



MAZONIA STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA FISHERIES FACT SHEET

Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area consists of 2,679 acres of reclaimed strip-mine land which was purchased by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) from Commonwealth Edison Company. The initial purchase was made in 1986 and included the old "Pit 16" area. An additional 1,662-acre parcel, which formerly included areas managed by sportsman's clubs, was purchased in 1999. The entire area was once surface-mined by the Peabody Coal Company from 1951-1970.

LOCATION: The Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area main office is located in Grundy County, 3 miles southwest of Braidwood on Illinois Route 53 and Huston Road. The south unit, which includes the Ponderosa, Wilderness and Monster Lake areas, is located in Kankakee County north of County Highway 6 and west of the town of Essex.

DESCRIPTION: The area consists of over 200 impoundments ranging from less than ¼ acre to nearly 150 acres. Most all of these water areas are typified by steep drop-offs and many have maximum depths in excess of 30 feet with some twice that. Shoreline access to most lakes and ponds is limited by extensive stands of tall reed grass. Concrete boat ramps access four of the largest lakes within the main Mazonia area and here boats are restricted to trolling motors only. Gravel ramps are present on Eagle, Ponderosa and Monster Lakes. Gasoline motors are allowed on these water areas and while there are no horsepower limitations, a strict no-wake regulation is enforced. "Belly boats" have become an effective and popular way of accessing and fishing the smaller interior ponds.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY: Most of the larger water areas contain largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, channel catfish, carp and a variety of other species. The IDNR presently stocks Lakes #8 (Carp Lake) and #9 (Gar Lake) annually with fingerling (8") northern pike, while channel catfish are stocked into several lakes on a rotational basis. Redear sunfish have been stocked into Lake #10 (Clear Lake) and Ponderosa Lake as well. Ponderosa Lake receives walleye fingerlings annually. Brown trout have been released into Eagle Lake on multiple occasions but have shown little evidence of recruitment and that program is subject to termination.

Largemouth Bass - The larger lakes promise the most consistent action, although smaller, more inaccessible ponds receiving less fishing pressure may be the best bet for larger, trophy-caliber bass. Although not common, largemouth bass in excess of six pounds are caught annually. Recent survey data indicates some potential cropping and stock-piling of fish just short of the minimum length limit on the larger lakes and some of the more easily accessible ponds. Lakes which offer better opportunity include Monster and Wilderness Lakes, as well as Mazonia Lakes #3, #7, #8 and #9.

Bluegill - While not common, larger bluegills are present in good numbers in some of the impoundments within the Mazonia area. Fair-sized bluegills (7+ inches) are taken more frequently by ice-fishermen. Better bets for larger fish can be found at Clear Lake (#10), Ponderosa Lake as well as the smaller ponds at the Wilderness Area. A ten (10) fish daily creel for bluegill, redear sunfish and their hybrids is in effect for Ponderosa Lake; all other lakes are unlimited daily creel.

Crappie - Although both white and black crappies are present in the Mazonia impoundments, white crappie are the more common of the two. Prevalent in most all lakes and ponds, crappie provides much of the early spring action. Crappie are caught through the ice as well. Large crappie are not common, but fish in excess of nine inches are routinely collected during IDNR sampling.

Northern Pike - Stocked on an annual basis into Lakes #8 and #9, northern pike have shown poor recruitment, with few fish of size collected in IDNR sampling. This species should not be confused with grass pickerel, which are similar in appearance but are not protected by a length and/or creel limit. The current state record northern pike was caught from Monster Lake. Larger fish are present in some of the south unit lakes, holdovers from when these lakes were private fishing clubs. **Walleye** fingerlings have been stocked into Ponderosa Lake annually since 2006 and this population is yet to develop.

Channel Catfish - This species is present in most all of the larger water areas with densities greatest in lakes receiving annual supplemental stockings. Lake #3 produces some the best action as well. **Flathead catfish** are present in Monster Lake.

A variety of other species which can be caught include carp, freshwater drum and green sunfish and several gar species.

FISHING REGULATIONS: Site specific angling regulations. Two pole and line fishing only, all other statewide regulations apply. Swimming is prohibited.

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Largemouth Bass	3	15"
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	10 (Ponderosa Lake only)	none
White/Black Crappie	10 (singly or in aggregate)	none
Channel Catfish	6	none

Fishing closed ten days prior to the opening of waterfowl season in the central zone and reopens at the conclusion of the upland game season, or as ice becomes safe.

Note: Monster Lake is open to fishing year 'round.

For further information contact:

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