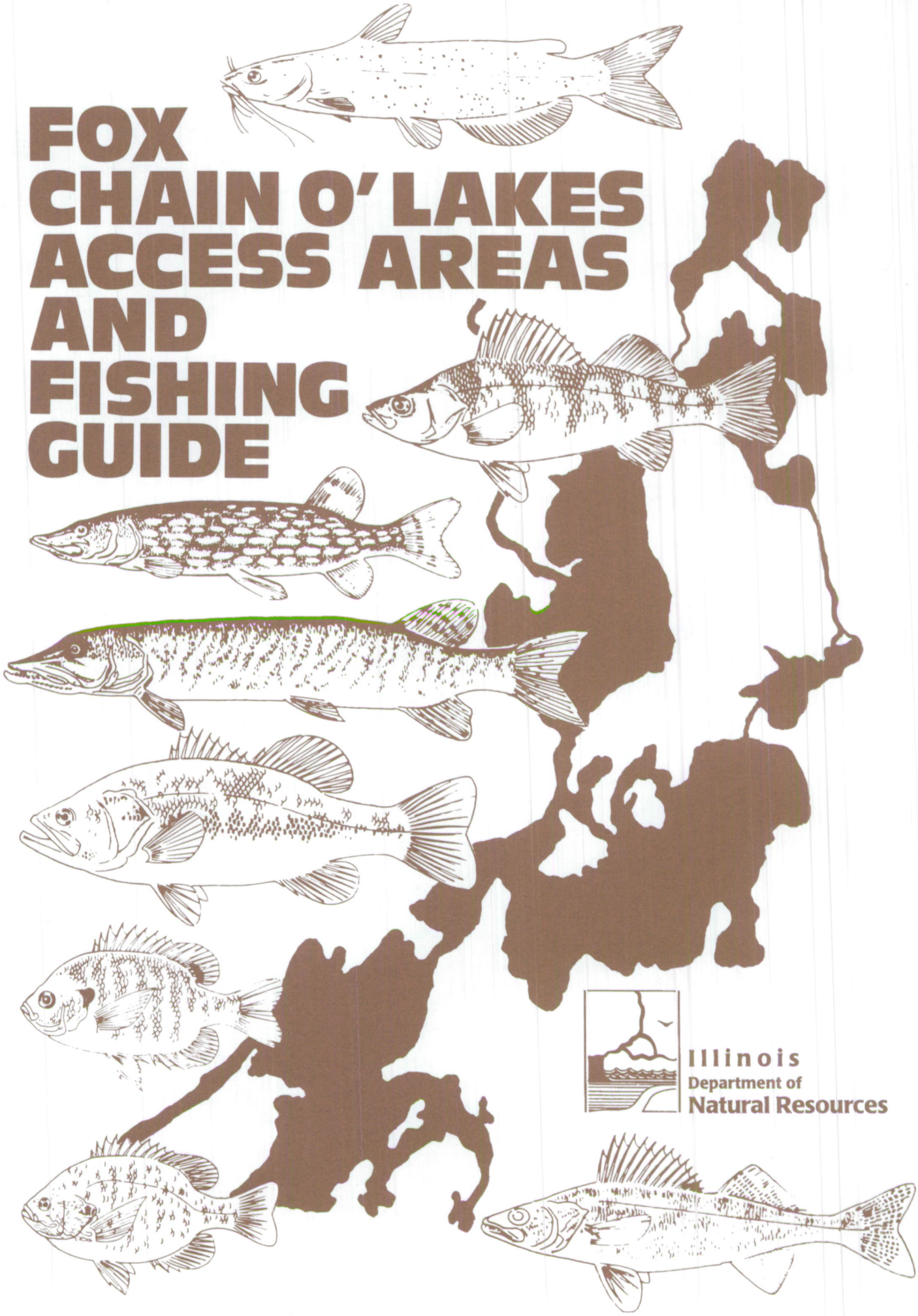
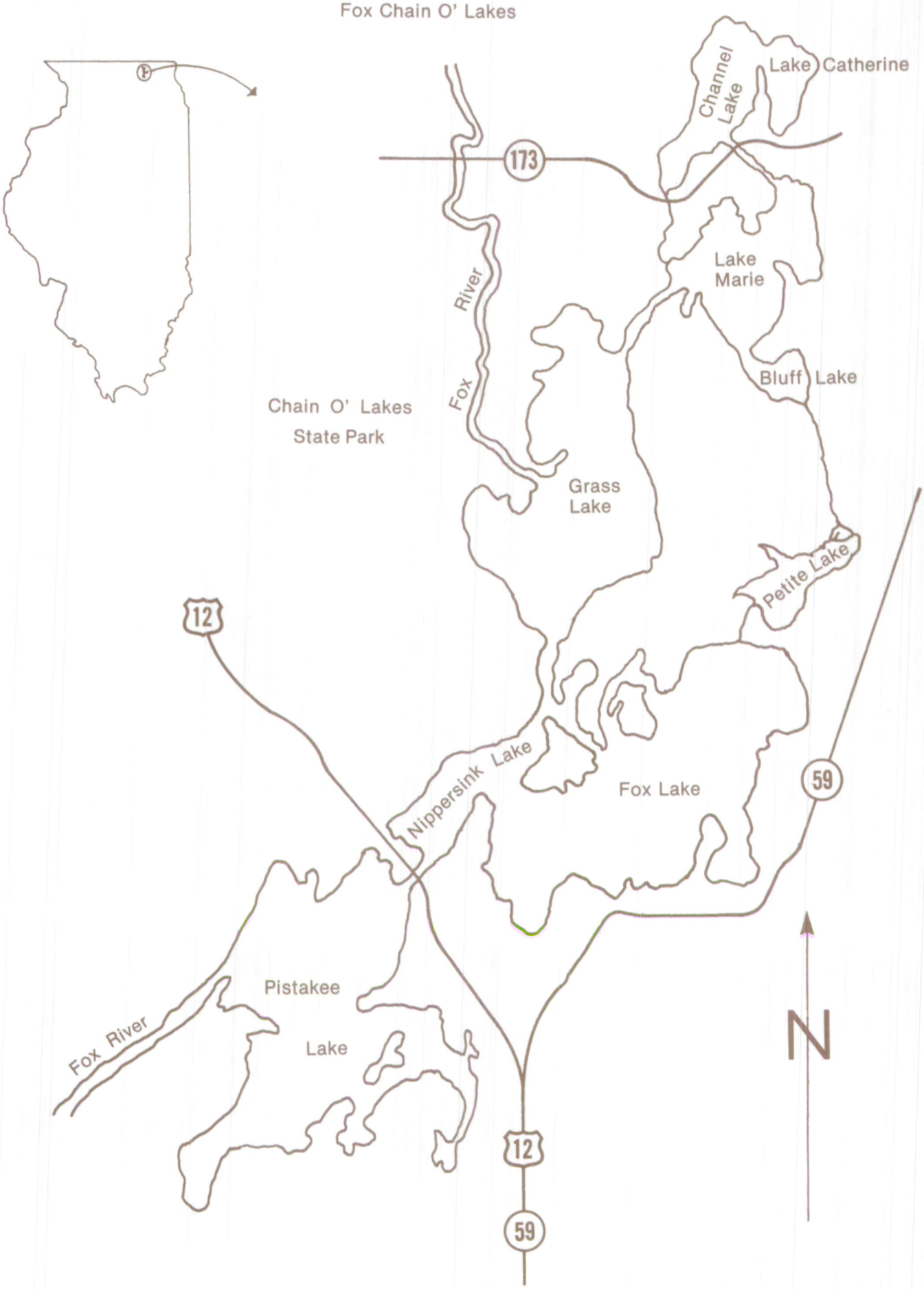
# FOX CHAIN O' LAKES ACCESS AREAS AND FISHING GUIDE



Illinois
Department of
Natural Resources

Fox Chain O' Lakes



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FISHERIES

# FOX CHAIN O' LAKES ACCESS AREAS AND FISHING GUIDE

by
James R. Langbein
Regional Fisheries Biologist
and
Joseph Ferencak
District Fishery Biologist

Revised 1999

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Assistance in gathering data was given by Scott Bartell, Fisheries Technician. The final manuscript and maps for printing were typed and prepared by Georgianne Davis and Shirley Moore.

## INTRODUCTION

### HISTORY:

Inching along ever so slowly, the massive sheet of ice had been purposely and relentlessly grinding, goring and rearranging the landscape for 68,000 years. Everything in its path was either encapsulated or destroyed by the crushing force. The weight of the ice crushed and gouged the earth's surface leaving behind basins or depressions. Then tens of thousands of years ago, the Wisconsin Glacier hit a snag, and the area's weather began to warm, and the ice began to recede northward. Tremendous quantities of melt water, called the Fox River Torrent, swept southward accomplishing a rapid down-cutting of the valley. Today, remnants of this tremendous river torrent exist; the largest became the Mississippi River, and another is our Fox River. The continued glacial recession northward resulted in melted waters filling previously created basins, thus Lake Michigan. In addition, large chunks of stagnant ice broke off and were buried in the upper basin, which upon melting formed what is now the Fox Chain O' Lakes.

Evidence of man's presence (the Mound Builders) has been found which puts him in the area about 1,000 years after the glacier retreated. From 4,000 B.C. various tribes of Indians arrived and departed from the area. Tribes such as the Fox, Sioux, and Potawatomi hunted and fished in this region.

According to recorded history, Jean Nicolet was the first white man to enter the region and to have contact with the Indians. He is supposed to have arrived by canoe in 1635, via Mackinac, Green Bay and the Fox River.

Spanish, French, and British kings debated over the territory for several centuries. In 1778, the territory became subject to Virginia's laws. In 1782, the U.S. Government subjected the territory to its laws, and in 1787 it became part of the Northwest Territory by Act of Congress. In 1818, the young state of Illinois became the governing factor, and in 1838 Lake County was established, initiated rule and thus ended a long line of varying governmental dominance.

By 1900, railroad service was completed to the village of Fox Lake. Tourists' boats were now operating on the Fox Chain O' Lakes with the highlight being Grass Lake with its spectacular American lotus beds.

In 1900, a Waterway Association was formed,

which by 1907 had gained approval from the federal government to construct a dam across the Fox River to the south of the Fox Chain O' Lakes. In conjunction with construction of a dam, excavation of channels between lakes was planned. By 1911, the only lakes not interconnected were Bluff and Petite, but soon this was completed and in so doing created Spring Lake, which previously had been a small, isolated pond called Mud Lake.

Fishing had become a favorite sport among the local residents and tourists. The connecting channels gave the fisherman a lot of mobility and access to different fishing waters. As the Chain entered its teens, fish were abundant in the lakes. "Hot spots" were plentiful, and all you had to do was anchor around one of them to catch your self-imposed limit.

## PRESENT:

Located approximately fifty miles northwest of Chicago on Illinois Routes 173 and 12 near the towns of Antioch and Fox Lake, the 7109.8 acre Fox Chain O' Lakes is the largest single, inland, water orientated, recreational asset in Northeastern Illinois, attested to by a U.S. Coast Guard usage figure of 60,000 people on an average summer weekend. These ranks are swelled on the major holiday weekends to well over 100,000 people.

Easy accessibility to one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas has continued to multiply the importance of the Fox Chain O' Lakes. In addition to the existence of some hotels, motels, and resorts with cottages in the immediate vicinity of the Chain, there are numerous marinas, restaurants, pubs, bait and tackle stores. The fact that the major economic influence of this area hinges upon the recreational value of the lakes in the Chain is readily apparent. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission in one of its reports attests that, "there is no area in the six counties with greater potential for meeting the varied recreation needs of the metropolitan area than the Chain of Lakes. . .".

The rapid expansion of usage of the lakes, coupled with the intensive development of the adjacent lands has brought about widespread concern for the quality of the water in the Chain and the possible degeneration in quality of the fish and fishing.

During the 1960's and 1970's pollution problems peaked stemming from enrichment particularly in the form of nitrates and inorganic phosphates introduced from agricultural drainage, sewage effluents and other sources. The enrichment triggered tremendous blooms of planktonic algae, which gave the lakes a bright green appearance by mid-summer. Once the algae exceeded its carrying capacity and outrun its food supply, it began to die. Here is where the problems begin, as the dying algae plants often release a bright turquoise pigment and give off a septic odor. Needless to say, both of these conditions sometimes drastically curtail water contact activities, such as swimming and water-skiing, cover and stain the bottoms of boats and foul shorelines, and in some years caused limited fish kills due to a reduction in dissolved oxygen.

However, water quality has greatly improved due to good environmental management practices in the 1980's and 1990's. Construction of housing, which displaced wetland areas essential as biological filters and as fish spawning and raring areas, has ceased because of federal, state and local legislation. In addition, governmental agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have assisted in controlling pollutants which are introduced into the Fox River Basin.

## FUTURE:

With continued public support and governmental regulation, the future of the Fox Chain O' Lakes looks bright. Stocking programs, concentrating on the maintenance and development of walleye, muskellunge, and largemouth bass population have been sustained by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. All in all, if anyone was to ask a fishery biologist where one of the best places to go fishing was in northern Illinois, he would have to recommend the Fox Chain. It still produces over forty species of fish in sizes and numbers desirable to and sought after by anglers.

## REGULATIONS

Since the Fox Chain O' Lakes is classified as a public navigable waterway and managed under the authority of the Department of Natural Resources and Fox Waterway Agency, all state boating, hunting, and fishing regulations are applicable and enforced. In addition, the Fox Waterway Agency requires an annual user fee for watercraft (boaters). Futher information can be obtained by contacting: Fox Waterway Management Agency, 45 S. Pistakee Lake Rd., P.O. Box 451, Fox Lake, Illinois 60020 (847/587-8540).

**Site specific fishing regulations have been established on the Fox Chain O' Lakes. These special size and creel limit regulations are posted at most access areas and apply to the Fox Chain O' Lake proper and that portion of the Fox River from the Illinois-Wisconsin state line south to McHenry Dam. Anglers should become familiar with these regulations and carry some device for measuring fish length whenever fishing the Fox Chain O' Lakes.**

A comprehensive listing of regulations may be obtained where fishing licenses are sold or by writing to: Department of Natural Resource, Division of Fisheries, Lincoln Tower Plaza, 524 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois 62706 or telephone 815/675-2319.

## SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE YOUR FISHING TRIP MORE ENJOYABLE AND SUCCESSFUL

Fishing is a sport enjoyed by people of all ages and walks of life. A recent survey by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources indicated that fishing ranked third as a recreational pursuit. In order to be a successful fisherman, one must expend some time and effort to learn and understand the behavior and habits of various fish, the types of bait and tackle to use, and when, where, and how to fish for them. As the old saying goes, "Ten percent of the fishermen catch ninety percent of the fish". Hence, all fishermen must learn to be patient if they expect to consistently catch fish.

Safety should be given a great deal of consideration, particularly when boat fishing. Make a checklist

to ensure you have all of your equipment and check to see if it is in proper working order. Use only certified life saving gear. Don't overload your boat or run it at high speeds in unfamiliar areas. Be courteous to your neighbors and give assistance where needed. Common sense is the key to a safe enjoyable trip.

## MANAGEMENT

Illinois Department of Natural Resources fishery biologists will occasionally tag fish in an effort to obtain information on growth rates, movements, mortalities and population size. Should you have the experience of catching a tagged fish, please provide the following information to our Regional Fisheries Office, Spring Grove; 815/675-2385: Species of fish, total length, weight, tag number, tag color, date caught, where caught, your name and telephone number.

## SPECIAL MAIL-IN MUSKIE CREEL SURVEY

The Department of Natural Resources and the Illini Muskie Alliance are co-sponsoring a mail-in Muskie Creel Survey for anglers catching any size muskie. Successful anglers should complete one of the postage-paid mail-in cards as soon as possible following the catch. Mail-in cards are available at the site office, concession stand, at most local bait and tackle stores, or by contacting the Department of Natural Resources office at 815/675-2385.

## CHANNEL LAKE:

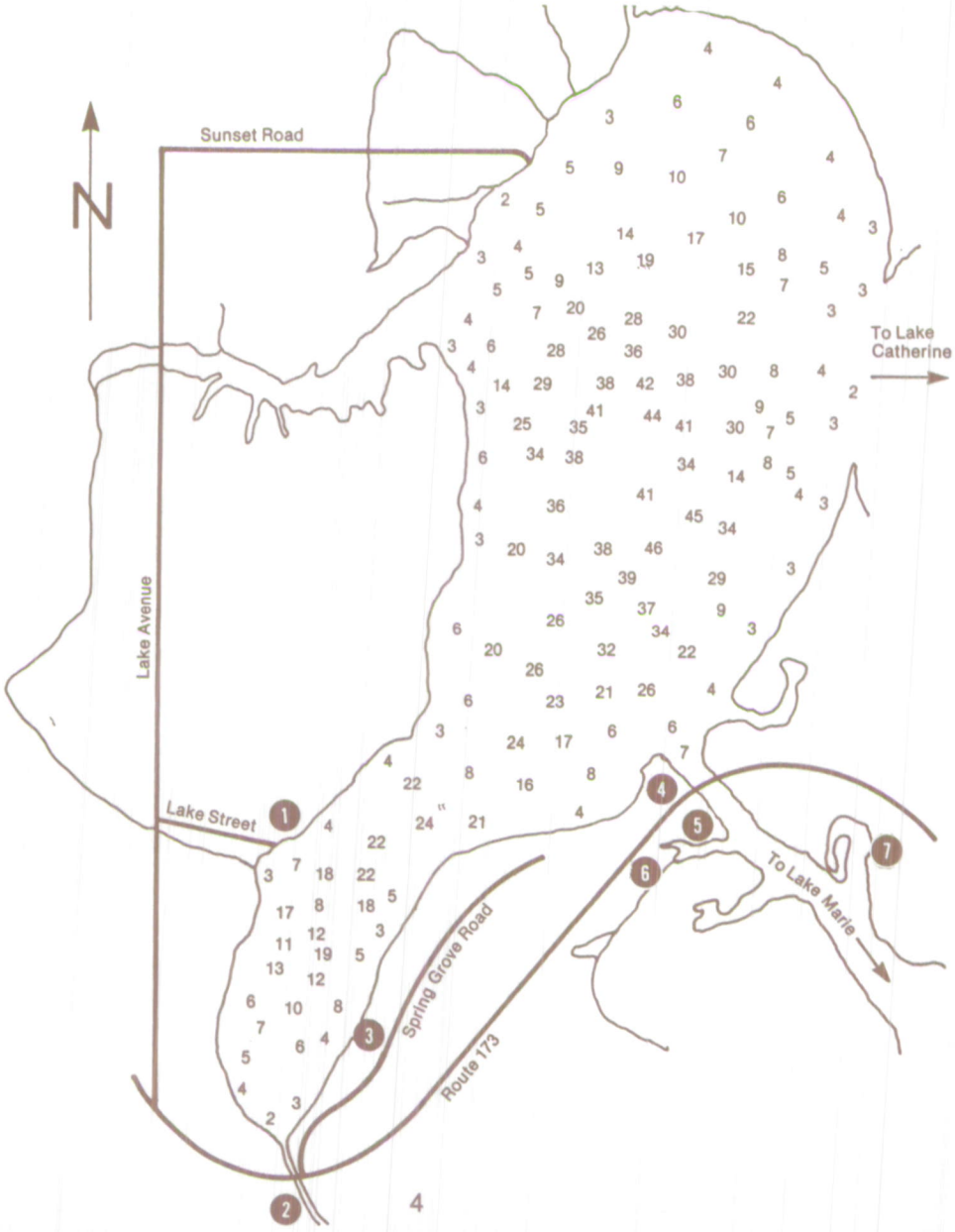
T46N, R9E, Section 1, 2, 11, 12, 14; Surface Area = 348.5 acres; Maximum Depth = 38.0 feet; Watershed = 3,600.0 acres; Shoreline Length = 3.6 miles, also 2.4 miles of channels. The water level was raised 5.0 feet by construction of the existing McHenry Dam in 1939.

Channel Lake lies just north of Illinois Route 173 and about one mile east of the Fox River. Together with Lake Catherine it is the deepest and northernmost lake in the complex known as the Fox Chain. Much of the shoreline is subdivided (70 percent) or in resort ownership. Direct access is available through eight boat liveries and resorts. Free boat access is available at Chain O' Lakes State Park on Grass Lake. No less than 30 species of fish occur in the lake. The most abundant species are: yellow perch, pumpkinseed, largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. Black crappie, walleye, and northern pike are moderately abundant. Carp and suckers do not appear to be very abundant in Channel Lake, which is probably due to the physical makeup of the lake bottom and the relative clarity of the water. This lake has a reputation as being one of the best areas for ice fishing in northeastern Illinois. In the summer months, largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish dominate the catch.

| CHANNEL LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | McDermit's Resort<br>42311 Woodbine<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-4704 | 400 Ft.<br>4<br>Acres | Fee | X | Fee | 100<br>Cars | Boats<br>Only | X | | | | Fee | | X | X | X | X | | |
| 2 | The Spot<br>26375 West Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-1707 | 300 Ft.<br>2.5<br>Acres | | X | | 75<br>Cars | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 3 | Parrot's Cove<br>26083 West<br>Spring Grove Rd.<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-838-9886 | 400 Ft.<br>3.0<br>Acres | | X | Fee | 75<br>Cars | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | |
| 4 | Mentone's<br>25836 West<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-4550 | 250 Yd.<br>2.0<br>Acres | | X | Fee | 100<br>Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |

| | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Webb's Marina<br>25837 W. Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-2217 | 200 Yd.<br>2.0 Acres | | | Fee | 100 Cars | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Float in Park<br>25855 W. Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL | 400 Yd.<br>80.0 Acres | Fee | | Fee | 75 Cars | | X | | | | Fee | Fee | | | | | | |
| 7 | Storm Harbour Marine<br>25605 W. Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-838-4150 | 250 Yd.<br>9.0 Acres | | | Fee | 70 Cars | | X | | | X | Boat Customers Only | Boat Slip Customers Only | | | | X | | |

## CHANNEL LAKE



## LAKE CATHERINE:

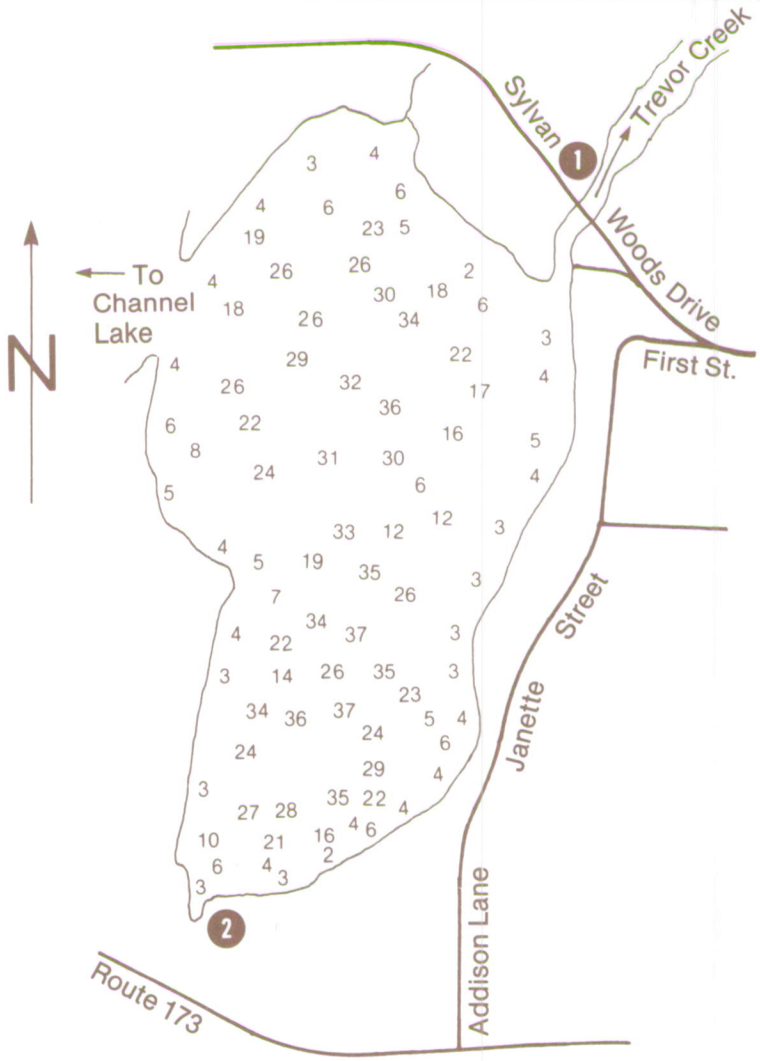
T46N, R9E, Section 1, 12; Surface Area = 149.5 acres; Maximum Depth = 40.0 feet; Watershed = 3,600.0 acres; Shoreline Length = 2.0 miles, also 0.7 miles of channels. Fox River dam at McHenry built in 1939 gave this glacial lake its present depth.

The gravel bar which formerly separated Lake Catherine from Channel Lake has eroded away so that both lakes are now contiguous bodies of water.

This lake receives part of its water supply from Wisconsin, via Trevor Creek. The lake has a strong population of yellow perch, bluegill, crappie, and pumpkinseed. Channel catfish, walleye, and northern pike are present in moderate numbers. Muskellunge are present, but not abundant. Direct public access is available via one marina and one resort or at Chain O'Lakes State Park on Grass Lake. The lake's shoreline is almost 100 percent subdivided, so shoreline angling is limited to a single resort area.

| LAKE CATHERINE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nor Shore II Resort<br>25164 W. North Ave.<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-8010 | 150 Ft.<br>0.5 Acres | X | X | Use At Own Risk | 150 Cars | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 2 | Bob's Marina<br>25584 W. Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-1173 | 400 Yd.<br>4.0 Acres | | | Fee | 150 Cars | | X | X | X | X | Boat Launch Customers Only | Boat Slip customers Only | | X | | | | Sells Boat Supplies |

## LAKE CATHERINE



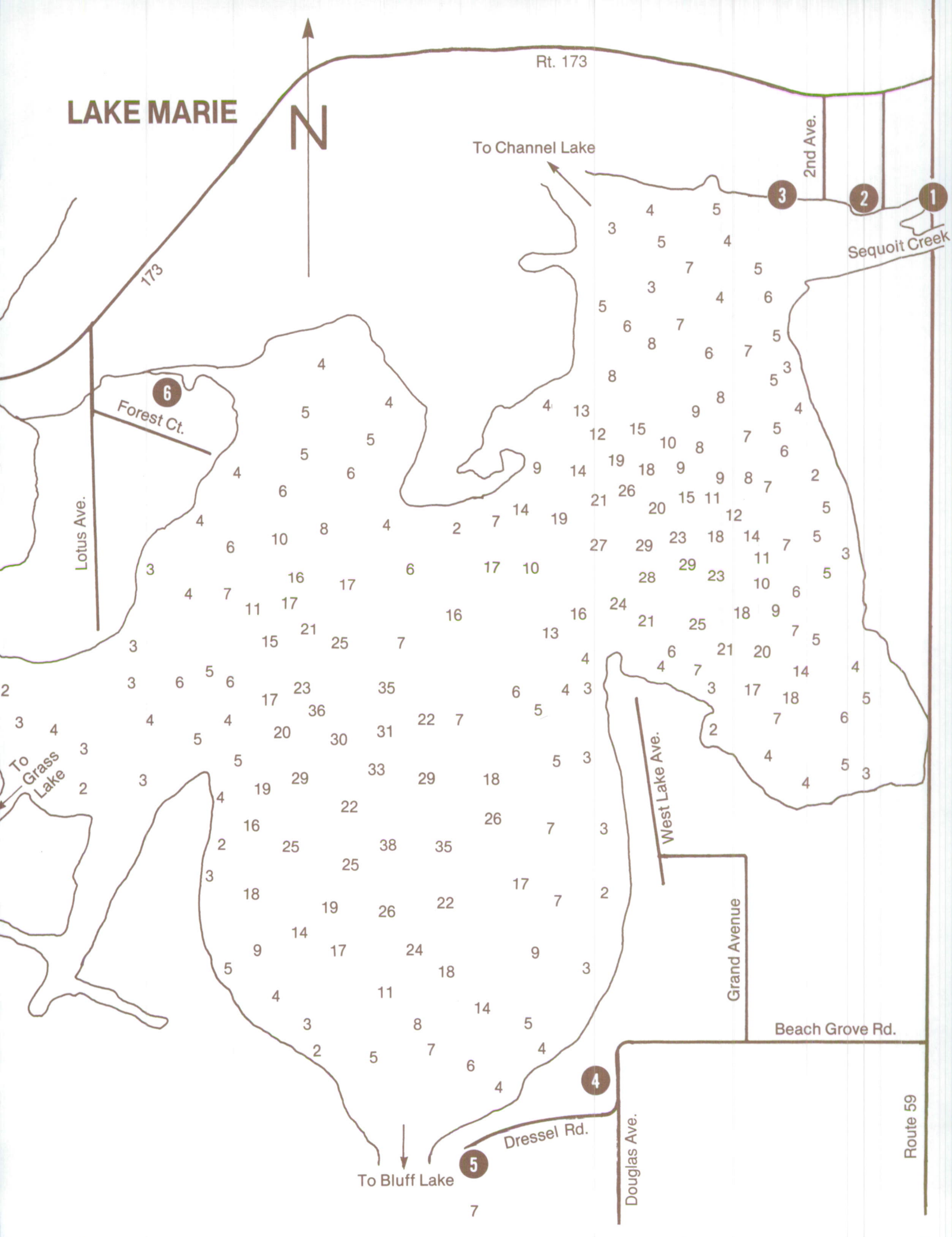
## LAKE MARIE:

T46N, R9E, Section 12, 13, 14, 24; Surface Area = 585.0 acres; Maximum Depth = 26.0 feet; Watershed = 4,200.0 acres, plus the Fox River back-up; Shorline Length = 6.0 miles plus 3.1 miles of channels.

Lake Marie lies just south of Illinois Route 173 and between Channel and Grass Lakes. Lake Marie is one of the deepest of the Chain lakes and remains somewhat clearer than its neighbors to the south. Shoreline development is not so severe on Lake Marie, due to the amount of sloughs adjacent to the lake. This lake is the direct recipient of the effluent from the Antioch sewage treatment plant, which discharges into the lake via Sequoit Creek. In early spring, northern pike migrate up the mouth of Sequoit Creek to spawn.

In 1976, Lake Marie produced the state record northern pike (22 lbs. 12 oz.) whch stood until 1989. Of the 25 or more fish species known to occur, the top 10 in abundance are: yellow and white bass, black and white crappies, bluegill, largemouth bass, channel catfish, walleye, yellow perch, and carp. Northern pike are present while muskellunge are moderately abundant. Annually each spring the Illinois Department of Conservation collects between 400-700 adult walleye for spawning. The 15 million eggs collected are hatched and the fry are stocked into the Fox Chain O' Lakes. Direct public boating access is available via one marina and five reports. Bank fishing is available via two resort areas.

| LAKE MARIE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pedersen Marine<br>840 Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-3356 | 500 Ft.<br>3.5 Acres | | | Fee | 50 Cars | | X | X | X | X | Private | | | | | | | Boat Sales<br>Water Skis |
| 2 | Sequoit Harbor<br>24921 W. Rt. 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-6101 | 700 Ft.<br>4 Acres | | | Fee | 150 Cars | | X | X | X | X | Only Boat Launch Customers | | | | X | | | Boat Sales<br>Water Skis |
| 3 | Barnacle Bob's<br>42150 N. 4th Ave.<br>Route 173<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-2036 | 175 Yd.<br>3 Acres | | X | Fee | 75 Cars | Both | | X | | X | X | | X | | X | | | Tackle<br>Ice |
| 4 | T.J.'s Play Pen<br>Dressel Road<br>Lake Marie<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-9800 | 100 Yd.<br>1 Acre | | | | 40 Cars | | X | | | | X | | | | X | X | | |
| 5 | Sand Bar Resort<br>40890 N. Douglas<br>Lake Marie<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-3150 | 250 Yd.<br>2.5 Acres | | | Fee | 75 Cars | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | |
| 6 | Bob Lang's<br>26264 Forest<br>Antioch, IL | 150 Yd.<br>3 Acres | X | X | Fee | 75 Cars | X | X | | | X | X | Lim-ited | X | | X | X | | |
| 7 | Georgeson Spiro's<br>East Marine<br>26050 Riverview<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-3126 | 1 Acre | | X | Fee | 25 Cars | X | X | X | X | X | X | Pop-up Trailers Only | X | X | | | | Boat Sales, Related Equip. Items |


LAKE MARIE
N
Rt. 173
To Channel Lake
2nd Ave.
Sequoit Creek
173
Forest Ct.
Lotus Ave.
To Grass Lake
West Lake Ave.
Grand Avenue
Beach Grove Rd.
Route 59
Douglas Ave.
Dressel Rd.
To Bluff Lake
1
2
3
4
5
6

## BLUFF LAKE:

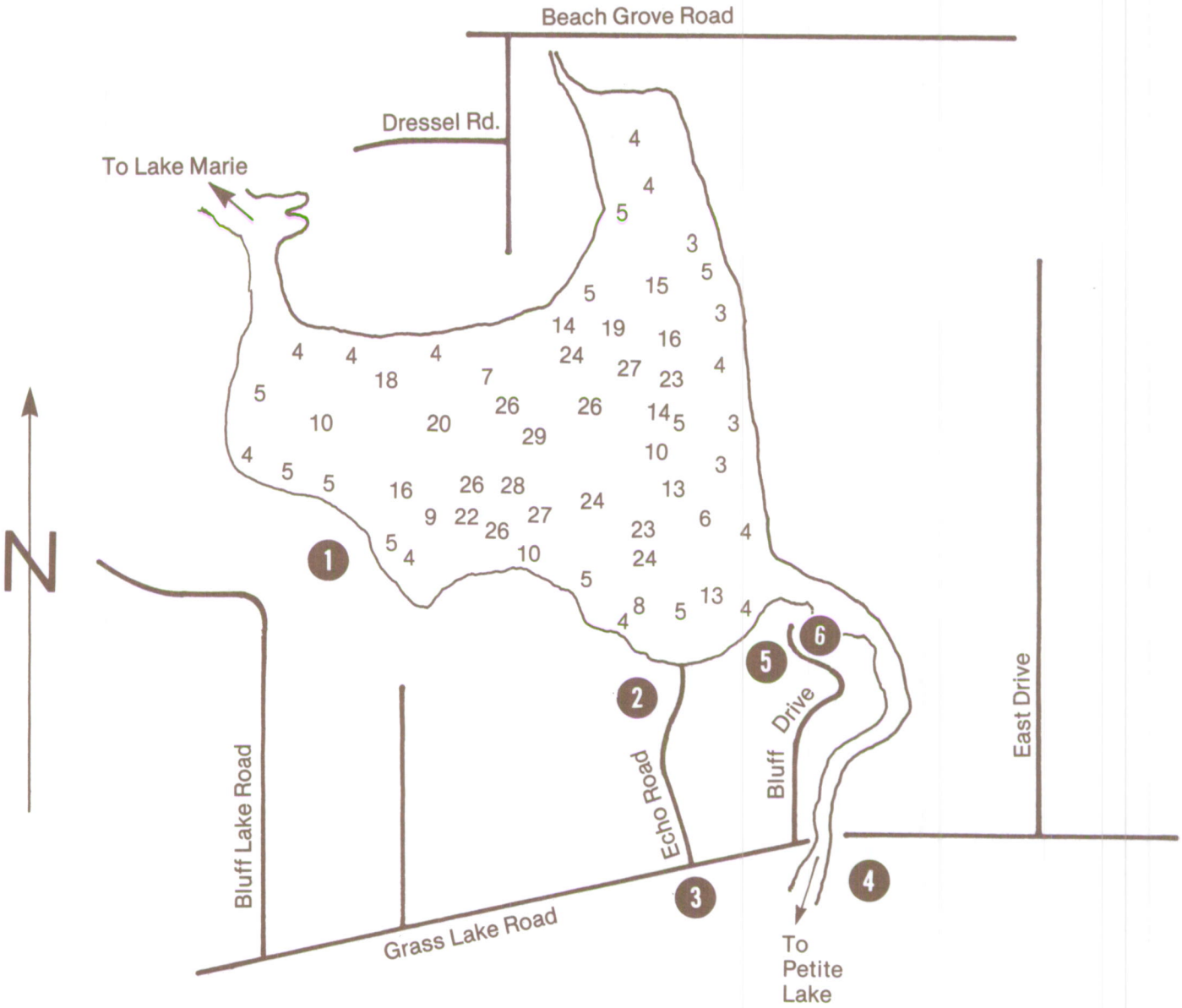
T46N, R9E, Section 24, N 1/2; Surface Area = 92.4 acres; Maximum Depth = 29.0 feet; Watershed = 600.0 acres; Shoreline Length = 1.6 miles plus 1.3 miles of channels.

This is the smallest of the principal lakes in the group referred to collectively as the Fox Chain. It is located west of Illinois Route 59 and north of Grass Lake Road. It is linked by channel with Lake Marie to the north and Petite Lake to the south. Bluff Lake's water level was raised and the lake size increased to 86.0 acres by the construction of the existing McHenry Dam on the Fox River in 1939. Although no public agency owns land on this lake, it is accessible by boat from either Lake Marie or Petite Lake. There are five fee ramps and one boat livery on the lake. Bank fishing access is available via five resort areas.

The last fisheries inventory revealed that 18 species of fish inhabit Bluff Lake. In terms of relative abundance, the fishery is composed of yellow bass, bluegill, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, channel catfish, carp, yellow perch, black and white crappie, and walleye.

| BLUFF LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | New Port Cove 40541 N. Bluff Lake Rd. Antioch, IL 847-838-1122 | 350 Yd. 10 Acres | X | X | Yearly Fee | 500 Cars | | X | X | X | X | X | Members Only | X | X | X | X | | |
| 2 | Lupa's Resort & Marina 25276 Grass Lake Rd. Antioch, IL 847-395-2753 | 300 Yd. 15 Acres | X | X | Fee | 75 Cars | | 70 Slips | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | |
| 3 | CJ Smith's Resort 25315 W. Grass Lake Rd. Antioch, IL 847-395-2753 | 150 Yd. 1 Acre | Fee | | Fee | 50 Cars | Boats Only | X | X | | | X | | X | | | | | |
| 4 | Spring Lake Marina & Campground 25125 Grass Lake Rd. Antioch, IL 847-395-6440 | 7 Acres | X S/F | X | Fee | 30 Cars | | X | | | X | | X | | | X | X | | |
| 5 | Steitz's Resort 25400 W. Bluff Ln. Antioch, IL 847-395-4050 | 250 Ft. 12 | X | X | Fee | 300 Cars | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | | |
| 6 | Baker Marine 25276 W. Grass Lake Rd. Antioch, IL 847-838-0066 | 100 Ft. | | | | 12 | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |

# BLUFF LAKE


Beach Grove Road
Dressel Rd.
To Lake Marie
N
Bluff Lake Road
Grass Lake Road
Echo Road
Bluff Drive
East Drive
To Petite Lake
1
2
3
4
5
6

## GRASS LAKE:

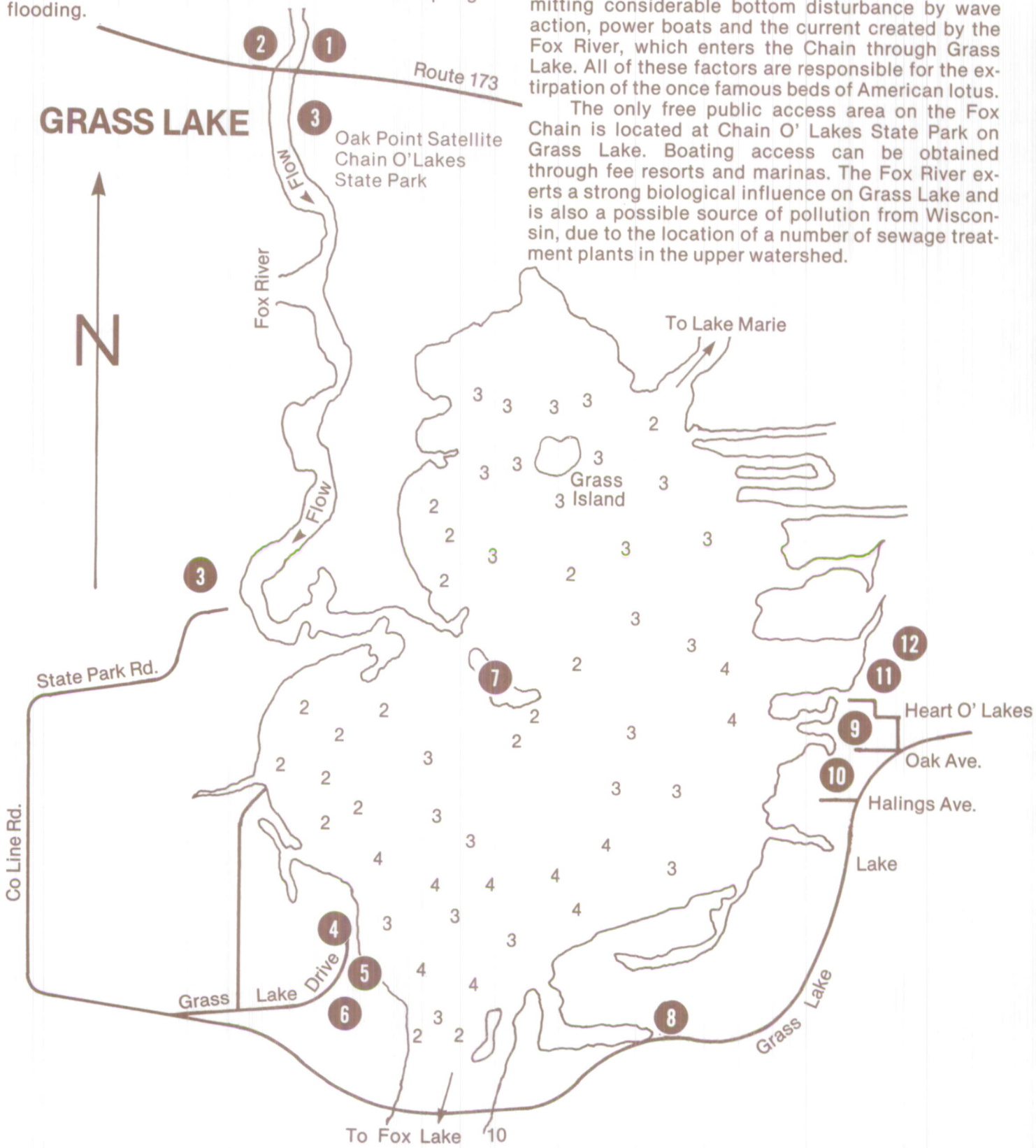
T46N, R9E, Section 34; Surface Area = 1451.4 acres; Maximum Depth = 6.0 feet; Shoreline Length = 8.5 miles and 2.8 miles of channels; Constructed = Flooded natural slough area, created by the damming of the Fox River at McHenry in 1939.

This lake is located three miles east of Spring Grove on Grass Lake Road. It is almost 85 percent ringed by cattail shoreline. Winter fish mortalities, especially in the channels, are common due to the lowering of the water level each winter at the McHenry Dam to reduce the threat of spring flooding.

The top ten fish species in Grass Lake in order of abundance are yellow bass, carp, channel catfish, bluegill, white crappie, pumpkinseed sunfish, largemouth bass, yellow perch, white bass, and black crappie. Although Grass Lake does not maintain an attractive northern pike and muskellunge fishery, the area does play an important role in providing spawning and rearing habitat for these fish.

Grass Lake becomes quite turbid in the summer. This turbidity is caused by many factors, not the least of which is its extreme shallowness. Over 60 percent of the lake is less than four feet deep, permitting considerable bottom disturbance by wave action, power boats and the current created by the Fox River, which enters the Chain through Grass Lake. All of these factors are responsible for the extirpation of the once famous beds of American lotus.

The only free public access area on the Fox Chain is located at Chain O' Lakes State Park on Grass Lake. Boating access can be obtained through fee resorts and marinas. The Fox River exerts a strong biological influence on Grass Lake and is also a possible source of pollution from Wisconsin, due to the location of a number of sewage treatment plants in the upper watershed.



| GRASS LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fox River Recreation, Inc. Fox River Bridge 27883 W. Route 173 Antioch, IL 847-395-6090 | 3/4 mi. 25 Acres | X | | Fee | 75 Cars | Both plus canoes | X | X | | X | X | 60-70 Tent, 175 Campers Elec. & Water | X | | X | | | Ice, LP Gas Dump Station |
| 2 | Bridge Port Inn Fox River Bridge Route 173 Antioch, IL 847-395-7840 | 100 Yd. 1.5 Acres | X | | | 20 Cars | | X | X | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 3 | Chain O'Lakes S.P. 729 E. State Park Rd. Spring Grove, IL (including Oak Point) 847-587-5512 | 4.1 mi. 6,000 Acres | X | X | Free | 200 Car/ Trailer | Both | | | | | X | No camping at Oak Point | X | | X | | | Concession 847-587-7165 |
| 4 | Steve's Resort 29240 N. Jackson Dr. Spring Grove, IL 847-587-8754 | 1 Acre | | | | | | X | | | X | | | | | X | X | X | |
| 5 | Jackson Bay Resort 39151 Jackson Dr. Spring Grove, IL 847-587-2888 | 80 Ft. 0.2 Acre | | | | 50 Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 6 | Dorothy's Resort 27717 Grass Lake Dr. Spring Grove, IL | 200 Ft. 1.0 Acre | | | Fee | 50 Cars | | X | | | | | Slip Owners Only | | | | X | | |
| 7 | Blarney Island Antioch, IL 847-395-4122 | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | Unique Island Resort |
| 8 | Mutiny Boat Club 27763 West Grass Lake Road Antioch, IL | 1.3 mi. 25 Acres | | | Fee | 100 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | Yearly | | | X | X | | Boat & Motor Sales |
| 9 | Dolphin Harbour 26222 W. Oak Ave. Antioch, IL | 700 Ft. 23 Acres | | | Fee | 75 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | | | | |
| 10 | Haling's Resort 26365 Haling's Road Antioch, IL | 550 Ft. 15 Acres | | X | Fee | 30 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | | | | X | | | Boat/Snow-mobile Sale & Service |
| 11 | Sunset Point Campground Heart O'Lakes Road Antioch, IL | 2.0 Acres | X | | Fee | 50 | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 12 | Grass Lake Landing Ahoy Mate 26250 W. Heart of Lakes Rd. Antioch, IL | 1.0 Acre | X | | | 60 Cars | | X | | | X | X | | | | | X | X | |

## PETITE LAKE:

T46N, R9, Section 25, 30, 36; Surface Area = 234.5 acres; Maximum Depth = 16.0 feet; Watershed = 1,000.0 acres; Shoreline Length = 2.0 miles; plus 2.1 miles of channels.

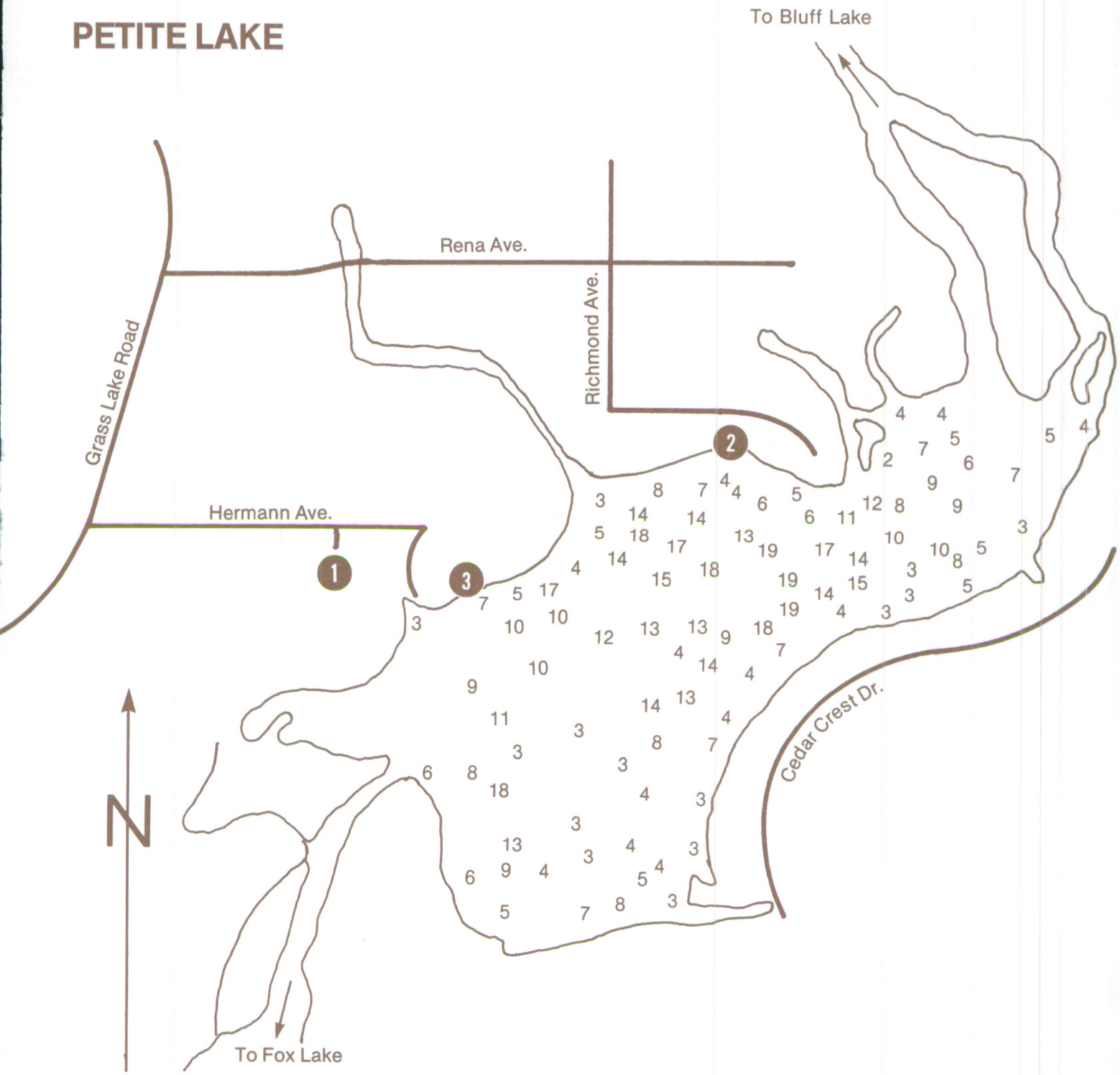
Petite Lake is one of the smaller members of the Fox Chain and is located between Bluff and Fox Lake, just west of Illinois Route 59 and south of Grass Lake Road. Prior to the installation of the McHenry Dam, it was much smaller and was isolated from the rest of the Chain except during periods of high water. Its shoreline is approximately 60 percent developed to cottages and permanent dwellings.

Of the 21 species of fish known to occur in the lake, the following are the top 10 in order of abundance: yellow bass, channel catfish, carp, yellow perch, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, bluegill, white bass, black crappie, and white crappie. Also important to the fishery but of less abundance are walleye, northern pike and muskellunge.

Boating access is available via one resort while bank fishing access may be obtained from three resorts.

| PETITE LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Joal's Resort<br>25701 W. Herman<br>Antioch, IL | 60 Ft.<br>1 Acre | | | X | 30 Cars | | | | | X | X | | | | | X | | |
| 2 | Kempf Resort<br>25344 W. Richmond<br>Petite Lake<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-2484 | 60 Ft.<br>0.5 Acres | X | X | | 100 Cars | Boats Only | X | | | | X | | | | X | X | X | |
| 3 | Olsen's Fishing Boat & Motor Rental<br>25603 Hermann Ave.<br>Antioch, IL | 2.0 Acres | Night fishing by reservation only | | | 20 Cars | Boat & Motor | | | | | X | | | | | | | |

# PETITE LAKE


To Bluff Lake
Rena Ave.
Richmond Ave.
Grass Lake Road
Hermann Ave.
Cedar Crest Dr.
N
To Fox Lake
1
2
3

## FOX-NIPPERSINK LAKE:

T45N, R9E, Section 2, 3, 4, 33, 34; Surface Area = 2376.8 acres; Maximum Depth = 18.0 feet; Watershed = 1,300.0 square miles; Shoreline Length = 12.2 miles plus 12.7 miles of channels. The present water level was established by the construction of the existing McHenry Dam in 1939.

This lake is located on the Fox River and is one of the primary lakes in the Fox Chain. Since Nippersink Lake is in reality just a bay of Fox Lake, the two lakes will be considered as one in this report. Nippersink Lake derived its name from the stream which flows into it, Nippersink Creek. This stream is one of the better quality streams in the area, particularly at the middle and upper reaches, and provides spawning and rearing habitat for walleye, smallmouth bass, and channel catfish, as well as, many other species of Fox Chain O' Lakes fish.

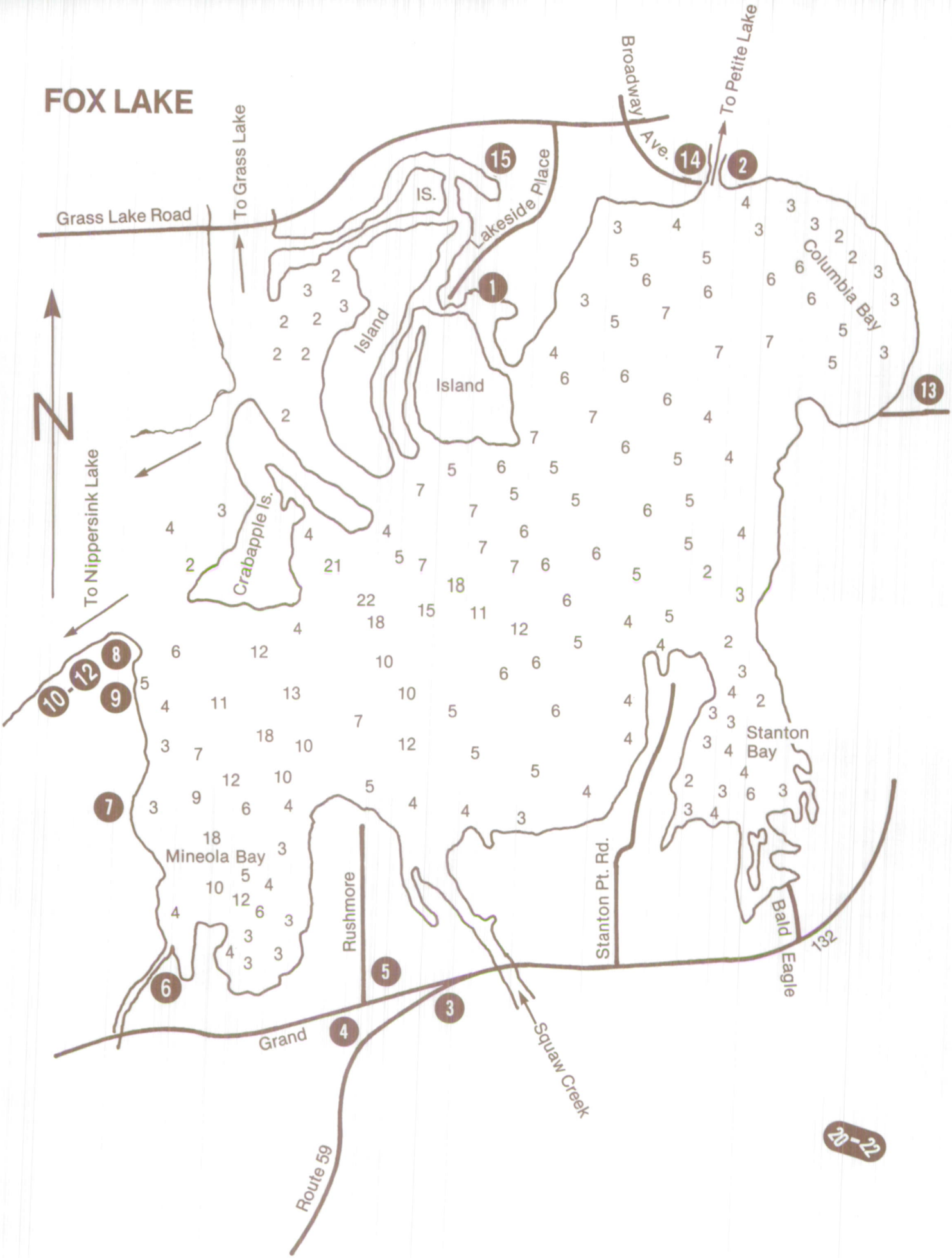
Of the 27 species of fish which are known to occur in Fox Lake, the top species in their order of numerical abundance: channel catfish, yellow bass, carp, yellow perch, bluegill, largemouth bass, white crappie, pumpkinseed sunfish, walleye, and orange spot sunfish. Northern pike and muskellunge, while not currently abundant, are, nevertheless, important to the fishery. The shoreline in front of Mineola Hotel and Crabapple Island is quite rocky and harbors numerous walleye. Largemouth bass are found throughout the lake. Channel catfish are particularly abundant along the sandy gravelly shorelines of Stanton Bay.

Boating access can be obtained through eleven fee resorts and marinas, while bank fishing access is available from six resort areas.

| FOX-NIPPERSINK LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Captain's Quarters<br>38283 N. Bolton Dr.<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-3569 | 200 Yd.<br>4.0 | X | | Fee | 100 Cars | | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X | X | | Host |
| 2 | Inland Harbor<br>38814 N. Broadway<br>Grass Lake Road<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-8070 | 1,000 Ft.<br>7.5 Acres | X | | Fee | 70 Cars | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | Hoist<br>Travel Life |
| 3 | Fagan's Squaw Creek Resort<br>Route 59<br>Ingleside, IL<br>847-587-2215 | 3 mi.<br>22 Acres | | | Fee | 50 Cars | Boats Only | | | | | X | | X | | X | | | Tackle |
| 4 | Chain-O-Lakes Marina<br>Route 59 & 132<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-6222 | 500 Yd.<br>8.0 Acres | | | | 150 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | Hoist<br>Ship's Store |
| 5 | Fox Lake Harbour<br>Rt. 59 & 132<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-0200 | 500 Yd.<br>10 Acres | | | | 150 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | Snowmobile, Motorcycle, Boat, Motor Sales-Hoist |
| 6 | Bergers Harbor<br>92 East Grand Ave.<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-0074 | 0.5 Acre | | | | 30 Cars | X | X | X | | | X | | X | | X | | | |
| 7 | Mineola Hotel & Marina<br>117 Cora Ave.<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-2777 | 200 Yd.<br>15 Acres | | Fee | Fee | 100 Cars | | X | X | X | X | Customers Only | | | X | X | | | Boat Towing<br>Stern Drive<br>OMC Repair<br>Hoist |

| FOX-NIPPERSINK LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Korpan's Landing<br>112 E. Lakeview<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-2622 | 500 Yd.<br>1.0<br>Acre | | X | Fee | 125<br>Cars | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | |
| 9 | Mary Nakutny's<br>Resort<br>109 E. Lakeview<br>Fox Lake, IL | 100 Ft.<br>1.0<br>Acre | | | | 30<br>Cars | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | |
| 10 | Leisure Point<br>200 North Forest<br>Fox Lake, | 5.0<br>Acres | | | Fee | 60 | | X | X | X | X | | | | | X | X | | |
| 11 | Aquarium Bar & Grill<br>N. Arthur<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-4544 | 50 Ft.<br>0.4<br>Acre | | | | 15<br>Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 12 | Studio One<br>115 Nippersink<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-8822 | 40 Ft.<br>0.2<br>Acre | | | | 20<br>Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 13 | Electric Harbor<br>38470 W. Columbia<br>Lake Villa, IL<br>847-356-2747 | 3.0<br>Acres | | | Fee | 25<br>Cars | | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | X | | |
| 14 | Trade Winds Marine<br>Center<br>38788 Broadway<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>815-455-2255 | 4.0<br>Acres | | | Fee | 100<br>Cars | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | Hoist |
| 15 | Port O'Blarney<br>27763 West Grass<br>Lake Road<br>Antioch, IL<br>847-395-4122 | 1800 Ft.<br>12<br>Acres | X | | Fee | 200<br>Cars | Both | X | X | | X | | RV Yearly<br>Lease | | | X | X | | |

# FOX LAKE


Grass Lake Road
To Grass Lake
Broadway Ave.
To Petite Lake
Lakeside Place
IS.
Island
Island
Columbia Bay
Crabapple Is.
To Nippersink Lake
N
Stanton Bay
Mineola Bay
Rushmore
Stanton Pt. Rd.
Bald Eagle
132
Grand
Squaw Creek
Route 59
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
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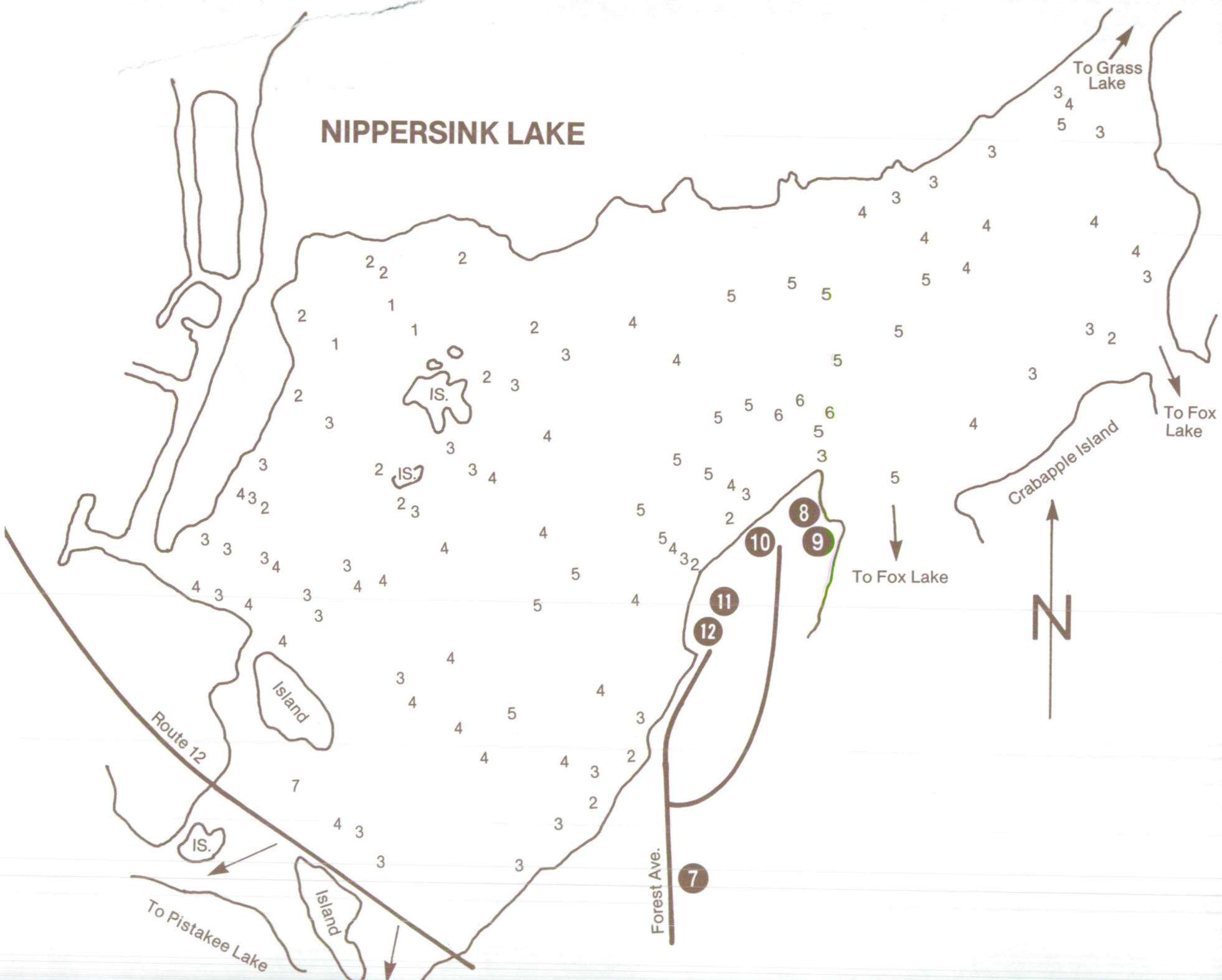
10-12
13
14
15
20-22


NIPPERSINK LAKE
To Grass Lake
To Fox Lake
Crabapple Island
To Fox Lake
N
IS.
IS.
IS.
Island
Island
Route 12
To Pistakee Lake
Forest Ave.
7
8
9
10
11
12

## PISTAKEE LAKE:

T45N, R9E, Section 9, 16, 17; Surface Area = 1715.7 acres; Maximum Depth = 36.0 feet; Watershed = 1,700.0 square miles; Shoreline Length = 11.8 miles plus 3.5 miles of channels; Constructed = Natural glacial lake, impounded in 1939 by McHenry Dam on Fox River.

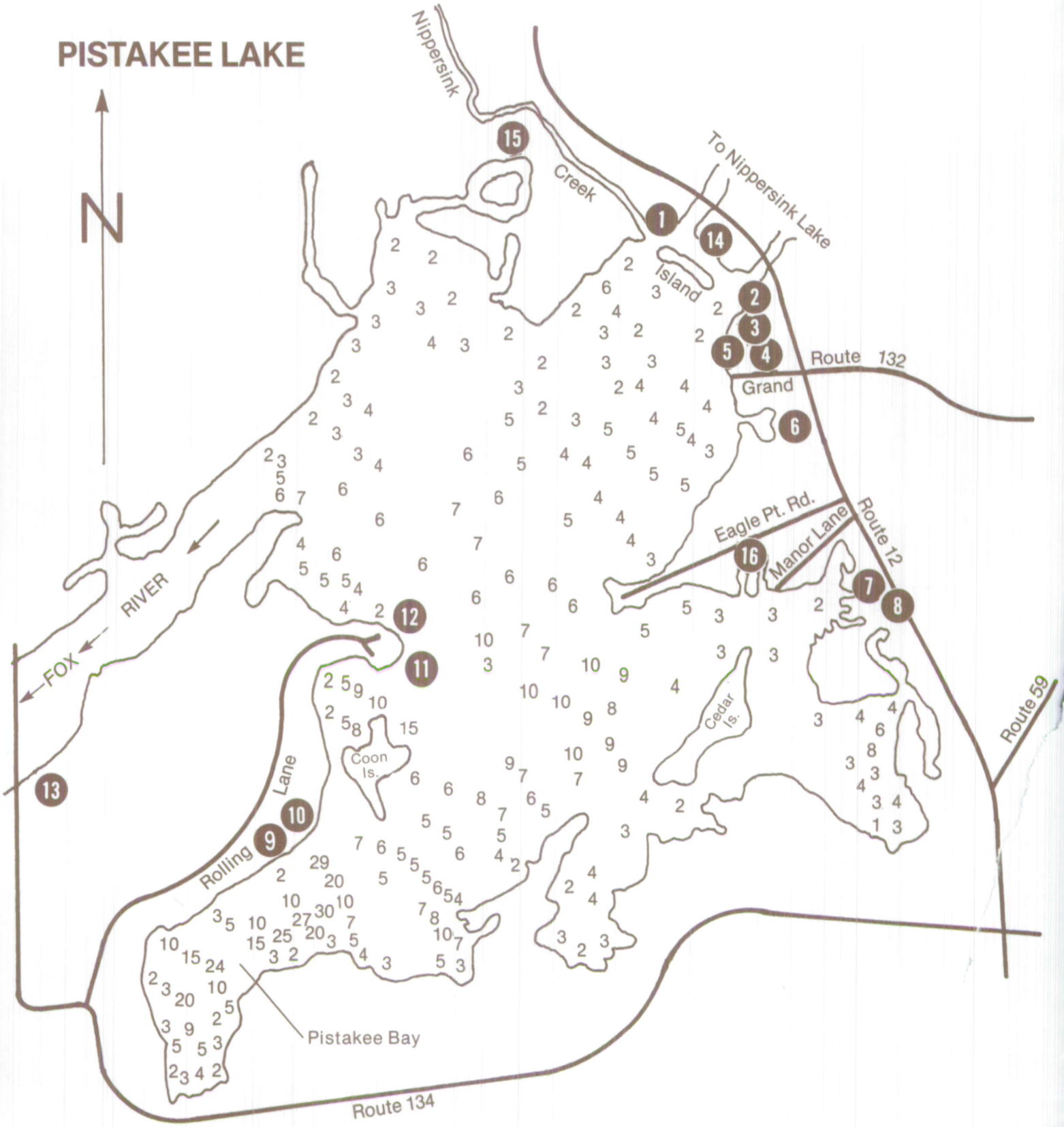
This large lake is the lowermost member of the Fox Chain and is the second largest in the Chain. It is located on the Lake-McHenry County line and bordered on the north and east by U.S. Route 12. Because it is at the lower end of the Chain, the lake accumulates much more enrichment than the more northern member lakes. This fact becomes very evident by mid-summer, when nuisance algal blooms reach such proportions that visibility in the water is less than 12 inches. There has been a marked reduction in the submersed aquatic vegetation during the past 15 years. The lake has experienced several summer and late spring fish mortalities over the past 15 years. The summer mortalities have been attributed to the dieback of algal blooms and the accompanying low oxygen content. The spring mortalities were traced to fish diseases. There are 29 species of fish in Pistakee Lake. The top ten species in their order of abundance are: channel catfish, yellow bass, yellow perch, carp, bluegill, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, white crappie, black bullhead, and orange spotted sunfish. Present in moderate numbers are walleye and northern pike. Smallmouth bass and muskellunge occur, but are taken with irregularity.

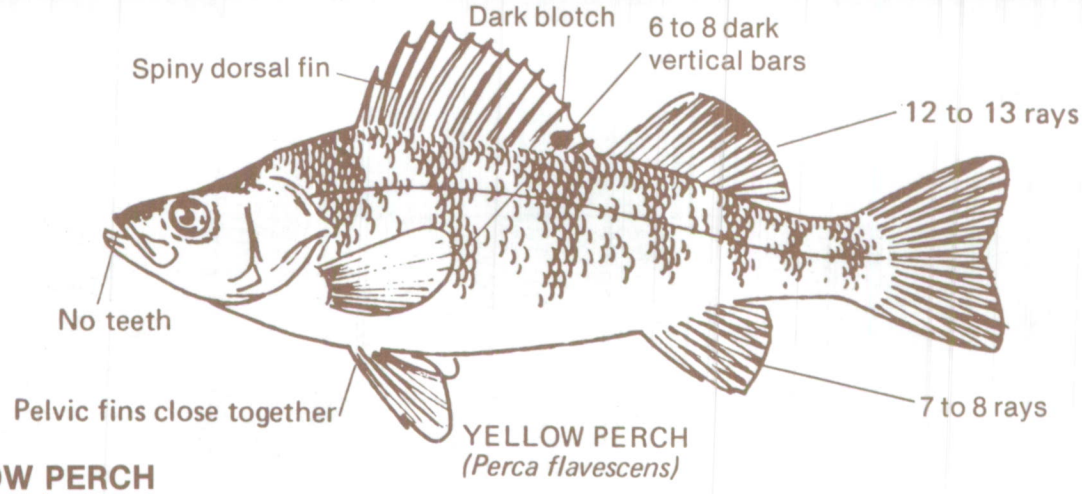
Boating access may be obtained through ten fee resorts and marinas. Bank fishing access is restricted to two resort areas. Additional indirect access may be obtained from launching ramps located along the Fox River, above the McHenry lock and dam. (See Fox River Access Areas and Fishing Guide.)

| PISTAKEE LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bauske's Boat Basin<br>152 N. Route 12<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-0190 | 200 Yd.<br>1.5 Acres | | | Fee | 50 Cars | Boats Only | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | Boat Sales |
| 2 | Kramer Boat Co.<br>82 N. Route 12<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-2517 | 200 Yd.<br>1.0 Acre | | | | 75 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | Boat & Motor Sales |
| 3 | Light House Marina<br>15 W. Oak<br>Fox Lake, IL | 140 Ft.<br>0.4 Acre | | | Fee | 25 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | Boating Accessories |
| 4 | Dick's Marine<br>32 N. Pistakee<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-2102 | 150 Ft.<br>0.5 Acre | | | | 4 Cars | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | Service Repair |
| 5 | Shoreline Inn<br>38 W. Grand<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>815-334-7116 | 75 Ft.<br>0.2 Acre | | | | 15 Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 6 | Lagoon Marine<br>36 S. Route 12<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-0342 | 1000 Ft.<br>2.0 Acres | | | | 60 | | X | | X | X | | | | | | | | Hoist |
| 7 | Watt's Marina<br>116 S. Route 12<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-0211 | 500 Yd.<br>5.0 Acres | | X | Fee | 100 Cars | | X | X | X | X | | Limited | | | | | | Boat & Motor Sales Hoist |
| 8 | Pistakee Marina<br>410 Kings Rd.<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-5814 | 450 Yd.<br>3.0 Acres | | | | 100 Cars | | X | X | X | X | Slip Owners Only | | | | | | | Boat, Motor & Sporting Goods Sales Hoist |

| PISTAKEE LAKE | ACCESS AREA | SHORELINE ACCESS | BANK FISHING | ICE FISHING ACCESS | LAUNCHING RAMP | PARKING AREA | BOAT & MOTOR RENTAL | DOCKAGE OR SLIPS | GASOLINE–OIL | REPAIR SERVICE | WINTER STORAGE | PICNIC AREA | CAMPING | BAIT | SWIMMING | FOOD | LIQUOR | LODGING | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Oake Park Hotel & Lounge<br>801 W. Oak Drive<br>McHenry, IL<br>815-385-9872 | 180 Ft.<br>1.5 Acres | | Fee | Yearly Fee | 50 Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 10 | Pink Harrison's Resort<br>801 West Harrison<br>McHenry, IL<br>815-385-0323 | 250 Ft.<br>2.0 Acres | | Fee | Fee | 75 Cars | Boats Only | X | X | | | | | | X | X | X | | |
| 11 | Bald Knob Resort<br>W. Bald Knob Rd.<br>McHenry, IL<br>815-344-5223 | 250 Yd.<br>3.0 Acres | X | X | Fee | 75 Cars | | X | | | X | X | Weekends Only | | | X | X | | |
| 12 | Harmony Resort<br>W. Bald Knob<br>McHenry, IL<br>815-385-1488 | 75 Ft.<br>0.4 Acre | | | Fee | 50 Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| 13 | Raymond's<br>3312 N. Chapel Hill<br>McHenry, IL<br>815-385-3270 | 200 Ft.<br>1.0 Acre | | | Fee | 100 Cars | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | Bowling Alley |
| 14 | One Hundred Club<br>100 North Route 12<br>Fox Lake, IL | 2.5 Acres | | | | 75 Cars | | X | X | | X | | | | | | | | Hoist |
| 15 | Rustic Harbor Marina Inc.<br>210 Broadway<br>McHenry, IL<br>847-587-7277 | 600 Ft.<br>8.0 Acres | | | | 300 Cars | | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Lakeside Resort<br>135 Manor Lane<br>Fox Lake, IL<br>847-587-7864 | | | | | 25 Cars | X | | | | | X | | | | X | X | | |

# PISTAKEE LAKE






## YELLOW PERCH

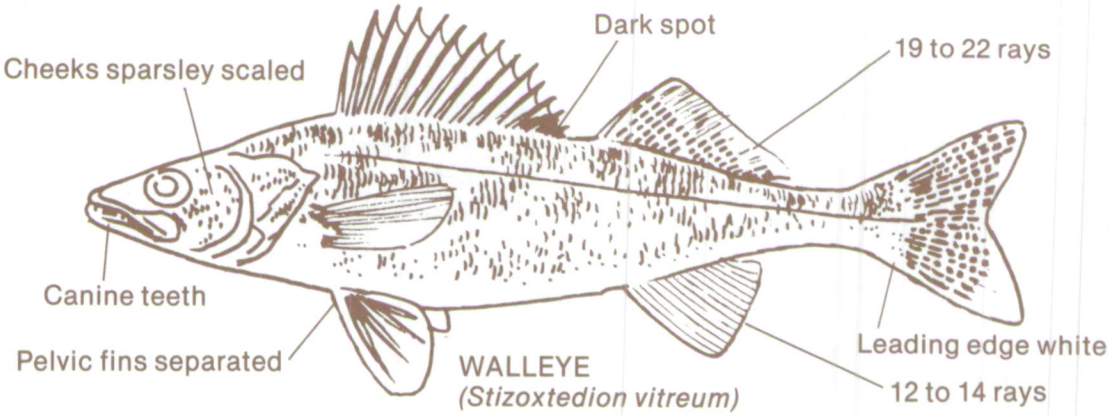
COMMON NAMES:

Perch, ringed perch, ringtail perch, lake perch, river perch, common perch, red perch, striped perch.

The yellow perch, which is in the same family as walleye, are very common throughout the Fox Chain O' Lakes area. They are a schooling fish and prefer to inhabit shallow weedy areas.

Yellow perch spawn randomly over gravel, brush, or submerged vegetation in April through early May when water temperatures range from 45 to 55 degrees. Between 10,000 and 100,000 eggs are deposited in long gelatinous strands or masses. As small predators yellow perch feed almost exclusively on aquatic microorganisms and insect larvae, although they will prey on small crayfish and minnows as well.

Fishing for yellow perch on the Fox Chain O' Lakes generally takes place year round. However, as with bluegill, ice fishing appears to appeal to many anglers. Small minnows, redworms, or mayfly larvae on an ice fishing jig generally produce good results.




## WALLEYE

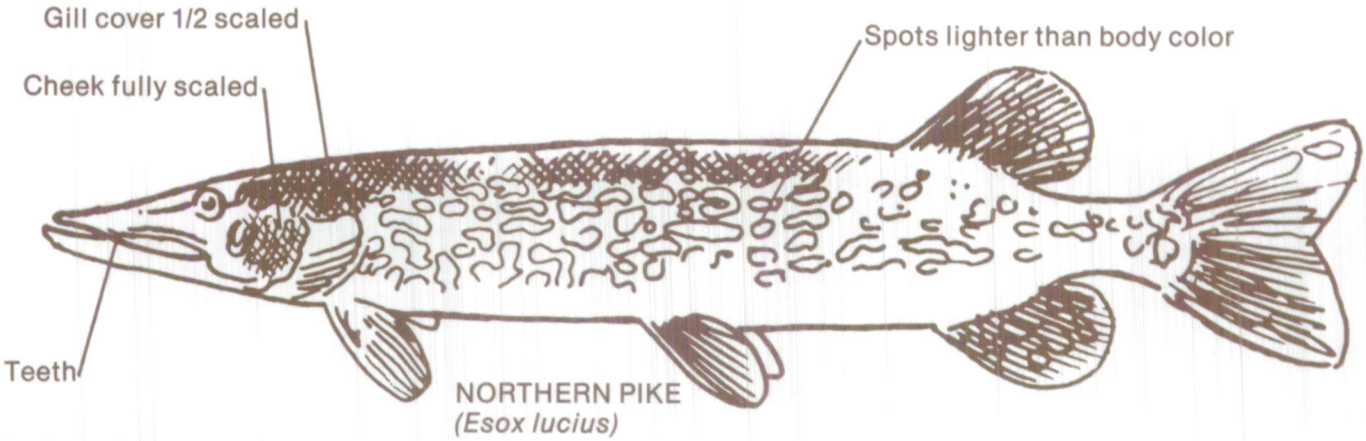
COMMON NAMES:

Pike perch, walleyed pike, pike, jack salmon, jack, yellow pike, dory, glasseye, white-eye, blue pike, gray pike, green pike, okow, howfish, blowfish, gum pike.

The Fox Chain O' Lakes is the only body of water in the state, outside of the major river systems, where walleye occur naturally. However, up until recently habitat degradation throughout the years caused their population to decline. Now, due to good environmental management practices by various state and local governmental agencies, as well as increased public awareness, the fish are making a come back. Since 1978, millions of fry and fingerlings have been stocked by Illinois fishery biologists to supplement the once depleted population and their survival rate has been very good. As a result, anglers in the northeastern Illinois area now have the opportunity to catch this prized sport fish in their own back yard, some up to twelve pounds.

Walleye spawn in both the Fox River and Chain O' Lakes proper. The fish will seek out shallow, rocky, gravel areas when water temperatures approach 45 to 47 degrees. Generally, smaller males, called jacks, will invade these areas first. The females will follow, each depositing between 35,000 and 615,000 eggs which will hatch within 18-20 days. Walleye fry, like other predator fish, initially feed on zooplankton or microscopic aquatic invertebrates. As they increase in size, their diet shifts to small insects and the fry of other fish. The forage of adult walleye in the Chain O' Lakes in composed primarily of perch and both white and yellow bass.

Fishing begins when these fish move into the shallows to spawn. Trolling with minnow-jig combinations and small spinning lures are most effective if bumped along the bottom. During the summer months, walleye will gradually move out to depths of 10 to 20 feet to avoid the warm surface water. Fishing declines during this period; however, a few can be taken by trolling bright colored spinning lures or deep diving crank baits. Fishing picks up again when water temperatures begin to drop in the fall, where similar techniques to those used in the spring can put this tasty fish in the frying pan.




## NORTHERN PIKE

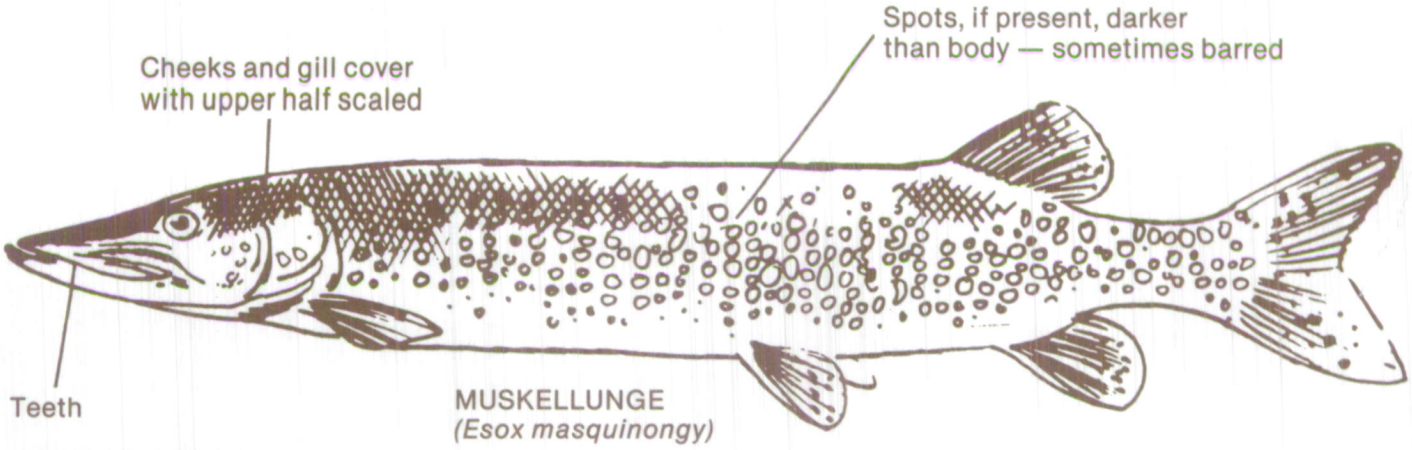
COMMON NAMES:

Common pike, pickerel, great northern pike, northern, jack fish, pike, snake, snake pickerel, jack.

Northern pike, like walleye, experienced a decline in their population. However, recent fish population surveys indicate the northern pike fishing is improving. In 1976 a past state record northern pike was caught out of Lake Marie. The fish weighed 22 pounds, 12 ounces.

Even before the ice goes out, northern pike are migrating up tributary streams or into shallow weedy areas to spawn. The female, usually accompanied by one or two smaller males, will scatter between 2,000 and 600,000 eggs over the vegetation where they will hatch in approximately 12 to 14 days. When the fingerlings reach four inches in size, they feed almost exclusively on other fish.

The northern pike is considered by many as one of the premier sport fish in the upper midwest. Heavy tackle is considered a must when attempting to take this fish, as they are notorious for breaking or cutting line with their needle sharp teeth. During the spring and fall, the fish generally inhabit shallow areas around aquatic vegetation, brush, or snags. Large spinners, crank baits, plugs, and minnows are all effective during these periods. Toward summer the fish seek deeper, cooler water in which cast trolling with large spoons or deep running crank baits generally produces good results. Tip-ups are commonly used to fish through the ice using large minnows.




## MUSKELLUNGE

COMMON NAMES:

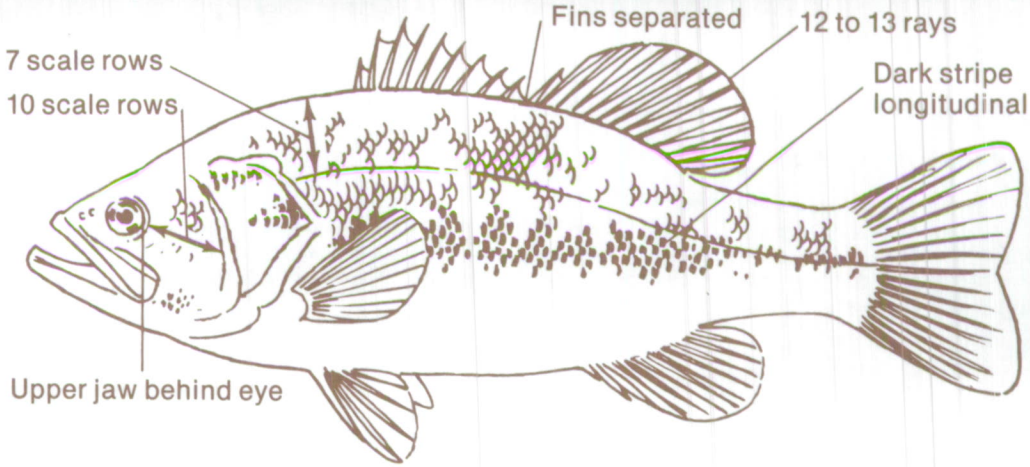
Great Lakes muskellunge, muskie (musky), lunge, maskinonge.

The muskellunge, commonly referred to as a muskie, can be distinguished from the northern pike, by the absence of scales on the lower half of the cheeks and opercles.

Their habits are quite similar to those of northern pike. Large muskie are generally solitary and prefer to inhabit bays and channels where aquatic vegetation or submerged brush and logs are available.

Fingerling introductions of pure muskellunge since 1981 have resulted in the establishment of a trophy fishery. The dedicated angler now has ample opportunity to experience the mystique of this highly prized sport fish.

LARGEMOUTH BASS
*(Micropterus salmoides)*




## LARGEMOUTH BASS

COMMON NAMES:

Largemouth, bass, black bass, bigmouth bass, line side, green bass, lake bass, bayou bass, green trout, Oswego bass, slough bass.

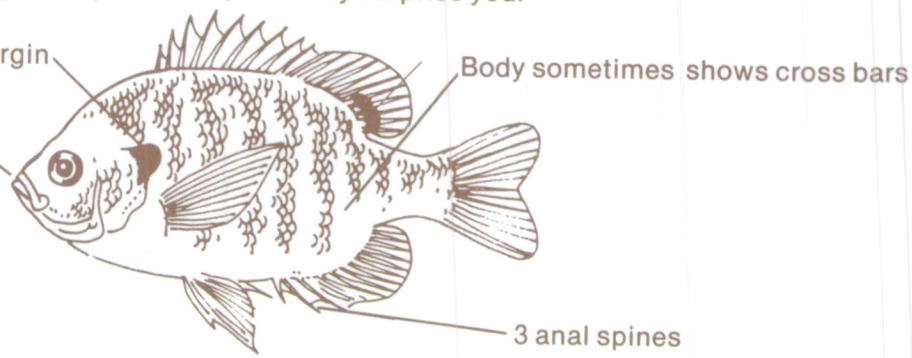
The largemouth bass, classified as a warm-water species, is in the sunfish family which also includes bluegill and crappie. They inhabit relatively shallow areas, and, although they prefer natural cover which may consist of weed beds and submerged brush or logs, they have adapted very well to the artificial habitat the Fox Chain O' Lakes provides. It is not unlikely that you may find a lunker bass lurking in or around channels, piers, rock riprap, or even sea walls.

Largemouth bass are sight feeding predators, and as a result feed almost exclusively on other aquatic organisms. After the fish hatch, the fry are primarily dependent on tiny microscopic organisms for food, collectively known as zooplankton. Once the fish reach fingerling and adult size they feed on insects, crayfish, frogs, and fish, particularly other sunfish. Young bass frequently school-up, which is a behavioral characteristic affording them protection, as well as enhancing their capability to capture prey. Larger fish tend to be more solitary and territorial. In other words, they spend most of their time in one area as long as the food source is adequate.

Fishing for largemouth bass in the Fox Chain O' Lakes is usually most productive from mid-May to early July and again from mid-September to late October when water temperatures range between 55 and 75 degrees. In July and August when water temperatures may exceed 80 degrees, these fish will frequent deeper, cooler waters during the day and move into shallow areas to feed during the early morning and late evening hours.

Largemouth bass are known to take a variety of artificial and natural baits. Surface lures, such as crank and buzz baits are effective in shallow weedy areas, whereas, flashing spoons, spinning lures, and bright colored plastic worms will entice a fish out of deeper, murky water. During the winter when fishing through the ice for bluegill, crappie, or perch using jig-minnow combinations or insect larvae, a bass may surprise you.

BLUEGILL
*(Lepomis macrochirus)*




## BLUEGILL

COMMON NAMES:

Bream, brim, sunfish, sun perch, prairie perch.

Bluegill prefer similar habitat to that of the aforementioned bass, as they will congregate in and around undercut banks, docks, brush piles, and weedy channels.

During the spawning period, usually from May through July when water temperatures reach 60 degrees, bluegill will build colonies of nests in two to five feet of water. These nests may appear as saucer shaped depressions in sandy or hard mud bottom areas. The fish will guard their nests and vigorously ward off any intruders. This is generally the best time to fish for the scrappy fighter, as they are apt to attack any object within range, particularly if it is a free meal.

For great action, an ultra-light spinning rod or fly rod/reel combination offering crickets, grasshoppers, small minnows, red worms, or wet flies are ideal. However, a cane pole and small bobber can be just as thrilling.

In the Fox Chain O' Lakes, more fishermen tackle bluegill through the ice than any other species of fish. Fishing is generally good in the northern lakes, of Channel, Catherine, Marie, as well as Petite.

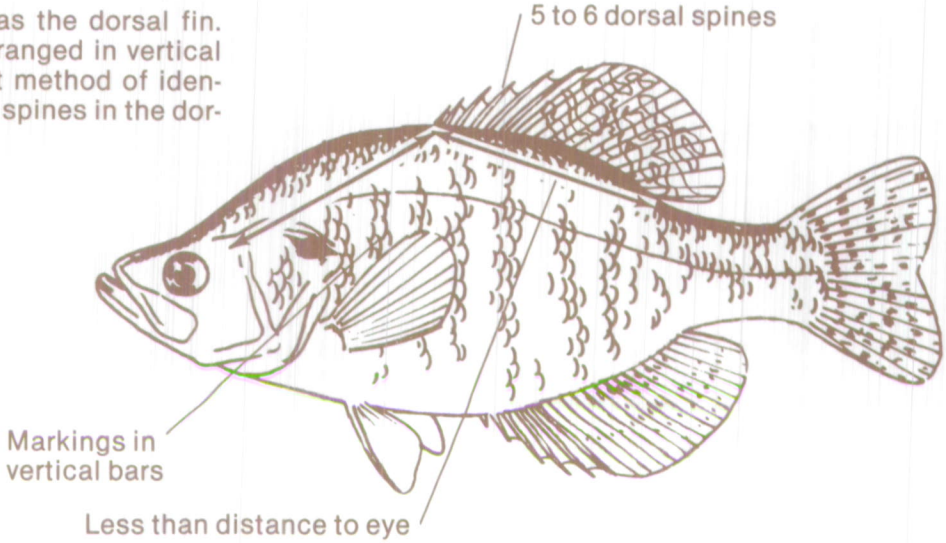
## WHITE CRAPPIE

COMMON NAMES:

Crappie, silver crappie, bachelor, newlight.

DESCRIPTION:

Anal fin is almost the same size as the dorsal fin. Color pattern of dark splotches arranged in vertical bands on a pale background. Best method of identification; white crappie have 5 or 6 spines in the dorsal fin.

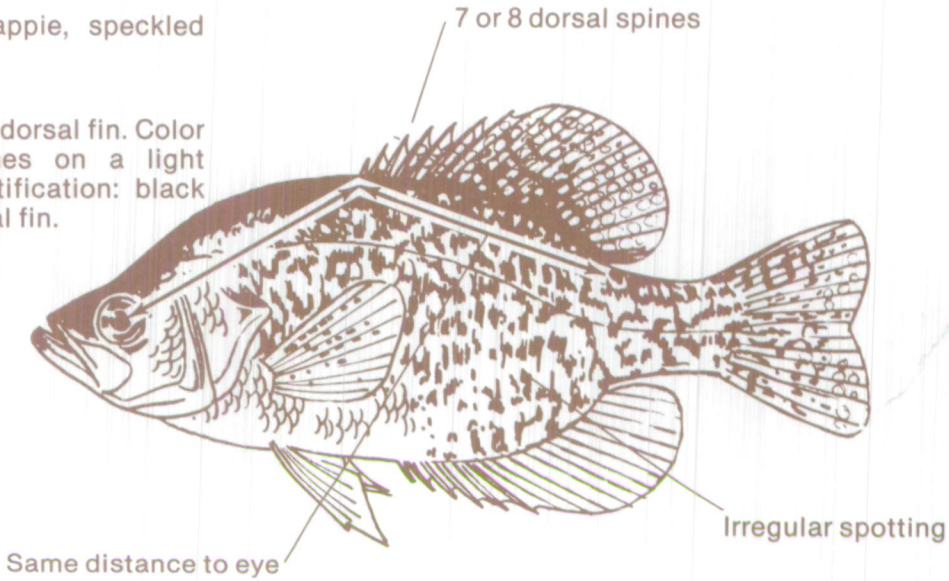



WHITE CRAPPIE
*(Pomoxis annularis)*

## BLACK CRAPPIE

COMMON NAMES:
Calico bass, strawberry bass, crappie, speckled crappie, spotted crappie.

DESCRIPTION:
Anal fin almost the same size as the dorsal fin. Color pattern of irregular dark splotches on a light background. Best method of identification: black crappie has 7 or 8 spines in the dorsal fin.

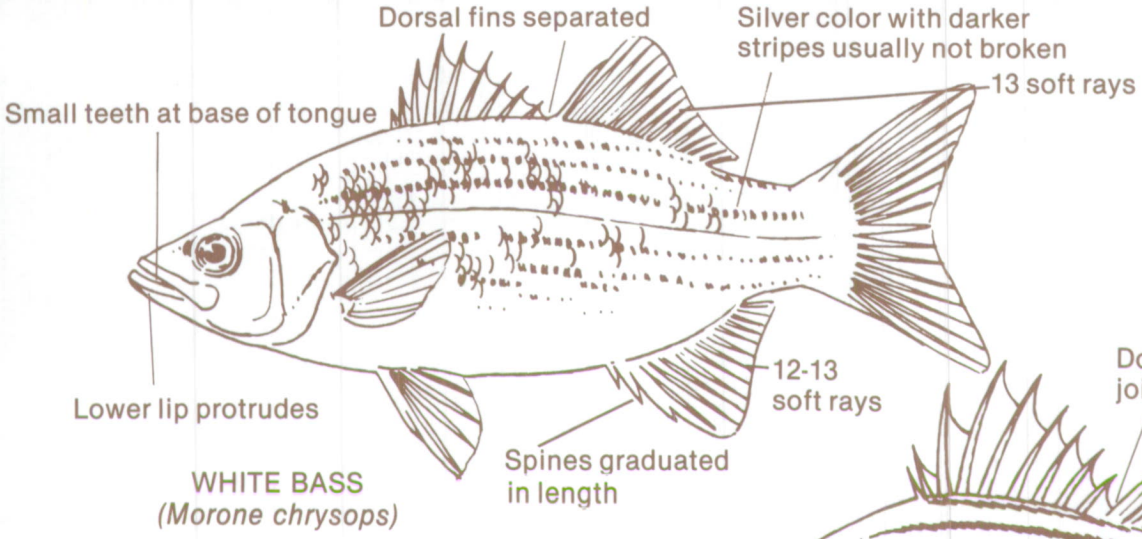


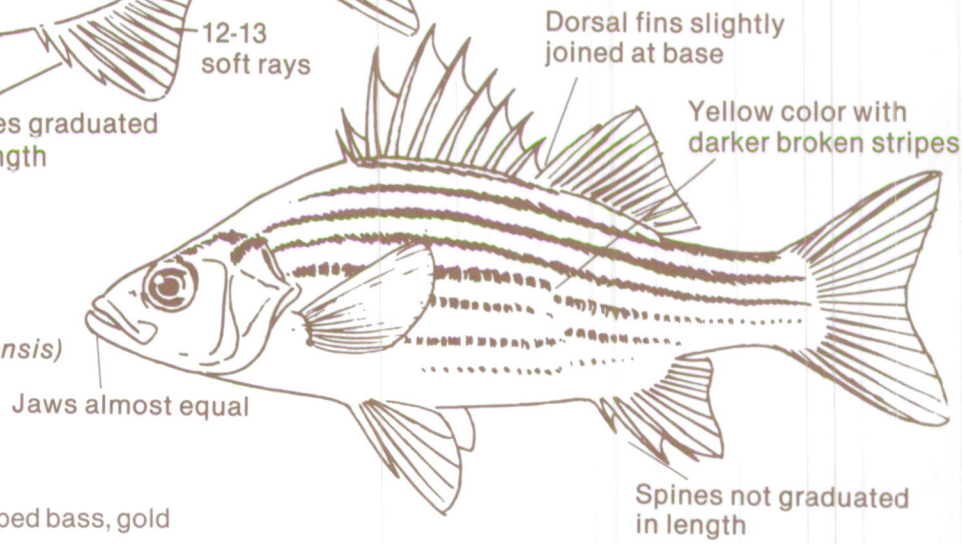

BLACK CRAPPIE
*(Pomoxis nigromaculatus)*

## CRAPPIE

Both species of crappie, black and white, are found in the Fox Chain O' Lakes. White crappie favor areas which maintain a flow of current such as channels and are more tolerant of turbid waters. Black crappie inhabit calmer, clearer waters. Both species prefer deeper areas and will be found suspended amongst submerged stumps, brush piles, and steep dropoffs in 5 to 15 feet of water, particularly during the spring and fall when water temperatures range between 50 and 75 degrees. Like bluegill, crappie are sight feeders and prey upon insects, crustaceans, and small fish.

Still fishing is the most common method used to fish for crappie. A number 6 or 8 hook with a small minnow in combination with a long, stiff fiberglass rod or cane pole will do the job. A bobber is not necessary, however, a ½ to 1 ounce split shot placed six inches above the hook should be used to get the bait down to the desired depth. The bait should be jigged to tease the fish into striking. Ice fishing using the same techniques as with bluegill is also very popular.




## WHITE AND YELLOW BASS

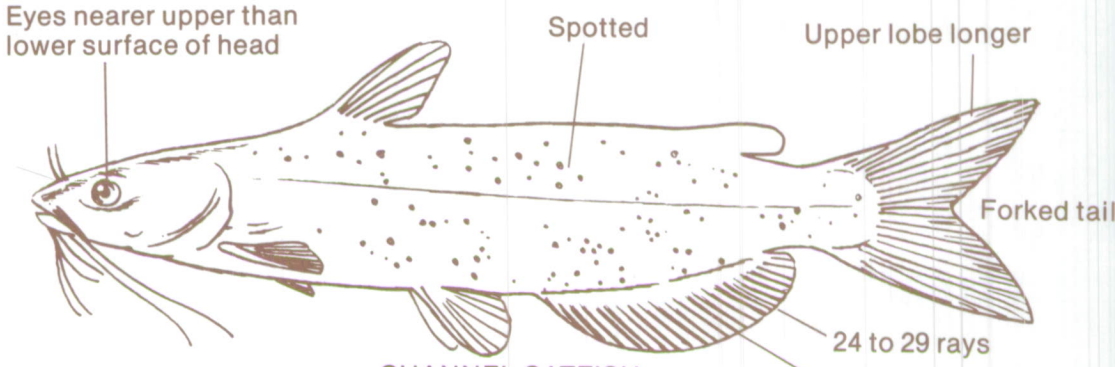
COMMON NAMES:

Streaker, striped bass, barfish, black-striped bass, gold bass, brassy bass, striper.

Both white and yellow bass, true freshwater bass, are found in the Fox Chain O' Lakes. Yellow Bass, which do not attain the size of White Bass, are more abundant. Fishermen will often group these two species together and commonly refer to them as "stripers". However, the true Striped Bass is their larger ocean going cousin which has adapted very well to inland freshwater lakes and rivers, and has been stocked in some of Illinois' larger reservoirs and power plant cooling lakes.

The fish begin their spawning movement up the Fox River and other tributary streams when water temperatures reach 55 degrees. The eggs, as many as a half million from each female, are released along with milt from the male on rocky, gravel shoals in 2 to 5 feet of water. The eggs drift slowly to the bottom where they hatch in 4 to 6 days, depending on water temperature. The fry grow rapidly and as the fish matures it ultimately feeds on other fish.

As with Walleye, White and Yellow Bass fishing ensues with their spawning run. Their is no apparent preferential difference in the types of bait used, as a small minnow or jig cast into the current below rock or wood debris is effective for both species. After spawning the fish will remain schooled-up and return to the lakes at which time a small spinning lure or metalic colored spoon flicked in to the channel areas connecting the lakes brings good results.




CHANNEL CATFISH
*(Ictalurus punctatus)*

## CHANNEL CATFISH

COMMON NAMES:

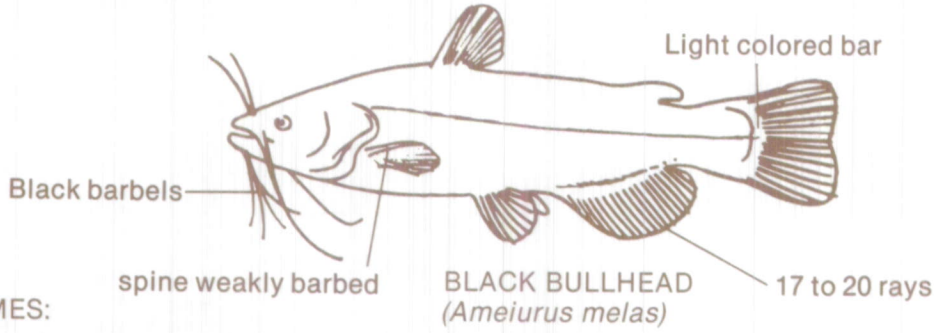
Fiddler, spotted cat, channel cat, catfish, blue cat, white cat, willow cat, Lady cat.

Over the past several years, the channel catfish population in the Fox Chain O' Lakes has increased dramatically. This increase coincides with the demise of the bullhead population. Channel catfish are every fisherman's ace in the hole, because, when other fish are not biting particularly during the hot summer months, you can count on the "cat".

Channel catfish initiate spawning activity when water temperature approaches 75 degrees, usually in late June and July. They spawn in both the Fox Chain O' Lakes and migrate upstream into the Fox

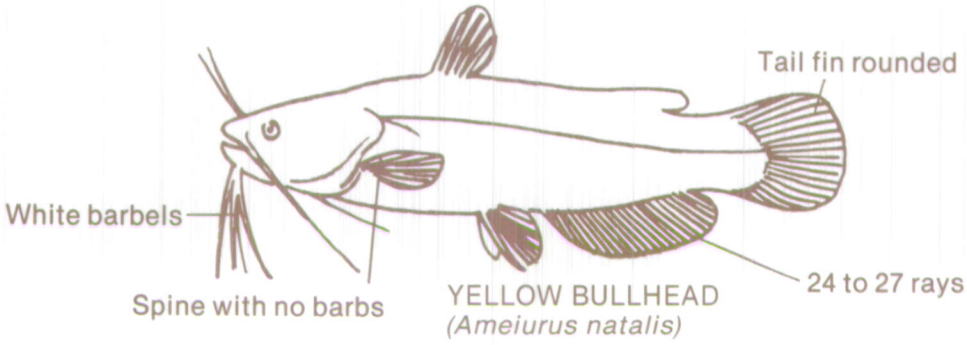
River. Between 2,500 and 70,000 eggs are laid by the female in cavities along the bank, under tree roots, in hollow logs, and even such places as discarded tires, cans, and drain tiles. The male will then guard the area and protect the young after hatch until the schools move out.

Channel catfish are largely dependent on their olfactory sense, that which detects odor, to capture or find food. Catfish are omnivorous in that they will actively seek live food items such as insects, clams, crayfish, or other fish, as well as, scavenge on dead or decaying material. Therefore, the use of any bait which emits a strong odor such as the commercially prepared (stink) baits, cheese, liver chunks, and dough balls are very effective when fishing for channel cat.



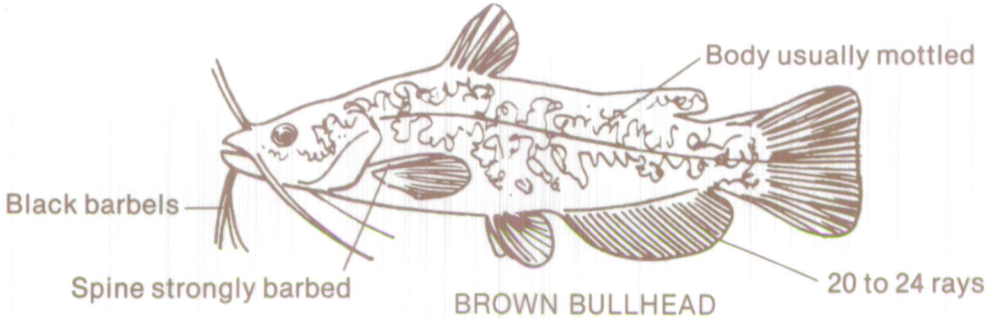

BLACK BULLHEAD
*(Ameiurus melas)*

COMMON NAMES:
Bullhead, yellow-belly cat, catfish, horned pout, stinger, river snapper, black cat.




YELLOW BULLHEAD
*(Ameiurus natalis)*

COMMON NAMES:
Yellow-bellied cat, greaser, yellow catfish, white whiskered bullhead, Mississippi bullhead.




BROWN BULLHEAD
*(Ameiurus nebulosus)*

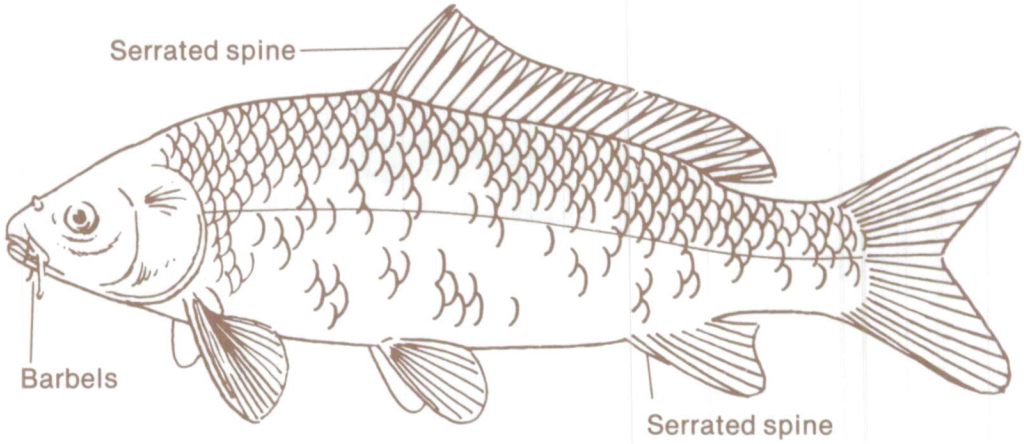
COMMON NAMES:
Speckled bullhead, speckled cat, bullhead, marble cat, mudcat, bullpout, horned pout.

## BULLHEADS

Black, brown, and occasionally yellow bullheads are found in the Fox Chain O' Lakes. Although black bullheads are more abundant than the other two species, their combined numbers are not very great. Outbreaks of bacterial disease decimated their populations during the late 1970's, which allowed for the expansion of the channel catfish population, as they directly compete with each other.

Bullheads prefer to spawn in concealed areas and will construct nests in such places as hollow logs or undercut bank cavities. After the fish hatch, the male will provide parental protection until the young leave the nest.

Many times these fish are inadvertently caught while fishing for other species using light tackles with nightcrawlers. They feed primarily at night in shallow areas. Although their unsightly looks make them somewhat unattractive to sport fishermen, anyone who has tried them knows that their exceptional good taste makes up for their unpalatable appearance.




CARP
*(Cyprinus carpio)*

## CARP

COMMON NAMES:

German carp, European carp, mirror carp, scaleless carp, leather carp, buglemouth, carp.

Probably the most maligned species of fish in Illinois is the carp. They were first introduced into American waters from Europe in the late 1800's and have since spread to become one of the most numerous species of fish in North America. Classified as a commercial species, hundreds of thousands of pounds of carp have been periodically harvested from the Fox Chain O' Lakes throughout the years.

Carp will generally spawn from May through July. They are very prolific in that they are capable of reproducing at a very high rate. A large female may deposit up to a million eggs over aquatic vegetation, submerged brush, or tree roots. It then generally takes 12 days for the eggs to hatch.

Carp are not particular with the food items they select to eat. As a result they are generally caught inadvertently by anglers fishing for bullheads or catfish because baits commonly used for those species are equally effective for carp. Carp can put up a real battle, as an unknowing angler abruptly learns.

If cooked properly, these fish can also be very good eating. Scoring is the most common method of preparing carp for the frying pan or deep fryer. After the fish is filleted and scaled, 1/6 inch vertical cuts are made through the flesh down to the skin. The filet can then be rolled in your favorite batter, ready to fry. This scoring process is popular because it eliminates the problem of bones. Smoking is also another fine method of preparing them.

# ATTENTION!!!

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THESE EXOTICS

## RUDD ALERT!

The rudd is a non-native fish which is sometimes sold as bait in Illinois. Some bait dealers sell rudd as "red shiners". It is illegal to import, sell, or possess live rudd in Illinois. This close relative of the common carp is not allowed in the state because of the damage they may cause by consuming aquatic plants, and hybridizing with native species. Rudd tend to become overabundant in lakes because they reproduce quickly and grow too large to be eaten by most predators.

Rudd look very much like golden shiners, but there are differences between the two. The easiest to see is the fleshy ridge or "keel" along the belly. The keel is covered by scales on the rudd but has no scales on the golden shiner.

If you find rudd in your bait, destroy them. If you see rudd in an Illinois lake or stream, notify the nearest Department of Natural Resources office.

It is a violation of Illinois law to import, possess, or sell live rudd.

## RUSTY CRAYFISH ALERT!

The Rusty Crayfish is expanding its range in Illinois. This aggressive crayfish can interfere with fish spawning, destory aquatic vegetation, and drive out native species of crayfish. It is ILLEGAL to bring live rusty crayfish to Illinois, to sell them, or to use them for bait. Your cooperation is needed to stop the southward advance of the Rusty Cray fish.

The Rusty Crayfish is easy to identify. Look for rusty red tips on the claws with a black band immediately behind the rusty tips. There is also a rusty red spot on each side of the shell above the rear pair of legs. If you find these crayfish in your bait, destroy them.

It is a violation of state law to import, possess, sell or use as bait live Rusty Crayfish within the State of Illinois.

## ZEBRA MUSSEL ALERT!

Clogged power plant, industrial and water supply intake pipes; fouled boat hulls, navigation buoys, beaches and commercial fishing gear; and probably declines in the number of some sport and commercial species; this is the scenario that's likely to occur if the prolific, dime-sized, European Zebra mussel becomes established in the waters of Illinois. Where it has become established, such as in Lakes Erie, Ontario, and St. Clair, economic and ecological damages in the millions of dollars is expected to occur, resulting in greater costs in terms of taxes and recreational expenditures.

While it may be impossible to halt the eventual spread of the zebra mussel, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is seeking the cooperative effort of every Illinois boater or fisherman, who may trailer a boat to and from the Great Lakes, to prevent the accidental introduction of this destructive pest into the Fox Chain O' Lakes and other waters of the State.

For a free copy of the pamphlet entitled *Zebra Mussell Alert and Guide* to Boaters, contact your local Natural Resources office or call 815/675-2319.

Illinois
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Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other non-merit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Ill. 62702-1271; 217/785-0067; TTY 217/782-1975.

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

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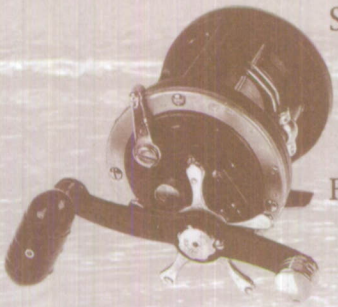

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