

ILLINOIS URBAN FISHING PROGRAM

Division of Fisheries

**Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report
(July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013)**

Submitted by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Urban Fishing Program was introduced in Chicago in 1985 to teach individuals of all ages to fish, to enhance fishing opportunities in populated areas and to give participants an understanding of and a greater appreciation for natural resources. In 1994 the Program was expanded statewide and now primarily consists of 1) free summer fishing clinics that include fishing at nearby stocked lagoons, 2) school fishing and non-fishing education programs, and 3) fishing and education programs at scout and 4-H camps, city and state parks, church camps, etc.

During FY '13 fish were stocked at **34** sites and summer fishing clinics were regularly held at **21** locations (see map). Fishing clinics were also held less frequently at **13** additional sites (see Central and Southern Illinois reports for these locations). Fishing clinics were held twice daily Monday through Friday for about nine weeks at each fishing site during the summer. Approximately **17,220** youngsters attended one of **872** summer fishing clinics that included fishing at a nearby stocked lagoon. Fish stocking remained important for the program and approximately **22,700** lbs. of channel catfish, **124,610** hybrid sunfish and **1,200** rainbow trout were stocked. Members of the public were also able to catch and take these fish at most sites.

Additional volunteers and volunteer organizations have become more involved in conducting and assisting with programs. Volunteers and volunteer organizations with IDNR training and assistance held **136** fishing clinics and events for **2,840** children and adults last year. These individuals and organizations play a very important role in the ongoing success of the program.

Urban Fishing Program coordinators held **361** non-fishing Education Programs for more than **42,420** participants at numerous schools and other settings during the year to teach environmental education and an appreciation for natural resources, and to promote summer fishing programs.

The popular "***Access to Fishing***" rod and reel loaner program was established in 1997. There are currently **138** "***Access to Fishing***" loaner sites in Illinois, and rods and reels were borrowed more than **15,260** times last year. The Urban Fishing Program held or sponsored a total of **1,482** fishing and non-fishing programs for more than **66,000** participants this past year.

INTRODUCTION

In past generations, Americans fished frequently and often did so out of necessity for food. Times have changed and now fishing is often done for pleasure as a way to relax with family and friends and to spend time outdoors. Fish may still be kept for food but are many times released to be caught again. According to a recent American Sportfishing Association (ASA) survey 40 million Americans fish, which are more people than play golf (24.4 million) and tennis (10.4 million) combined. In addition, these 40 million anglers generate about \$45 billion in retail sales annually. Responsive Management reported that 30 million anglers sixteen years and older fished in 2006. The overall economic output from fishing is about \$125 billion annually and that supports more than 1 million jobs.

The sport of fishing presents an opportunity to instill outdoor ethics and to cultivate an appreciation for our natural resources. Realizing that we live on a planet that is 70% water, we must strive to be good stewards of our natural resources if we are to coexist with plants and animals.

Parts of Illinois have been transformed from quiet rural settings into urban sprawl and areas that were once pristine countrysides are now filled with houses, super malls and fast food restaurants. Along with this change in the landscape came changes in attitudes, values and priorities. Such changes have resulted in more single-parent families. With the burden of rearing children and earning a living, outdoor ethics and an understanding of our natural resources are not always being taught. These situations along with society's other less desirable influences are producing many youngsters who desperately need outdoor experiences. Is there a solution? Can fishing be part of a solution that turns struggling members of our younger generation into good citizens? Research has shown many benefits of fishing, including its contribution to family cohesiveness and values, an enhanced and increased understanding of the environment, and many health-related benefits. Efforts to provide Illinois children with additional outdoor activities and experiences were expanded in 2010 with IDNR's "**No Child Left Inside**" initiative.

There is hope on the horizon! Reports show that kids are more likely to fish when they become adults if they experience fishing before reaching high school age. A survey by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation showed that 20% of Hispanics and African Americans who do not fish would like to fish but do not participate for various reasons. This survey also showed that participation by members of these minority groups during their teen-aged years was important in influencing them to take up fishing

as a lifelong hobby. Hispanics and African Americans tend to fish with others rather than by themselves and view fishing as an opportunity to socialize.

A recent survey by Responsive Management showed that most kids learn to fish from a parent/family member but they are willing to learn from someone else provided that person is skilled. A child must have fun while learning to fish, therefore it is important that they catch fish. Kids tend to get bored and show disinterest when they don't catch fish. Most want to touch what they catch. Some beginning anglers might shy away from fishing because they don't like to handle bait. Girls can get interested in fishing but surveys show many still think of fishing as a boy's sport. We must keep in mind that in today's world there is competition for a child's interest when they have access to video and computer games. These types of indoor games offer an almost sure chance of easy entertainment without being boring.

Another survey showed that most anglers under 35 years of age are not being introduced to fishing by their parents. If that is the case it means that our Urban Fishing Program can fill an important niche by bringing fishing to many people who might not otherwise experience it.

Responsive Management says that satisfaction is high for 90% of active anglers and very high for 67% of the participants. The majority of today's anglers focus on the importance of fishing for relaxation and as a family activity, and sees catching big fish as being less important as the experience itself. It has been reported that two reasons people don't fish as often are a lack of time and no close lakes that offer good fishing.

To address the needs to provide and get more Illinois children involved with outdoor activities and experiences the Department initiated the "**No Child Left Inside**" program in 2010.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the Illinois Urban Fishing Program include teaching children to fish, stocking sufficient numbers of catchable-sized fish in an effort to provide quality sport fishing opportunities for urban anglers, and attract and introduce citizens to the outdoors by instilling an interest and appreciation for plants and animals. These program objectives have remained the same each year.

Steps deemed necessary to get someone interested in fishing are 1) create a threshold experience, 2) have available equipment, 3) have a suitable place to fish, 4) have a mentor to teach fishing, and 5) have social support of friends and family. Our goal is to have the Urban Fishing Program provide for all or most of these five criteria.

PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDE FISHING

Free Fishing Clinics

Summer fishing clinics were regularly held at **19** local park district sites (see map) and occasionally at **20** additional sites (see Central and Southern Illinois reports for these additional sites). Clinics began in mid-June and continued throughout July and into mid-August. Sessions were held twice daily, Monday through Friday. Instructors were hired and trained to conduct clinics at each site. Each clinic lasted about 2.5 hours and had two portions: 1) an approximate 45-minute educational session, and 2) a “hands-on” fishing session at a nearby stocked lake. The clinics are designed to teach safety, proper angler ethics, aquatic and general ecology, fish identification, knot tying, the importance of becoming good stewards of natural resources and the importance of choosing good friends. Following the classroom educational session, attendees practiced casting, learned the art of setting the hook and then were taken fishing.

The clinic instructor presented clinics using large laminated posters along with hands-on demonstrations using various types of fishing gear. Group size was generally limited to 20-30 per session. Larger groups were discouraged because angling education is less effective and instructors were not able to give adequate individual attention, plus it is easier to ensure safety with smaller groups. Catch and Release fishing was usually practiced during clinics. Reservations were requested for those attending the clinics, and individuals were encouraged to attend a clinic more than once. At many sites the local park district assisted by taking reservations.

Fish Stocking

Surveys show that kids are more likely to become interested in fishing if they have fun while learning. This is more likely to happen if they catch fish. Therefore, the stocking of catchable-sized channel catfish and hybrid sunfish (green sunfish x bluegill) was an integral part of the Urban Fishing Program. The general public was also allowed to catch fish at most sites. Channel catfish were stocked only in some Chicago lagoons this past summer at the rate of approximately 200 lbs./acre, and hybrid sunfish were added at most sites at the rate of 500 fish/acre/year. Sunfish were added in 2 - 5 deliveries between late spring through early August. Catfish weighed an average of 1 - 4 lbs. and sunfish were 4 - 7 inches long.

OTHER PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Studies show that a program that teaches fishing is much more effective at getting participants hooked on the sport if participants are able to actually go fishing. Therefore,

clinics included fishing if possible. Other programs which did include fishing were: special event clinics, events held by volunteer instructors, fishing expos, daily fishing clinics at the state fair, school fishing programs and fishing derbies.

Special Event Clinics

Special event clinics were similar to regular summer clinics, but were held on weekends, after school, or at different locations near lakes with a suitable fish population.

Volunteer Instructor Clinics

The volunteer instructor fishing clinics were held by individuals, by employees of state or local parks, recreation department employees, by 4-H and scout camp leaders, etc., and were held at sites with a lake where fishing was available. The volunteers were trained and provided with Urban Fishing Clinic Program educational materials and with fishing poles. This portion of the Program has shown a great amount of growth and has the potential for more, and will allow additional children to learn to fish at a low cost.

Fishing Expos

Fishing Expos were large fishing clinics where each topic of the Program was taught at a separate station by trained instructors. After completing each instructional station, participants then went fishing. These events were normally sponsored in part or entirely by local fishing clubs, service clubs, and/or private businesses. Expos were one-day events and were designed to accommodate between 100-500 participants.

Fishing Derbies

Fishing Derbies usually involved a larger group of anglers (40-200 people), and included fishing without the educational part of the summer clinic program. Educational sessions may not have been practical due to large group size, participants arriving at different times, time constraints, etc.

School Fishing Programs consisted of school fishing field trips, after-school fishing programs, and P.E. fishing programs. For all programs the educational portion was presented at the school or by the lake before actual fishing. With many fishing field trips and after-school programs, parents or grandparents met the lower-grade students at the lake to help. These family-mentored angling programs were held in high esteem because it was more likely that these children and adults will go fishing again by themselves. With P.E. programs the teachers took students fishing during their P.E. classes for several weeks near the end of the school year with fishing poles that IDNR provided for their use. Teachers who offered these fishing programs were truly enthusiastic and dedicated. After-school rod and reel maintenance became a way of life for these teachers.

PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE FISHING

In Illinois, weather limits Program activities that include actual fishing to the warmer months of April through October. If inclement weather or other limitations such as large group size, time constraints, lack of a suitable body of water, etc. occurred, non-fishing activities were held. These programs included school classroom programs, fishing/outdoor shows and outdoor Conservation Field Day programs.

School Classroom Programs

The School Classroom Programs included a variety of types of sessions. Some programs discussed lake ecosystems and related topics and then allowed students to pick up and handle live fish and other aquatic animals. Other programs included slide show fish related presentations followed by question and answer periods. Some programs were educational bingo-type fish games.

Fishing/Outdoor Shows

Fishing/Outdoor Shows were usually held indoors during the winter and they were set up to handle hundreds of persons wanting to visit with vendors selling fishing and outdoor products. Our activities at times offered the use of a fish simulator that allowed participants to experience what it might be like to catch a large fish. We also promoted our various summer fishing programs and gave away aquatic and fish related literature.

Conservation Field Day Programs

Conservation Field Day programs consisted of 15 - 25 minute presentations about fish and general aquatics, and were usually held outdoors at state parks for school groups that were on a field trip. Numerous groups of students participated and each group would rotate from station to station.

“ACCESS TO FISHING” PROGRAM

The Illinois “**Access to Fishing**” rod and reel loaner program was started in 1997 and remains a unique way of allowing anglers to try fishing without having to buy equipment. Rods and reels which had been purchased by or donated to IDNR were placed in establishments such as libraries, lake-side concession stands, bait stores, etc. This equipment was available to be borrowed at no cost, and was handled much like checking out and returning a library book. Tackle packets (containing hooks, sinkers, a bobber, etc.) and instructional fishing literature were also available at no cost for users to keep when they borrowed a fishing pole. This Program is popular with recent fishing clinic

participants, the first-time angler, and the occasional angler who does not yet want to invest in equipment. It also made it possible for example, for a parent to take their children and additional neighborhood children fishing, and be able to provide a fishing pole for each person.

This equipment was maintained by local volunteers, employees of the lending facility that housed the equipment, and by IDNR employees, etc. Locations and phone numbers for “loaner sites” in each area are shown in an appendix at the end of this report.

CHICAGO URBAN FISHING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Urban Fishing Program was initiated in Chicago in 1985. Programs were held in city parks and consisted of summer educational fishing sessions which were followed by fishing at a nearby stocked lagoon. The summer clinic program has been expanded to additional parks but the original format remains the same.

We also offered other fishing and aquatic environmental educational programs throughout the year. These programs were held in schools, with senior groups and day care facilities, in parks on weekends, etc. An important goal of this program was getting individuals interested in fishing so that they might develop it as a hobby in future years. If someone is to develop fishing as a hobby, it is most important that they actually go fishing when learning the sport. Therefore, activities in this report will be divided into those that included fishing and those that did not include fishing.

PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Summer Fishing Clinics

Summer Fishing Clinics were started in 1985 at Marquette, Gompers, and Columbus Parks. The Program was expanded and now fishing clinics and fish stockings take place at the following parks: Auburn, Columbus, Douglas, Garfield, Gompers, Humboldt, Jackson, Palmisano, Marquette, McKinley, Riis, Sherman, and Washington. A total of **467** fishing clinics was held for **14,335** participants and this past year we stocked **22,200** pounds of catchable sized channel catfish and **56,250** hybrid sunfish (Refer to Table 1 for fishing clinic and fish stocking information).

Table 1: Summer Fishing Clinics and Fish Stocking

Park	# of Clinics	# of Participants	Fish Stocking Lbs. Channel Catfish	# Hybrid sunfish
Auburn	-0-	-0-	1,700	2,725

Park	# of Clinics	# of Participants	Fish Stocking Lbs. Channel Catfish	# Hybrid sunfish
Columbus	59	1,950	2,450	5,625
Douglas	30	810	2,000	5,000
Garfield	0	-0-	1,800	5,000
Gompers	60	2,162	1,800	2,500
Humboldt	30	810	2,550	5,625
Jackson	55	1,727	1,450	3,375
Marquette	60	1,538	1,737	5,225
McKinley	56	2,323	2,238	5,850
Palmisano	0	0	0	3,475
Sherman	61	1,750	2,237	5,225
Riis	-0-	-0-	-0-	500
Washington	56	1,265	2,238	6,125
Totals	467	14,335	22,200	56,250

IDNR provided fishing equipment and bait for the participants to use. Wax worms and spikes were the preferred bait and it was generously provided at cost by Henry's Sports and Bait Shop, Inc. of Chicago.

OTHER PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Special event clinics were conducted on weekends, after school, or times when the structured clinic schedule and/or site could not be utilized. Special events also meant clinics for "special" groups, such as special education and special recreation groups, block clubs, school groups, senior citizens, park districts, and others that had expressed an interest. During the year 3,155 participants took part in one of the seven special event programs.

The Sheriff's Office of Cook County's youth services department held two fishing events at Maple Lake. Five of the Urban Fishing clinic instructors provided educational and fishing clinics for **200** kids this summer. Most of the kids caught bluegills and bass and all are waiting to go fishing next year.

78th District State Representative, Deborah Graham, held her annual fishing derby at Columbus Park Lagoon. Three summer clinic instructors provided instruction and

equipment for this event. Approximately **100** kids participated and caught bluegills, catfish, and bullheads.

A fishing derby for seniors was held at Channahon State Park by the **Chicago Police Department's 7th District**. There were approximately **300** seniors who participated in the event. They enjoyed the presentations and caught catfish, smallmouth bass, and bluegills from the banks of the canal and near the dam area. A total of 50 fish were caught and of course released. Lunch was provided for everyone. The weather was perfect and the seniors stated they had a great time and wished they could do this more often.

Trustee Melvin Lightford had two fishing events held at Waumpum Lake. Three Urban fishing clinic instructors provided educational and fishing clinics for **100** kids from the city of Maywood. The kids caught bluegills, perch and smallmouth bass. The weather was hot but everyone had a great time.

School fishing programs were held for elementary and high school students. Each program included a power-point presentation which was followed by educational games. We held **92** aquatic-outreach fishing clinics in **22** Chicago Public Schools for **2,455** students. Urban Fishing T-shirts were awarded as prizes and most students went fishing at a later date.

PROGRAMS THAT DID NOT INCLUDE FISHING

The Chicago Urban Fishing Program participated in the sixth annual event called "Kidzfest" which was held in Joliet. The Chicago Urban Fishing Coordinator along with six of her instructors provided an informational table with literature, specimens of exotic species, and casting targets for kids. Artificial bait was used as prizes. Over **500** students participated in the casting and approximately **5,000** people attended this event. The students along with their parents had a great time.

PROGRAM TOTALS

A total of **17,990** individuals participated in the Chicago Urban Fishing Program during the year. Summer Fishing Clinics had **14,335** participants, Special Event Outreach Fishing Programs had **700** participants, School Fishing Programs had **2,455** participants, and Aquatic Outreach Programs non-fishing programs had **500** participants.

"ACCESS TO FISHING" PROGRAM

The **"Access to Fishing"** rod and reel loaner program had **2,115** loans during the year. We have **nine** sites: Albany Park Branch Library, Sherman Park Library, Uptown Public Library, Humboldt Park Library, Douglas Park Library, McKinley Park Branch Library, Blackstone Library, Vodak East Side Library, and Henry's Bait Shop. Each site was provided with 25 rod and reel combos to lend out. In order to participate in the program,

parents were required to sign an agreement which waived liability for the City of Chicago and the Chicago Public Libraries. A bar code was attached to each rod and reel and cataloged for their records. The rod and reel combo was checked out of the libraries using the same system for checking out books. Henry's Bait Shop was also a loaner site and required a valid driver's license to borrow fishing gear. Participants were allowed to borrow fishing poles for seven days.

Locations and phone numbers for "loaner sites" are shown in an appendix at the end of this report.

FISCAL YEAR 2014 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Activities planned for the Chicago Urban Fishing Program will include summer fishing clinics at nine Chicago Park District sites and the stocking of catchable sized fish at 13 park district lagoons.

We also plan to expand the Aquatic Outreach Program to additional schools.

If you have questions or comments regarding the Chicago Urban Fishing Program, please contact: **Brenda McKinney, Chicago Urban Fishing Program Coordinator, 9511 Harrison Street, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016 or call 847/294-4137, 312/771-9741, fax 847/294-4128, E-mail: brenda.mckinney@illinois.gov**

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS URBAN FISHING PROGRAM

Currently, the northeastern Illinois Urban Fishing Program is limited to stocking catchable-sized fish at seven locations shown in Table 1 below. The "Access to Fishing" rod and reel loaner program is still available at **38** sites. Loaner locations are shown in the index at the end of this report.

Table 1. Fish Stockings

City/Site Stocked	Hybrid Sunfish (#)
Lyons/Cermak Quarry	816
Mundelein/Comm Park Pond	1,632
Wheaton/Elliot Park Lake	2,040
Schiller Park/Schiller Park Pond	2,448
Northbrook/Lake Shermerville	1,088
Dolton/Flatfoot Lake	6,120
Alsip Park District Lake	1,088
Totals	15,232

"ACCESS TO FISHING" PROGRAM

The "Access to Fishing" sites loaned fishing tackle equipment 8,379 from 51 loaner sites in the suburban area outside Chicago city limits.

NORTHWESTERN ILLINOIS URBAN FISHING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Since its humble beginnings in 1985, the Illinois Urban Fishing Program has been dedicated to improving the sport of fishing by demonstrating proper safety and responsibility to beginning anglers. The skills demonstrated and the knowledge imparted are valuable in our modern society.

While school team sports usually become spectator sports after graduation, fishing can turn into a lifelong activity. Most anglers develop an appreciation for natural resources, wildlife, and a clean environment by participating in wholesome outdoor recreation.

As conservationists, our success is not only measured in the resources we pass on to our children and grandchildren, but also by the attitude we have instilled in them. They are the future custodians of our land, water, and wildlife. The Urban Fishing Program tries to instill an awareness of safety, a willingness to become involved in conservation, and an attitude of responsibility toward all of our natural resources.

Our programs teach fishing, aquatic education, or a combination of the two. Our programs may or may not include fishing. Those that include fishing are much more valuable in instilling a desire for a person to adopt fishing as a lifelong hobby.

PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Fishing Clinics and Fish Stockings

The Northwestern Illinois Urban Fishing Program was initiated in 1995. Three sites were initially chosen based on population centers and availability of suitable waters. These sites were: Levings Lake in Rockford (Winnebago County), Glen Oak Park Lagoon in Peoria (Peoria County), and Riverside Lagoon in Moline (Rock Island County). Spencer Lake and the Mill Race Ponds in Belvidere were added to the Rockford clinic site in the spring of 1999. Participants were mostly school-age children, although a few adult and senior groups attended. Catchable-sized fish were stocked at most sites to improve fishing success. We held **56** clinics for **647** participants. (Refer to Table 1 for fishing clinic and fish stocking information).

Table 1. Summer Fishing Clinics and Fish Stockings

Clinic Site	# of Clinics	# of Participants	Hybrid Sunfish (#)
Moline Area	0	0	1,750

Peoria/Glen Oak Park	32	409	1,750
Rockford/Belvidere	24	238	8,100
Totals	56	647	11,600

A **Fishing Expo** is a large single-day event that usually includes a large number of participants. 2013 marked the 15th annual Kids Fishing@ expo held at Baker's Lake in Peru, Illinois, in cooperation with the Better Fishing Association (BFA). The BFA has a large number of dedicated volunteers, and they work very hard to make this a successful educational experience. At this year's clinic, more than **160** volunteers worked to provide an outstanding experience for more than **800** children, and about the same number of adults. Teachers at Lincoln School in Sterling, Freeport Jr. High and Rochelle Jr. High along with Outdoor Adventure Fest staff at the Sterling YMCA took more than **1300** youngsters fishing. Totals for these programs are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Other Programs That Included Fishing

Program Type	# of Events	# of Participants
Bakers Lake	1	800
School/Other Clinics	4	1,300
Totals	5	2,100

PROGRAMS THAT DID NOT INCLUDE FISHING

Region 1 fish biologists also presented numerous non-fishing aquatic ecosystem programs. This past year they held **240** events for more than **7500** students.

PROGRAM TOTALS

A total of **1,649** individuals participated in the Northwestern Illinois Urban Fishing Program during the year. Summer Fishing Clinics had **647** participants and Fishing Expos/Other Fishing Programs had **2,100** participants.

"ACCESS TO FISHING" PROGRAM

In the spring of 1997, sixteen "**Access to Fishing**" sites were established in Northwestern Illinois. Since that time, additional locations have been added and we now have a total of **20** sites. Last year fishing poles were borrowed **408** times.

FISCAL YEAR 2014 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The high quality and successful Baker's Lake Kids Fishing will again be cosponsored with the Better Fishing Association.

If you have any questions about this report or the Northwestern Illinois Urban Fishing Program, please contact: **Lori Johnson 815/ 625-2903**

CENTRAL ILLINOIS URBAN FISHING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Fishing is a new activity for many participants in our program. We do our best to teach children the important aspects of fishing and the aquatic world, catch fish, become excited and want to fish again. When individuals are introduced to fishing, they are being introduced to an activity they can enjoy their entire life. With today's hectic pace, fishing can make one forget life's pressures and just enjoy being outdoors. It is possible for fishing to give a child a good feeling and raise her/his level of self esteem. Fishing is a unique hobby that can be done alone or with friends or parents, and is an activity at which anyone can become an expert.

PROGRAMS

Some of our programs included fishing and some did not have fishing. Actual fishing was always included if possible because individuals are more likely to want to fish again and to develop fishing as a hobby **if they have the fishing experience**. Multiple fishing trips are even better at teaching someone to fish and to get them interested in fishing for the rest of their life. Children are **not likely** to become interested in fishing if they don't have the fishing experience.

Programs that included fishing were: summer fishing clinics, special fishing clinics, state fair fishing clinics, school fishing programs, volunteer instructor fishing clinics, and fishing derbies. A total of **6,073** individuals participated in one of **269** of these fishing programs.

The non-fishing program was the touch-a-fish station at the Illinois state Fair. Approximately **27,500** individuals participated in this event.

PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Summer fishing clinics were held twice daily during week days for about nine weeks in

the summer. A seasonal fishing instructor was hired by IDNR to teach fishing, and nearby ponds were stocked at most sites to help assure fishing success.

Sites for these programs included Crystal Lake Park in Urbana, Kaufman Lake in Champaign, Fairview Park in Decatur and Washington Park in Springfield. A total of **2,553** people (mostly children) attended one of **159** clinics. (Refer to Table 1 for specific numbers for fishing clinics and attendees, and the percent of anglers who caught at least one fish).

Table 1. Summer Fishing Clinics and Angler Totals and Angler Success

Clinic Site	# of Clinics	# of Anglers	% Anglers Catch at least one fish
Crystal Lake, Urbana	28	284	97
Kaufman Lake, Champaign	24	291	100
Fairview Park, Decatur	49	774	100
Washington Park, Springfield	58	1,204	96
Totals	159	2,553	

In order to increase attendance at clinics, promotional letters were sent to children’s groups such as day care centers, YMCAs, and Boys and Girls Clubs. News releases/interviews were also given to radio and TV stations and to newspapers.

Fish stocking has become an integral part of the Program. If children are to become interested in fishing, it is very important that they catch fish while they are learning. Fish were stocked on a bi-weekly schedule during the summer at most clinic sites to help improve success. Some offsite lakes used occasionally were not stocked because they had a sufficient fish population that allowed most attendees to catch fish. All lakes were pre-fished before programs to make sure fish were available. The stocking locations and numbers of catchable-sized fish that were stocked are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Fish Stocking Totals

Clinic Site	Hybrid Sunfish (#)
Crystal Lake, Urbana	6,630
Kaufman Lake, Champaign	3,400
Washington Park, Springfield	3,400
Fairview Park, Decatur	2,800
Illinois State Fair, Springfield	4,000
Totals	20,230

Fishing poles were rigged with small hooks (size 12 circle hooks) and small bobbers to catch mostly sunfish during clinics because those fish were more numerous and easier to catch. Kids are more likely to become interested in fishing if they catch fish. Catching a small fish is far superior to not catching anything.

Volunteer help during fishing programs has become an integral part of the Urban Fishing Program. The extra help provided more individual attention for children, that usually meant more success at catching fish and also made events safer. Many volunteers helped our young anglers this year and group leaders were always urged to bring enough adults to have a one-to-five adult/child ratio.

OTHER PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Other programs that included fishing were special fishing clinics, fishing derbies, school fishing programs, fishing clinics by volunteer instructors and state fair fish clinics. A total of **3520** individuals fished in one of **110** programs that were held. These programs and their totals are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Other Programs That Included Fishing

Program Type	# of Events	# of Participants
Special Fishing Clinics	4	95
School Fishing Clinics	8	355
Clinics by Volunteer Instructors	37	720
Derbies by Volunteer Instructors	11	700
State Fair Fishing Clinics	50	1,650
Totals	110	3,520

The State Fair Fishing Program was exciting in its carnival atmosphere. It was again held

using a small temporary pond about 2/3 the size of a tennis court near Conservation World's entrance. The pond was filled with water and then stocked with about **4,000 hybrid sunfish** along with a few catfish and largemouth bass shortly before the fair started. As in the past, the fish were susceptible to being caught and most of the **1,650 anglers** caught at least one fish. The pond's small size limited the number of attendees to 25 - 35 kids per session. Parents were always encouraged to participate by helping their children bait hooks and remove fish. Other volunteers also came forth to help.

The Touch a Fish station was located near the entrance to Conservation World where participants were allowed to touch or hold a fish, turtle or crawdad and this was again extremely popular. It seemed to be a new experience for many. Approximately **27,500 individuals** participated in this opportunity to touch something slimy or to hold one of these aquatic creatures.

The **Volunteer Instructor** program is becoming a more important and larger part of the central Illinois program. With this program fishing clinics were held by employees of a state or local park, a recreation department, church, 4-H or scout camp, individuals, etc. The employees of organizations or individuals were trained and given educational posters, fishing poles, and other program necessities. Numerous fishing clinics were held at each site, and these sites included: Weldon Springs State Park, Comlara Park in McLean County, the Charleston Park District, the Quincy Park District, Heartland Community College in Bloomington, In addition, numerous fishing derbies were held at the 4-H Camp at Allerton Park near Monticello. IDNR trained new employees where necessary and helped repair/replace damaged fishing equipment at each site.

"ACCESS TO FISHING" PROGRAM

The ***"Access to Fishing"*** (rod and reel loaner program) program now has 27 **loaner sites** in the central Illinois area. Usually, eight or ten rod and reel combos were placed at each site, although several sites were given more. Large colorful promotional posters from the American Sportfishing Association were used to increase awareness. Fishing poles were **used approximately 2,600 times** during the year at these **27** sites. Locations and phone numbers for "loaner sites" are shown in the appendix at the end of this report. Some sites are designated as "Super Loan Sites", meaning a minimum of 20 rods and reels will be loaned out for groups such as school classrooms, large scout groups, etc. These super sites are also noted in the appendix.

If you have questions or comments about this report or the Central Illinois Urban Fishing Program, please contact: **Dan Stephenson at 217/782-6424 or email dan.stephenson**

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SOUTHERN ILLINOIS URBAN FISHING PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Southern Illinois Urban Fishing Program is a fun-filled practical introduction to fishing for youth and persons of all ages. Thousands of children and their families receive basic training in the sport of angling each year through the efforts of the Urban Fishing staff.

The southern Illinois IDNR Urban Fishing programs are managed by the IDNR Division of Fisheries and are supported by fishing clubs, educators, service clubs and interested anglers. These groups and individuals share ownership of the program and promote fishing as a wholesome sport.

The Urban Fishing programs are basic fishing classes devoted to the sport of fishing, and ideally include an actual fishing experience. Students learn water safety and fishing ethics and many realize the lake ecosystem requires good conservation practices while they experience the freedom of the great outdoors. As young anglers build confidence with their newly acquired skills they become more aware of the world's natural resources and the environment in which they live. Many participants come to enjoy fishing as a stress-free, low-cost pastime while others mold the many facets of ichthyology into satisfying career paths.

This report separates these activities into fishing and non-fishing events. A total of **16,608** persons participated last year in the **39** counties of southern Illinois served by the Southern Illinois Urban Fishing Program Coordinator and **9,685** fished.

PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Summer Fishing Clinics: Fishing clinics were staffed by five IDNR Conservation Education Representatives (CER) clinic Instructors who taught **4,998** anglers. The CERs were headquartered at five locations: Gordon Moore Park in Alton, Frank Holten State Park in East St. Louis, Veterans Park in Mt. Vernon, Foundation Park in Centralia, and at Southern Illinois University Campus Lake in Carbondale. However, CERs also held fishing programs at alternate sites shown in Table 1. Fishing classes were scheduled twice daily during weekdays for about 10 weeks in the summer. Catchable-sized hybrid

sunfish were stocked at the clinic sites to help improve success for the anglers. See Table 1 below for clinic student locations and fish stocking numbers. The asterisk* indicates CER classes at other fishing sites.

Table 1 Summer Fishing Clinics and Fish Stockings

Clinic Site	# of Clinics	# of Participants	Hybrid Sunfish (#)
Alton/Gordon Moore Park	52	705	5000
Edwardsville/LeClair Lake*	3	151	1,000
Belk Park, Wood River	6	109	1,000
Edwardsville Rod-Gun Club	10	157	0
Belleville Quail Club	10	128	0
East St. Louis/Holten SP	72	1401	5,000
Carbondale/SIU Camp Lake	35	467	2,500
Carbondale/SIU Touch-Nature	15	243	0
Mt. Vernon/ Veteran=s Park	36	594	1,200
Centralia/ Foundation Park	20	400	1,500
Clay Co. and Washington Co	25	478	0
Carlyle Camp Joy*	19	155	0

Totals	303	4,988	17,200
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OTHER PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDED FISHING

Large outreach programs that the Southern Illinois Urban Fishing Program co-sponsored were the Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair at Pere Marquette State Park, the Southern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days weekend at John A. Logan Community College, the Lewis and Clark Community College Water Stewardship Festival, the national award-winning Fish Tales program held at Shawnee Community College, and the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program held at Pere Marquette State Park.

The **Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair**, held during Illinois Free Fishing Days, is the largest youth fishing event in Illinois. In 2013, the 23rd Annual Fishing Fair attracted over **4,500** persons and had **1,600** children registered for fishing activities. The event has always been held at Pere Marquette State Park, but had to be relocated in 2013 due to spring flooding. Because it was moved, the numbers were down slightly. The Urban Fishing staff and volunteers managed six of the 28 fishing activities which included a felt fish pond, one-cast, the pitch and flip station, knot tying, the sport fishing simulator station, and the favorite of many, the Bluegill Pond, which was stocked with **1000** hybrid sunfish and a few channel catfish. Youth who visited at least seven stations to learn fishing skills were qualified to fish for trout and were then eligible to select a prize from the prize tent. Special attractions included an appearance by Fred Bird, the mascot of the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team, and the wildlife-trained antics of Camo-the-Clown (David Freeman). A 4000-gallon aquarium provided by Fetch-n-Fish Promotions was stocked with several species of Illinois fish and attracted many visitors, as did the Cabelas scavenger hunt and fish preparation station. Three new stations were introduced this year, including: the Audubon Center with a display entitled "Home is Where the Habitat Is", Kampsville Archeological Center taught kids the ancient ways of fishing, and the local fire department provided a "smoke house" to demonstrate fire safety and awareness. The event received considerable media coverage through St. Louis radio and television which helped to promote it to urban families in the St. Louis and Metro East communities. After 23 years, the event remains completely free to participants in order to reach as many people as possible.

The annual “**Becoming An Outdoors Woman**” program is designed to give women introductory experiences and instruction in various outdoor activities. Some of the courses include catching a fish, tying a fly, shooting a gun, paddling a canoe, plus many others. Program instructors emphasize the basics in instruction while providing information on equipment, associated clubs and/or organizations, and additional training opportunities. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources wants to provide a supportive, safe, non-threatening and non-competitive learning environment. The year’s event hosted 85 women from throughout the state.

The annual fall **Southern Illinois Celebration of Hunting and Fishing Days** at John A. Logan Community College in Carterville attracted approximately **25,000** persons in September. The Fishing Program stocked **500 lbs.** of channel catfish and **1,300** hybrid sunfish in the college reflecting pool, and over **1,500** kids caught fish. The Urban Fishing trailer was a hit as kids and parents viewed large mounted fish including the state record bluegill, a three-pound eight-ounce trophy fish, and the 1995 record blue catfish (79lb. 12oz). This event has hosted over a **half million** sportsmen and their families since 1987. It is the largest event of its kind in the United States, is held on the fourth weekend September each year, and showcases outdoor recreation in Illinois.

The **Lewis and Clark Community College Water Stewardship Festival** attracted over 500 students and teachers from 18 schools. The educational emphasis of the event was to raise the awareness of the science of water. The Urban Fishing area enabled over 500 youth to catch fish during 15-minute fishing sessions. Many volunteers kept the hooks baited and practiced good catch and release and methods with **800** hybrid sunfish that were stocked.

The national award-winning **Fish Tales** program managers held their 11th annual fishing camp at Shawnee Community College in Ullin. A total of 300 participants from 10 schools attended. During the training sessions the youth learned outdoor ethics as they enjoyed fishing.

The Hooked On Fishing - Not On Drugs (HOFNOD) Program combines sport fishing, environmental education, a life learning skill, and drug prevention into one package. This portion of the Urban Fishing Program continued to be a highly regarded program used by elementary science teachers and high school environmental class room instructors.

Other Urban Fishing Programs that included fishing were special clinics and derbies. Totals for outreach programs that included fishing are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Other Programs That Included Fishing and Fish Stockings

Program Type	# of Events	# of Participants	Channel Catfish (lbs.)	Hybrid Sunfish (#)	Trout (#)
Fishing Expos	6	4040	-	1,800*	1,200
HOFNOD Program	10	309	-	-	-
Special Fishing Clinics	5	108	-	-	-
Fishing Derbies	1	50	-	-	-
Volunteer Fishing Clinics	4	190	-	-	-
Totals	26	4697		1,800	1,200

PROGRAMS THAT DID NOT INCLUDE FISHING

These non-fishing programs were presented at fishing events, outdoor shows, fairs, and schools as well as non-school educational programs where various aspects of fishing and environmental appreciation were taught. Again this year members of the Urban Fishing Program staff were presenters during the Kids Day Safety activities at the Du Quoin State Fair. Totals for these events are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Programs That Did Not Include Fishing

Program Type	# of Events	# of Participants
School Aquatic Outreach Programs	75	2,787
Non-School Aquatic Outreach Programs	15	2191
Du Quoin State Fair Casting Practice/Urban Fishing Tent (ten days)*	10	1,525
Fishing Safety Clinics DuQuoin State Fair	10	420
Totals	110	6,923

*The Urban Fishing Tent was open all 10 days of the Du Quoin State Fair

“ACCESS TO FISHING” PROGRAM

The Southern Illinois Urban Fishing “**Access to Fishing**” program continues to allow youth to experience the sport of fishing and the great outdoors by providing libraries and other loaner sites with fishing tackle that can easily be borrowed by youthful anglers. Alton’s Hayner Library was the first rod and reel “loaner site” in Illinois. There are now **44**

sites in southern Illinois. During FY '13, approximately **850** youth borrowed a fishing pole. Rods and reels are usually bar-coded by the libraries before being loaned out. Tackle packs containing hooks, sinkers, a bobber, and fishing tips are also available to each borrower. A new loaner site was added to the program in FY '14. The Jerseyville Public Library now has loaner poles and tackle available. Locations and phone numbers for the Southern Illinois loaner sites are shown in the appendix at the end of this report.

FISCAL YEAR 2014 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Plans for the Southern Illinois Urban Fishing Program next year include:

- Increase the number of in-school fishing/environmental classes given at schools in the metro-east area and encourage those students to bring their parents to actual fishing training that is available at the Urban Fishing Clinic sites, or to attend Family Fishing Events held at state and local parks.
- Promote attendance at the regular Urban Fishing summer clinics. Encourage advanced reservations and inform youth groups about the free fishing clinics. Continue to involve the media to inform the public about the availability of the free fishing clinics in their area.
- Offer Library access to Fishing Sites at training opportunities for their youthful patrons during their summer reading programs. Continue to promote the access to Fishing at sites.
- Build upon past experience and successes to promote attendance at the Urban Fishing events. Continue to perfect these quality programs that help instill a respect for the conservation of our natural resources and introduce sport fishing to our youth.
- Expand the conservation world area at Du Quoin State Fair by adding a fishing pond for the youth to fish during the fair.

If there are any questions about this report or the Southern Illinois Urban Fishing Program, please contact Scott Isringhausen, the Urban Fishing Coordinator at 618/786-3323, cell 618/535-6237 or Scott.Isringhausen@illinois.gov