

STATUS OF THE MUSKIE FISHERY



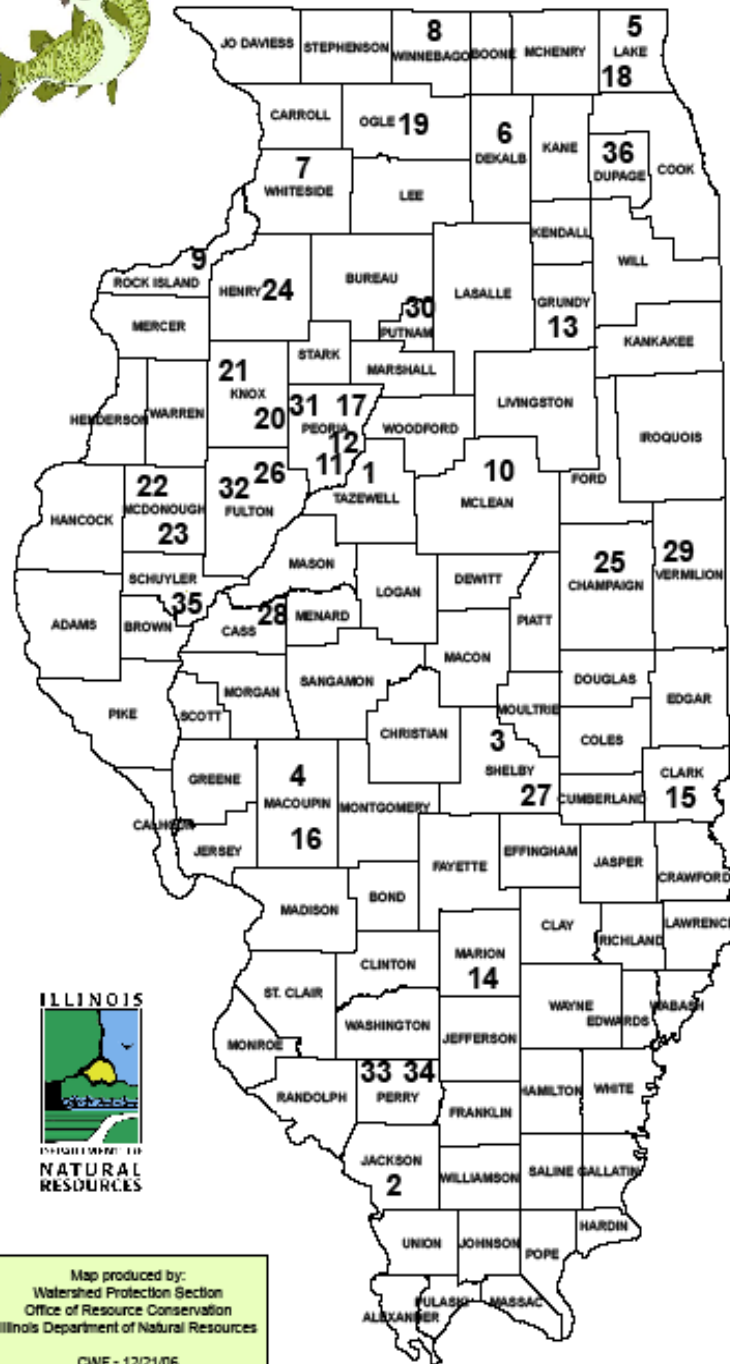
**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

JANUARY 2008



Illinois' Public Muskie Lakes



Legend

Muskie Lakes

- 1, Spring Lake (North)
- 2, Kinkaid Lake
- 3, Shelbyville Lake
- 4, Otter Lake
- 5, Fox Chain
- 6, Shabbona Lake
- 7, Lake Carlton
- 8, Pierce Lake
- 9, Lake George
- 10, Evergreen Lake
- 11, Wheel Lake
- 12, Shovel Lake
- 13, Heldecke Lake
- 14, Forbes Lake
- 15, Mill Creek
- 16, Stanton City Lake
- 17, Johnson Lake
- 18, Sterling Lake
- 19, Lake Sule
- 20, Lake McMaster
- 21, Lake Storey
- 22, Spring Lake
- 23, Argyle Lake
- 24, Johnson Sauk Trail
- 25, Lake of the Woods
- 26, Canton Lake
- 27, Pana Lake
- 28, Prairie Lake
- 29, Lake Mingo
- 30, Hennepin Hopper Lake
- 31, Deep Lake
- 32, Double T Lake
- 33, Goldeneye Lake
- 34, Canvasback Lake
- 35, Schuy - Rush Lake
- 36, Mallard Lake



Map produced by:
 Watershed Protection Section
 Office of Resource Conservation
 Illinois Department of Natural Resources
 CWF - 12/21/06

2007 STATEWIDE MUSKIE STOCKING SUMMARY

DATE	SIZE	LAKE NAME	NUMBER	SOURCE
08/02	9.1	Lake Mingo (R)	397	Kentucky
08/28	10.3	Lake Shelbyville	5,630	Iowa
08/28	10.3	Kinkaid Lake	2,000	Iowa
09/04	10.8	North Spring Lake	1,156	Iowa
09/05	10.8	Otter Lake	765	Iowa
09/05	10.8	Shabbona Lake	319	Iowa
09/05	10.8	Fox Chain O'Lakes	3,000	Iowa
09/05	10.8	Lake George	167	Iowa
09/05	10.8	Lake Carlton	76	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Mill Creek Lake	366	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Staunton City Lake	84	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Prairie Lake - JE/PC SFWA	200	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Evergreen Lake	926	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Johnson Lake - Banner Marsh	600	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Shovel Lake - Banner Marsh	200	Iowa
09/06	10.8	Wheel Lake - Banner Marsh	350	Iowa
09/07	10.8	Deep Lake - Wildlife Prairie SP	25	Iowa
09/07	10.8	Double T SFWA	64	Iowa
09/07	10.8	Heidecke Lake	390	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Lake #3 - Fulton Co. Rec. Area	90	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Lake #4 - Fulton Co. Rec. Area	36	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Canton Lake	500	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Schuy-Rush Lake	370	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Spring Lake - McDonough Co.	554	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Argyle Lake	186	Iowa
09/11	11.2	Heidecke Lake	1,565	Iowa
09/12	11.2	Lake Storey	270	Iowa
09/12	11.2	Johnson Sauk Trail Lake	116	Iowa
09/12	11.2	McMaster Lake	270	Iowa
09/12	11.2	Sterling Lake	300	Iowa
09/12	11.2	Mallard Lake (DuPage Co.)	178	Iowa
09/12	11.2	Busse Lake (Cook Co.)	800	Iowa
09/12	11.2	Fox Ridge Lake (R)	100	Iowa
09/13	11.2	Lake Sule	154	Iowa
09/13	11.2	Pierce Lake (R)	300	Iowa
09/13	11.2	Lake of the Woods	52	Iowa
09/13	11.2	Lake Mingo (R)	300	Iowa
09/13	11.2	Pana Lake	440	Iowa
09/13	11.2	Sam Dale Lake (R)	300	Iowa
09/14	11.2	North Spring Lake	572	Iowa
09/17	11.0	North Spring Lake	186	Illinois
09/27	9.2	Pierce Lake (R)	253	Ohio
09/27	9.1	Sam Dale Lake (R)	250	Ohio
11/14	13.0	Eagle Lake - PRKSP (TGM)	200	Minnesota
11/14	20.0	Fox Chain O'Lakes	500	Minnesota
11/30	10.5	Sam Dale Lake (R)	260	Minnesota
11/30	10.5	Lake Mingo (R)	270	Minnesota
11/30	10.5	Pierce Lake (R)	250	Minnesota

TOTAL: 26,337

(R) - Research
(TGM) - Tiger Muskie

2007 GREEN GENE STOCKING SUMMARY

DATE	SIZE	POPULATION	NUMBER	STOCK	SOURCE
Sam Dale Lake					
09/13	11.20	Spirit Lake, IA	300	Up Miss. River	Jake Wolf Hatchery
09/27	9.13	Clear Fork Lake, Oh	250	Ohio River	
11/30	10.50	Leech Lake, MN	260	Up Miss. River	
			TOTAL: 810		
Lake Mingo					
08/02	9.09	CaveRun Lake, KY	397	Ohio River	
09/13	11.20	Spirit Lake, IA	300	Up Miss. River	Jake Wolf Hatchery
11/30	10.50	Leech Lake, MN	270	Up Miss. River	
			TOTAL: 967		
Pierce Lake					
09/13	11.20	Spirit Lake, IA	300	Up Miss. River	Jake Wolf Hatchery
09/27	9.21	Clear Fork Lake, OH	253	Ohio River	
11/30	10.50	Leech Lake, MN	250	Up Miss. River	
			TOTAL: 803		

GRAND TOTAL: 2,580

Total Ohio River drainage muskie = 900
Total Upper Mississippi River drainage muskie = 1,680

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION I

DISTRICT 1: JO DAVIESS, STEPHENSON, WINNEBAGO, BOONE, DEKALB, OGLE, AND CARROLL COUNTIES

SHABBONA LAKE - This lake was built in 1974 and first opened to fishing in 1977. The lake is 319 acres and the basin was shaped and designed with Sport Fish Restoration funds. Standing timber, stump fields, fish cribs, anchored trees, rock piles, fish piers, a gravel road bridge, and a cement block house provide some very interesting structures for the angler. The shoreline is well-vegetated with a variety of aquatic plants including water lily.

In addition to muskie, the lake's predator population includes largemouth bass in substantial numbers, walleye, smallmouth bass, and hybrid striped bass supplementally stocked yearly. The prey population includes gizzard shad, bluegill, yellow perch, golden shiners, white suckers and brook silversides.

The lake was initially stocked with 30,000 tiger muskie fry in 1976. The stocking success was excellent with 53 tiger muskie collected in the fall electrofishing survey of 1976. The lake was again stocked with 286 tiger muskie fingerlings in 1980.

Two state record tiger muskie were claimed from Shabbona Lake; the first in 1982 from the original stock and the second in 1986 from the supplemental stock.

From 1983 to 1989 the lake was stocked with 2,229 pure muskie at 11" in size from the Carlton Silt Basin and Muskie, Inc. This stocking effort has been a success since two state records came from the 1985 stocking at 34 pounds, 3 ounces in 1994 and a latter state record in 1997 at 37 pounds, 13 ounces.

From 1990 through 1999 - 4,812 muskie 8" to 12" were stocked from Jake Wolf Hatchery or through a purchase by the Shabbona Lake Sportsmen's Club. Muskie were stocked only in odd years beginning in 2001 with 638 fish or 2 per acre followed by 638 fish in 2003. In 2005, 850 - 10 inch muskie were stocked. In 2006, 1,150 10 inch muskie were stocked. In 2007, 319 - 11 inch muskie were stocked.

April trapnetting for walleye (1997-2002) yielded 283 muskie with two estimated to be over 40 pounds. With reduced efforts in 2003, 28 muskie were captured. In 2005, 6 trapnets resulted in the collection of 66 muskie of which 65 were greater than 30 inches. In 2006, 6 trapnets resulted in the collection of 26 muskie of which 25 were greater than 30 inches. In 2007, 6 trapnets resulted in the collection of 46 muskie of which 45 were greater than 30 inches, 21 were greater than 36 inches. The largest muskie collected in 2007 weighed just under 37 pounds.

The long-awaited barrier net was completed on August 4, 1998 completely blocking the exit of larger fish over the spillway. Prior to the net's installation, members of Muskie, Inc. collected 22 muskie below the dam in the Indian Creek tailwaters. A similar

September survey in 2000 found only one muskie. The 2007 fishing season was very good for muskie anglers.

There is a 48" size limit on muskie at Shabbona Lake with a limit of one per day.

PIERCE LAKE - This 162-acre lake was built in 1960. It was completely drained in 1970 due to a defective valve. The lake's predators in addition to muskie include largemouth and smallmouth bass, and walleye stocked supplementally each year. Among the many prey species are gizzard shad, brook silversides, white suckers, and carp.

A muskie stocking program was begun in 1983, and to 1989 - 1,274 large fingerling muskie (11") were stocked from the Carlton Silt Basin, state hatcheries, and Muskie, Inc.

The muskie sign-in program from 1987 to 1991 has reports of 59 fish caught with 42% of these fish being harvested. Creel data from 1993 found an estimated 30 muskie caught with none reported as being harvested. Creel data from 1999 estimated 50 muskie caught with 3 estimated harvested.

An Illinois Natural History Survey study was begun in 1990 to determine the comparative survivability of stocked 4", 8", and 10" fish. In 1990 - 3,335 muskie were stocked as part of this study of which 1,000 were 10" fish. The study was continued in 1992 and 3,772 muskie were stocked of which 709 fish were 10" in size. The lake was monitored through 1997. The preliminary results were that no survival occurs on muskie stocked under 8.0" in size.

From 1997 to 2003, Jake Wolf supplied 1,301 muskie 10" - 13" and the Flatlanders Muskie, Inc. supplied an additional 330 muskie with 51% of these fish over 20" and 79% from the Leech Lake Strain. Jake Wolf production was good in 2003 and Pierce Lake was stocked with 824 - 6.0 to 10.0" fish. The lake is now part of a statewide muskie genetic survival study and will continue to receive generous stocks of muskie from strains throughout the country. In 2004, 300 - 11 inch muskie were stocked from Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery as part of the genetic study.

From 1997 through 2002, 60 muskie were taken below the dam with 25 of them taken during the wet 2000 year. This generated interest from the Flatlanders in installing a barrier net to prevent fish escapement. Initial planning and fund-raising began in 2001, but by mid-2002, the State Water Survey determined a net could not be installed due to possible dam failure. Retrieval of muskie below the dam will continue in future years.

The Lake and Willow Creek tailwaters has a 48" size limit on muskie with a limit of one per day.

DISTRICT 2: ROCK ISLAND, HENRY, BUREAU, LASALLE, LEE, AND WHITESIDE COUNTIES

LAKE GEORGE - This 167 acre lake in Rock Island County was built in 1966 and has a maximum depth of 62 feet with an average depth of 24 feet. Because Lake George is located near a heavily populated area, it receives between 200 and 350 man hours per acre fishing pressure.

Other predators in Lake George, in addition to muskie, are largemouth bass, walleye, and striped bass hybrids which are stocked supplementally each year. The main prey species in the lake since 1990 is gizzard shad.

The lake was first stocked with pure muskie fingerlings in 1983. By 1993, Lake George had developed into one of Illinois' premiere muskie lakes especially for muskie over 40 inches. In 1993 and 1994, Lake George suffered some mortalities to larger muskie. Approximately 50 muskie, 36 to 42 inches died. The cause could not be determined. Lake George was not stocked with muskie in 1995, but was stocked with 167, 12 inch Leech Lake strain muskie fingerlings purchased by the Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc., in 1996 and 1997. In 1997, the state also stocked 169, 10" muskie. In 1998, the lake was doubled stocked again to make up for muskie lost in 1993 and 1994 with the Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc. purchasing 169 muskie. In 1999, the lake received 1000, 4 inch muskie; 334, 11-13 inch muskie from state stockings. The lake also received 170, 11 inch muskie from the Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc. In 2000, the state stocked 167 - 10.0" muskie and 167 - 11.0" muskie. In 2001, the state stocked 334 - 11.2" muskie. In 2002, the state stocked 334, 6.8 inch muskie and 167, 11.9 inch muskie. In 2003, 332 - 10 inch muskie were stocked. Muskie were not stocked in 2004. In 2005, 167 - 10.0 inch muskie were stocked. In 2006, 367, 11 inch muskie were stocked and 1,190, 5 inch muskie were also stocked. In 2007, 167, 10.8 inch muskie were stocked.

The volunteer muskie creel program from 1987 to 1991 recorded 106 legal muskie caught with 90 being released. Creel report data from 1994 reported 83 muskie caught with only 3 harvested. The lake has a 36 inch size restriction on muskie with one fish per day creel limit. In 1999, thirteen trapnets set overnight in April resulted in the collection of 9 muskie greater than 33 inches. The largest was over 35 pounds. In 2002, 28 trapnets set overnight resulted in the collection of 37 muskie greater than 24 inches. In 2003, 10 trapnets resulted in the collection of 23 muskie greater than 25 inches. In 2005, 10 trapnets resulted in the collection of 24 muskie greater than 30 inches. In 2006, 15 muskie of which 14 were greater than 32 inches. In 2007 only 6 trapnets were set and they collected 10 muskie all were greater than 36 inches. The lake has a good number of 40 inch plus muskie with several muskie collected near the Illinois state record. Lake George is scheduled to be stocked in 2008 with one, 12 inch muskie per surface acre. With the large gizzard shad population that has developed in Lake George, muskie fishing is tough because of the prey density.

LAKE CARLTON - This 76.7 acre lake was built in 1969 with a maximum depth of 27 feet and an average depth of 12 feet. The lake was originally stocked with tiger muskie in 1978. Pure muskie were not stocked until 1983. Since then, 1,554 - 12 inch muskie

have been stocked in the lake. The 75 - 11.5 inch muskie stocked in 1995 were purchased by the Illinois Chapter of Muskie, Inc. In 2002, 76 - 11.9 inch muskie, and in 2003, 76 - 11.0 inch muskie were stocked by the State. Muskie were not stocked in 2004. In 2005, 2006 and 2007, 76-10.0 muskie were stocked by the State. Lake Carlton possess high water clarity with visibility occasionally extending down 15 feet. The lake has numerous bays, points, and extremely shallow flats of submerged vegetation and water lotus beds.

Lake Carlton, although only 77 acres, has been the number one muskie lake for almost every year since 1987. The lake has produced more legal sized muskie than any other lake in the state. Creel data from 1994 found a catch of 148 muskie and a harvest of only three. The fishing pressure was reported as 606 man hours per acre. Lake Carlton should remain as one of Illinois' premiere muskie lakes for years to come. The fall electrofishing survey in 1995 produced five muskie in excess of 40 inches. Ten trapnets set in April of 1998 resulted in the collection of 32 muskie greater than 28 inches. Eleven trapnets set in April of 1999 resulted in the collection of 29 muskie greater than 30 inches and five trapnets in April 2000 collected 11 muskie over 33 inches. Twelve trapnets in 2001 resulted in the collection of 23 muskie greater than 19 inches. Six trapnets set in April of 2002 resulted in the collection of 29 muskie between 30 and 46.5 inches. Fourteen minutes of night electrofishing resulted in the collection of 4 muskie. Two of the muskie were greater than 42 inches. Five trapnets set overnight in April of 2003 resulted in the collection of 12 muskie greater than 26 inches. The muskie body condition showed improvement in 2003. In 2005, 6 trapnets set over night resulted in the collection of 33 muskie of which 32 were greater than 30 inches. In 2006, 8 trapnets set over night resulted in the collection of 25 muskie of which 24 were greater than 30 inches. In 2007 only 6 trapnets were set. They caught 12 muskie greater than 34 inches. Three of the muskie were greater than 24 pounds. The lake has a 36 inch size restriction on muskie with a one fish per day limit.

DISTRICT 3: HENDERSON, KNOX, MCDONOUGH, MERCER, AND WARREN COUNTIES

MCMASTER LAKE - This 142 acre watershed impoundment located in the center of the 2,500 acre Snakeden Hollow State Fish & Wildlife Area has several unique physical and chemical features to support a quality muskie fishery. The lake is 56 feet deep in the central main basin with adjacent shallow gravel bars, abrupt dropoffs, numerous bays, points and islands, a standing timber area, extensive shallow flats of submerged vegetation, and cattail flats. The lake also possesses extremely high water clarity with visibility occasionally extending down to 30 feet.

The Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc. and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources have cooperated in the stocking of 1,580 Leech Lake strain muskie (9 to 16 inch) during the 1991 through 2003 period. In 2008, this unique lake will offer anglers a limited density muskie fishery with fish ranging up to 50 inches. A 42 inch minimum length with a one fish/day limit is enforced at Lake McMaster (formerly Snakeden Hollow Lake).

During 2005 and 2006, the site's largest impoundment, Lake McMaster, had a new spillway installed which will increase the lake size to an estimated 160 acres and the water depth by 5 feet. To facilitate spillway construction, the lake level was lowered 10 feet making boat access impossible. Although the lake's water levels have not yet recovered, the boat ramp has been extended to allow access to the lake.

Snakeden Hollow State Fish & Wildlife Area is closed to all fishing each year during the waterfowl hunting season (starting October 1st and usually ending in late January).

LAKE STOREY - This 133 acre public lake located near Galesburg in Knox County has been home to muskie since 1976. A fall water level draw down of 6 feet for the purpose of predatory prey balance is an annual fish management practice. The lake is heavily fished with an estimated annual pressure of 400 to 800 hours/acre for all fish species.

Both muskie and tiger muskie have been stocked on an infrequent basis over the past 24 years. The first stocking of tiger muskie in 1976 resulted in a 20 pound 13 ounce state record in August, 1982. The largest muskie caught to date from Lake Storey was a 27 pound 8 ounce fish caught in May 1993. The Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskies, Inc. and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources have cooperated in stocking of 1,680 Leech Lake Strain muskie (6 to 16 inch) during the 1993 through 2003 period. Lake Storey has the potential of producing a 30 pound plus natural muskie during the 2008 fishing season. A 42 inch minimum length limit is enforced on muskie at Lake Storey.

DISTRICT 4: PEORIA, FULTON, AND STARK COUNTIES

WHEEL LAKE (BANNER MARSH) - Wheel Lake was added to the muskie stocking priority list in 1996. Except for 2004, Wheel Lake has received a stocking of 350 - 10.0" muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery from 1996 to 2007. In 1998, Wheel Lake received an additional 100 Leach Lake strain muskie through the funding of Muskie Inc. and in 1999 received an extra 2000, 4 inch muskie in June from Jake Wolf Hatchery. On April 1, 2000, the new minimum length limit was raised to 42 inches with a 1 fish per day limit.

At normal pool the 350 acre lake is composed of a deep final cut section and a large series of strip mine wheel cut lakes. The wheel cut portion (280 acres) contains a maze of points, islands, flooded brush and diverse aquatic vegetation, while the final cut portion (70 acres) has a maximum depth of 60 feet and rocky structure.

The spring 2007 trapnet survey collected 5 muskie in 34 trapnet nights of effort. The fish ranged from 24 to 43 inches long.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, and gizzard shad. Other fish species present are smallmouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, yellow bullhead, carp, green sunfish, and yellow perch. There is a 25 horse power limit at Banner Marsh.

SHOVEL LAKE (BANNER MARSH) - Shovel Lake was added to the muskie stocking priority list in 1999. In 1999, this lake received 200, 11 inch muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery in September and 250, 11 inch fish from the Banner Marsh Rearing Ponds in October. Except for 2004, Shovel Lake has received a stocking of 200 - 10.0" muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery from 2000 to 2007. On April 1, 2000, the new minimum length limit was raised to 42 inches with a 1 fish per day limit.

The spring 2006 trapnet survey collected 10 muskie in 20 trapnet nights of effort. The fish ranged from 28 to 38 inches in length.

Shovel Lake was enlarged to over 200 acres by the end of 2000. It is a "T" shaped final cut strip mine lake (74 acres) with a maximum depth of 65 feet that was attached to approximately 100 acres of littoral zone surrounding deep water pockets (25 acres of strip mine ponds).

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, walleye, channel catfish, carp, and gizzard shad. There is a 25 hp limit at Banner Marsh

JOHNSON LAKE (BANNER MARSH) - Johnson Lake was added to the muskie stocking priority list in 2001. In 2001, this lake received 2,174 - 11 inch muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery in October, and 725 - 10 inch muskie in 2002. In 2003, a stocking of 1,333 - 10 inch muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery occurred in September. Except for 2004, Johnson Lake has received a stocking of 600 - 10.0" muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery from 2005 to 2007.

The spring 2006 trapnet survey collected 23 muskie in 20 trapnet nights of effort. The fish ranged from 28 to 38 inches long.

Johnson Lake is approximately 600 acres and is composed of a maze of deep strip mine water connected to shallow flats of flooded trees.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, walleye, channel catfish, northern pike, carp, and gizzard shad. There is a 25 hp limit at Banner Marsh.

CANTON LAKE - Canton Lake was added to the muskie stocking program in 2000 and received 2,500 fish at 3.5 inches long. In 2001, it received 650 muskie at 10 inches long and then in 2002, it received 250 muskie at 6.8 inches long. In 2003, the lake received 2500 muskie at 4 inches long. No muskie were stocked in 2004 or 2005. In 2006, it

received 750 muskie at 5 inches long in July and 1521 muskie at 11 inches in September. In 2007, it received 500 muskie at 11 inches.

The spring 2006 trapnet survey collected 8 muskie in 14 trapnet nights of effort. These fish ranged from 34 to 39 inches long.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, yellow bass, channel catfish, carp, and gizzard shad. The City of Canton has various user fees for boat use and an 85 horse power motor limit.

DOUBLE T SFWA - This site is located 3 miles northwest of Canton and was acquired by the state of Illinois in September 2001. The big lake is approximately 64 surface acres in size and has very steep and deep profile that is typical of a stripmine lake. This lake was added to the Muskie stocking list in 2002. In 2002, 179 muskie from 10 to 13 inches were stocked from Jake Wolf hatchery. Except for 2004, Canton Lake has received a stocking of 64 muskie at 10 inches long each year from 2003 to 2007.

The spring 2006 trapnet survey collected 39 muskie in 21 trapnet nights of effort. These fish ranged from 26 to 39 inches long.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, carp and gizzard shad. The current muskie regulation is a 42 inch minimum. A concrete boat ramp was installed in 2005 and the lake is electric motors only.

DISTRICT 5: MARSHALL, PUTNAM, TAZEVELL, AND WOODFORD COUNTIES

SPRING LAKE NORTH (Tazewell County) - In 1978, Spring Lake was divided into two distinct waters for the purpose of capital improvement and the restructuring of the fish population. Prior to 1916, Spring Lake was part of the Illinois River system as a lateral freshwater marsh. In 1916 it was separated from the river by a high levee and has remained a separate body of water. From 1916 until 1981, the quality of the fishery habitat and the fish population declined due to rough fish populations such as carp and bullheads. In 1981 the lake was treated with rotenone to remove the existing fish population and encourage the growth of aquatic vegetation. The key to the rehabilitation was the re-establishment of lush aquatic vegetation which had occurred by summer of 1983.

Always a shallow water, Spring Lake today has an average depth of 2.9 feet. Of the 578 acres of water, at least 75 percent is covered with 17 different species of aquatic vegetation by late May of each year. The majority of this coverage now consists of Eurasian milfoil. The tremendous spring recharge from the bed of the lake amounts to 52 acre feet a day, creating very cold water temperatures under the insulating layer of vegetation for the majority of the summer months. This is a unique situation and only occurs in Spring Lake within the State of Illinois. The resulting temperature regime and water quality is excellent habitat for muskie.

Because of its proximity to the Jake Wolf Hatchery, North Spring Lake has been used as a brood source for muskie the past ten years and has provided most of the early muskie stocks for statewide stocking each year. In an effort to collect fish for egg production, extensive population assessment data has been gathered since 1991. We know quite a lot about the size structure and age of the population as well as growth. It appears that growth of female fish is excellent when compared to nation-wide populations. Growth of male muskie is in the normal range when making a similar comparison. There is a big difference in the length at age between sexes! A 32 inch female is usually 4 years old, whereas a 32 inch male is 5 years old, on average.

North Spring Lake is stocked every third year at a rate of between 2 and 3 fish per acre. It has been observed that significant cannibalism occurs if muskie are stocked every year. Young muskie are especially vulnerable to 1 and 2 year old male muskie at North Spring Lake.

A muskie tag reading project is in its 8th year on North Spring Lake. It is important to gain information regarding growth of fish by sex and age as well as potential egg production data. This tagging project should answer many questions concerning muskie biology in Illinois in future years.

In 2007, 346 muskies were collected by trap nets in March. Of these fish, 89 were females and 31 were flowing eggs when captured. All fish were taken to Jake wolf hatchery for processing and then were returned in good condition to the lake. As a result of this effort, 808,000 eggs were taken that resulted in 230,000 muskie fry being produced. There were 130 recaptures of muskie tagged in previous years, resulting in excellent growth data information.

Fishing for muskie on North Spring Lake is a challenge. The water temperatures rise quickly and usually result in fish feeding actively in late March. Aquatic vegetation becomes thick and hard to fish no later than May 15th of each year and lasts until the lake closes for regular waterfowl season. The narrow window of opportunity between the middle of March and mid-May results in some excellent fishing. The fish are then refuged by the thick vegetation until the following year. Sometimes fishing the holes in the vegetation in June is quite effective. There are a number of large fish in the population available to muskie fishermen.

North Spring Lake has three useable boat ramps and is accessible by the Manito Blacktop, 12 miles south of Pekin. No fuel or services are available; however, camping and food is. There is a 25 horsepower limit at Spring Lake.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 2

DISTRICT 6: DUPAGE, KANE, AND McHENRY COUNTIES

MALLARD LAKE - September 20, 2006 marked the initial stocking of muskie fingerlings into Mallard Lake, an 89-acre cooperatively managed lake owned by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. Mallard Lake is the largest fishing lake in the DuPage County Forest Preserve system and it was selected to receive muskie because of its size and suitable prey base that includes large gizzard shad and yellow bass populations. This was the first known introduction of muskie to District waters.

Seven muskie fingerlings from the initial stocking were sampled during a regularly scheduled spring fish population survey conducted in May 2007. While still small, these yearling muskies averaged 12 in. long and just under 0.5 lb. This represented a growth increase of 2.0 in. and 2.4 oz. over 8 months that included the winter slow growth period. In addition to sampling, IDNR stocked an additional 178 muskie fingerlings (mean length = 11.2 in.) in Mallard Lake during fall 2007. The stocking rate of 2.0 advanced fingerlings per acre in each of the past two years should help ensure the successful establishment of a muskie population and future sport fishery. Stocking will be reduced to 1.0 fingerling/acre in upcoming years and supplemental spring electrofishing and trap netting surveys will be conducted annually to monitor survival and growth of the developing population.

At this time, only shoreline fishing is allowed at Mallard Lake, but an extensive trail system and bridges to islands make for plenty of good fishing spots. Handicap accessible fishing piers are available and further access development is likely in the future. A 48-in. minimum length limit for muskie will go into effect April 1, 2008.

DISTRICT 7: LAKE COUNTY

FOX CHAIN O'LAKES - Muskie stockings initiated in 1982 have resulted in the development of an outstanding pure muskie fishery. IDNR staff occasionally collect spotted (Leech lake strain) muskie during spring sampling but not in proportion to which they've been stocked. This leads to the question, are all Leech Lake muskie spotted and is spotting, like most fish coloration related to their habitat. We're working through this question by PIT tagging fish and tracking the results.

Beginning fall 2006, a change in stocking protocol took effect. Instead of stocking 2130 fingerlings every other year as maintenance stockings, 3000 fingerlings are stocked each year and that number is reduced by "approved" outside donations. Next year the State will stock 2500 fingerlings since SOB Chapter of Muskie Inc. donated 500 fish this

fall. This program will increase densities and bring stock rates in line with historic levels. It sets up a more predictable stocking program that stocks first and adjusts second verses trying to anticipate stockings that may never occur. If growth rates slow, due to density dependent factors, stocking rates will be adjusted downward. Trend data will take 5 to 10 years to evaluate since fish don't become vulnerable to our sampling gear for 3 to 4 years past stocking.

No Leech Lake fingerlings were stocked in 2006 because of the Viral Hemoragic Septicemia (VHS) quarantine placed on importation of vulnerable species by the USDA in October, 2006.

The overall spring trap net catch rate was 1.5 muskie per trap net night and targeted effort exceeded 1.8 fish per trap net night. Both exceeded Management Objectives established by the Esocid Task Group of 0.3 fish per spring trap net night. Our catch rates were impacted by freezing temperatures during the time we set aside for this project and the project was less "fun" than most years but fish were still caught in relatively large numbers.

The largest fish ever collected by IDNR staff were 49.5 inches long and the heaviest exceeded 36 pounds.

Tagged fish have been reported from all lakes in the Chain and in the Fox River as far south as Yorkville and north into Wisconsin. The longest a floy tagged fish swam at large before being recaptured was 8 years ! Most fish grow approximately 2 inches per year until they reach 36" to 38" then male growth rates slow dramatically and females continue to grow at just under 2" per year. A cleithra collected from a 47" dead muskie (in 2006) was estimated at 12 years old.

Population indices indicated 100 percent of our sample were sexually mature, 56 percent exceeded 36" long and 9 percent exceeded 42". No muskie exceeded 46" in 2007 but weather definitely reduced fish movement and thus our ability to catch them. Generally speaking, in the Chain, male muskie occasionally exceed 40 inches and females easily grow beyond 40 inches so there is ample opportunity to catch fish at the historic trophy size fish (40+ inch) and "millennial" trophy size fish (48+ inch). The Fox Chain O' Lakes has a muskie length limit of 48" and 1 fish per day creel from the Wisconsin line south to the Algonquin Dam.

STERLING LAKE - This 74.4 acre lake is managed cooperatively with the Lake County Forest Preserve District. It is the only actively managed muskie water in Lake County, outside of the Fox Chain, that is open to the public. Sterling Lake has received intermittent muskie stockings of pure strain fingerlings from either Muskie Inc. or the IDNR since 1990. It was stocked with 300 State produced fingerlings from Jake Wolf Hatchery in 2007 and 150 in both 2006 and 2005.

Spring sampling in 2006 yielded 7 fish ranging in size from 13 inches to 37 inches. The catch rate of 6 fish per hour of electrofishing (A/C gear) exceeded Management Goals established by the Esocid Management Committee of 1.0 fish per hour of electrofishing. Sterling Lake has produced fish exceeding 48 inches long though none of these monsters have been collected by the IDNR.

There are no concession facilities at the lake though it offers ample picnic, pit toilets, and shorefishing access. Sterling Lake has a variety of sport and pan fish species present so everyone can have a happy time catching something. A 48 inch length limit and 1 fish per day creel limit exist on the lake for muskie.

DISTRICT 8: COOK COUNTY

BUSSE WOODS - This is the first Muskie Status Report for Cook County in a long time. In the early 1990's tiger muskie were stocked in Wolf Lake to evaluate their performance. Few successful stockings were detected by IDNR (then IDOC) staff so the practice and production of stocking and producing tiger muskie was stopped. The State has been very successful in raising and stocking pure muskie so slight expansion of that program occurs each year.

In 2007 Busse Woods was added to the Coolwater Stocking List and received 800 fall fingerlings (approx. 12"–14" long). Just under 200 fish were implanted with PIT tags (Passive Integrated Transponders) to attempt to track these fish over time. Newly stocked fish will not be vulnerable to our sampling gear, in large numbers, until spring 2010 at age 3+ years old and males approach sexual maturity. Females should take another year to develop.

Busse Lake has an abundance of white suckers, gizzard shad and small sunfish which should provide ample forage for these fish as they mature. Growth rates are expected to be faster than in the Chain O' Lakes but not as fast as lakes further south where growing seasons are considerably longer.

It will be exciting to follow the development of this "new" urban fishery and to hear stories from anglers who never thought they'd have the opportunity to catch a fish with so many teeth !!

DISTRICT 9: GRUNDY, KENDALL, WILL, AND KANKAKEE COUNTIES

HEIDECKE LAKE - As part of a research project, 1,955 acre Heidecke Lake which is located in Grundy County near Morris received an initial stocking of pure muskellunge in 1980. Annual additions of these fish (which were extensively-reared, purchased fish) commenced in October of that year. Field data from these early stockings indicated slightly accelerated growth rates and fair recruitment. Tiger muskie were initially stocked in 1981 and were released on an almost annual basis through 1997. Tiger muskie released from 1993 through 1997 were "minnow-finished", larger in size and released

later in the year. Pure muskellunge stockings ceased in 1986 with the completion of the research project. In 1999 when surplus fish produced by the state hatchery system became available, pure muskellunge were once again released into Heidecke Lake and continue to be stocked on a biennial schedule. The muskie population is evaluated by the biennial standardized survey, formal angler creel surveys, voluntary angler survey (green card) and via annual spring trap netting. Since 2005, a total of 68 muskellunge have been fitted with PIT tags (internal) which provide valuable age and growth data. A number of fish have also been marked with floy tags (external). Spring trap netting in April, 2007 resulted in a collection of 73 muskellunge which ranks as an all-time high and represents a nearly 38% increase over the preceding year's efforts. Males dominated the 2007 survey, outnumbering females by more than 2½ to 1. Pure muskellunge captured in 2007 ranged from 530mm/21.2" to 1164mm/46.6". These fish had an overall average length of 888mm/35.0" compared to 881mm/34.4" in 2006, 903mm/35.6" in 2004 and 791mm/30.9" for 2003. Eleven fish were recaptures, one individual having been floy tagged in 2005, increasing in length by 6.7" and 6 pounds heavier. This is an up-and-coming fishery which has the potential to produce fish of trophy caliber. A partially perched lake, Heidecke came become very rough under windy conditions. The decommissioning and demolition of the Collins Generating Station has eliminated thermal loading to Heidecke and has resulted in ambient water temperatures. There is no horsepower limit and boat and motor rental are available at the lake concession. Heidecke Lake is open to fishing from April 1st to mid-October, closing one week (7 days) prior to the opening of the North Zone waterfowl season.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 3

DISTRICT 10: CHAMPAIGN, DEWITT, FORD, IROQUOIS, LIVINGSTON, MCLEAN, PIATT, AND VERMILION COUNTIES

EVERGREEN LAKE - This lake was first stocked with muskie in 1990. A netting survey was initiated in 2002 to monitor the muskie population. Each spring, frame nets are used to collect muskie. Muskie are tagged with an internal tag; the tag has an individual number so each fish can be tracked over time. From this information we can determine growth rates and condition of each fish over time. It has also provided some information on escapement from the lake for certain muskie. The McLean Co. Parks and Recreation Department has worked with local anglers to erect a barrier below the spillway to lower the escapement potential of muskie downstream.

We captured 1.7 muskie per net in 2007. Approximately 90% of the muskie captured in 2007 were larger than 30 inches, 29% were larger than 38 inches, and 13% were larger than 42 inches. Muskie exhibited ideal weights at all sizes in Evergreen Lake. Muskie have now been in Evergreen Lake long enough to allow them to reach a large size. The muskie population in this lake is developing nicely and starting to show its true potential. Muskie have been collected over the current state record the past 2 spring netting surveys.

Evergreen Lake has two boat ramps and has a 10 horsepower limit on all boats. In order to launch a boat on Evergreen Lake, a sticker must be purchased. The stickers can be purchased at the boat ramps, Comlara Park Visitor's Center, or by calling 309/726-2022.

LAKE MINGO - In 2002 muskie were first stocked into Lake Mingo as part of a research project conducted by the Illinois Natural History Survey and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The project is titled *Evaluation of Growth and Survival of Different Genetic Stocks of Muskellunge: Implications for Stocking Programs in Illinois and the Midwest*. Muskies have been stocked each year since 2002.

A netting survey was conducted in April of 2006 and 2007. In 2006, a total of 52 muskellunge were netted during the 4 nights resulting in an average of 1.2 fish per net-night. Nightly average capture rates ranged from 0.64 to 2.09 fish per net-night. Of the 52 muskellunge captured, 33 were Ohio River drainage stock, 19 were Illinois population, and 0 were Upper Mississippi River drainage stock.

In 2007, a total of 98 muskies were netted during 4 nights of sampling resulting in an average of 1.7 fish per net-night. Nightly average capture rates ranged from 0.4 to 4.21 muskies per net-night. Of the 98 muskies captured, 48 were Ohio River drainage stock, 48 were Illinois population, one was Upper Mississippi river drainage stock, and one was unidentifiable. The largest muskie captured in 2007 was over 40 inches.

The muskies are exhibiting great growth rates and survival. Lake Mingo should have a great muskie fishery within a few years. For more information regarding Lake Mingo and Kennekuk Cove County Park call 217-442-1691.

DISTRICT 11: CLARK, COLES, CUMBERLAND, DOUGLAS, EDGAR, MACON, MOULTRIE, AND SHELBY COUNTIES

MILL CREEK LAKE - Located approximately 8 miles west of Marshall, in Clark County. This lake has a surface area of 731 acres, with a maximum depth of 60 feet, and an average depth of 22 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available and the Clark County Park District (217-889-3901) collects a boating access fee. A 42-inch minimum length limit with a one (1) fish per day creel limit is in effect for muskie.

This lake was stocked initially in fall of 1999 with pure muskellunge to diversify the fishery and take advantage of outstanding habitat, water quality, and abundant adult gizzard shad and white suckers for forage. Recent reports indicate that this fishery is developing well, with reports of 48"+ fish being caught in 2007. No muskies were observed in the 2007 fall survey. This fishery is developing into a high quality fishery and has been receiving more attention from muskie anglers in 2007. Fishing prospects are rated as fair to good in 2008.

LAKE SHELBYVILLE - Located in Shelby and Moultrie Counties in east-central Illinois. This lake has a surface area of 11,100 acres, with a maximum depth of 67 feet, and an average depth of 18.9 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available, with a fee assessed on U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (217-774-3951) boat ramps, and free access on state park or Corp gravel boat ramps. A 48" length - 1 fish daily creel limit will remain in effect. The limit is in effect in the headwaters up to the Corps of Engineers project boundary and extends below the dam, downstream to the State Route 128 Bridge near Cowden.

Pure muskellunge were first stocked in Lake Shelbyville in 1978. It wasn't until 1988, however, that somewhat consistent year-to-year stockings of 5,500 fingerlings per year were initiated. Compared to the known potential longevity of this species, this fishery is still relatively young compared to the many well known fisheries in northern United States and Canada. In recent years this lake has developed into an outstanding muskie fishery. In fall 2002 the Professional Muskie Tournament Trail set a record for any previous tournament for the catch rate per fisherman and in the spring 2003 the total number of fish caught in a tournament (later broken on the Madison Chain of Lakes)! This attest to the increased quality of this fishery! Several fish are reported each year exceeding 50 inches.

Fishing for muskie was very poor during the spring and summer, both on the lake and below the spillway. An extended spawn is believed to be the primary stress causing an extensive muskie kill below the spillway. No evidence of a significant muskie kill was observed on the lake, but the same stress may have resulted in the poor fishing results. Jim Saric while filming for Muskie Hunter television produced three large fish in late spring indicating that at least a decent population was present at at times fish were biting. Muskie fishing on the lake finally began to pick up by mid-September.

In October, 19 large muskie were collected from just below the spillway to the old railroad bridge to help the Illinois Natural History Survey staff collect muskies for a diet assessment study. A few additional fish were missed. There were a number of fish which bolted ahead of the boat and likely many more not observed at all. Most looked healthy which suggest that this fishery should rebound well over time.

The two major muskie tournaments held on Lake Shelbyville in fall 2007. The catch as reported was distributed as 22 fish (IMTT Classic, 40 boats, 15 \geq 40") and 14 fish (IMTT State Invitational Championship, 20 boats, 4 \geq 40"). The largest fish of each tournament were 47.5" and 45", respectively. The fifteen fish 40 inches or larger caught in the IMTT Classic was significantly higher than in 2006.

Muskie numbers remain good on the lake and lower, but decent at the spillway area below the dam. Fish up to 43 inches and 13 lbs. were collected in the fall fish population survey. Fishing prospects for 2008 remain good to excellent for numbers and size on the lake and likely moderate below the spillway.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 4

DISTRICT 13: CASS, CHRISTIAN, LOGAN, MASON, MENARD, MORGAN, AND SANGAMON COUNTIES

PRAIRIE LAKE (Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area) - Initial stockings in 1999 on this newly constructed lake included the standard largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish which was followed by a stocking of pure muskies. It received 210, 10"-12" fingerling muskies in October of that year and has received 200 fish every other year since then. This is a relatively small lake for muskies and has a sunfish forage base so growth rates and body conditions are a little lower than larger lakes with gizzard shad. On the other hand, the lake is deep, steep-sided, clear and has excellent woody cover and aquatic vegetation so the muskies have done pretty well. The spring 2007 netting and electrofishing survey produced 11 fish, all from electrofishing. Surprisingly the gill nets didn't produce any fish. Likely due to fact that the lake is crystal clear and the muskie have very good net avoidance systems. In addition to the eleven fish collected via shocking, we raised fourteen more that were not captured. So in 7.5 hours of electrofishing 25 fish were either seen or collected. They ranged from 31"(6.6 pounds) to over 40". The largest measured was 43.2" long and weighed 21 pounds. Besides the fish collected in surveys, biologists and site staff have received numerous reports and pictures of large muskies from the lake. At least one over 50" was reported. So anecdotally the muskies appear to be doing well at this little lake. By the way, there are reports of tiger muskies (hybrids between northern pike and muskies) being caught in the lake. The IDNR has not stocked hybrid muskies anywhere in the state since the mid-90's and there haven't even been any tigers in the hatchery system since that time so these cannot be tigers in Prairie Lake. They are highly barred pure muskies. All from Spring Lake (IL) as far as the biologist can tell. The crystal clear water really brings out the color pattern. Currently there is an unlimited horsepower limit but the entire lake is a No Wake Zone except for boats 10hp and less which can operate as normal. Two concrete ramps and campgrounds are found on site and there are rental cabins on the lake as well. For more information on Prairie Lake contact the site office 217/452-7741 or the district fisheries biologist's office at 309/543-3316.

DISTRICT 14/15: GREENE, JERSEY, SCOTT, MACOUPIN, AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

OTTER LAKE - Data received from the 2007 spring netting evaluation showed Muskie densities retreated from the 2006 sample (28). 16 Muskellunge were collected during March of 2007. This total falls terribly short of the 12 year mean (31.5 fish) for this impoundment. The muskie sampled measured 24" to 43", and weighed 2.7 lbs. to 22 lbs. The length frequency breakdown is as follows: 3 fish (19%) ranged from 24" to 30", 6 individuals (38%) were 30" to 35", 6 Muskie (38%) measured 35" to 40", and 1 (6%) exceeded 40" in total length.

When fish are available, Otter Lake is receiving more than the standard 1 fish per acre stocking rate. Since the 2 - 100 year flood events, Muskie densities have plummeted in this water body. The IDNR - Fisheries has continued to stock 10" to 14" Muskellunge fingerlings since these monstrous flood events occurred. With more stable water levels over time, this population should rebuild, and create improved fishing opportunities into the future.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 5

DISTRICT 21: ALEXANDER, JACKSON, PERRY, PULASKI, AND UNION COUNTIES

KINKAID LAKE - This lake was built in 1972 and first stocked with muskie in 1985. Muskie (MUE) habitat at Kinkaid is abundant with high water clarity, good depth, and 82 shoreline miles of necks, bays, and points. Weed beds can be found in certain shoreline areas. Large numbers of spotted suckers are available and preferred as forage. Growth rates and conditions are exceptional. During early summer of 1996, it was discovered that a high number of MUE escape over the spillway during periods of heavy rain. Since June 1996, electro sampling by biologists has resulted in 230 MUE (28-47 inches in total length) being returned to the lake. At least 12 of these MUE had been rescued below the spillway, tagged and returned to the lake, and subsequently recaptured again below the spillway. One fish has been documented as going over the spillway on three separate occasions. During the fall of 1998, a spillway barrier was installed across the dam to reduce MUE escapement during periods of high water flow. This barrier should greatly enhance opportunities to grow trophy MUE and keep them in the lake. There has been no confirmed MUE escapement since the installation of the spillway barrier. Sampling efforts will continue to assess the effectiveness of the spillway barrier and the resultant effect on the Lake's MUE population.

The largest documented MUE known from Kinkaid Lake was collected in an IDNR net in 2002. The female measured 50 inches and weighed 34.7 pounds (she had already lost most of her eggs). Kinkaid Lake was stocked with 2000 ten inch MUE during 2007. Spring 2007 trap netting resulted in the collection of 207 muskie with the largest fish measuring 47 inches and the heaviest fish weighing 28 pounds.

If you catch a tagged MUE from Kinkaid Lake **DO NOT REMOVE THE TAG**. Please contact Shawn Hirst, District 21 Fisheries Biologist at 618/687-4546 with the following information: date of catch, length of MUE, tag number (If number is covered with algae simply scrap the algae away with your fingernail or a knife). Anyone providing a tag number will receive the history of that particular fish.

CANVASBACK LAKE - This 60 acre strip cut is located in the Denmark Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Muskie were first stocked in August 2002. Canvasback Lake was stocked with 50 ten inch MUE during 2006. This lake has a 10

HP motor limit. Fishing is not allowed from October 28 through February 28. Muskie up to 37 inches have been caught at this site.

GOLDENEYE LAKE - This 125 acre strip cut is located in the Galum Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Muskie were first stocked in August 2002. Goldeneye Lake was stocked with 50 ten inch MUE during 2006. This lake has a 10 HP motor limit. From October 28 through February 28 fishing is permitted in designated areas only, and fishing hours are from ½ hour before sunrise to 2 pm. Muskie up to 37 inches have been caught at this site.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS RIVERS

FOX RIVER - Muskie occur in the Fox River as a result of escapement from stocking programs in Chain-O-Lakes, Lake Shabbona, and Lake Holiday. Although not abundant, they are common in many areas in Kane and Kendall Counties with most individuals ranging from 30-45 inches. Mouths of larger creek are preferred summer habitat, but they can be found ranging throughout the free flowing areas of the river in especially at Montgomery, Yorkville, and near Silver Springs. Electrofishing catch rates in these areas range from 2- 8 fish per hour.

Northern pike are generally very rare in the Fox River. Higher gradient conditions, combined with lack of spawning habitat (except in the upper river and Chain-O-Lakes), may be limiting factors.

DES PLAINES RIVER - This low gradient river, with associated wetland and backwater areas, provides good habitat for northern pike in some areas. In 2007, a total of 5 pike were collected by electrofishing near Riverside and Hodgkins. Most of the fish were in the 20-25-inch range. Catch rates were similar to those found in previous years. Anglers report frequent catches of northern pike, especially in the early spring months.

KASKASKIA RIVER (Shelby County) - The Kaskaskia River tailwaters of Lake Shelbyville is the home of the current state record for Muskellunge. The record fish was caught in 2002 and weighed over 38 pounds. Fishermen continue to report high catch rates for muskies below the dam, although numbers are down from years past. The tailwaters experienced a significant die-off of muskies this past summer, but recent sampling indicates that the resident population below the dam is still numerous. Muskies have been reported up to 20 miles downstream of the lake, but highest catch rates continue to be immediately below the Lake Shelbyville dam.

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This information may be provided in an alternative format if required. Contact the IDNR Clearinghouse at 217/782-7498 for assistance.

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