MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR MANIPULATING FISH POPULATIONS

Increasing Carrying Capacity

- Fertilization
- Feeding
- Pond Aeration

Fertilization

- Liquid, powder or granular
- pH and total alkalinity (East Texas)
- Muddy water
- Aquatic vegetation
- Water exchange
Supplemental Feeding

- Floating fish rations
- Automatic feeders
- Multiple feedings
- Multiple locations

Supplemental Stocking

- Florida bass (if appropriate)
- Channel and/or blue catfish (really—it's ok!)
- Supplemental forage species
- Consider the use of nursery ponds to produce fish for stocking when appropriate!
Supplemental Forages

- Bluegill can be supplemented-but not replaced!
- Redear sunfish-great for East Texas
- Shad (threadfins or gizzards?)
- Tilapia-winterkill?
- Avoid stocking hybrid sunfish as forage
- If adult bass are present-no fathead minnows
- Think “Multiple Sizes of Multiple Species” --- (small bass = small forage & big bass = big forage)

Corrective Stocking Strategies

**BASS OVERHARVESTED**

- Catching no or few bass and mainly 3”-5” bluegills
- **CURE**: Stock 40 8”-12” bass per acre.
- Release all bass caught until small bass become abundant, then use 12”-15” slot limit.

**BASS UNDERHARVESTED**

- Catching only small bass and a few large bluegills
- **CURE**: Stock 30 5”+ bluegill per acre.
- Remove 25 8” to 12” bass per acre annually via a 12” to 15” slot limit.
Harvest Regulations

- KEEP RECORDS! Collecting accurate total lengths and weights is not optional!
- EXISTING PONDS - In the absence of data, begin with a 12” to 15” slot limit on bass.
- NEW PONDS - Remove no bass for 2-3 years to allow initial bass stocking time to reproduce.

- Slot limits only work when fish are removed!
- Watch PSD and Wr data and let them be your guides to adjusting slots or changing to another goal-oriented length regulation
- Use harvest regulations in conjunction with other management strategies addressing limiting factors (i.e. muddy water, forage deficiencies)

Fish Attractors

- Brush
- Tires
- Combination
Lake Drawdowns

- Concentrate forage species
- Winterkill vegetation
- Allow boat dock/ramp repairs

POND MANAGEMENT LAWS

Want More Bass?
Grow More Forage!

You Must Grow That Trophy Bass Before You Can Catch Her!

Take Home Message # 1

Tackle Your Biggest Problem First!
Take Home Message #2

It's Still Legal to Eat Largemouth Bass !!!!!!