2024 Alabama Small Impoundments Committee Report by AnaSara Gillem

Public Fishing Lakes

We have continued to manage our 23 Public Fishing Lakes (PFLs) mostly for maximum yield of bass, sunfish, catfish, and crappie. A few lakes are operated by the city and only advised by our agency. Most, however, have a contracted lake manager on site that manages the anglers, fertilizes the lake, and keeps grass cut and litter picked up. They are also responsible for collecting all harvest data. Lakes are renovated as needed to correct fish populations that are irreversibly out of balance or to provide an improved or unique angling experience. Five lakes are currently closed for renovation. Renovation usually includes a new drainage system (old drain pipe often slip-lined), removing trees from the dam, piers worked on, habitat installed, new fish stocked, and any necessary maintenance to concession building.

Fish habitat is deployed in most of the lakes, some offshore and some in reach of the bank, to provide concentrations of fish for anglers. We have deployed several types of attractors, including artificial and natural. Natural materials with high surface area, such as cedar trees and recycled Douglas fir seem to be the best. These fish reefs are marked and utilized heavily by anglers. Douglas fir reefs are supplemented annually due to rapid decomposition.

For years, the PFL's suffered from bass populations skewed toward smaller fish and excessive reproduction. Biologists encouraged the harvest of small bass with most lakes allowing unlimited harvest of bass under 14". This led to very few fish surviving long enough to exceed the 14" maximum length limit and compensatory reproduction resulting in the lakes being flooded with YOY bass. Without an abundance of larger bass to control the YOY and age-1 bass, bluegill were quickly depleted causing the lake to appear bass crowded. Biologists attempted to correct this by more liberal predator harvest by anglers, increased electrofishing harvest, shoreline rotenone of YOY LMB, supplemental bluegill stockings, etc., but we have found these strategies to be largely ineffective at improving the size structure of the bass populations and only temporarily increase the abundance of intermediate size sunfish. We have since recognized the problems of growth overfishing leading to compensatory reproduction and set stricter bass harvest regulations on many lakes. We have also begun stocking threadfin shad in many of the lakes focused on quality bass production following research completed at Auburn University disproving prior concerns about the negative effects of threadfin shad in small impoundments. This has led to more balanced fish populations as well as increased abundance of sunfish.

Therefore, upon renovation of lakes, we have begun several strategies to reduce or post-pone this predator-crowded condition. The stocking strategies include stocking bass relative to the littoral habitat in the lake rather than surface area, increased bluegill stocking rate, and establishing supplemental forage. However, even when length limits are in place, larger fish are often removed. If too many of these larger bass are removed, it doesn't take long for the bass distribution to become skewed toward smaller fish. With fewer large bass to control YOY production, recruitment continues to increase. At this point, we focus on maintaining a healthy threadfin shad population to suppress YOY production and to increase the size structure of the bass.

Private Pond Program

District biologists provide technical assistance to pond owners at no charge. While the majority of the assistance is provided via telephone/email, biologists may perform on-site assistance if deemed necessary. Pond visits are conducted June-September and involve seining 3-5 shoreline areas. Biologists provide management recommendations to improve the fish population based on our seine hauls and other relevant information provided by the pond owner. Biologists also address other concerns during these visits, such as aquatic vegetation control, physical pond issues, and offer ways to improve the overall quality of the fishing experience.

The number of on-site pond checks have declined as biologists are using more discretion when deciding if a visit is necessary. Additionally, it is becoming more apparent that seine hauls are not always an accurate representation of the adult populations. Bass crowding and bass overharvest can appear similar (lots of age-0 bass in seine hauls, condition of adult fish are skinny, etc.), which makes it difficult to determine the next course of action. Some biologists have recommended that pond owners provide a sample of 15-20 adult bass for age estimation to determine growth rates and therefore provide more helpful recommendations.

The recreational value (fishing) of ponds seems to be decreasing among pond owners in Alabama. It is likely that our biologists may not perform on-site checks in the future. Our pond management book has not been revised since 2003, and an updated version is necessary as we transition to providing most of our assistance via online resources rather than on-site visits.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: Arkansas

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Ryan Mozisek

Date Submitted: 11/22/2024

District 1 – Northwest Arkansas

Lake Leatherwood (85 acres)

- Completed electrofishing sample
- Tandem baited hoop net sample for Channel Catfish
- Fall trap netting for sampling the Crappie population
- Placed 6 new habitat sites with 30 Mossback Fish Habitat Structures
- 50 students from Eureka Springs High School helped assemble and place the habitat

Lake Wedington (105 acres)

- Electrofishing sample for Largemouth Bass
- Tandem baited hoop net sample for Channel Catfish

Lake Elmdale (143 acres)

- Electrofishing sample for Largemouth Bass
- 100 Christmas Trees at 3 habitat sites

Bob Kidd Lake 200 acres

- 6 habitat sites with 30 Mossback Fish Habitat Structures
- 40 Lincoln High School Students assembled and helped place the habitat

Lake Swepco (494 acres)

- Electrofishing sample for Largemouth Bass

*Fish attractor spots can be viewed and downloaded at https://www.agfc.com/fishing/where-to-fish/fish-attractors/

District 2- North Central Arkansas

Amon's Lake (2 acres)

- Amon's lake was community electrofished on July 6th, 2024. Largemouth Bass and Bluegill were the only species that were captured during the sample. A heavy rain even prior to sampling led to increased turbidity and low catch rates.
- Amon's lake is stocked annually with Rainbow Trout in the winter and Channel Catfish in the Summer.

District 3 – Northeast Arkansas

Lake Poinsett (342 acres)

- Conducted springtime electrofishing for Largemouth Bass and bream in March.
- Sampled crappie using trap nets in October, November, and December.
- 2130 yearling Channel Catfish were stocked.

Lake Hogue (286 acres; Upper Lake 45 and Lower Lake 241 acres)

- Conducted springtime electrofishing for Largemouth Bass April.
- Sampled Channel Catfish using tandem baited hoop nets in September.
- Sampled crappie using trap nets in September.
- 1570 yearling Channel Catfish were stocked.
- Added 5 fish attractor buoys to existing fish attractor spots.

Lake Charles (575 acres)

- Conducted springtime electrofishing for Largemouth Bass April.
- 2799 yearling and 300 catchable Channel Catfish
- Enhanced 4 fish attractor spots using 60 Christmas trees and fish attractor buoys.

Craighead Forest Lake (75 acres)

- Created 3 new fish attractor spots and enhanced 3 other sites using 46 Christmas trees, 2 spider buckets, and a PVC structure.

Lake Frierson (339 acres)

- Enhanced 5 fish attractor spots using 94 Christmas trees and fish attractor buoys.

Mallard Lake (329 acres)

- Created 13 new fish attractor spots using Mossback Mega Root Wad Kits.
- 1920 yearling Channel Catfish

*Fish attractor spots can be viewed and downloaded at https://www.agfc.com/fishing/where-to-fish/fish-attractors/

District 5- Southeast Arkansas

Kate Adams Lake (245 acres)

- The fish community of Kate Adams lake was sampled this summer via boat electrofishing during the day.

Lake Enterprise (200 acres)

- Lake Enterprise received two herbicide treatments between April and June to control Duckweed and Water Hyacinth.

Lake Grampus (350 acres)

- Lake Grampus received five herbicide treatments between March and June to control Water Hyacinth, Cuban Bulrush, Alligatorweed and Duckweed.

Lake Wallace (393 acres)

- Lake Wallace received two herbicide treatments in June to control Alligatorweed.

Lake Saracen (500 acres)

- The Largemouth Bass population was sampled on Lake Saracen this spring during the day via boat electrofishing.
- Spider buckets were placed along AGFC bank fishing areas to increase angler catch rates
- Mossback fish attractors were placed at various habitat sites throughout the lake.

*Fish attractor spots can be viewed and downloaded at https://www.agfc.com/fishing/where-to-fish/fish-attractors/

District 6- South Central Arkansas

Tri-County Lake (280 acres)

- Tri-County Lake was treated with herbicide twice in 2024 to treat Alligatorweed and Lotus.
- Two new habitat sites were created using wood beam structures.

Calion Lake (500 acres)

- The Largemouth Bass population was sampled with daytime electrofishing on April 1st. One hundred and one Largemouth Bass were sampled across 10 sites.
- Calion Lake was treated with herbicide twice in 2024 to treat spatterdock.

Lake June (80 acres)

- Lake June was treated twice with herbicide in May and June to control pennywort and Alligatorweed.
- A portion of the dam was damaged due to erosion. Repairs to it were finished in October.

Bragg Lake (160 acres)

- The Largemouth Bass population was sampled with daytime electrofishing on March 21st. The entire perimeter of the lake was sampled to ensure we would have adequate numbers for size and structure indices. A total of 87 fish were collected over 9 sites.
- Bragg Lake was treated once with herbicide in March to control Water Shield and Spatterdock.
- One new habitat site was created using wood beam structures.

Little Lake (5 acres)

- To better understand the fishery, a community sample was conducted using electrofishing on July 12th.

Clear Lake (15 acres)

- To better understand the fishery, a community sample was conducted using electrofishing on July 15th.
- An infestation of Giant Salvinia was discovered on July 15th. Due to the low number, physical removal was used. No GS has been found since then.

District 7- Southwest Arkansas

South Fork Lake (77 acres)

- Genetic samples of Largemouth Bass have been collected and sent off to be analyzed for our Black Bass Program. So far genetics testing has not completed yet as only 26 of 60 samples have been conducted.

Dierks City Pond (36 acres)

- new AGFC lease from Weyerhaeuser, built concrete boat ramp, parking area, bass fall EF sample, Christmas tree habitat sites and hinge cut trees for fish habitat.

District 9- West Central Arkansas

Horsehead Lake

- To better understand the Largemouth Bass fishery, the lake was electrofished during the day, on April 18, 2024.
- The fish community of Horsehead Lake was sampled in July 2024 via Mini Fyke nets. A total of nine species were captured with a total fish count of 786. The nets were altered by human interaction which limited the catch rates of some nets.
- A peak season (March-May) angler creel survey was conducted resulting in only 19 interviews

Lake Jack Nolen

- Lake Jack Nolen was fertilized three times during the summer to boost productivity.
- To better understand the Largemouth Bass fishery, the lake was electrofished at night, on April 4, 2024.

SugarLoaf Lake

- To better understand the Largemouth Bass fishery, the lake was electrofished at night, on April 3, 2024
- Sugarloaf lake was fertilized three times during the summer to boost productivity.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report

State Reporting: Florida

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Hayden Wennerdahl

Date Submitted: 11/20/2024

Project Name or Description: FWC Small Impoundment Management; Fish Orlando and the Community Fishing Project

Contact Information:

Name: Hayden Wennerdahl

Co-Authors: Kyle Miller, Madison Fishman, James Entrekin, Owen Bayindirli

Email: Hayden.Wennerdahl@MyFWC.com

Phone: (863) 209-2634

Objective: Maintain and enhance freshwater fishing opportunities in developed/developing regions throughout the state of Florida. Existing sites are primarily located in the Greater Tampa Bay and Orlando areas.

Current Status: In-progress; current projects include developing a standardized sampling protocol for both sportfish and full fish communities, revegetation work at multiple sites, establishing sportfish populations in three developing waterbodies and working to enhance the sportfish quality in existing waterbodies.

Abbreviated abstract: Since 1991 the Community Fishing Project (*previously the Urban Fishery Project)* has aimed to provide quality freshwater fishing opportunities in developed/developing areas throughout the State of Florida, with active programs in Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, and South Florida. Waterbodies within developed areas (often small park ponds) are managed in partnership with city and county organizations to create robust outdoor recreation opportunities. Tools used by FWC biologists to manage and improve community fishing locations include regulation changes at designated Fish Management Areas, stocking programs, habitat enhancement, providing and improving access and promotion through community outreach activities. These small systems also provide excellent opportunities for various research initiatives.

FWC Southwest Region; Community Fishing Project

Throughout 2024, staff in FWC's Southwest Region participated in 19 outreach events including fishing derbies, clinics, talks, trade shows and the annual Florida State Fair held in Tampa. Across the 19 events, nearly 150,000 individuals engaged with FWC educational materials and displays. During many of these events, biologists partnered with FWC staff from other divisions as well as county and state personnel.

Figure 1. Photos from 2024 outreach and education events in FWC's Southwest Region.

At the end of February, DFFM biologists joined staff from Sarasota County to complete a Largemouth Bass sample on the Scherer-Thaxton Preserve in Sarasota County. The entire perimeter of the lake was sampled via 900 second transects. During each 900-second run all bass seen were collected. After collecting length and weight data each fish was marked using a hole-punch and then released to prevent redundant data collection due to unintentional recapture. Once the entire perimeter was sampled, the lake was hobby shocked to increase the sample size. All recaptured bass were released and not re-recorded. The sampling effort yielded 138 Largemouth Bass with an overall CPUE of 1.43 fish/min. The fishery holds many catchable sized bass but lacks a robust size structure. The lake notably lacks substantial submersed or emergent vegetation and has a limited forage base. Current work on the lake is focused on expanding and diversifying submersed aquatic vegetation, with test plantings of Eelgrass and Illinois Pondweed in place. The plants are surviving and will be monitored closely as the growing season progresses. If submersed habitat survives and expands, biologists will push for the stocking of additional forage species like Golden Shiner, Threadfin Shad and/or Lake Chubsucker.

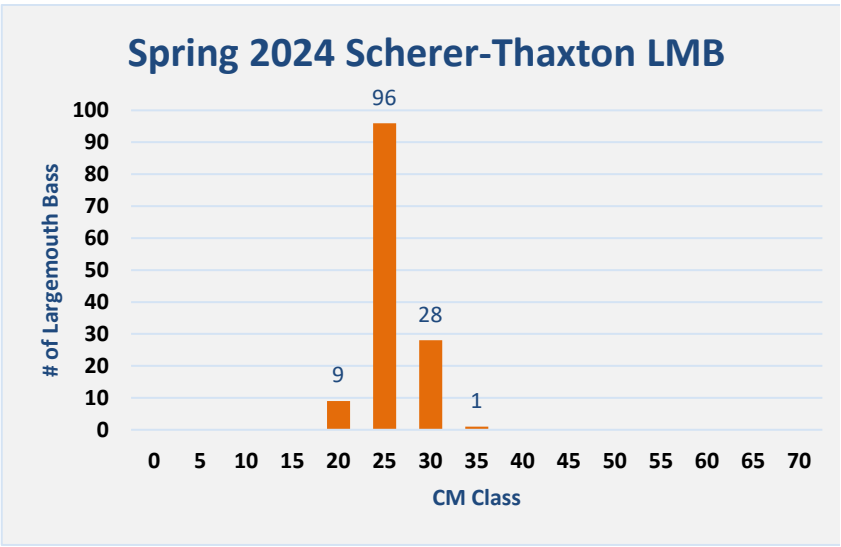


Figure 2. The length-frequency histogram of 138 LMB collected from the Scherer-Thaxton Preserve (left) and a recaptured LMB collected during the hobby shock phase of sampling (right).

In early March, DFFM biologists completed a Largemouth Bass population sample at Walsingham Reservoir in Pinellas County. The lake's perimeter was divided into 7 transects and all 7 were sampled. During each 900-second run all bass seen were collected. During the sampling event, 209 total bass were collected producing an overall CPUE of 1.99 fish/min. The lake boasts clear water and excellent habitat overall with abundances of Eelgrass, Illinois Pondweed, Spatterdock and Bullrush. Although this spring sample yielded excellent numbers of bass, a fall community sample is planned to assess the overall condition of the fishery.

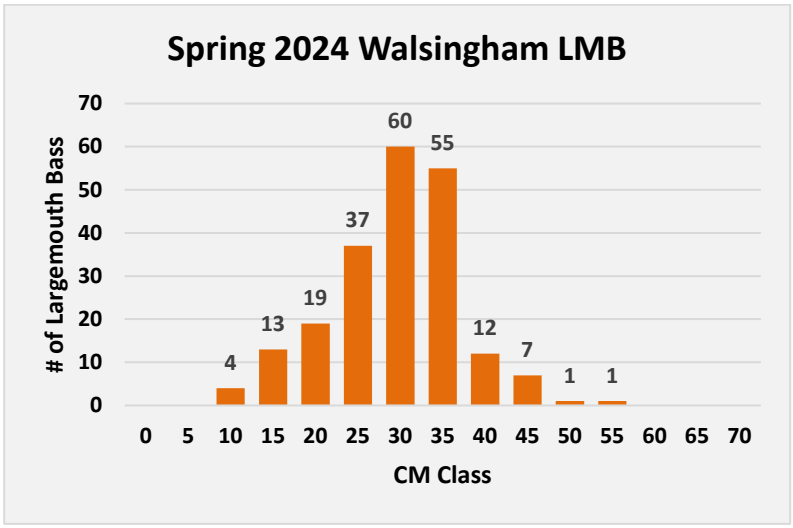
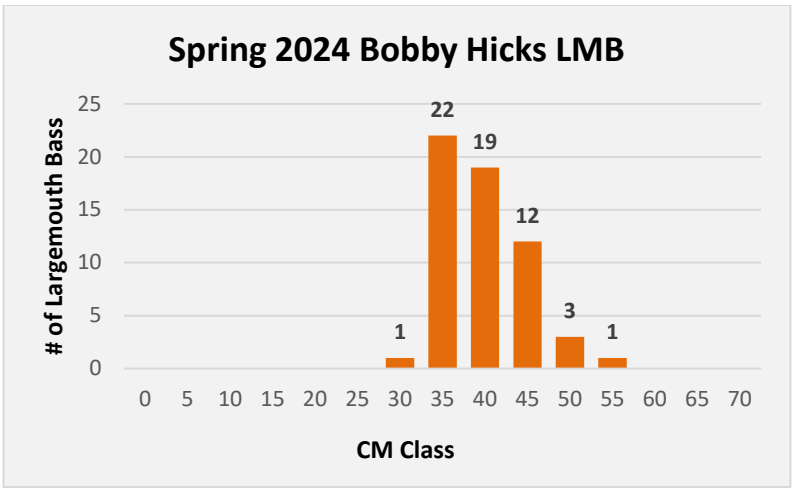


Figure 3. A quality Largemouth Bass (left) and overall length-frequency of bass (right) collected from Walsingham Reservoir in Pinellas County during Spring 2024 LMB sampling.

In late March, DFFM biologists completed a sportfish population sample on Bobby Hicks FMA in Hillsborough County. Boat-mounted electrofishing equipment was used to sample the entire lake's perimeter for Largemouth Bass and Common Snook. During sampling, all snook and bass seen were collected for length and weight analysis. Given the small size of the lake, biologists marked each recorded bass with a hole punch to prevent redundant data collection in the case of recapture. During sampling 62 Largemouth Bass and 62 Common Snook were collected with an overall CPUE of 0.90 fish/min for each species. Although there was a noticeable lack of Largemouth Bass in smaller size classes (<30cm), all fish collected were in excellent condition with an average RW 91.57%. It is likely that the lack of small bass is a direct result of predation from the abundant snook population, with larger bass surviving. The fishery at Bobby Hicks will be monitored annually going forward to develop a more robust picture of the fish community.



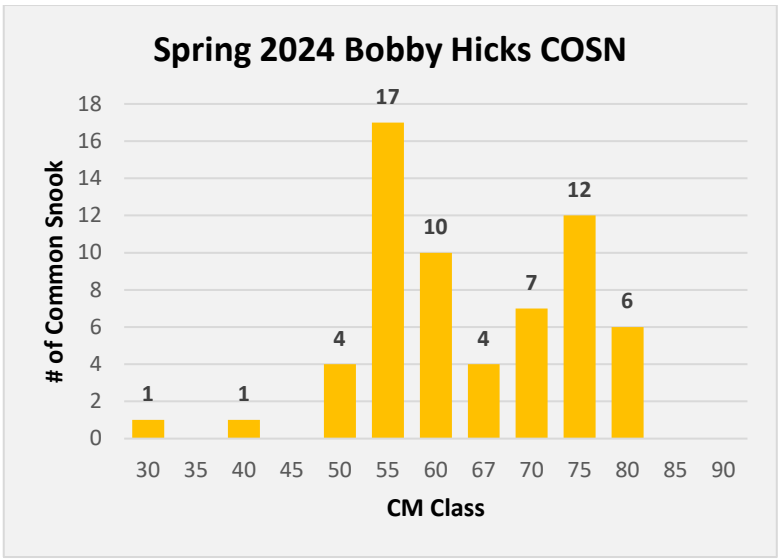
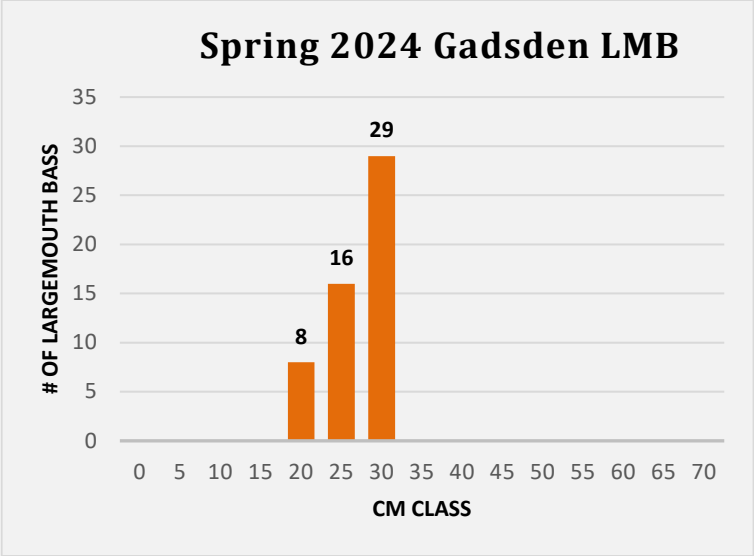


Figure 4. Two Common Snook with the overall length-frequency histogram of snook (left) and the overall length-frequency histogram of bass with a memorable class Largemouth Bass (right) collected from Bobby Hicks FMA in Hillsborough County.

In late March, DFFM biologists completed a Largemouth Bass population sample on Gadsden Park FMA in Hillsborough County. Boat-mounted electrofishing equipment was used to sample the entire lake perimeter. During each 900-second transect, every bass seen was collected for length and weight analysis. Given the small size of the lake, biologists marked each measured fish with a hole punch before release to prevent redundant data collection due to unintentional recapture. The sampling effort yielded 53 total bass with an overall CPUE of 0.98 fish/min. There are fair numbers of catchable-sized fish in the stock and quality size categories, but the lake lacks a complex size structure. There is an abundance of small Bluegill around the entire lake, but very little submersed and emergent vegetation, with woody debris making up most of the habitat. This lack of habitat is a likely reason for the lack of size variation in the bass population. Future work at the lake will focus on test plantings of additional aquatic vegetation, as well as annual fish population sampling to develop a more robust picture of the fishery.



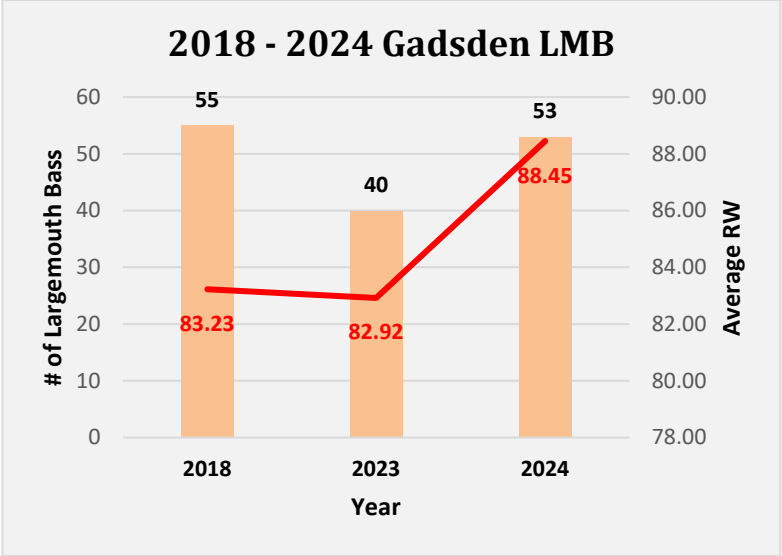


Figure 5. Length-frequency histogram of 53 Largemouth Bass (left) and annual sample size plotted against average relative weight (right) of bass collected from Gadsden FMA in Hillsborough County.

In early April, DFFM biologists travelled to the newly opened Southshore Sportsplex in Apollo Beach for a test planting of Illinois Pondweed. Biologists planted pondweed on a protected shoreline with a sturdy littoral shelf. Three turtle-exclusion cages were installed as well to protect most of the plants from herbivory. The pond will be utilized as a public freshwater fishing site and is set to receive 2,500 Bluegill and 1,500 Redear Sunfish this Fall. A stocking of juvenile Largemouth Bass will take place Spring 2025. Throughout the summer, the plants expanded into dense beds and even colonized an additional cove on the opposite side of the pond. Future habitat work is planned for 2025, including additional plantings of Illinois Pondweed and Giant Bulrush.

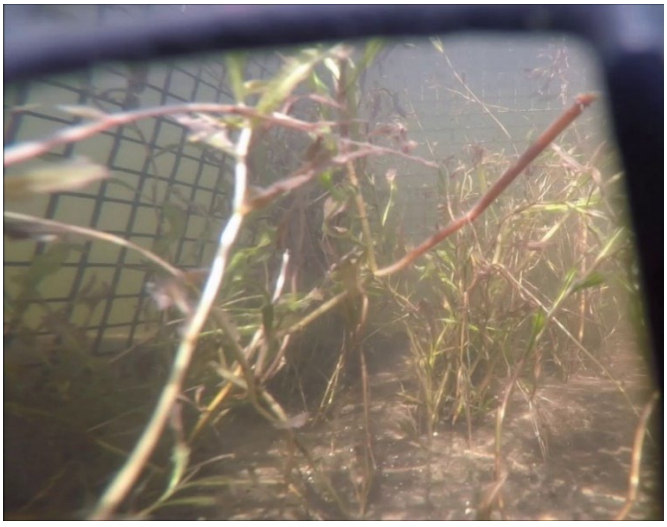


Figure 6. Test planting of Illinois Pondweed within turtle exclusion cages at Southshore Sportsplex in Apollo Beach, Hillsborough County.

Throughout August and September, DFFM biologists travelled to Babcock-Webb WMA to complete repairs on 2 lake aeration systems. The aerations systems are deployed at Marl Pond FMAs 1 and 2 and have been dormant since early 2023. The breaker boxes and compressors sustained storm damage during the 2022 storm season and required extensive repairs. Both systems required extensive repairs and modifications, but biologists were able to reactivate both systems, which now provide dissolved O2 around the clock. However, after running for several weeks, biologists identified problems with flooding and compressor overheating. Plans are in place to overhaul the systems in the next quarter to prevent any future failures. The Marl Pond FMAs provide excellent shoreline fishing access within the Babcock-Webb WMA and are well utilized by anglers. Additional sportfish are stocked annually by biologists, with the next round of panfish and catfish set to arrive in Fall 2024.

Figure 7. Reactivated aeration diffusor (left) and the new compressor configuration (right) at Marl Pond 1 Fish Management Area, Charlotte County.

FWC Southwest Region; Tenoroc Fish Management Area

Tern Trophy Bass Lake:

This phosphate lake at Tenoroc FMA in Lakeland, FL is being used to potentially grow trophy bass. The objective is to have only female bass, as literature has proven that females tend to grow much larger. They will be stocked at low densities to ensure that competition for forage is at a minimum. Since this is an old phosphate mined lake there is little vegetation that grows which is keeps the forage from being able to hide and makes them more vulnerable to the bass. Since they don't have to use energy for reproduction it is assumed that all that extra energy will go towards growth. Fishing pressure will be low as well as we are only open from Friday-Monday and there is a quota for how many anglers can be on the lake at once.

Shop Lake Regulation:

A modified regulation change for largemouth bass was implemented for Shop Lake (26.24 acres). A 16-inch (406 mm) maximum length limit, with no daily bag limit, for largemouth bass replaced the existing catch-and-release regulations on the lake. Additionally, circle hooks were required to be used by anglers when fishing with live bait greater than 3" inches in length. The goal is to maximize trophy largemouth bass production by protecting larger bass, allowing them to achieve the largest size possible, as well as providing more forage available to increase growth rates by removing smaller bass from Shop Lake.

Crappie Stockings:

Six lakes were chosen at the Tenoroc FMA in Lakeland, FL to evaluate the efficacy of supplementally stocking black crappie. Three reclaimed lakes (Cemetery, C, & Picnic) and three un-reclaimed lakes (2, 3, & Shop) were chosen for comparison in this study. This study looks into the enhancement of year-class strength and environmental factors that could influence the stocking success such as system productivity, zooplankton densities, and lake morphometry. Fin clips are being taken to determine the difference between the stocked and native black crappie populations to determine if stocking is an efficient way to boost populations.

FWC Northeast Region; Fish Orlando

During 2024, biologists in FWC's Northwest Region utilized the Fish Orlando waterbodies to conduct an evaluation of Florida Bass stockings. The study aims to evaluate the survival of stocked bass fry compared to catchable sized fish moved from unaccesable ponds. The project is in the early planning stages, but will likely expand to include ponds in other regions of FWC. As part of the project, bass falling between 1-2lbs were stocked into 4 ponds to provide anglers with an immediate fishery.

Biologists in the Northwest Region participated in 10 fishing derbies and education events in the Orlando area during 2024. During these events, biologists worked with state hatchery staff to stcok catcheable sized Channel Catfish to provide a quick bite for participants.

	Date	Location	Event Partner	Time	Anglers Regisgtered	Atendees	Fish Caught Total
2	4/13/2024	Bill Breeze Park	City of Ocoee	10:00-12:00	68	68	22
3	4/20/2024	St. Cloud Borrow Pit	City of St. Cloud	8:00-10:00	30	45	65
4	5/4/2024	Cornerstone Church	Cornerstone Church	7:00-9:00	40	75	115
5	5/11/2024	Central Winds Park	City of Winter Springs	8:00-10:00	25	40	80
6	9/7/2024	Blanchard Park	Orange County	8:00-10:00	100	175	132
7	9/14/2024	Barnett Park	Orange County	8:00-10:00	106	181	95
8	9/21/2024	Bear Creek Recreation Complex	Orange County	8:00-10:00	80	140	288
9	9/22/2024	Bithlo Park	Orange County	8:00-10:00	88	138	302
10	10/5/2024	MLK Jr. Park	City of Winter Park	8:00-10:00	85	150	500
11	10/16/2024	Renaissance Senior Center	Orange County	8:00-10:00	6	6	24

Figure 8. Outreach participation in the Northwest Region by event.

FWC South Region; Community Fishing Project

Current Activities: Currently, two cameras are installed at Tropical Park, two at Plantation Heritage Park in Broward County, two at Caloosa Park in Palm Beach County, and three at Okeeheelee Park also in Palm Beach County. Each camera takes an image to capture anglers every hour. The images are then analyzed to record visible anglers. The cameras at the FMAs are checked every two months to switch out the SD cards as well as any maintenance that needs to be done on the cameras. For outreach, it was discussed that social media posts will be used to get anglers to fish more at our FMAs. To test our advertising/marketing treatment we need to differ meaningfully from any "standard" advertising and marketing that would occur. The proposed treatment consists of a suite of actions, including signage at fishing sites, social media outreach, flyers, or pamphlets at tackle shops, and potentially speaking engagement. Specific recommendations include:

· 1 post/yr FWC main Facebook page

· 1 post/quarter on TrophyCatch Facebook page

· 1 post/mo on FWC Instagram

· 4-6 mentions/yr via FWC mass emails

· 1/month speak with local tackle shops

Four game cameras were purchased during this quarter to replace damaged cameras and used as backups. Batteries and SD Cards were also purchased to maintain the cameras. Four Camera were Replaced in Tropical Park when they were stolen. We placed the cameras higher in the tree to prevent them from being taken or tampered with. One camera in Okeeheelee Park was broken and then replaced as well.

Figure 9. Anglers captured on trail cameras at South Region Fish Management Areas as part of the on-going camera creel project.

Park updates:

Angler Efforts: Our two largest lakes, Tropical and Okeeheelee, get the most angler effort compared to the other two FMA lakes. The most popular spot that had the most anglers this year was Tropical Park. We had a total of 499 anglers that were caught on camera at Tropical. The second most popular spot is Okeeheelee Park with a total of 343 anglers, followed by Plantation Heritage Park with a total of 226 anglers. Caloosa Park had the lowest effort observed with a total of 139 anglers.

Shock and Stock: On April 8th DFFM staff was able to take three shock boats on the Jupiter DOT Lake between the Turnpike and 95. Together we caught a few hundred catchable sized Florida Bass. The fish were transported and released in our two larger FMA's Okeeheelee Park and Tropical Park.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: Georgia

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Tim Bonvechio

Date Submitted: 12/27/2023

Project Name or Description: Ocmulgee PFA

Contact Information:

Name: Tim Bonvechio

Co-Authors: Jackson Theimer

Email: Tim.Bonvechio@dnr.ga.gov

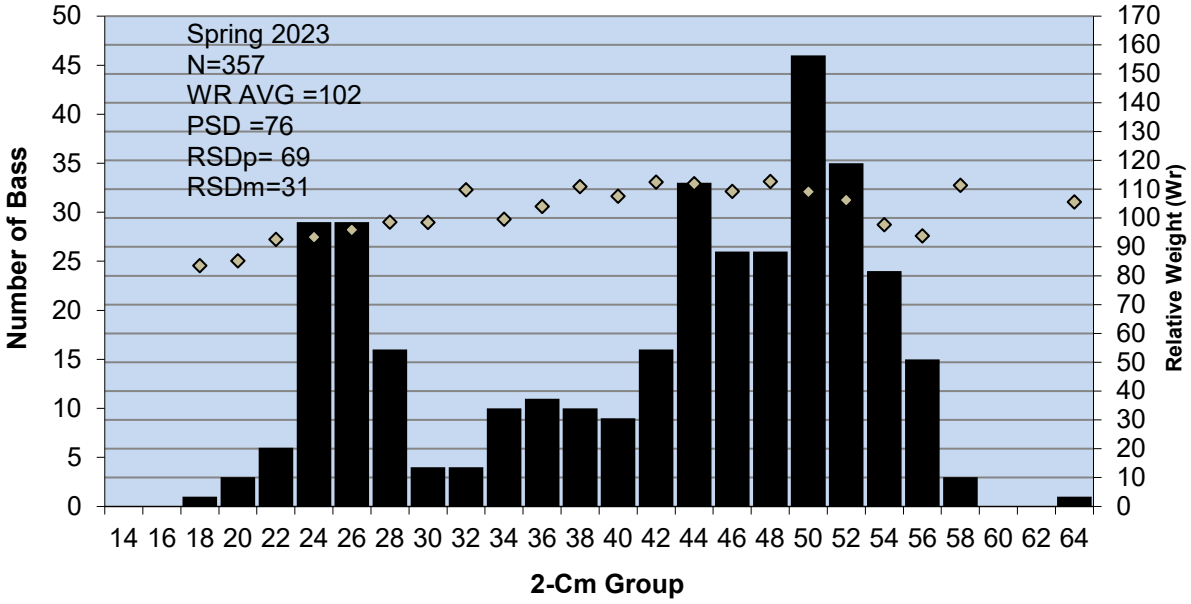
Phone: 912-285-64984

Objective: Manage the current trophy bass lake

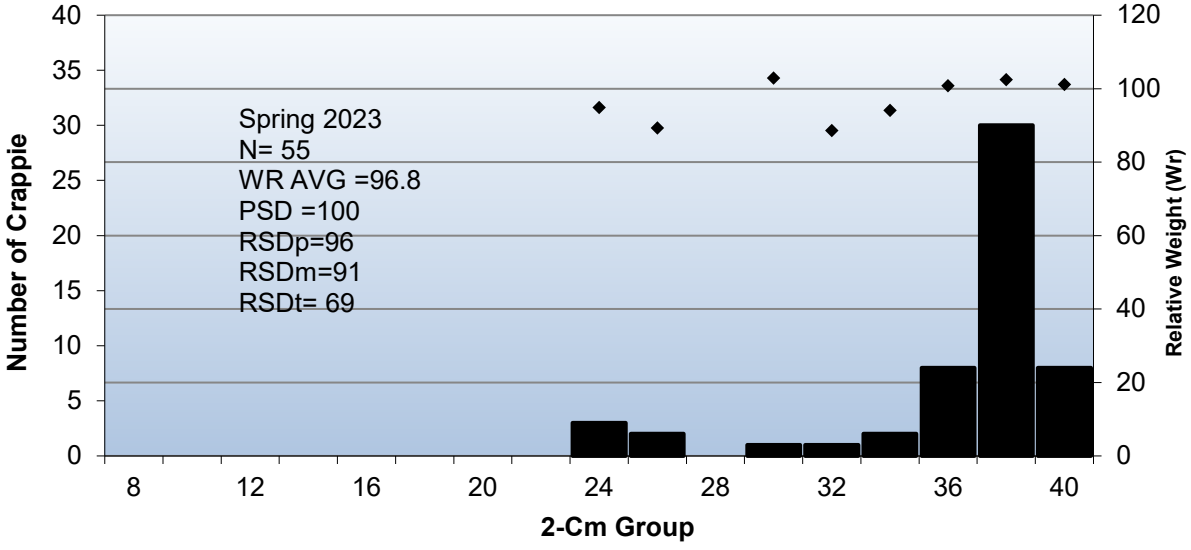
Current Status:

Abbreviated abstract: Ocmulgee PFA is a newer PFA impounded for a second time in January 2017, and is a 106-acre small impoundment. Over the past 6 years, the lake has received a low-density stockings (around 22.9 per acre total) of advance female Georgia strain largemouth bass (Florida allele percentages of 70 to 100%). These female bass average 10 inches or more in length when stocked. The lake is fertilized, and stocked with annually with bluegill, redear sunfish, golden shiners, threadfin shad, and lake chubsuckers for forage to increase largemouth bass growth. The bass are protected from harvest with a catch-and-release regulation to allow the fast-growing females to live long enough to reach trophy size. Unfortunately, reproduction and male bass were documented in the lake and those numbers have grown. Each stocked female bass is PIT tagged to identify individual growth rates and document reproduction. With recruitment, there is approximately 32 or so bass per acre now in the lake. All non-tagged fish will continue to be culled from the population to keep the population in check. Sampling with (Hook and line and Electrofishing) revealed 10 bass over in 10lbs in 2020. In 2021 & 2022, the same gear turned up 4 over 10lbs each year. The current lake record largemouth bass stands at 10lbs & 10.56 ounces, caught by Orville Newlin of Bonaire on May 29, 2020. Several bass larger than the current angling record have been sampled with electrofishing by DNR personnel and record growth has been documented. The year-long access creel survey in 2022 revealed over 15,000 angler hours and the average bass caught was 5.05lbs but the catch rates were low (0.14 bass per hour). The latest lake record White Crappie of 2lbs & 9.76 ounces was caught on November 2, 2022 by Walter Bray of Warner Robins, GA. The crappie catch rate in the creel survey was 0.87 fish per hour.

Ocmulgee PFA Largemouth Bass



Ocmulgee PFA White Crappie



Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division
State Report Format

State Reporting: Kentucky

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Dane Balsman

Date Submitted: November 19, 2024

Project Name or Description of Activities: Overview of the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) Program

Co-Authors: Dane Balsman

Email: dane.balsman@ky.gov

Phone: 502-892-4480

Objective: To develop high quality urban fisheries in Kentucky that lead to high angler use, catch rates, and satisfaction.

Current Status: Ongoing

During 2024, 94,807 catfish (channel catfish and channel catfish x blue catfish hybrids), 117,750 rainbow trout and 18,115 bluegill were stocked in the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) lakes. These stockings of large keeper-size catfish (15-in avg), trout (10-in avg) and bluegill (6-in avg) provide anglers with quality fishing opportunities close to home. The program currently includes 45 lakes in 28 counties. A memorandum of agreement is in place with all lake owners enrolled in the FINs program giving Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) the authority to manage fish populations and set standardized regulations for all lakes in the program.

Advertising and marketing efforts were employed in a continuing attempt to raise awareness of the FINs program, increase participation, and recruit new anglers. Facebook and X notifications were posted around stocking dates. District fisheries biologists also mentioned the FINs program and stocking schedules in their weekly fishing reports. Flyers promoting the FINs program were distributed at boat shows. A one-page advertisement for the FINs program appeared in Kentucky Fishing and Boating Guide. Additionally, a one-page stocking table appeared in the Kentucky Afield calendar. Newspaper, magazine and radio interviews, as well as press releases, were issued to promote the program. All lake owners were notified prior to fish being stocked so they could contact their followers via social media. The FINs website was routinely updated to convey the latest stocking information and list of lakes enrolled in the program. Kiosk posters promoting the FINs program and KDFWR's role in fish management and stocking was displayed at 25 of the 45 lakes. Information on the kiosk posters included the FINs logo, mission

statement, fish stocking dates and quantities, license requirements, fishing regulations, fish identification, poacher hotline, no littering graphic, brief overview of fishery and past sampling, basic knot tying and the location of a rod loaner program if present.

Spring electrofishing is conducted at every lake on an every other year basis. Samples are conducted to gather information on species composition, catch rates, and size structure. Furthermore, tandem hoop nets are used to sample catfish populations in the fall at every lake, every two to three years to monitor standing stock and condition of catfish.

Furthermore, exploitation studies, creel surveys, and use of time-lapse cameras to assess fishing pressure have been used to assess angling pressure at FINs lakes. Time lapse cameras have been deployed at 42 of the 44 lakes for a 12-month period to survey fishing pressure in recent years.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: Kentucky

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Dane Balsman

Date Submitted: November 19, 2024

Project Name or Description: Can channel catfish nesting boxes replace stocking in small impoundments?

Contact Information:

Name: Tom Timmerman

Co-Authors: Jeff Crosby, Marcy Anderson, Jeremy Shiflet

Email: tom.timmerman@ky.gov

Phone: 606-783-8650

Objective: Because channel catfish are not able to produce self-sustaining fisheries in small impoundments, KDFWR has been experimenting with artificial nesting boxes as a replacement to stockings.

Current Status: Completed

Abbreviated abstract: In most small impoundments, channel catfish do not produce a self-sustaining population of fish and anglers are reliant on state agencies to stock fish to maintain a fishable populations. The limiting factor in most instances is a lack of spawning habitat such as: hollow logs, undercut banks and rock crevices. Several other states have experimented with adding artificial spawning habitat in the form of nesting boxes to their lakes and have had success in creating habitat necessary to have self-sustaining fish populations in small impoundments. With hatchery space limited and expense of raising and stocking these fish high, alternative strategies for providing fish to small impoundments is of particular interest to state agencies. If channel catfish can self-sustain through artificial nesting boxes, then hatcheries can be freed up to use space and funding for other projects. The goals of this project are to (1) determine if artificial nesting boxes can create a self-sustaining population of channel catfish and (2) if so what rate of boxes are needed to maintain high quality populations of channel catfish.

Usage of boxes for spawning by channel catfish was observed with eggs and fry observed; however, no recruitment was documented. While the study was ongoing, catfish stockings were paused at these study lakes. Catfish were sampled with hoop nets and trot lines for age and

growth to determine if recruitment was occurring. The density of spawning structure was increased from 0.2 spawning boxes/acre to 0.5 spawning boxes/acre to determine if additional boxes could provide enough fry to increase recruitment, without success. Stocking these lakes with hatchery reared catfish has resumed.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Reporting: North Carolina

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: David Belkoski

Date Submitted:

Project Name or Description: Martin Marietta Park Ponds Survey 2024

Contact Information:

Name: Mason Collins

Co-Authors: T.D. VanMiddlesworth

Email: mason.collins@ncwildlife.org

Phone: 252-702-5548

Objective: Evaluate the fish communities at Martin Marietta Park

Current Status: Complete

Abbreviated abstract: Martin Marietta Park (MMP) is 888 acres along side of the Neuse River and is managed by the City of New Bern. The park is located near South Glenburnie Drive in New Bern, NC. The park has 3 ponds that were created through quarry operations. Pond 1 is the largest (382 acres) and is closest to the entrance gate. Pond 2 is adjacent to the Neuse River and is 148 acres. Pond 3 is 93 acres and located at the rear of the park. Pond 1 and 2 are both oligotrophic and are very clear. Pond 3 is eutrophic and is receiving nutrients that the other two ponds are not. The MMP ponds were surveyed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) during May 22-23, 2024, to evaluate the fish communities at MMP. Each pond was sampled with shoreline electrofishing using a boat-mounted electrofishing unit (Smith-Root Apex, 120Hz, 7000-9000W). Total electrofishing effort was 3.05 hours. Game fish species were measured for total length (TL) to the nearest millimeter, weighed to the nearest gram, and released. Other fish species were documented and also released. Water quality parameters were measured before electrofishing. Water quality characteristics were within the normal range for Ponds 1 and 2. Water quality characteristics for Pond 3 showed elevated salinity and conductivity. Pond 2 can provide excellent angling opportunities currently. The Bluegill and Largemouth Bass populations are at levels that are indicative of good fishing. Anecdotal reports suggest that the other two ponds provide excellent trophy fishing. While our survey in Pond 1 does indicate lower fish abundance, it could be reflective of the limitation of electrofishing to shallow water. We were unable to sample the large deep areas of Pond 1 that may hold a larger population of target species, not susceptible to electrofishing. Given the uncertainty about Pond 1 and Pond 3 fish populations, angler reports of trophy fish, and fishing

pressure, the City of New Bern requested harvest closure regulations for Largemouth Bass and Striped Bass at MMP which was implemented by the NCWRC in 2020. The City of New Bern has requested the continuation of Largemouth Bass and Striped Bass harvest closure at MMP in 2024. While our recent assessment does not currently suggest a harvest closure on Largemouth Bass to be biologically necessary, continuation of the current restrictions fits the social needs of the community. Striped Bass were not collected during our survey and current regulations in the Neuse River do not allow for harvest, so we also recommend the continuation of harvest closure on Striped Bass in MMP.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

Project Name or Description: Cabin Lake Survey 2024

Contact Information:

Name: Mason Collins

Co-Authors: T.D. VanMiddlesworth

Email: mason.collins@ncwildlife.org

Phone: 252-702-5548

Objective: Evaluate the fish community at Cabin Lake

Current Status: Complete

Abbreviated abstract: Cabin Lake is a 75-acre reservoir on Cabin Creek, a tributary of the Northeast Cape Fear, and is managed by Duplin County. The park is located off Hwy 111 between Pink Hill and Beulaville. Anecdotal reports as well as results from recent fishing events caused Duplin County to have concerns about the fish populations in Cabin Lake. Cabin Lake was surveyed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) on May 30, 2024, to evaluate the fish community. The lake was sampled with shoreline electrofishing using a boat-mounted electrofishing unit (Smith-Root Apex, 120Hz, 7000-9000W). Total electrofishing effort included 4 transects for a total of 1.14 hours. Game fish species were measured for total length (TL) to the nearest millimeter and released. Other fish species were documented and released. Water quality parameters were measured before electrofishing. Water quality characteristics were within normal ranges. Cabin Lake can currently provide sufficient angling opportunities. The Bluegill and Largemouth Bass populations are at levels that are indicative of good fishing. The transects nearest the boat ramp and dam resulted in the fewest catches. This area is easily accessible to anglers but has very little fish habitat. High fishing pressure coupled with lack of habitat could be the cause of poor fishing conditions. We recommend placing large woody debris within casting distance of the bank, particularly in accessible areas such as the dam and boat ramp, to increase fishing opportunities. This should include large trees and brush piles to provide habitat for Largemouth Bass as well as Bluegill and their forage.

Project Name or Description: Lake Glenwood Survey 2024

Contact Information:

Name: Mason Collins

Co-Authors: T.D. VanMiddlesworth

Email: mason.collins@ncwildlife.org

Phone: 252-702-5548

Objective: Evaluate the fish community at Lake Glenwood

Current Status: Complete

Abbreviated abstract: Lake Glenwood is a 14-acre lake that flows into Hardee Creek, a tributary of the Tar River, and is located off Eastern Pines Road in Greenville, North Carolina. The county of Pitt recently acquired the lake from the Lake Glenwood Homeowners Association to update the lake's dam to be compliant with the Pitt County Hazard Mitigation Plan and develop a Pitt County Public Community Park near the lake's dam. The county of Pitt currently allows public fishing at the lake and is interested in hosting an annual kids' fishing event. Additionally, the county of Pitt is interested in partnering with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) to make Lake Glenwood a Public Fishing Area (PFA) and build a public fishing pier. Anecdotal reports indicated quality fishing opportunities may be present. Lake Glenwood was surveyed by the NCWRC on June 4th, 2024, to evaluate the fish community. The lake was sampled with shoreline electrofishing using a boat-mounted electrofishing unit (Smith-Root Apex, 120Hz, 7000-9000W). Total electrofishing effort included 2 transects for a total of 0.57 hours. Game fish species were measured for total length (TL) to the nearest millimeter and released. Other fish species were documented and released. Water quality parameters were measured prior to electrofishing. Water quality characteristics were within normal ranges. Lake Glenwood can currently provide quality angling opportunities for preferred and memorable Largemouth Bass. However, our survey did find a large population of stock and sub-stock sized Bluegill. While not enough information was collected during our survey to determine the cause of the abundance of small Bluegill, we can infer that the population may be stunted. To affirm our suspicions of a stunted Bluegill population, an age-length key on Bluegill would have to be created for Lake Glenwood. Two separate options could be pursued from the conclusion of a stunted Bluegill population:

1. Managers could maintain the current bass fishery that exists in Lake Glenwood and Bluegill would not provide a quality fishery. This would require no management changes.

2. Managers could increase opportunities for anglers to catch stock and quality size Bluegill and catch more abundant, but smaller, Largemouth Bass. This would require a low-density stocking of Largemouth Bass to increase predation on Bluegill and thus allow Bluegill to reach larger sizes.

Whichever goal is decided upon by the county of Pitt, NCWRC believes this property would be a good candidate for a PFA due to the quality angling opportunity as well as the accessibility to a diverse population in the surrounding area.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

Project Name or Description: Grimesland PFA Survey 2024

Contact Information:

Name: Mason Collins

Co-Authors: T.D. VanMiddlesworth

Email: mason.collins@ncwildlife.org

Phone: 252-702-5548

Objective: Evaluate the fish community at Lake Glenwood

Current Status: Complete

Abbreviated abstract: Grimesland Public Fishing Area (PFA) consists of two ponds adjacent to the Tar River off North Grimesland Bridge Road near Grimesland, NC. The ponds have not been surveyed in the past and recent interest in making the area a PFA prompted these surveys. The two ponds will be referred to as the Southwest Pond (17 acres) and the Northeast Pond (6 acres). Grimesland PFA was surveyed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) on August 13, 2024, to evaluate the fish community. The ponds were sampled with shoreline electrofishing using a boat-mounted electrofishing unit (Smith-Root Apex, 120Hz, 7000-9000W). Total electrofishing effort on the Southwest Pond included 5 transects for a total of 1.32 hours. On the Northeast Pond total electrofishing effort included 2 transects totaling 0.52 hours. Game fish species were measured for total length (TL) to the nearest millimeter and weighed to the nearest gram and released. Other fish species were documented and released. Water quality parameters were measured before electrofishing. Water quality characteristics exhibited elevated conductivity in the Southwest Pond but was otherwise normal. Water quality characteristics in the Northeast Pond were normal. The Southwest Pond had much lower catch rates, however we believe this is due to the significantly elevated conductivity possibly due to the flooding of the Tar River. During the sampling period, the Southwest Pond was connected to the Tar River through the floodplain. We believe this caused the elevated conductivity and made achieving high CPUE impossible. This could have also caused the gap in moderately sized Largemouth Bass and Redear Sunfish as they likely retreated into the floodplain. A repeated sampling date may be conducted in the future when water levels recede. Grimesland PFA can currently provide sufficient angling opportunities. Of particular significance are the high occurrence of preferred length Largemouth Bass and memorable length Redear Sunfish and Black Crappie. Relative weights show the fish in the ponds are healthy and visual observations during electrofishing indicate a sufficient supply of forage for game species of interest. Catfish abundance was relatively low and if the managers want to establish a catfish fishery we suggest stocking the Northeast Pond with Channel Catfish. Due to the Southwest Pond's connection to the Tar River through the floodplain during high water events, we advise against any stockings in the Southwest Pond. The non-wooded areas of the ponds lack any structure to concentrate fish. Anglers may

benefit from managers placing structure on the pond edges with cleared banks. We recommend placing large woody debris within casting distance of the bank on the cleared edges of the ponds, to increase fishing opportunities. This should include large diameter trees and brush piles to provide habitat for sunfish species and their forage.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Reporting: North Carolina

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: David Belkoski

Date Submitted:

Project Name or Description: S.R. Farmer Lake Largemouth Bass Survey

Contact Information:

Name: Seth Mycko

Co-Authors: Daniel Morrill

Email: seth.mycko@ncwildlife.org

Phone: 336-534-0019

Objective: To monitor the Largemouth Bass population in S. R. Farmer Lake

Current Status: Complete

Abbreviated abstract: S.R. Farmer Lake is usually sampled every 7-8 years for routine monitoring. However, in 2022 hybrid Striped Bass were stocked in Farmer Lake to evaluate their potential as a tool to improve stunted Black Crappie populations. Additional sampling of the Largemouth Bass population was implemented every other year in order to assess any changes in the population resulting from this introduction. The Largemouth Bass population at S.R. Farmer Lake remains in outstanding condition with population metrics nearly identical to previous surveys. A robust adult population exists where 88% of Largemouth Bass encountered were greater than age 3. Younger Largemouth Bass (<age 2) were rare during this survey year but not uncommon. This may be due to sampling bias associated with shoreline electrofishing and not necessarily due to low recruitment. The mean relative weight was 87 with a few outliers exceeding 110, which is typical of small Piedmont reservoirs in NC. Growth is appropriate for a small reservoir, where 40% of age-4 Largemouth Bass were ≥400 mm TL. The von Bertalanffy growth parameter estimates were acceptable and comparable to the previous survey. Overall, this population is steady and consistently produces larger-than-average fish for a lake of this surface acreage (<500 ha). It was recommended to maintain the current size and creel regulations and to continue monitoring Largemouth Bass populations every other year. It was also recommended to enhance the littoral zone of the reservoir by planting native aquatic vegetation throughout the lake.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: Oklahoma

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Dalton Norris

Date Submitted: 1/21/2025

Contact Information:

Name: Dalton Norris

Co-Authors:

Email: Dalton.norris@odwc.ok.gov

Phone: (580) 327-7029

Project Name or Description: Department Lakes

Objective: To provide and maintain a healthy public fishery

Current Status: Ongoing

Abbreviated abstract:

Department Lakes are owned and controlled by ODWC for the public to have access for fishing. These lakes are sampled in the spring for largemouth bass and in the summer for channel catfish to assess and improve the fishery. Habitat has been added to these lakes in the form of cedar trees, brush piles, and various forms of artificial structures. Vegetation control has also been carried out on a few lakes to create easier fishing access for anglers.

Project Name or Description: Close to Home Creel Surveys

Objective: To assess angler usage and satisfaction of close to home lakes

Current Status: Ongoing

Abbreviated abstract:

An OKC trout creel was conducted at Route 66 Park Pond and Edwards Park Pond in Dec. 2023-Feb. 2024. In total, 486 creel surveys were conducted, with 696 anglers being interviewed between the two ponds. A large majority of the anglers were men (93%), and 12% of the anglers were children. Route 66 had the most surveys (n=123), and Edwards had the most surveys from an angler who had been

previously surveyed (n=104). Route 66's largest age group was 65-75, and Edwards was 46-55. Typically, the anglers fished the pond that was closest to their home zip code. Most anglers had not caught any fish at the time of the interview but intended to harvest a limit. The mostly commonly encountered license types were the Oklahoma annual fishing license (40%), and the annual city permit (47%). Fishing satisfaction was most often a 3 or greater (out of 5). Anglers did not identify many fishery improvement needs. The current trout limit of three fish is acceptable to a majority of anglers. The majority of anglers had an above satisfactory rating for both fisheries.

Bickham-Rudkin Park Pond is an 8-acre pond located in Edmond, OK. A creel survey was conducted from April – Aug. 2024. One hundred thirty-nine surveys were conducted with 215 anglers. Eighty-four percent of the parties were male only, and 31% of the parties had children fishing. Most anglers were opportunist fishermen, but if pressed on a specific species, they would target Largemouth Bass. However, sunfish were caught the most often. Eighty-two percent of the anglers planned to catch and release, and 8% wanted to take fish home for consumption Most of the fishermen were satisfied with the pond and did not think any change was needed for the pond or the park.

Project Name or Description: Close to Home Fishing Surveys

Objective: To assess the status of the close to home fisheries.

Current Status: Ongoing

Abbreviated abstracts:

Mitch Park Pond was surveyed by spring electrofishing in 2024 to assess the Sunfish population. Mitch Park pond was previously sampled by electrofishing in the spring of 2018, but it was drained in 2021 for cattail removal. No other sampling was done before or after the pond was drained. The fishery consists of various sunfish species and Channel Catfish. Regular sampling and stocking of Largemouth Bass and Bluegill Sunfish is recommended.

Little River Park Ponds were surveyed by spring electrofishing in 2024 and summer hoop netting in 2024 to assess the fish population in both ponds. Both Little River Ponds had not been sampled since 2013 renovations. There was also a fish kill in the summer of 2024 that was attributed to a low-oxygen conditions due to an algae bloom. The fishery consists of various sunfish species, Channel Catfish, White Crappie and Yellow Bullhead. Stocking of Largemouth Bass and Bluegill are recommended.

Bickham-Rudkin Park Pond is an 8-acre pond located in Edmond, OK. It was surveyed in 2024 using boat electrofishing, hoop netting, and trap netting. The largest Largemouth Bass was around 400mm (15in), and the relative weights were all above acceptable. One thousand five hundred forty-eight Bluegill were caught during 2024 hoop netting. Their relative weights were all above acceptable. Additionally, Black Crappie was caught in higher abundance than White Crappie. Black Crappie had a catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of 29.44, while White Crappie's CPUE was 21.18. Channel Catfish were caught in low abundance. Those results were compared to the previous sampling events: 2004 & 2013 electrofishing, 2020 hoop netting & 2020 trap netting. Regular monitoring is recommended for Largemouth Bass,

Bluegill, and Crappie. Additional sampling during spring or fall seasons is recommended for Channel Catfish.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: South Carolina

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Preston Chrisman

Date Submitted: 11/19/2024

Project Name or Description: SCDNR State Lakes Program

Contact Information:

Co-Authors:

Email: chrismanp@dnr.sc.gov

Phone: 803-280-0922

Objective: Provide diverse angling opportunities for the public

Current Status: Ongoing

Abbreviated abstract: The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) currently manages 20 lakes under the State Lakes Program. These lakes range in size from 1 to 400 acres and display an array of management intensity levels due to a host of factors. Of the 20 lakes, 9 are limed and fertilized and there have been recent nuisance vegetation issues (Cattails, Bladderwort, Primrose, Parrot Feather, and Water Hyacinth) at 6 lakes, but these were sprayed and appear to be under control. Lake Paul Wallace suffered a catastrophic failure of its dam and the dike that separated the fishing side from the boating side of the facility in summer 2024 following a rain event. Estimates to fix the numerous issues that have arisen exceed $24 million at this point. Lake Brown is hyper-eutrophic and had struggled with cyanobacteria blooms in summer; some were severe enough to cause SCDHEC lake advisories in recent years, but no such advisories were issued in 2024. To help combat cyanobacteria outbreaks, 2024 saw the deployment of a Sentinel AIQ ultrasonic algae mitigation device; preliminary results have been promising. Fish attractor sites are maintained on most State Lakes and receive periodic replenishment in the form of Christmas trees, bamboo, or artificial structures.

The lakes' sport fish populations receive varying levels of monitoring and management due to manpower and budgetary restrictions. Some lakes are sampled annually while others are not able to be sampled effectively at all. Of the lakes that have had their fish populations sampled in recent years, most are displaying bass-crowded conditions. There are several trophy bass lakes in the State Lakes Program as well, but very few that display balanced conditions. Finally, there are a handful of impoundments that are little more than put-and-take catfish ponds. Many of the lakes receive annual Channel Catfish stockings as well as supplemental Bluegill and Redear Sunfish stockings to improve panfish fisheries and bass forage in the lakes. Threadfin Shad have been stocked into four of the lakes and early returns look promising.

Trying to combat the crowding of Largemouth Bass in these lakes is a top priority for lake managers but most efforts have been unsuccessful so far. However, SCDNR wants to provide a wide array of angling opportunities and it is hoped that some lakes can be corrected to display balanced conditions while still maintaining some lakes in bass-crowded conditions for trophy panfish opportunities. Preliminary discussions have occurred within SCDNR to determine if we would like to try a female-only Largemouth Bass lake, following GADNR's recipe. Having clusters of State Lakes where there is at least one lake that is bass-crowded and one lake that is a trophy bass fishery should appeal to widest range of anglers and keep participation rates high.

The two lakes that underwent intensive mechanical removals of largemouth bass to attempt to correct bass crowded conditions (https://seafwa.org/journal/2023/sportfish-population-characteristics-following-mechanical-largemouth-bass-removal-two) are both displaying similar states of balance as they were at the conclusion of that study, even though no additional removals have occurred. The fish population in the lake where the removal efforts were more successful (Lake Oliphant) is still showing characteristics that indicate a balance somewhere in between the "balanced" and "trophy bass" sides of the spectrum.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: South Carolina

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Preston Chrisman

Date Submitted: 11/19/2024

Project Name or Description: Outreach and inter-agency cooperation.

Contact Information:

Name: Preston Chrisman

Co-Authors:

Email: chrismanp@dnr.sc.gov

Phone: 803-280-0922

Objective: Provide pond management information to the public. Host youth fishing rodeos. Sample small impoundments that are not in the State Lakes Program.

Current Status: Ongoing

Abbreviated abstract: Budget reductions eliminated SCDNR's ability to conduct on-site pond management consult visits many years ago. Now, biologists can still perform nuisance vegetation identification and control sessions as well as water quality tests, but the pond owners must bring the samples to DNR offices. All regional offices perform these consulting sessions with pond owners and can provide recommendations on herbicide treatments, grass carp stocking rates, pond construction, and fish population management. Many pond owners are served every year in this fashion in-person or via email or phone conversations.

There are 15 youth fishing rodeos put on by SCDNR every year, including three that are hosted on lakes in the State Lakes Program. Channel Catfish are stocked in the week leading up to each rodeo and all kids that participate receive a rod and reel and a tackle kit at no cost and lunch is served to all of the kids and their parents. Prizes are awarded for the biggest and smallest catfish caught and raffle prizes are also given away during each event.

SCDNR biologists also monitor sport fish populations and stock fish into small impoundments that are not within the State Lakes Program. These lakes can include lakes owned by SC State Parks, the US Forest Service, and/or local municipalities that provide angling opportunities for the public.

State Reporting: Tennessee

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Mike Bramlett

Date Submitted: 11/22/2024

Project Name or Description: 2024 Small Impoundments Report

Contact Information:

Co-Authors: Regional Biologist/Managers

Email: Mike.Bramlett@tn.gov

Phone: 615-781-6592

Small impoundments in Tennessee consist of work with Agency Lakes, Community Fishing Program Lakes, along with the Winter Trout Program, Youth Fishing derbies, and Private Pond assistance.

Agency Lakes Program (ALP)

TWRA currently maintains nineteen public family fishing impoundments ranging from 20 to 985 acres, and are managed for maximum yield of bass, bream, crappie, and catfish. Three impoundments have the addition of hybrid stripe bass, and walleye. Four lakes are under concessionaire operations. The largest lake (Halford) is multi-use having both a wake and no-wake zones.

Most of the activities were routine, such as sampling and maintenance, but much was done to improve facilities. ADA improvements on walkways, restrooms and fishing piers were made at five lakes. Fish habitat/attractors were added, or sites refurbished on six lakes. Materials/designs consisted of commercial, corrugated PVC/concrete blocks, spider buckets, brush and stone piles, and stake beds. Hoop nets and trot lines were used to help evaluate catfish reproduction after catfish spawning structures were added to three lakes. While some catfish reproduction has been recorded, there has been no noticeable increase in recruitment.

While not directly in the ALP, fisheries staff assists with the management of state park lakes, which are under the control of the Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). Most of these impoundments are not currently intensively managed, and much of the work centers on surveys, creel/size limits, stocking, and aquatic vegetation control. Fishing regulations are being reviewed in an effort to standardize creel and size limits between agency lakes and state park lakes. Habitat improvements, mapping, fish stockings, and age and growth analysis will be conducted in 2025. In addition to three agency lakes, the agency has partnered with TDEC to intensively manage three lakes to improve the fisheries as part of the Tennessee fishing trail (Bill Dance Signature Lakes) lakes. Work continues with fish population assessments, management

plans, fish stockings, fish feeders, habitat enhancements and facility improvements on four additional lakes.

Fish species stocked included Bluegill, (including Coppernose), Blue catfish, Blacknose Crappie, Channel catfish, Golden Shiner, FLMB, Hybrid Stripe Bass, Redear sunfish, Threadfin shad, and Walleye.

Community Fishing Program (CFP)

The CFP continues to bring fishing opportunities to municipal/urban areas as well as suburban and rural communities by working with local/county government and community organizations. It seeks to increase the number of anglers with access to fishing "closer-to-home". There are currently 18 impoundments in the program ranging from 2 to 45 acres. Most are managed using statewide regulations for bass and bream, with stocked species consisting of channel catfish and/or trout. Our R3 coordinators held multiple "how to and get out and fish" events at ten lakes during April through August.

Multiple lakes are scheduled to receive habitat improvements, fish feeders, stocking, age and growth analysis, and routine electrofishing in 2025. Forty habitat structures (from Mossback, Pond King, and American Fish Tree) were installed in four lakes, along with six solar-powered fish feeders from Texas Hunter Products.

Work also continues to identify small impoundments in "distressed" counties that could be enhanced for fishing. This includes investigating access, amenities, fish population structure, habitat, and economic status of the surrounding area.

Winter Trout Program

The program stocked approximately 32 small impoundments across the state with rainbow trout during the months of December through March. These lakes are generally less than 10 acres with easy access. Approximately 65,000 rainbow trout, averaging 10 inches were stocked during this four-month period, with a daily creel limit of seven, and no size limit. A trout license is required in addition to a regular fishing license (except for a Sportsman's License). Angler use has been steady or increasing, with trail cameras being used on multiple lakes to estimate angler effort/use. Creel surveys are also being conducted on several impoundments.

Youth Fishing Derbies

Nearly 58,000 pounds of channel catfish (.75 – 2.0 lbs. each) were stocked into 78 waterbodies/community lakes that had organized youth fishing derby/event, along with five community fishing lakes without an organized fishing event. An estimated 11,000 youth participated in the organized fishing derbies/events with approximately 72% catching at least one fish.

Private Pond Assistance

Technical assistance is provided to private pond owners over the phone, printed materials, and website. Onsite assistance is given on a case-by-case basis depending on the issue, because of limited time and manpower. Most issues are with aquatic vegetation, water quality and “pond balance”. Otherwise, they are given contact information of private pond consultants. The agency no longer stocks fish into private waters but provides those requesting fish stockings contact information of private pond stockers.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division
State Report

State Reporting: Texas

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Cynthia Fox Holt

Co-Authors:

Email: cynthia.fox@tpwd.texas.gov

Phone: 817-732-0761

Date Submitted: 11/22/2024

Project Name or Description of Activities: Texas has over 1,000 public small impoundments that range in size from 0.1 – 500 acres. These are typically controlled by local governments (cities, townships, and counties), who partner with us to manage recreational fishing opportunities across the state. Many small impoundments are focal points in small communities and serve as a great attraction for residents while, others are spread throughout major metropolitan areas and serve as close-to-home opportunities for our fastest-growing demographics. These waters play an important role in our state's R3 initiatives. The degree of management varies among sites, ranging from simply "put-and-take" seasonal fisheries to intensively managed diversified angling opportunities. Many of these receive fish stockings to sustain fishing activity. Species stocked in small impoundments were mainly Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout, Lone Star Bass, and sunfishes, providing excellent fishing opportunities for Texas anglers. Lone Star Bass are 2nd generation offspring of ShareLunker Largemouth Bass females that are >13 pounds.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) partners with waterbody controlling authorities, local vendors and interest groups and educational institutions to plan, fund and complete management activities on small impoundments across Texas. Management activities in small impoundments in 2024 consisted of fish community and vegetation surveys, vegetation treatments, fish stockings, construction and installation of spawning structures, shoreline stabilization, aerator installation to improve water quality, and habitat enhancement with native vegetation and various types of artificial structures. These projects are often partially or wholly supported by TPWD Conservation License Plate (CLP) or Habitat and Angler Access Program (HAAP) funds. Four HAAP funded projects were initiated on small impoundments in 2024. Eight CLP funded projects were completed in 2024. For more information about CLPs, HAAP, and the projects they fund, please visit: www.conservationplate.org and https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/habitats/habitat-angler-access-program/.

Objective: Small Lakes

Current Status: Small lakes are typically between 75 and 500 acres, excluding those completely enclosed within state parks. These reservoirs may have regulated access and more restrictions than our larger reservoirs to preserve water quality and wildlife populations. When necessary, TPWD will manage specific objectives in these small lakes, like large reservoirs, by monitoring, regulating, and restoring fish habitat and improving angler access to enhance fishing opportunities. Supplemental stockings may not be required for these self-sustaining populations.

Management activities on small lakes in 2024 consisted of fish community assessments via nighttime and daytime electrofishing surveys, vegetation assessment and control projects, habitat enhancement using native plants, rock (riprap and gravel), artificial structures, and fish stockings.

Objective: Community Fishing Lakes (CFLs)

Current Status: These ponds are defined as a public impoundment ≤75 acres located totally within incorporated city limits, or a municipal, city, county, or state park. CFLs are subject to special regulations for fish harvest and fishing gear. When fishing at CFLs, fishing is by pole and line only with only two poles per angler, and anglers are allowed to harvest 5 fish (all species combined). There are approximately 850 known CFLs in the state, with numbers growing every year. Most CFLs are minimally managed for local anglers seeking a quick experience around their communities. Many CFLs receive annual stockings of Channel Catfish and Rainbow Trout, with a significant number of these stockings tied to outreach fishing events, sponsored by partners. Depending on size and popularity; some CFLs are managed more intensively to provide diverse fisheries objectives to attract a spectrum of angler preferences. Some have received supplemental Lone Star Bass and sunfish stockings, habitat and access enhancements, tailored regulations, and highlight less traditional species in smaller impoundments.

Management activities on CFLs in 2024 consisted of fish community assessments via daytime electrofishing surveys, vegetation assessment and control projects, habitat enhancement using native plants, rock (riprap and gravel), and artificial structures, and fish stockings.

Objective: Neighborhood Fishin' Program

Current Status: The Neighborhood Fishin' Program (NFP) is our premiere urban fishing program developed to bring quality fishing close to home. It consists of 18 (1-6 acre) CFLs located in parks of 11 major metropolitan areas. Ponds are stocked on a seasonal, biweekly schedule with Channel Catfish or Rainbow Trout eleven months of the year to maintain a 'put-and-take' fishery. This program is supported by numerous local government and private partners, including Gulf States Toyota and Sport Fish Restoration. Total program operating costs are ~$500K per year at current levels. Fishing regulations are restrictive, intended to ensure success among as many anglers as possible. Sites have been carefully selected to provide diverse amenities to attract families and recruit new anglers to fishing. The program has been running strong for 20 years. In November 2024, TPWD completed the angler survey portion of the Neighborhood Fishin' Program assessment. The objectives of the assessment are to evaluate success of the program in terms of child participation and new angler creation and to assess

overall angling participation, angling success, and gauge angler expectations. Results of the will be reported in the 2025 report. For more information on NFPs, please visit: www.neighborhoodfishin.org.

Objective: Outreach and Research

Current Status: TPWD participates in a few hundred public outreach events each year, many of which pertain to youth and family fishing, continuing education courses for Master Naturalist groups, "How to Fish" workshops, and career and field days with schools from kindergarten to college. In addition to these in-person outreach activities, most Inland Fisheries districts utilize social media (Facebook and/or Instagram) as a tool to reach and educate our current and future anglers about Texas' natural resources. Since management reports are not often written for small impoundments, social media is a great way to communicate with Texas anglers about management activities for CFLs and small impoundments.

Small Impoundments Technical Committee

American Fisheries Society – Southern Division

State Report Format

State Reporting: Virginia

Name of Representative to Technical Committee: Steve Owens

Date Submitted: 12/20/2024

Project Name or Description: Small Impoundment Bathymetry Mapping

Contact Information:

Name: Steve Owens

Co-Authors: Justin Heflin

Email: steve.owens@dwr.virginia.gov or justin.heflin@dwr.virginia.gov

Phone: 276-783-4860

Objective: Bathymetry data will be collected and made public for DWR owned/managed small impoundments.

Current Status: Ongoing

Abbreviated abstract: DWR staff has been collecting bathymetry data using newer sonar technology to create bathymetric maps that will be made available both electronically and in print to the angling public. Currently, close to a dozen waters have been surveyed and data is being processed into a GIS format. A timeline for project completion has not been established as the protocol is still under development for dispersal to staff around the state.