

# *Caring for Your Land and Water*

## STOCKING YOUR POND

FACTSHEET 4



### Why stock your pond?

Not only is a pond on your property visually pleasing, it is also an excellent haven for fish and wildlife. The fish you stock will feed on the aquatic insects, including mosquito larvae. Eventually, they will enhance the basis of a food web that will include species like Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, mink and turtles.

### How do you get started?

If you are interested in stocking your pond with fish you will need to get a permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Also check with the Conservation Authority or the Ministry of Natural Resources for advice if you plan on stocking your pond.

### A Word of Warning

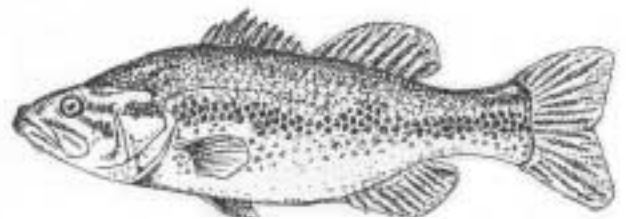
DO NOT stock Goldfish, Koi or Carp as these species are bottom feeders and destroy the aquatic vegetation. By feeding through the silt on the bottom they make the pond turbid (cloudy). Ensure the setting for the pond will not allow the stocked fish to escape into wild waters.

### What type of fish should you stock with?

Deciding what species to stock your pond with depends on the temperature of the pond. Two

### Action Steps

- ◆ Obtain a permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources - this is a **LEGAL** requirement
- ◆ Check with the Conservation Authority or the Ministry of Natural Resources for advice
- ◆ Stock with native species such as bass or trout
- ◆ **DO NOT** stock Goldfish, Koi or Carp
- ◆ Create varying habitat around the shore of your pond
- ◆ Maintain and perhaps increase the trees and wetland vegetation surrounding your pond



Bass



Trout

popular species are trout and bass. Trout require deeper colder ponds (around 4 - 5m deep with water temperatures between 10°C - 18°C during the warmest time of the year – August to September), while Bass will survive in warmer shallower ponds (around 2 - 3m deep with water temperatures over 21°C during August to September).

If there are already minnow species present in your pond (such as central mudminnow, bluntnose minnow, or fathead minnow), Sunfish (for bass ponds) or Pumpkinseeds could be introduced as the next predator level in the food chain. Both are colourful and spawn in shallow areas and are easy to see making them an attractive choice for pond owners.

If the Pumpkinseed and Sunfish fish survive, larger fish such as Trout or Largemouth Bass could be introduced. Other common species to consider may include Smallmouth Bass, Rock Bass, Yellow Perch, or Bullhead Catfish. The smaller fish would then serve as food for the bigger fish, creating a stable food chain.

## What conditions are needed for fish habitat?

- ◆ Diverse wetland vegetation, varying structure along the shoreline, and a diverse pond bottom (different depths, substrates, and aquatic vegetation types) for fish to hide in.
- ◆ Overhanging tree branches to shade the water. These branches also make particularly good perches for birds.
- ◆ Fallen branches, logs, stumps, and rocks in the water to provide shelter for juvenile fish.
- ◆ Ideally, at least a third of the bank should have a very gradual incline. This creates a

productive zone where sunlight can penetrate through the water to allow aquatic vegetation to grow, but part of the pond should be significantly deeper.

Sediment from erosion can cover spawning beds, suffocating fish eggs. It can also increase the incidence of disease among your fish. It is therefore important to take steps to minimize the impact of erosion if you expect fish to survive.

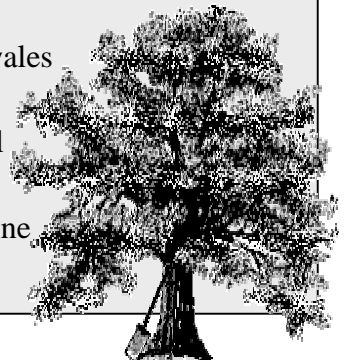


## Who can you contact for assistance?

- ◆ Ministry of Natural Resources
- ◆ Conservation Authority
- ◆ Local Fish Farm (see Ontario Aquaculture Association)

## Other relevant factsheets in this series include:

- ◆ Wildlife Pond Management
- ◆ Buffer Strips and Swales
- ◆ Wetlands and Vernal Pools
- ◆ Management of Online Ponds



Scientific references available upon request



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