



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.

CONCESSION STAND: Boat and motor rental, live bait, tackle, ice, food and soft drinks.

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 has received stockings of a variety of sport fish including largemouth bass, walleye, hybrid and pure striped bass, crappie and both pure and tiger muskie. Supported by a thriving gizzard shad forage base, Heidecke Lake offers a variety of fish species to the angler. The decommissioning of Collins Station in January, 2005 has resulted in the cessation of thermal loading and water circulation. This should lead to an increase in water clarity and expansion of rooted aquatic plants.

Largemouth Bass - Due to poor natural reproduction and recruitment, an aggressive annual stocking program for largemouth bass was initiated in 1986. Intensive sampling did not indicate a favorable response to these stockings and the program was terminated. The results from the fall 2006 survey were somewhat disappointing as the number of largemouth bass collected declined by nearly 35% from the previous survey (2005). On the bright side, a high percentage of these fish were young bass which, with good recruitment, should equate to good angling opportunities for this species in the next few years. Should the aquatic plant community expand as water clarity increases, an increase in the largemouth bass population is anticipated.

Smallmouth Bass - Excellent natural reproduction and recruitment results in a self-sustaining population which produces large numbers of sub-legal size fish. Smallmouth were nearly three times as common in the fall 2006 survey as largemouth bass, with an average length of nearly 12 inches. The density of legal size bass remains good, with trophy potential also present.

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 the fall 2006 survey measured 20.2 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. While the density of large fish has declined slightly in recent years, catches of 10 to 15 pound-plus fish are not uncommon. Hybrid stripers collected in the fall 2006 survey averaged 17.0 inches and ranged up to nearly 29 inches. Annual stockings of hybrid striped bass (and less-frequent additions of pure striped bass) maintain what has become a trophy fishery. Included in the daily aggregate creel limit of 10 fish are white bass, which in the 2006 survey averaged 12.2 inches and weighed 0.9 pound. Yellow bass, which are also present in good numbers, are not included in the aggregate "striper" limit.

Walleye - No longer a primary source of walleye broodstock, harvest regulations were relaxed for Heidecke Lake walleye in 1997. This fish provides the bulk of the late spring action for boat and bank anglers alike. Exhibiting excellent growth rates, walleye fingerlings are stocked on an annual basis and provide a fishery which can produce fish close to the ten-pound mark. Collected at all-time high rates in the 2006 survey, walleyes averaged 16 inches and ranged up to 24 inches.

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 2006 spring trap net survey yielded excellent results as the collection of pure muskies increased to more than 1 fish per net night of effort. The majority of these fish were young males, resulting in an average length of 34.4 inches although several large fish near the 40-inch mark were recovered. An up-and-coming fishery.

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	3 (singly or in aggregate)	15"
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 10 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:

Heidecke State Fish and Wildlife Area
5010 N. Jugtown Road
Morris, Illinois 60450
Phone: 815/942-6352