



# SKOKIE LAGOONS

## FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY

### FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

**LOCATION** – Located in Glencoe and Winnetka east of the Eden’s Expressway (I-90) between Dundee and Willow Roads.

**DESCRIPTION** – The Skokie Lagoons are located in the Skokie Valley which lies between two ridges of glacial drift. The southern portion of this valley was a long bay of ancient Lake Chicago. As the lake level receded, this bay became a large marsh. The Skokie River which drained the upper watershed, ran into the marsh at the north end and exited at the south end as the North Branch of the Chicago River. The Potawatomi Indians referred to the large marsh as “Chewab Skokie” meaning “big, wet prairie”. Historically, the marsh had an abundance of fish and wildlife. In 1929, planning began to convert the marsh into a series of lagoons. By 1933, the Forest Preserve District had acquired most of the Skokie marsh so when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created in 1933, ten companies of workers were allocated to undertake the project. Construction continued until 1942, at which point four million cubic yards of earth had been excavated and the present day Skokie Lagoons were dug.

Skokie Lagoon’s seven pools cover 242 acres; maximum depth 14.9 feet; average depth 5.5 feet. There is a boat ramp at Tower Road; concessions with boat/electric motor rental, canoe/kayak rental, live bait/tackle, food, and soft drinks open during summer months. No fish cleaning station is available.

**MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:** The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) periodically spot treats aquatic vegetation at main access points; in 2013, water hyacinth and water lettuce were identified, both are aquatic invasive species so research is being done to determine their origin and hardiness. In 1993, the Skokie Lagoons and it’s watershed were rehabilitated thru a joint project involving the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Northern Illinois Planning Commission and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

**STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY** – Skokie Lagoons receive annual stockings of 2200 - 8” to 10” channel catfish, 1200 - 8” northern pike, 11,000 - 2” walleye. Below is a brief description of catchable game species in this water body.

**LARGEMOUTH BASS** – In 2007, 56 bass were collected in one hour of shocking. Fish measured between 2.5” to 19.3” long and weighed up to 4.1 lbs.; 79% of bass collected were over 12” long (sexually mature), 51% exceeded 14” (legal length), 29% exceeded 15” and 15% exceeded 16” long. This size structure helps maintain high reproductive potential for bass and better pan fishing for the angling public. In 2013, 22,000 2” largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked to supplement the fishery. These data have been similarly confirmed by IHSA High School tournament results and FPDCC survey data. Bass fishermen can be very successful fishing in the Skokie Lagoons!

**WALLEYE** – In 2007, 17 walleye were collected in one hour of electrofishing, fish ranged from 16.2” to 27.1” long, the largest fish weighed 7.3 lbs; 65% of the walleye collected were over 18” long (legal size) providing excellent angling opportunities. Incidental surveys have confirmed a very healthy walleye population in the Skokie Lagoons!

**BLUEGILL** – In 2007, 72 Bluegill were collected in one hour of electrofishing. They ranged in size from 2” to 7.5” long and weighed up to 0.38 lbs.; 39% exceeded 6” long and 3% exceeded 7.5” in length.

**BLACK and WHITE CRAPPIE** – 1 black crappie and 6 white crappie were collected in 2007. Fish measured from 5” to 11.5” and weighed up to 0.6 lbs.; both crappies had fish in the 11” to 12” range. Crappie are difficult to collect with electrofishing gear so once they’re established they reproduce consistently and their maximum size is dependent on the lake having a diverse and abundant predator population which Skokie Lagoons has!

**CHANNEL CATFISH** – Channel catfish are very popular amongst anglers at the Skokie Lagoons, they’re stocked to maintain their presence and provide sportfishing opportunities.

**ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES:** Sixteen fish species have recently been collected including the above; pumpkinseed sunfish, orange spot sunfish, green sunfish, hybrid sunfish, yellow bass, yellow bullhead, common carp, goldfish, golden shiners, white suckers and gizzard shad were present. Northern pike are stocked and routinely caught by fishermen but were missed the last survey.

**FISHING REGULATIONS –**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Daily Limit</b>	<b>Length Limit</b>
Largemouth/ Smallmouth bass	6	14”
Walleye	6	18”
Channel catfish	6	None
Bluegill/Sunfish	15	None
Crappie	15	None

**Two Pole and Line Fishing Only**

(see current Illinois Fishing Information booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/> for specific details).

**ADDITIONAL SITE SPECIFIC REGULATIONS:**

Boaters - Trolling motor only (no gas motors attached)

**CONTACT INFORMATION –**

FPDCC Fisheries Office: 708/403-6951

IDNR District Fisheries Fish Biologist: 815/675-2319.

**Skokie Lagoons Lake Map**

