



Skokie Lagoons #3-5 Population Survey

Located in Glencoe and Winnetka along Forestway Drive between Willow and Dundee Rd.'s, just east of Edens Expressway (I-94). The Skokie Lagoons is a system of 7 lagoons connected by channels on the Skokie River. The total acreage for the entire lagoon system is 242-acres. The maximum depth of 14.9 feet is located in Lagoon #2; however, pockets of 10 feet or more can be found in most of the other lagoons. The main predators in the Skokie Lagoons include Walleye, Northern Pike, Largemouth Bass, and Channel Catfish. Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Yellow Bass, crappie, bullheads, and Common Carp can also be found in the lagoons. A Boat ramp and barrier free fishing wall is located off Tower Road just east of the Edens Expressway. For acceptable watercraft and general boating regulations see the District's Fishing Guide. Canoes and kayaks rentals are available at Lagoon #3 in the parking lot on Tower Road just west of Forestway Drive.

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 in 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 moonlight 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 lake's 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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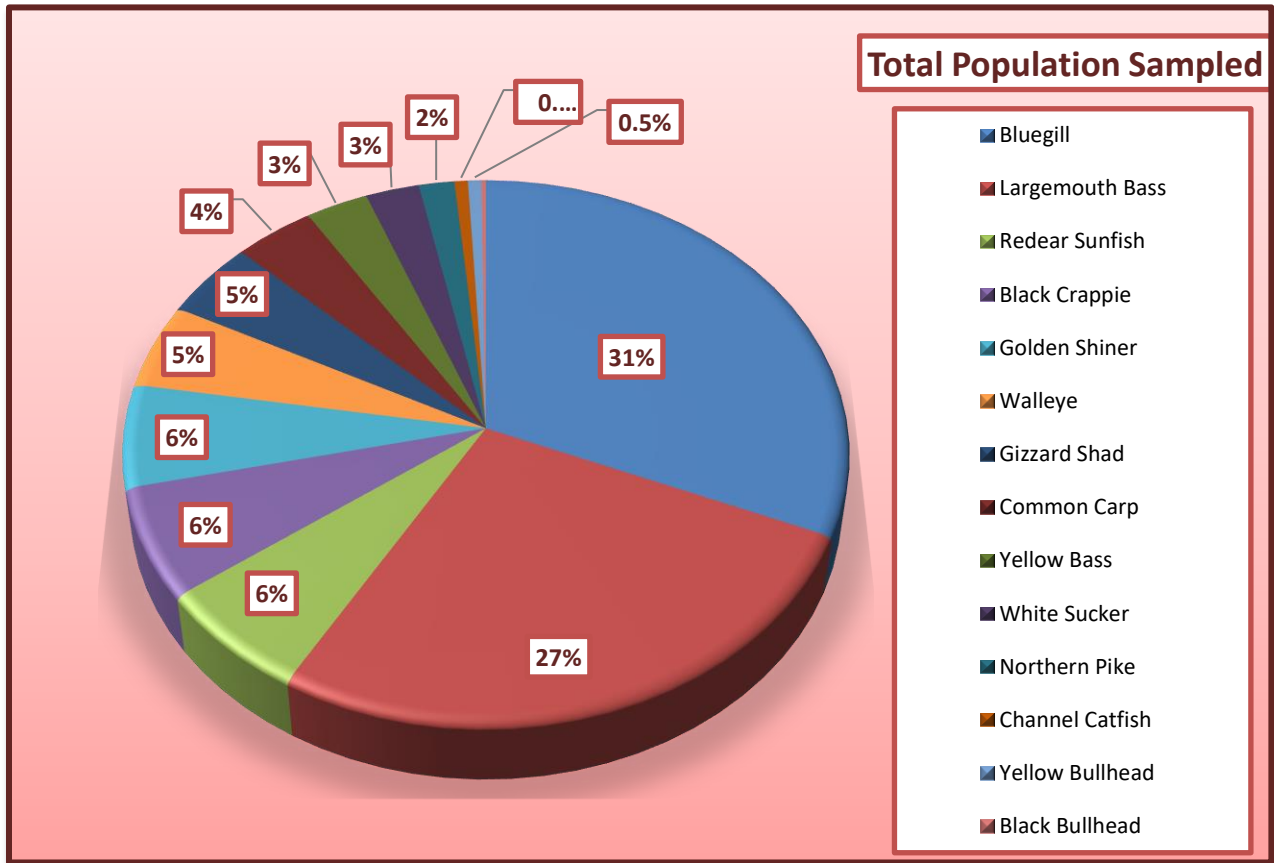


Date of survey: September 19 - 22, 2022
Electro-fishing time: 1 hour 45 minutes
3 Fyke nets fished: 24 hours
0 feet of gill nets fished: 0 hours

Total Population Sampled

Species	Number	Percent
Bluegill	144	31.30%
Largemouth Bass	125	27.17%
Redear	30	6.52%
Black Crappie	30	6.52%
Golden Shiner	28	6.09%
Walleye	23	5.00%
Gizzard Shad	21	4.57%
Common Carp	18	3.91%
Yellow Bass	14	3.04%
White Sucker	12	2.61%
Northern Pike	8	1.74%
Channel Catfish	3	0.65%
Yellow Bullhead	3	0.65%
Black Bullhead	1	0.22%
Total	460	99.99%

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Bluegill

1/2 Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
1.0	5	3.47%	0.002	0+
1.5	10	6.94%	0.002	0+
2.0	4	2.78%	0.002	0+
-	-	-	-	-
3.0	22	15.28%	0.02	0-1+
3.5	13	9.03%	0.04	1+
4.0	8	5.56%	0.06	1+
4.5	7	4.76%	0.07	1+
5.0	28	19.45%	0.10	1-2+
5.5	15	10.42%	0.14	2+
6.0	12	8.33%	0.19	2+
6.5	19	13.19%	0.21	3+
7.0	1	0.69%	0.32	4+
Total	144	99.99%		

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Largemouth Bass

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
3.0	4	3.17%	0.02	0+
3.5	8	6.35%	0.02	0+
4.0	6	4.76%	0.03	0+
4.5	4	3.17%	0.05	0+
5.0	2	1.59%	0.06	0+
-	-	-	-	-
7.5	2	1.59%	0.23	1+
8.0	4	3.17%	0.28	1+
8.5	4	3.17%	0.34	2+
9.0	12	9.52%	0.38	2+
9.5	1	0.79%	0.44	2+
10.0	7	5.56%	0.51	2+
10.5	2	1.59%	0.62	2+
11.0	6	4.76%	0.74	2-3+
11.5	1	0.79%	0.79	2+
12.0	5	3.97%	1.02	3+
12.5	8	6.35%	1.34	3+
13.0	4	3.17%	1.34	3+
13.5	7	5.56%	1.45	3-4+
14.0	8	6.35%	1.59	4+
14.5	9	7.14%	1.81	4+
15.0	1	0.79%	1.92	4+
15.5	4	3.17%	2.40	4-5+
16.0	4	3.17%	2.34	5+
16.5	1	0.79%	2.62	5+
17.0	1	0.79%	3.17	6+
17.5	3	2.38%	3.26	6+
18.0	3	2.38%	3.63	6+
-	-	-	-	-
19.0	4	3.17%	4.78	6-7+
-	-	-	-	-
20.0	1	0.79%	5.41	7+
Total	126	99.95%		

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Redear

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
2.0	1	3.33%	0.01	NA
-	-	-	-	-
3.5	1	3.33%	0.05	1+
4.0	3	10.00%	0.06	1+
4.5	2	6.67%	0.07	2+
5.0	2	6.67%	0.09	1-2+
-	-	-	-	-
6.0	2	6.67%	0.17	2+
6.5	9	30.00%	0.22	2+
7.0	5	16.67%	0.27	2+
7.5	2	6.67%	0.32	3+
8.0	1	3.33%	0.36	3+
8.5	2	6.67%	0.45	4+
Total	30	100.01%		

Black Crappie

½-Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
5.0	1	3.33%	0.06	1+
-	-	-	-	-
6.0	1	3.33%	0.13	1+
-	-	-	-	-
7.0	3	10.00%	0.22	2+
7.5	6	20.00%	0.22	2+
8.0	6	20.00%	0.31	2+
8.5	6	20.00%	0.37	2-3+
9.0	4	13.33%	0.38	3+
9.5	2	6.67%	0.52	3+
-	-	-	-	-
11.0	1	3.33%	0.85	4+
Total	30	99.99%		

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Walleye

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
8.0	1	4.35%	0.20	0+
-	-	-	-	-
14.5	1	4.35%	0.97	2+
-	-	-	-	-
16.5	1	4.35%	0.71	3+
17.0	3	13.04%	1.88	3+
17.5	1	4.35%	1.84	3+
18.0	2	8.69%	1.89	3-4+
18.5	3	13.04%	2.34	4+
19.0	3	13.04%	2.51	4+
-	-	-	-	-
20.0	1	4.35%	2.93	5+
20.5	1	4.35%	2.97	5+
21.0	1	4.35%	3.17	5+
21.5	2	8.69%	3.82	5-6+
22.0	1	4.35%	3.70	6+
-	-	-	-	-
24.5	1	4.35%	5.21	6+
-	-	-	-	-
25.5	1	4.35%	8.03	7+
Total	23	100.00%		

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Common Carp

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	Percentage of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
12.5	1	5.56%	1.16	2+
-	-	-	-	-
16.0	1	5.56%	2.24	3+
-	-	-	-	-
17.5	1	5.56%	2.92	3+
-	-	-	-	-
19.0	1	5.56%	3.26	3+
19.5	1	5.56%	3.73	4+
-	-	-	-	-
22.0	1	5.56%	5.64	3+
22.5	1	5.56%	5.23	5+
23.0	3	16.67%	6.22	5-6+
23.5	2	11.11%	7.21	6+
-	-	-	-	-
25.0	1	5.56%	7.90	6+
25.5	1	5.56%	7.92	7+
-	-	-	-	-
26.5	1	5.56%	9.41	7+
-	-	-	-	-
29.0	1	5.56%	13.85	8+
29.5	1	5.56%	14.51	8+
-	-	-	-	-
30.5	1	5.56%	14.73	9+
Total	18	100.06%		

Yellow Bass

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
6.5	1	7.14%	0.17	1+
-	-	-	-	-
8.5	2	14.29%	0.34	2+
9.0	4	28.57%	0.39	2-3+
9.5	4	28.57%	0.47	3+
10.0	2	14.29%	0.57	4+
10.5	1	7.14%	0.60	4+
Total	14	100.00%		

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Northern Pike

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
21.0	1	12.50%	1.64	1+
-	-	-	-	-
22.5	3	37.50%	2.21	1-2+
-	-	-	-	-
27.0	2	25.00%	3.84	2+
27.5	1	12.50%	3.66	3+
28.0	1	12.50%	3.99	3+
Total	8	100.00%		

Channel Catfish

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
14.0	1	33.33%	0.63	NA
-	-	-	-	-
17.0	1	33.33%	1.59	NA
-	-	-	-	-
18.0	1	33.33%	1.95	NA
Total	3	99.99%		

Yellow Bullhead

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
8.0	1	33.33%	0.24	NA
-	-	-	-	-
10.5	1	33.33%	0.56	NA
-	-	-	-	-
11.0	1	33.33%	0.78	NA
Total	3	99.99%		

Black Bullhead

½ Inch Group	Number Collected	% of Population	Average Weight lbs.	Age
11.0	1	100.00%	0.65	NA
Total	1	100.00%		

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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 overfished. 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.

Channel Catfish are stocked at around 6-inches in most lakes.

The IDNR suspended the production, rearing and stocking of Northern Pike in 2017, Northern stocking resumed in 2020 and were stocked in the 7 to 9-inch range. Muskellunge range from 10 to 14-inches and are stocked in the Main Pool of Busse Reservoir intermittently.

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.

Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Channel Catfish	3,582	4,750	4,750	4,750	4,750
Northern Pike	-	1,974	969	981	968
Walleye	9,531	16,788	11,572	9,153	10,003

Fisheries Survey Overview

Along with Busse Reservoir, the Skokie Lagoons have consistently been one of the best fishing lakes in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. For management purposes, The Lagoons, like Busse is divided into sections. This year’s survey included Lagoons #3 - #5 and all the channels that connect them. Like many of the lakes within the Forest Preserves, Skokie Lagoons have a very large Gizzard Shad population. This species of open water is not usually caught while electro-fishing and therefore not higher in the total population sampled. Shad are the predominate forage fish in the Lagoons and is what every gamefish is feeding on.

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Once again Bluegills were the most abundant species collected. These fish ranged in size from 1-inch young-of-year (YOY) fish all the way up to 7-inches. Thirty two of the 144 Bluegill collected were 6-inches or larger, providing area anglers some of the better Bluegill opportunities in the Forest Preserves.

To say that the Largemouth Bass are doing well in the Lagoons would be an understatement. We collected 126 bass in four days of surveying with hundreds more seen but not collected. Thirty-nine or 31% of the bass collected were over the 14-inch legal size limit including five fish over 19-inches! The largest bass collected was 20.07-inches long and weighed in at 5.41 pounds. Largemouth Bass were collected throughout the three lagoons in equal numbers and were found predominantly near downed trees and patches of aquatic vegetation.

Another species of the sunfish family that was collected in good numbers were Redear Sunfish. This species is native to southern Illinois but has been stocked alongside Bluegill throughout the rest of the state. Of the thirty Redear Sunfish collected 21 or 70% were in the 6 to 8.5-inch range. Redears are an aggressive feeder and can be easily caught in the warmer months. They tend to be less aggressive in the winter than Bluegill though.

The Black Crappie that was surveyed were a little on the smaller size than some found elsewhere in the Forest Preserves. This species tends to be cyclic with good numbers of smaller fish being found for several years. Hopefully the size of these crappie will continue to improve over the next few years providing crappie anglers a better fishery here at the Lagoons.

Thanks to the large population of Gizzard Shad, the Walleye population is very healthy. Walleye were introduced into the Lagoons after the rehab project back in the mid-90's. The stocking of YOY walleye has continued every year since. Walleye collected in our survey ranged from 8-inches up to 25.5-inches. The largest fish collected was 25.59-inches and weighed in at 8.03-pounds, however, we have collected Walleye that have exceeded 10-pounds in the past.

Other fish collected in the survey included Yellow Bass, Common Carp, Northern Pike, Channel Catfish, and some bullheads. Most of these fish are bottom feeders or open water species that are not easily caught by electro-fishing. The carp were nice sized with fish over 30-inches being collected. Of the eight Northern caught, half were over the legal size limit of 24-inch. Only three Catfish were collected with the largest one being only 18-inches long. Catfish are very hard to get electro-fish but when we have used gill nets in the past, we have collected cats pushing 15-pounds.