

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE
STATEWIDE SPORT FISHERIES MANAGEMENT



FEDERAL AID JOB PROGRESS REPORT

F-20-48
2012

Urban Sport Fisheries
SOUTHERN REGION



**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES DIVISION
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

Table of Contents

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY	1
BACKGROUND	1
OBJECTIVES AND APPROACHES.....	3
PROCEDURES	3
General Fisheries Assessment.....	4
General Habitat assessment	4
Rainbow Trout Stocking.....	4
Channel Catfish Stocking	4
Development of Additional Urban Fisheries.....	4
FINDINGS	4
Sunset Park Pond.....	5
Lorenzi Pond	5
Tule Pond	6
Boulder City Pond.....	6
Mesquite Urban Pond	6
Cold Creek Pond	6
Beatty Urban Pond	6
MANAGEMENT REVIEW	6
RECOMMENDATIONS	6

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES DIVISION
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

List of Figures

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Angler Use For Seven Southern Region Urban Ponds	5

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State: Nevada
Project Title: Statewide Fisheries Program
Job Title: Southern Region Urban Sport Fisheries Management
Period Covered: January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012

SUMMARY

The urban fishing ponds in the Southern Region support put-and-take fisheries of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*). Additionally, some ponds support populations of various sunfish species (*Lepomis* spp). Current regulations limit anglers to three fish of any species. In 2012, a total of 83,685 rainbow trout were stocked within all ponds. These fish averaged 10 inches total length (in, TL), and 2.5 fish per pound (f/lb). In the warm water season, 17,660 channel catfish were stocked, averaging 0.85 f/lb and measuring an average of 14.6 in, TL.

A total of 13 days of contact creel surveys were carried out with one to three ponds visited on each survey day. There were 181 anglers contacted, reporting 86 fish caught. These fish included 78 rainbow trout and 8 channel catfish. No largemouth bass or bluegill (*L. macrochirus*) were reported in the catch. Overall, catch rates were 0.25 fish per hour and 0.48 fish per angler. By species, rainbow trout made up 91% of the catch and channel catfish 9% of the catch.

The creel survey was conducted at least once a month, and because of the small amount of effort put toward surveys, creel data may not fully reflect the amount of angler use and harvest occurring at these ponds. The 2011 Mail-in Angler Questionnaire Survey data provides additional information regarding the use of the urban ponds. Angler use at the seven ponds averaged 8,833 days per year, with estimated average catch rates of 3.1 fish per angler day with 105,000 fish reported caught from all the ponds. Sunset and Floyd Lamb Park ponds support the highest angler use, followed by Boulder City Pond.

BACKGROUND

There are seven urban fishing ponds in the Southern Region. They include Sunset Park Pond, Boulder City Fishing Pond, Lorenzi Park Pond, Tule Pond (Floyd Lamb Park), Mesquite Urban Pond (Hafen Pond), Cold Creek Pond, and Beatty Pond. These ponds are popular alternatives to traditional fishing and provide nearby urban fishing environments. Ponds are managed mainly as put-and-take fisheries, providing stocked rainbow trout during the coldwater season and channel catfish during the warmwater season. Some ponds have naturally recruiting populations of largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) and sunfish.

Sunset Park Pond

Sunset Park Pond is approximately 14 acres and is located in the southeastern Las Vegas Valley. It is managed by Clark County Parks and Recreation Department. This pond has a maximum depth of 10 to 12 feet (ft). Rainbow trout and channel catfish are stocked seasonally. Other resident fish include redear sunfish (*L. microlophus*), bluegill, black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), and largemouth bass. While not stocked by the NDOW, these fish are able to reproduce naturally because of adequate pond habitat.

Boulder City Park Pond

Boulder City Park Pond is approximately 3 acres with a maximum depth of 15 ft. It is located at the Veterans Memorial Park in Boulder City and is operated by the City of Boulder City. Rainbow trout and channel catfish are stocked seasonally, depending on water temperature.

Lorenzi Park Pond

Lorenzi Park Pond is another small pond of approximately three acres in size. It is located in northwest Las Vegas and is operated by the City of Las Vegas. This pond has a maximum depth of 10 ft. Rainbow trout and channel catfish are stocked seasonally. Some largemouth bass and other panfish species are known to inhabit the pond but are not stocked by the NDOW.

Tule Pond (Floyd Lamb Park)

Tule Pond is a spring-fed pond located in the Floyd Lamb Park in the northwest part of Las Vegas. This pond is approximately 5 acres with a maximum depth of 15 ft. It is currently maintained by the City of Las Vegas. Seasonally, rainbow trout and channel catfish are stocked. The pond does support other species of sunfish including largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, green sunfish (*L. cyanella*), and redear sunfish.

Mesquite Urban Pond

Mesquite Urban Pond is one of the smallest urban ponds in the Southern Region at approximately 2 acres. This pond is located in the town of Mesquite at Hafen Lane Park. It is stocked seasonally with rainbow trout in the coldwater season and channel catfish in the warmwater season.

Cold Creek Pond

Near Indian Springs, Cold Creek Pond is a small spring fed pond north of Mount Charleston in Clark County. The pond is less than 2 acres and has a maximum depth of 8 ft. It is stocked with rainbow trout in the winter months.

Beatty Pond

Beatty Pond is located in the town of Beatty in Nye County. The pond is located at Highway 95 and Vanderbilt Road and historically was a gravel pit operated by the Nye County Road Department. The pond is spring fed from a shallow well with cattails along its edges. It is stocked annually with rainbow trout during the winter months, but it also has resident bass and catfish which were stocked sometime after its construction in 1977.

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACHES

Objective: To administer an urban fisheries program, which assesses fisheries resources or potentially new fisheries resources, identifies and addresses habitat management needs, manages fish stocking to meet fishery objectives, provides information to anglers and maintains contact with managing entities of individual fishing waters.

Approaches:

- Conduct a general fisheries assessment through direct angler contacts at least once monthly at all managed sites except Mesquite (Hafen Park) Pond.
- Conduct a general habitat assessment through visual observations of water quantity (lake level) and water quality (clarity).
- Evaluate annual stocking recommendations based on habitat conditions and angler use.
- Coordinate rainbow trout stocking at all sites during cool-weather months (November through March)
- Manage contracts for and coordinate stocking of purchased channel catfish at all sites during warm-weather months (April through October).
- Coordinate fishery management activities with the City of Las Vegas, City of Boulder City, City of Mesquite and Clark County, as necessary to maintain/enhance the fishery and address observed site management needs.
- Identify and/or develop additional urban fishing waters in cooperation with local government entities as opportunities arise.

PROCEDURES

General Fisheries Assessment

Creel surveys were conducted at Sunset Park Pond, Lorenzi Pond, Tule Pond (Floyd Lamb Park), and the Boulder City Pond once a month throughout the year, contacting 181 anglers. Broken down by site, Sunset Park Pond was surveyed on 12 occasions, Lorenzi on one, Tule on six, and Boulder City Pond on five. No creel survey was conducted at Mesquite Urban Pond or Beatty Pond. Survey information collected included total catch, unit of effort, and species caught.

General Habitat assessment

General habitat assessments were made through visual observations during creel survey and stocking days.

Rainbow Trout Stocking

Rainbow trout stocking was initiated on January 3 through March 13 and then resumed November 6 through December 26. Stocking occurred on a weekly basis. A total of 83,685 rainbow trout (33,649 lbs) were stocked to the urban ponds in 2012. Fish averaged 10 in, TL, and were 2.5 f/lb. Fish came from Mason Valley Hatchery and Spring Creek Rearing Station and were divided up among the following ponds: Sunset Park Pond: 27,419; Tule Pond: 27,202; Boulder City Pond: 20,182; Mesquite Urban Pond: 4,103, Beatty Pond: 2,780 and Cold Creek Pond: 1,999. Lorenzi Pond was not stocked due to construction by the city.

Channel Catfish Stocking

Channel catfish stocking commenced on April 25 and ended October 24. Catfish were stocked on a monthly basis, except for July. Due to high mortality rates in July, both NDOW and the vendor agreed to postpone stocking until August. A total of 17,660 channel catfish (20,700 lbs) were stocked in the urban ponds averaging 0.85 f/lb and averaging 14.6 in, TL. Floyd Lamb and Sunset ponds received the largest number of catfish at 6,315 fish each, followed by Boulder City Pond at 4,140, and Mesquite Pond at 890. No catfish were planted at Lorenzi Pond due to construction. The allotment for Lorenzi Pond was divided among the other ponds. Catfish were purchased through a contract with Mr. Fish located in Arkansas.

Development of Additional Urban Fisheries

No additional ponds were identified in 2012.

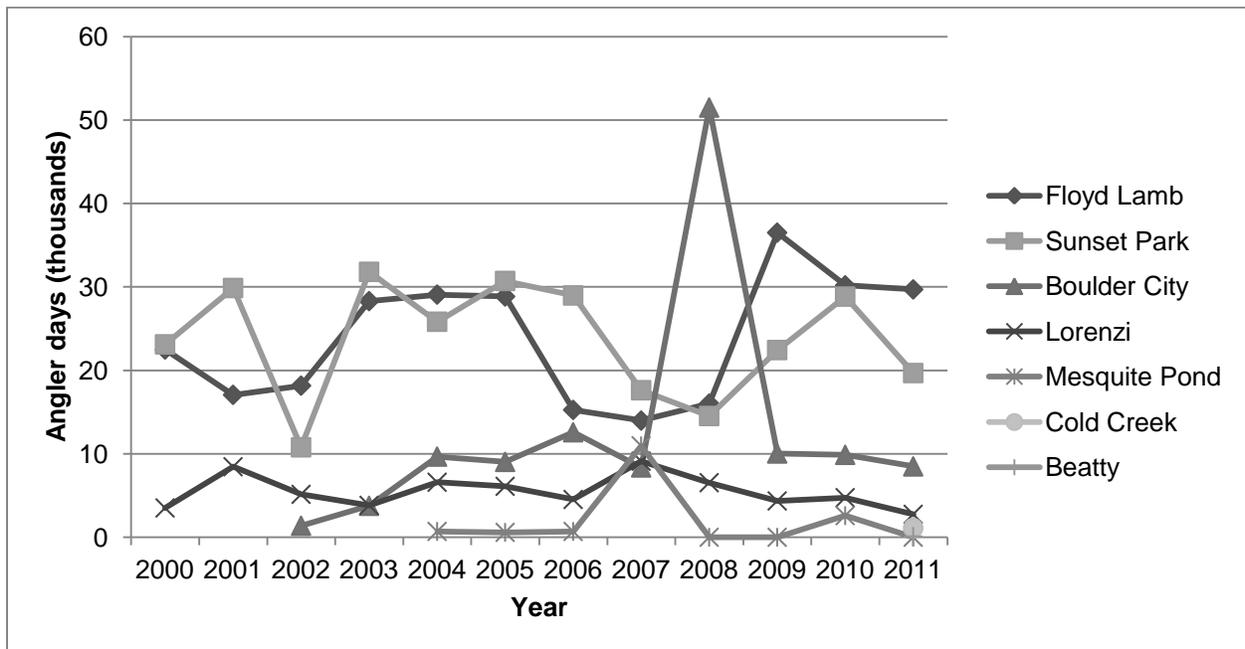
FINDINGS

A total of 13 days of contact creel surveys were carried out at urban ponds, contacting 181 anglers who reported catching 86 fish. These fish included 78 rainbow trout and 8 channel catfish. No largemouth bass or bluegill were reported. Overall, catch rates were 0.25 fish per hour and 0.48 fish per angler. By species, rainbow trout made up 91% of the catch and channel catfish 9%. While the following catch rates seem quite low, creel survey effort was also low and results may not fully reflect actual fishing pressure and catch rates.

In addition to contact creel surveys, mail-in angler questionnaire data provides insight into angler use at urban ponds. Angler use combined for all seven ponds in 2011 was estimated at 8,833 angler days with anglers catching 105,000 fish for an

average catch rate of 3.1 fish per angler day. Sunset and Floyd Lamb Park Ponds support the highest angler use followed by Boulder City Pond (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Angler Use for Seven Southern Region Urban Ponds From The Annual Mail-In Angler Questionnaire Survey, 2000-2011.



Sunset Park Pond

Through 12 creel survey visits to the pond, 108 anglers were interviewed. A total of 55 rainbow trout and 8 channel catfish were reported. No bluegill or largemouth bass were reported. Anglers fished 185.25 hours for catch rates of 0.34 fish per hour and 0.6 fish per angler.

Lorenzi Pond

Due to construction on Lorenzi Pond, only one visit was made to survey anglers. A total of 16 were contacted. They reported 35.5 angler hours and caught 13 trout for catch rates of 0.37 fish per angler hour and 0.8 fish per angler.

On March 14, a fish salvage effort was conducted at Lorenzi Pond. Prior to this, most of the water had been pumped out and the pond sat to dry out. On March 14, two areas of the pond retained some water and fish. A backpack electroshocker with two netters was used to capture the remaining fish. Approximately 25 channel catfish and 150 bluegill sunfish were captured. The fish were taken to the Floyd Lamb Pond. A large number of common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) were also captured and properly disposed of.

Tule Pond (Floyd Lamb Park)

On six visits to Floyd Lamb Park, contact creel surveys were conducted at the Tule Pond. A total of 41 anglers were contacted having fished 93.5 hours and catch rates of 0.06 fish per hour and 0.15 fish per angler. Anglers caught six rainbow trout and no channel catfish, bluegill, or largemouth bass.

Boulder City Pond

Five visits were made to the Boulder City Pond for creel surveys. These surveys contacted 16 anglers fishing for a total of 24 fishing hours. Anglers reported catching four rainbow trout, but no channel catfish or bluegill were caught. Catch rates were 0.17 fish per hour and 0.25 fish per angler.

Mesquite Urban Pond (Hafen Pond)

No creel surveys were conducted at the Mesquite Urban Pond.

Cold Creek Pond

No creel surveys were conducted at the Cold Creek Pond.

Beatty Urban Pond

No creel surveys were conducted at the Beatty Pond.

MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The objectives of administering an urban fisheries program were met and approaches completed. Creel surveys found angler fish per hour rates were lower than last year and somewhat less than that described for a Put-and-Take Fishery Management Concept. Fish per day rates observed from 2012 angler contacts were slightly less than expected; however, fish per day rates reported in the 2011 Mail-in Angler Questionnaire Survey were better and in line with the Put-and-Take Fishery Management concept.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue with the following approaches:

- Conduct a general fisheries assessment through direct angler contacts at least once monthly at all managed sites except Mesquite (Hafen Park) and Beatty ponds.
- Conduct a general habitat assessment through visual observations of water quantity (lake level) and water quality (clarity).
- Evaluate annual stocking recommendations based on habitat conditions and angler use.

- Manage contracts for and coordinate stocking of purchased channel catfish at all sites during warm-weather months (April through October).
- Identify and /or develop additional urban fishing waters in cooperation with local government entities as opportunities arise

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