



Centralia Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Centralia Lake was constructed in 1910 to serve as a water supply reservoir for the city of Centralia. Annual boat stickers and City/IDNR tournament permits are required.

Location: Centralia Lake is located in Marion County approximately 2 miles west and 5 miles south of Salem, Illinois.

Area: Centralia Lake has a surface area of 254 acres, a maximum depth of 23 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake has 12.9 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 4,480 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery: The sport fish population in Centralia Lake is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappies, and channel catfish. Other common species include redear sunfish, common carp, and yellow bullhead. 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 overall size structure of the bass population was good, but there was a slight downward shift in size structure. All the population metrics met their lake management plan targets. Approximately 50% of the adult bass collected in the 2024 survey were in the 8" – 12" size range, with an additional 30% in the 12" – 15" size range. The percentage of adult bass in the sample over the 15" minimum length limit decreased from 25% in 2023 to 20% in 2024. The catch rate increased and was two and a half times the minimum target at 150 fish per hour. Body condition remained above target, but it decreased from $Wr=94$ in 2023 to $Wr=92$ in 2024. Fishing prospects for the coming year should be good with most bass over the minimum length limit ranging from 15" – 20" in length and weighing between 1.8 – 5 pounds.

Bluegill: The size structure of the bluegill population continued to remain poor. The number of larger bluegill was well below optimal ($RSD-7 = 2$). Many bluegill between 5" – 7" were collected, and no bluegill over 7.5" were sampled. In 2025, anglers can expect to catch an abundance of bluegill 5" – 7" in length weighing approximately 0.2 pounds. Unfortunately, the bluegill population in this lake will likely always be hindered by the presence of gizzard shad.

Redear: The size structure of redear sunfish collected in 2024 remained good and the electrofishing catch rate was high at 85 per hour. However, average body condition remained below target at $Wr=86$. Approximately 22% of the adult redear were 9" or longer and 9% were 10" or longer. Expect most redear caught to be between 7" – 10" and 0.25 – 0.65 pounds, with some larger fish exceeding 10" and approaching 0.75 pounds. Redear fishing should be good in 2025.

Channel Catfish: As a result of recent stocking efforts, the channel catfish population density is improving. The current population exhibits good growth rates and body condition ($Wr=99$). Approximately 95% of the adult channel catfish collected in 2024 were over 16" long and 92% exceeded 18". Fishing in the coming year should be good with most fish ranging from 1 – 6 pounds and larger fish near 10 pounds.

Crappie: The size structure of the white crappie population continued to look good, while the size structure of the black crappie population remained poor. In 2024, 51% of the adult white crappie sampled were in the 8” – 10” size range and 34% were longer than 10”. Most black crappie were, again, in the 7” – 9” range and only a single fish over 10” in length was collected. Only 2% of the adult black crappie in the sample exceeded 9” in length, which is a decrease from 5% in 2023. Body condition for white crappie remained poor and below the lake management plan target and black crappie body condition was at the minimum target. Crappie fishing should be good in 2025. Anglers can expect to catch an abundance of black crappie in the 7” – 9” range weighing 0.2 – 0.4 pounds and white crappie from 7” – 12” weighing 0.15 – 0.85 pounds. Larger white crappie will be rare but should exceed 1 pound. **Harvest of crappie is highly encouraged.**

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	15”
Channel Catfish	6	None

Additional Regulations: City of Centralia boat and tournament permits are required and may be obtained at the City Clerk’s office at 101 S. Locust, Centralia. IDNR tournament applications can be submitted on ifishillinois.org.

Contacts: Centralia City Clerk’s office 618/533-7625; IDNR Fisheries 618/393-6732.

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