

# Horsetail Lake Population Survey



Located in Palos Park on Willow Springs Rd. (104<sup>th</sup> Ave.) just north of McCarthy Rd. Horsetail Lake is 12 acres in size and has a maximum depth of 19 feet near the east end. Species found in Horsetail include largemouth bass, bluegill, pumpkinseed sunfish, green sunfish, bullhead, yellow perch and crappie. Horsetail Lake is part of the District's Rainbow Trout Program and gets stocked with 1/2 to 3/4 pound rainbow trout in both the spring and fall. Designated ice fishing lake.

## Fish Population Survey

Fish population surveys are periodically conducted on Forest Preserves lakes in order to assess the health of the lake and the fish population in it. Surveys last anywhere from a few hours to a few days depending on the size of the lake.

Water samples are collected and analyzed for each survey. The information collected over the years will show trends to the lakes health. If any unusual readings are found, further tests may be done or the Illinois DNR and EPA may be asked to investigate.

Fish are collected during surveys to assess the health of the population. Several methods are used to collect fish, these include experimental gill nets, Fyke or trap nets and the use of an electro-fishing boat. All fish collected are measured, weighed and a scale sample is collected when applicable. These scale samples are used to age the fish. All fish are then returned to the lake when possible.

The information listed below was collected during the most recent survey. It is only a snapshot in time. Many factors such as temperature, wind, rain and even moon light can affect the species and number of fish that are collected. The Forest Preserves' Fisheries Section looks at data from many years when assessing a lake's fish population and assumptions from just one year of data therefore should not be made.

The dates of the survey along with the type of equipment used and the length of time it was fished is listed below. The "Total Population" tables & charts show all species collected and includes not only game fish but also forage fish. A healthy balanced population of forage fish and predatory (game) fish is needed in order to support a healthy overall fish population. Ideally, 30 to 40% of a lakes total fish population should be made up of forage fish in order to support a healthy predatory fish population. The species of forage fish varies from lake to lake, gizzard shad may be the main forage fish in one lake, while bluegill/sunfish may be the main forage fish in another

Individual species tables are included only for the game fish that were collected. Game fish are those fish most sought after by anglers.

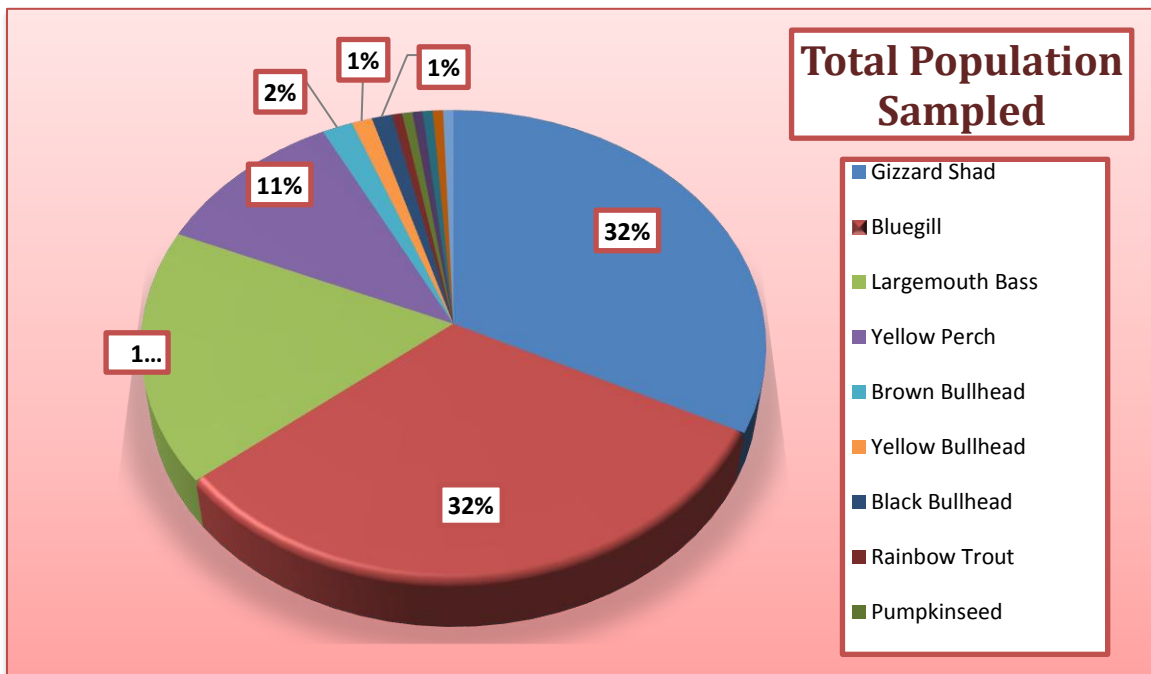
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**Date of survey: June 20 – 21, 2017**  
**Electro-fishing time: 30 minutes**  
**Fyke nets fished: 0 hours**  
**500 feet of gill nets fished: 24 hours**

## Total Population

Species	Number	Percent
Gizzard Shad	56	32.37%
Bluegill	55	31.79%
Largemouth Bass	30	17.34%
Yellow Perch	19	10.98%
Brown Bullhead	3	1.73%
Yellow Bullhead	2	1.16%
Black Bullhead	2	1.16%
Rainbow Trout	1	0.58%
Pumpkinseed	1	0.58%
Green Sunfish	1	0.58%
White Sucker	1	0.58%
Pumpkinseed x Green Sunfish Hybrid	1	0.58%
Bluegill x Green Sunfish	1	0.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.01%</b>



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## Bluegill

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs	Age
2.5	1	1.82%	0.007	1+
3.0	1	1.82%	0.01	1+
3.5	2	3.63%	0.04	1+
4.0	3	5.45%	0.05	1 – 2+
4.5	10	18.18%	0.06	1 – 2+
5.0	25	45.46%	0.09	2 – 3+
5.5	11	20.00%	0.11	3+
6.0	2	3.63%	0.14	4+
<b>Totals</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.01%</b>		

## Largemouth Bass

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs	Age
3.0	12	40.00%	0.01	0 – 1+
3.5	9	30.00%	0.02	1+
4.0	2	6.67%	0.03	1+
-	-	-	-	-
5.0	3	10.00%	0.06	1+
5.5	1	3.33%	0.06	1+
6.0	1	3.33%	0.10	2+
-	-	-	-	-
7.5	1	3.33%	0.21	2+
-	-	-	-	-
16.0	1	3.33%	2.09	4+
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99%</b>		

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## Yellow Perch

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs	Age
6.0	5	26.32%	0.10	1+
6.5	7	36.84%	0.10	1+
7.0	7	36.84	0.12	2+
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		

## Brown Bullhead

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs	Age
9.0	1	33.33%	0.40	NA
9.5	1	33.33%	0.36	NA
-	-	-	-	-
12.0	1	33.33%	0.65	NA
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>99.99%</b>		

## Other Species Collected

Species	Number	Length	Weight	Age
Yellow Bullhead	2	9.0 – 10.0	0.35-0.66	NA
Black Bullhead	2	8.0 – 11.0	0.35-0.75	NA
Rainbow Trout	1	12.0	0.75	1+
Pumpkinseed	1	5.5	0.13	2+
Green Sunfish	1	4.5	0.06	2+

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## Stocking

The Forest Preserves of Cook County works closely with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to stock fishes within the Forest Preserves lakes. The decision to stock fish and the number of fish stocked is based on many factors including but not limited to type of species, size of fish stocked, size of the lake and type of stocking. The Forest Preserves of Cook County must follow State of Illinois regulation regarding the introduction and stocking of fish. All requests to stock a new species into a District lake must go through the State's Management Recommendation Committee.

Most stocking fall under one of three categories, introduction, supplemental and put-and-take. Introduction stockings are the introduction of a new species within an existing lake or the stocking of a new body of water. Supplemental stockings are the stocking of species already in a lake and are used to supplement a species that may not successively reproduce on its own or has been over fished. Fish stocked in a put-and-take stocking are catchable size fish.

## Size of Fish Stocked

Most of the fish stocked in the lakes of the Forest Preserves of Cook County are young-of-the-year and are provided by the IDNR Hatcheries. Fish from the hatcheries are stocked upon availability and are funded by your fishing licenses. **Not all species are stocked in all lakes.**

These fish range in size from 2 to 3 inches for largemouth bass and 1/2 to 3/4 inch for bluegill. Hybrid sunfish (bluegill x green sunfish) are stocked for the IDNR's Urban Fishing Program and are 6 to 8 inches.

Channel catfish are stocked at around 6 inches in most lakes; however Cermak Quarry, Flatfoot Lake and Schiller Pond are part of the IDNR's Urban Fishing Program and receives 1.5 pound average catfish.

Northern pike are stocked in the 6 to 8 inch range. Muskellunge range from 10 to 12 inches and are stocked every other year.

Walleye fingerlings from the IDNR are 2 to 3 inches and the walleye from the Tampier Walleye Propagation Program are stocked as fingerlings and/or fry.

Rainbow trout are stocked in the 1/2 to 1 pound range. Trout stockings are funded by your trout stamps and the FPCC. Spring trout season opens the 1st Saturday in April and the fall season opens on the 3rd Saturday in October. \* S = Spring, F = Fall

Species	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rainbow Trout	2,000	2,250	1,800	1,800	2,768