



Giant City State Park - Eagle Pond

2023 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION: Giant City State Park is located in Jackson and Union Counties south of Carbondale, IL. Eagle Pond is located at the north entrance to the park across from the stables and is visible from Giant City Rd. as you enter the park.

DESCRIPTION: Eagle Pond is a 2.5-acre pond managed for recreational fishing. There is a gravel parking lot near the pond and the perimeter of the pond is mowed to provide easy access. There are no docks or restrooms on site, although restrooms are available at the Giant City Visitors Center.

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – The following is a summary of game fish populations based on a fish community electrofishing survey conducted during May of 2021 by IDNR:

Bluegill – During the 2021 spring survey, a total of 32 Bluegill were collected during 12 minutes of electrofishing. Bluegill in the sample ranged from 2 inches up to 9 inches in length. The largest Bluegill was 9 inches and weighed 0.75 lbs. For a small pond, the electrofishing catch rate for Bluegill was quite low at 160/hour, indicating heavy predation by Largemouth Bass. In summary, the Bluegill fishery in Eagle Pond is characterized by relatively low abundance, but excellent growth. All 32 Bluegill in the sample were retained for aging using otoliths. Bluegill in Eagle Pond reached 8 inches in length by age-4 and 9 inches by age-6. The current population structure for Bluegill is desirable in Eagle Pond, as the primary management goal is to maintain a quality panfish fishery with opportunities for Bluegill at least 8 inches in length. However, Bluegill abundance should be increased to improve angler catch rates, which are reported to be low. Complex structures placed in the lake during April of 2021 should assist with increasing Bluegill recruitment, as young-of-year fish will likely use these structures to hide from predators. Very little fish habitat existed in the lake prior to placing structures in April. Additional habitat enhancements (brush piles and gravel beds) are planned for the winter of 2021/2022 to further improve Bluegill recruitment.

Redear Sunfish – During the 2021 spring survey, a total of 4 Redear were collected during 12 minutes of electrofishing. Three of the four Redear were around 10 inches in length. Like Bluegill, the Redear fishery in Eagle Pond is characterized by relatively low abundance, but excellent growth. The current population structure for Redear is desirable in Eagle Pond, as the primary management goal is to maintain a quality panfish fishery with opportunities for Redear over 9 inches. However, Redear abundance should be increased to improve angler catch rates, which are reported to be low. As stated for Bluegill, habitat enhancements may help to improve Redear recruitment.

Largemouth Bass – During the 2021 spring survey, a total of 61 Largemouth Bass were collected during 12 minutes of electrofishing. The majority of bass were between 10 and 14 inches in length. The largest bass was just over 14 inches and weighed 1.3 lbs. The electrofishing catch rate for Largemouth Bass was very high at 305/hour. In summary, Largemouth Bass are very abundant in Eagle Pond, but growth is relatively poor. However, the current population structure for bass is desirable, as high bass abundance helps drive a quality size structure for Bluegill and Redear, which is the primary management goal in Eagle Pond.

Channel Catfish – During the 2021 spring survey, a total of 14 Channel Catfish were collected during 12 minutes of electrofishing. Lengths ranged from 12 to nearly 20 inches. The largest catfish was just under 20 inches and weighed 2.7 lbs. The fishery for Channel Catfish is popular among anglers and is maintained by annual stockings.

Fishing regulations:

Species	Creel Limit	Minimum Length Limit
Channel Catfish	6	None
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	15	None
Largemouth Bass	6	15 inches
All Fish	2 Pole and Line Fishing Only	

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