

Haven Lake

82.5 acres

Milford, DE

Fish Community

The Division of Fish and Wildlife conducted an evaluation of the fish community via electrofishing in the spring of 2016. Although the abundance of Largemouth Bass has declined in recent years, the proportion of larger fish ($\geq 15''$ and $\geq 18''$) has increased. More than one-fourth of the fishable size bass ($\geq 8''$) were larger than 15 inches. Average relative weight (measure of body condition or 'plumpness') improved since the pond was last sampled in 2011. Variability in the length frequency distribution indicates sporadic spawning and recruitment. It is possible that the fluctuating density of aquatic vegetation coupled with shoreline alternation (bulkheads, removal of natural vegetative buffers) has impacted the suitability of nesting and nursery habitat.

A variety of panfish species occur in Haven Lake including: Bluegill, Black Crappie, Pumpkinseed, Redear Sunfish, White Perch and Yellow Perch. Bluegill are the most abundant species with a population comprised primarily of smaller fish (3"-4.5"), although a few individuals $>6''$ are present. Typically when there is an abundance of small fish, relative weights are poor because of competition for resources, however, the relative weights for all size groups were good indicating there is enough forage. Pumpkinseed are the least abundant panfish species. A few Bluegill x Pumpkinseed hybrids were noted during sampling in 2016. It is common for species in the *Lepomis* genus to hybridize and their offspring exhibit traits of both parent species. Redear Sunfish were not observed in 2016 but may still persist in very low numbers. The abundance of Black crappie increased from 2011 and there is a high proportion of larger individuals ($\geq 10''$). It is not unusual for anglers to report catching a citation size crappie (≥ 1 lb or $\geq 10''$) to Delaware's Sportfish Tournament Program (<http://de.gov/livereleaseprogram>). Anglers have also reported catching citation size Chain Pickerel (≥ 4 lbs. or $\geq 24''$) which are fairly abundant in Haven Lake. Other species observed in 2016 include: American Eel, Common Carp, Creek Chubsucker, and Gizzard Shad. Although Brown and Yellow Bullheads were not caught in 2016, they likely still persist in the pond. Catfish populations are difficult to assess using electrofishing gear because they tend to inhabit deeper areas near the pond bottom where the gear is less effective.



The low density bass population is comprised of a high proportion of catchable size fish

Vegetation

Floating mats of filamentous algae are common along the shoreline during the summer. A non-native submersed plant, Hydrilla, is present although densities are controlled by the Division's mechanical harvester and by herbicides to provide open water access for angling and boating. This plant can quickly recolonize, thus complete eradication is difficult to achieve. Also, research has found that some percentage of submersed aquatic vegetation is beneficial to the fish community because it provides cover for juvenile fish and for macroinvertebrates. Manicured lawns and bulkheads have displaced emergent wetland vegetation in many areas of the pond. This type of vegetation not only aids in maintaining good water quality, but also provides habitat for fish and wildlife.



Shoreline alteration has reduced the density of beneficial emergent vegetation, such as Pickerelweed.

Access

The boat ramp can be accessed via an unnamed road off of Williamsville Road (County Rd 443). The entrance is marked with a large Division of Fish and Wildlife sign. The majority of the shoreline is privately owned, thus access for angling is quite limited with just a small area adjacent to the ramp. Fishing along the dam is not safe due to limited space and heavy traffic on U.S. Route 113.



The boat ramp is located off of Williamsville Road, within the town of Milford, DE.



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- 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

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

Haven Lake Kent County, 2015

