

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**FISHPOND MANAGEMENT**

(Ac.)

CODE 399

**DEFINITION**

Managing impounded water for the production of fish or other aquatic organisms.

**PURPOSE**

- To provide favorable habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.
- To develop and maintain a desired species composition and ratio.
- To develop and maintain a desired level of production.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

In ponds, lakes, and reservoirs not managed for commercial aquaculture purposes.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes**

Structures will meet or exceed NRCS Standards: i.e., a constructed pond will meet or exceed the requirements of Pond (378).

Implement State Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan recommendations.

Protect the site from flooding, sedimentation, and contamination from barnyards, septic tanks, pesticides, excess nutrient runoff and other types of pollutants.

Control excessive and/or undesirable aquatic vegetation.

Livestock will be excluded from the pond.

**Criteria To Develop And Maintain A Desired Species Composition And Ratio**

Limit species for stocking to those that are adapted for use in ponds, lakes or reservoirs in

Illinois. Species selection(s) and stocking rates shall follow a pond management plan developed with the client and in accordance with *Management of Small Lakes and Ponds in Illinois* or an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Fisheries Biologist.

Develop species(s) selection and stocking rates based on size, depth, soil fertility, and water quality of the area to be stocked or the status of the existing fish population.

**Criteria To Develop And Maintain A Desired Level Of Production**

The desired level of production shall be maintained through harvest recommendations, supplemental stocking or supplemental feeding. Desired water quality conditions (e.g., dissolved oxygen level, pH, alkalinity, etc.) reflect local conditions and should be addressed in the pond management plan.

Aquatic organism health issues directly affect production levels and need to be included in the pond management plan. In the event of a fish kill an IDNR District fisheries biologist should be consulted.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Consider using only native species for best results.

Consider alternatives to the use of pesticides in the drainage area above the site, which may have negative impacts to water quality and aquatic organisms.

Consider the use of erosion control and nutrient and pest management practices in the watershed to maintain water quality.

Consider the effect of additional uses (e.g., livestock watering, recreation, irrigation, etc.) on the fish and/or aquatic organism population.

Consider the use of appropriate water treatment practices below structures to ensure that discharges from ponds, lakes, and reservoirs will meet state water quality standards.

Consider methods to prevent the fish in the pond, lake, and reservoir from escaping or being introduced into adjoining waters where native species might be adversely affected.

Consider providing additional fish and wildlife habitat within or around the impoundment for cover and breeding purposes. Grassy cover around the impoundment that may provide nesting habitat should not be mowed until after the nesting season is over (August 1).

### PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

A pond management plan will be prepared using Illinois Pond Management Plan Job Sheet 399JS. Ponds used for Fishpond Management must meet pond specifications listed in Illinois Pond Management Plan Job Sheet 399JS.

The plan will include:

- A location map and plan view of the site;
- Statement of purpose that describes the species(s) desired and management goals;
- Evaluation methods (catch record, observation, seining, electrofishing, etc.) for determining the population dynamics of fish and other aquatic organisms;
- Reference to State Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan recommendations, if applicable; and
- Permit requirements and regulations, if applicable.

### OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Develop an operation and maintenance plan as part of the pond management plan (Illinois Pond Management Plan Job Sheet 399JS) that may include one or more of the following actions for the successful management of the pond, lake, or reservoir:

1. Evaluation of habitat conditions on a regular basis;
2. Management of fish population and other aquatic life;
3. Supplemental feeding where applicable;

4. Removal of undesirable and overpopulated organisms;
5. Management and control of aquatic vegetation;
6. Monitoring and maintenance of desired water quality conditions (e.g., dissolved oxygen level, pH, alkalinity, etc.);
7. Periodic inspection and maintenance of structural components (e.g., water level control equipment).

### REFERENCES

A Manual of Fish Culture. Fish Culture Section, American Fisheries Society, 1999.

Illinois Aquatic Nuisance Species Program. <http://www.iisgcp.org/il%2Ddans/index2.html>

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Fisheries. 2004. *Management of Small Lakes and Ponds in Illinois*, Second Edition. Springfield, Illinois. 71 pp.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Fisheries. 2001. *Aquatic Plants Their Identification and Management*, Fishery Bulletin No. 4. Springfield, Illinois. 56 pp.

Inland Fisheries Management in North America, Second Edition. Chapter 21, Small Impoundments. Kohler, C.C. and W.A. Hubert, editors. American Fisheries Society, 1999.

Managing Aquatic Vegetation with Grass Carp. J.R. Cassani, editor. American Fisheries Society, 1996.

Suggested Procedures for the Detection and Identification of Certain Finfish and Shellfish Pathogens (Blue Book). Fish Health Section, American Fisheries Society, 2004.