**Rend Lake**

**2022 Fisheries Fact Sheet**

The construction of Rend Lake was completed in 1971 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The lake was formed by constructing a 2 mile long dam across the Big Muddy River floodplain.

**Location –** Rend Lake is located in Franklin and Jefferson counties along IL Interstate 57 approximately 15 miles south of Mt. Vernon just northwest of Benton.

**Area –** At normal pool (405.0 feet), Rend Lake has a surface area of 20,633 acres, a maximum depth of 35 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake is thirteen miles long and three miles wide, and has 162 miles of shoreline. It is the second largest impoundment in Illinois.

**Status of the Sport Fishery –** There are more than 38 species of fish in Rend Lake. The fish population is surveyed annually, and summaries of some of the more popular sport fisheries below are based on the results of the most recent fall population survey.

**Largemouth Bass –** Bass fishing at Rend Lake should be good in 2022.During the 2021 survey, bass were collected at a rate of 109 fish/hr which represents the third highest catch rate in the last ten years. The average catch rate during the last 10 surveys is 74 fish/hr. Currently 26% of the bass population exceeds the 14-inch minimum length limit, 17% are greater than 15 inches, and 3% are over 18 inches. Two spotted bass (13-15 inches) were collected in the 2021 survey.

 The main problem with largemouth bass in Rend Lake appears to be reproduction. Reproduction is dependent on spring water levels which can vary dramatically at Rend Lake. This results in the need for an annual supplemental LMB stocking to offset poor reproduction years. Just over 393,000 bass fingerlings have been stocked in Rend Lake in the last ten years including 16,520 bass fingerlings (5-6 inches) in 2021.

**Crappie –** The fishing prospects for crappie remain excellent for the coming year. The 2021 catch rate for crappie (39 fish/net) was below the five-year average catch rate of 73 fish/net. However, the air temperatures during the three-day trap netting survey in late October were much higher (70s F) than the typically average temperatures for the trap netting time period (50s F). As a result, the crappie had not moved into the shoreline areas where they are susceptible to netting. The crappie electrofishing catch rate of 94 fish/hr was more than double the 5-year average of 41 fish/hr. The white crappie electrofishing catch rate of 30 fish/hr was just under the 10-year average of 32 fish/hr. There is a large group of 6-8 inch black crappie present in the lake. The black crappie electrofishing catch rate of 64 fish/hr was the highest ever recorded at Rend and more than double the 10-year average of 26 fish/hr.

Thirteen percent of the crappie collected during the netting survey were over 10 inches and another 13% were between 9-10 inches. Only 1% of the crappie collected during the netting survey were over 12 inches and no crappie over 15 inches were collected in the electrofishing or netting surveys. The small percentage of crappie over 12 inches and lack of crappie over 15 inches suggests that crappie harvest is high. Eighty percent of the crappie collected during the netting survey were white crappie.

**Bluegill -** Bluegill will be abundant in the coming year with most keepers measuring 7-8" in length and averaging 1/3 lb or less. A few bluegill over 8 inches were collected during the survey.

**Catfish -** The 2021 catch rate for channel catfish was 15 fish/hr which was just under the five year average catch rate of 16 fish/hr. In the coming year channel catfish from 1–3 lbs should be abundant with larger fish up to 6 lbs common. Twenty-six flathead catfish were collected during the survey and ranged from 8-40 inches in length with the largest weighing 32 lbs.

**Striped Bass Hybrids** - Eleven striped bass hybrids (5-23 inches) were collected in the 2021 survey. The number of hybrid striped bass remains low. Since the stocking program was revived in 2008 a total of 268,405 hybrid stripers have been stocked into Rend Lake. Striped bass hybrids were stocking in June (37,924 1.4-inch fish) and August (19,500 4-inch fish) of 2021.

**White Bass –** The 2021 catch rate for white bass was 15 fish/hr which was higher than the ten-year average catch rate of 9 fish/hr. Anglers can expect the catchable population in the coming year to be largely comprised of fish 12-15 inches and weighing 0.6-1.5 lbs.

**Fishing Regulations:** \*Consult the current Illinois Fishing Regulations Booklet for more detailed information.

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| **Species** | **Creel Limit** | **Minimum Length Limit** |
| Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted Bass | 6 | 14” |
| White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie | 25 daily, not more than 10 exceeding 10” |  |
| White, Yellow, or Hybrid Striped Bass | 20 daily, not more than 3 exceeding 17” |  |
| Channel Catfish | None | None |

**Additional Contacts:** **Rend Lake U.S Army Corps of Engineers** 618/724-2493

 **Rend Lake Marina** 618/724-7651

 **IDNR Fisheries** – Shawn Hirst 618-559-5009

**Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park** – 618-629-2320

**Fish Attractors** – for a map showing types and locations of fish habitat added to Rend Lake please visit the following website: visitrendlake.com