

The First Records of Three Fish Species in Illinois Waters of Lake Michigan: Longear Sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis peltastes*), Black Crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), and the Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

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ABSTRACT

Two individuals of longear sunfish were captured by electro-shocking at Jackson Park Harbor on August 10, 1989. This is the first record of the species in Illinois waters of Lake Michigan. The total lengths and weights of the specimens were 9.7 cm (19 g) and 10.1 cm (13 g). Another longear sunfish was captured at Belmont Harbor on August 21, 1989. The northern subspecies, *Lepomis megalotis peltastes*, was known previously only from Kankakee, Will, Grundy, and Iroquois counties and was considered rare in these counties (Smith, 1979). None of the counties border Lake Michigan. The southern subspecies, *Lepomis megalotis megalotis*, occurs in the southern and central portions of Illinois.

The species was believed to have been extirpated in the Illinois portion of the Lake Michigan drainage basin (Becker, 1976), since the only previous specimen (INHS 84578) in this portion of the drainage was captured on June, 1880 in the Calumet River, south of Chicago (Smith, 1979). The longear sunfish has been found in the Milwaukee and Green Bay areas but not in Lake Michigan (Becker, 1976). In Wisconsin, the longear sunfish is considered a threatened species, and, while the longear sunfish is common in Michigan and Indiana (Becker, 1976), there are no reports of the species captured along the Lake Michigan coasts of these states (Becker, 1976).

A specimen of the black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*) was captured by electro-shocking in Belmont Harbor in Chicago, Illinois on August 21, 1989

and is the first record for Illinois waters of Lake Michigan. The total length of the fish was 16.2 cm and it weighed 65.0 g. There are some records (pre-1908) of black crappie occurring south of Chicago in the Lake Michigan drainage, but none has been reported from the Illinois waters of Lake Michigan (Smith, 1979). The black crappie occurs throughout Illinois but is less common than the white crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*). The only specimens of black crappies previously collected in Lake Michigan were captured in Green Bay in Wisconsin (Becker, 1976).

This is the first record of the channel catfish in Illinois waters of Lake Michigan. The fish was caught by hook and line at Diversey Harbor in Chicago, Illinois, on August 18, 1989. The total length of the fish was 41.5 cm and it weighed 538 g. The channel catfish occurs throughout Illinois, but there are few records of this species in northeastern Illinois (Smith, 1979). There are no reports of the species in the Illinois portion of the Lake Michigan basin (Becker, 1976; Smith 1979). Channel catfish occur in the Wisconsin and Indiana portions of the drainage basin but the only other specimens from Lake Michigan were captured in the southwestern portion of Green Bay in Wisconsin (Becker, 1976).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Dr. Lawrence Page for confirming the identification of the specimens; they now reside in the fish collection at the Illinois Natural History Survey at Champaign, Illinois. They are catalogued as follows: longear sunfish from Jackson Park (INHS 65045), black crappie (INHS 65044), and channel catfish (INHS 65043). The collection of the specimens was part of a project sponsored by the Illinois Department of Conservation, F-93-R.

LITERATURE CITED

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