



MAZONIA STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA

Gar Lake (Mazonia Lake #9)

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Gar Lake (Lake #9) is located within the Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area Main Unit, 3 miles southwest of Braidwood in Grundy County on Illinois Route 53 and Huston Road.

DESCRIPTION – Gar Lake is one of the largest impoundments in the Mazonia Main Unit covering 34.0 surface acres. It is connected by a narrow channel to Carp Lake (Lake #8). Gar Lake also receives water from the Mazon River during high water periods, which has resulted in diversification of the fish population. Shoreline access is limited by extensive stands of tall reed grass. Boaters can access the lake by launching at the Carp Lake ramp. Gar Lake is closed to fishing during upland game and waterfowl season. Following the completion of the hunting seasons, it reopens for ice fishing dependent upon ice conditions.

HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY: Gar Lake is surveyed on an alternate year basis. While not directly stocked, Carp Lake (Lake #8) receives Channel Catfish from the state hatchery system and these fish likely migrate between the two lakes via a small connection channel.

In addition to the species listed, a variety of other species that can be caught include Common Carp, Bullheads and various Sucker species. A Silver Carp was observed in 2020 but avoided capture. Silver Carp have sporadically been sighted in Gar Lake. Silver Carp have access to Gar Lake through the Mazon River (which is, itself, connected to the Illinois River). *No special mercury advisory or other contaminant-related consumption advisories pertain.*

LARGEMOUTH BASS – Largemouth Bass catch rates remained unchanged in 2020, though the proportion of legal sized fish declined. The largest fish collected was 17 inches. Body condition (plumpness) was good for most size groups. A good proportion of fish collected were between 8 – 12 inches. As these fish grow, the number of Quality size fish (12 – 14 in) should increase.

BLUEGILL – Bluegill catch rates declined in 2020, though the proportion of adult fish over 6 inches remained unchanged. Bluegill over 8 inches were absent from this survey, a historical trend for this lake. About half of the total catch were smaller than 3 inches. As these fish grow, the number of larger fish should increase.

CRAPPIE – Crappie were omitted from this survey, though Crappie over 12 inches have been collected in IDNR surveys. Average Crappie size is 9.4 inches.

CHANNEL CATFISH – Channel catfish up to 25” have been collected in previous surveys. While Gar Lake does not directly receive routine Channel Catfish stockings, Carp Lake is scheduled to receive them on a triennial basis. Due to a direct connection, Channel Catfish are able to migrate between the two lakes.

GAR – Three species of gar have historically been collected from this lake with Longnose Gar the most prevalent. Longnose Gar in excess of 40 inches are routinely collected during IDNR surveys.

ADDITIONAL LAKE INFORMATION: Trolling motor only.

Additional Site-Specific Fishing Regulations:

All Fish Species: 2 Pole and Line Fishing Only

Large or Smallmouth Bass: 15" Minimum Length Limit; 3 Fish Daily Creel

Black, White, or Hybrid Crappie: 10 Fish Daily Creel Limit

Channel Catfish: 6 Fish Daily Creel Limit

CONTACT INFORMATION –Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish & Wildlife Area: 815/237-0063.
IDNR Fisheries County Fish Biologist: 630/553-6680.