

Waples Pond

50.6 acres

Milford, DE

Fish community

The Division of Fish and Wildlife evaluated the fish community via electrofishing in the spring of 2015, however, only the small eastern end of the pond could be sampled. The western end of the pond was too shallow to launch the electrofishing boat. The majority of fish observed in the eastern portion of the pond occurred along the north shore and in and around the mouth of Prime Hook Creek. The abundance of game fish in this pond has been historically low despite the preponderance of woody structure. The majority of Largemouth Bass that occur are <12" total length. Relative weights (measure of condition or 'plumpness') of bass were much improved over values observed in 2008 when the pond was last sampled. This is an indication that there is adequate forage available. The abundance of Bluegill was lower than average for Delaware ponds, but the proportion of fish >6" was within the target range of a balanced fish community and relative weights were excellent for all size groups. Other species of panfish observed were Redear Sunfish and Black Crappie. Neither species were particularly abundant and relative weights were fair to poor. Although no Chain Pickerel were observed during sampling of the eastern portion of the pond, anglers have reported catching fair sized pickerel in the pond especially on the western side near the headwaters. Chain Pickerel were likely underrepresented in the survey because they are able to effectively avoid electrofishing gear. Additional species that occur in Waples pond include Brown Bullhead, Golden Shiner, American Eel, and Common Carp. In 2015, an angler reported a citation sized (≥ 6 lbs or ≥ 25 ") catfish to the Delaware's Sportfish Tournament Program (<http://de.gov/livereleaseprogram>). A species was not provided, but historically Brown Bullhead and Yellow Bullhead were the only catfish species reported from Waples Pond. As noted during previous surveys, carp are more abundant and outweigh other species. Yellow Perch were not observed in 2015, but have been documented in past surveys and may still persist.



If you enjoy fishing for Common Carp, you will likely have success at Waples Pond.

Vegetation

Hydrilla, a submersed aquatic plant, used to dominate the pond interfering with angling and boating during the late summer months. However, vegetation mapping conducted in the mid-2000s revealed a decline in the coverage of hydrilla although it still persists east of Route 1. During mapping, white waterlily was the most abundant aquatic plant especially in the shallow waters near the upstream end of the western half of the pond. Small amounts of coontail, fanwort, and bladderwort were also present in some areas. This pond is notable in the number and extent of rare and uncommon plant species. The "boggy" habitat in the headwater portion of the pond provides habitat for many of these unusual species and should be closely monitored to ensure they persist.

Special Conditions

Waples Pond empties into Prime Hook Creek which flows through Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. This area is known for its somewhat isolated beauty and is popular with canoeists. It also has good gamefish populations, but boat movement from the pond to the creek requires a short portage. The creek and great expanse of surrounding freshwater wetlands is unique in Delaware.

Access

Waples Pond is divided by Delaware Route 1. Unimproved (sand/silt surface) launching areas are available on the east and west side of the pond (via Route 1), however, only small boats, canoes and kayaks can be accommodated. Parking is very limited on the western side of the pond and it may be best to launch on the east side and float under the Route 1 Bridge that divides the pond (small craft only).



A launching area is available off of Northbound Route 1, East of Milton.



A launching area is also available on the South bound side of Route 1, but parking is limited.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!
Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
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 invasive species

(See Pond Map on next page)



Waples Pond Sussex County, 2015



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Surface Acres - 50.6
Max. Depth - 4ft

Depth Contours are
1ft intervals - significant
changes are labeled

The boat ramp can be
accessed for Route 1
southbound

Legend

- Parking
- Boat Ramp - Unimproved
- Flow
- Hydrilla
- Vegetation
- Flooded trees and shrubs