

Beecher Sportsman's Club

Fishery Evaluation Report

Property Overview

- **Surface Area:** 2.5 acres
- **Depth:** 10–12 ft (max)
- **Type:** Former clay excavation (1940s)
- **Shoreline:** Excellent access throughout
- **Watershed:** Limited / low fertility
- **Water Level Fluctuation:** ~24 inches in drought
- **Aeration:** Two bottom diffusers
- **Feeding Program:** ~½ bag Aquamax MVP/month
- **Aquatic Management:** Occasional dye and Hydrothol use

The pond has a long stocking history including bass, bluegill, crappie, walleye, catfish, and annual trout stockings (~200 lbs).

Fishery Assessment

Largemouth Bass

- Strong population with above-average size structure
- Average size ~14 inches
- Multiple fish observed in the 14–17 inch range
- Condition generally good, but slightly inconsistent due to forage limitations

Bluegill

- Good quality fish (6–8 inches present)
- Major deficiency in small bluegill (<4 inches)
- Indicates poor reproduction and limited forage base

Crappie

- Extremely low population
- No live fish observed during sampling
- One dead 11-inch fish confirms minimal presence

Channel Catfish

- Moderate population including larger individuals
- Currently **over-utilizing biomass** and reducing efficiency of the fishery

Additional Species

- **Walleye:** Present in low numbers
 - **Trout:** Stocking program performing as expected
 - **Grass Carp:** One large fish observed (~48 inches)
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Key Limiting Factors

- Weak bluegill recruitment (primary issue)
 - Excess catfish biomass
 - Minimal habitat structure
 - Low natural fertility
 - Reduced catch rates relative to potential
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Management Objective

Improve catch rates and fish size by strengthening the forage base, improving habitat, and rebalancing predator populations over a 3-year period.

Recommended Management Plan

1. Habitat Improvements

- Install **~20 habitat structures** (trees, brush, or artificial)
- Enhance structures annually with fresh material

2. Feeding Program

- Feed **50 lbs/month (April–October)**
 - Aquamax 400 or Triton 4512 (1/8")
- Switch to **single midday feeding**
 - Targets bluegill over catfish

3. Bluegill Program (Foundation Priority)

- Stock **1,000 bluegill (4–6")** annually for 3 years (May/June)
- **No harvest for 2 years**

- Starting 2028: allow 5 fish/person/day harvest

4. Bass Management

- 2026–2027: Remove all bass under 13"
- 2028: No harvest + stock 40 bass (8–10")

5. Catfish Reset Strategy

- 2026: Aggressively remove catfish
- 2027+: Stock 100 catfish (8–10") annually
- Optional: Stock catchable fish for events (designed for harvest)

6. Vegetation & Productivity

- Stock 3 additional grass carp
- Reduce reliance on pond dye where possible

7. Trout Program

- Continue current stocking approach

8. Crappie (Future Addition)

- Begin in Year 3: Stock 50 crappie (6–8") annually
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Expected Results

Within 2–3 years:

- Significant increase in bluegill population across all size classes
 - Improved bass growth rates and size structure
 - Better catch rates for members
 - More balanced and sustainable fishery
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Sample Fish Data

Largemouth Bass:

- 16.75" – 2.56 lbs
- 15.75" – 1.92 lbs
- 14.75" – 1.42 lbs

- 14.0" – 1.34 lbs
- 13.75" – 1.38 lbs

Channel Catfish:

- 19" – Healthy
- 14" – Healthy

Walleye:

- 13.25" – 0.94 lbs
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Summary

This pond has a strong bass population but is currently limited by an underdeveloped forage base and excess catfish biomass. By focusing on bluegill production, habitat improvements, and active population management, the fishery will become significantly more productive, consistent, and enjoyable for club members. Please let us know if you need anything at all!



Sincerely,

Austin Bennett

Fisheries Biologist

Abennett@hblakemanagement.com