

Millsboro Pond

101 acres

Millsboro

Fish Community

The Division of Fish and Wildlife conducted an evaluation of the fish community via electrofishing during the spring of 2016. Historically, a low density fish population prompted supplemental stocking efforts. In 2004, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and Golden Shiner were stocked to supplement the population. Improvement in the fish community was noted until 2011 when the abundance of bass declined. Thus an additional 1,100 bass fingerlings were stocked in 2011 to supplement natural reproduction. Results from 2016 sampling revealed an improvement in the abundance of most fish species in the pond. Largemouth Bass abundance more than doubled from 2011 to 2016, although it is still lower than the average for ponds located in Sussex County. The proportion of larger bass ($\geq 12''$ and $\geq 15''$) is within the target range for a balanced fish community. Mean relative weights (measure of body condition or 'plumpness') for all size groups are good, although gaps in size distribution indicate sporadic spawning and growth. The Bluegill population improved in abundance but is now comprised primarily of small fish ($< 4''$ in length). The proportion of individuals that are $\geq 6''$ is low but relative weights are good for all size groups. It is likely the population is dominated by a few very strong year classes. The abundance of Black Crappie is still low but did improve since 2011. The population is comprised primarily of smaller fish ($< 8''$).

Other moderately abundant sunfish in Millsboro Pond include Redear and Pumpkinseed. Redear were first noted in 2005, possibly illegally stocked by anglers (it is illegal to stock Delaware's public waters without a permit from the Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife). This species is also commonly called 'shell-cracker' because of its habitat of foraging on snails and mussels. Bluegill x Pumpkinseed hybrids also occur in the pond. Hybrids of these two closely related species is common and the offspring exhibit variations in the physical characteristics of both parent species. Yellow perch are abundant and anglers have reported catching citation sized individuals ($\geq 1\text{lb}$ or $\geq 12''$) to Delaware's Sportfish Tournament Program (<http://de.gov/livereleaseprogram>). Other species that occur in the pond include: Creek Chubsucker, American Eel, Golden Shiner



Redear Sunfish were first documented in Millsboro Pond in 2005



Bluegill x Pumpkinseed hybrid

and Common Carp. Carp have been abundant in this pond for many years and can provide a different type of sport fishing experience. Brown Bullhead and Yellow Bullhead were not observed in 2016 although it is likely these two species still persist. Catfish tend to inhabit deeper areas near the bottom where electrofishing gear is not as effective. Chain Pickerel are also able to effectively avoid electrofishing gear and their populations are difficult to assess, however individuals $\geq 15''$ were noted during sampling in 2016.

Vegetation

The plant community is dominated by Hydrilla, a non-native submersed aquatic plant that is difficult to control. Aquatic herbicides are used to reduce the density of the plant to provide open water access for boating and angling. 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. The decrease in the density of hydrilla has allowed the recolonization of a few native aquatic plants such as coontail, muskgrass and bladderwort. Spatterdock beds and abundant woody structure provide habitat for structurally oriented fish such as bass and Bluegill. The beds are also a good place for anglers to cast a line.

Special Conditions

The pond is owned by the Town of Millsboro with access provided by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Special Town regulations including a maximum outboard rating of 5 hp are posted adjacent to the ramp.

Access

The boat ramp can accommodate moderate sized boats; however, the parking area is very small and can only accommodate 2-3 boat trailers. The pond is mostly surrounded by private property, thus shoreline angling is limited to the area adjacent to the boat ramp. There are no safe areas for shore anglers to pull off on Gravel Hill Road (Route 30) to fish near the dam. Although the pond is 101 acres, a large portion of it is relatively shallow with numerous submerged stumps and deadfalls. Anglers must navigate carefully around these structures to avoid damage to outboards.



The boat ramp is located off of Gravel Hill Rd (Route 30), on the north side of Millsboro.



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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 prevent the spread of invasive species

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

Millsboro Pond 2014

Sussex County, Delaware

