Managing a Quality Fish Pond

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Successful Pond Management

Set your GOAL

- The GOOD fishing pond
- TROPHY fish ponds
- Single Species Pond
- Pond For PROFIT
- Property VALUE Pond
Typical Stocking Strategy For Small Ponds

- Bluegill/ Red ear
- Largemouth Bass
- Channel Catfish
A balanced pond fishery can be established with the initial stocking. *Maintaining* that balance requires the pond owner to *manage* the harvest.

50 Bass and 500 Bream per Acre

At least 100:400 red ear to bluegill. (200 to 300 OK)
Red Ear Sunfish (Shell Cracker)

- Eats snails and crustaceans
- Helps control parasites
Largemouth Bass

50/Acre for normal fishing pressure
100/Acre for heavy fishing pressure
Bream Mortality

- Because of high reproductive rate, catch bream to help Bass keep pond in balance

- **Throw no bream back**

- Catch 100 to 150 pounds per acre per year in fertilized ponds
Bluegill Sunfish in Good Condition

- Deep Body
- Eye small
- Head proportionate
Managing Largemouth Bass for Good Fishing

- Do not harvest bass for two years after initial stocking (spawn at 10 in)
- Keep some of the bass caught May or later in second year
- Remove no more than 20 bass per surface acre each year (after the first two years) (25 to 30 pounds/A/yr)
- Be conservative, use judgement
## Relative Weights Trophy Bass

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length in inches</th>
<th>Pounds per fish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **18**           | **3.8**         | 4 pound BASS in about 3 years
| 20               | 5.4             |
| 22               | 7.4             | 10 pound BASS in about 5 years? |
| 24               | 9.7             |
| 32 (RARE!!!)     | 22 (12+ years)  |
Trophy Forage

- Begin with bream base
  - 500 to 1,000 per acre. Mix redear and bluegill.

- Watch bass condition before stocking other species as forage
  - Want 1+ Relative Weight
  - Start with Threadfin Shad at 600-1,000/A
Single Species Ponds

- All catfish
  - Channel catfish
  - Blue catfish
  - Bullheads

- All Bream
  - Bluegill
  - Hybrid bream
Channel Catfish

- 500 to 1,000 per acre
- Feed 5 to 7 days per week
- Catch most out before 2 years have passed
- Restock as needed

- For catfish lovers or semi-commercial
Common Bullheads of Georgia

Brown or Speckled Bullhead

Yellow Bullhead or Buttercat
Bluegill

- Stock 500 per acre as 1 to 2 inch or 10 pairs of adults per acre
- Lime and Fertilize or feed regularly
- Catch as many as possible up to about 300 pounds per acre
- Begin fishing three to six months after stocking fingerlings
- First year keep all catchable fish
One way to clean bream

Enjoy your fish by removing all bream you catch and eating or sharing the harvest.
Bluegill and Green Sunfish characteristics in a Hybrid

Yellow on gill cover
Bands across body
Large mouth
Yellow fringe on fins
Fee Fishing - Old, but Reliable

Stocking 60,000 lbs. of Farm Raised Catfish A Year

05/31/2008

04/26/2008
Property Value Ponds

- Water is attractive (used for marketing)
- Ponds are useful
- Water provides separation

- “Six ponds will dot the landscape of The Bridges, a residential development underway…”
A view of the water...
Sediment and Settling – plan ahead

Settling basin design and Finished Pond
Stocking Wildlife or Property Value Ponds or Sediment Ponds

- Fish to eat mosquitoes
  - Bream (with bass) – 500/50 per Acre
  - Optional: Mosquitofish – 1 pound per acre

- Fish to eat aquatic plants
  - Sterile grass carp (Not some wildlife ponds) – 5 per acre
  - Restock every six (6) years
Wildlife and Fish

- Need open water that is >4 ft deep
- Access to pond edge
- Fishing pier or boat access
- Pond productivity may be low
What is your type of Quality Pond?

- Each owner has a different goal
- Tailor management for each set of goals