SEPOND
SOUTHEASTERN POND MANAGEMENT

Management Plan For

LAKE CAMERON

AT THE WATERS

March 18, 2024

INTRODUCTION

As an integral part of the ongoing management program for Lake Cameron, Southeastern Pond Management conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the 200 acre impoundment on March 18, 2024. A representative sample of the fish community was collected by electrofishing to accurately assess the present state of balance. In addition, a water chemistry test was conducted to determine total alkalinity. The degree of aquatic weed infestation was also recorded. Results of the assessments provide the basis for this management plan.

The goal of this management plan is to create and maintain a balanced fish community with quality to trophy size bass and quality crappie fishing. The following evaluation report and management plan details and explains our recommendations with those goals in mind.

LAKE ASSESSMENT

The aquatic environment of Lake Cameron is in good to excellent condition, with respect to the water chemistry and water quality.

Water hyacinth, (***Eichhornia crassipes***), a tropical, invasive, exotic species of aquatic weed, was discovered in the lake last summer. A control plan has been implemented. Manual removal and chemical control are both effective and can be employed safely in Lake Cameron. Unfortunately, grass carp do not eat or control water hyacinth.

The critical time for water hyacinth control will be in the summer. As it is a tropical species, it can exhibit explosive growth in the heat of the summer.

FISHERY ASSESSMENT

The fishery in Lake Cameron was sampled with standard boat-mounted electrofishing equipment. The sample contained largemouth bass, catfish, coppernose bluegill, redear sunfish (shellcracker) and channel catfish. Currently, largemouth bass and catfish are functioning as the primary predators in Lake Cameron. The bluegill and shellcracker are the prey.

Bluegill and shellcracker were collected ranging in size from 3 to 12 inches in total length and in normal abundance. Figure 2 depicts the length distribution of the bluegill population. No management action of the bluegill population is indicated.

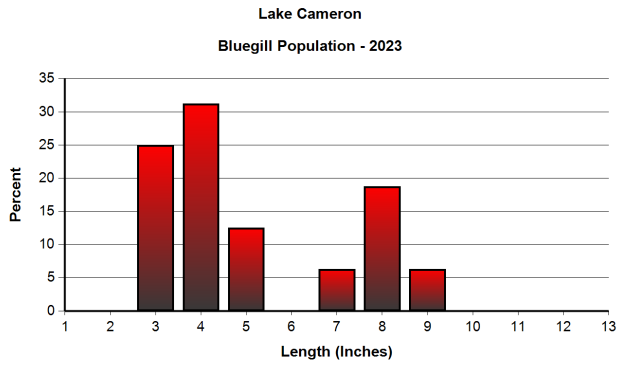
Largemouth bass ranging in size from 8 to 23 inches (Figure 3) in total length were collected in moderate abundance. Individual bass up to 7 lbs were collected. The bass in the 12-14 inch range we suspect include those Titan fingerings stocked in June 2022. Since we want to protect those fish, whereas we would normally recommend harvesting bass 14" and smaller, we recommend no harvest for this year.

The **average relative weight** of adult bass in our most recent sample **increased slightly** over last year. This year's average relative weight was **100**, as compared to last year, **98** (Figure 4). This is probably not a truly statistically significant difference, but it is a change in the upward direction, nonetheless. This metric indicates the bass are chunky and fat.

We did not shock up, observe or collect any crappie during this evaluation. In areas where we have always turned up crappie in past years, we saw none. In addition, we shocked a large area in the upper lake near the causeway, in a directed effort to collect crappie, but found none.

Only two catfish were turned up during this evaluation. Both of those fish were large adults. No small catfish, which would indicate successful reproduction, were observed. Relative to past evaluations, the catfish population is not on the increase but is either stable or gradually declining.

No threadfin shad were shocked up and observed during this evaluation. As usual, the winter season avian predation (cormorants, mergansers, etc) likely impacted the threadfin shad population.



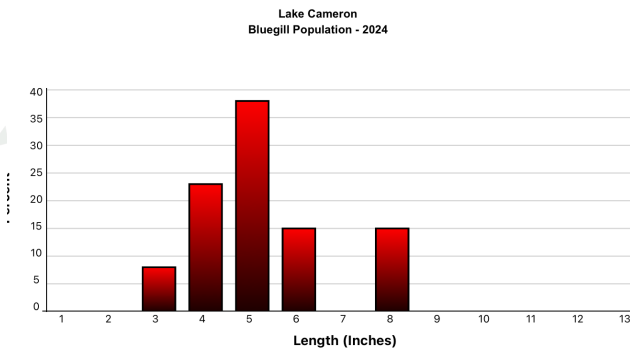


Figure 2. Comparison of the length distribution of bluegill collected from Lake Cameron in March 2023 and March 2024.

FISHERY ASSESSMENT

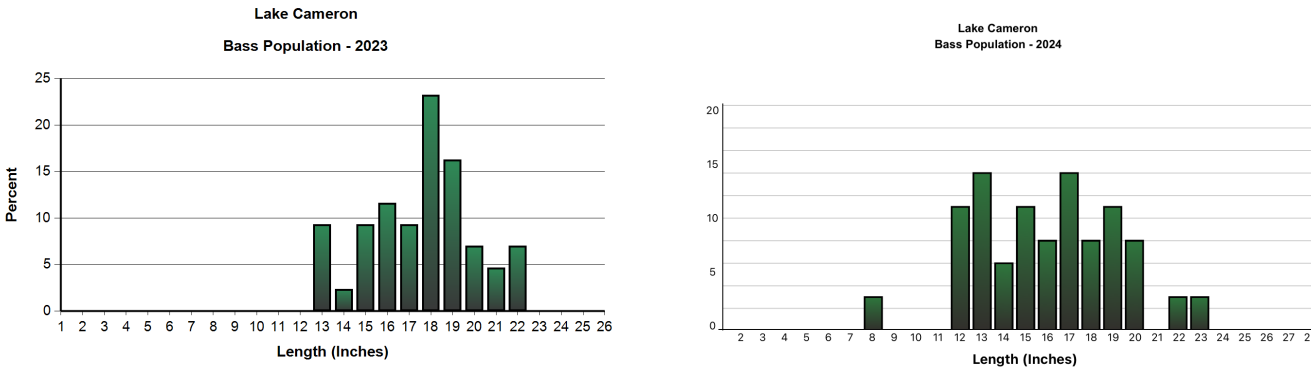


Figure 3. Comparison of the length distribution of bass collected in Lake Cameron in March 2023 and March 2024..

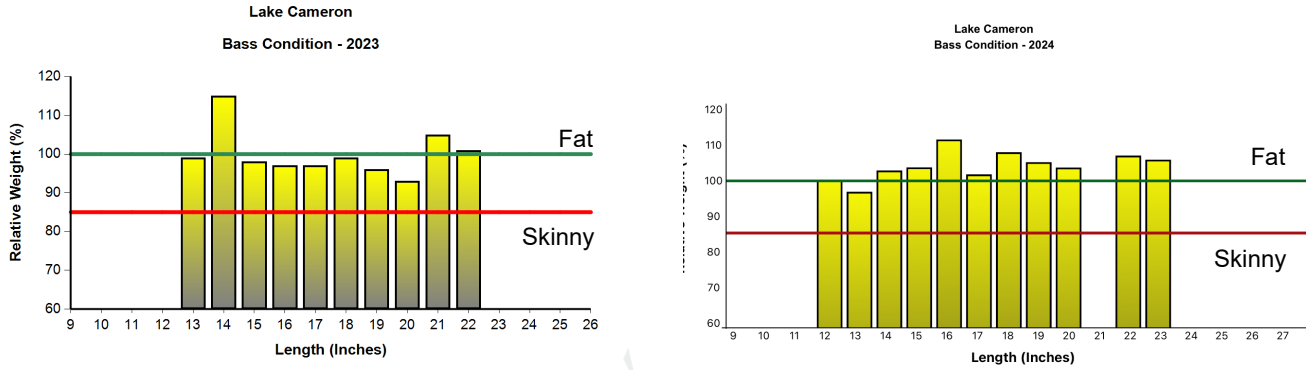


Figure 4. Relative weight distribution of adult largemouth bass collected from Lake Cameron in March 2023 and March 2024..

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Lake Cameron is functioning as a balanced system that has a high level of fertility. The bass are in good condition and quality to trophy size individual bass are present in acceptable numbers. The crappie population appears to still be near the trough of the cycle.

Control water hyacinth as necessary: chemical and/or manual control

No bass harvest this year. Catch-and-release bass fishing can proceed without limit, as usual.

Continue the **no harvest on crappie**. Catch-and-release fishing can proceed as much as desired, however.

Continue to **harvest all catfish caught**—no limit.

Consider stocking threadfin shad this spring to support the population.

The management activities we recommend over the course of the next twelve months are listed in the following pages. In an effort to assist in the prioritization of these management inputs, we have developed a simple color-coding system. You will note this system in the bottom right-hand corner of the respective Management Recommendations to follow:

LEVEL 1 Highest priority. Generally, require immediate attention.

LEVEL 2 Secondary in importance to Level 1. Directed toward achieving your stated management objectives.

LEVEL 3 Increase enjoyment and/or functionality of your lake but have less impact on the overall management program.

THREADFIN SHAD

SPRING 2024

Current Status: Awaiting Owner Approval

☐ **Approved** ☐ **Declined** ☐ **Done**

Date Approved: _____

Date Done: _____

COST: $ 2,100.00/load*

* This price does not include delivery.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY:
Stock 5 loads adult threadfin shad

LEVEL 2