



Sam Parr Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Sam Parr Lake was constructed in Sam Parr State Park in 1971 through the cooperative efforts of the Illinois Department of Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Location: Sam Parr Lake is located in Jasper County, approximately 3 miles northeast of Newton Illinois on Illinois Route 33.

Area: Sam Parr Lake has a surface area of 180 acres, a maximum depth of 28 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake has 9.5 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 3,950 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Sam Parr Lake is comprised of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, white crappie, and channel catfish. The lake is stocked annually with channel catfish, hybrid striped bass, and saugeye. The lake also contains common carp and gizzard shad. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries below are based on the results of the most recent population survey and four-year trends in the population indices.

Largemouth Bass: The size structure of the bass population in the 2024 survey was consistent with the size structure seen in 2023. The percentage of adult bass in the 12" – 15" size range remained below the lake management plan target. The electrofishing catch rate increased to 162 per hour and remained well above the minimum target. Approximately 29% of the adult bass in the sample were larger than the 14" minimum length limit. Approximately 24% of the adult bass collected were greater than 15" and 12% exceeded 18" in length. Average body condition ($W_r=95$) remained above the lake management plan target, and the body condition of bass over 16" was very good ($W_r=107$). The discrepancy in body condition between bass shorter than 16" and those longer than 16" is likely a result of the strong gizzard shad population in the lake. Nearly 87% of the gizzard shad collected in 2024 exceeded 7" in length and are not available as a prey source for smaller bass. In 2025, anglers can expect most bass over the minimum length limit to be 1.6 – 5 pounds.

Bluegill: Size structure of the bluegill population remained poor. Average body condition remained above the lake management plan target. Only 6% of the adult bluegill collected in 2024 were 7" or longer. The precipitous decline in the quality of the bluegill population coincided with the 2005 appearance of gizzard shad, and the bluegill population will likely always be hindered by the presence shad. Anglers can expect most fish to range from 5" – 7" and weigh 0.10 – 0.22 pounds.

Crappie: Sam Parr Lake contains both white and black crappies, and the size structures for both populations are poor. Average body condition was below the lake management plan minimum target for both species. In recent surveys, white crappie have become the more dominant species. Nearly 47% of the adult black crappie collected were in the 8" – 10" size range and only 4% exceeded 9". Approximately 72% of the adult white crappie were in the 5" – 8" size class, 13% were in the 8" – 10" size range, and 17% exceeded 9". Crappie fishing should remain fair/good in the coming year with many black and white crappie in the 7" – 9" range weighing 0.1 - 0.34 pounds, and a few larger white crappie exceeding 1 pound. **Small fish of both species will also be abundant, and harvest of these smaller fish is encouraged.**

Channel Catfish: Catfish remain relatively abundant in Sam Parr Lake and should provide good fishing opportunities in the coming year. Nearly 80% of adult catfish collected were 14” or longer and approximately 11% exceeded 18” long. Most fish in 2025 should range from 14” – 16” and weigh 0.79 – 1.2 pounds with a few larger fish over 4 pounds. This lake provides many bank fishing opportunities. The best places to fish include the riprap along the dam, the upper ends of the two main arms of the lake, along the tent camping shoreline, and in the backs of coves.

Saugeye: Saugeye fingerlings were first stocked in Sam Parr Lake in 2024. Approximately 11,900 fish were stocked at 1.6” long in May. No saugeye were collected in the annual fall survey, but spring surveys are planned to evaluate their recruitment. Saugeye are being stocked in Sam Parr Lake to provide an additional predatory fish to prey on the overabundant shad and crappie populations. **Catch and release is encouraged**, but saugeye are subject to the statewide 14” minimum length limit and a 6 fish daily harvest limit.

Hybrid Striped Bass: Hybrid striped bass fingerlings were first stocked in Sam Parr Lake in 2024. Approximately 900 fingerlings were stocked at 1.5” long in July. No hybrid striped bass were sampled in 2024, but spring surveys are planned for 2025 to sample the population. Hybrid striped bass are being stocked in Sam Parr Lake to prey on the overabundant shad population. **Catch and release is encouraged**, but hybrid striped bass are regulated by the statewide limits. There is no daily limit on hybrid striped bass less than 17”, but only 3 fish per day longer than 17” may be harvested.

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	
Saugeye (Walleye x Sauger Hybrids)	6	14”
Hybrid Striped Bass (White Bass x Striped Bass Hybrids)	No limit under 17”; 3 fish 17” and longer	

Additional Regulations: **Boats with outboard motors must operate at No-Wake/Idle Speed in all parts of the lake, regardless of motor size (no horsepower limit).** IDNR tournament permit applications must be submitted on ifishillinois.org.

Contacts: Sam Parr State Park 618/783-2661; IDNR Fisheries 618/393-6732

Updated 12/23/2024