

War Eagle Lake Gets Fish Survey

On April 4th this month, some of the residents may have seen the State of Tennessee Agricultural Department doing a fish survey on the 12-acre lake behind the Sylvest, Hoosan, Gatlin and Hogue properties. Glenn Sylvest, Wade Gatlin and Jeff Hogue wanted to identify the fish currently living in the lake, ratios of the different types of fish, and solicit recommendations from the State in making the lake healthier and conducive to growing bigger bass. Glenn and Wade now call this lake War Eagle Lake because they both attended Auburn University.

Wade called the Tennessee Agricultural Department in Spencer to schedule the fish survey about a month ago. War Eagle Lake (as dubbed by Auburn grads Glenn and Wade) has never had a fish survey by the State.



State Ag representatives brought a specialized boat that has the ability to drop aluminum arms into the water. Each arm has wires that hang down into the water and carry electrical current. This current shocks the fish, placing them in a temporary stupor. They then turn sideways and float toward the surface. This allows the Ag representatives to scoop up the fish with specialized dip nets made of fiberglass (fiberglass does not

conduct electricity.) The Ag representatives made 5 ten-minute passes with the boat, covering all the shoreline, to stun and collect fish. The electrical current only went down 3-4 feet. Shocking the deep water is not practical because the electrical current is limited in reach to 3-4 feet below the surface. The fish are placed in a large barrel of water on the boat. After each pass, the fish are released back into the lake unharmed. They recuperate from the shocking after a minute or two. After each pass the Ag representatives look at the fish before releasing to make sure the fish are healthy and do not have any diseases.

All the fish in War Eagle Lake were healthy; however, the lake holds too many small bass for a healthy ratio of bass to bluegill. There are also too many bass in the 8 - 12-inch range. Glenn, Wade, and Jeff will reduce these numbers during the coming year with selective harvesting of the excess bass. The Ag representatives also recommended the lake be limed.



Limed lakes can hold more fish since these lakes help aquatic bugs and insects thrive also helping to feed the bluegill and bass. As an additional benefit of liming, the bass should increase in weight. The lake will obtain a lime green color causing the reduction of aquatic weeds on the bottom of the lake. Aquatic weeds are counterproductive to a healthy lake and the fish living therein. The Ag representatives recommended spreading 2-3 tons of lime per acre on War Eagle Lake. Each lake is different when it comes to liming the amount of agricultural lime needed is based on the depth of the lake, the water flow, the size of the lake and the alkalinity of the lake.



The Ag representatives also caught one green sunfish (see attached picture). These fish are highly damaging to Tennessee lakes and ponds. They primarily eat baby bass and bluegill. The Ag representatives recommend disposing of all Green Sunfish when they are caught, in this lake

and all other lakes in the area. We did not return this fish back into the lake.

At the end of the day and just before the Ag representatives left, a bald Eagle swooped down into the lake, caught a fish and flew off. Looks like the name of the lake is appropriate. Glenn, Wade, and Jeff are all looking forward to working on their lake to make it more productive in the future and sharing the knowledge they gain in their backyards with the rest of the Long Branch Lakes Community.

Don't forget to take a kid fishing....after all, we are all just kids!