

WILDLIFE TRENDS

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Stocking Gizzard Shad In Ponds

By *Kedric Nutt*

In the world of private ponds and pond management, consistently producing trophy bass is the ultimate goal of many pond owners. For the sake of argument, I will define 'trophy' bass as in excess of 10 pounds. Of course, 'trophy' is in the eye of the beholder, but that's another story.

As with management of deer for trophy bucks, the key factors for producing trophy bass are well known: age, genetics and nutrition. This has become a well known mantra for land owners and deer hunters. It should be as well known to bass fishermen.

For a pond owner or pond manager, the tricky part of that equation is the nutrition component. We can easily acquire a stock of bass with the desired genetics and given them adequate time to reach trophy size. All it takes is employing the too popular practice of catch-and-release fishing. This is one advantage fishing has over hunting: you can't practice catch-and-release hunting.

But how can an owner of a 10 acre pond, for example, insure that his bass have enough food on a daily basis? Unfortunately, Florida and Florida X Northern bass do not eat fish feed. And, it is extremely expensive to purchase truck loads of forage fish to directly feed bass on a regular basis.

Therefore, it falls to the pond owner or manager to manipulate the predator

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Gizzard shad can grow very large.

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