



Fish Stocking in Texas

For more information

The Inland Fisheries Division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department maintains three regional and 15 district offices across the state.

To find the office and biologist for your area, go to www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/about/divisions/inland_fisheries/offices/index.phtml#biologist

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(325) 651-4846

Region 3 Fisheries
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Tyler, TX 75707
(903) 566-1615

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Texas anglers want to know:

What fish get stocked into Texas public waters?

Where and when are they stocked?

Who decides what gets stocked and where?

Why does the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department stock fish?

Before we answer that question, we need to answer a more basic one: **Why stock at all?**

Remember that 200 years ago, Texas had 191,000 miles of streams and rivers but only one natural lake. Today there are more than 800 man-made reservoirs that were formed by the damming of Texas' rivers. Reservoir construction increased the amount of aquatic habitat in the state while dramatically changing most of the original habitat. TPWD has used hatchery-raised fish to meet the challenges of these altered systems while creating tremendous fishing opportunities in our state.

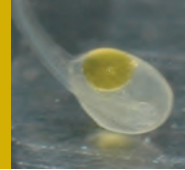
TPWD stocks to make fishing better for all anglers. Stocking is done to accomplish specific fisheries management goals in specific reservoirs. Goals are developed by staff biologists who know most about these resources and the anglers who use them. In general, stocking is used to:

- start fish populations in new or renovated waters
- supplement populations with insufficient natural reproduction
- restore populations impacted by catastrophes
- provide fish in small urban lakes
- enhance the genetic makeup of a fish population
- take advantage of improved habitat conditions

We stock about 15 million fish of various species into fresh water each year.



How does TPWD decide what fish get stocked and where?



Stocking Questions and Answers

Step 1. TPWD's district fisheries biologists utilize sampling techniques such as electrofishing, gill netting, trap netting and angler surveys to assess the status and use of fish populations in reservoirs they manage. From the data that is collected, biologists determine how many fish of each species are present; how many juvenile, sub-adult and adult fish of each species are present; whether there is enough prey available to sustain the populations; whether fish are growing well and in good condition; and how anglers are currently using the fishery. Biologists then consider this information in conjunction with factors such as water level fluctuations and the types and amounts of available habitat to decide which reservoirs could benefit most from stocking.

Step 2. Every year, biologists prepare stocking plans for their districts that prioritize the reservoirs needing to be stocked on an individual species basis. They decide how many and what size fish are needed to improve a fishery. Once developed, the biologists' stocking plans are combined into regional plans and, ultimately, into a Statewide Stocking Plan. All stocking requests are thoroughly discussed and prioritized based on standard criteria to ensure the best possible use of the state's hatchery resources and success in meeting fisheries management goals.

Priority is given to waters that are part of a research project, are new or recently renovated, have experienced a catastrophic event such as a fish kill or severe drought, or have had a significant increase in habitat. In addition, state park lakes and small urban lakes, which provide close-to-home fishing for many Texans, will get high stocking priority.

The extensive process of developing, reviewing and prioritizing the Statewide Stocking Plan is necessary because hatchery-raised fish are valuable and sometimes limited. Great care is taken to ensure that fish get put into waters where they are needed the most and will have the greatest impact on fishing.

Step 3. Once the Statewide Stocking Plan is finalized, it is submitted to our hatchery staff, who then develop production plans geared toward raising enough fish of the appropriate size to meet the needs of public waters. Fish are produced at five state-of-the-art fish hatcheries located across the state. Hatchery biologists go to great lengths to ensure that fish produced are of the highest possible quality (health, size and body condition) to maximize their survival following stocking. They work in close coordination with fisheries management biologists during production planning and fish delivery phases.



Step 4. Hatchery staff deliver fish in the order of the priority established on the Statewide Stocking Plan. Timing will vary depending on the species being stocked and the size of fish requested. Typically, species such as walleye, saugeye, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and blue catfish are stocked as two-inch fingerlings from April through July. Channel catfish, ranging in size from two to 12 inches, are stocked almost anytime from March through November. Rainbow trout are stocked from December through March.

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Q. Will TPWD stock fish in my private pond?

A. TPWD only stocks fish into public waters. Private pond owners may purchase fish for stocking from a number of commercial fish hatcheries.

A list of commercial hatcheries, as well as information on managing a private pond, can be found at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/habitats/private_water/

Q. Where can I find information on where and when fish are stocked into public waters?

A. For dates and locations of fish stockings, see www.tpwd.state.tx.us/stocking

The Neighborhood Fishin' program stocks channel catfish and rainbow trout at two-week intervals in selected urban lakes. For details: www.neighborhoodfishin.org

Rainbow trout are stocked into a variety of public fishing lakes during winter; see the schedule beginning each November: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/troutstocking

Q. What species of fish does TPWD stock?

A. TPWD hatcheries typically raise and stock blue catfish, bluegill, channel catfish, Florida largemouth bass, Guadalupe bass, hybrid striped bass, northern largemouth bass, rainbow trout, red drum, smallmouth bass, striped bass, walleye and saugeye.

Q. Where do fish for stocking come from?

A. TPWD operates five state fish hatcheries:

- A.E. Wood Fish Hatchery, in San Marcos (512) 353-0572
- Dundee State Fish Hatchery, near Wichita Falls (940) 586-1203
- John D. Parker East Texas Fish Hatchery, near Jasper (409) 698-2052
- Possum Kingdom Fish Hatchery, near Graford (940) 779-2301
- Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, near Athens (903) 676-2277

These hatcheries are open to the public and available for tours. For details: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/management/hatcheries/



When a truckload of fish is released into the water, that's the last step in a long, carefully planned process.