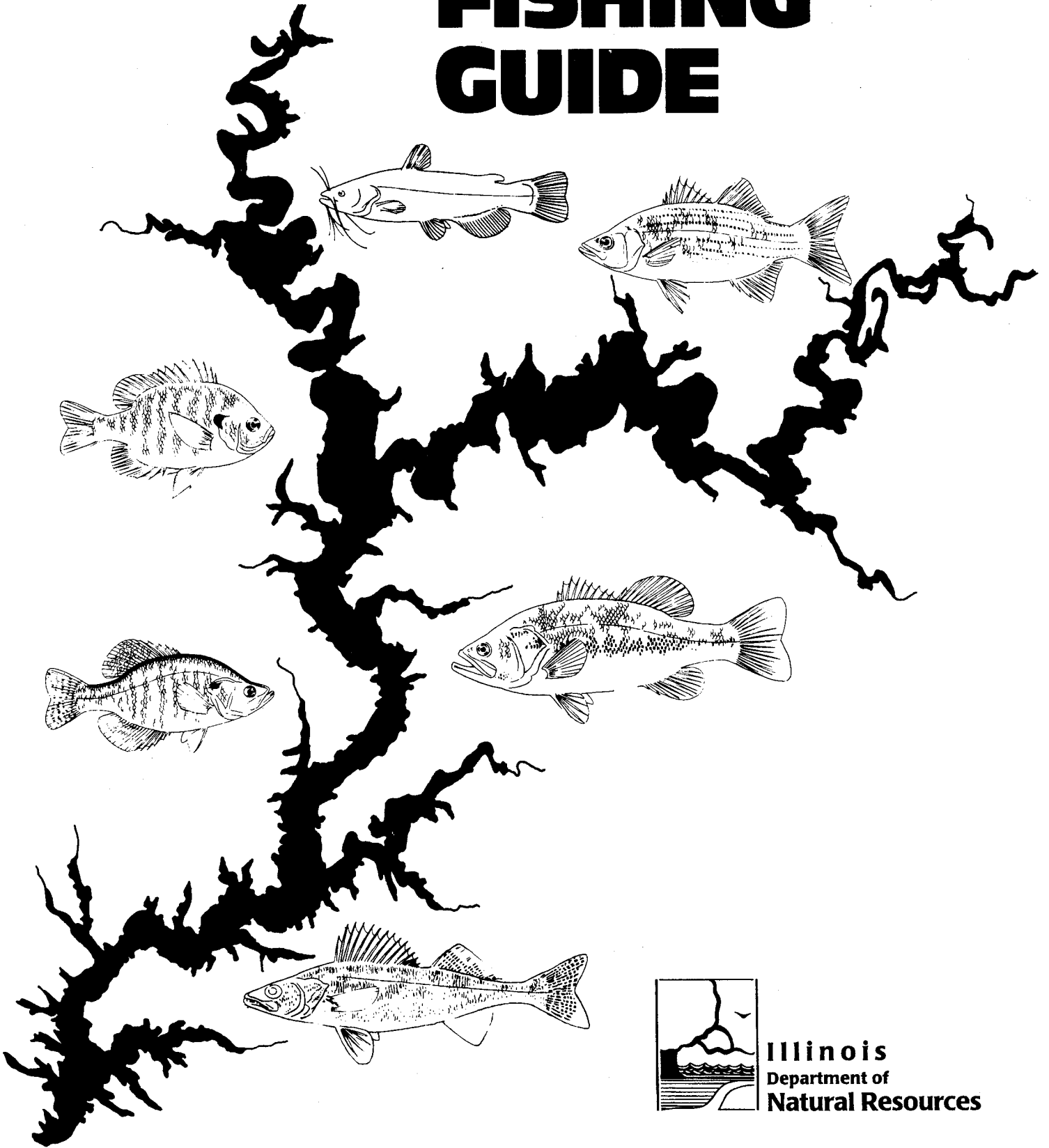
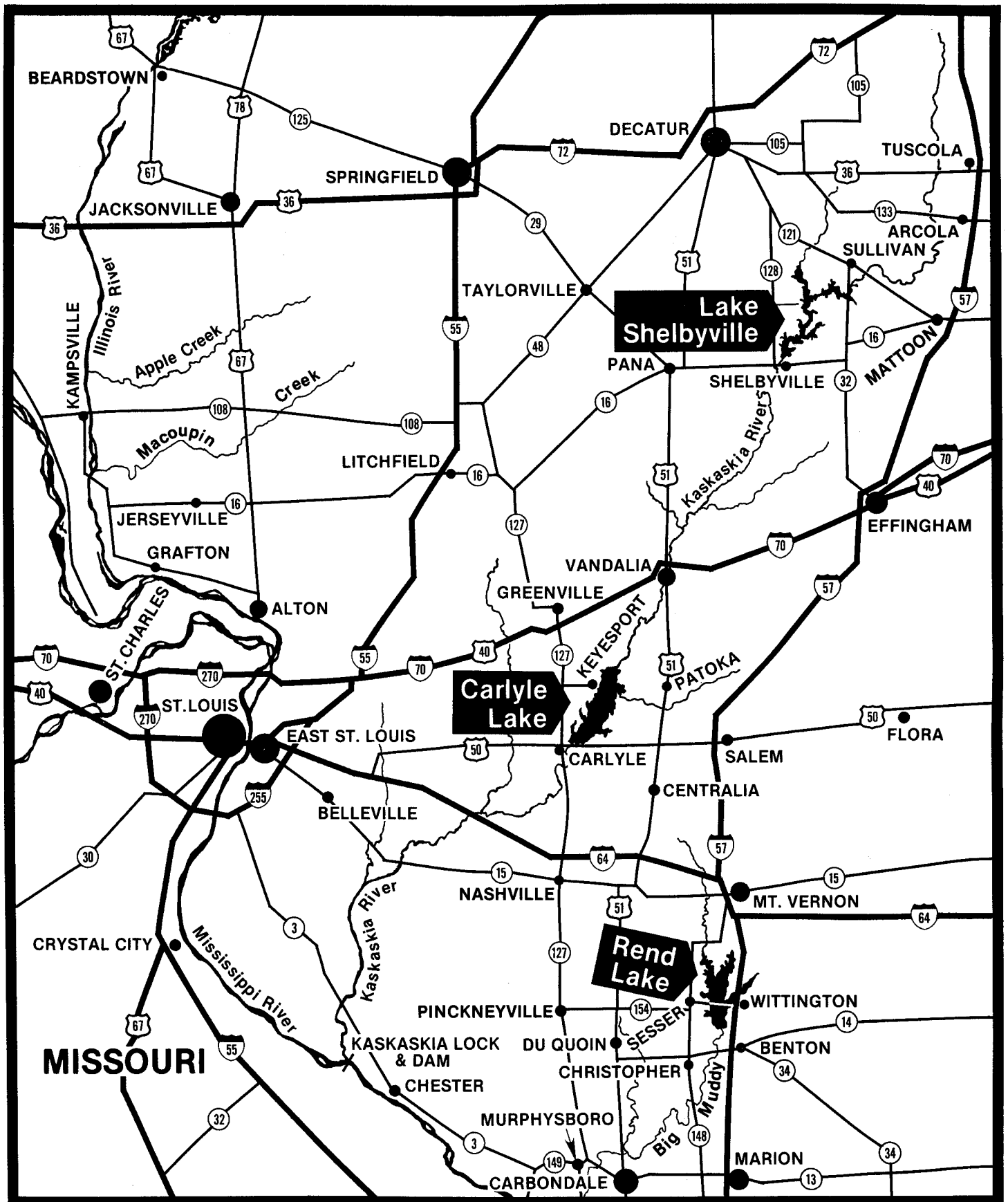


# LAKE SHELBYVILLE FISHING GUIDE



**Illinois**  
Department of  
Natural Resources

# LOCATION OF THE THREE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS RESERVOIRS IN ILLINOIS



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF FISHERIES

# LAKE SHELBYVILLE FISHING GUIDE

BY

LARRY B. CRUSE  
RESERVOIR FISHERY BIOLOGIST

AND

REVISED BY HARRY L. WIGHT  
RESERVOIRS PROGRAM MANAGER  
MARCH 1996

## INTRODUCTION

In one manner or another, man has probably fished since the beginning of time. Archaeological evidence from old village sites throughout the world indicates that the taking of fish was an integral part of early man's life, because fish were an important portion of his diet.

But within the last century, fishing has become a sport, a pleasurable activity, a means of relieving tension and a way to get away from one's congested technical world and back to Mother Nature. No longer is the pursuit of fish for food the main reason for fishing.

In Illinois one has the opportunity to fish many kinds of waters; ranging from the small artificial lakes to the large Corps of Engineer reservoirs, the small fast flowing smallmouth bass streams to the mighty Mississippi River, and the river bottomland lakes to Lake Michigan. One's choice of fish to catch is also as varied, ranging from carp, crappie, catfish and bass, to walleye, northern pike, trout and salmon.

Conversely to what one might believe, fishing is as good if not better than it was 30 to 50 years ago. Factors contributing towards more and better angling opportunities have been due primarily to: (1) the emphasis on eliminating pollution of lakes, rivers and streams; (2) improved and more diligent use of soil and water conservation techniques; (3) building of numerous water supply ponds, lakes, power and flood control reservoirs and (4) improved fish management techniques.

Illinois sport fisheries management is geared to produce "more and better fishing" throughout the State. As a result, many of our waters support excellent populations of sport fishes. However, we fre-

quently find, that even where there are good numbers of desirable size fish, they are not always caught in proportion to their abundance. So, it is for those people who are just beginning to fish or are unfamiliar with our waters that we try to provide some of the basic whats, wheres, and hows of sport fishing.

## LAKE DESCRIPTION

Lake Shelbyville, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineer reservoir, is located between Sullivan and Shelbyville in east-central Illinois. This picturesque, clear water lake was formed by damming the Kaskaskia River in 1970. The lake, which is situated between steep rolling bluffs, is 11,100 acres in size. The average depth is 18.9 feet and the maximum depth is 67 feet.

The basic shape of Lake Shelbyville is a lopsided Y, lying in a southwest-northeast direction, the upper arms being formed by the West Okaw and Kaskaskia Rivers. The 172-mile shoreline is quite irregular, forming numerous bays and coves. Maximum width is about one mile. The approximate length from the dam to the head of the lake is 20 miles. Two-thirds of the way up, the lake is spanned by the attractive columnar-piered Bruce-Findlay Bridge. The West Okaw Arm of the lake is transected by the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad which is also a very old and attractive structure. The Kaskaskia Arm is transected by the Coal Shaft Bridge which leads either to the Whitley Creek or Forrest W. "Bo" Wood Recreation Areas. Route 32 crosses the upper portion of the Kaskaskia Arm approximately 4 miles south of Sullivan.

Several attractive islands dot the lake north and east of the Bruce-Findlay Bridge. Besides

being excellent stops for a picnic or nature walk, the islands provide good fishing around the perimeters.

Along most of the shoreline in the lower  $\frac{2}{3}$ ds of the lake, the water depths quickly drop to 10-15 feet. Flooded ridges with good underwater cover are abundant throughout this portion of the lake. Extensive shallow flats, 3 to 8 feet deep, are found along Eagle Creek and Wolf Creek State Parks, Sand and Skull Creeks, the Findlay Marina Area, the junction of the Okaw-Kaskaskia Arms, northwest of the Wilborn Creek Recreation Area, Whitley Creek Recreation Area, and the upper portions of the Kaskaskia Arm east of the Fox Harbor Marina.

Small tributary streams that feed into the lake in addition to the West Okaw and Kaskaskia Rivers are: Sand, Wilborn, Lithia Springs, Skull, Whitley, Wolf and Coon Creeks. These creek areas offer some of the best crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, and bullhead fishing found on the lake.

Some timber was flooded in a number of coves along the shore of the lake to congregate the fish and help the fishermen fill their stringers. The only clearing done in these areas was a boatway, 100 feet wide.

With the maps included in this fishing guide, one can more quickly locate the old road beds that previously crossed the Kaskaskia-Okaw River basins. For the crappie fishermen, numerous fence rows of trees and brush were also left intact prior to filling the lake. Also, discarded Christmas trees, collected by volunteers are placed at various locations throughout the lake to provide habitat for young fishes. For the structure fisherman, Lake Shelbyville offers some of the best.

Lake Shelbyville becomes chemically and thermally stratified during the summer months, which is typical of most Illinois lakes. Generally from mid-June to mid-September, the dissolved oxygen becomes quite low or non-existent below the 20 foot level. Thus, summertime anglers should avoid fishing below this level as few fish will ever be caught.

At Lake Shelbyville, winter temperatures generally drop low enough to put a good ice cover over the entire lake. When it does, and the thickness of the ice approaches 6-8 inches, it is time to get out the ice fishing gear. Good catches of crappie and bluegill with an occasional largemouth bass, channel catfish, or white bass are made during this period. The tributary creek areas such as Wilborn, Whitley, Wolf and Sand Creeks have been the better fishing locations.

## **ACCESS AREA, SERVICE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

Many fine access areas, service and recreational facilities are available at Lake Shelbyville. Table I, found on the following page provides a quick reference to the various facilities found around the lake for each access area.

Located directly below the dam at Shelbyville is the Spillway Recreation Area. Besides offering some of the best fishing on the entire project area,

excellent day-use facilities are available for the fishermen's comfort and playground equipment for the children.

Directly northwest of the dam is the Shelbyville West Dam Recreation Area. It has a good launching ramp and is one of the best areas to catch white bass. There are also bathhouse facilities, a large swimming beach, and a fish cleaning station.

Proceeding 2.5 miles uplake, on the west side, are Coon Creek and Opossum Creek Recreation Areas. These two areas offer a good view of both the lake and dam. Opossum Creek has 84 Class A camping sites. Coon Creek offers 224 Class A sites, shower and laundry, and a swimming beach but it does not have picnic facilities for the general public. Coon Creek is the largest Corps of Engineers campground on the lake. Crappie, bluegill, channel catfish and largemouth bass provide the best fishing in the two bays that these areas encompass.

Set high over the lake, picturesque Lone Point Recreation Area has 94 Class A camping sites. A special site for group camping is also provided.

Eagle Creek State Park, located several miles north of Lone Point, has 159 Class B camping sites, of which 10 are reservable for group camping in a special group camping area. This 2,174-acre park has plenty of room to roam plus many fine picnic areas.

A recently constructed resort and conference center called The Inn at Eagle Creek is a welcome addition to the existing facilities at Lake Shelbyville. Nestled inside the scenic Eagle Creek State Park is a hotel with 130 luxurious rooms with balconies or patios. There are 10 large executive suites, each with a fireplace, entertainment lounge and meeting area. The guests have a choice of dining areas to suit their culinary needs. THE MAIN DINING ROOM offers breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. THE GRILL has casual dining in a relaxed atmosphere serving lunch, dinner, and cocktails. Amenities and sports activities include a health club complete with an inside pool, and exercise center. Outside activities offered are fishing, swimming, hiking trails, golf, tennis, hunting, archery, horseback riding, and cross country skiing depending on the season. The conference center will accommodate any gathering from 10 to 600 guests. A special conference pod is also available for private meetings. This facility has a 20x30 conference area with a fireplace surrounded by 8 guest rooms.

Findlay Marina is located two miles east of the town of Findlay. This marina offers complete services for the boaters and fishermen, including boat and motor rentals, gas and oil, bait and tackle, summer and winter boat dockage, and a fee launching ramp.

Wilborn Creek is located on the north side of the West Okaw Arm or two miles west of Kirksville. This is a very popular picnicking, swimming, boating and fishing area. The only camping permitted is for groups on a reservation basis.

The Forrest W. "Bo" Wood Recreation Area, formerly called the Sullivan Access Area, is the most popular camping spot around the lake. It has a good launching ramp for boaters and fishermen, 82 Class A camping sites and attractive picnic facilities.

On the south side of the Kaskaskia Arm of the lake and one mile west of Route 32, the Whitley Creek Recreation Area has the same facilities as the "Bo" Wood Area except for picnicking and electricity. This heavily wooded area has 84 Class A camping sites. A large swimming beach is located a half mile directly east of this access area, adjacent to Route 32.

Directly to the east of Route 32 on the north side of the Kaskaskia Arm is the Sullivan Marina which offers 180 sites. This marina offers the same facilities as the Findlay Marina.

Centrally located on the east side of the lake is Wolf Creek State Park. This 1,966-acre park has 378 tent and trailer camping sites, picnic areas, electricity, hiking and equestrian trails. Additional facilities are being constructed or planned. Sand Creek, which borders the entire southern part of the park is one of the finest fishing arms of the lake. Crappie, largemouth bass, channel catfish, bullheads, walleye and white bass are the principal species sought in this area.

**TABLE I**  
**LIST OF FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT LAKE SHELBYVILLE, ILLINOIS 1977**

RECREATION AREAS	Shelbyville Dam East Recreation Area	Spillway Recreation Area	Shelbyville Dam West Recreation Area	Opossum Creek Recreation Area	Coon Creek Recreation Area	Lone Point Recreation Area	Eagle Creek State Park & Resort	Wilborn Creek Recreation Area	Forrest W. "Bo" Wood Recreation Area	Whitley Creek Recreation Area	Wolf Creek State Park	Lithia Springs Recreation Area	West Okaw River Wildlife Area	Kaskaskia River Wildlife Area	Lithia Springs Marina	Sullivan Marina & Campground	Findlay Marina	Sullivan Recreation Area
Boat Ramp & Parking	o	o	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o
Picnic Tables & Grills	x	x	x	x	o	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o	-	o	o	o	x
Picnic Shelters	x	x	x	x	o	x	x	x	x	o	x	x	-	-	o	o	o	x
Toilets	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o	o	x	x	x	x
Water Supply	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o	o	x	x	x	x
Playground Equipment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	-	o
Swimming	o	o	x	o	x	o	x	x	o	o	x	x	-	-	o	o	-	x
Tent Camping	-	-	o	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	o	x	o	o
Trailer Camping	-	-	o	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	o	x	x	o
Electricity	-	-	-	x	x	x	x	-	x	o	x	x	-	o	-	x	o	o
Dump Station	-	-	-	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	-	o	o	x	o	o
Showers	o	-	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	-	o	o	x	-	x
Laundry	o	o	o	o	x	o	o	-	x	x	-	x	o	o	o	o	o	o
Boat Storage & Dockage	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	x	x	x	o
Boat & Motor Rental	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	x	x	x	o
Gas & Oil	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	x	x	x	o
Bait & Tackle	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	x	x	x	o
Groceries	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	o	o	o	o	o	x	x	x	o
Cafe or Short Orders	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	o	o	x	o	o	x	x	x	o
Fish Cleaning Station	o	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o	o	o	o	-	o
Telephone	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o	o	x	x	x	o
Equestrian Trail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	o	x	-	-	-	-	-	o	-
Hike-Nature Trail	-	-	-	o	x	x	x	-	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	o

x Available at Site

o Available nearby = less than three miles

- Not available

Lithia Springs Recreation Area is located on the lower east side of the lake directly east of Opossum Creek Recreation Area. In addition to the 124 Class

A tent and trailer sites, there is a swimming beach, picnic area and shelters, showers, laundry and launching ramp. Also located in this area is the Lithia Springs

Marina which offers a total package of goods and services, including a small grocery-gift store.

The Dam East Recreation Area is located directly north and east of the Corps of Engineer's Project Office and is a picnicking and viewing area. A visiting center which offers information to the public is also located here.

Electricity is only available at Coon Creek, Eagle Creek State Park, Forrest W. "Bo" Wood, Opossum Creek, Lone Point, Wolf Creek State Park, Lithia Springs, and Fox Harbor. Trailer sanitary dump stations are available at all camping areas except Wilborn Creek Recreation Area. Flush toilets are found at all camping areas except Eagle Creek. All marinas have marine dump stations.

Additional launching facilities (although not of the concrete type) for small boats or canoes are found both in the Okaw and Kaskaskia River Wildlife Management Areas. Since all of these launching sites are not indicated on the Lake Shelbyville Guide maps, it is recommended that a map of the same be obtained from the Wolf Creek State Park Office or by writing to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fisheries, Lincoln Tower Plaza, 524 S. 2nd St., Springfield, IL 62706. These areas are very popular with the early spring fishermen who are seeking the spawning runs of white bass or walleye. During the summer months, anglers fish these areas quite extensively for channel catfish and carp. The Okaw and Kaskaskia River Wildlife Management Areas are being managed to provide upland game hunting, waterfowl and deer hunting.

Additional camping is found at the following commercial campgrounds: Arrowhead and Swings Campgrounds both ½ mile northeast of Lone Point Recreation Area, JR's Trading Post north of Coon Creek Recreation Area, Robin Hood Woods and Lithia Resort, East of Shelbyville, the Horseshoe Campgrounds south of Shelbyville on the east side of the Kaskaskia River, and the Kaskaskia River Campgrounds located directly south of the Route 16 Bridge at Shelbyville. The Lithia Resort also has housekeeping units plus trailer sites with water, sewer and electric hookups.

Motels and hotels are available both in Sullivan and Shelbyville. Bait and tackle shops are located in all the towns surrounding the lake, and at or near the access areas and marinas.

## **REGULATIONS**

Since Lake Shelbyville is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reservoir, there are a number of federal regulations which must be observed. These regulations are posted on bulletin boards located at all recreation areas, or a copy of these regulations may be obtained by visiting or by writing to: Lake Shelbyville Management Office, RR #4 Box 128B, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Shelbyville, Illinois 62565.

All state boating, hunting, fishing and park regulations remain in full force where applicable and are posted on the same bulletin boards.

As on all large lakes, Lake Shelbyville can be-

come rough when the wind exceeds 15-20 m.p.h. All boaters should keep a close eye on the weather. Shallow areas and underwater hazards do exist in the upper arms of the lake and one should operate their craft accordingly. Depth maps are excellent guides but they cannot pinpoint floating hazards. Whether boating, fishing, hunting, swimming or camping, "Safety First", although an undefined rule, is the responsibility of each individual to insure that his trip is one of happy memories, rather than of tragedy. Common sense and courtesy should also guide everyone's actions. If each recreationist would follow these simple rules of outdoor etiquette, all trips would be more rewarding and enjoyable experiences . . . . .

## **ENTERTAINMENT**

Besides the camping, picnicking, swimming, power and sail boating, hunting, fishing, nature and equestrian trails, game fields and playground equipment, additional entertainment can be found around the area. Interpretive programs are also provided at several of the Corps of Engineer Recreation Areas. Campers or visitors who wish to attend these programs should check at the various informational booths or State Park and Corps of Engineers' headquarters for exact programs, locations, dates and times.

Not to be overlooked, for fine stage entertainment, is the well-known Little Theater in Sullivan. Popular stage, screen and TV personalities highlight each of the weekly stage productions.

Golfing is available to the public at the Timberline Course located immediately northwest of the Coal Shaft Bridge and at the Eagle Creek Resort. Additional information on local attractions and events can be obtained from the Shelby County Office of Tourism at (217) 774-2244.

## **YOU AND YOUR FISHING TRIP**

Fishing is a sport enjoyed by young and old, rich and poor alike. It is recognized as one of the most relaxing, peaceful and contemplative of all recreational activities. One can enjoy learning to be a good fisherman and still have time to savor Mother Nature's wonders. Fishing also provides the opportunity to rest and meditate away from pressures of the job . . . . . which is in itself therapy for body, mind and soul.

But to be really successful at fishing, one must put forth some effort to learn about fish and their habits, the types of gear and bait to use, and when, where and how to fish for various species. The so-called "lucky fisherman" isn't lucky at all. The individual has taken the time to learn the sport and, in the course of learning has become successful. A fisherman must learn to be observant, adaptable and determined if he wants to put fish in the frying pan consistently. Like the weather, fish can be changeable and it's up to the fisherman to change his ways.

## TIPS TO MAKE YOUR FISHING TRIP MORE ENJOYABLE AND SUCCESSFUL

1. Plan your trip. Be sure to check tackle and equipment prior to going afield; a forgotten raincoat, fouled spark plugs, or a dirty reel can spoil a fishing trip. Monofilament line should be changed yearly. Learn to tie the proper knots. An improperly tied knot can mean the loss of a plug or a nice fish. Also practice your casting before leaving on a fishing trip.
  2. On arrival at Lake Shelbyville, check with the local fishermen or bait and tackle shops regarding what species are being caught, what baits to use and where to fish. Bait shops are in the business to serve you, and a customer steered in the right direction is going to return.
  3. Fish for the species that are most abundant or those hitting best. Use the right baits for various species. A lake may have a large population of hungry catfish or fat bluegill, and one who uses only artificial lures may go home empty-handed. As the season progresses, one must also remember that what's hitting in April may not be in July or August.
  4. If you fail to catch fish in one spot using various baits and techniques, move to another area or habitat. Many species of fish such as crappie, largemouth bass, walleye and white bass will move back and forth between shallow and deep water or range from one area to another.
  5. As you become more knowledgeable and successful, share fishing tips or fishing holes.
  6. Be courteous and considerate of others. Don't crowd in on another's fishing spot. Don't create big wakes or run closely to or between other boats.
  7. Learn the lake regulations, fish and boating laws and follow them.
  8. When boating, follow proper boat operational techniques. Don't overload your boat. Do not run your craft at a high rate of speed near the shoreline and bank fishermen.
  9. Give assistance where needed. A friend in need is a friend indeed.
  10. Be careful. Use required safety equipment of reputable manufacture. Don't take chances. When moving, wear your life saving gear.
11. Do not litter, treat each area as if it were your own property.
  12. Watch the weather, when the lake becomes rough or a storm front is sighted, seek the protection of a marina or a sheltered cove.

## FISHES

The most popular sport fishes found in Lake Shelbyville are black and white crappie, white bass, largemouth bass, bluegill, black bullheads, channel catfish and walleye. The white bass and walleye, two species not normally found in mid-central Illinois waters, have really caught the fancy of the sport fishermen. These two species were initially stocked on an experimental basis by the Division of Fisheries personnel and now provide additional quality sport fishing.

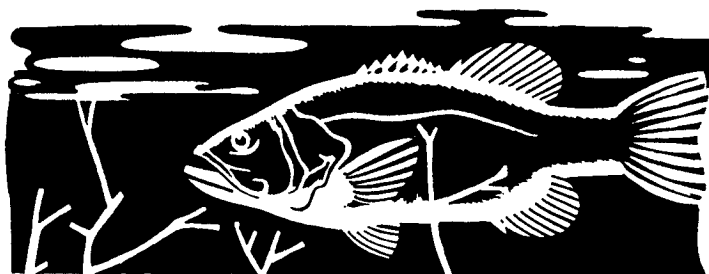
Other species occasionally caught by anglers are green sunfish, carp, bowfin, northern pike, flathead catfish, warmouth, smallmouth bass, and muskellunge.

For variety (and some of the entire area's best fishing), anglers should not pass up the sport provided in the spillway area below the dam. Over 24 different species have been caught from this area. Crappie, bullhead, carp, drum, white bass and channel catfish are the most frequently caught species. But occasionally one might also catch flathead catfish, buffalofishes, carpsuckers, yellow bass, suckers, gar, bowfin, American eel, walleye, or muskellunge. From late fall or early spring, the hardier anglers find this is a prime area to catch a limit of walleye. Table II will provide a general guide to some of the major areas which provide good fishing for various species. It is up to the individual angler to learn the specific spots within these designated areas. Only those species commonly caught in each area are indicated; although, many other species will be caught in the same locale.

## FISHING REGULATIONS

Anglers should familiarize themselves with current size and creel limits, particularly for largemouth bass, walleye and sauger, crappie and muskellunge.

If one is in doubt about the state fishing regulations, copies can be obtained where fishing licenses are sold or by writing to: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fisheries, Lincoln Tower Plaza, 524 S. 2nd St., Springfield, IL 62706.



## BLACK CRAPPIE

### COMMON NAMES:

Calico bass, strawberry bass, crappie, speckled crappie, spotted crappie.

### DESCRIPTION:

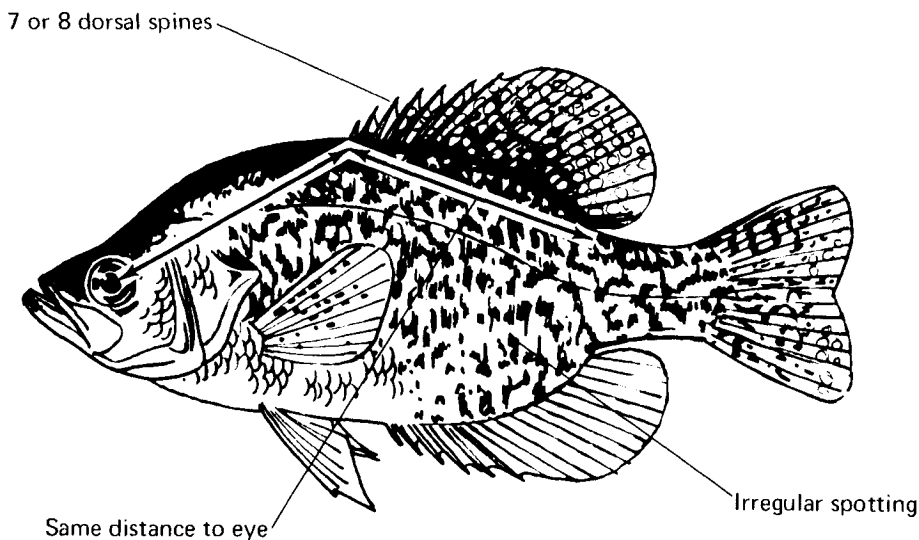
Anal fin almost the same size as the dorsal fin. Color pattern of irregular dark splotches on a light background. Best method of identification: black crappie has 7 or 8 spines in the dorsal fin.

### HABITAT:

Large lakes, ponds and streams.

### DISTRIBUTION:

Occurs statewide but more commonly in large river lakes.



BLACK CRAPPIE  
(*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*)

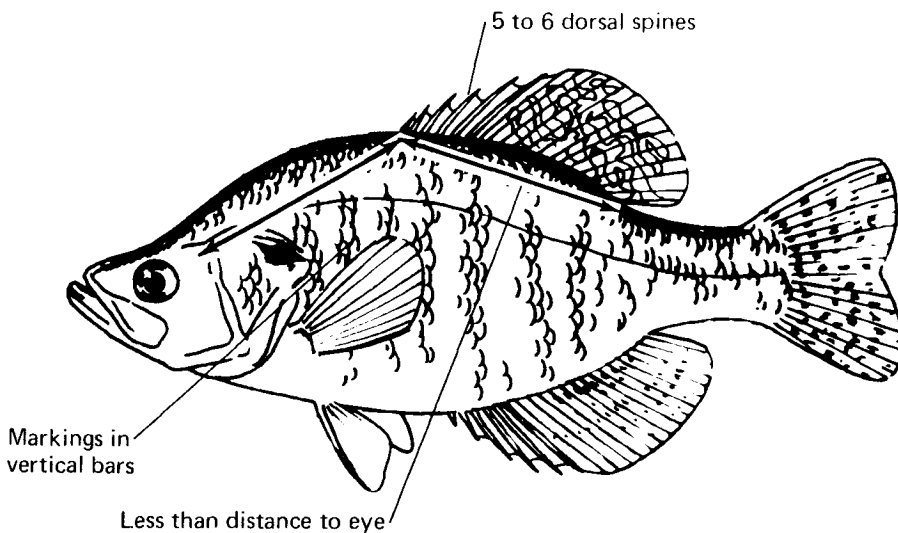
## WHITE CRAPPIE

### COMMON NAMES:

Crappie, silver crappie, bachelor, newlight.

### DESCRIPTION:

Anal fin is almost the same size as the dorsal fin. Color pattern of dark splotches arranged in vertical bands on a pale background. Best method of identification; white crappie have 5 or 6 spines in the dorsal fin.



WHITE CRAPPIE  
(*Pomoxis annularis*)

## CRAPPIES

Both black and white crappie are found in Lake Shelbyville; however, at the present time, the white crappie is the most numerous of the two. There are no striking differences in the habits of these two species; although, the white crappie is apparently more tolerant of turbid waters. Both species like areas with an abundance of cover which provides protection, food and some shade. Therefore, they are generally found in bays and coves with stickups and flooded timber, around submerged fence rows, in creek channels and along rock rip-rap areas from mid-September to early June. During the summer months, crappie seek the cooler, deeper water of the lake and this usually results in poorer fishing.

Crappie, like the other sunfishes, are nest builders. They generally spawn in May or early June

at depths ranging from 2 to 12 feet, depending on water clarity. The eggs hatch in three to five days. When the young crappie are about a half inch long, they are left by the adults to fend for themselves.

The main food items of crappie are insects, crustaceans and small fish. Since they are sight feeders, periods of good crappie fishing are usually determined by the clearness of the water and they also bite best when the temperature of the water is between 50° and 75°. Both species are shortlived fish, and seldom live more than six years.

Crappie fishing is usually best during the spring and fall months but many are also taken during the winter by ice fishermen. However, if they can be located in their deeper haunts, crappie can be caught during the hot summer months.



Minnow fishermen prefer using 10 to 14-foot fiberglass extension poles, cane poles or stiff action fly rods with single action reels, or any device that will hold a small amount of line. These are rigged with 8 to 15-pound test monofilament line so that crappie can be pulled quickly from the brush. In addition, this test line is strong enough to straighten out No. 6 to No. 2 wire hooks when snagged on brush.

Tightlining, using the above equipment, is the most popular method of fishing for crappie. No bobber is used and one or two quarter-ounce split shot, wrap around sinkers or a small spinner blade is placed on the line four to six inches above the hook. In this manner, the bait can easily be fished at various depths to locate the crappie. The bait should be jigged (moved quickly up and down two or three inches) frequently to entice the crappie into striking the bait. Two other variations of this method are to substitute a small maribou jig-minnow combination, or attach a small white plastic beetle on with the minnow. If the minnow is knocked off on the first strike, crappie will frequently hit the jig or beetle body . . . . . resulting in one more crappie for the frying pan. Once the

type of cover and depth of the crappie is established, most anglers will attach a stationary or sliding-type bobber. If the crappie are schooled up in brush or on spawning beds, a single jig worked up and down over these spots can frequently produce a full stringer in a short period of time.

Many fishermen who like to fish the rock riprapped shoreline or spillway tailwater area use the long fiberglass poles baited with a small minnow or a small 1/32 ounce jig with a small bobber. The bait or lure is allowed to drift along the bottom with the current or wind and jigged frequently to tease the crappie into hitting. This is a very popular way to catch crappie early in the spring or late in the fall when the water is quite cold and the crappie only slightly dip the bobber when taking the bait.

Light spinning tackle is popular when the water is relatively clear. Light colored 1/32 to 1/2 ounce hair and maribou jigs or small spinning lures like the beetle-spins or twister tail lures come into play under these conditions. Casting these lures towards or into the stickups, steep banks, rock riprap or over submerged brushy cover and retrieving them in a slow, slightly jerky manner is a very effective way to catch crappie.



**TABLE II**  
**LAKE SHELBYVILLE AREA SPECIES COMMONLY CAUGHT**

AREAS	Largemouth Bass	Crappie	Bluegill	White Bass	Bullheads	Channel Catfish	Carp	Freshwater Drum	Walleye	Smallmouth Bass
Dam	x	x		x						
Cove - 9th Street	x	x	x		x	x	x			
Golf Course Cove	x	x			x		x			
Opossum Creek	x	x	x		x	x				
Coon Creek	x	x	x		x	x				
Lone Point Area	x	x		x					x	
Eagle Creek	x	x	x		x	x	x			
Eagle Creek Flats				x		x	x		x	
Findlay Marina Area (S)	x	x	x	x		x			x	
Findlay Marina Area (N)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
C & E I Railroad Trestle	x	x		x					x	
Wilborn Cr. Recreation Area	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	
Wilborn Creek		x	x		x	x	x			
Okaw River		x		x	x	x	x			
Coal Shaft Bridge Area				x	x	x	x		x	
Camfield Branch	x	x		x	x	x	x			
Forest W. "Bo" Wood	x	x		x	x	x				
Fox Harbor	x	x		x	x	x			x	
Kaskaskia River		x		x		x	x		x	x
Whitley Creek		x	x		x	x	x			
Whitley Cr. Recreation Area	x			x	x	x	x			
Wolf Creek	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Wolf Creek Flats				x					x	
Sand Creek	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Lithia Springs Recreation Area	x	x	x	x			x		x	
Lithia Springs Creek		x	x		x	x				
Islands of Lake	x	x		x					x	
Spillway Area		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Kaskaskia River Below Lake		x	x		x	x	x	x		x

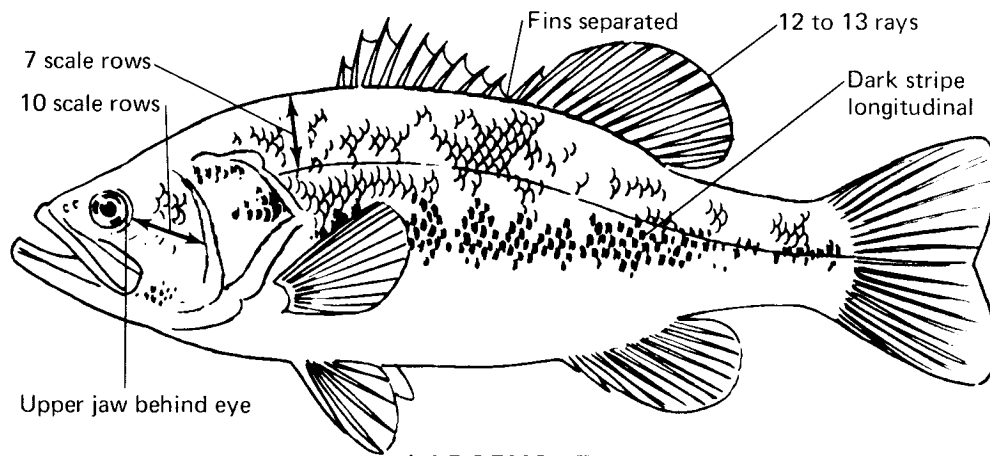
During the warmer months of the year (mid-June to mid-September), crappie usually frequent the cooler and deeper waters along the steep drop-off, river and creek channels, spring holes and old flooded ponds. At these times they are hard to find. But, if located, they can be caught on small beetle-spin or twister tail lures, spinner-jig or spinner-minnow combination. These baits should be allowed to sink to the depth of the crappie and retrieved steadily with an occasional twitch of the rod tip to be effective.

Other anglers catch crappie during the summer months by fishing for them at dusk and dawn . . . . . when the crappie come into the shoreline to feed on small fishes and insects. When this occurs, a fly rod rigged with dry flies or poppers will pay off.

Lantern fishing, another angling method for catching crappie, is gaining some followers at Lake Shelbyville. A gas lantern is tied about four feet above the water to a limb, a stout stickup or a boat mounted 12 foot pole. An aluminum reflector is

placed on one side of the lantern. The area illuminated by the lantern is the side on which to fish, with one's boat on the opposite side. As darkness sets in the lantern is lit, which attracts bugs, then minnows and, hopefully, the crappie. Floating lights are also gaining popularity for the same purpose.

During winters when there is a solid ice cover of six inches or more, good crappie fishing can be found in the shallower portions of the lake. The best ice fishing is generally found in brushy areas along the creek and river channels or the shallow bays with stickups or submerged brush. These areas are usually not more than eight feet deep. Ice fishermen use small 2½ to 3½ foot rods, tiny bobbers and either small wire hooks or the many small artificial ice flies. These are baited with small minnows or larvae of insects (mousies, waxworms, golden grubs, corn borer, meal worms, blackeyed susan grubs, etc.) and jigged frequently to attract the fish.



LARGEMOUTH BASS  
(*Micropterus salmoides*)

## LARGEMOUTH BASS

**COMMON NAMES:** Largemouth bass, black bass, bigmouth bass, line side, green bass, lake bass.

**DESCRIPTION:** The upper jaw with the mouth closed extends well back of the eye. The spiny dorsal or top fin is nearly separated from the soft dorsal by a deep notch. There is usually a dark lateral stripe along the side.

## LARGEMOUTH BASS

Considered by many as the "King" of sport fishes, the largemouth bass is one of the most popular species in Lake Shelbyville. Angling for this fish has increased tenfold within the last decade. This is due in part to the seemingly mystic nature of the largemouth bass, the challenge and prestige of being able to catch them consistently, and the possibility of landing a real "Lunker Bigmouth". Other related factors are the improvements made in fishing tackle, boats, motors and other electronic gear; such as fish locators, temperature and oxygen meters.

Hundreds of bass fishing clubs have been formed in the midwest within the past ten years to learn more about and participate in the sport of largemouth bass angling. Many of these clubs fish weekly among themselves or against other fishing clubs. Dozens of books have been written about the largemouth bass and the art of catching them. National bass fishing organizations have been formed throughout the country, many of which publish magazines devoted to the when, where and how of the sport. Some organizations also hold competitive state, regional and national bass tournaments with purses running into the thousands of dollars.

The largemouth bass, a member of the sunfish family, is a species that likes the still water environments provided by Illinois ponds, lakes and reservoirs. They prefer to inhabit areas having weed beds, submerged brush and logs, flooded timber and rock rip-rap that provide suitable protective cover and a nearby source of food.

Largemouth bass are sight feeders. After hatching, the bass fry feed largely upon tiny crustaceans called Cladocerans and Copepods. The primary food items of fingerling and adult bass are:

insects, crayfish, frogs and other fish, especially the gizzard shad. Young bass frequently school-up to feed but once they reach a size larger than a pound, they appear to be more solitary in nature.

In Lake Shelbyville, largemouth bass fishing is generally best from early May to mid-June and again from early September to mid-October when the water temperature ranges between 55 and 75 degrees. The best spots to fish in the spring are shoreline stickups, rock rip-rap or areas that are utilized for spawning.

When daytime summer water temperatures approach the 80° mark, bass generally move to the deeper, cooler water along steep banks, river and creek channels, old pond beds and spring seeps, that also has protective cover. However, they will move from these areas into the shoreline shallows to feed during the early morning or late evening hours, which are prime times to fish. During the winter, largemouth bass can also be caught by ice fishing using the method that is described briefly under crappie and bluegill.

Although it is impossible to describe all the ways to take bass, (many books and magazine articles have been written on this subject), a few may be pointed out to hopefully increase your success. It is difficult to catch largemouth bass consistently, but they can be caught on a greater variety of baits and lures than practically any other fish. Casting with bait, spincast or spinning tackle is probably the most popular method of catching "Mr. Bigmouth".

During the spring, when most lakes have periods of murkiness, the single or tandem spinner baits, wobbling and flashing spoons with pork rinds, spinning lures and light colored sub-surface lures are the best artificials to use. As the water

becomes somewhat clearer, buzzer baits, top water and sub-surface lures, plastic worms and diving baits become popular.

In the summer, especially during the heat of the day, diving or deep running plugs and plastic worms are usually the most productive. If the water is clear, top water plunker, buzzer, crawler or diving baits fished along shoreline cover early in the morning or late in the evening, yield good catches. When bass are feeding on shad schools, any surface or sub-surface lure that imitates a crippled minnow is very effective. This is also the time to use a fly rod with large poppers, streamers, wet flies or hair bug lures. Other summertime fishermen use stout fiberglass poles with 25 to 50 pound test line and a weighted plastic worm to jig bass from their hideouts. During the fall, largemouth bass generally feed from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Depending on water turbidity and temperatures, type of cover and time of day, one can use practically any lure in the tackle box to catch them.

## BLUEGILL

### COMMON NAMES:

Bream, brim, sunfish, sun perch, prairie perch.

### DESCRIPTION:

- Has a small mouth and a short gill flap which is tinted black. The lower portion of the gill cover is bluish. A distinct black spot is at the posterior end of the dorsal fin. The throat of the male may be colored orange.

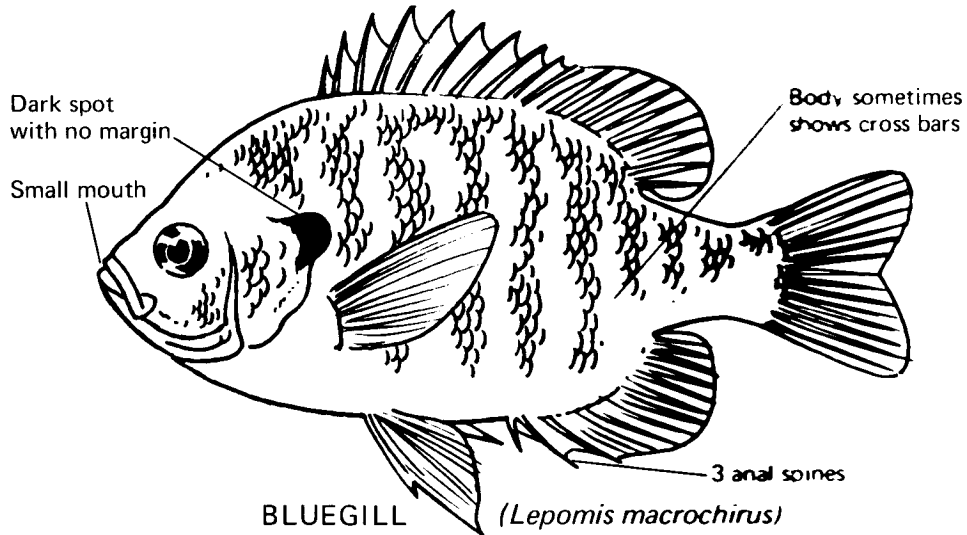
## BLUEGILL

Ounce for ounce, many anglers consider the bluegill one of the sportiest of game fishes. As a general rule, this species is fairly easy to catch, puts up a scrappy fight if caught on a fly or ultra-light rod and is mighty fine eating.

At Lake Shelbyville, the best bluegill fishing is from May through mid-June when they are on spawning beds. Bluegill build their nests in colonies, in water two to five feet deep where there is a hard mud or sand bottom. Once these areas are located, an offering of a cricket, roach, grasshopper, grub, redworm or small minnow is enough to start the action. A cane or fiberglass pole or a fly rod rigged with monofilament line, a small split shot or spinner and a small bobber and small hooks (No. 10 — No. 8) is all the tackle needed. If the water is clear, a fly rod and a wet fly or an ultra-light spin-

The fisherman who likes to use live bait such as crayfish, nitecrawlers or minnows, can frequently catch more bass than the man using a \$75 rod and reel and large boxes of artificial lures. These natural baits are usually fished around overhanging banks, submerged brush, logs, stumps or on hard mud and sand bottoms. At other times live baits are more effective if they are worked slowly over the bottom, or drifted with the wind or current into pockets, holes and riffles, or jigged over good cover.

Because of their temperamental moods, diverse habits and tendency to move from one area to another, catching bass can be a frustrating, mind-boggling situation. To become a good bass fisherman, one must learn to be patient, adaptable and determined to be successful. Probably the best advice to give a budding bass fisherman is to learn all about the bass' habits and habitats, fish as frequently as possible, and go with someone who has developed a degree of expertise in catching this species.



ning rod and tiny 1/32nd-ounce jig can also work wonders.

After spawning, bluegill disperse to the shady cover of the stickups, floating logs, undercut banks and rock rip-rap, to spend the summer and fall months gorging on insects and their larvae. During the summer, fishermen look for bluegill pimpling the water surface at dusk feeding on an emerging aquatic insect hatch. This is the time to put the fly rod and poppers or dry flies into action. Another popular way to catch bluegill during the summer and fall is to use a light spinning or ultra-light rod with a clear plastic casting bobber and a wet fly. The wet fly, which is tied to a 2-3 foot piece of monofilament line, is attached to the floating bobber and cast towards any shoreline cover. The use of a slow steady or jerky retrieve will often produce some of the more cautious hand-sized bluegill.

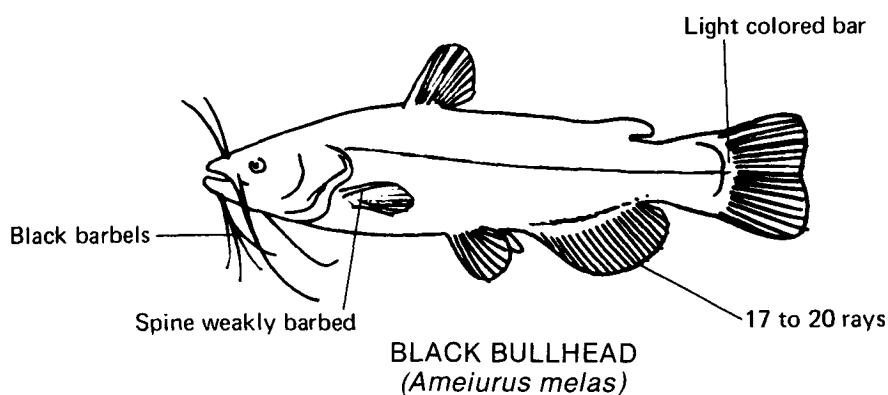
This species also rates a big plus when it comes to ice fishing. Thousands are caught each winter by using the aforementioned method from such areas as Wilborn, Whitley, Coon, Opossum and Sand Creeks. A fisherman can become outfitted with all the necessary ice fishing equipment for around \$15. Other than warm winter clothes and boots, all that is needed is two ice fishing rods, a half dozen ice fishing lures, several dime-sized bobbers, a spring clip sinker for sounding the depths, a 4 foot ice chisel which can be made by any blacksmith shop, any type of strainer or dipper for scooping out the chipped ice, and a five gallon pail that will serve for carrying one's tackle, provide a seat, and hauling the fish home. If one wishes to have more of the comforts of home, with a little effort, a portable ice sled can be built to house a small alcohol or charcoal stove, provide a comfortable seat, a base to attach a wind breaker, and

compartments for holding one's tackle and fish.

During the winter months, bluegill are usually found in shallow water (2 to 6 feet deep) in and around brush. But at other times, they may move into deeper water of creek channels, flooded ponds and the center of the small bays.

Baits used for ice fishing consist of tiny red-worms, small minnows, and insect larvae such as rattailed maggots, waxworms, goldenrod grubs, corn borers, blackeyed susan grubs, etc. These baits are used in combination with number 12 or 14 hooks, small ice flies or spoons. Jigging of these baits will usually attract the bluegill's attention and produce the fastest action.

Other sunfishes found in Lake Shelbyville are green sunfish, warmouth and longear sunfish. These can be caught by the same methods as described for the bluegill.



## BLACK BULLHEAD

**COMMON NAMES:** Bullhead, yellow-belly cat, catfish, horned pout.

**DESCRIPTION:** Body completely devoid of scales, has eight barbels or chin whiskers about the mouth. The anal fin has 17-20 rays and the chin barbels are black.

**HABITAT:** Lakes, ponds, rivers and creeks.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Statewide in all types of waters.

## BULLHEADS

The black bullhead is one of the game species in Lake Shelbyville. Due to their persistence in nibbling at the bait until it is gone or they are hooked, it is also one of the easiest fish to catch. Unfortunately, few fishermen fish for this good eating species, because of the abundance of the other more popular sport species.

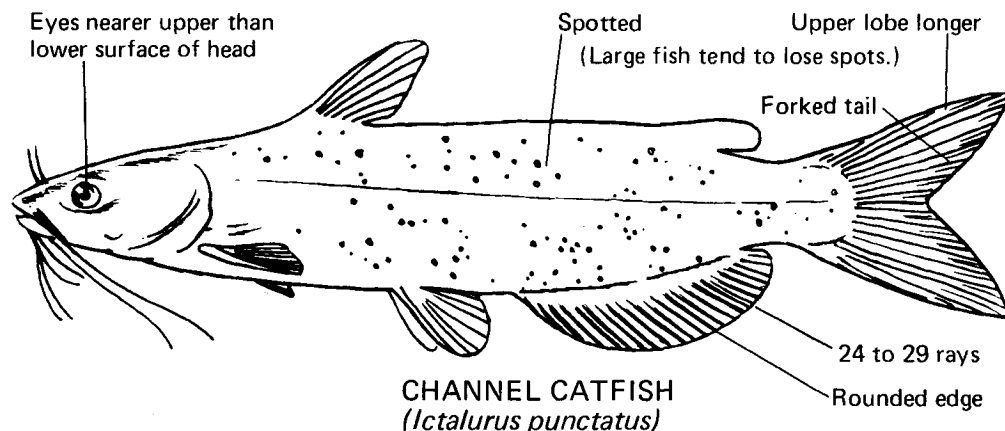
All one needs for bullhead fishing is bait or spin casting tackle, a few No. 1 or 2 hooks, some 1/2 to 3/4-ounce sinkers and a can of worms. Two types of riggings are usually used by bullhead anglers. One is to attach separately two 6-inch leaders with hooks at one foot intervals above the sinker tied to the end. The other rigging is to thread a slip sinker on the line, move it 12 to 14 inches up, pinch a split shot below the sinker, and then attach a single or treble hook to the end of the line. The advantage of this rig is that the fish can nibble at, or pick up and

run with the baited hook without feeling the resistance of the sinker. This rig is also very popular with fishermen who fish the rivers and streams for channel catfish.

Bullheads spawn in June in bank cavities, hollow logs or in saucer-shaped nests built on mud or sand, among weed and tree roots, in water 2 to 4 feet deep. The male bullhead guards the nest, fans the eggs until they hatch, and protects the young until they are about two inches long.

Bullheads are omnivorous, feeding on any living or dead animal and plant material that might suit their fancy. However, the major items in their diet consist of aquatic insects and their larvae, small clams, crayfish, worms and crustaceans.

Trotline fishing is another popular way to catch bullheads. Nitescrawlers, crayfish, liver, chicken entrails, small chunks of fish, sour clams, shrimp, shiners, leeches and catalpa worms are just a few of the popular baits used.



## CHANNEL CATFISH

**COMMON NAMES:** Fiddler, spotted cat, channel cat, catfish.

**DESCRIPTION:** Body completely devoid of scales, has eight barbels or whiskers about the mouth, prominent adipose fin, a single hard spine in the pectoral and dorsal fins and a deeply forked tail. The channel catfish can be distinguished from the blue catfish by its rounded anal fin with 24 to 29 rays. The blue catfish has 30 to 35 rays in a straight edged anal fin.

## CHANNEL CATFISH

Channel catfish may not be as popular with anglers as the largemouth bass, but few are more devoted to their sport than the catfishermen. The Kaskaskia River has always been known as a good channel catfish stream and Lake Shelbyville, into which it flows, is no exception. Since the lake was impounded in 1971, the population of channel catfish has been increasing yearly.

The best fishing period for channel catfish runs from late May until mid-October. Peaks of good fishing occur whenever there is a rise in pool level; especially in the shallower bays influenced by the tributary streams.

Channel catfish spawn in June and early July when the water temperature reaches about 75 degrees. The eggs are laid in bank cavities, muskrat runs, under tree roots, in hollow logs or even in old tires, tiles and large cans. After spawning, the male catfish assumes the total duties of hatching the eggs and protecting the young until the school breaks up when the young are about 1½ to 2 inches long.

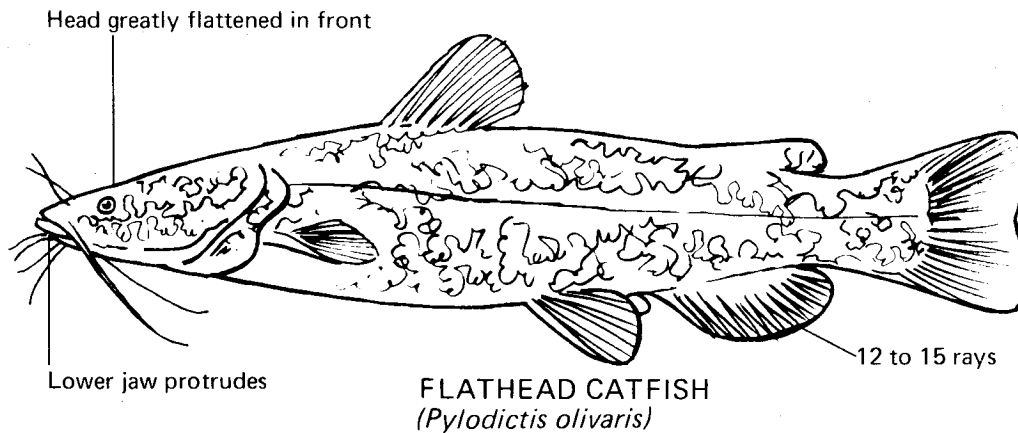
Channel catfish are quite secretive in their feeding habits, seeking food mainly between dusk and dawn. As darkness begins to fall, they will move from their hiding places into the shallows to feed. However, they can be caught during the daylight hours if the water is murky or a bait is worked into a deep hole or cover where they are hiding. Channel catfish are omnivorous feeders or ones that are not selective in the foods they eat. Their main food items are crayfish, insects and their larvae, snails, small clams, worms and fish, both living and dead. However, any bait that will give strong flavor such as cheese, blood, soured fish, clam and meat chunks, entrails and liver will also attract the atten-

There are two distinct groups of channel catfishermen at Lake Shelbyville, those who pole and line fish only and those who prefer to use trotlines.

The pole and line fisherman confines the major part of his activities to the river channel from the junction of the West Okaw and Kaskaskia River north of the Bruce-Findlay Bridge up into each of these respective rivers, or fishes the flats near these same channels. From mid-May to mid-September, good pole and line fishing can also be found in the tailwater area below the dam. These fishermen generally use the slip sinker rig (described under bullheads) which will allow the channel catfish to pick up the bait and run with it before trying to swallow it. A myriad of baits are used ranging from the blood and cheese stink baits to crayfish, minnows, worms, shrimp, and sour clams, liver and leeches.

Trotline fishermen also like to set their lines in and near the flooded river channels from the Bruce-Findlay Bridge up both arms of the lake. Other good areas to set a trotline are on the flats from the aforementioned bridge on down the lake to the southern tip of Eagle Creek State Park and in those bays with flooded standing timber and small tributary streams. When the pool level is rising, sets made parallel to the shoreline in 2 to 4 foot water can be very productive. Baits that are most popular with the trotline crowd are large shiners, small shad, crayfish, nitecrawlers, leeches, chicken entrails and chunks of shad or carp.

The eating qualities of the channel catfish are renown. Fried up crisp, eaten with barbecued beans, "tater" salad, slaw, rye bread, butter and one's favorite beverage is a perfect way to enjoy one of the best tasting fish found in Lake Shelbyville.



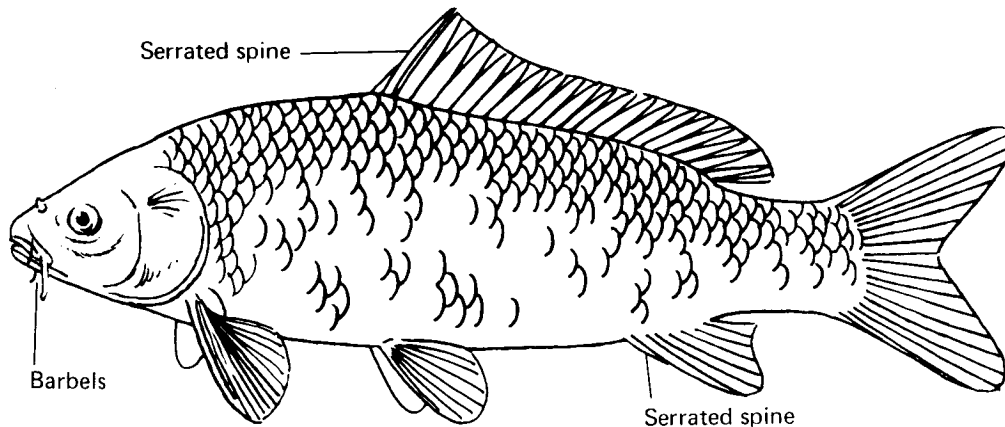
FLATHEAD CATFISH  
(*Pylodictis olivaris*)

## FLATHEAD CATFISH

Whenever this species is caught, it is generally considered a bonus or trophy fish. Within the past two years, a number of large flathead catfish (some exceeding 25 pounds), have been caught from the lake and tailwater area. From fishery surveys made, it appears that this species may also be increasing its number in Lake Shelbyville.

Some trotline fishermen specialize in trying to catch big "flatheads". Through experience they have learned that it takes big hooks (No. 2.0 to No.

6.0), strong main and staging lines, and equally big baits to catch and hold this fish. The majority of the flathead catfish are taken on trotlines set in or around the flooded river channels. The baits used range from live green sunfish, bullheads, carp and large shiners to leeches, chicken guts, bullfrogs and large chunks of meat from bowfin, white carp and buffalo fishes. Occasionally, this species is also taken by pole and line fishermen using jigs, streamers and small spinning lures along the rock rip-rap areas or in the tailwater.



CARP  
(*Cyprinus carpio*)

## CARP

An Asiatic minnow, an import from Germany, known by all, loved by some, hated by others, tolerated by most, and one of the most widely distributed and numerous fishes found in the United States; all descriptions fit only one species — the carp. Few fish have such widespread but questionable notoriety or invoke such diversified opinions as "old buglemouth". The poor acceptance of this fish is generally due to two reasons: (1) they may have an undesirable flavor if taken from shallow stagnant or polluted waters and (2) they are very bony to eat if not prepared properly.

Carp are omnivorous feeders eating both animal and vegetable material, alive or dead. The main

items in their diet are insects and their larvae, crustaceans and small mollusks. If the opportunity presents itself, they may consume tree seeds or the roots, stems and leaves of aquatic weeds in large quantities.

Carp generally spawn from early May into June, depositing their eggs over aquatic weeds, sticks, brush or tree roots. A large female may lay as many as a million eggs which are left to the mercy of the elements and predators. Typical of carp and other species that do not protect their eggs or young, the spawning of tremendous numbers of eggs seems to be Mother Nature's way of insuring the survival of these fish.

The carp is one of the most abundant species found in Lake Shelbyville and its tributary streams; yet, it is almost totally ignored by the angling public. It is a difficult fish to catch because of its small mouth and cautious biting habit. But once hooked, the carp puts up a strong and determined fight.

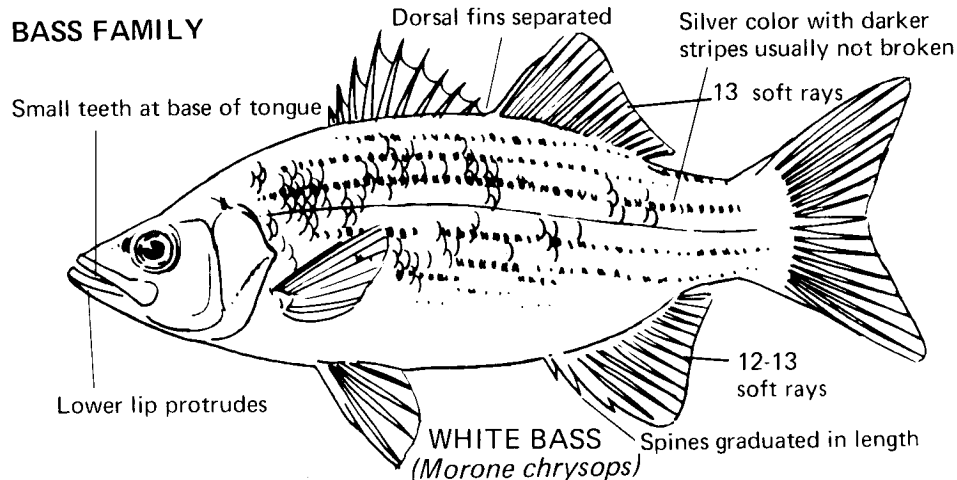
More carp are caught from the tailwater area than from the entire lake. The same type of tackle and slip sinker rig as described for bullheads and channel catfish works equally as well for carp. However, smaller single or treble hooks must be used so the carp can more readily take the bait into his small sucker-like mouth. Baits commonly used by carp fishermen include such items as worms, small crayfish, shrimp tails, canned corn, grasshoppers and 101 types of homemade and commercial baits.

Those anglers who fish for carp in the lake generally fish the shallow bays, the hard mud and sand flats, and the creek and river channels.

More and more anglers are finding that carp are good to eat. Filleted, scored (vertical 1/6-inch cuts made through the flesh down to the skin), rolled in cornmeal, and cooked in hot deep fat (375°F.), makes carp a tasty fare — with no bones to pick out. Smoking carp is another fine way to pre-

pare them. Other fishermen prefer to can the carp they catch. After the carp are filleted, the skin is removed and the flesh cut into 1½ to 2-inch chunks. These are then packed tightly into jars with 1 teaspoon each of salt and vinegar per pint, sealed, and then pressure cooked for 1 to 1½ hours at 15 pounds pressure. The result is a product that is difficult to distinguish from canned salmon. It contains no bones and is delicious used in salad or made into patties and fried.

Pickling is another preparation method gaining in popularity. The meat is prepared in the same manner as for canning, except the flesh is cut into ½ to ¾-inch cubes. These cubes are then soaked in a brine of one gallon of white vinegar and one cup of canning salt for 10 days, stirring once daily. After the brining period, the cubes are thoroughly rinsed in cold water and drained. The fish cubes are then packed into pint jars, alternating layers of fish and onion rings. Add one teaspoon of pickling spices and cover completely with a solution made of one cup of white vinegar and one cup of sugar (DO NOT COOK). Store in the refrigerator. After 10 days, you will have tasty pickled morsels that will be palate pleasing. Although this recipe is given for carp, other species of fish can be prepared in like manner.



## WHITE BASS

The white bass is the major true bass found in Lake Shelbyville. They were successfully introduced into the lake in 1971. Since that time, they have become one of the more popular, sought after sport fish in the lake. Thousands are caught annually.

White bass range widely throughout the lake on up into the tributary streams. Beginning in late March, the white bass move into the Kaskaskia and West Okaw Rivers (chiefly the former) to spawn. This run may extend all the way up to Champaign County some years. This movement also signals

the first opportunity of the year to catch this species. Any small, bright colored spinning lure or jig or minnow drifted with the current is effective at this time.

Spawning usually occurs during the latter half of April. A large female may spawn a half million eggs or more over sand and gravel bars. The eggs hatch within three to six days, depending on water temperature. The white bass fry's first foods are microscopic crustaceans. As they reach a larger size, small insects and their larvae and tiny fish of other species becomes more important in their diet. This



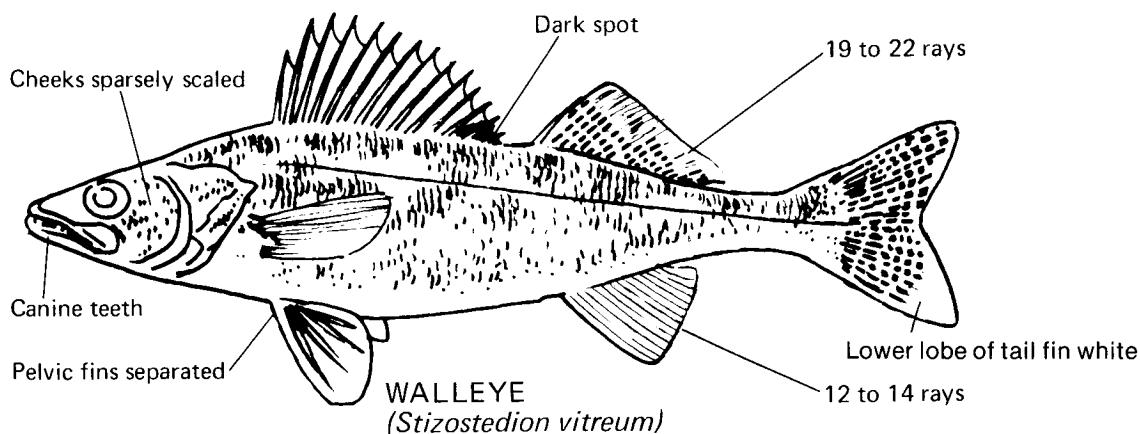
species grows very rapidly, frequently reaching lengths of five to seven inches the first year. As the white bass matures, fish make up the largest percentage of their diet. This is a short-lived fish, seldom living more than four years.

After spawning, white bass return to the lake. During May and early June, they can often be caught from the shallow flats when they are foraging for insects and small fishes, particularly the first hatch of gizzard shad. During this period, fishing for this species is generally best during the early morning or late evening hours, unless the day is cloudy. Then they might be caught anytime during the day.

By mid-July, when the young shad school up and range near the surface of the lake, the white bass will also move more extensively in search of

these schools. From this time until early September, anglers should keep their eyes peeled for small shad jumping frantically out of the water. Chances are good that the white bass are busily gorging themselves below the fleeing school. Any bright-bladed spinning or spoon-type lure cast in the direction of the jumping shad and retrieved near the surface will often result in white bass on the stringer.

As fall approaches and the water cools, white bass move into deeper water. When they do, they can frequently be caught by trolling a minnow-jig or minnow-spinner combination near the bottom. The heavy bodied spinning lures, such as the Little Georges and Pedigo Spinrites, are effective if worked in a similar manner during this period.



## WALLEYE

The walleye, one of the most prized cool water game fish of the northern United States and Canada, is also found in Lake Shelbyville. Two million walleye fry were stocked as the lake filled in 1971 with good survival. Since 1975, annual fry and fingerling stockings have been made to maintain a quality sport fishery for this species. And, as a result, anglers can now enjoy catching walleye, some which exceed twelve pounds in weight, without journeying to the northlands.

The walleye is actually a native Illinois species, which surprises many fishermen. Where formerly they were found in most of the major river systems of the State and the Fox Chain O'Lakes region, today they are only common in the Mississippi, Rock and Kankakee Rivers. However, through efforts of Illinois fishery biologists, the range of this desirable species is being re-expanded with the successful stockings of a number of large impoundments, which in turn has provided many additional angling opportunities.

The reproductive run of walleye occurs in the spring as the water temperature approaches the 45 to 50 degree mark. Walleye will spawn in either lake

or stream environments wherever suitable habitat is found. They prefer to deposit their eggs over clean gravel and sand bars or rocky areas at depths of two to five feet. The eggs, which are deserted after being laid, hatch within 12 to 18 days.

After hatching, the first foods of the walleye fry are microscopic crustaceans. As they increase in body size, larger food items such as small insects and young fishes are consumed. As adults, their diet consists primarily of fish.

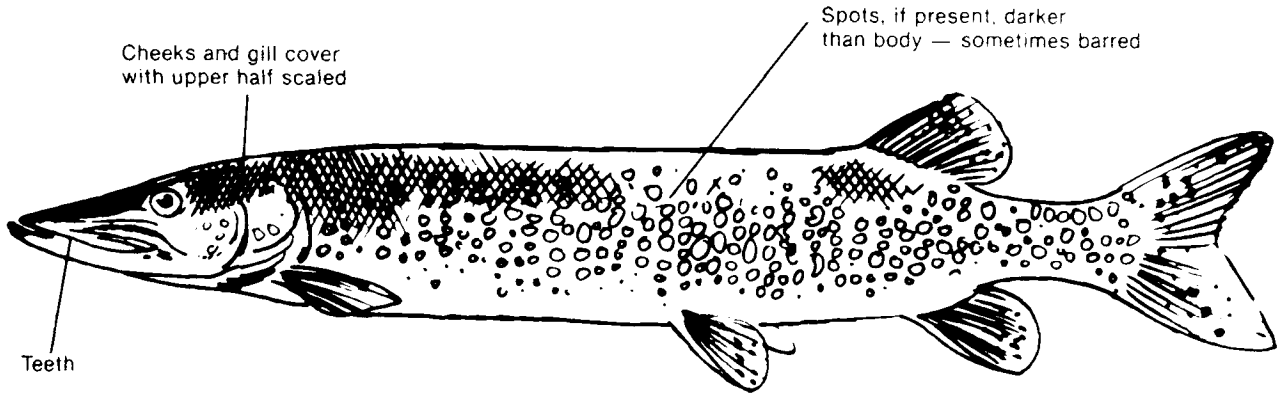
While a few walleye may spawn in Lake Shelbyville, the major run occurs in the Kaskaskia River and, to a lesser degree, the West Okaw River. The run usually begins in mid-March and lasts until mid-April, which also presents the first opportunity of the year to catch walleye. Minnows, small spinning lures and bright colored jigs are the best baits to use at this time.

As spawning is completed, the adults return to the shallower portions of the lake to feed on the flats, flooded ridge tops and around the islands. It is from these areas, at depths ranging from 5 to 12 feet, that the better catches are made from mid-April to mid-June. The same baits used during the

spawning run, plus the spinner baits, spinner-minnow and jig-nitecrawler combinations, provide the best results.

As the lake warms, the walleye gradually move into deeper, cooler water, resulting in a decline in fishing success. Occasionally a few are taken during the hot summer months by trolling the deep diving lures or a spinner-minnow combination along the bottom in 10 to 20-foot depths or by casting plain jigs tipped with whole nitecrawlers or leeches.

Fall often brings about a resurgence in walleye fishing as the surface waters cool. During the day, they might be caught by trolling or bumping a bait across the ridge tops at medium depths. Other anglers are more successful if they fish only during the early morning or late evening hours when the walleye are feeding in the shallows around the shoreline. A jig and nitecrawler, minnows and small spinning lures are usually the best baits to use during the fall months.

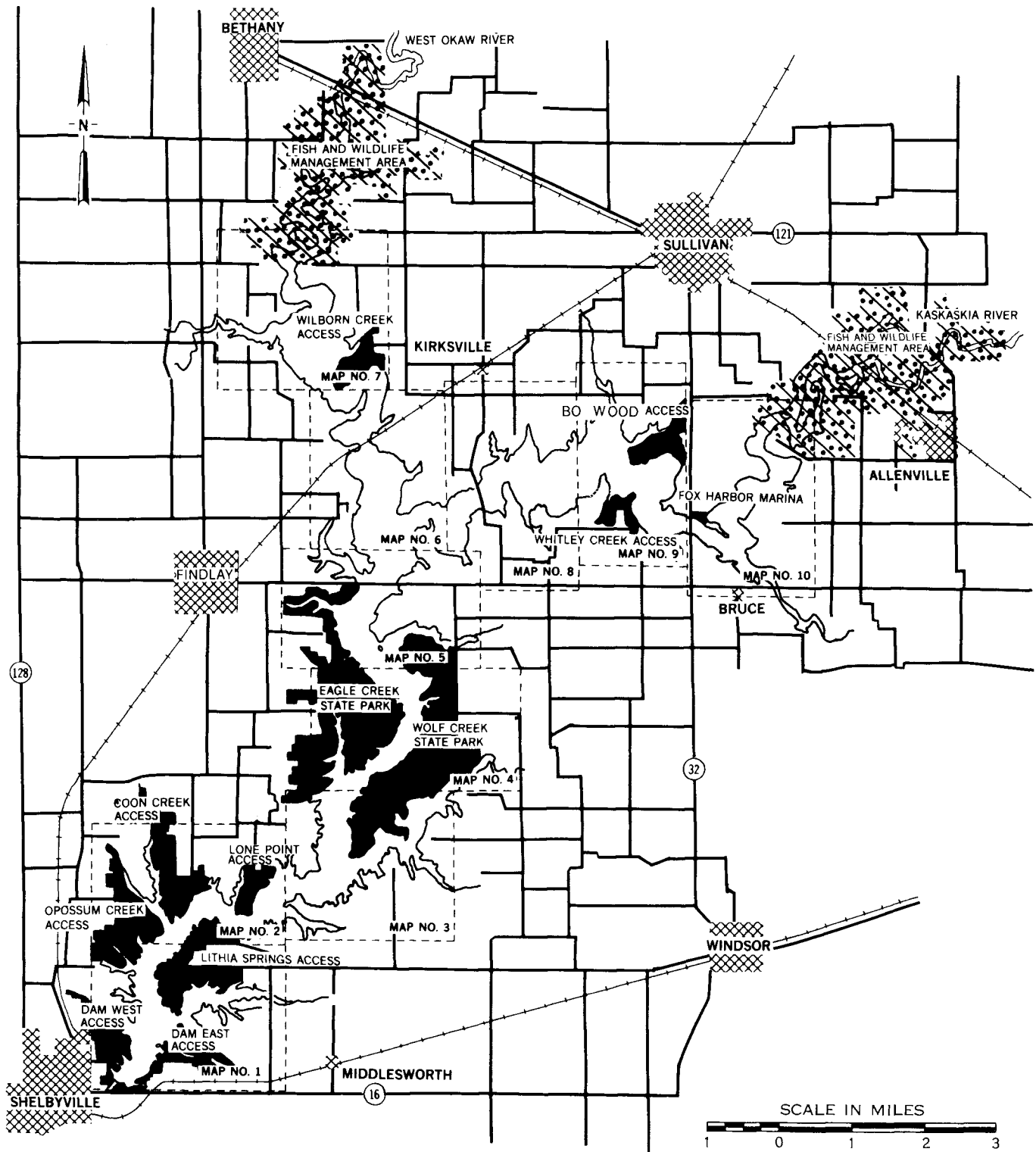


MUSKELLUNGE  
(*Esox masquinongy*)

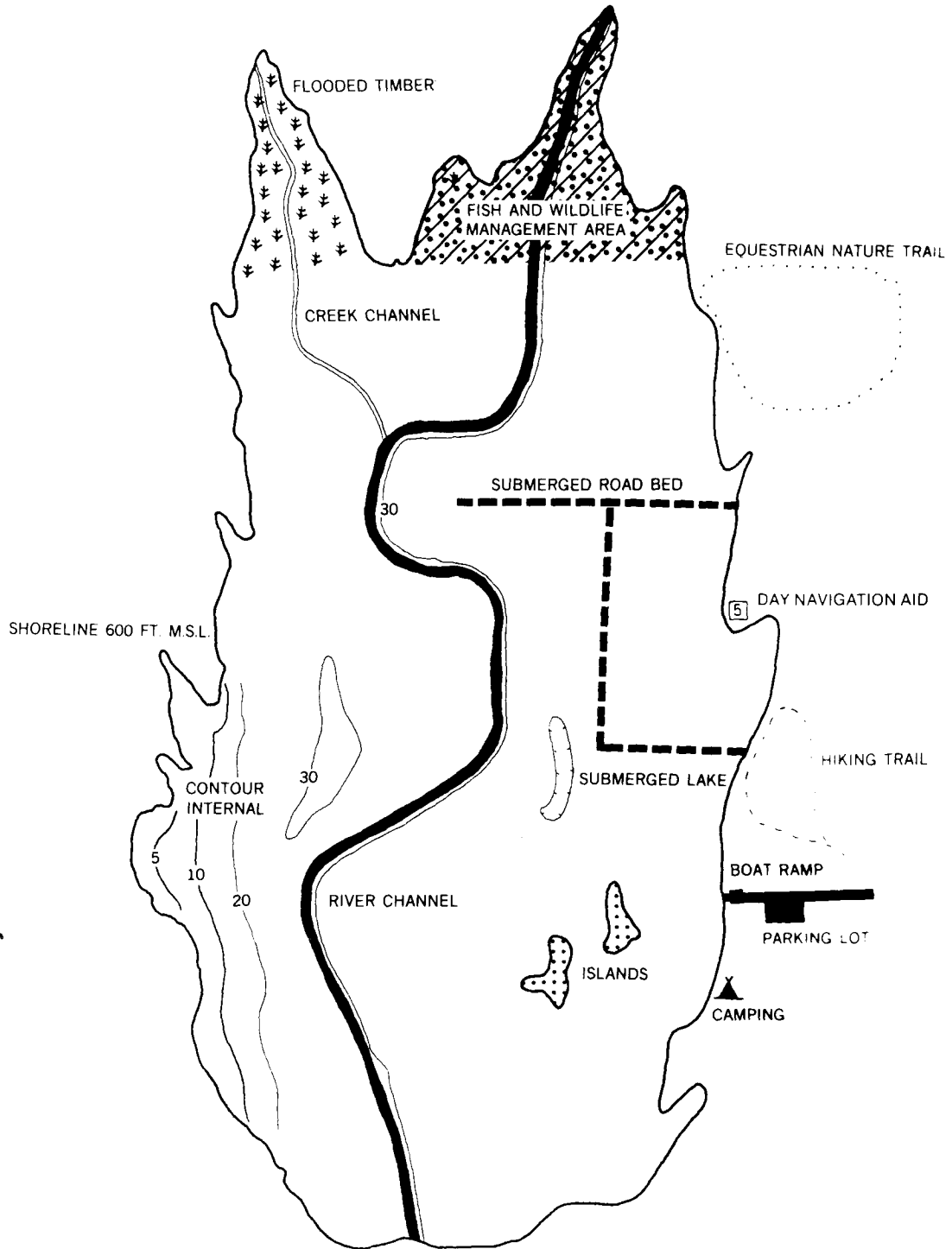
The muskellunge or muskie is one three species of the pike family found in Lake Shelbyville. Unlike its smaller relatives the grass pickerel and northern pike, its cheeks and opercies are scaleless on the lower halves, a distinguishing feature. Muskie were first established in Lake Shelbyville in 1978 when a small stocking of large-sized fingerlings was made by Illinois fishery biologists. Subsequent limited stockings have resulted in increased abundance proportional to the available fingerlings released. Muskie in excess of 20 pounds have been captured by biologists during routine fish population surveys.

Known as “the fish of a thousand casts,” the muskellunge will surely become popular among

Lake Shelbyville anglers who are looking for the challenge of catching a trophy fish. Muskellunge are lone, sedentary fish that lurk among vegetation, near channels, bars or near rocky ledges waiting for prey. Migration from its home range is usually restricted to movement to shallow water for spawning in April and May and a return to shallow water in September and October. During the periods that the muskie are in shallow water large spinners or jerk baits, muskie plugs and large minnows are likely to produce the best results. Trolling with large muskie plugs or spoons when muskie are deeper may yield a summer-time trophy. Whatever the season, the muskie angler should be persistent and have his gear in top shape for the battle with this “king of the sport fish.”

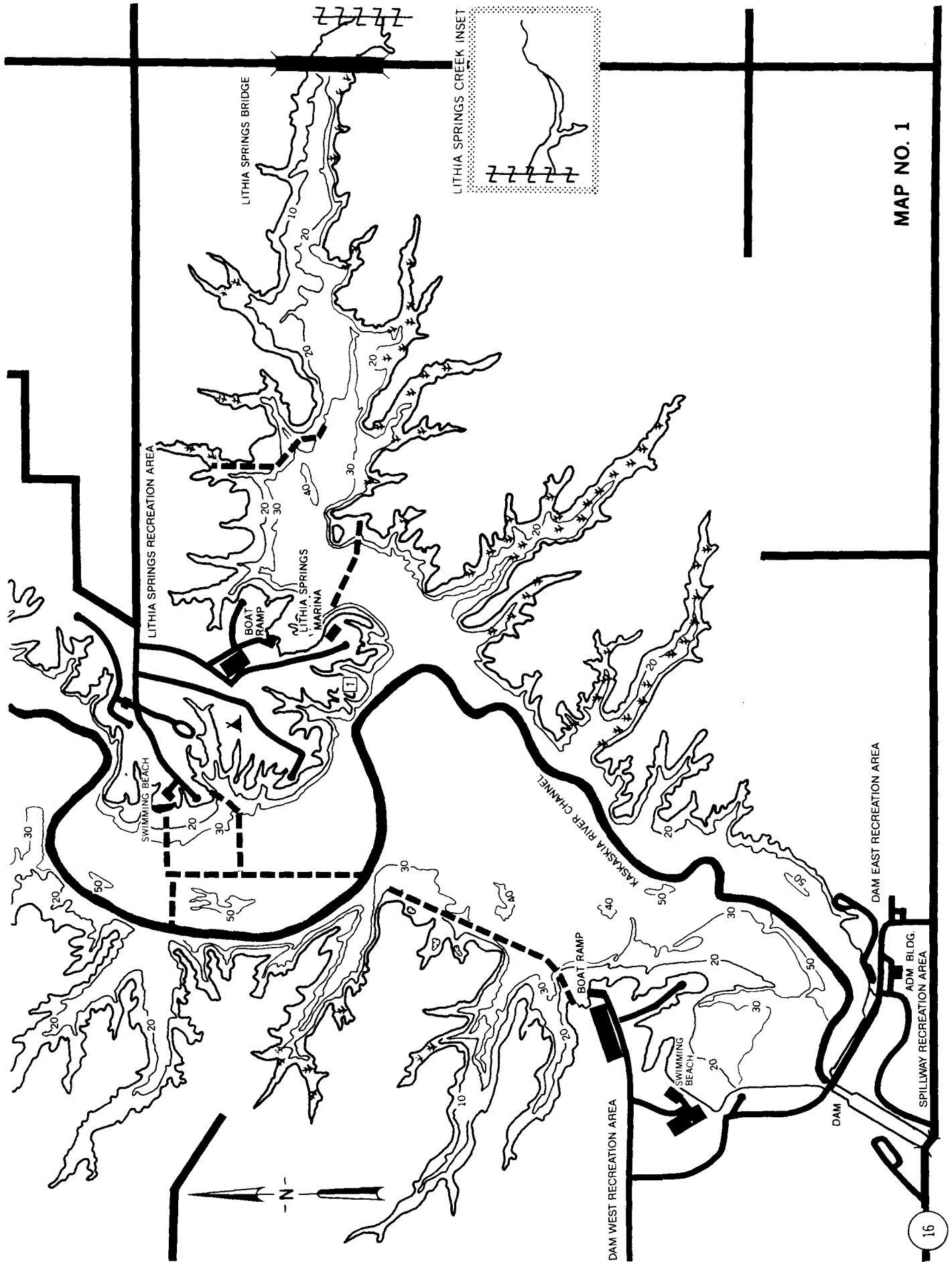


# KEY TO SYMBOLS

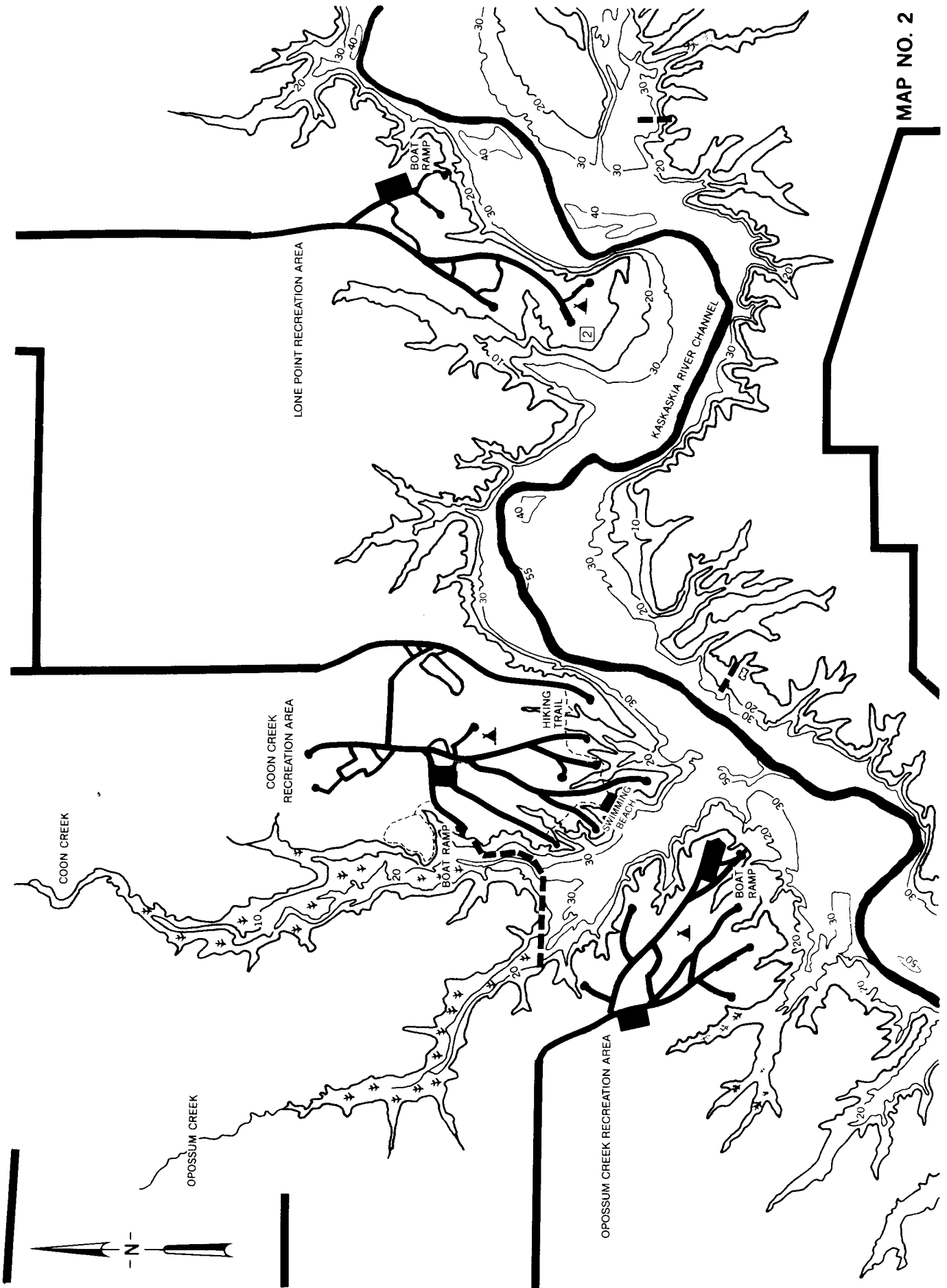


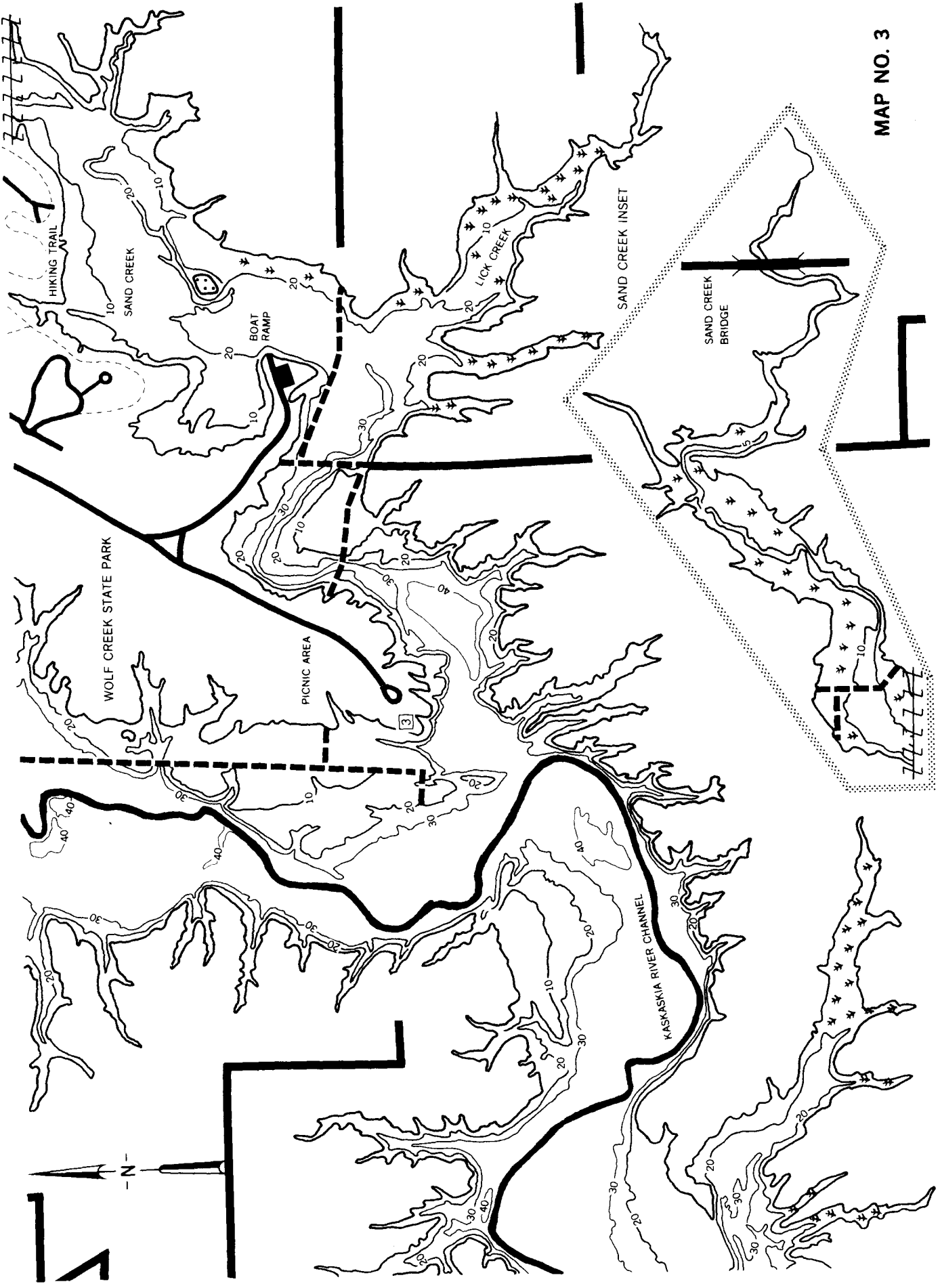
ALL FOLLOWING MAPS  
SCALE = 1 MILE



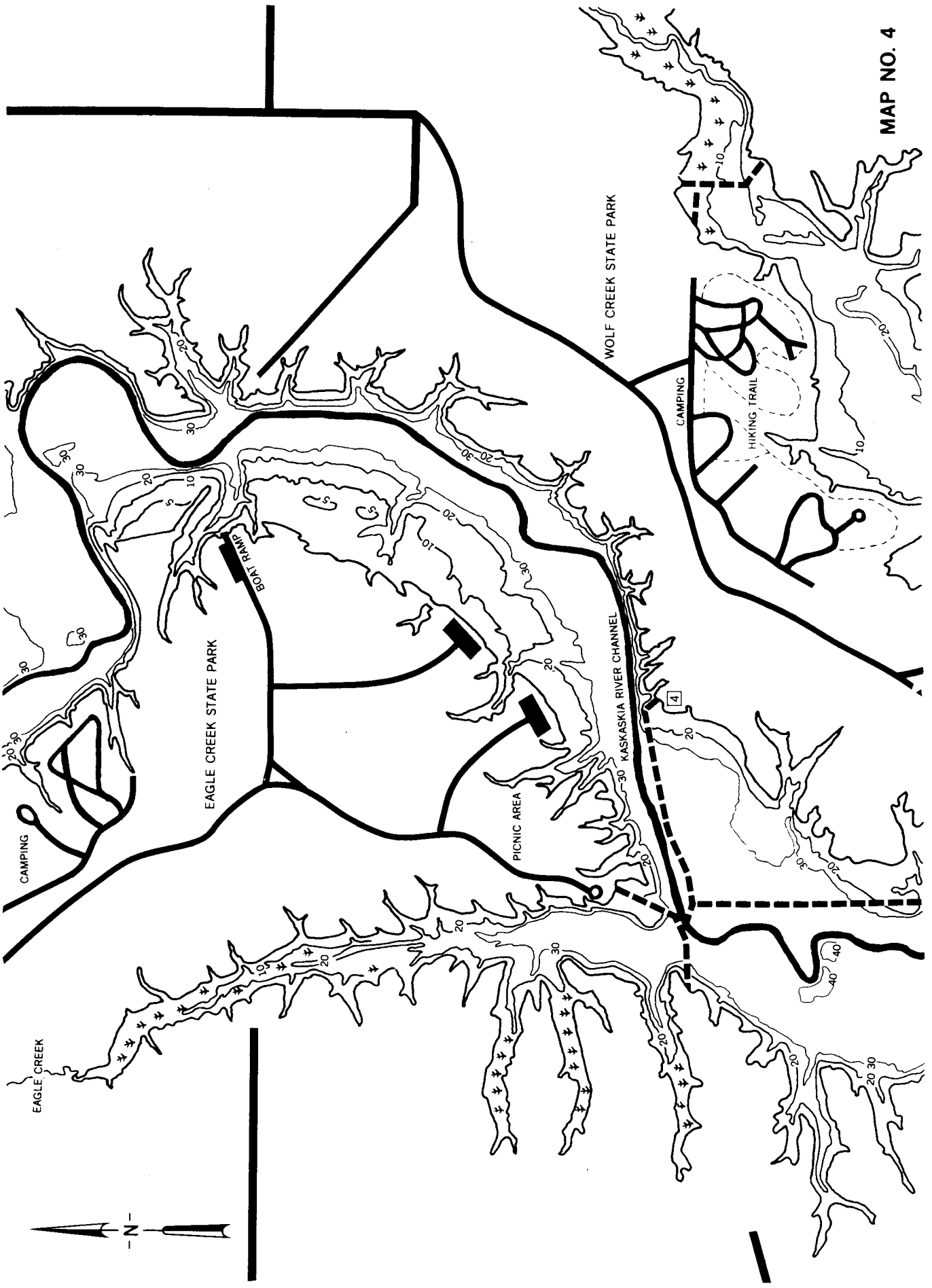


MAP NO. 1

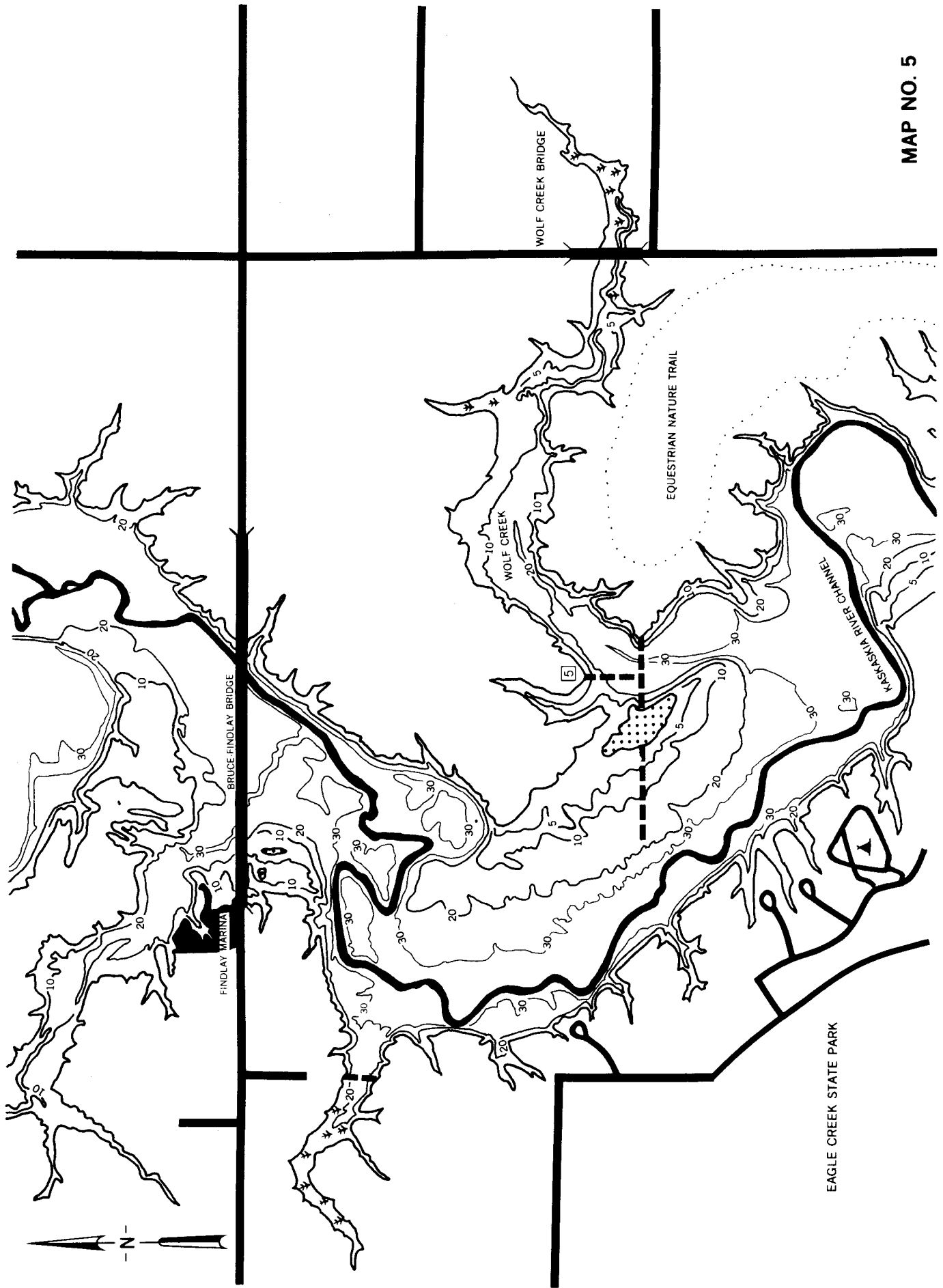




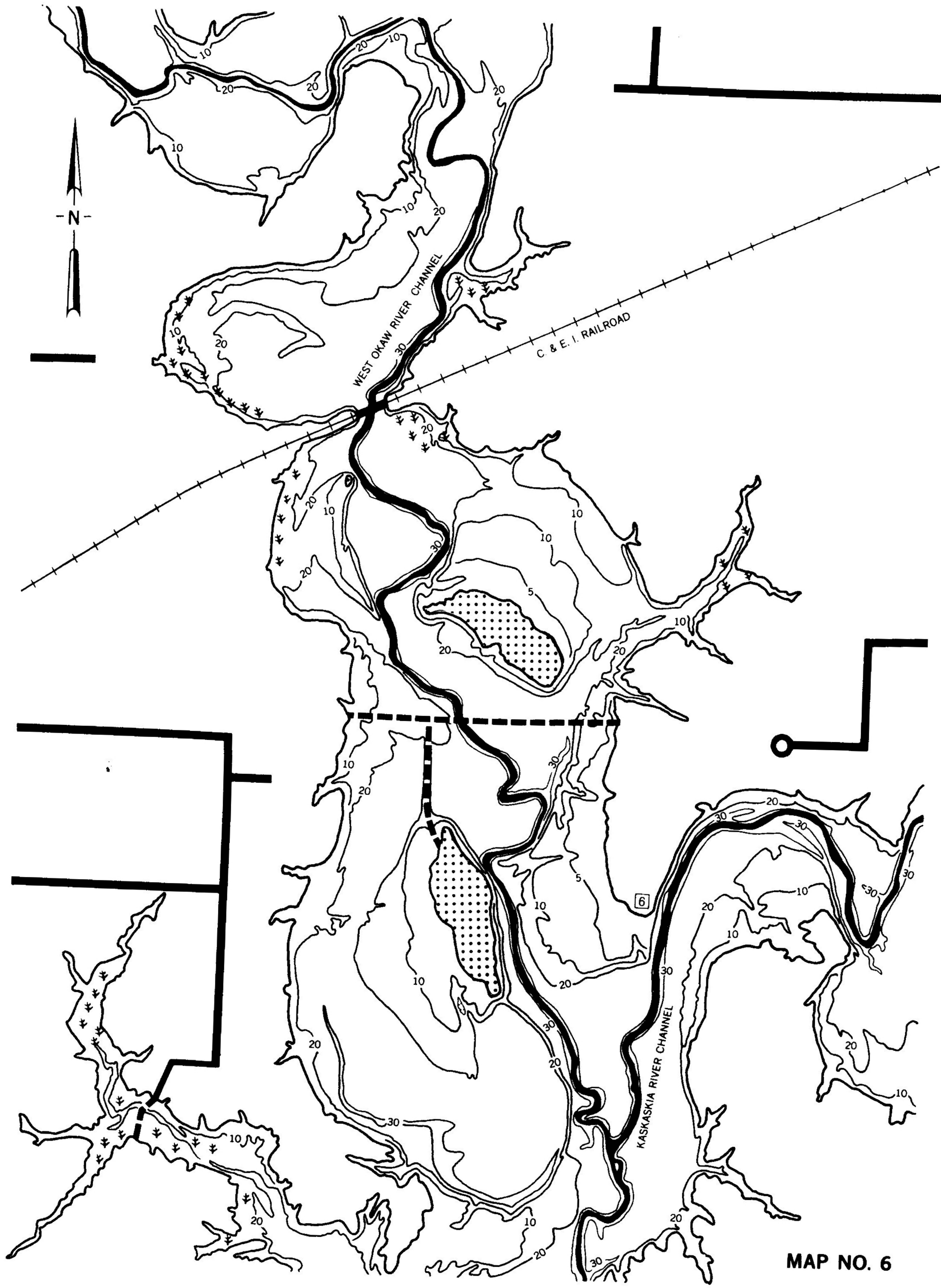
MAP NO. 3



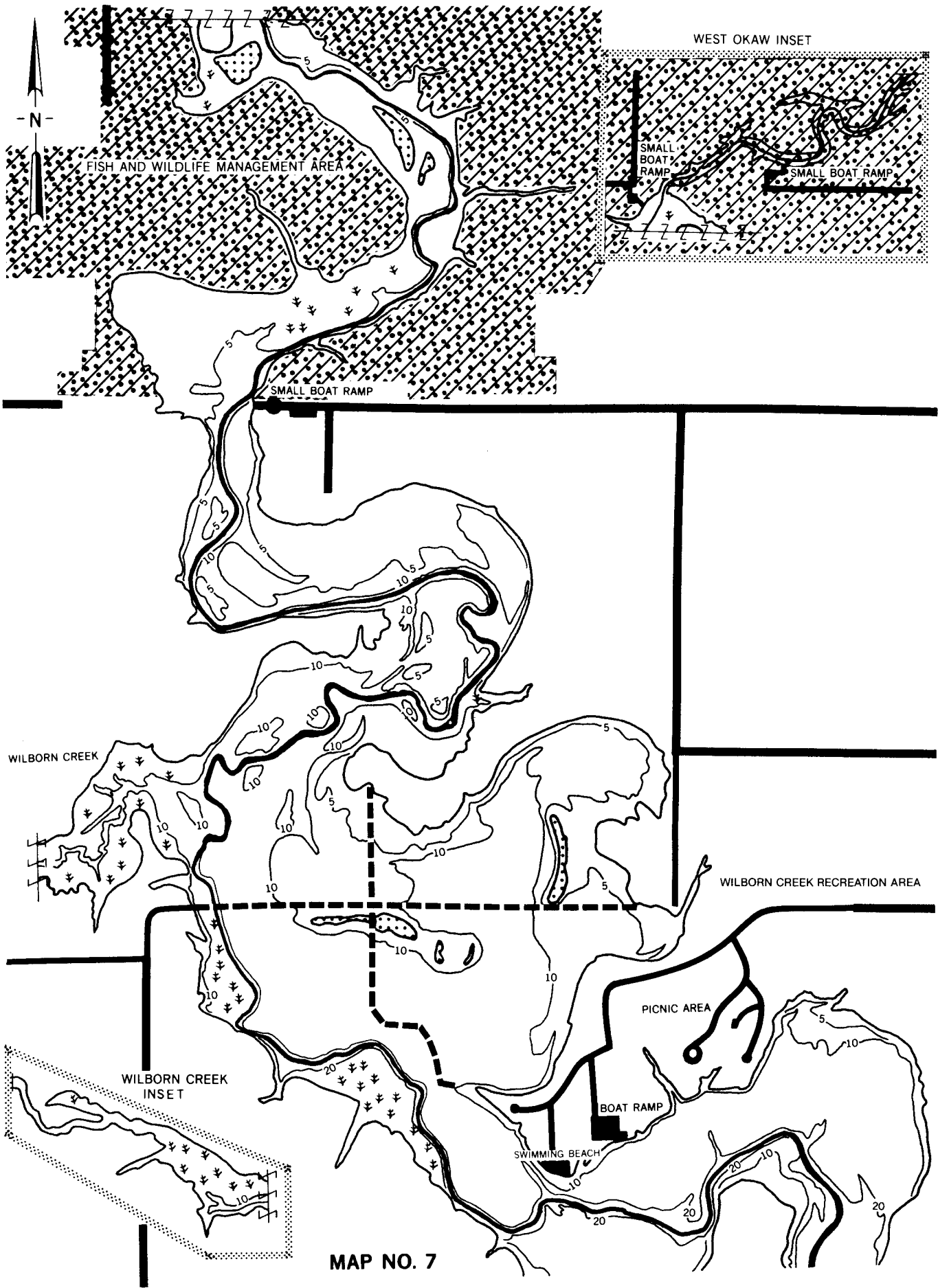




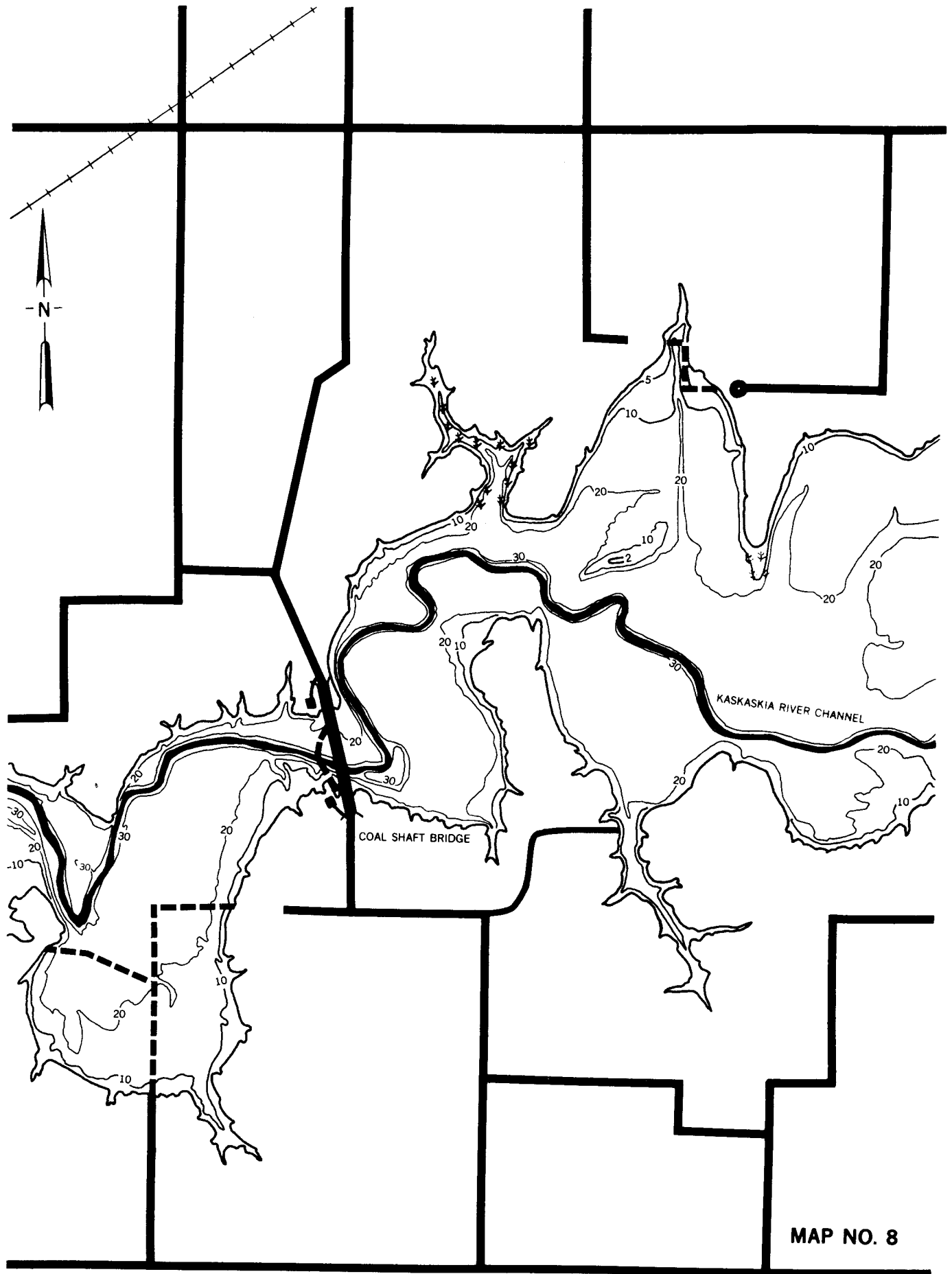
MAP NO. 5



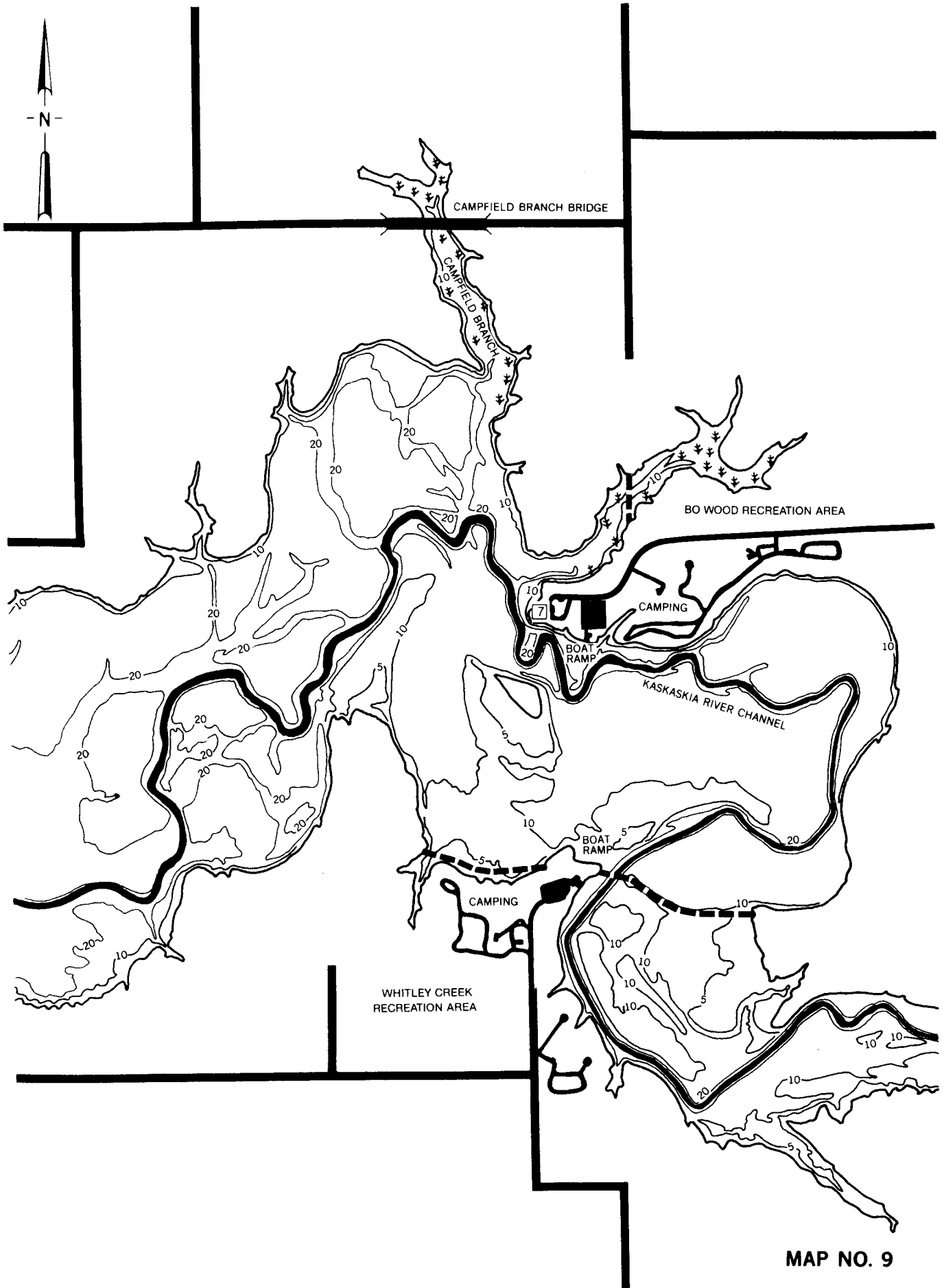
MAP NO. 6

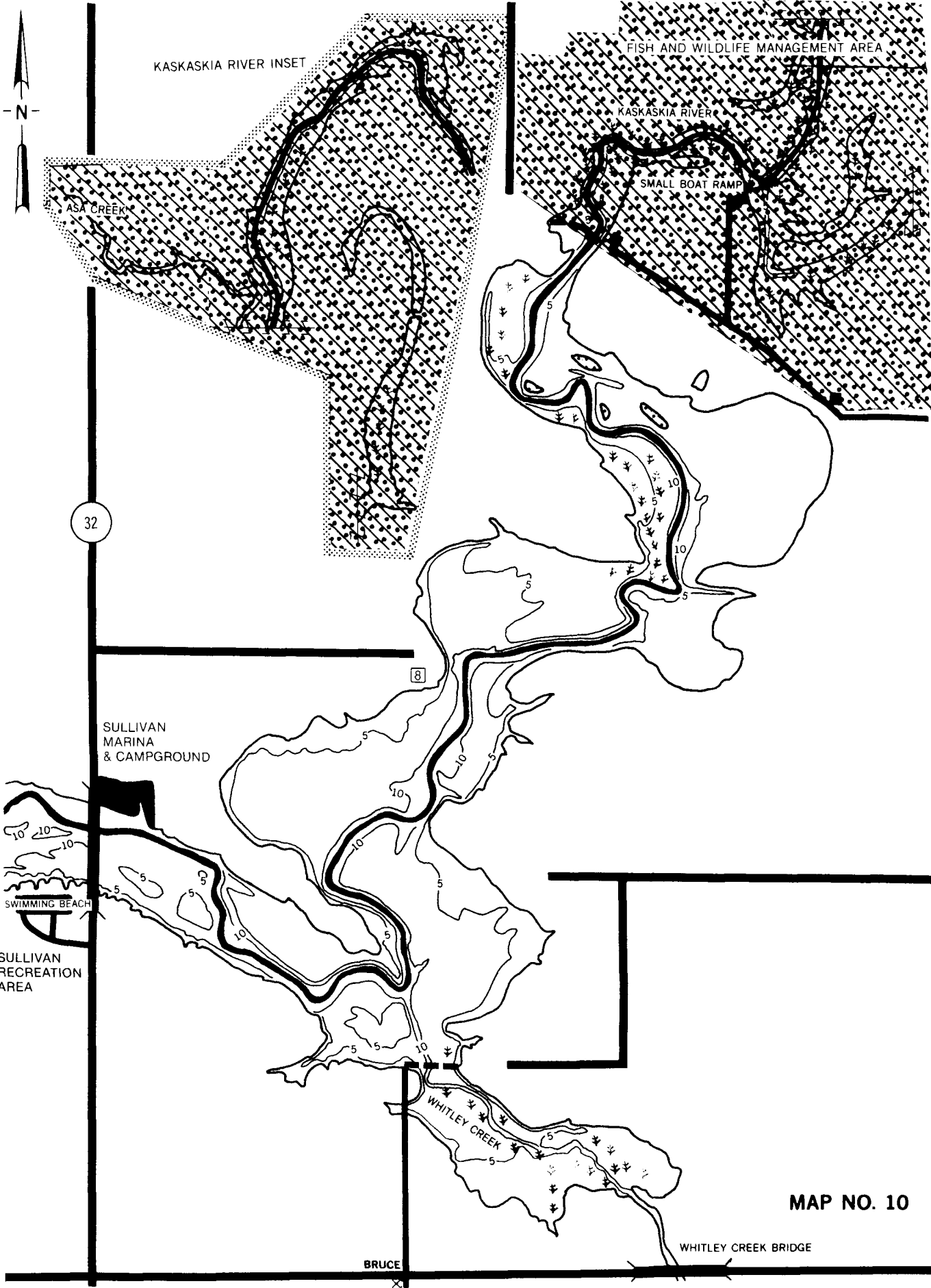


MAP NO. 7



MAP NO. 8





MAP NO. 10



# FEDERAL AID IN SPORT FISH RESTORATION

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives monies authorized by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950 (Dingell-Johnson Act) and its 1984 Wallop-Breaux Amendment. This act imposes a manufacturer's tax on fishing tackle, "flasher" type fish finders, electric trolling motors, motorboat fuel, and import duties on fishing tackle and boats.

This money is received as a 75% reimbursement on approved projects. At Lake Shelbyville such monies are spent for:

- Hatchery stocking of walleye and muskellune;
- Rearing of largemouth bass and walleye fingerlings in the Fin and Feathers Nursery Pond;
- Stocking of threadfin shad to improve the forage base;
- Placement of discarded Christmas trees for fish habitat;
- Conducting a variety of biological surveys to monitor fish populations, evaluate past management activities, and set regulations;
- Creel surveys studying angler's catch to determine the quality of fishing, angler preferences, and trends;
- And a portion of boat ramp operation and maintenance costs on the Lake Shelbyville Fish and Wildlife Area.

This Sport Fish Restoration Program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in partnership with the states.



**Illinois**  
Department of  
**Natural Resources**