



# HEIDECKE LAKE FISHERIES FACT SHEET

One responsibility of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is to provide outdoor recreational opportunities to the residents of Illinois. One means of providing these opportunities has been to lease valuable recreational land and water from utility companies. Heidecke Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area is one such area operated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) in cooperation with Midwest Generation Company.

**LOCATION:** Heidecke Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, is located in Grundy County approximately 1 mile south and 8 miles east of Morris, between Illinois Route 47 and Interstate Route 55 on Lorenzo/Pine Bluff Road.

**DESCRIPTION:** Perched former cooling lake impounding 1,955 surface acres of water with 75% of shoreline comprised of rock rip-rapped dikes. A "safe harbor" created by breakwaters was constructed in 1993. No horsepower limitations; maximum speed is 40 mph except in designated "no wake" areas; working gasoline engine required as main propulsion unit; boats under 14' are not recommended. Three lane concrete boat ramp with fully blacktopped 100+ car/trailer parking available. Boat launch is handicapped accessible. Zebra mussels have been found in Heidecke Lake and boaters should take appropriate measures upon departure. Shore angler access is located on the east side of lake off Dresden Road with portions of the center and east dike open to bank fishing. A handicapped fishing pier is located on the east side of the lake as well.

**HISTORY & STATUS of the SPORT FISHERY:** The IDNR Division of Fisheries has been active in the management of Heidecke Lake since pre-impoundment in the mid-1970's. Heidecke Lake (formerly Collins Lake) opened to fishing in August of 1980 and receives annual stockings of a variety of sport fish including: walleye, hybrid striped bass and pure muskellunge (biennially). Supported by a thriving gizzard shad forage base, Heidecke Lake offers a variety of fish species to the angler. The decommissioning and razing of Collins Station has resulted in the cessation of thermal loading and water circulation.

**Largemouth & Smallmouth Bass** - In the late 1970's and early 1980's, largemouth bass dominated the black bass fishery but over time this changed. Even though an intensive stocking program attempted to bolster the largemouth bass population, no appreciable improvement was noted in either IDNR fisheries surveys or, more importantly, in angler's creels. At the same time, the smallmouth bass population was flourishing via natural reproduction and recruitment, without the benefit of additional hatchery stockings. The most recent addition of hatchery-reared largemouth occurred in 2010 when 29,000+ surplus fingerlings were added. To improve spawning efforts for largemouth bass, artificial spawning logs have been placed at various locations in the lake. The smallmouth bass population continues to dominate the black bass fishery and this species was collected in a nearly two-to-one margin in comparison with largemouth bass in the IDNR 2010 fall survey. The average size smallmouth bass collected increased from the previous survey (10.5" to 13.0") and eclipsed the long-term average by several inches. Largemouth bass collected in the fall 2010 survey exhibited an average length of 9.6" which is nearly one inch greater than the long term average. On a positive note the total number of largemouth bass collected which were 8 inches and larger was the best it has been in nearly ten years.

**Channel Catfish** - This species provides the bulk of the action for most anglers and catches of channel catfish up to and exceeding ten pounds are not uncommon. The channel catfish population at Heidecke is comprised of larger average-size fish with the opportunity to catch a trophy fish a reality. The average size channel catfish collected in 2010 showed an increase from the previous survey (from 21.0" to 22.3") and eclipsed the long-term average by more than two inches.

**Striped and Hybrid Striped Bass** - Rapid growth rates resulting in large size fish and overall tenacity as fighters have made "stripers" extremely popular with fishermen. Hybrid striped bass are stocked annually at a rate of 10/acre. The 2010 fall survey produced an all-time high number of hybrid stripers, eclipsing the previous record which was recently set in 2006. The majority of this collection was comprised of young fish with nearly one-fourth exceeding 17 inches and 17% meeting or exceeding what is considered "memorable" size (20 inches). White bass were also collected in good numbers and averaged 12 inches and one pound. Yellow bass were very prevalent in the 2010 survey and averaged 7.7 inches. NOTE! Yellow bass, are not included in the aggregate "striper" limit.

**Walleye** - The 2010 survey collection numbers, while lower than either 2006 or 2008, were more reflective of collection numbers of the earlier surveys. The average size for walleyes collected in 2010 was 15.5", 0.4" lower than the previous survey and nearly a full inch less than the long-term average. Legal size fish and larger comprised 44% of the 2010 collection and nearly 15% were of preferred size (20" or larger). Walleye are stocked annually at a rate of roughly 40/acre.

**Muskellunge** - Both hybrid (tiger) muskie and pure muskellunge have been stocked into Heidecke Lake, with the last addition of tigers occurring in 1997. Stocked from 1980-87, pure muskies were stocked once again in 1999 and are now released on a biennial rotation (11-inch fingerlings @ 1/acre). The average size fish collected during 2011 spring trap netting was 36.1" with fish collected up to 48.8".

**FISHING REGULATIONS:** Site specific angling regulations. Two pole and line fishing only, all other statewide regulations apply.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Walleye	3	16"
Channel Catfish	6	none
Largemouth/Smallmouth Bass	SLOT LIMIT! 2 fish under 12" and one fish over 15" (combined or aggregate)	
White, Pure & Hybrid Striped Bass	10 (singly or in aggregate)	3 fish 17" or larger

Swimming, wading, water skiing and sail boating are prohibited.

Heidecke Lake is open to fishing from April 1 to ten days prior to the opening of waterfowl season in the north zone. The boat access is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to sunset; bank fishing access on the center and eastern dikes opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at sunset. Since windy conditions can produce treacherous waves, the lake can be closed at the discretion of the site superintendent.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

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