth Bass: Approximately 32% of the adult bass in the sample exceeded the 14" minimum length limit and the percentage of bass in the 15" – 20" size class increased from 10% in 2023 to 16% in 2024. Average body condition remained above the lake management plan target ($W_r=91$). Electrofishing catch rates remained high at 282 per hour, compared to 287 per hour in 2023. Recent surveys have collected many bass in the 9" – 14" size class and fish in this size class were again prevalent in 2024. However, abundant numbers of bass in this size range may be helping to promote the quality panfishery at Ramsey Lake. The bass population does not appear to have been negatively impacted by the 2024 fish kill and the overall size structure has shifted slightly towards an increased percentage of adult bass in the 15" – 18" size range. In 2025, most bass over the 14" minimum length limit should weight 1.3 – 4 pounds.

Bluegill: Bluegill appear to be the species most negatively impacted by the 2024 fish kill. Average body condition for the whole population fell below target and there was a noticeable shift in the size structure towards smaller bluegill. Despite this shift, all the population size structure indices met, or exceeded, their lake management plan targets and the survey results were consistent with four-year trends. In 2024, the percentage of adult bluegill in the 6" – 8" size class decreased from 46% percent in 2023 to 29%. This shift is primarily due to a decrease in the percentage of 7" bluegill. The RSD-7 decreased from 44% in 2023 to 31% in 2024, while the RSD-8 decreased from 12% to 10%. The electrofishing catch rate remained high, but it decreased to 205 per hour. This lake should provide good bluegill fishing in the coming year with some larger fish over 0.33 pounds. **Please practice selective harvest. Bluegill over 8" (especially males) are important for maintaining the size structure of the population. We ask that you consider returning those fish to water and harvest smaller bluegill instead.**

Redear: The redear sunfish population was also impacted by the 2024 fish kill. The most noticeable impact was the lack of 10" redear collected in the survey. However, approximately 31% of the adult redear collected were over 9" long, which is an increase from 9% in 2023. The redear population is expected to recover from the fish kill and redear fishing in 2025 should remain good with some of the larger fish weighing 0.33 – 0.5 pounds.

Crappie: The size structure of the black crappie population in 2024 remained good. Crappie over 9" accounted for 43% of the adult crappie in the sample and 10% of the crappie collected were 10" or longer. Crappie catch rates remained high at 30 fish per hour, but the average body condition decreased from $W_r=99$ in 2023 to $W_r=93$ in 2024. The percentage of fish in the 8" – 9" size range increased from 2023 to 2024, and these fish should contribute to the fishery in the coming year. In 2025, crappie larger than the 9" minimum length limit should be 0.40 pounds or larger.

Channel Catfish: Channel catfish are abundant in Ramsey Lake and should provide good fishing opportunities in the coming year. Approximately 85% of the channel catfish sampled were 16” or longer, and 70% were over 18”. Ramsey Lake is stocked annually with channel catfish and the lake provides many bank fishing opportunities. The best places to fish include the dam, the parking area near the boat ramp, the upper end of the lake, and in the backs of coves. Anglers should expect most catfish in 2025 to range from 1 – 3 pounds, with some larger fish weighing over 5 pounds.

Fishing Regulations: Pole and line fishing only; no more than two poles with two or less hooks or lures per pole.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	6	14”
Channel Catfish	6	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish Combined	25	None
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie Combined	10	9”

Additional Regulations: Operation of gas motors on the lake is prohibited, but they can be used for loading and unloading of boats. Electric trolling motors may be used on the lake.

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