

## 2015 State Updates

### Louisiana

In Louisiana, technical advice to owners of ponds and small lakes is a part of the responsibility of the Inland Fish Division. Division biologists make several site visits assisting residents of the state on problems ranging from construction and stocking requirements, to harvest and disease identification. The biologists also answer numerous phone inquiries about various pond-related problems.

Aquatic vegetation has become a problem in most small impoundments. Biologists provide advice and technical assistance as well as aquatic plant identification assistance for pond owners on request. Inland Fish division also issues triploid grass carp permits to individuals that have aquatic vegetation problems.

Louisiana has not provided fish to private pond owners since 1988. Private pond owners are given a fingerling producers list where they can purchase fish. Also, a pond management guide is offered to these individuals for helpful management ideas. This producer's list and pond management booklet is on our web site [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov).

The Office of Fisheries is currently in the process of developing a community fishing program for LDWF. Within this program, LDWF would identify potential opportunities to bring fishing access to municipal areas as well as suburban and rural communities. LDWF believes fishing should be a readily accessible activity to all Louisiana residents and that the development of community fishing opportunities significantly increases access to quality fishing. LDWF will only support community fishing opportunities that allow open access to the public, with particular attention to access typically in short supply; shoreline angling and accessibility to the handicapped. For the purposes of this program, a public waterbody is one that is no more restricted to the general public than to any other group or individual. The objectives of this program are as follows:

1. Increase the number of recreational fishing opportunities and participation in recreational fishing each year
2. Develop cooperative relationships with local government and community organizations to provide community fishing opportunities
3. Develop and/or maintain a fishery that will provide the opportunity to catch fish
4. Provide training and educational opportunities to teach children and adults how to fish and enjoy other related aspects of nature
5. Develop and increase anglers' and nonanglers' environmental awareness and conservation ethics in the community
- 6.

In the south central part of the state, Eunice City Lake Renovation Project was completed in 2014. The objective of this renovation project was replacing the existing fish population with desirable fish stocked at rates proven to produce a balanced, self-sustaining population; as well as revitalizing the facility to accommodate those seeking an outdoor recreational refuge within their community.

Species stocked in this 44 acre lake consisted of:

Florida Largemouth Bass (phase II)	1,442
Adult FLMB (3-6 lbs.)	99
Channel Catfish	4,400
Coppernose Bluegill	22,000
Redear Sunfish	22,000
Threadfin Shad	4,000
Black Crappie	1,100

The most recent community fisheries project is in the south central part of the state. The Get Out and Fish! Program seeks to increase the number of people with access to quality fishing. The program intends to recruit new anglers to the sport of fishing and promote outdoor activities for future generations. In order to accomplish this mission, public water bodies that meet the required specifications will be chosen by LDWF biologists and stocked on a regular basis for up to one year. LDWF will promote the launch of each new site with a Get Out and Fish! Event.

Girard Park Pond, the first water-body chosen for the new program, was stocked with 800 pounds of adult channel catfish in preparation for the event. LDWF will continue to stock the pond for up to one year, based on continued angler interest and participation. Beginning in December through February 2015, the pond was stocked with adult rainbow trout followed by a stocking of adult channel catfish in warmer months of March through June. The new program is a huge success with numerous fishermen of all ages coming out to fish and harvesting fish that were stocked. Due to the fishermen's excitement and interest in this program, the governing body of Girard Park continued the program by stocking channel catfish in November of 2015 and plan on stocking rainbow trout in the December 2015 and January 2016.

The next water-body chosen for the Get Out and Fish Program is the Sidney D. Torres Memorial Park located in Chalmette, Louisiana. Rainbow trout will be stocked in December 2015 and January 2016. Adult channel catfish (800 pounds) will be stocked each month beginning in February through March 2016.

Species stocked in small ponds/lakes in Louisiana in 2015:

Florida Largemouth Bass	1,023
Channel Catfish	9,666

Bluegill	7,490
Rainbow Trout	770

Contact: Jody David [jdavid@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jdavid@wlf.la.gov)

## **Texas**

In Texas, public water bodies range from a fraction of an acre to over 100,000 acres in size; however, this summary primarily focuses on bodies of water under 500 acres. These smaller impoundments are typically managed by local governments (cities, townships and counties) and 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 provide free fishing opportunities under a free fishing initiative program. Anglers fishing 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. Most of these waters are managed with regular fish stockings to sustain fishing activity. Over 1 million channel catfish and 225,000 rainbow trout were stocked into Texas water, most into small impoundments to provide excellent fishing opportunities for Texas anglers.

With fluctuating water levels, due to drought and consumption, affecting access at many 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. TPWD, in conjunction with these local 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/projects affiliated with these lakes.

### *Small Lakes*

These are typically small impoundments between 75 and 500 acres, constructed as water supply reservoirs for smaller cities or are nested within state parks. These reservoirs may have regulated access and more restrictions than our larger reservoirs in order to preserve water quality and wildlife populations. When appropriate, TPWD will manage these small lakes similar 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 some 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 and special research projects have taken place in these small water bodies and will continue to host similar efforts in the future. Some activities/issues this past year included:

- Severe drought conditions have impacted many areas in west and central Texas; however many of these small lakes continue to support recreational angling when access to larger reservoirs have been lost. Still some are victims of drought; having lost access, while others impacted by golden alga outbreaks. Stocking efforts to help repopulate some of these lakes are underway. Coordination with local authorities to extend boat ramps is also underway; though funding support has been a challenge.
- Operation World Record 2 (OWR2) study that is investigating Florida largemouth bass and ShareLunker bass performance in a couple of small reservoirs (Bellwood and Fisherman Reservoir) is ongoing.
- Several lakes were monitored with electrofishing surveys, received management stockings and had habitat work done on them.

#### *Community Fishing Lake (CFL)*

A CFL is a small impoundment designation, 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 CFLs are stocked annually with channel catfish and/or rainbow trout. Special fishing regulations apply to CFLs, which differ from statewide fishing regulations. With urban areas expanding, new parks and ponds are created increasing local fishing opportunities. While stocking and regulation have been the driving management action for this classification of lakes, other management efforts have been applied at several locations. Activities/issues reported for our CFLs this past year:

- There are over 700 CFLs registered statewide, with two new lakes being added and one renovated this past year.
- TPWD stocked Channel Catfish and Rainbow Trout into hundreds of CFL's. Many ponds that received stockings were host to many fishing outreach events and several sites participated in our winter rainbow trout stocking program, which is very popular throughout the state.
- Many fishing outreach events were conducted at CFLs by TPWD staff, as well as independent educators, that use these stocked venues to increase angler success.
- The TPWD Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) in Athens was also stocked and used for outreach events, reaching well over 10,000 participants annually.

- A special study was conducted in collaboration among several districts to evaluate the effectiveness of our 9-inch Channel Catfish stocking program, which supports our CFL stocking regime. The data have been evaluated and being written into a report.
- Several angling educational programs have been supported through Houston area independent school districts.
- At least two water bodies in the Houston area have been affected by a hydrilla nuisance and are under a treatment program.

### *Neighborhood Fishin' Program (NF)*

Neighborhood Fishin' has become a 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 7 years of the prestigious Toyota Texas Bass Classic (TTBC) event. The TTBC has become an annual community event that has generated over \$2 million for TPWD and the state of Texas. Proceeds from this event go to the foundation, which has been the driving force behind NF along with local government and private partners. The program costs about \$500K per year to run.

The program consists of 17 sites located in major metropolitan statistical areas. The program is managed by a biweekly stocking regime of seasonal channel catfish and rainbow trout ten months out of the year. With the program surpassing 13 years since its inception, TPWD continues to pursue an extensive marketing campaign. For information on Neighborhood Fishin', please visit [www.neighborhoodfishin.org](http://www.neighborhoodfishin.org)

Activities/issues reported for NF this past year:

- A program evaluation study write up is close to completion.
- Woldert Park Pond became the 16<sup>th</sup> NF site, located in the City of Tyler. At the local level, fish for the Woldert Park Pond stockings are purchased (from a commercial producer) through a cooperative agreement between TPWD, Tyler Parks and Recreation, SuddenLink Communications, and East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation.
- A partnership with the City of Abilene to develop a Neighborhood Fishin' Program (NFP) site at Grover Nelson Park Small Pond (1.25 acres) was developed. This became the 17<sup>th</sup> NF site, and all stocking costs are being funded by the City of Abilene.
- A second NF partnership in Abilene is under development, potentially expanding the program in the near future.
- Kids fishing clinics were conducted at several NF sites, reaching hundreds of youth under 17 years of age. Thousands of dollars in prizes were awarded throughout certain events.

- A significant issue being experienced at several NF sites is the predation of trout by migratory cormorants during the winter months. Because of the location and citizen concerns effigies and noise makers can't be used. A change in stocking schemes to once a month didn't deter the birds and irritated the anglers at one popular site in the Houston area. There is a great need to develop a solution to this problem.

### *Diversified Community Angling (DCA)*

DCA is a classification of urban waters designed to provide a more advanced quality fishing opportunity for anglers. A committee was put together to develop this framework and formalize objectives for these waters. These impoundments will be more intensively managed utilizing management practices such as more restrictive harvest regulations, fertilization, aeration, forage stockings and habitat and access enhancement. The goal is to develop and manage community fisheries that offer diversified angling opportunities to existing and potential anglers in Texas. This will create quality urban fishery options not directed towards harvest, per say, but more towards recreation and enhancing sport fishing skills. The committee sees DCA impoundments to have the following characters:

- A. More self-sustaining/productive lakes (size, habitat)
- B. High-quality, non-harvest oriented fishery; focus on recreational opportunity
- C. Access management to protect sustainability
- D. Establish effective partnerships to achieve projects
- E. Should be marketable to more experienced anglers

Activities/issues reported for DCA this past year:

- Lake Pflugerville (180 acres), in the Austin area, has been managed with a combination triploid grass carp and mechanical harvesting to control a heavy outbreak of hydrilla.
- We're sampling two larger urban waters in the Missouri City area of Houston. Buffalo Run is 47.5 acres and Lake Independence is 46 acres. Both of these impoundments have boat ramps. We're continuing sampling and will work with Missouri City on management plans in 2015.
- TPWD partnered with the Austin Fly Fishers to complete a native aquatic vegetation planting at Brushy Creek Reservoir (38 acres) in the Austin area. Over 250 colonizer plants were planted to create near littoral habitat for sunfish species as part of the lake's management plan to increase the abundance of sunfish.
- A catch-and-release regulation went into effect at Lake Kyle (12 acres) on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. TPWD partnered with the City of Kyle, Outdoor Water Solutions and the Austin Fly Fishers to raise funding for three windmill-driven aerators to oxygenate the lake to improve water quality and carrying capacity. The network of aerators is set to be installed in spring 2015.

- TPWD is developing new partnerships to fundraise for the purchase of a fish feeding system as a second phase of project development for Lake Kyle. The feeding network is expected to be completed in spring 2015.

*Other*

- We're currently working with the George H. W. Bush grant from RBFF and Bass Pro Shops. The grant is specifically designed to increase Hispanic participation in angling.
- 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 TPWD fishing programs, please visit: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/>

Contact: Marcos De Jesus [Marcos.Dejesus@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:Marcos.Dejesus@tpwd.texas.gov)