

DEER CREEK LAKE

Fayette and Pickaway Counties

LOCATION

Deer Creek Lake is in Pickaway and Fayette Counties, 4 miles south of Mt. Sterling along SR 207.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

Deer Creek Lake was designed and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Dam construction was completed in 1968. Today 1,290 acres of water are impounded behind the Deer Creek Lake dam. The dam retains water from two primary tributaries, Deer Creek and Clark Run, and has a drainage area of about 177,000 acres. Due to the large watershed compared to the size of the lake, Deer Creek Lake experiences water level changes up to 20 feet.

Total area owned by the Army Corps of Engineers at the Deer Creek recreational area is about 7,600 acres. Most of this property is leased to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife and Division of Parks and Recreation for fish and wildlife management and general recreation purposes. Deer Creek Wildlife Area lies generally to the west and north of the lake. Deer Creek State Park lies to the south and east of the lake (see map). The general topography of the area is flat to slightly rolling.

FISHES OF INTEREST TO ANGLERS

Deer Creek Lake has populations of bluegill, largemouth bass, white and black crappie, bluegill, channel catfish, white bass, saugeye, carp and bullheads. Saugeye fingerlings are stocked annually by the Division of Wildlife. Gizzard shad is the main forage species.

METHODS OF FISHING AND BEST FISHING SITES

Deer Creek Lake is a good lake for anglers seeking crappies. Use minnow and jigs in areas with brushy cover during April and May. Redworms and waxworms are used to catch bluegill. For white bass, use spinners in Deer Creek above the lake during May. For channel catfish, use nightcrawlers or cut shad fished on the bottom especially at night during the summer. Seek largemouth bass along deep shorelines with heavy cover.

In 1978, Deer Creek Lake became the first lake in Ohio stocked with saugeye. This successful experiment led to introductions of saugeye at more than 50 lakes statewide. To catch saugeye, try the dam face and other rip-rapped areas in early spring using imitation minnow baits. Also try the tailwater area below the dam in late fall, winter and early spring about one week after a major water release. Use twistertails tipped with minnows or nightcrawlers.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Division of Parks and Recreation operates and maintains a lodge, marina, parking lots, boat ramps, boat docks, campgrounds, a swimming beach, picnic areas, horseback riding, biking and hiking trails. The Division of Wildlife operates and maintains parking lots, shooting range, archery range and public hunting area primarily on the west and north side of the lake.

Note: There are currently no horsepower limits at Deer Creek Lake, however limits and other boating regulations are subject to change. Boaters should contact the ODNR Division of Wildlife for current information.

FISH OHIO

Anglers who catch a big fish should enter their prize in the Fish Ohio angler recognition program. A fish qualifies for an award if it meets the minimum size requirement set for the Fish Ohio program. Applications are available online at FishOhio.org.

FISH MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The ODNR Division of Wildlife's fish management activities include stocking, conducting angler creel surveys, constructing fishing piers, renovating boat ramps and parking areas, and monitoring fish populations with nets, seines, and electrofishing gear. These activities are vital to providing adequate public access and determining the management practices necessary to produce good quality fishing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The nearest district office is Wildlife District One, 1500 Dublin Road, Columbus, Ohio 43215 telephone 614-644-3925. The Division also has a website for information on fishing regulations, tips, maps and other wildlife related information (www.ohiodnr.com). To get other maps or publications call toll free 1-800-WILDLIFE.

TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to control poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.



ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE DISTRICT OFFICES

WILDLIFE CENTRAL OFFICE
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. G
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693
Phone: (614) 265-6300

WILDLIFE DISTRICT ONE
1500 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 644-3925

WILDLIFE DISTRICT TWO
952 Lima Avenue
Findlay, Ohio 45840
Phone: (419) 424-5000

WILDLIFE DISTRICT THREE
912 Portage Lakes Drive
Akron, Ohio 44319
Phone: (330) 644-2293

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FOUR
360 East State Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
Phone: (740) 589-9930

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FIVE
1076 Old Springfield Pike
Xenia, Ohio 45385
Phone: (937) 372-9261

ODNR Division of Wildlife Internet address: wildohio.com
Toll free 1-800-WILDLIFE

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