

## **Craigs Pond**

11.9 acres

Seaford, DE

### ***Fish Community***

The Division of Fish and Wildlife conducted an assessment of the fish community via electrofishing during the spring of 2016. The upstream half of the pond was too shallow to sample and mats of filamentous algae were starting to form at the surface. The abundance of Largemouth Bass is still low as noted during the last assessment conducted in 2011. However, the proportion of legal size (>12") and larger bass (>15") has improved and is indicative of a balanced, although low density population. Relative weights (measure of condition or 'plumpness') have also improved since 2011. Gaps in size distribution indicate variable spawning and recruitment. Thick mats of filamentous algae, typical of this pond by early summer, may impede the ability of bass to move and forage within the dense plant material. In early spring, before the algae becomes excessive, a good fishing spot is the steep drop-off along the road where bass tend to congregate.

The Bluegill population remains moderately dense with a good balance of fish >6" and a fair number >8". Many juvenile and newly spawned Bluegill were observed during sampling in 2016. They may be benefitting from the ability to escape predation in the algal mats. Relative weights for Bluegill were above average for all size groups. As noted in 2011, the low density of the Black Crappie population makes them difficult to catch. Other species observed in 2016, which also occur in low densities, include: Pumpkinseed, Yellow Perch, Creek Chubsucker, Golden Shiner, Yellow Bullhead and Chain Pickerel. Although Chain Pickerel have the ability to outswim electrofishing gear, a few 7"-12" pickerel were noted during sampling in 2016 and anglers reported catching even larger individuals. No White Perch were caught, but anglers reported catching citation sized perch ( $\geq 1$  lb or 12") to the Division's Sportfish Tournament program (<http://de.gov/livereleaseprogram>) in the past.

### ***Vegetation***

Filamentous algae, consisting of several different species, often cover the surface of this small pond. Control efforts, either using the Division's mechanical harvester or herbicide treatments, have been necessary nearly every year to maintain angling and boating access. It is best to fish early in the season before the algae growth covers a large percentage of the pond and wind blown mats become concentrated at the boat ramp. Beds of Spatterdock, also known as 'cow-lily', also occur in discrete areas of the pond but are beneficial in providing habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. Bass often hang within the floating leaves, making the beds a good place to cast a line. Although watermeal, which is a very small floating leaved plant, frequently covers the water's surface it does not impede fishing.

### ***Access***

Shore anglers will find several areas around the pond and parking lot that are good for bank fishing. The drop-off along the road frontage is an ideal location for bass and sometimes crappie during early spring. Extensive shallow areas in the back half of the pond can make boating difficult outside of the channel.



*Photo: J. Kwoka*  
*The chance of catching bass at least 12" or larger has improved in Craigs Pond*



The boat ramp is located on Craigs Mill Road just west of the intersection with Figgs Road, West of Seaford.



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**  
Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

**When you leave a body of water:**

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.



*Help us stop the spread of aquatic invasive species*

(Please see **Pond Map** on next page)

