

Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District
Information Sheet
FISH FOR STOCKING PONDS

The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to coordinate the purchase of fish for pond stocking. Pooling of orders helps pond owners take advantage of lower, quantity pricing. Before ordering fish, please carefully review the following information.

Depth of Water – At least 10% of the pond should be a minimum of 8 ft. deep.

Water Temperature – Most ponds in western New York are “warm water ponds” with surface water temperatures reaching or exceeding 75°F during the summer months. “Cold water ponds” have surface water temperatures, which never reach 75°F.

Species – Warm water ponds will support a healthy largemouth bass population if a plentiful food supply is available. Trout should not be stocked in warm water ponds because water of 72°F cannot normally hold enough oxygen for trout to survive. **Bluegills are not recommended.** They will usually overpopulate the pond, resulting in a large number of stunted bluegills and just a few large bass. Fathead minnows are an excellent food fish and reproduce well in most ponds. Placing some large flat stones on the bottom of the pond in about one foot of water with one edge of the stone supported about one and one half inches off the bottom will provide sheltered places for them to lay their eggs. Also, especially in new ponds where no plant growth is present, the temporary placement of brush or small trees in the shallow water will provide the minnows with some protective cover. Bass are voracious feeders and will soon eliminate the food fish if no cover is provided. Fathead minnows should be stocked in the spring so that successful reproduction is assured.

Rainbow or brook trout can be successfully stocked in a cold water pond. Insects and crustaceans are the preferred food. Fathead minnows are an acceptable food fish. Other fish species are generally not stocked in trout ponds. Brown trout tend to be cannibalistic and are hard to catch so we do not recommend stocking them.

Trout stocking is usually more successful in the fall after minnows have been introduced in the spring. Trout are short-lived fish and will usually not be present the third or fourth year even if not caught by hook and line. They seldom breed successfully in ponds. Restocking is necessary if a trout population is to be sustained.

Numbers to Stock – Stocking rates are made based on the pond’s surface area in acres. To determine the acreage of your pond, first find the number of square feet (length (ft) x width (ft)) then divide by the number of square feet in a surface acre – 43560. For example, a pond 200 ft. by 200 ft. is approximately one (1) surface acre.

Fathead Minnows	400 per surface acre
Largemouth Bass	100 per surface acre
Trout	up to 600 per surface acre

If a large population of bass or trout is to be supported, the pond will probably need restocking with fathead minnows after the third year.

Stocking and Fishing Permits – The Conservation Laws of New York State require that pond owners obtain a license to stock and manage their ponds. The five-year fishing permit includes a stocking permit for the same period. Application forms are available at our office. Be sure to apply well in advance of fish delivery time. Questions, phone 652-8480.

Grass Carp – You may have heard about Triploid Grass Carp, a sterile carp that is being used for the control of aquatic vegetation. **SPECIAL PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR STOCKING GRASS CARP.** Contact the SWCD office for more information.