

## 2016 State Updates

### Arkansas

The majority of activities on small impoundments in Arkansas in 2015 were routine sampling. However, there was one non-routine activity from District 10 as well as updates from the Family and Community Fishing program and the Derby Program.

- District 10 sampled the largemouth bass in Lake Barnett in 2015. Genetic samples were taken to determine if any Florida alleles exist in the population.

#### Family and Community Fishing Program (FCFP)

- Nearly 140,000 fish were stocked in FCFP locations about 70,000 catfish and 70,000 trout.
- They are in the process of acquiring one new location at Arkansas State College in Jonesboro.
- They also added Van Buren Municipal Park Pond in Van Buren, Arkansas as FCFP site.
- FCFP partnered with the Little Rock Park and Recreation and limed McArthur Park Pond and treated War Memorial Park Pond for alligator weed. The City of Russellville will submit a proposal for the construction of handicap fishing pier for the Russellville FCFP site.
- FCFP has also partnered with Cycle and Marine Supercenter of Pine Bluff and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Nature Centers to promote trout fishing in Arkansas by giving away a boat motor and trailer to a person who visits a nature center during February and March or catch a tagged trout from a FCFP site

#### Derby Program

- The Derby Program held 327 derbies. Three hundred twenty-two of the derbies were catfish derbies and 5 were trout derbies. Ninety-nine thousand four hundred thirty catfish were stocked for the derbies and 1725 trout were stocked.

### Texas

In Texas, public water bodies range from a fraction of an acre to over 100,000 acres in size; however, this summary 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 583,000 Channel Catfish and 315,000 Rainbow Trout were stocked into Texas water, many into small impoundments to provide excellent fishing opportunities for Texas anglers.

With fluctuating water levels, 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 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 impacting the state have diminished with heavy rain patterns presented by “El Niño” weather effects. Many larger impoundments have recovered and have become accessible again; however many small lakes continue to support recreational angling. Stocking and habitat improvement efforts help maintain healthy fish populations in these lakes.
- 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 and other conventional fisheries methods.

### **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 primary 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:

- We are reaching 800 CFLs registered statewide, with new lakes consistently being added due to strong development in urban areas. In the Houston area alone, over 30 new CFLs were inventoried in the past year.

- TPWD stocked Rainbow Trout into hundreds of CFL's. Many ponds that received stockings were host to fishing events. Our winter Rainbow Trout stocking program is very popular throughout the state.
- Our 9" Channel Catfish production was limited this year; however 12" fish were produced to cover prioritized programs. Local stakeholders/partners also purchased Channel Catfish from private vendors to supplement CFL stockings for community outreach events.
- 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.
- Several angling educational programs have been supported through Houston area independent school districts.

### **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 9 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 18 sites located in major metropolitan 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 14 years since 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:

- Robert Mauk, biologist at the Wichita Falls district office, completed an evaluation of NF angler usage. His findings have been published in the TPWD Data Management Series under the title: Angler Catch, Harvest, and Characteristics at Neighborhood Fishin' Program Lakes; #288 2015.
- Kingfisher Pond became the 18<sup>th</sup> NF site, located in Travis County East Metropolitan Park, in Austin. At the local level, this expansion is supported by Travis County Parks and recreation and kind donations from a new Bass Pro Shops in Round Rock, TX to support urban fishing programs in the community.
- Kids fishing clinics were conducted at several NF sites, reaching hundreds of youth under 17 years of age.
- A continuing issue affecting 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 characteristics:

- 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:

- The DCA committee met in December 2015 to render management plans/progress for nine (9) selected pilot sites in major urban areas. Three sites in Dallas/Fort Worth; Two sites in Houston; One each at San Antonio, Austin, Abilene, and Wichita Falls.
- The pilot sites are at different stages or progression. Some are beginning to assess the site potential and developing partnerships with local managing authorities and stakeholders. Other sites are ready to begin management plans; while some are well into their development plans and approaching an evaluation phase.
- Habitat improvement projects will be crucial to most of these management plans. Some approaches that were completed this past year at Lake Kyle (Austin) were the installation of three windmill-driven aerators; purchase and installation of 6,330 ft<sup>2</sup> of sunfish spawning gravel beds; and purchase of four Texas Hunter products directional fish feeders. Funds for these projects came from partnerships developed with local stakeholders, retail companies, park management, and appropriations from the new Texas Largemouth Bass conservation license plate sales.
- At Live Oak City Park (San Antonio), new regulations to allow non-motorized vessels on the lake will help improve access and support future management plans. Two fish community surveys were conducted to assess the aquatic population.
- At Lake Independence and Buffalo Run (Houston), fish surveys were conducted and Channel Catfish were stocked.
- At Bachman Reservoir, White Rock Reservoir, and Bedford Boys Ranch Pond (Dallas/Ft. Worth); funding from the new Texas Largemouth Bass conservation license plate sales and Kills and Spills state restitution will be directed towards the purchase of artificial fish habitat structures and sunfish gravel beds.

### **Other**

- We're continuing work with RBFF and Bass Pro Shops to increase Hispanic participation in angling, which can be addressed heavily in urban areas, where these small impoundments can serve as important venues.

- 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/>