

## 15 best Indiana panfishing lakes

This information has been shared numerous places but somehow we've missed putting it on our own website. If you've been looking for a place to catch some dinner, our fisheries biologists have compiled a list of the 15 best panfishing lakes throughout Indiana. Enjoy!



### Northern Indiana

#### Sylvan Lake

Sylvan Lake is a 669-acre man made reservoir near Rome City. It is best known for its bluegill fishing with some reaching 9 inches. About one third of the adult bluegill population are 7 inches or larger. The best places to catch bluegill are the Cain Basin at the east end of the lake and along the 8 to 10 foot drop-offs in the western basin. Red-worms, flies, and crickets are the most effective baits.

#### Skinner Lake

Skinner Lake is a 125-acre natural lake near Albion. The lake is known for crappie fishing for both black and white crappies. Most crappies are in the 8 to 9 inch range, with some reaching 16 inches long. Don't expect to catch lots of big crappies, but you can expect to catch plenty that are keeper-size. The best crappie fishing is in May over developing lily pads in the four corners of the lake. Live minnows and small white jigs are the most effective baits.

#### J. C. Murphey Lake

J. C. Murphey Lake is located on Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area in Newton County. Following this winter, there was minimal ice fishing (due to lack of ice) and the spring fishing should be phenomenal especially for bluegills. Bluegill anglers regularly catch limits of eight inch bluegills with some black crappies and some ten inch redear sunfish mixed in. As a reminder J.C. Murphey has a 25 fish per day aggregate panfish limit (bluegill, crappie, sunfish) and a 2 fish per day limit on largemouth bass over 18 inches.

#### Plymouth Chain of Lakes

The Plymouth Chain of lakes include Kreighbaum, Mill Pond, Cook, Holem, Myers, and Lawrence. Bluegill are the most abundant panfish at these lakes. Angler bluegill catches are consistent and have a decent average size larger than seven inches. Redear sunfish, black crappie, and yellow perch vary in abundance by lake but are present in most of the lakes in the chain. These lakes can be good to fish as they are fairly small so an angler can develop a pattern or fish their strength and catch a lot of bluegills.

#### Clear Lake

Clear Lake is an 800-acre in Steuben County. This is a quality bluegill fishery, not quantity. Bluegill harvested average 8.5 inches with fish up to 10.5 inches observed.

#### Shipshewana Lake

Shipshewana Lake is a 200-acre lake in LaGrange County. Bluegill fishing is very good. This

shallow lake is very productive and produces good bluegill year after year. It also has a quality crappie and largemouth bass fishing.

### **Big Long Lake**

Big Long Lake is a 365-acre lake in LaGrange County. It has some of the best bluegill fishing in Northeastern Indiana. Bluegill average 8 inches in length with some bluegill over 10 inches.

## **Central Indiana**

### **Summit Lake**

Summit Lake is an 800-acre lake located in Summit Lake State Park. Summit has good bluegill, redear, crappie, and yellow perch fishing. The average bluegill harvested is nearly 8 inches long.

### **Lake Waveland**

Lake Waveland is a 358-acre lake in Montgomery County. Waveland offers good opportunities for bluegill, redear, and crappie. The redear are some of the biggest I've seen with a number of them between 10 and 11 inches long.

## **Southern Indiana**

### **Ferdinand State Forest Lake**

Ferdinand State Forest Lake is a 42-acre impoundment located in Ferdinand State Forest in Dubois County. It is a trolling motor only lake. Big bluegill and redear sunfish are abundant. Redear reach 10 inches and many are 8.0 inches or larger. Bluegill reach 9 inches and many are 7.0 inches or larger. There is also a 12 to 15 inch slot limit for bass.

### **Springs Valley Lake**

Springs Valley Lake (aka Tucker Lake) is a 127-acre impoundment located in the Hoosier National Forest in Orange County. It is a trolling motor only lake. Clear water makes finding bedding fish easy at this lake. Lake contains good numbers of 8 inch plus bluegill and 9 inch plus redear sunfish.

### **Hardy Lake**

Hardy Lake is a 741-acre impoundment located in Scott County. Outboard motors are allowed. Good numbers of nice bluegill and really big redear sunfish. Also a very good crappie lake with a lot of 9 inch and larger black crappie.

### **Blue Grass Fish and Wildlife Area Pits**

Blue Grass Fish and Wildlife area in Warrick County has many good crappie lakes including Otter pit, Loon Pit, and Bluegrass Pit. Outboards are allowed at all three pits at idle speed only. All lakes are good white crappie lakes. Crappie over 10 inches is common.

### **Patoka Lake**

Patoka Lake is an 8,880-acre lake in Dubois, Orange, and Crawford Counties. It has good crappie fishing with harvested crappie averaging 9 inches with crappie up to 15 inches. The best

crappie fishing occurs in the early spring near King's Bridge boat ramp, Walls boat ramp, and in coves throughout the lake.

### **Dogwood Lake**

Dogwood Lake is a 1,414-acre lake located at Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area in Daviess County. Bluegill and redear harvested average around 8 inches, with bluegill often seen up to 9.5 inches and redear up to 11.5 inches . Crappies are often harvested that are 9.0 inches or longer with some up to 12 inches.