



NEWS RELEASE

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Carlyle Lake Fishing Prospects for 2011

Carlyle Lake – With spring just right around the corner, it is time to begin thinking about the big fish you're going to catch this year at Carlyle Lake. Carlyle Lake provides a diverse and bountiful freshwater game population. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division recently provided the results of the annual 2010 fall survey of Carlyle Lake and these results indicate that fishing prospects are good for the upcoming season.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources survey data summary and fishing prospects follow:

LARGEMOUTH BASS - VERY GOOD – From 2001 to 2008, we collected an average of 30 bass per hour during our population surveys. In 2009, we collected 102 bass per hour, a record high. In our latest population survey in 2010, bass numbers are still high at 62 bass per hour, but down from 2010. The bass population structure indicates a healthy, well balanced fishery. Fifty-seven percent of the adult population is 12 inches or greater in length, 34% is 14 inches or more, and 16% 15 inches or greater. Currently, legal fish range in length from 14 to 21 inches, and weigh 1.6 to 5.8 lbs. Within this range is a strong class of 14 to 18 inch bass. Six pound bass are present in the lake, with a seven pound fish being extremely rare. The high number of young bass present in the population should continue to provide good fishing in the years to come. Growth and condition of all size classes are very good.

The best spring fishing will be in coves and other protected areas as the bass come in to spawn. The last week of April and the first two weeks of May is a good time to catch some keepers. A 14" minimum length limit/6 fish per day creel applies.

WHITE BASS - FAIR TO GOOD - White bass numbers in 2010 have more than doubled compared to 2009 according to our catch per hour. Thirty-eight white bass were collected per hour compared to 15 in 2009. However, the average size has decreased somewhat and condition was only fair due to the early shad spawn, where the shad grew too big for many white bass by late summer. Currently, twenty-six percent of the adult population is composed of fish that are 12 inches or more in length, and 2% of the fish are 15 inches or greater. The largest white bass weighed 2.5 lbs. 2011 should provide fair to good fishing for this species.

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CRAPPIE - GOOD - Currently, black crappie dominate the fishery. Numbers are down somewhat from 2009, but still high. We collected 34 fish per hour during our survey. There is a strong year class of crappie present in the 6 to 9 inches length range.

Forty-six percent of the adult crappie is 8 inches or more in length, but only 7% are 9 inches or longer. Growth rates and condition of these fish are excellent, so these crappie should provide good fishing in the future. The biggest black crappie observed weighed 1.4 lbs. The white crappie population is smaller than the black crappie, but average size is much greater at present. During our current survey, we collected 6 fish per hour. Eighty-nine percent of the adult fish are 8 inches or more in length, while 54% are 10 inches or greater. Condition of these fish is good, with good growth rates. The largest white crappie collected weighed right at 1lb. There is a 10 inch minimum/10 fish per day creel for crappie.

CATFISH - GOOD - Our fisheries survey data show that the channel catfish population has remained relatively stable for the last 10 years in terms of numbers and size structure. Our survey showed channel catfish ranging in length from 13 to 30 inches and weighing from 0.6 to 8.5 lbs. Currently, condition and growth of channel catfish is slightly below average. The flathead catfish population is excellent. Abundance and size distribution is superb, ranging from young of the year up to fish weighing 35 lbs. Flatheads exhibit exceptionally good reproduction and recruitment in Carlyle Lake. Condition and growth is good. We pick up many young fish during our surveys.

SAUGER - FAIR TO GOOD – Sauger is doing well in the lake. Several year classes are present, however, condition is presently below average. During our population survey, we collected fish ranging in length from 6 to 20 inches. Thirty-six percent of the adult fish are 15 inches or more in length. The largest sauger observed during our survey weighed 2 lbs. Most of these fish originally came from our annual spring fry stocking program. The spillway area has a dense concentration of sauger and offers excellent fishing. A 14 inch minimum length limit/6 fish per day creel applies.

BLUEGILL - GOOD TO VERY GOOD –The bluegill population continues to look good. During our current population survey, two hundred and thirty-three fish were collected per hour. Thirty-nine percent of the adult fish are 6 inches or more in length, with 5.5% 7 inches or more. Bluegill condition remains good and spring fishing should be fine in 2011.

For additional information, please contact the Carlyle Lake Project Office at (618) 594-2484 or email at carlylelake@usace.army.mil.

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