



Ohio River Fisheries Management Plan

2005-2009

General Approach and Goal

Activities will be conducted through five integrated tasks. Public input will be solicited throughout the plan's implementation. The goal of the plan is to provide enhanced angling opportunities using a sound technical approach and sensible use of agency funds.

Proposed Angler Surveys Tasks:

Angler Use and Economic Survey: Angler use and economic information will be ascertained in 2005 via a survey contracted to a nationally-recognized vender.

Tailwater Angler Survey: As part of ongoing information-gathering efforts angler surveys will be conducted at two tailwaters during the sauger fishing period in 2007-2008. WVDNR and Ohio River Fishery Management Team (ORFMT) staff will provide input on survey design.

Proposed Fish Stocking Tasks:

Largemouth Bass:

1. A maximum of 38,400 largemouth bass will be stocked into the Willow Island Pool in 2005 at two life stages.
2. Subsequent years' stocking will be dependent on daily mean river stage (feet) for the period May 1-June 30. If warranted, annual stocking rates will be the same as 2005.
3. Three hatchery ponds will be dedicated to this effort annually.
4. Fish reared, but not stocked in a given year because of adequate river levels, will be released into small lakes to promote community angling activities.

Smallmouth Bass:

1. A maximum of 38,250 fingerling smallmouth bass will be stocked during 2005, 2006, and 2007 into the Hannibal Pool. Slower growth rates and a dependency on in-river spawning is the main reason for three years of dedicated stocking.
2. Initiating in 2008, stocking of smallmouth bass will be dependent on daily mean river stage (feet) for the period May 1-June 30. If warranted annual stocking rates will be the same as 2005-2007.
3. Two hatchery ponds will be dedicated to this effort annually.
4. Fish reared, but not stocked in a given year because of adequate river levels, will be stocked into rivers that currently have extremely low densities of smallmouth bass because of past habitat degradation (i.e. Tug Fork, Guyandotte).

Hybrid Striped Bass:

1. Current agreements between ORFMT member states have set the stocking of hybrid striped bass at a rate of 5 fish/acre.
2. The WVDNR is responsible for stocking the Ohio River upstream and inclusive of the Willow Island Pool. This requires the stocking of 97,500 fingerling (30-day old) hybrid striped bass.
3. One to two hatchery ponds will be dedicated to this effort annually

Proposed Fish Stocking Tasks: (continued)

Paddlefish:

1. A maximum of 6,800 paddlefish will be stocked throughout the West Virginia reach of the Ohio River excluding the Greenup Pool.
2. A single hatchery pond will be dedicated to this effort annually.

Blue Catfish:

1. Blue catfish restoration will be focused on the Ohio River reach inclusive and downstream of the Belleville Pool. A maximum of 26,800 individuals will be stocked annually.
2. A single hatchery pond will be dedicated to this effort annually.

Walleye:

1. WVDNR and ORFMT biologists have identified a unique population of walleye inhabiting the Ohio River of West Virginia.
2. WVDNR biologists will collect walleye from the Ohio River upstream of the Belleville Pool and utilize only unique walleye in hatchery production.
3. The succeeding fingerlings (30-day old) will be introduced into the Hannibal and Pike Island pools annually from 2005-2009.
4. One to two hatchery ponds will be dedicated to these unique walleye. A maximum of 65,500 fingerlings will be stocked annually.

Proposed Habitat-Related Tasks:

Habitat Inventory: Depth and major substrate type will be determined in selected embayments of the Ohio River.

Habitat Enhancement: Spawning and nursery habitat for nest spawning species will be constructed in selected embayments of the Belleville Pool in 2005 and extended throughout the river in ensuing years. In river habitat structures will be constructed where appropriate following the planning and permitting process.

Proposed Angling Regulations:

Current or Proposed Regulations:

Black Bass: (Implement January 2006)

Current: Bag Limit: 6/day; Minimum Size: None
Proposed: Seasonal Catch and Release: November 1-June 30

Walleye: (Implement January 2006)

Current: Bag Limit: 10/day; Minimum Size: None
Proposed: Bag Limit: 2/day; Minimum Size: 18 inches

Blue Catfish: (Implement January 2006)

Current: No Regulation
Proposed: Bag Limit 2/day; Minimum Size Limit: 24 inches

Paddlefish: (Implement when population levels reach adequate levels)

Current: No Harvest
Proposed: Bag Limit 1/day

Sauger/Saugeye: Regulations will remain as 10 fish per day with no size limit.

Comments:

Provide comments to Chris O'Bara at 304-420-4550 or e-mail ohioriverfish@wvdnr.gov. Comments can also be sent to Chris O'Bara, WVDNR, 2311 Ohio Avenue, Parkersburg, West Virginia, 26101.

Comment Deadline: February 4, 2005