

Garrisons Lake
85.9 acres
Cheswold, Delaware

Fish Community

Garrisons Lake has been maintained below bankful for dam and structural repairs since 2012 and is quite shallow in the upstream third of the pond. The area of the pond adjacent to Route 13 was deepened by dredging in 2006 which has improved fish habitat. The Division of Fish and Wildlife conducted an evaluation of the fish community in the spring of 2014 via electrofishing, but approximately one third of the pond was too shallow (only several feet deep) to access with the electrofishing boat. Seine surveys were also conducted along the shoreline during the summer of 2015 to assess reproduction. As noted during the last sampling effort in 2009, Largemouth Bass are not abundant but a good proportion of the population is >15" in length. Several citation sized (≥ 5 lbs or ≥ 20 ") bass were reported to Delaware's Sportfishing Tournament Live Release Program (<http://de.gov/livereleaseprogram>) during the past few years. Relative weights (condition or 'plumpness') of the bass population was good and indicative of plentiful forage or high feeding efficiency. Reduced water levels can concentrate prey into smaller areas and limit access to cover which increases the foraging ability of predators such as bass. The very shallow depth of the pond often concentrates bass in the deeper areas along Route 13. Anglers willing to work the spatterdock beds are also rewarded with a few good-size bass. Pumpkinseed Sunfish were more abundant than Bluegill which is unusual for Delaware's freshwater public ponds. It is not surprising that Pumpkinseed x Bluegill hybrids were also observed as it is common for species in the genus *Lepomis* to hybridize. The offspring have characteristics of both parental species. White Perch were fairly abundant. This species has a tendency to become overpopulated in Delaware's freshwater ponds and may have to be culled in the future. Densely populated White Perch exhibit slow growth and compete with other panfish species for prey resources. American Eel, Common Carp and Gizzard Shad were also quite abundant and are likely benefitting from the shallow, turbid conditions of the pond. Also present but less abundant are Golden Shiner, Brown Bullhead and White Catfish. Large schools of Brown Bullhead fry were observed during seine sampling which was good considering this is one of Delaware's native catfish species.

Vegetation

Historically, high turbidity (muddiness) has limited vegetation in this pond except for large expanses of spatterdock (also known as cow lily or yellow pond-lily). However, occasionally a submersed aquatic plant (rooted but remains below the water surface) has become so abundant that herbicide treatment is required to reduce the density. Generally some aquatic vegetation is beneficial to the fish community and the Division strives for control (about 40% coverage) but not complete elimination. At times there is an abundance of the tiny floating plant, duckweed, but it does not impede boating or angling.

Special Conditions

A fish ladder to facilitate upstream passage of anadromous fish species (Alewife, Blueback Herring, and American Shad) was installed on the dam in the 1990s. Modifications were made to also promote the upstream movement of American Eel, which spawn in the Atlantic Ocean but enter freshwater areas along the east coast to grow to adulthood. It is unlawful for any person to fish within ten feet of the entrance or exit of a fish ladder or remove fish from any ladder between March 15 and May 30

Access

There are parking areas on both the north and south sides of the pond. The boat launching area is on the south side of the pond and can accommodate a fair number of boat trailers. Numerous scattered tree stumps and the shallow depth make this pond difficult to fish for unfamiliar anglers. It is best to abide by the no-wake speed limit when motoring through the pond to avoid damage to outboards. Shoreline angling is available around the boat ramp and in the area adjacent to the northern parking lot. A fishing pier and walkway across the dam provides additional shoreline angling.



The boat ramp is located off of the southbound lane of Route 113.



Help us prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species

(see Pond Map on next page)



Garrisons Lake Kent County, 2015



0 250 500 1,000 Feet



Legend

-  Flow
-  Boat Ramp
-  Parking
-  Vegetation

Depth Contours are 1ft intervals - Significant changes are labeled

The boat ramp can be accessed from Messina Hill Rd. Additional parking and be accessed from Routh 13 southbound.

Surface Acres - 85.9
Max. Depth - 4ft
Pond Volume - 105 acre-feet