

# Becks Pond Action Plan



*D. Raver, US FWS*

Sampling pond fish via electrofisher



The boat ramp was renovated.



Becks, the most heavily fished pond in Delaware!



For more information on the Becks Pond Work Group contact:

Edna Stetzar  
Fisheries Biologist  
4876 Hay Point Landing Rd.  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
(302) 735-8654

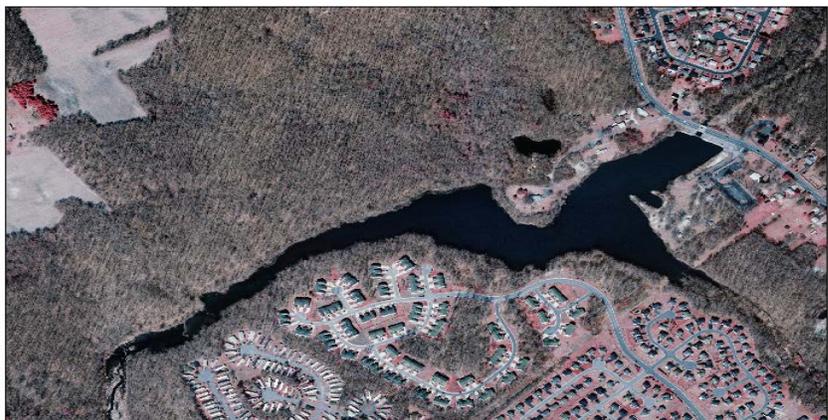
[Edna.Stetzar@state.de.us](mailto:Edna.Stetzar@state.de.us)

Becks Pond in New Castle County is the most heavily fished pond in Delaware. Less than 25 acres in size, this pond supported more than 24,000 man-days of fishing by licensed anglers in 2003. This does not include angling by legally unlicensed anglers (youth under 16 years and residents over 65) which increases the effort. This makes Becks Pond a high priority for the Division and New Castle County (NCC), which leases the pond property.

Problems with fish populations were noted as early as 1984 when overfishing and high harvest rates resulted in low numbers of bass and sunfish. Regulations to increase the minimum size limit and reduce the daily bag limit were put in place to improve the fish populations. A decline in water quality, primarily low dissolved oxygen and high bacterial counts, was also documented. Although the fish populations improved following the restrictive size and bag limits, water quality continued to be a problem.

In 2000, the Division initiated formation of the Becks Pond Work Group to focus attention on this valuable pond. The Work Group consists of representatives from a wide variety of local, state, and federal agencies in addition to shoreline residents and anglers to provide the diversity of expertise needed. Initially, the Work Group tabulated all available data on the pond. When some data gaps were observed, group members activated projects to obtain the needed information. By 2005, it became apparent that the basic problem within the pond was the accumulated layer of silt and muck on the pond bottom as a result of heavy development in the watershed prior to the Stormwater and Sediment Control Act of 1990. All possible options for removal of the sediment were explored. Three types of dredging methods were evaluated. However, because no disposal site is available in the area, the method used will have to utilize sediment removal and transport to another location. Cost and efficiency of the two remaining options are being evaluated.

Meanwhile, various physical improvements have been made including: replacement of leaking dam boards, replacement of boat ramp, installation of curbing to divert parking lot runoff, repaving of the parking lot, construction of gazebos (by NCC), and development of an emergency water plan for high flow storm events.



Aerial photograph of Becks Pond showing some of the development.