



BRAIDWOOD LAKE

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Braidwood Lake is located IN Will County approximately 1¼ miles south of the Village of Braidwood adjacent to U.S. Route 53.

DESCRIPTION – Braidwood Lake is a 2,640 acre, partially perched cooling lake. When impounded in 1981 several old strip-mine pits were flooded within the lake proper. No horsepower limitations; maximum speed limit is 40 mph except in designated "no wake" and "hazard" areas; working gasoline engine required as main propulsion unit; boats under 14' are not recommended. County Line Road Access (south access) has a four-lane concrete boat ramp with 35 car/trailer parking. An additional 75+ car lot is located adjacent to the ramp area. Cemetery Road Access (north access) has a two-lane concrete boat ramp with parking for 35 car/trailers. A majority of the shoreline is open to bank fishing, and these areas are clearly marked. Access to the interior islands by anglers is prohibited. Steep drop-offs, rock piles, man-made habitat, current and thermal breaks and woody cover are all present. The nature of this lake requires extreme care in boating and a good topographic map is well worth the expense.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES - The fishery is evaluated via biennial major surveys and species-specific ancillary surveys. Fish habitat enhancement has been conducted for several years and most recently involves the installation of commercially made units. Braidwood Lake supports a persistent phytoplankton bloom which suppresses rooted aquatic vegetation.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY –Braidwood Lake receives annual stockings of largemouth bass, blue catfish and most recently hybrid striped bass. *No special mercury advisory or other contaminant-related consumption advisories pertain.* Below is a brief description of the major sportfish species in this water body.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Negligible spawning success resulted in a supplemental stocking program which was initiated in 2006. More than 25,000 4" fingerlings were added in 2014. Bass from the past two stockings were very prevalent in the 2014 fall survey and comprised nearly 75% of the total collection. Recruitment looks favorable with good year class distribution and adult bass collected in excess of 20". Over 38% of the adult bass were 15".

BLUEGILL – Found throughout the lake, bluegills are more commonly collected in or near rip-rapped shorelines. Larger fish seem to be in decline, as the average size bluegill in the 2014 survey was 5.5". Bluegills larger than 7" are not common. Redear sunfish are present at much lower densities but are generally larger in size.

CHANNEL CATFISH – A combination of very successful natural reproduction and high survival of young fish leads to a population dominated by smaller fish. Channel catfish collected in the 2014 survey ranged from 4" to 25" and 5.9 lbs. As it has been for the past several years, the average size is just over 12" and ½ pound.

BLUE CATFISH – Initially stocked in 2008, blue catfish have shown excellent growth rates and provide an exciting compliment to species available to the angler at Braidwood Lake. The largest collected in the 2014 survey weighed 15 pounds but reports of anglers catching fish in excess of 20 pounds are not uncommon.

HYBRID STRIPED BASS – A new and developing fishery, hybrid stripers were first stocked in 2011. An addition of 23,000 fingerlings was completed in 2014. According to site reports, angling for stripers was not as good in 2014 as the previous year and the 2014 survey reflects that as few were recovered.

ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES – Excess production at the IDNR hatchery systems has allowed for the stocking of redear sunfish on a few occasions and while not as prevalent as bluegill, larger specimens are caught. Flathead catfish were also stocked several years ago and a remnant population exists today. Braidwood Lake is maintained by periodically pumping water from the Kankakee River. As a result, the lake supports a variety of fish species which include common carp, quillback, freshwater drum and others. Braidwood Lake is supported by a thriving gizzard and threadfin shad forage base as well as various other minnow species.

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

Additional Site Specific fishing regulations:

Open daily from 6:00 a.m. to sunset from March 1 to ten days prior to the opening of the waterfowl season.

All fish species - Two pole and line fishing only.

Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass – 15” minimum length limit; 3 fish daily creel limit.

Hybrid Striped Bass – 10 fish daily creel/3 fish 17” or longer

CONTACT INFORMATION – Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Area: 815/263-0063.
IDNR Fisheries County Biologist: 630/553-6680.

Braidwood Lake Map

