



Little Grassy Lake

Fisheries Fact Sheet

Little Grassy Lake is a deep, clear, 1000-acre impoundment located in the south portion of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge between Marion and Carbondale in Williamson County Illinois. The Little Grassy Lake fishery is cooperatively managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The lake is surrounded by forested land and has four boat ramps plus a marina.

Largemouth bass: The Little Grassy Lake largemouth bass population is generally well balanced, and contains fish ranging in size from fingerlings to trophies. In 2014, bass abundance was good--94 were collected per hour of electrofishing (goal is 60/hour). Bass quality, as measured by length, was easily within the management plan goal range with 46% larger than 12 inches and 13% over 15 inches. As is often the case in clear, infertile lakes, bass body condition (measured by relative weight) remained somewhat lower than the goal but, the 2014 sample included bass over 5 pounds. Threadfin shad stockings are part of an ongoing plan for improving bass body condition, and annual spring stockings will be continued as long as these fish are available.

Bluegill: Little Grassy Lake bluegill abundance in spring 2014, as measured by catch-per-unit-effort, was adequate at 148 per hour, and the proportion of these fish larger than 6 inches remained excellent at 72%, which exceeded the management plan goal. Bluegill larger than 7 inches comprised 50% of the sample. Average bluegill body condition was slightly lower than the desirable range.

Redear: Little Grassy Lake redear abundance in the spring 2014 sample was lower than that of bluegill, as usual, at 49 per hour of electrofishing. However, redear quality based on length continued to be impressive, with 90% of fish over 7 inches, 69% larger than 8 inches, and 19% exceeding 9 inches in length. In fact, this was the highest quality sample of redear documented by IDNR staff in Little Grassy Lake in 20 years. Similar to other species in this relatively infertile water body, Little Grassy redear body condition was slightly lower than the goal range.

Regulations in effect: Largemouth bass – 12 to 15 inch protective slot limit, 6 per day creel. Channel catfish – 6 per day creel limit. No other size or creel limits are in effect. Outboard motor limit is 10 hp. Consult the Illinois Fishing Information booklet for additional regulation information.

Fees: A user permit is required to access the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, and a special use permit is required for competitive events. Information may be obtained by calling the refuge visitor center at 618-997-3344.

Additional Fisheries Information may be obtained by calling IDNR District Biologist Chris Bickers at 618-993-7094.