



Newton Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Newton Lake is a cooling reservoir currently owned by Dynegy. It was constructed by Central Illinois Power Company in 1975, and was leased by the IDNR and opened for fishing in 1980.

Location - Newton Lake is located in Jasper County, approximately 6 miles southwest of Newton Illinois and 18 miles southeast of Effingham Illinois.

Area - Newton Lake has a surface area of 1,750 acres, an average depth of 16 feet, and a maximum depth of 40 feet. The lake has 52 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 30,720 acres.

Status of the Sport Fishery – The sport fishery in Newton Lake is best known for the trophy bass fishery. Other conventional sport fish include white bass, channel catfish, crappie, and bluegill. The lake also contains large numbers of common carp and gizzard shad. Newton Lake is open year-round with the best fishing opportunities from fall through spring. 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 size structure of the bass population in Newton Lake is almost identical to last year and remains excellent. The percentage of bass greater than 18" remained stable, and comprised 18% of the total population. The catch per effort was also stable at an incredible 178 bass per hour! Over the last few years this lake has improved from a very good bass fishery to one of the premier bass lakes in the Midwest. Recruitment continues to be good and, with their excellent body condition (Wr 97) and growth rates well above average the fishery should remain stable for the near future. For 2015, Newton Lake should provide excellent angling opportunities. Anglers can expect to catch large numbers of fish from 15" – 20" in length ranging from 2 – 6 pounds. The majority of bass exceeding the 18" minimum will weigh between 3.5 – 7 pounds.

Channel Catfish - Natural reproduction is tremendous in this cooling lake. As a result, the PSD and Wr have been historically well below optimal. More recently, the growth rate and size structure of the population has improved. Although still dominated by smaller fish, the population contains an adequate number of large fish to provide a good quality fishery. For 2015, the majority of the catch will be comprised of fish under 2 lbs. with some larger fish up to 4 lbs. These fish are in excellent body condition (Wr 101), and because of their abundance there is no daily creel or size limit. The warm temperatures in this cooling lake provide excellent fishing opportunities fall through spring. Bank fishing opportunities have been expanded to include the shoreline bordering all non-restricted areas of the lake. For boat anglers, drift fishing the flats in both the warm and cool arms of the lake can be productive year round.

White Bass – The white bass population has successfully recruited each year since they were first discovered in 1994, and with few exceptions their numbers have remained relatively constant. The catch rate in 2014 increased slightly but remains near the historic average. Angling opportunities for this species continue to look good for the coming year. The population continues to exhibit excellent growth rates and body condition (Wr 97). Two large year classes of fish will contribute to the fishery in 2015. Most of these fish will range from 10" – 16" with larger fish up to 18" common. Fish the main lake points or troll the flats to locate fish and then cast to schools.

Crappie - Black crappie numbers remain poor but, growth rates and body condition (Wr 97) are good. In spite of the relatively low numbers, some anglers successfully target crappie each spring and consistently catch limits. Best fishing is around tree tops in the warm arm in early spring.

Bluegill – The bluegill population is in extremely poor condition. High summer temperatures (Newton Lake has very little thermal refuge) and a dense population of shad contribute to poor reproduction and slow growth. This lake is not recommended for bluegill.

Fishing Regulations:

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted Bass	3 daily	18"
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie	10 daily	10"
White Bass	Unlimited except no more than 3 over 17"	None
Channel Catfish	None	None

Additional Regulations: Two pole and line fishing only. Newton Lake is closed to fishing during the 7 days of the regular shotgun deer season. The cold arm of the lake is closed daily to fishing during the regular duck and Canada goose seasons from one-half hour before sunrise until 1:00 pm. Tournaments are prohibited in June, July, and August. *Consult the current Illinois Fishing Regulations Booklet for more detailed information.

For tournament permits and additional information: Newton Lake State Park 618/783-3478.

Additional contacts: DNR Fisheries – 618/393-6732.

Updated: 12/17/14