



# East Fork Lake

## Fisheries Fact Sheet

East Fork Lake was constructed by the City of Olney in 1971 to serve as a water supply reservoir. Annual boat stickers and tournament permits are required.

**Location:** East Fork Lake is located in Richland County, approximately 1 mile north of Olney Illinois.

**Area:** East Fork Lake has a surface area of 935 acres, a maximum depth of 40 feet, and a mean depth of 15 feet. The lake has 25 miles of shoreline and a watershed of 9,982 acres.

**Status of the Sport Fishery:** The sport fish population in East Fork Lake is comprised primarily of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, white crappie, and channel catfish, and is stocked annually with walleye. The lake also contains common carp and yellow bullheads. 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 improved slightly over the past year. The catch per effort rose to 109 bass/hr. (25% increase) and, the number of fish over 15" in length increased as well. In spite of these improvements only 20% of the population exceeds the 15" minimum length limit. The number of fish just below the 15" minimum length limit has increased significantly in the past year and, if mortality rates can be reduced for bass > 15", the increased number of smaller bass (12" – 14") should help to further improve the size structure of the. The body condition for all sizes of bass remained relatively stable but, fell just below the minimum standard (Wr = 89). Bass fishing should be fair in 2015 with most keeper fish ranging from 15" – 19" in length and weighing between 1.6 – 3.8 pounds.

**Bluegill** – The bluegill population also showed some improvement, but the size structure of the population remains poor. The 2014 PSD was the highest in more than two decades and a few larger fish > 8" are finally beginning to appear within the population. If this positive trend continues it should eventually result in a significant improvement in the size structure of the population but for now the fishery is still comprised almost entirely of fish under 7" in length. Body condition is also improved (Wr 97). Fishing in 2015 should be fair with most keepers 6" – 8" in length and 0.25 – 0.33 lbs.

**Crappie** - The white crappie population showed some improvement in the past year but remains below optimal. The population is currently dominated by a strong year class of 8" – 9.5" fish. There are also a large number of 6" – 8" fish that are growing rapidly and should contribute to the creel by late 2015. All sizes of fish were in excellent condition (Wr 98). The percentage of fish over 10" in length fell over the past year to 11%, down 3 percent from the previous year. However, the number of larger fish could improve by late 2015 if growth rates remain good for the large year class of smaller fish. For the spring of 2015, most keeper fish will range from 9" – 11" in length and weigh from 0.5 – 0.75 lbs with a few larger fish up to 14".

**Channel Catfish** – Catfish numbers remain low in East Fork Lake, but the average size of the fish is exceptional. Most fish will range from 3 – 10 pounds with larger fish up to 15 pounds common. Body condition of these fish is excellent (Wr 109). This lake provides some good bank fishing opportunities. Drift fishing the main lake is also very productive.

**Walleye** – Four year classes were collected in this year’s survey, but the catch rate of just over 5 per hour was well below average. While the number of walleye is down, a significant percentage of the remaining population is comprised of older larger fish, with many in the 3 – 7 lbs. range.

**Fishing Regulations:**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Daily Creel Limit</b>	<b>Minimum Length Limit</b>
Largemouth Bass	6	15”
Walleye	6	None
White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie	25 collectively	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	25 collectively	None
Channel Catfish	6	None

**Additional Regulations:** Two pole and line fishing only. City boat stickers and tournament permits are required. Boat stickers are available at Olney City Hall and local bait shops. Tournament permits are available at Olney City Hall.

**Contacts:** Olney City Hall 618/393-2130; DNR Fisheries 618/393-6732.

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