



Current Report

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Fingerlings for Pond Stocking

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Fish for stocking a fishing pond can either be purchased from a private hatchery or be obtained from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) without cost. Regardless of the source, the first step should be to educate yourself about pond management.

NREM-9209, "Improved Fishing in Your Pond," discusses many ways to improve fishing besides the stocking of fingerlings. NREM-9206, "Common Pond Problems," deals with issues like correcting muddiness, excess aquatic plant growth, the yellow grub parasite, turtles and other situations that concern pond owners. "Managing Pond Fisheries in Oklahoma" gives information on many pond management topics, including trophy bass, catfish only ponds and hybrid bluegill. A limited supply is available for \$3 from ODWC Fisheries Division (1801 N. Lincoln Blvd., PO Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK, 73152). Before ordering, check for availability at wildlifedepartment.com under Outdoor Store – Publications. When the supply is exhausted, it will be announced online.

Here are important facts to keep in mind as you make plans for stocking fingerlings into your pond:

- Stocking fingerlings on top of an existing fish population is discouraged. Such fingerlings will likely be eaten by existing bass. See NREM-9209, "Improved Fishing in Your Pond," for information on how to improve an existing fish population.
- Observe the fingerlings closely and check for any of the following disease signs. Not all sick fish will show disease signs, so it may be safest to reject all of them if some appear sick. Some signs of illness include:
 - loss of balance
 - hanging near the surface
 - bulging eyes
 - swollen or shrunken stomach
 - sores or spots or other abnormalities.
 - cotton-like growth – white or brownish
- There may be undesirable fish mixed into your fingerlings. Be careful not to introduce problem fish into your pond by checking closely for unknown fish. Bass fingerlings will have a single strong stripe along the side (Figure 1). Bluegill fingerlings will have strong vertical bars (Figure 2). Reject if there are unknown fish.



Figure 1. Young largemouth bass can be identified by their single, strong horizontal stripe. (Photo credit: Outdoor Alabama)



Figure 2. Young bluegill have vertical bars. (Photo credit: Outdoor Alabama)

Buying fingerlings from private hatcheries gives pond owners the option of stocking other fish species and getting larger-sized fingerlings. Ask for details about the guaranteed length of time mortalities are covered, etc. A list of private hatcheries is listed below.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation offers free largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish fingerlings produced at state hatcheries in Byron, Durant, Medicine Park, and Holdenville. You must first meet their requirements and accept their conditions:

- Pond owners must have current fishing license
- Pond must be totally without fish
- Pond must be at least one half acre
- Game rangers are allowed to check anglers for fishing licenses
- You are not required to let the public fish your pond unless part of the pond is on public property

Your application to the ODWC is generally required to be in before June if you wish to receive fingerlings that year. Bluegill and channel catfish fingerlings are provided in the fall followed by largemouth bass fingerlings in the spring. This staggered stocking gives the bluegill time to grow, spawn and establish a good forage base on which the bass can feed. Contact the Fisheries Division by mail (PO Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152) or phone (405-521-3721) to receive an application. Complete a separate application for each pond and return it to the address on the application. You will then be sent a letter advising you of the application number(s) and the appropriate time that fish will be available. The game warden in your county will arrange an onsite evaluation of the pond(s). When fish are available, you will receive a notification by mail with the date, time, town and location where the fish can be picked up.

Private Hatcheries

Arkansas Pond Stockers

PO Box 357
Harrisburg, AR 72432
1-800-843-4748
Catfish, Hybrid bluegill, Redear, Bluegill, Sunfish, Bass, Crappie, Grass carp, Fathead minnow
Delivery to set locations in eastern Oklahoma.

Crystal Lake Fisheries

Rt 2, Box 528
Ava, MO 65608
417-683-2301
Rainbow trout

Dunn's Fish Farm

PO Box 85
Fittstown, OK 74842
800-433-2950
dunnfishfarm.com
Catfish, Grass carp, Bass, Redear, Bluegill, Koi, Fathead minnows
Delivery to set locations throughout Oklahoma.

Harbin Fish Farm

2295 N. 383 Rd, Box 151
Wetumka, OK 74883
Spencer Harbin 620-968-7499
harbinfishfarm.com
Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Hybrid Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Crappie, Fathead Minnows, Grass Carp
Delivery available or pick-up at farm.

Inslee Fish Farm

PO Box 207
Connerville, OK 74836
1-800-222-9505
580-836-7150
Bass, Grass carp, Bluegill

Moore's Fish Farm

25353 S. 4230 Rd.
Inola, OK 74036
918-341-4194
mooresfishfarm.com
Straight Bluegill, Hybrid Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Northern Largemouth Bass, Grass Carp, Fathead Minnows, and Tilapia
www.moorefishfarm.com

Newalla Fish Company

580-919-5110
(You may text 'FISH' for help or more information)
NewallaFishCompany.com
Pond-Ready Hybrid Striped Bass, Domesticated Striped Bass, Largemouth Bass, Coppernose Bluegill, Triploid Grass Carp, Redear Sunfish
Free Delivery, Statewide

Texoma Fish Hatchery

PO Box 506
Whitesboro, TX 76273
903-564-5372
pondboss@texoma.net
Catfish, Bass, Bluegill

Corrections, new listings or updates should be sent to Marley Beem, Assistant Extension Specialist, Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management, at 008C Ag Hall, Stillwater OK 74078 or marley.beem@okstate.edu or by calling 405-744-3854.

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry—Aquatic Culture License Holders

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