

## **Fishery Committee Report**

This article is intended to inform association members what the fishery committee is planning in order to improve the fishing in our lake and what you can do to help with this effort. The fishing survey done by the Nebraska Game and Parks in 2008 gave us some insight into what we can do to improve the fishing in our lake. If interested, you can view it on the lake association's website. Some of its more significant findings are:

- We have a low bass population
- We have a large percentage of junk fish (white perch, gar, carp, shad)
- We lack structure, which is used by fish to spawn and helpful to bass as they hunt prey.
- We should be tracking the fish populations so that we can better determine what fish to stock and whether our strategies for improving the fish population are working.

Every lake has a limit of fish it can support. The key to improving the fish population is increasing the percentage of desirable fish. Stocking can be used to alter the relative populations of various fish species. There are plans in place to stock 10-12" bass very soon. In the past, we have stocked smaller fish and many have not survived to become effective predators for the junk fish in the lake. Although the larger fish are considerably more expensive, they will consume more of the undesired fish than small ones will. They are being stocked in the spring so that they can more effectively control the shad and other junk fish while they are small. Although stocking can be an effective tool to control the fish population, stocking alone cannot control the fish population. You should remove all white perch, gar, carp and shad that you catch. However, predator fish will do a much better job controlling problem species than anglers can so the most important thing you can do to improve the fishing is to not remove the large predator fish (wipers, walleye, and especially bass). It is state law (even in our private lake) that you cannot remove bass under 15", but it would be better to catch and release all predator fish until we have a more balanced fish population. Catfish, bluegill, and crappie can be harvested assuming applicable state laws are followed. You can view the Nebraska fishing guide at <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/fishing/guides/fishguide/fishguide.asp>. If you need help identifying species of fish, the Nebraska Game and Parks has an excellent tool that is specific to the fish you will find in Nebraska. This tool can be found at <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/fishing/guides/identification/>.

There are also plans to spend a portion of the stocking budget on wipers in the fall when they are available. Wipers are very aggressive predators that are particularly good hunters of white perch.

To improve the habitat, the Game and Parks recommends placing underwater structure for the fish which concentrates the fish nearby and helps predators like bass to thrive. Concentrating fish near structures also improves fishing success. In the past, trees have been used to provide this habitat, but trees decay and pieces of them break off and pose a danger to boaters. Excess decaying material also contributes to algae blooms and helps carp thrive. Instead the Lake Association recommends using only habitat made of inert material such as PVC, rock, or concrete.

In order to track the fish population, volunteers can keep track of what they catch on creel sheets (will be available on association website or from Kevin Eastman). Record the number, size, and type of fish that are caught and whether they were kept or released. Turn these in to Kevin Eastman and the results will be compiled and posted on the association's website.

If you have any comments or suggestions on improving our fishing, please contact:

Kevin Eastman (lot 67)  
Fishery Committee  
894-5716  
[kevinandluci@hotmail.com](mailto:kevinandluci@hotmail.com)

### **Lead-acid Battery Recycling**

Do you have lead-acid batteries lying around that you want to get rid of? These are the type of batteries you would find in cars, boats, jet skis, ATVs, etc. There will be a recycling drive on May, 4<sup>th</sup> 2009 for Hanson Lake Three residents. Leave your batteries by the curb by 5pm and they will be picked up. The batteries will be sold to a recycler and the proceeds will be donated to the fishing budget. If you have any questions, please contact:

Kevin Eastman (lot 67)  
894-5716  
[kevinandluci@hotmail.com](mailto:kevinandluci@hotmail.com)