

Compatibility Determination

Station Name: Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge, Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges

Date Established: May 9, 1973

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS), was amended to include Meredosia Refuge under the Nationally Significant Wetlands Target. Formerly, Meredosia Refuge was listed as a Migratory Bird Target.

Purpose(s) for Which Established: The primary purpose for Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge is "for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." Secondary objectives are to protect, restore, and manage the backwaters, bottomland forest, and floodplain wetlands for other migratory birds and resident wildlife.

Applicable Laws, Regulations and Policies: From February 16 through October 15 annually, the Refuge is open for sport fishing from boats and from the bank. From October 16 through February 15, fishing on the Refuge is permitted on Meredosia Island south of Carver Lake by foot access only. Decurrent false aster populations on Meredosia Lake will be identified, and public access in these areas will be prohibited.

Species allowed to be taken and the permitted methods of taking will be consistent with state regulations. Fishing is allowed during daylight hours only.

Description of Proposed Use:

To provide public sport fishing opportunities on Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge.

From February 16 through October 15, all waters of the Refuge are open for fishing from boat, and from the bank.

From October 16 through February 15, fishing is permitted south of Carver Lake by pedestrian access only, to protect sensitive areas used by waterfowl and eagle sensitive areas.

Species allowed to be taken and the permitted methods of taking are the same as current state regulations allow. Enforcement activities on the lake are performed by the State of Illinois.

Bank fishing activities will be regulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and monitored during routine visits to the Refuge. Fishing use will be continued indefinitely.

This Sport Fishing Plan is an integral part of an initiative to enhance public use opportunities on the Refuge. Few wild areas exist for public use in central Illinois, and nearly 200,000 people live within 60 miles of the Refuge. Public recreational use and environmental education opportunities will be improved with several developments including: boat ramp, visitor contact area, maintenance facilities, information kiosk, wheelchair accessible interpretive nature trail, and wildlife observation platforms. This project will promote community stewardship of our public lands, increase public use opportunities in the area, and heighten public awareness of our natural resources.

Sport fishing activities will not conflict with other Refuge goals. It is expected to enhance Service initiatives on and in the vicinity of Meredosia Refuge.

Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters or Interests:

Controlled access and seasonal restrictions will limit human disturbance of wildlife.

Litter, resulting from public use, will be collected periodically by personnel and volunteers. Educational signs and trash receptacles will be strategically placed.

The gradual (0 to 2 %) slope along the edge of Meredosia Lake and the alluvial silt/clay soil along the shoreline are two factors that will limit the amount of soil erosion due to bank fishing, although some erosion may occur. To help counterbalance this impact, trails will be monitored annually and maintained as needed. Pedestrians will be encouraged to stay on the trails to reduce excess damage to surrounding natural vegetation.

The shallow condition of Meredosia Lake is not conducive to high boating speeds. Damage from boat generated waves and boat access is not expected.

Bass, black crappie, bluegill, carp, bullhead, and catfish are the most commonly fished species in Meredosia Lake. These river-adapted species often use backwater habitat and move into the area from the Illinois River, restocking the lake during periods of flood. Therefore, sport fish species often found in the Illinois River and connected backwaters will not be substantially affected by bank or boat fishing from bank and boat fishing on the Refuge. The Illinois Department of Conservation periodically monitors fish populations in Meredosia Lake.

Sport fishing would not adversely affect the cultural resources surrounding Meredosia Lake, if public use is encouraged away from significant sites. The only site archaeologists felt "significant" is along the shore of the Illinois River, along the north-west boundary of the Refuge, where access would be limited anyway.

Determination:

This use is compatible ☒ This use is not compatible ☐

The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:

1. Controlled access and seasonal stipulations.
2. Litter collection, trash receptacles, and education.
3. Trail maintenance.

Justification:

Incompliance with the Refuge Recreation Act.

Project Leader:

Andrew G. French
Andrew French, Refuge Manager

03-12-93
Date

Review and Concurrence:

Matthew A. Henselton
Wildlife Associate Manager 2

3.31.93
Date

Susan Henselton
ARD Refuges and Wildlife

5/21/93
Date