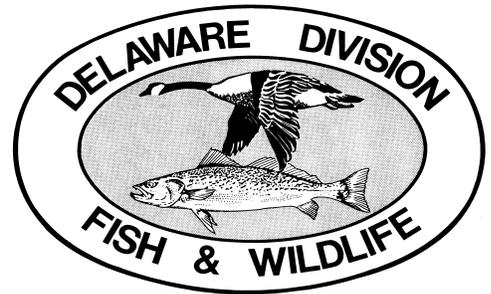


Tournament News Fall 2013



Fisheries Section Updates - Edna Stetzar

Fall 2013

This is my first issue of *Tournament News* so I hope it finds all of you well and having a great year of fishing. I've taken over for Cathy Martin, a lady I greatly respect and from whom I have learned much over the years. I worked for Cathy and Craig Shirey more than a decade ago and it feels great to return to the work I enjoy. Over the past few months I've been busy catching up and I'm a bit behind in getting the newsletter out to you. There are many new items of interest, so enough about me! Please don't hesitate to call or send an e-mail if you want to chat.

Sincerely,
Edna

New Contacts

- Carol Gondeck has left DNREC for another job so stay tuned for a new contact for tournament permits. Thanks to those of you who have already sent in your 2013 reports. As you know, the information is valuable to us as we evaluate catch and effort in Delaware's ponds and freshwater tidal areas. The next newsletter will include a report on 2013 tournament activities.
- Welcome Rebecca Lynch, who is now our Fisheries Technician and will be assisting us with various projects. You may cross paths either in the field or when reporting tagged fish and tournament activities.

IT'S HERE! You can report tagged largemouth bass online. Go to the weblink below, scroll down to 'Freshwater Fishing' and on the right hand side click on 'Report Nanticoke River or Broadkill River Largemouth Bass Tag'

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/Fisheries/Pages/RecreationalFishing.aspx>

Your tag return reports are appreciated as it provides us with data to assess angler behavior, fishing effort and bass movement. One tag return you might find particularly interesting is a 16.8" (2.4lbs) female caught by the Division and tagged in the lower Broad Creek on 10/3/2012. She has now been caught twice in this same general location by anglers during tournaments (10/7/2012 and 7/24/2013). Each time she has been captured and moved, she has returned to the same location in the lower Broad. The first angler released her several miles downstream near Sharptown. Some bass are real home bodies!

Telephone numbers of Interest

Tournament reports and tag returns:

- Edna Stetzar, 302-735-8654 ;
edna.stetzar@state.de.us

or

- Rebecca Lynch, 302-735-8661 ;
rebecca.Lynch@state.de.us

Tournament permits:

- New contact, 302-739-9913

Fish & Wildlife Enforcement

Agents:

New Castle & Kent Counties:

302-739-6139

Sussex County: 302-855-1901

Report Violations: 302-739-4580

Or 1-800-523-3336

24-hour Enforcement Number for Environmental Complaints

1-800-662-8802

Operation Game Theft :

1-800-292-3030

Permit applications:

www.fw.delaware.gov/

Click on *Fisheries*, under *Latest News*, click on photos "Recreational Fishing". Under Freshwater (Bass picture), click on *Fishing Tournament Application*. Form is sent directly to the tournament contact.

Tournament Research

“Keeping Bass Alive in the Live Well” is a report drafted by Joe Love, Tidal Bass Manager, Maryland DNR and is based on the results of research conducted in the Potomac River during largemouth bass tournaments. Although most bass survive being caught during tournaments, the main goal of the research was to assess how fish survival could be maximized. The resulting table provides guidance on how to minimize stress, maximize survival and what to do if the live well fails. Also check out <http://www.bassmaster.com/tips/keeping-bass-alive> for additional information on the topic.

SUMMER	SPRING/FALL	IF THE LIVE WELL FAILS
1. Chill live wells with a bag of ice to 5-7°F below stream or lake water temperature	1. Chill live wells with a bag of ice to 5-7°F below stream or lake water temperature	1. Bucket in freshwater every 10 minutes or 2. Use a spare pump or 3. Transfer bass to a working live well, or 4. Release the bass.
2. Use frequent recirculation (2 min interval)	2. Use recirculation (2-9 min interval)	
3. Use infrequent water exchanges (every 2-3 hrs). Frequent exchanges can increase water temperature in summer.	3. Use water exchanges (every 1/2-1 hr)	
4. Use a minimum 750 gal/hr pump	4. Use a minimum 750 gal/hr pump	

Delaware Dam Safety Program

Did you know that DNREC established a ‘Dam Safety Program’ in 2009? The program goals include reducing the risk of failure to prevent injuries, damage to downstream property and loss of reservoir storage. Inspections of state regulated dams are conducted to identify which dams meet safety requirements and which are in need of repairs or upgrades. There is a list by county of all the regulated dams and their status at the following website: <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/swc/Drainage/Pages/DamSafety.aspx>

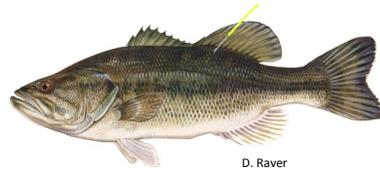
In some cases, partial pond drawdowns and closure of ramps and parking areas may occur when construction is on-going. Our fisheries section is coordinating with the dam safety program so that we are aware of construction timing so press releases can be sent out to inform users of our state-owned and managed ponds. Current efforts underway to evaluate dams for possible rehabilitation or improvements include:

- Garrison Lake-dam repair is planned for the fall of 2014. Although the design hasn’t been finalized, a new fishing access area along the roadway is being considered
- Trap Pond-replacement of boards at the spillway is on-going, the low-level outlet gate is slated for installation in spring of 2014
- Other dams being evaluated: Chipman Pond, Concord Pond, Craigs Pond, Hudson Pond, Mud Mill Pond, Silver Lake in Milford, Hudson Pond, Records Pond and Hearn’s Pond.

Tidal Bass Sampling

As part of a long-term research project, we sampled largemouth bass populations in the Broadkill River and the Nanticoke River/Broad Creek during September and October. The next issue of *Tournament News* will include a full analysis of the bass population but I thought you might be interested in a quick summary of our efforts. A total of 33 legal length bass were tagged with a yellow t-bar anchor tag in the Broadkill River, 133 in the Nanticoke and another 110 in Broadcreek. Given the amount of rain we had this summer and all of the freshwater input, salinity was minimal in the lower Nanticoke and we were able to electrofish all the way to the MD/DE Stateline. As you know, fishing the tidal cycle is one key to successfully catching bass. We electrofished the shoreline across from Phillips Landing at dead low tide (from the creek mouth to the first duckbox on the north shore) and captured 97 fish! At low tide the fish are forced out of the spatterdock and hang off the slope. We weren't so successful in the lower section of the Nanticoke even at low tide, except for that one dock on the north shore near the state-line. Sampling the south shoreline during mid-low tide from the railroad bridge past the Seaford boat ramp resulted in another 77 fish, although most of our catch were smaller than 12". Not great for angling, but a good sign of a healthy population when you capture fish of various size categories. Our largest fish (4.8lbs) rolled off the north shore upstream from the Hospital in Seaford. As a reward for reporting tagged bass that are caught, we've been giving out hats and t-shirts for some time now and I'm wondering if there is interest in receiving a different item (must be only 5-7\$/item) or just a newly designed hat/shirt? I welcome any feedback you may have in that regard.

Please report tagged bass to us!



Northern Snakehead Update

We've confirmed the presence of Northern Snakehead (NSH) from 5 water bodies so far in 2013. Reproduction continues to be documented at Becks Pond as several schools of fry were observed this past spring and summer. An angler managed to remove 20 fry using a dipnet. Anglers also caught four juveniles in the pond: one near the dam, two in the first cove and one in the spatterdock near the upstream end. After several unsuccessful attempts, we caught a large juvenile (with panfish in its stomach) a few weeks ago while electrofishing for bass along the shoreline just past the second cove. An additional NSH was captured in Muddy Run which feeds into Sunset Lake, north of Becks.

Five NSH have been documented in water bodies with a connection to the Christina River System, four of which came from a stormwater pond in Newport with a connection to Nonesuch Creek. Staff at the DuPont Environmental Education Center in Wilmington found a young-of-the-year in a tidal pool connected by a small tributary to the Christina. They continue to be documented in the Nanticoke/Broad Creek River system as well. A NSH >29" was left on the bank near the ramp at Phillips Landing in September. A few weeks later we captured a female with eggs near the ramp while electrofishing for bass. Apparently, NSH also like to hang off the slope near the spatterdock at low tide! Anglers have reported catching them using spinner bait and plastic worms.

- If you catch a NSH please contact us so we can examine stomach contents, gonads and collect scales/otoliths for ageing. As part of a multi-state effort we are also collecting genetic samples. Carefully check identification first as we've had several mistaken identities. Our website includes the most commonly confused species at: <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/Fisheries/Pages/InvasiveSpecies.aspx>

On the Web

www.fw.delaware.gov/

Stocking Activities

As noted in the last *Tournament News*, bluegill and golden shiners were stocked in Records Pond during October of 2012 following a drawdown of the pond in preparation for hurricane Sandy. Our Spring 2013 electrofish sampling revealed a bluegill population with good size distribution and abundance, indicating there is sufficient forage to support bass. Few adult bass were noted during sampling efforts but several schools of fry were observed. In late August, 4,700 advanced largemouth bass fingerlings (average 3") were stocked to aid in rebuilding the population. *We are asking anglers to practice catch and release of bass through 2014 to allow the population time to recover.*

During July/August, 8,813 largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked into the Nanticoke River/Broad Creek and 2,005 were stocked into the Broadkill River as part of a long-term effort to enhance bass populations. The fingerlings are the offspring of brood stock collected this past spring from the Nanticoke and taken to Eastern Shore Fisheries, an aquaculture facility in Maryland. After spawning naturally, the adults were returned to the river and the fry were monitored until they reached 3", a size which increases their survival in the wild. Past evaluation of the Broadkill River bass population have shown that the stocked fish contribute 11-18% overall to the population. A 10 year evaluation of the Nanticoke River/Broad Creek revealed that stocked fish contributed 20-25% to the population.

Angler Mail Survey

You may receive a survey in the mail requesting information about your freshwater fishing activities in 2013. I'm sure some of you participated in the last survey in 2009 and we are grateful for your input. The survey queries anglers on freshwater angling effort, catch and harvest, seasonality and other social dimensional characteristics. Past results have helped guide management activities and determine priorities for access site improvements. Typically the survey response rate is about 26%. For the first time, we are going to offer the option to complete the survey **online** in hopes of increasing the response rate. A link will be sent with the survey and only those who receive the survey will be able to access it online. If you receive a survey please take a few minutes to share your fishing activity as your feedback is integral to our efforts to ensure quality fishing in Delaware!

Construction/Access Updates

- Upgrades to the ramp and parking area at McGinnis Pond were completed in early October
- Two wooden fishing piers at Biddle's Point along the C&D Canal are going to be replaced by new aluminum piers by Spring of 2014

Would you like to share a picture of one of your favorite fishing memories? Send a picture to Edna.Stetzar@state.de.us and I'll feature it in a future newsletter.



Grandpa Kimmick circa 1975, Big Bass Lake, PA