

## **2009 Fall Fish Sale Fish Facts**

### **Bluegill**

Bluegill are widely considered to be the ideal panfish for a stocking combination that includes largemouth bass. The main reason for this is that they reproduce several times throughout the summer providing a continuous food source for the bass. Plus, individuals that grow too large for the bass to eat provide an excellent panfish fishery for you. They will accept a commercial diet, if you plan to feed the fish in your pond. Be careful, if you don't harvest sufficient numbers of bluegill and over-harvest largemouth bass, you will most likely end up with a population of stunted bluegill that will limit the reproduction of your largemouth bass. Once a pond is out of balance it can be difficult to re-establish a balanced population.

### **Redear Sunfish**

Redear Sunfish should be stocked in bluegill/bass stocking combinations as a biological control for snails. Snails in a pond carry one of the life stages of the grubs (black grubs, white grubs, yellow grubs and eye flukes). If you control the snails, you reduce the number of grubs on your fish. In addition they provide an excellent panfish for your fishery and food for your bass. Contrary to myth these are not a hybrid bluegill or a different type of bluegill. They are a distinct species in the sunfish family.

### **Hybrid Sunfish (or Hybrid Bluegill)**

Hybrid Sunfish (also known as Hybrid Bluegill) are a cross between the male bluegill and female green sunfish. The young from this cross are between 90 and 95 percent males. This reduces their ability to spawn and overpopulate a fishing pond. This is especially true when they are stocked along with largemouth bass. Hybrids will take a prepared diet more readily and will grow quicker than either parent. Fish of a half pound or more are not uncommon. They usually don't perform well when stocked in combination with bluegill.

### **Hybrid Redear Sunfish**

Hybrid Redear Sunfish is a cross between the bluegill and redear sunfish. Like the hybrid bluegill sunfish, they are predominately male (up to 99%). They can be used along with hybrid bluegill sunfish as a substitute for redear sunfish to further control the amount of reproduction occurring in your fishery. Largemouth bass should be stocked to control any unwanted reproduction. Like their parent, the redear sunfish they will eat snails. Stock at the same rates as listed for redear sunfish.

### **Black Crappie**

Black Crappie are recommended only for ponds greater than five acres in surface area. In smaller ponds they tend to over-reproduce and form a stunted population even when

subjected to predation by largemouth bass. They do not readily accept a commercial diet. Stock at a rate of 100 per surface acre.

### **Largemouth Bass**

Largemouth Bass are undoubtedly one of the most popular freshwater sportfish in the United States. It is a predatory fish and works well to control and prevent stunting of bluegill populations. They don't naturally accept a prepared diet; however, we sell largemouth bass that have been trained to take a commercial diet similar to that fed to catfish and hybrid sunfish.

### **Channel Catfish**

Channel Catfish are an outstanding food fish that provides superior sport on hook and line. They grow rapidly (up to a pound per year if fed a prepared diet). They are an excellent choice for ponds since they won't reproduce and overpopulate unless specific spawning requirements are met. They will need to be restocked periodically to maintain a fishery. Fish less than 8 inches are vulnerable to predation by largemouth bass, so you should restock with 8-10 inch fingerlings if possible. Contrary to popular myth, channel catfish do not "muddy" a pond's water.

### **Fathead Minnows**

Fathead Minnows should be stocked in new ponds prior to stocking largemouth bass so that they have an opportunity to spawn several times. This will provide the young bass with plenty of food to get a good start and grow quickly. Fathead minnows should be stocked at a rate of 5 pounds per surface acre of your pond. After largemouth bass have been established in your pond, it is not necessary to restock with fathead minnows since they are not likely to reestablish a self reproducing population.

### **Walleye**

Walleye are considered by many to be the best tasting freshwater fish around. Walleye can be stocked in some situations, primarily medium to large ponds, to provide diversity to the fishery. Under the right circumstances they will grow very well. They can be stocked at a rate of 50 per acre. They normally will not produce a self sustaining population so must be restocked periodically. Available only during the Fall harvest season.

## Stocking rates

### Basic Stocking Plans for New and Established Ponds

#### **Bluegill/Largemouth Bass/Channel Catfish option**

Traditional stocking plan that will produce a fine fishery for quality largemouth bass as well as a good fishery for bluegill, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. Channel catfish will need to be restocked periodically since reproduction is limited in ponds.

New Pond

Established Pond

#### Bluegill / Largemouth Bass / Channel Catfish stocking option for new ponds

This stocking plan is for a newly built or newly renovated pond that **does not** have an established fish population (yes, that includes those few bass your brother-in-law put in to help you get started).

Species Stocked	Size to Stock	When to Stock	<u>Stocking Rate per Acre</u>	
			Plan to Feed	Don't Plan to Feed
Bluegill	1-2 inch	Spring or Fall	500	500
Channel Catfish	4-6 inch	Spring or Fall	300	150
Redear Sunfish	1-2 inch	Spring or Fall	250	250
Fathead Minnows	Adult	Spring or Fall	5 Lbs	5 Lbs
Largemouth Bass	2-3 inch	The next Fall following stocking other fishes (example, first fish stocked Fall 2003, bass stocked Fall 2004)	75	75

#### Bluegill / Largemouth Bass / Channel Catfish stocking option for established ponds

This stocking plan is for a typical pond with an established Bluegill/Largemouth Bass/Channel Catfish population. We recommend that you have a thorough fishery assessment conducted on your pond to determine whether supplemental stocking is required. See our [links page](#) for companies that can complete this type of assessment and develop a management plan for you.

Species Stocked	Size to Stock	When to Stock	<u>Stocking Rate per Acre</u>	
			Plan to Feed	Don't Plan to Feed
Bluegill	3-5 inch	Spring or Fall	250	250
Channel Catfish	6-8 or 8-10 inch	Spring or Fall	300	150

Largemouth Bass 5-8 inch      Spring or Fall      100      50

### Hybrid Sunfish/Largemouth Bass/ Channel Catfish Option

This option will produce a high quality panfish fishery with a fair quality fishery for largemouth bass. It is an ideal option for a fishing pond for children or for ponds smaller than two acres. Largemouth bass in this option are primarily used to control the reproduction of the hybrid sunfish. Channel catfish and hybrid sunfish will need to be restocked periodically since reproduction is limited. Redear sunfish or hybrid redear sunfish should be stocked to control snails. Note: there is no advantage to stocking hybrid sunfish in ponds with bluegill; you should chose one or the other based on what type of fishery you desire.

New Pond

Established Pond

### Hybrid Sunfish / Largemouth Bass / Channel Catfish stocking option for new ponds

This version of the stocking plan is for a newly built or newly renovated pond that **does not** have an established fish population (yes, that includes those few bass your brother-in-law put in to help you get started).

Species Stocked	Size to Stock	When to Stock	Stocking Rate per Acre	
			Plan to Feed	Don't Plan to Feed
Hybrid Sunfish	1-2 inch	Spring or Fall	500	500
Channel Catfish	4-6 inch	Spring or Fall	300	150
Redear Sunfish	1-2 inch	Spring or Fall	250	250
Fathead Minnows	Adult	Spring or Fall	5 Lbs	5 Lbs
Largemouth Bass	2-3 inch	The next Fall following stocking other fishes (example, first fish stocked Fall 2003, bass stocked Fall 2004)	50	50

### Hybrid Sunfish / Largemouth Bass / Channel Catfish stocking option for established ponds

This stocking plan is for a typical pond with an established Hybrid Sunfish/Largemouth Bass/Channel Catfish population. We recommend that you have a thorough fishery assessment conducted on your pond to determine whether supplemental stocking is required. See our [links page](#) for companies that can complete this type of assessment and develop a management plan for you.

Species Stocked	Size to Stock	When to Stock	<u>Stocking Rate per Acre</u>	
			Plan to Feed	Don't Plan to Feed
Hybrid Sunfish	3-5 or 5-7 inch	Spring or Fall	500	500
Channel Catfish	6-8 or 8-10 inch	Spring or Fall	300	150
Largemouth Bass	5-8 inch	Spring or Fall	100	50

**Other Stocking plans:**

Do you need advice about what to stock in your pond? Give us a call, and our staff of professional biologists with over 55 years of combined experience will recommend a general management plan for your particular situation and fishing preferences. For a more detailed fishery assessment and stocking plan tailored specifically to your situation, you may contact one of the companies listed in our [links page](#).