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2011 Lake Shelbyville Fishing Prospects

Lake Shelbyville- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announces the 2011 Fishing Prospects for Lake Shelbyville.

Largemouth Bass - Excellent - Recent large floods and a few well-timed smaller flood pulses in the spring of 2010 have resulted in excellent natural recruitment of largemouth bass. Recruitment of the 2010 year class of bass appears good, especially in the middle and lower parts of the lake. The largemouth bass fishing prospects for 2011 remain good to excellent for numbers and good to excellent for size.

Smallmouth Bass - Poor – In four of the last 5 years smallmouth have been stocked in Lake Shelbyville. A few reports from fishermen indicate that initial stockings of fish are doing well however, there has been no evidence of spawning success. Tournament fishermen are asked to release all smallmouth bass immediately and are not allowed to weigh them in tournaments on Lake Shelbyville. Fishing prospects for smallmouth bass are poor due to low stocking densities and no evidence of natural recruitment.

Crappie - Excellent - Crappie fishing in 2010 was very good with fishermen catching limits of crappie with fish up to 15" in size not uncommon. Fall fish population surveys indicate that good numbers of legal size crappie are present. The crappie regulation changed in April, 2007 and so far has been popular with fishermen. Fishermen will be able to keep ten (10) crappie, 10" and larger, PLUS an additional five (5) crappie less than 10". This regulation is designed to thin out the smaller crappie to provide a boost in growth rates. Fishing prospects for crappie should be excellent for both numbers and size in 2011.

Walleye - Excellent - Walleye fishermen and guides reported excellent fishing in late April through May in 2009 and 2010 for walleye. Catch rates of young-of-the-year walleye were very good in the 2007, 2008, and 2009 fall standard fish population and supplemental surveys, and fair in 2010. This increase is likely in part due in part to an increase in the number of fish stocked, however there is a possibility walleye may have spawned in the Kaskaskia River in springs 2008 and 2009. Fishing prospects for 2011 should be excellent for both numbers and size.

Sauger – Fair - Sauger were stocked experimentally into Lake Shelbyville for the first time in 2006 in an attempt to establish a self-sustaining population. In 2010, stocking was increased to 102,000+

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fingerlings up from a previous average of 16,500/year. Although the stocked fish appear to be doing very well, fishing prospects for sauger in 2011 are fair due to low stocking densities prior to 2010.

Muskellunge - Fair to Good - In recent years Lake Shelbyville has produced an outstanding muskie fishery, however catch rates in 2007 - 2010 have been depressed for unknown reasons. Floods may have been partially to blame in 2008 and 2009, allowing muskies to use heavy brush for cover which makes fishing for them more difficult, however water levels were close to normal in fall 2010. Muskie numbers likely remain fair to good on the lake and improved in the area below the dam. Fishing prospects for 2011 are expected to be fair to good for numbers and fair for size on the lake and fair to good for both numbers and size below the lake in the spillway area.

White bass - Excellent - 2009 and 2010 were banner years for white bass fishing! Catch rates of 200+ fish per day of good sized fish points to a high quality fishery. Fishermen reported catching white bass up to 14 inches, with most keepers from 11 to 12 inches. Fishing prospects for 2011 should be excellent for numbers and size.

Catfish - Fair - Good - Very low numbers of channel catfish were collected during recent surveys. Channel catfish recruitment appears to have improved though, as good catches of harvestable "fiddler-size" channel catfish were reported by fishermen in fall 2010. Flathead catfish recruitment appears to be variable and fishermen report variable, but fair success. Fishing prospects for 2011 are improved to good for numbers and fair for size.

Bluegill - Fair - Most "keeper" size bluegill will range from 6.5 - 7.9 inches. A few bluegill in excess of eight inches are caught annually, although they are NOT common. Bluegill averaging 7.0 - 7.5 inches and 0.25 to 0.3 lbs are often caught by fishermen using night crawlers seeking other species. Fishing prospects for 2011 remains good for numbers and poor to fair for size.