

# Management Calendar for Kentucky Fish Ponds

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## January

Add agricultural limestone\* if total alkalinity of the pond's water is less than 20 mg/l and the pond has less than 13 water exchanges per year.

When ponds freeze - Ice covering a pond will only endanger fish if a blanket of snow prevents sunlight from penetrating the ice for a prolonged period. Aquatic plants and algae may die causing a dissolved oxygen depletion which may kill fish. **NO ATTEMPTS SHOULD BE MADE TO CLEAR ICE OR SNOW FROM THE POND.**

## February

Lime ponds which would benefit from the addition of agricultural limestone. Potential for ice (and snow) covering ponds.

## March

Begin algae and aquatic plant management programs. Stock triploid grass carp to control soft-stemmed, vascular plants.

Average lake temperature is 50 degrees F.

Fertilize ponds when water transparency is greater than 2 feet in

## April

Begin algae and aquatic plant management programs.

Begin pond fertilization program<sup>+</sup> every two weeks when water temperature reaches 60 to 65 degrees F, if maximum fish production is desired and the pond is to be heavily fished. Do not fertilize ponds where aquatic vegetation control is a problem.

Average lake temperature is 62 degrees F.

## May

Continue algae and aquatic plant management programs. Continue pond fertilization program every two weeks.

Largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish may begin spawning.

Average lake temperature is 71 degrees F.

## June

Continue algae and aquatic plant management programs.

depth.

Assess pond's fish population "balance" by test seining for the presence of young of year largemouth bass and bluegill. The number of intermediate size (3 to 5 inch long) bluegill will determine the status of the pond's predator - prey relationship.

Largemouth bass continue to spawn. Bluegill, which are multiple spawners, will reproduce for the remainder of the summer.

Stock 120 largemouth bass fingerlings and 50 channel catfish fingerlings (2 inches in length, or of equal size) per surface acre in new or reclaimed ponds if bluegill were stocked the previous fall.

Lakes will begin to stratify or layer due to the warming of surface waters.

Average lake temperature is 79 degrees F.

## **July**

Fertilize ponds when water transparency is greater than 2 feet in depth. Continue algae and aquatic plant management programs. Assess pond fish population "balance" by test seining.

Average lake temperature is 84 degrees F.

## **August**

Fertilize ponds when water transparency is greater than 2 feet in depth.

Continue algae and aquatic plant management programs. Last month to assess fish population balance by test seining. Last month to apply for Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife

Resources fish pond reclamation program. Undesirable fish populations are eliminated from ponds by use of rotenone, a chemical toxic to fish.

Begin plans to construct new ponds or repair or renovate established ponds with the onset of dry weather.

Average lake temperature is 82 degrees F.

## **September**

Fertilize ponds when water transparency is greater than 2 feet in depth. Continue algae and aquatic plant management programs.

Pond "turnover" and resulting oxygen depletions are likely to occur in "fertile" ponds due to the cooling of surface waters. Depletion of dissolved oxygen often causes fish kills.

Dry weather allows new pond construction and repair and renovation of established ponds.

Pond drawdown may be used to increase bluegill predation by largemouth bass by reducing shallow water habitat where bluegill can escape from the bass. Ponds should be reclaimed with rotenone during this month.

Last month to apply for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources pond stocking program.

Average lake temperature is 77 degrees F.

## **October**

Stop pond fertilization program until next April.

Continue algae and aquatic plant management programs.

Best time to add agricultural limestone to ponds with waters low (below 20 mg/l) in total alkalinity. The pond's water volume should not exchange more than 13 times per year.

New ponds should be constructed and established ponds repaired or renovated before the onset of wet, winter weather.

For new or reclaimed ponds stock 400 bluegill fingerlings (1 inch in length) per surface acre, or 300 bluegill and 160 red ear sunfish (shellcrackers) if desired. Stock 120 largemouth bass fingerlings and 50 channel catfish fingerlings which are two inches in length (or of equal length) per surface acre the following June.

October has the least amount of average rainfall for any month in Kentucky. Pond water volumes and flows from springs should be at their lowest.

Average lake temperature is 70 degrees F.

## **November**

Best time to add agricultural limestone to ponds.

## **December**

Best time to add agricultural limestone to ponds.

Drawdown pond water level to expose

5 to 10 feet of shoreline to control aquatic vegetation by subjecting it to freezing weather.

Pond surfaces may freeze.

Save old Christmas trees for brush "fish" attractors.

\* Agricultural limestone may be added to ponds at any time. However, application during the fall and winter months allows the lime to react with the pond's bottom muds freeing available nutrients in time for the spring growing season.

+ The amount of pond fertilizer used depends on the chemical composition of the fertilizer. A County Extension Agent, Fisheries Biologist or an Aquaculture Extension Specialists can provide application rates for various fertilizers.