

Fish in Heidecke State Fish & Wildlife Area

Largemouth Bass

due to poor natural reproduction and recruitment, an aggressive annual stocking program for largemouth bass was initiated in the early 1986. Extensive research did not indicate a favorable response to these stockings and the program was terminated. Results from 2004 fall survey show a slight increase in the number of largemouth collected, with fish averaging just under 8 inches but adequate numbers of larger fish present. The change in conditions on Heidecke Lake may prove beneficial to this species as aquatic plant growth increases.



Smallmouth Bass

Excellent natural reproduction and recruitment results in a self-sustaining population which produces large numbers of sublegal size fish. Smallmouth were nearly twice as common in the fall 2004 survey as largemouth bass, with an average length of nearly 9 inches. The density of legal size bass remains good, the 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. Unlike other cooling lakes, 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 2004 survey measured 19.4 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 pound-plus fish are not uncommon. Hybrid stripers collected in the spring 2005 survey averaged 24.7 inches and ranged up to nearly 30 inches. As lake circulation ceases with the closure of Collins station, larger striped bass, which were common in the restricted area, may roam out into the main lake where they will be accessible to anglers. 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 are fairly large and averaged in excess of one pound in the 1997 creel survey. 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 brood stock, 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. Spring trap netting resulted in a somewhat poor sample with low numbers of fish captured, exhibiting an average length of 24.8 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 fingerings @ 1/acre). The 2005 spring trap net survey yielded disappointing results as the collection of pure muskies declined, as did the average size (36.2 inches). With few exceptions, all muskies collected were small males. Surface temperature during this survey was well below what was experienced in previous spring when nets produced more and larger fish. In late fall, supplemental electro fishing yielded several fish which exceeded 38 inches. Still in the developmental stages, this fishery has the potential to produce fish of trophy caliber.





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Updated March 18, 2008