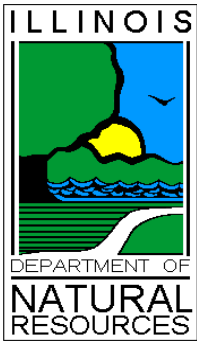


# PYRAMID STATE PARK – CAPTAIN AREA – MERGANSER LAKE



## 2023 FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

**LOCATION:** Pyramid State Park is located south of Pinckneyville in Perry County. Merganser Lake is located just south of Cutler off Trico Road.

**DESCRIPTION:** Merganser Lake is located on the Captain Section of Pyramid State Park. This 20-acre strip cut is deep, rocky, and has very clear water. There is a gravel boat launch, but no docks or bathroom facilities.

**STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY** – The following is a summary of the major sport fish species based on fish population surveys conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Fisheries surveys conducted during 2022 consisted of community spring electrofishing survey and fall netting survey.

**Largemouth Bass** – Results from the 2022 electrofishing survey suggest that Merganser Lake harbors an excellent Largemouth Bass fishery. All management goals for the population were exceeded, including abundance (catch rate), relative weight (plumpness), and size structure. A total of 28 bass (112/hour) were collected during the 15-minute electrofishing survey, of which 43% were over 15 inches and 11% were over 18 inches. The mean relative weight of all bass in the sample was excellent at 103. Mean relative weights exceeded the goal of 90 among nearly all size classes. Bass growth in Merganser Lake is likely driven by an abundance of small Gizzard Shad; most shad captured during the electrofishing survey were between 3 and 4.5 inches in length.

**Crappie** – Merganser Lake harbors both Black and White Crappie, as well as their hybrids. A total of 12 Black Crappie and 3 White Crappie were collected by electrofishing; an additional 7 Black Crappie, 5 White Crappie, and 1 Hybrid Crappie were captured in fall trap nets. The size structure of crappie in Merganser Lake is impressive, as most crappie collected were between 10 and 13 inches. Similar to bass, the quality size structure of crappie is likely driven by the abundance of small Gizzard Shad.

**Bluegill** – Merganser Lake does not appear to have a good fishery for Bluegill. A total of 62 Bluegill (248/hour) were collected during spring electrofishing, of which only 2 were over 7 inches in length. Mean relative weight of all Bluegill in the sample was low at 89. Given the abundance of Gizzard Shad in the lake, it is unlikely the Bluegill fishery will improve anytime soon, as Bluegill and shad compete for the same food sources.

**Channel Catfish** – Merganser Lake contains a self-sustaining population of Channel Catfish. A total of 5 were collected during 2022, ranging between 21 and 27 inches. The largest Channel Catfish was nearly 8 lbs.

### **Fishing regulations:**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Creel Limit</b>	<b>Minimum Length Limit</b>
Largemouth Bass	5 under 14” and 1 over 18”	14-18 inch protected slot (no possession)
Bluegill or Redear Sunfish	25	None
Crappie	25	None
Channel Catfish	6	None
All Fish	2 Pole and Line Fishing Only	
Live Bait	All live bait in excess of 8” must	be rigged with a quick set rig.

**RECREATIONAL USE RESTRICTIONS** – Fishing is prohibited from November 1 through the end of February. There are no boat motor restrictions at this lake but the entire lake is a “NO WAKE ZONE” and all sizes of boat motors must operate at no-wake speed.

**CONTACT INFO** – IDNR Fish Biologist – Nick Abell 618-967-0952, nicholas.abell@illinois.gov. Pyramid State Park 618-357-2574.