Recreational Pond Management: How to improve sport fishing

Forrest Wynne
Aquaculture Extension Specialist
Kentucky State University
Ponds are built for some of the following purposes:
To establish good fishing: fish species you want!
Objective: to produce harvest size bluegill and largemouth bass
Optional: red ear sunfish and channel catfish may be stocked
Fish Stocking Rates and Times
Forage base
Proper steps in getting started:
Bass – Bluegill Pond Advantages
Stocking self sustaining bluegill and largemouth bass populations is a widely accepted fisheries management practice.
How to determine if the fishing is good?  Fish the Pond!!!!
Test seining to determine fish population balance
Young of year present?
Species you don’t want!
Problems: Unbalanced fish populations
Do not over harvest largemouth bass!
Lots of frogs and crawfish in your pond?
Reclaiming ponds with Rotenone
Primary management pond uses may conflict with fish production! Not all ponds will support fish!
Quality fishing may be difficult to achieve in some ponds due to:
Optional inputs to increase fish production to 400 lbs/acre, or more
Agricultural Limestone
Gypsum or CaSO$_4$
Fertilization Program – Only if the Pond will be fished hard!
Feeding Fish
Aeration – Good Insurance!
Fence off livestock, or allow limited pond access where gravity fed water tanks cannot be used!
Turtles don’t hurt ponds!
Pond Management
Things to avoid:
Things to do:
Steps to control aquatic vegetation
Methods of control
Filamentous algae control
Cattails, Rushes and Sedges
Duckweeds
Water Lily and Watershield
Watermeal
Water Primrose
Pondweeds
Expert advice is of great comfort – even when it’s wrong...