



FISHERIES SERIES

TIMELY INFORMATION

Agriculture & Natural Resources

EXTENSION FISHERIES, SWINGLE HALL, AUBURN UNIVERSITY, AL 36849-5628

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**Timetable for Pond Owner Services provided by
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
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The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (DWFF) of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provides a variety of services for the private pond owner. These services include fish for stocking, pond balance checks, fish kill investigations, and weed control recommendations. Applications for these services must be submitted in a timely fashion to the DWFF office in the district where the pond is located. Some of these services are also provided by Alabama Cooperative Extension System personnel. Owners should take advantage of the full variety of sources of technical assistance to help them better manage their ponds.

Fish for Stocking:

State hatcheries provide largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), northern strain bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), and redear sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*) also known as shellcrackers. The cost of the fish for stocking depends on the size of the pond and the stocking rate. For fertilized ponds which are stocked at a rate of 100 largemouth bass and 1000 combined bluegill and redear sunfish, the cost is \$70 for ponds $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ acre in size. For each additional $\frac{1}{4}$ acre the cost increases \$35 up to \$140 per acre for ponds 1 acre or larger. Unfertilized ponds are stocked at $\frac{1}{2}$ the rate of fertilized ponds; however, the cost for the stocking is same per acre as for fertilized ponds. To qualify to receive fish to stock a pond, the owner must submit an application to the appropriate district office prior to 31 January of the year the fish are needed. The district biologist must then certify that the pond meets the minimum area requirement of at least $\frac{1}{4}$ acre for a fertilized and $\frac{1}{2}$ acre for an unfertilized pond. The pond must also be free of wild fish. The only fish that can be present in the pond at the time of stocking are mosquitofish (*Gambusia sp.*) or grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*). It is advisable to wait to stock the grass carp until the pond has been approved for stocking.

ALABAMA A&M AND AUBURN UNIVERSITIES, AND TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, COUNTY GOVERNING BODIES AND USDA COOPERATING

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

For qualifying ponds less than 20 surface acres, state hatchery technicians deliver fingerlings to a location, usually a post office, in the county where the pond is located. The pond owner must meet the delivery and provide containers filled with pond water to transport the fish to the pond. For larger ponds, the technicians will deliver the fish to the pond. Bluegill and redear sunfish are stocked from November through March while largemouth bass are stocked the following late May or June. This split stocking permits the bluegills and redear sunfish to become established and begin to reproduce providing food for the juvenile largemouth bass stocked the next spring. The state provides no other species for stocking in private ponds.

District biologists can recommend other than the standard rates and procedures for stocking under special circumstances. Should the January 31 deadline be missed, the pond owner may purchase sunfish (bream) from a private hatchery. The state can then provide largemouth bass necessary for balanced stocking. To obtain only bass from the state, the sunfish must be stocked and an application in place before April 1. The cost for a bass only stocking is half that for standard stocking. Should the district biologist find that a pond has experienced recruitment failure (no young bass are produced or survive) of the largemouth bass and be in danger of becoming overcrowded with sunfish, the state can provide largemouth bass fingerlings for late summer remedial stocking.

Balance Checks:

State biologists will do seine checks of private ponds to determine if the fish populations are in balance (proper number and sizes of both sunfish and bass to generate good growth and fishing success). Biologists conduct pond checks in June and September. Applications for June balance checks must be made by May 31 and by August 31 for September checks. Results of these checks are summarized by the district biologist and recommendations are provided to the pond owner in writing.

Fish Kills, Water Quality, and Weed Control:

Fisheries biologists will investigate unexplained fish kills in recreational fishing ponds. Pond owners should contact their district biologist immediately if fish are sick and begin dying in their pond. The district biologists will also provide advice and help with problems of poor water quality and vegetation control. These problems can be reported at any time during the year. Owners should seek help with these problems when they first arise and when they may be corrected most easily.

Table 1. Pond Services provided by Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Service	Application Deadline
Fish for pond stocking	January 31
Bass only stocking (sunfish from a private hatchery)	April 1
June balance check	May 31
September balance check	August 31
Fish kill, weed control, water quality	Any time when needed

Table 2. Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries contact information

District	Office location	Tel. Number	District Biologist
1	Decatur	(256) 353-2634	Keith Floyd, Supervisor Phil Ekema, Mgmt. Biologist
2	Eastaboga	(256) 831-6860	Dan Catchings, Supervisor Rob Andress, Mgmt. Biologist
3	Northport	(205) 339-5716	Jerry Moss, Supervisor Jay Haffner, Mgmt. Biologist
4	Montgomery	(334) 358-0035	Chris Greene, Supervisor Graves Lovell, Mgmt. Biologist
5	Spanish Fort	(251) 626-5153	Dave Armstrong, Supervisor Ben Ricks, Mgmt. Biologist
6	Enterprise	(334) 347-9467	Ken Weathers, Supervisor Michael Holley, Mgmt. Biologist
Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries website: http://www.outdooralabama.com/fishing/freshwater/			

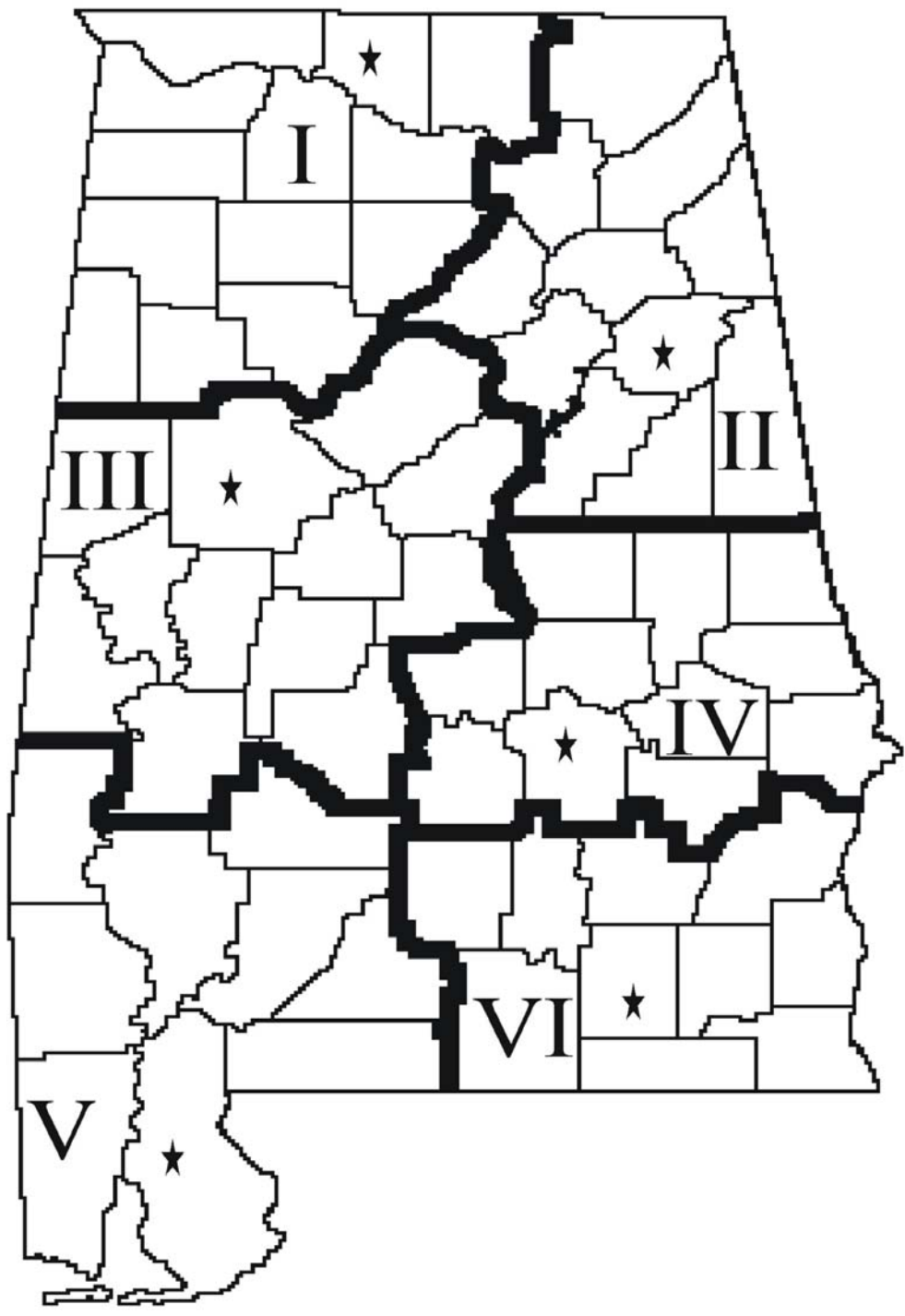


Figure 1. Fisheries district boundaries and office locations of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.