

## 2013 State Updates

### **Alabama**

#### *State lakes*

There are 23 state lakes (20 sites) in Alabama. Jack Turner, the state lakes supervisor, reported that usage has declined about 25% in his tenure, most of this in the last 7 or 8 years. The most common problem that affects angling success in many of the lakes is bass-crowding. Not only are bass growth rates low as a result, but recruitment of bluegill and crappie are usually low in these systems.

Currently, about 4 of our lakes are either under renovation or have recently been renovated and about to reopen. Many of our other lakes could certainly use renovating but have not been in a while simply due to old drainage structures and/or negative response from the lake manager that operates the lake.

A committee of district biologists was formed to begin discussing changes in the state lakes program. A decision-making model is being put together in combination with angler surveys to help provide insight.

Bass were aged in many of our state lakes this past spring. This data revealed that there is a trend for our lakes to become age-limited. In other words, older bass seem to be leaving the system faster than we thought and this will impact our ability to manage for quality and trophy bass if we decide to do so. At present, we are looking at why these older fish are not there.

#### *Pond Program*

The pond assistance program hasn't changed much. We basically help pond owners any way we can including offering a site visit if it is deemed valuable by the biologist. Our agency terminated the pond stocking program several years ago. We have seen a general trend over the last couple of years of fewer ponds being built. As a result of the dry summers, existing ponds have been very low. Maintaining good, productive fish populations has been challenging. We have been working on a pond management video for the last 4 years. This will be a very comprehensive series of video clips (YouTube) that a pond owner can access either on our website or from a data DVD that can be played on a computer. This project has grown in to a huge nightmare for our I and E section. At present, filming is complete, but the format is still being designed. Completion date may be sometime in April.

### **Arkansas**

#### *District 1 – Northwest Arkansas*

District 1 Biologists used tandem baited hoop nets to sample catfish in Bob Kidd Lake and Lake Elmdale in 2012. Three hoop nets were tied together and each net was baited with 8 pounds of cheese/soybean logs. The nets were set for 3 days to allow catfish to find the bait and get caught in the nets. Ten hoop

net series (30 nets total) were set on each lake. Five channel catfish at Bob Kidd Lake and 5 channel catfish at Lake Elmdale (0.5 channel catfish per hoop net series) were collected. These low catch rates may be explained by a variety of factors listed below:

1. Channel catfish populations on Bob Kidd and Elmdale lakes are very small
2. Current catfish stocking rates are too low
3. High exploitation; catchable catfish are harvested as a put and take fishery and very few survive past one year.

The AGFC stocks 750 catchable (13 inch) channel catfish in Bob Kidd and 375 catchable catfish in Lake Elmdale every year. The District Biologists have decided to increase stockings of yearling fish to improve the catfish population at each lake. They plan on stocking the catchable catfish next year and stock an additional 6,000 yearling (8 inch) catfish at Bob Kidd (30 per acre) and 3,000 yearlings at Lake Elmdale (20 per acre). The stockings will be evaluated through hoop netting, creel surveys and track growth of the stocked fish by using fin clips.

The District Biologists did find that the hoop nets are very efficient at capturing redear sunfish. On Bob Kidd Lake 774 redear were collected in 10 net nights (77.4 per hoop net night). Several redear were 11-12 inches long and over 1 pound.

The effectiveness of trap nets and hoop nets at catching crappie and redear sunfish was evaluated in fall 2012 on Bob Kidd Lake. Five trap nets and 5 tandem hoop nets (15 nets total) were set for 24 and 72 hours. Both hoop net sets captured many more redear than did trap nets. In fact, the 72 hour hoop net sets captured 7 times the number of redear sunfish as did the trap nets. Hoop nets were also more effective at catching crappie than the trap nets, but at a lower rate. Hoop nets caught 2 times the number crappie than did trap nets. These same nets will be evaluated next year to determine if we need to be using hoop nets to get better samples of redear sunfish and crappie populations on small impoundments.

#### *District 9 – West Central Arkansas*

The effects of various management practices (conducted from 1992 through 2012) on the largemouth bass (*Micropterus Salmoides*; LMB) population in Lake Jack Nolen (LJN) was evaluated in 2012. Catch data from shoreline seining and catch/age data from spring electrofishing were examined to determine the effects of spring fertilizations, fall drawdowns, and selective kills on largemouth spawning success and recruitment. Relative Weight data was examined to determine if supplemental stocking of predators negatively affected the LMB population. Catch and growth data taken before and after angling regulation changes (removal of 381-mm minimum length limit (MLL) and reduction in the creel limit (from 10 to 6) were examined to determine changes in population size structure and growth rates. Spring fertilizations did not affect LMB spawning success (young-of-the-year = YOY), recruitment, or relative weights (t-test;  $P > 0.05$  for all three comparisons); however, the data set was small, variable, and potentially confounded by many external factors. Spawning success increased dramatically the spring following a fall drawdown (following drawdown CPUE = 17 YOY per seine haul; No drawdown

CPUE = 3 YOY per seine haul). Largemouth bass YOY produced the spring following a fall drawdown had higher than average year class strength; however, YOY produced the spring prior to the fall drawdown had lower than average year class strength. Supplemental stockings of predatory fish appeared to have negative effects on LMB relative weights. Post regulation change, size structure indices increased (Chi-Square;  $P < 0.01$ ), annual mortality decreased (dropped from 50% to 37%) and growth rates remained unchanged (ANCOVA;  $P = 0.40$ ). However, these results may be confounded by moderate recruitment variability (CV = 44). It was concluded that more research is needed to understand the effects of lake fertilization on LMB spawning success/recruitment in LNJ. Fall drawdowns/selective fish kills lead to cyclic recruitment for LMB in LNJ, but potential positive effects on other species were not studied. Due to high recruitment variability, three more years of study is needed to fully understand the effects of the MLL/creel limit changes on the LMB population.

#### *Family and Community Fishing Program*

Seventy thousand catfish have been stocked into Family & Community Fishing Program Ponds. Seventy thousand trout have been stocked into Family and Community Fishing Program Ponds. They are in the process of acquiring two new locations; Paradise Park Pond in Jacksonville and the Monticello School Pond. They partnered with the Little Rock Park and Recreation to renovate Conner Park Pond on Highway 10. A new pier and a walk over bridge was built for this renovation.

#### *Derby Program*

The Derby Program held 320 derbies with 31,000 participants and stocked 93,736 fish in 2012.

### **Georgia**

In August 2012, four experimental night fishing events were held. Two events were held at Marben Public Fishing Area and two events held at Dodge County Public Fishing Area. The events were held to determine if anglers would be interested in opening Georgia's PFAs to night fishing. Currently, Georgia's Public Fishing Areas are open Wednesday through Sunday sunrise to sunset. Creels were conducted to obtain several answers: angler effort, targeted species, additional amenities, boat versus bank anglers and distances traveled were a few of the questions that were also targeted during the event. Despite low catch rates and above average temperatures, 100% of the anglers were in support of the Fisheries Section pursuing night fishing opportunities on Public Fishing Areas.

Two of Georgia's Public Fishing Areas are currently under or being evaluated for repair. It appears the Evans County Public Fishing Area will reopen this summer as repairs to the 84-acre lake dam are in the finishing stages. Ocmulgee Public Fishing Area was managed as a trophy bass fishery. Low density stockings of age one female bass were initiated in the spring of '05. Unfortunately, leaks in the dam, as well as, the lake basin have caused the draining of Ocmulgee Public Fishing Area. Engineers are currently evaluating Ocmulgee to determine how to proceed. In response to the draining, 191 bass ranging in size from 5-10 lbs. were removed and stocked in Lake Paradise at Paradise Public Fishing Area.

This stocking instantly created a trophy bass lake. A catch and release regulation has been implemented in order to maintain this trophy potential.

In an attempt to continue interest in fishing for sunfish and tourism, the third annual "Bobberthon" Tournament was organized. Following previous tournament protocol, 200 harvestable sunfish in each of three Public Fishing Area lakes (Ocmulgee, Flat Creek, and Dodge Co.) were collected via electrofishing, tagged, and released. Over several months any angler that caught a tagged fish was eligible for a prize and qualified to fish the season ending "Grand Bobberthon" tournament at Dodge Co. PFA. However, this year's event did not end with the "Grand Bobberthon" tournament but is expected to be reestablished in the upcoming years. The 2012 grand prizes for the tournament varied from a four night stay for a family of four in Savannah, GA to a multi-pack of prizes that included free admission to the Georgia State Fair. The concept was originally pitched to our agency by one of our state representatives and has grown in popularity over the past three years. County tourism bureaus are responsible for soliciting the vast majority of prizes from vendors within their counties. Prizes included items such as a Zebco 33 and a bible, gift cards, state park pass, fish cookers, \$100 US savings bond, 2-night stay at a state park cottage, etc. Overall, the tournament still continues to grow in popularity and appears it will continue in the future.

Walleye stockings continue in several north GA reservoirs including some smaller impoundments. Several of these lakes are beginning to develop walleye fisheries and local anglers are very pleased with the addition of this fishery as they adapt to walleye fishing. Several walleye fishing guides are available on our website for anglers to access. Small impoundments are producing State record walleye (>12 lbs.).

Still producing fish for private pond owners. Pond owners are charged a nominal fee and have four options to choose from:

1. A bream, bass and catfish combination is recommended for ponds one acre or larger. This option provides bream (80% bluegill and 20% redear sunfish) at the rate of 500 per acre, and bass and channel catfish at rates of 50 per acre. The cost for this option is \$65 per acre of pond.
2. Pond owners can choose to receive only bream and bass (at the same stocking rate as Option 1) by selecting Option 2. Option 2 is also recommended for ponds one acre or larger. The cost for this option is \$60 per acre.
3. The channel catfish only option is recommended for ponds smaller than one acre. This option provides 500 channel catfish per acre for ponds smaller than one acre. For catfish-only ponds one acre or larger, state hatcheries will provide a maximum of 500 catfish per pond. The cost is \$20 per 100 catfish.
4. Channel catfish fingerlings are also provided to supplementally stock ponds that already contain bass and bluegill at the rate of 100 per pond or 50 per acre, whichever is greater and up to 1,000 fish per applicant. The cost for supplemental catfish is \$20 per 100 catfish. Pond owner is informed that the catfish must be reared in cages to 10 inches in order to help them avoid predation after being released.

Georgia still provides technical advise (i.e. recommendations on aquatic weeds, water quality, etc.) to pond owners. However, pond owners must bring weed or water samples to one of our offices. Have not performed field investigations for several years.

## **Kentucky**

### *FINs Program*

In 2012 the KDFWR stocked 38 lakes in 24 counties as part of the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) program with keeper-size channel catfish and rainbow trout. These lakes were located in cities of all sizes across the state to provide anglers a place to fish without the need to travel far from home. A total of 98,650 catfish and 137,000 trout were stocked in 2012. Lakes/ponds ranged in size from 1-46 acres (245 total acres in program, most lakes < 10 acres). Catfish were stocked at 200 fish/acre in March, April, May, and August in lakes < 10 acres. Lakes > 10 acres received 100 fish/acre. Trout were stocked in Oct/Nov, Feb, and Mar. Stocking rates in urban lakes were as follows; 1-2 acres 500 trout, 3-4 acres 1,500 trout, 5 acres+ 2,500 per stocking. The Feb trout stocking rate was ½ the normal rate for lakes ≥ 3 acres.

All lakes in the FINs program have standardized regulations; 5 rainbow trout, 4 channel/blue catfish, 1 largemouth bass with a minimum size limit of 15", and 15 bluegill/other sunfish.

An exploitation study was conducted at two small impoundments in 2012; however data has not been analyzed fully. Preliminary analysis showed extremely high tag return rates. A tagging study in 2011 at a 7 acre impoundment had a corrected return rate of 88% for trout (9-11" fish) and 85% for catfish (12-16"). Harvest rates were 28% and 32% respectively.

A creel survey is conducted in conjunction with the exploitation study at each lake. Results show the number of trout and catfish caught exceeds the number of stocked fish indicating that many fish appear to be caught multiple times before being harvested. In other words we are getting great returns on our stocked fish. At several of the small impoundments where we have conducted creel surveys we are seeing fishing pressure exceeding 5,000 man-hr/acre.

Contact Dane Balsman for further information (1800-852-0942 ext 4480).

### *Pond Stocking Survey*

KDFWR still provides fish for stocking farm ponds on a fee schedule assigned by surface acreage. This program requires approximately 14 hatchery ponds yearly to assure adequate fish are produced. With constricting budgets and declining demand for farm pond stockings KDFWR is looking into discontinuing the program. KDFWR believes that without the Farm Pond Stocking program hatchery resources can be better utilized and reallocated to initiatives designed to increase license sales and angler recruitment. A representative from the state fish and wildlife agency in all 50 US states was contacted by either email or phone. Each representative was asked what type, if any, private pond stocking program their agency

provided and if there was an associated fee. Information was obtained from 47 of 50 states. Of the 47 respondents only 5 states, including Kentucky, currently offer fish for the stocking of private ponds. Oklahoma and Nebraska both offer fish for free, Iowa charges \$25/acre, Georgia offers fish for \$20-60/acre depending on the stocking combination the pond owner requests, and Kentucky charges based on surface acreage with the following schedule; 0-1.4 acres = \$75; 1.5-2.9 acres = \$200; >3 acres = \$200 +\$150 per additional acre. This data will be presented at the next KDFWR Commission meeting with the hopes of discontinuing the program.

### *Kingfisher Lakes Renovation*

Both Old and New Kingfisher Lakes are in the process of being renovated. Old Kingfisher Lake was opened to fishing in 1900 and New Kingfisher Lake in 1942. The lakes have silted in considerably over the years and are prone to frequent fish kills. The fish populations in both lakes are dominated by stunted sport fish and unwanted rough fish. The lakes are currently being drawn down with the installation of a water control structure slated for February 7, 2013. After which the lakes will be drained as completely as possible and left to dry out until fall 2013. After the lake beds have dried sufficiently heavy equipment will be used to deepen both lakes and construct fishing jetties. Parking areas and boat ramps will be improved, fish habitat will be added and an aeration system may be installed. The project is slated for completion by November 2013.

### **South Carolina**

The SCDNR currently maintains 17 public impoundments ranging in size from 5.0 to 300 acres. These water bodies encompass a total of approximately 1090 acres. Historically, the level of management has varied significantly from lake to lake due to the fact a number of them are located on large watersheds which prevents or reduces the success of traditional management practices. Furthermore, recent budget reductions have resulted in changes in program priorities within the Fisheries Section, thus making it difficult to maintain or expand a number of management strategies on several of the impoundments. One notable example of a reduction in program activities was the discontinuation of the youth fishing rodeos that were held annually at a number of the state lakes.

Most of the lakes have been stocked with bluegill/redear, largemouth and channel catfish at some point and several have undergone renovation within the recent past. Rough fish populations remain a problem in a number of the impoundments as does poor water chemistry and nuisance aquatic vegetation. Standardized lake population sampling revealed that the growth of the Centrarchids is much less than desirable in most impoundments. Routine management practices such as liming and fertilization are conducted on seven lakes, fish attractors are maintained in eight of the impoundments and amenities such as handicapped fishing piers and picnic sheds are present at nine of the sites. Recently, habitat development activities such as the placement of gravel beds for spawning sites were undertaken in several impoundments. Those lakes deemed most manageable receive annual fish population monitoring via seining or electrofishing. Efforts to manipulate fish populations or otherwise address identified problems with a particular lake's fishery have included stocking augmentation,

marginal rotenone and/or and harvest restrictions. A qualitative angler survey of fifteen of the agency maintained lakes revealed most anglers rated their fishing experience “fair” to “poor. Efforts are still underway to re-evaluate the sates lakes program to determine which water bodies provide the best potential for future adaptive management approaches.

2012 site specific activities:

- Lake Brown (100ac.) Eutrophic reservoir that regularly produces quality largemouth bass, Attempts to establish threadfin shad to augment forage base has met with little success.
- The following lakes’ fish populations were monitored via electrofishing:  
Lake Ashwood (75ac.), Lake Oliphant (40ac.), Mountain Lakes (25ac.), Lancaster Reservoir (62ac), Lake Wallace (300ac.), Sunrise Lake (25ac.), Lake Brown, Lake Johnson (40ac.), Lake Long (80ac.).
- State managed lakes receiving supplemental fish stocking included:  
  
Lake Ashwood- (10,000 fingerling bluegill/ 10,000 fingerling redear sunfish, and 1,000 channel catfish.  
Mountain Lake -(3500 fingerling bluegill/ 10,000 intermediate bluegill/ 14,000 fingerling redear sunfish/ 350 10”channel catfish).  
Lake Oliphant- 8,000 fingerling bluegill/ 15,000 intermediate bluegill/ 8,000 redear sunfish.
- Total fish population renovation and restocking was conducted at Lake Johnson. The lake reopened in July of 2012. Initial fishing success and pressure was very high. Electrofishing later showed the bluegill population had been significantly reduced. An additional 10,000 intermediate bluegill were stocked and creel limits were adjusted.
- Fish habitat enhancement efforts (gravel beds) were expanded in several impoundments. This has shown to be very successful in improving spawning sites for bluegill and redear.
- Hydrilla has become established in four of the state lakes and efforts have been stepped up to control the infestations via aquatic herbicides and grass carp.
- Attempts to control overcrowded largemouth bass populations in several impoundments, via electrofishing, have proven largely unsuccessful.
- Youth fishing rodeos were reinstated during 2012 and five events were held statewide in agency managed impoundments.

#### *Private Pond Management Program*

The agency’s level of technical assistance with respect to the management of private impoundments was reduced significantly some years ago due to reprioritization of the Fishery Section’s activities. This was largely driven by budget and personnel constraints. On-site inspections of private waters were discontinued completely and technical guidance is now conducted via telephone, e-mail and a Pond Management Guide with is available on line or hard copy. Pond owners may continue to provide water

samples and aquatic vegetation samples to the Regional offices for analysis or identification and remedial recommendations.

Additional information on SCDNR state lakes and private pond management is available to the public at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/>

## **Texas**

There are thousands of impoundments of all sizes incorporated within the public and private sectors in Texas. Public water bodies range from a fraction of an acre to over 100,000 acres in this state; however, we will restrict this summary to bodies of water under 400 acres, which are considered small impoundments in Texas. These smaller impoundments are usually managed by local governments (cities, townships and counties) and mainly serve the purpose of flood control, water supply and recreation. Some reside within state parks and are great venues for those looking for an all-around outdoor package. State park ponds also provide free fishing opportunities under a free fishing initiative program within state parks. Anglers fishing from the bank within a state park are not required to possess a fishing license. This was designed to entice people to become involved in fishing while visiting state parks. Many of these small impoundments are focal points in small communities and serve as a great attraction for local residents. Others are spread throughout major metropolitan areas and serve as close-to-home opportunities for fishing and outdoor recreation. With drought issues affecting access at major Texas reservoirs, these small lakes at times become the most reliable fishing holes for Texas anglers. In the future, these small impoundments may become invaluable fishing resources as water issues become more chronic in our state. Texas Parks and Wildlife, in conjunction with these local management authorities manage these impoundments to provide fishing opportunities for everyone. For management purposes we have classified the small impoundments into several categories to identify certain programs affiliated with these lakes.

### *Small Lakes*

These are small impoundments between 75 and 400 acres, commonly constructed as water supply reservoirs for smaller cities or are nested within state parks. These reservoirs may have regulated access and more restrictions than larger reservoirs in order to preserve water quality and wildlife populations. When appropriate, TPWD will manage these small lakes similarly to large reservoirs by applying fishing regulations and conducting habitat and access projects to enhance fishing opportunities. Stockings may not be applied as rigorously as in smaller impoundments since the larger size and habitat availability will aid self-sustaining populations. In the past year district biologists have been involved with several projects on these small lakes. Projects such as fish attractor installations, native aquatic vegetation restoration, nuisance vegetation control for access and special research projects have taken place in these small lakes and will continue to host similar efforts in the future. Some projects this past year included:

- New special Operation World Record (OWR) study that is investigating Florida largemouth bass and ShareLunker bass performance in a couple of small reservoirs (Bellwood and Fisherman Reservoir). Initial survival results are looking promising:
  - Fall 2011 – Advanced fingerling stocking at Fisherman Reservoir (70-acre)
    - Very high stocking survival based on 48h pen study for both treatment groups (LOS – 100%, HOS – 99%)
  - 2012
    - Spring – roughly 8,500 standard sized fingerlings per treatment CW tagged and stocked into Lake Bellwood (160/acre)
    - Excellent stocking survival – LOS mean survival (98%), HOS mean survival (96%)
    - Fall – Collected EF sample (N = 136 fish) at Fisherman Reservoir for genetic analysis to assess relative survival and growth differences. Results pending
  
- Several small reservoirs have been presented with nuisance aquatic vegetation issues that have required intensive management efforts, including the use of triploid grass carp (Lake Pflugerville, Tyler State Park Lake).
  
- Some Bathymetric surveys have been conducted on some small impoundments (Purtis Creek, Tyler State Park Lake and Lake Kyle). Bathymetric data typically have not previously existed for these smaller systems and will serve to enhance fishing success.
  
- Aquatic vegetation plantings of native plant species have been implemented to restore aquatic habitats at Purtis Creek and Raven. After controlling nuisance exotics, native plantings have successfully established and expanded outside protective enclosures.
  
- A very unique walleye fishery is developing at Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Glen Rose, TX. This reservoir recently opened to the public and was stocked with walleye about 3 years ago in preparation for the public opening. Recent population surveys revealed nice catch rates of fish already measuring over 20 inches. Anglers are starting to catch them. This is part of a partnership with Somervell Water District.

### *Community Fishing Lakes (CFL) Program*

A CFL is defined as a public impoundment 75 acres or smaller located totally within an incorporated city limits or a public park, or any impoundment lying totally within the boundaries of a state park. Many CFL's are stocked annually with channel catfish and/or rainbow trout. Special fishing regulations apply to CFL's, which differ from statewide fishing regulations:

#### **Gear restrictions**

Fishing is by pole and line only. Anglers may use no more than two poles while fishing. Cast nets are prohibited.

#### **Black bass**

For largemouth and smallmouth bass, minimum length limit = 14 inches. No minimum length for Guadalupe or spotted bass. Daily bag limit is 5 fish for all four species in any combination.

#### **White, striped and yellow bass**

For striped and hybrid striped bass, minimum length limit = 18 inches and daily bag limit = 5 in any combination. For white bass, minimum length = 10 inches and daily bag is 25. There are no bag or size limits for yellow bass.

### **Carp**

There is no minimum length limit or daily bag limit for common carp.

### **Catfish**

For channel and blue catfish, there is no minimum length and combined daily bag limit = 5. For flathead catfish, minimum length = 18 inches and daily bag = 5.

### **Crappie**

For white and black crappie, their hybrids and subspecies, minimum length limit = 10 inches. Daily bag limit = 25 in any combination.

### **Gar**

For alligator gar, daily bag limit is 1 fish of any size. No bag limits on other species of gar.

### **Sunfish**

There is no minimum length or daily bag limit on bluegill, redear, warmouth or other species of sunfish.

### **Trout**

For rainbow and brown trout, their hybrids and subspecies, there is no minimum length and daily bag limit = 5 trout in any combination.

With urban areas expanding, new parks and ponds increase local fishing opportunities, and become options for this program. While stocking and regulation have been the driving management action for this program, other management efforts have been applied at several locations. Here are some reports for our CFL's this past year:

- There are approximately 680 CFL's registered statewide, with 8 new ones joining this past year.
- TPWD stocked 269,106 CCF in 194 locations (CFLs) and 281,338 RBT into 119 locations. Ponds that received stockings were host to many fishing outreach events and several participated in the winter rainbow trout stocking program, which is very popular throughout the state.
- A ravishing wildfire destroyed 90% of Bastrop State Park, where a brand new aeration system was installed. Upon the loss of the system, a generous donation by Vertex Water resources, a new aeration system was donated for Bastrop State Park Pond in efforts to control lake stratification and prevent fish stress/kills during hot summer months.
- Fish population surveys and creel surveys were conducted on several CFL's and plans to improve habitat and access will come in the form of fish attractors, aeration systems, fish feeders, construction of fishing piers and bathymetric mapping. City and county partnerships will play a major role in these efforts.
- The TPWD Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) in Athens, TX reported high outreach participation at their facility fishing ponds:

Event Summary			
	Youths 17 & under	Adult	Total
Males <sub>1</sub>	4,776	830	5,606
Females <sub>2</sub>	4,242	1,465	5,707
Minority	3,738	440	4,178
Phys. Challenged	39	20	59
Total <sub>1+2</sub>	9,018	2,295	11,313

Minority(Breakout)		
Black or African American	1,697	40.6%
Hispanic or Latino	2,408	57.6%
Asian	37	.9%
Hawaiian / other Pac. Islander	0	%
Americans Indian / Alaska Native	5	.1%
Other	31	.7%
Total	4,178	100%

*Neighborhood Fishin' (NF) Program*

Neighborhood Fishin' has become a standard trademark of urban fishing in Texas. This successful program has developed thanks to generous funding from the Toyota Texas Bass Classic Foundation, which is going strong after 6 years of the prestigious Toyota Texas Bass Classic (TTBC) event. The TTBC has become an annual community event that has generated over \$1.4 million for the TPWD and the state of Texas. This event hosts the Professional Anglers Association (PPA) annual championship fishing tournament and is a leader in promoting conservation throughout the nation via this nationally televised event. Proceeds from this event go to the foundation, which has been the driving force behind NF along with local government partners, and the new addition of two private partners for the Tarrant County sites. The program costs about \$500K per year to run.

The program consists of 14 sites in major metropolitan statistical areas. One site was dropped from the program with golden alga toxicity issues, while another was brought back online after renovations the past two years. With the program surpassing 11 years since its inception, TPWD continues to pursue an extensive marketing campaign. In conjunction with our marketing department, nearly \$30,000 was appropriated towards promotional venues for the program. Marketing strategies have been evaluated the past couple of years, consisting of flyers and banners to Billboards and TV commercials in large markets. Recommendations have been to use a mix of strategies, restraining to those that were economically efficient for the respective market and venue.

A program evaluation is underway in efforts to monitor its success and compare to an initial evaluation during its pilot phase. The evaluation consists of an annual creel survey performed twice a week on all

program lakes. The surveys were designed to acquire data to evaluate if the program is meeting set objectives. In order to reduce angler count trips, a network of digital trail cameras were mounted at several sites to collect angler counts. This was recommended after the success of a digital trail camera to evaluate program participation two years ago. Overall, angler satisfaction with the program remains high.

### *Other*

- TPWD continues its efforts to develop a new category of CFL in urban areas designed to provide a more advanced quality fishing opportunity for those that wish to move on from the NF experience. These lakes will consist of larger CFL's that will be more intensively managed than traditional CFL's. These lakes will most likely have more restrictive bass regulations and may receive an array of management practices such as fertilization, aeration, and forage stockings. The goal is to create a quality urban fishery option not directed towards harvest, per say, but more towards recreation and enhancing sport fishing skills.
- Based on the results of our statewide catfish angler survey; it has become clear that we need to develop and promote catfish angling opportunities where 85 percent of Texans live. Eighty percent of our 1.8 million anglers fish for catfish and they want good fishing close to home. Our community-based programs will serve as a platform to meet these needs.
- TPWD offers valuable small impoundments management information for the private sector in its web site at: [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/habitats/private\\_water/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/habitats/private_water/)
- Information on all of TPWD fishing programs, please visit: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/>

### **Virginia**

#### *Dam Safety at DGIF owned impoundments*

DGIF has been working towards bringing our agency owned lakes up to compliance with new Dam Safety Guidelines per the Dam Safety Program administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. This has been an expensive endeavor, as around 32 impoundments fall into varying categories from high hazard to low hazard. In order to bring several dams into compliance, estimated costs have approached upwards of \$3 million per site. DGIF is faced with prioritizing the recreational importance of agency owned impoundments throughout the state and making hard decisions on whether the money should be spent for upgrades or whether dams will be breached due to the lack of funding. So far a number of impoundments have been upgraded, and several recent projects have come in significantly under budget due to the current state of the economy. Spillway and dam renovations at

Burke Lake in Fairfax County (Washington DC suburbs) came in well below anticipated costs at \$1.2 million. DGIF is hoping to have all high hazard upgrades completed within the next three years if funding allows.

#### *DGIF fertilization programs*

DGIF has lake fertilization programs in place at eight locations around the state in order to increase productivity and yield. Historically, liquid 10-34-0 fertilizer was used, but this was messy and caustic to our equipment. A phytoplankton monitoring study was conducted several years ago at Lake Orange (124 acre impoundment) to evaluate secchi readings of historical liquid applications versus one of the newer granular pond fertilizers (10-52-4) that are readily available on the market today. Our findings showed that by tracking phytoplankton bloom days and water transparency, that granular fertilizer was just as effective as the traditional liquid. The advantage to the granular came in storage and the ease of application with minimal mess. A cost analysis found that costs were similar for both liquid and granular application. As a result, DGIF has transitioned away from liquid fertilizer to a commercially available granular pond fertilizer.

#### *Statewide WAE Study*

Agency personnel are wrapping up a four year walleye tagging study that assessed catch and harvest of walleye from small impoundments, large reservoirs, and the New River. Adjusted exploitation averaged 74%, which was higher than expected from our small impoundments. Growth over fishing was common at several impoundments and those populations were comprised mostly of fish age 2 or younger. A statewide 457 mm minimum size limit was enacted in 2010 to protect walleye to age 3, while also reducing harvest. The implementation of the size limit was successful in reducing harvest by up to 50% at some impoundments, while shifting the size structure to larger fish. It's important to point out that in Virginia, a legal sized walleye from a small impoundment was usually harvested.

#### *Private Pond Assistance*

DGIF does not have an official pond assistance program for private landowners. District biologists attempt to answer questions and provide assistance as time allows. Our policy is to try and address pond owner questions over the phone or to provide aquatic plant ID to individuals that may deliver samples to agency offices. Private pond owners are referred to private consultants for more extensive assistance.

#### *Urban Trout/Catfish Program*

Historically, 11 stockings of rainbow and brown trout occurred at urban trout ponds/lakes around the state between November 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. Budget cuts about ten years ago caused a significant reduction in trout stockings from 11 to 3. After major renovations at DGIF's Coursey Springs Fish Cultural Facility and administrative support, stocking frequency increased from 3 to 5 beginning in Fall

2012. Our urban trout sites are also stocked in late spring with catchable channel catfish to provide for a quality summer fishery. Anglers fishing urban sites are limited to 4 trout/day and 4 catfish/day.

### *Fish Habitat Structures*

DGIF personnel have been working to increase fish habitat at department owned lakes by installing structures made of PVC and corrugated pipe, pallet teepees, and Christmas trees. Biologists have also dropped trees along the shoreline and cabled them to the bank. The installation of these structures will provide additional habitat for fish and better opportunities for anglers.