EWF-003
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TEXAS FARM POND MANAGEMENT CALENDAR

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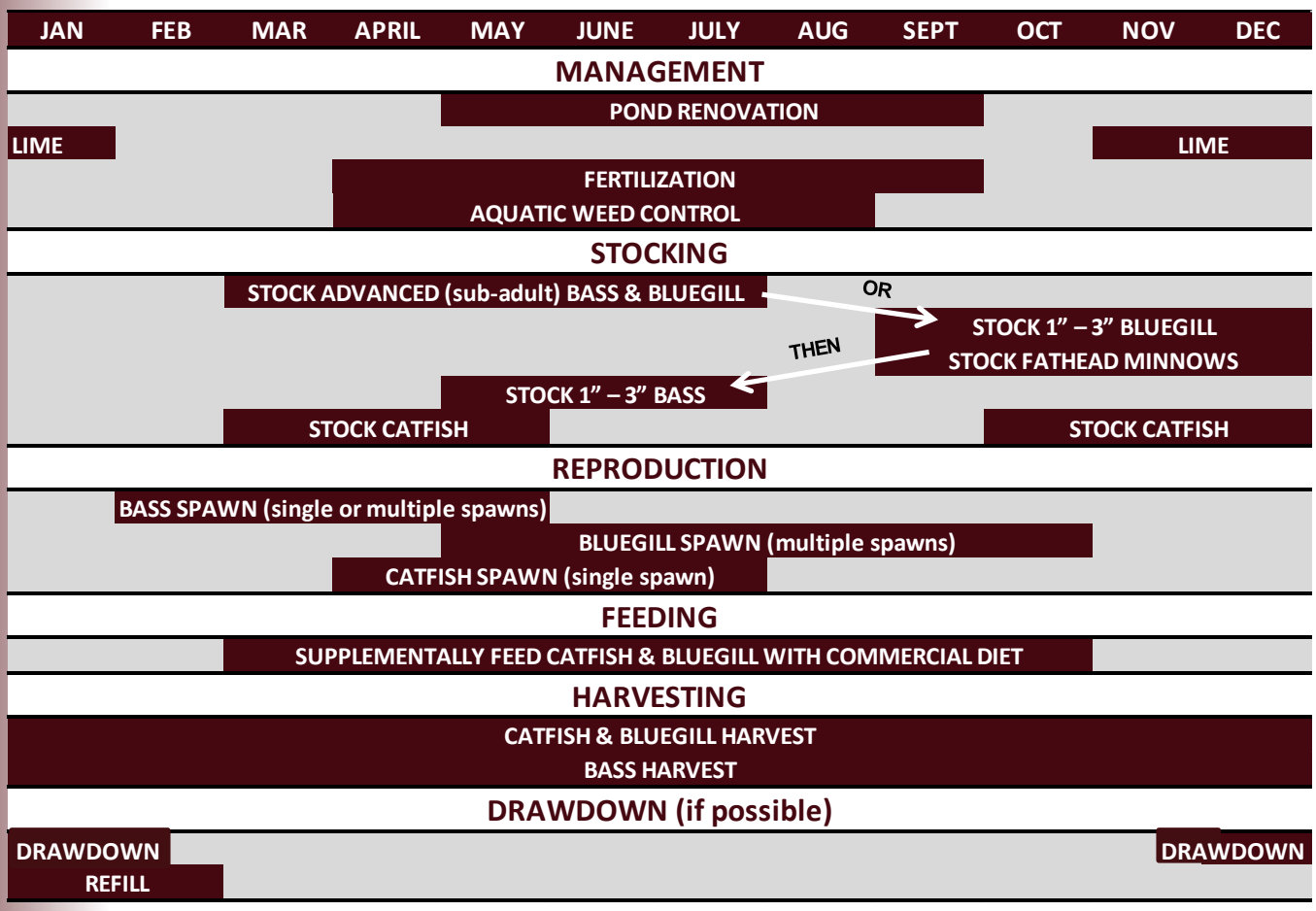

● **POND RENOVATION –** **Ponds that become imbalanced due to stunted fish populations and/or undesirable species should be renovated utilizing rotenone. Liquid or powder 5 percent rotenone at 10 pounds of powder or one gallon liquid/acre foot of water kills most problematic species. Treated water is safe for livestock. Restocking is possible three weeks after treatment.**
Best months: May-September (when water temperature is above 70° F).

● **LIME –** **Agricultural limestone applications are necessary in ponds with pH below 6.5 and/or total alkalinity below 20 ppm. Waters in this category may limit fish growth and reproduction. East Texas ponds in particular should be tested before stocking. Be sure to use the same lime as used on pastures and hay meadows.**
Best months: November-January.

● **FERTILIZATION –** **Inorganic fertilizer can be utilized to increase fish production 2-6 fold by increasing the food supply. Apply granular 10-20-5 at 100 pounds/surface acre followed by one or two reduced rate applications of 35 pounds/surface acre as needed to maintain the bloom. Liquid fertilizer such as 16-34-0 is also utilized at 1-2 gallons/surface acre with reduced rate applications as needed. Apply water soluble fertilizers such as 10-52-4 at 6 to 10 pounds per acre with reduced rate applications as needed. Never fertilize and lime a pond at the same time. Fertilization should be continued on an annual basis.**
Best months: Start in early April, end in September.

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

● **AQUATIC WEED CONTROL –** Consider using triploid grass carp as a *biological* control treatment if plants they control are present. Initiate *herbicide* weed control when growth begins in the spring. Proper plant identification is essential to providing good control. Do not treat an entire pond with heavy weed infestations in the summer. Spot treat in hot weather to avoid oxygen depletion. Visit our aquatic weed website for help with plant identification and treatment options: http://aquaplant.tamu.edu
Best months: Start in April or May – spot treat only throughout summer as needed if fish are important.

● **STOCKING –** Rates given are for new or renovated ponds only (no fish present). Muddy ponds and *all ponds less than one surface acre* should be stocked with only fathead minnows (at 500/surface acre as supplemental forage) and catfish or hybrid sunfish or hybrid striped bass. Stocking rates range from 100 to 1000 fingerlings per acre for these species depending on the frequency and quantity of feeding.
Best months: March-May or October-December.
Ponds larger than one surface acre are suitable for management of bass-bluegill or bass-bluegill-catfish. Occasionally, supplemental forage species (threadfin shad, fathead minnows, tilapia and/or redear sunfish) are stocked in addition to the bluegill. Stock twenty 6-8" bass and thirty 3" or larger bluegill per surface acre, if available. Do not stock hybrid sunfish in a bass pond.
Best months: October-December (bluegill); March-early July (bass).
If only 1-3" bass and bluegill are available, stock 500 bluegill/surface acre in the fall followed by 50 bass/surface acre the next spring. Catfish stocked with bass-bluegill should be at least as large as the bass fingerlings (stocking rate 50/surface acre). All stocking rates for bass-bluegill-catfish strategies can be doubled if a fertilization program is utilized. To maintain catfish populations in a bass pond, stock 25-50 8" or larger catfish/surface acre every 3 to 5 years.

● **SPAWNING –** Catfish stocked alone should not be encouraged to reproduce by adding spawning habitat. However, when stocked with bass and bluegill, spawning cavities can be added to the pond to increase catfish reproduction. Bass initiate spawning in March (February in southern portions of Texas), with some females spawning more than once before summer. Bluegill are essential as bass forage because of their ability to spawn throughout the summer (May-October), providing abundant forage for maintaining a bass population.

● **SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING –** Supplemental feeding greatly increases the pounds of catfish that can be supported in ponds and lakes. Bluegill also benefit from a regular feeding program. Use a floating ration containing at least 28 percent crude protein. Feed at three percent body weight or all that will be eaten by the fish in 10-15 minutes. DO NOT feed more than 15 pounds per day without supplemental aeration. Feed may also be offered once a week during the winter on warm, sunny days only.
Best months: March-November and during prolonged warm periods during the winter.

● **HARVEST –** Hook and line harvest is encouraged as soon as catfish reach edible size. Catfish produced for income should be removed and sold (if appropriate) by the end of the growing season (November-December). However, since most pond owners simply raise catfish for their own recreation, carry-over of fish from one year to the next is common. Mature fish (3-4 years) may spawn and the resulting offspring stunt or the carrying capacity of the pond (maximum of 1000/pounds/surface acre with daily feeding) will be exceeded if the fish are not routinely harvested. Return all bass less than 15" long during the first three years after stocking. From the fourth year on, remove twenty-five 8-12" bass, return 12-15" bass, and keep or return those bass over 15". Do not remove more than 25 pounds of bass per acre per year to prevent overharvest. No limit should be placed on the number of bluegill harvested.
Best months: All year.

● **CATCH RECORDS –** Anglers should maintain accurate records on the number and size of each species caught during each fishing trip. Harvest can then be monitored to determine when restocking and/or harvest restrictions become necessary for certain species.
Best months: All year.

● **DRAWDOWN –** Ponds larger than one surface acre containing bass and bluegill may benefit from annual drawdown of 1-3 feet. This technique concentrates forage (bluegill) and makes them more available to bass. Exposed shoreline areas can be planted with a combination of winter grasses following drawdown to provide nursery habitat for sportfish fingerlings the next spring. Winter drawdown can also serve to kill problematic weeds.
Best months: Drawdown in November, refill before bass spawning season (March).

For additional information and resources please visit our Extension websites at:
http://wildlife.tamu.edu and http://aquaplant.tamu.edu