



POWERTON LAKE

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

Location - Located in west-central Illinois, two miles southwest of Pekin Illinois in Tazewell County.

Description- Powerton Lake was constructed and filled in 1971 by Commonwealth Edison Company. Its' purpose was to provide cooling water for a fossil fuel fired electric generation facility. Powerton Station was constructed in the 1930's, but greatly expanded in 1971. Water quality law made it necessary for the plant to construct a cooling lake, rather than using the Illinois River for cooling the heat exchanger. Powerton Lake was built in a drainage district adjacent to the Illinois and Mackinaw Rivers and encompasses 1426.0 acres of water. The Lake was built in the shape of an extended rectangle and has very little structure. The maximum depth is 18 feet with an average depth of about 8 feet. Water flow is from the plant discharge on the East side and flow is directed toward the west by a series of baffles. Water turn-over is about every 48 hours through the plant intake at maximum cooling flow capacity. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources signed a cooperative agreement with Commonwealth Edison Company in 1984 to open Powerton for fishing and waterfowl hunting. That lease was renewed in 2010 to extend another 10 years. There is a double concrete ramp and parking for 90 cars at the access which is located along the Manito Blacktop on the south side of the lake. In 2014 a new access facility is planned to be constructed. The lake will be closed to all public access while this facility is being constructed in the summer of 2014.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES- In 2001, blue catfish stocks were obtained from Arkansas and stocked into Powerton Lake with the hope that it would create an excellent trophy fishery for this fish. The catfish grew quickly in the warm water of the lake and had attained a size of 50 pounds by 2011. The lake has been stocked annually with this species and will be evaluated for natural reproduction in the fall of 2014. Striped bass hybrids have been stocked in Powerton to provide an open water predator on gizzard shad. The success of these stockings is currently being evaluated. Although they are not game fish, alligator gar were obtained from the federal hatchery system and stocked into Powerton. The purpose of this stocking was to re-establish this rare fish in Illinois waters. We were able to collect one of the initial stocking of 78 fish in a survey this summer. In two years it had grown from 21.0 inches to 49.2 inches in length and weighed 27 pounds. We stocked a total of 160,000 smallmouth bass 1.5 inches in length in order to re-establish a good breeding population of these fish in coming years.

STATUS OF THE FISHERY - Powerton Lakes' fish population is influenced greatly by the elevated temperature of the water. Fish growth is very fast but reproduction is negatively affected.

LARGEMOUTH AND SMALLMOUTH BASS – Bass populations have been recently affected by limited reproduction. Many 8-15 inch smallmouth bass are found at Powerton, however. These fish grow rapidly and are in good body condition. They provide excellent fishing in April and May.

CHANNEL CATFISH – There is an excellent population of fast growing channel catfish. We were able to collect 267 fish in our fall sampling effort in 2013. These fish ranged from 4.7 to 19.3 inches in length. Growth and condition of most of the collected channel cat was within normal limits for Illinois waters.

HYBRID STRIPED BASS – We were able to collect 59 hybrid strippers during our fall sample. These fish were in excellent growth condition. Thirty nine percent of the strippers collected were 16.5 inches or longer in size and weighed up to 3.5 pounds.

BLUE CATFISH – Since these fish were initially stocked in 2001, they have grown very quickly. We now have an abundance of harvestable blue catfish at Powerton. We were able to sample 43 blue cats during our 2013 fall samples. These fish weighed up to 13 pounds. We have had reports of 50+ pound fish being caught in 2013.

ADDITIONAL SPECIES – We were able to collect a total of 15 species of fish in our collection for the fall of 2012. They included: Gizzard shad, threadfin shad, bigmouth buffalo, bluegill, redear sunfish, carp, smallmouth buffalo, freshwater drum, brook silversides silver carp, and green sunfish. Not collected were: Pirate perch, shortnose gar, alligator gar, and bighead carp.

FISHING REGULATIONS – Statewide fishing regulations apply at this lake. (see current Illinois Fishing information booklet and the IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/> for specific details).

Additional site specific regulations:

Boats – unlimited HP

Pole and line fishing only

Black bass – 18” minimum-one fish limit

Walleye – sauger – 18” minimum, three fish limit

Channel catfish – blue catfish – 6 fish limit

Striped bass hybrid & White bass – 10 fish per day/ 3 fish – 17”>