

Horsetail Lake Population Survey



Located in Palos Park on Willow Springs Rd. (104th 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 lake's 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.

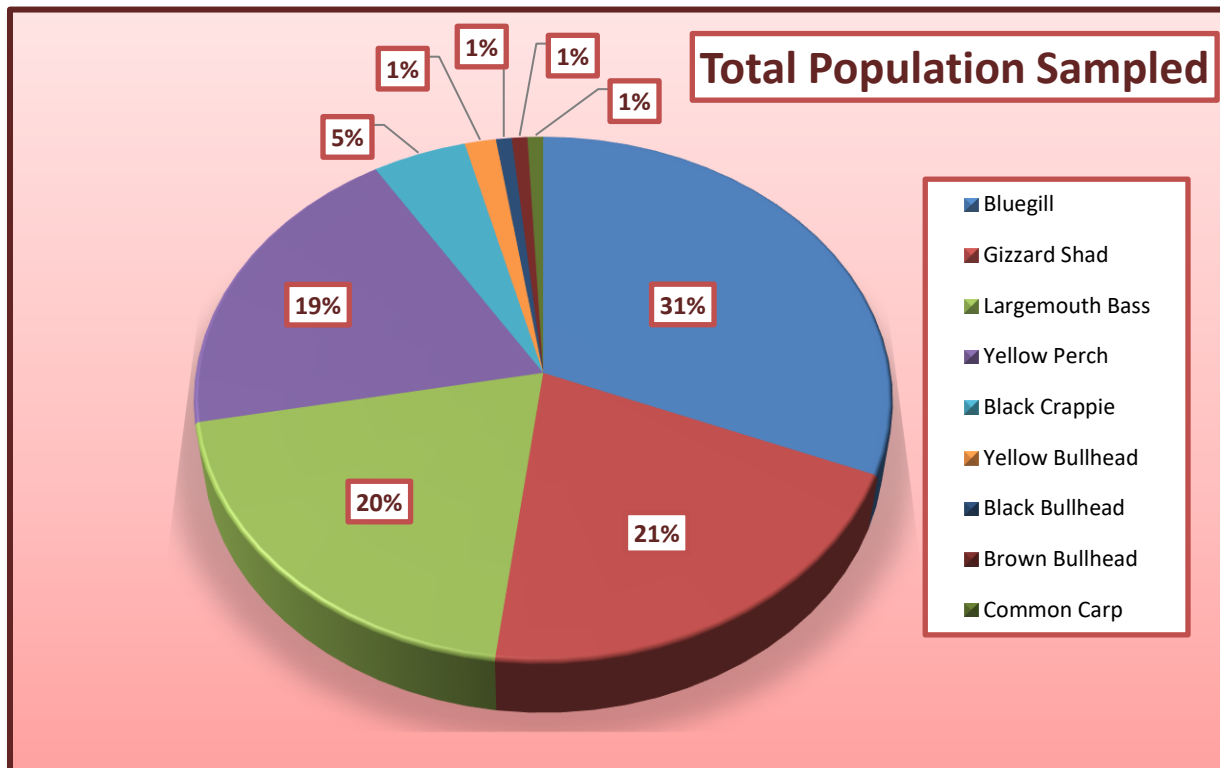
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Date of survey: July 19 – 20, 2021
Electro-fishing time: 30 minutes
Fyke nets fished: 0 hours
500 feet of gill nets fished: 24 hours

Total Population Sampled

Species	Number	Percent
Bluegill	39	31.20%
Gizzard Shad	26	20.80%
Largemouth Bass	25	20.00%
Yellow Perch	24	19.20%
Black Crappie	6	4.80%
Yellow Bullhead	2	1.60%
Black Bullhead	1	0.80%
Brown Bullhead	1	0.80%
Common Carp	1	0.80%
Total	125	100.00%



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Bluegill

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
2.5	2	5.13%	0.01	0+
3.0	9	23.08%	0.02	0+
3.5	1	2.56%	0.04	1+
4.0	3	7.69%	0.05	1+
4.5	4	10.26%	0.06	2+
5.0	16	41.02%	0.09	2-3+
5.5	2	5.13%	0.11	3+
6.0	2	5.13%	0.15	3+
Totals	39	100.00%		

Largemouth Bass

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
4.0	1	4.00%	0.04	0+
-	-	-	-	-
5.0	1	4.00%	0.05	1+
5.5	1	4.00%	0.08	1+
-	-	-	-	-
6.5	1	4.00%	0.13	1+
7.0	2	8.00%	0.18	1+
7.5	3	12.00%	0.22	1-2+
8.0	1	4.00%	0.23	2+
8.5	2	8.00%	0.32	2+
9.0	3	12.00%	0.36	2+
9.5	1	4.00%	0.40	2+
10.0	1	4.00%	0.47	3+
10.5	1	4.00%	0.41	3+
-	-	-	-	-
12.0	1	4.00%	0.85	3+
12.5	2	6.00%	0.98	4+
-	-	-	-	-
14.5	2	8.00%	1.85	4+
-	-	-	-	-
16.0	2	8.00%	2.62	5+
Totals	25	100.00%		

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Yellow Perch

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
6.0	4	16.67%	0.09	3+
6.5	12	54.16%	0.11	3-4+
7.0	4	16.67%	0.15	3+
7.5	3	12.50%	0.17	3+
Total	24	100.00%		

Black Crappie

1/2-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
5.0	1	16.67%	0.05	1+
-	-	-	-	-
6.5	1	16.67%	0.17	2+
7.0	3	50.00%	0.18	2-3+
7.5	1	16.67%	0.22	3+
Totals	6	100.01%		

Other Species Collected

Species	Number	Length	Weight	Age
Yellow Bullhead	2	10.0	0.50 – 0.54	NA
Black Bullhead	1	8.5	0.26	NA
Brown Bullhead	1	12.0	0.81	NA
Common Carp	1	23.0	5.98	6+

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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.

Bluegill are stocked at 1/2 to 3/4-inch.

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.

Species	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Rainbow Trout	2,593	3,200	2,533	1,897	2,413
Bluegill	-	-	30,000	-	-