

# Carlyle Lake Hunting & Fishing Guide



US Army Corps of Engineers

St. Louis District

Partners in Progress



Illustration by Bob Hammel

**Carlyle Lake** is the largest man-made lake within Illinois with more than 26,000 acres of water and 11,000 acres of land. The lake is located 50 miles due east of St. Louis, Missouri, providing ample opportunity to the outdoor enthusiast. Carlyle Lake is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Together these two agencies manage all lands and water for the benefit of fish and wildlife. This guide is intended to provide a general description of opportunities available to the outdoor enthusiast visiting Carlyle Lake.



## HUNTING/TRAPPING OPPORTUNITIES

The areas on and around Carlyle Lake are home to an abundance of wildlife. As part of the wildlife management program, food plots of sunflowers, corn, beans, winter wheat, clover, milo, and millet are planted at several locations around the lake to provide quality wildlife habitat. Other land management techniques such as prescribed burning, prairie restoration, wetland restoration, and reforestation provide benefits to a wide variety of wildlife populations.

Carlyle Lake is known as one of the top waterfowl hunting areas in the state and is a mid-migrational resting area for waterfowl and

other migrating birds. The Corps of Engineers manages four wetland restoration areas around the lake. These include Boulder Flats, Saddle Dam III, Grasher Creek, and James Hawn.

The Boulder Flats area consists of Whitetail, Wood Duck, North Fork East, and North Fork West. Habitat management consists of planting crops and promoting the growth of natural wetland vegetation (moist soil management). The manipulation of water within levees play an important part in management of the area.

Saddle Dam III and Grasher Creek have natural drainage for moist soil management. Saddle Dam III is also home of a duck blind built for sportsmen with disabilities.

The James Hawn Area provides approximately 100 acres of public hunting, including 25 acres of impoundments. Within these impoundments are six duck hunting blinds set up for first come first serve use.

The lake also provides year-round opportunities to hunt quality white-tail deer, turkey, rabbits, squirrels, doves, bobwhite quail, and pheasants.

Trapping is permitted on public lands except where posted. Trapping helps manage population densities, prevents disease, and maintains healthy populations. Trapping is allowed within the Carlyle Lake Wildlife Management Area sub-impoundments only after the waterfowl season and requires a permit from the IDNR site manager.

## FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for fishing have dramatically improved since the construction of the lake. Stocking and habitat improvement programs are in place to increase fish populations and provide a diversity of species. A biological monitoring program provides a means of checking fish population, health, and determining fish management needs.

Carlyle Lake fishing prospects include white bass, bluegill, crappie, largemouth bass, channel catfish, carp, buffalo, freshwater drum, flathead catfish, walleye, sauger, and hybrid striped bass. Crappie and largemouth bass are mostly caught during late April through June (during spawning) and again in late September through October. Flooded vegetation, stumps, fallen trees, and beaver huts in coves are prime spots to probe. During hot summer days white bass and channel catfish dominate catches. They can be found by fishing numerous stumps, shallow flats, or watching shad “busting” the water’s surface to escape predation. As the water cools in the fall, rip rap along shorelines and breakwaters become a prime spot to catch white bass and crappie. If the wind has blown into a shoreline for a day or two, this will produce the best fall fishing. If you are looking for a good spot to bank fish, you can find fishing piers at Lakeview Access and Keyesport Boat Ramp.

The tailwater or spillway is also a great place to catch a wide variety of species year-round. When fish aren’t biting in the lake, they always bite here.

A display in the Visitor’s Center provides a guide, for first time visitors and novice anglers, to the most seasonally available species.

Length and daily creel limits follow statewide regulations except as follows:

SPECIES	MINIMUM LENGTH LIMIT	DAILY REEL LIMIT
<b>Largemouth bass</b>	14 inches	6 fish
<b>Walleye &amp; Sauger</b>	14 inches	6 fish in combination
<b>White &amp; black crappie</b>	10 inches	10 fish in combination

These limits only apply in the lake (not the tailwater) and tributary streams up to the Corps of Engineers project boundaries, except the walleye and sauger limit which applies to the tailwater and the entire Kaskaskia basin.

Cast netting is prohibited in spillway between main dam and Illinois Route 50 bridge.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

Hunting is permitted on all public land except where posted and within 100 yards of developed recreation areas or residence. Below is a list of only a few of the regulations which govern hunting and/or fishing at Carlyle Lake. It would be wise to become familiar with the Code of Federal Regulations (Title 36), the State of Illinois Administrative Orders (Article 53), and other hunting regulations each year before entering the field. Copies of each are available from the Carlyle Lake Project Office or the Eldon Hazlet State Park Office.

- It is unlawful to possess or consume alcoholic beverages, including beer and wine while hunting.*
- It is unlawful to operate any type of vehicle off designated roadways on public lands.*
- No hunting is allowed within 100 yards of developed recreation areas or residences.*
- Daily shooting hours for waterfowl will be from legal opening time until 1:00pm.*
- Daily shooting hours for doves will be from 12:00 noon until sunset unless otherwise marked.*
- Migratory bird hunters (Dove, Waterfowl) must sign in/out and record all harvest at the nearest harvest box.*
- Dumping of animal/fish carcasses is not permitted.*
- Cast netting prohibited in spillway between main dam and IL Route 50 bridge.*
- Please obtain permission from adjacent private landowners prior to retrieving downed game or hunting private property.*
- Portable tree stands or ladder stands are permitted but must be removed after each days hunt. Permanent tree stands will be treated as unauthorized structures, which are prohibited under Title 36, CFR 327.20 and are subject to removal.*
- Screw-in steps, spikes, or nails are prohibited.*
- Pack it in – Pack it out. (water bottles, scent bottles, shotgun hulls, etc.)*
- Call 911 to report all game violations or illegal activities.*

## NO HUNTING ZONES

Hunting is prohibited within 100 yards of a developed recreation area, or residence.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Carlyle Lake offers several hunting/fishing opportunities for sportsmen with disabilities. Waterfowl blinds are available for use at the Maple Grove Access and the Saddle Dam III Wetland Complex. Reservations can be made during the waterfowl season by calling the Carlyle Lake Project Office. Also, a special dove hunt for disabled sportsmen is set up each September 1, 2 at the Steins Access Field.

Lakeview Access has a fishing pier designed for sportsmen with disabilities. This pier is open year round and provides great fishing opportunities. Each year brush piles are placed to improved habitat near the pier.



## ACCESS INFORMATION

Access lots around the lake provide public parking to hunting and fishing areas. Lots include:

- Hitogi (IDNR)\*
- Parking Lot #1 (IDNR)
- Parking Lot #2 (IDNR)
- Parking Lot #3 (IDNR)
- Tamalco\*
- Bobwhite
- Horseshoe Island\*
- Keyesport\*
- Lakeside
- Muskrat Flats
- North Allen Branch
- Allen Branch\*
- Apache\*
- Peppenhurst\*
- James Hawn
- Dam West\*
- General Dean\*
- City Ramp\*
- Old River Channel
- Lakeview
- Dam East\*
- Carrigan
- Deer Run\*
- Brewster Creek
- Steins
- Mourning Dove
- Massasauga
- Prairie View
- Elmwood
- Grasher Creek
- Maple Grove
- Coles Creek\*
- Lotus
- Boulder\*
- Catfish Cove
- Whitetail
- Wood Duck\*
- Pin Oak
- Ole Wood Duck
- North Fork\*
- North Fork West
- Patoka\*
- Cox Bridge\*
- Cox Farm
- Eckert’s Farm
- Eckert’s Woods
- Turkey Run
- East Fork Mgmt. Unit (IDNR)

\* = Boat ramp

*These lots provide access to public lands and water.*

## WILDLIFE VIEWING

Carlyle Lake is a mid-migrational resting area for waterfowl and other migrating birds, thus a variety of wildlife can be seen throughout the year. For hunter and naturalists, wildlife hunting and/or viewing opportunities exist in every part of the project. Watchable wildlife towers are located at Tamalco, Eldon Hazlet State Park, and Whitetail Parking Lot #1.

The Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, an Illinois endangered species, also calls Carlyle Lake home. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are conducting ongoing studies to learn more fully the habits, range, and habitat necessary to sustain this protected species. The shy, retreating nature of this snake makes it hard to find. Should you come upon a snake, please do not kill or disturb it, but report it to the park staff. Your cooperation is vital if we are to learn about this state endangered species.



## STATE MANAGED AREAS

State managed areas at Carlyle Lake include Eldon Hazlet State Park, South Shore State Park, and Carlyle Lake Wildlife Management Area. The rest of the areas around the lake are managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



## ELDON HAZLET STATE PARK

Eldon Hazlet State Park is a 3,000 acre park on the west shore of Carlyle Lake. The site is leased by the Department of Natural Resources from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The park has more than 300 acres designated as public hunting areas, including a controlled pheasant hunt, fields designated for dove hunting and a large area north of Allen Branch for upland game, archery deer hunting, and waterfowl hunting. For information on hunting Eldon Hazlet State Park, contact the office at (618) 594-3015.

## SOUTH SHORE STATE PARK

South Shore State Park is a 3-mile long, 300 plus acre park located on Carlyle Lake’s southeast side, approximately 3 miles east of the City of Carlyle on Route 50. The park provides recreational opportunities, including a small boat access, woodlands for archery deer hunting, as well as outstanding bank fishing opportunities. Observing wildlife, especially white-tailed deer and turkey, is another popular activity. For information on hunting South Shore State Park call Eldon Hazlet Site Office at 618-594-3015.



## CARLYLE LAKE STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA

The State Fish and Wildlife Area is at the northern end of Carlyle Lake and is leased by the Department of Natural Resources from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a variety of habitat management measures aimed at increasing food, shelter, and nesting areas for numerous wildlife species. The State Fish and Wildlife Area is blessed with habitat diversity: approximately 2,000 acres of woodland, 5,800 acres of open water and wetlands, 200 acres of grassland, and 1,500 acres of cropland planted for food and cover. The area is divided by the following management areas: Westside Management Area, Eastside Management Area, Flooded Dead Timber Area, and Open Water Area. Sub-impoundments 1, 2, 3, and 4 are part of the Westside Management Area and are managed for waterfowl. For information on hunting Carlyle Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, contact the office at (618) 425-3533.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### FOR EMERGENCIES DIAL 911

#### Carlyle Lake/Kaskaskia Navigation Project

801 Lake Road  
Carlyle, IL 62231  
(618) 594-2484

#### Carlyle Lake Visitor Center

(618) 594-LAKE (5253)

#### Eldon Hazlet State Park

20100 Hazlet Park Road  
Carlyle, IL 62231  
(618) 594-3015  
Fisheries:  
(618) 594-3627

#### Clinton County Sheriff’s Office

415 Franklin Street  
Carlyle, IL 62231  
(618) 594-4555

#### IDNR Region IV Office

4521 Alton Commerce Pkwy  
Alton, IL 62002  
(618) 462-1181

#### IDNR Region V Office

11731 State Highway 37  
Benton, IL 62812  
(618) 435-8138

#### Carlyle Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area

R.R. #2 Box 233  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
(618) 425-3533

#### Wildlife Resources (IDNR)

129 North Kennedy Blvd.  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
(618) 283-3070

*Call (618) 594-4637 for a 24-hour recorded message giving camping, hunting, fishing, and weather conditions.*

**T.I.P.**  
**TARGET ILLINOIS POACHERS**  
**REPORT VIOLATIONS TO:**  
1-877-2DNRLAW  
(236-7529)  
*Operates 24 hrs./day, 7 days/week*





Carlyle Lake Access Directory

- A

Hitogi Boat Access (IDNR)
- B

Parking Lot #1 Access (IDNR)
- C

Parking Lot #2 Access (IDNR)
- D

Parking Lot #3 Access (IDNR)
- E

Tamalco Boat Access
- F

Bobwhite Access
- G

Horseshoe Island Boat Access
- H

Keyesport Boat Access
- I

Lakeside Access
- J

Muskrat Flats Access
- K

North Allen Branch Access
- L

Allen Branch Boat Access (IDNR)
- M

Apache Boat Access (IDNR)
- N

Peppenhorst Branch Boat Access (IDNR)
- O

James W. Hawn Access
- P

Dam West Boat Access
- Q

City of Carlyle Boat Access (Carlyle)
- R

General Dean Bridge Boat Access
- S

Lakeview Access
- T

Old River Channel Access
- U

Dam East Boat Access
- V

Carrigan Access
- W

Deer Run Boat Access
- X

Steins Access
- Y

Mourning Dove Access
- Z

Massasauga Access
- AA

Prairie View Access
- BB

Elmwood Access
- CC

Grasher Creek Access
- DD

Turkey Run Access
- EE

Maple Grove Access
- FF

Coles Creek Boat Access
- GG

Lotus Access
- HH

Brewster Creek Access
- II

Boulder Boat Access
- JJ

Carlfish Cove Access
- KK

Whitetail Access
- LL

Wood Duck Boat Access
- MM

Pin Oak Access
- NN

Ole Wood Duck
- OO

East Fork Mgmt. Unit Access (IDNR)
- PP

North Fork Boat Access
- QQ

North Fork-East Access
- RR

North Fork-West Access
- SS

Patoka Boat Access
- TT

Cox Bridge Boat Access (IDNR)
- UU

Cox's Farm Access (IDNR)
- VV

Eckert's Farm Access (IDNR)
- WW

Eckert's Woods Access (IDNR)

- 

Handicap Accessible
- 

Marina
- 

View Tower
- 

Day Navigation Aids
- 

Lake Access Parking Lots
- 

Boat Access

