Polk County AgriLife Extension Beef/Forage & Natural Resources Newsletter

Local Programs

East Texas Natural Resources Tours: deer and quail managment in the field, May 5

Produce Growers Breakfast: County Farm Tour, May 26

East Texas Natural Resources Tours: fisheries and waterfowl managment, July 7

Additional AgriLife Programs

AgriLife Learn Online Courses

Sunfish 101

Rather you call them sunfish or perch this group of fish is popular amongst novice and experienced anglers. Sunfish are typically a young anglers first experience with fishing as they can be caught from the bank with minimal amount of equipment and technical skills.

Though sunfish and perch is used interchangeable in Texas, sunfish scientifically do not belong in the perch family. Sunfish are grouped with black bass (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, etc.) in the family of fish called Centrarchidae. The perch family, Percidae, includes fish like yellow perch, walleye and sauger. The black bass family is further divided up into different groups or what scientists call genus. Sunfish belong to the genus Lepomis. Texas is home to 10 Lepomis species.

Sunfish can be very difficult to ID to species especially in east Texas where many species are very similar. Sunfish ID can even stump fishery biologists. Texas Parks and Wildlfie Department has a very helpful guide to the sunfish of Texas which can help you ID sunfish down to species. https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_rp_t3200_2168/pwd_rp_t3200_2168.pdf

Many pond owners will stock sunfish in ponds to either catch for recreation or to provide a forage source for largemouth bass. Extension only recommends stocking the following sunfish species in ponds: bluegill, redear, or hybrid. Hybrid sunfish is the result of spawning a female redear sunfish and a male bluegill. Hybrid sunfish demonstrate higher growth rates, greater acceptance to formulated feeds, higher tolerance to cooler water temperature and poor environmental conditions. Hybrid sunfish are a great option in small ponds where largemouth bass are not feasible, but you wish to stock a larger and stronger fighter then non-hybrid sunfish.

For ponds less then one acre in size, hybrid sunfish or bluegill is recommended at 300-550 fish stocked. For ponds greater than one acre the following strategy works well. 500 bluegill or 400 bluegill and 100 redear sunfish per acre. If you are fertilizing the pond to increase fish production the above rates can be doubled.

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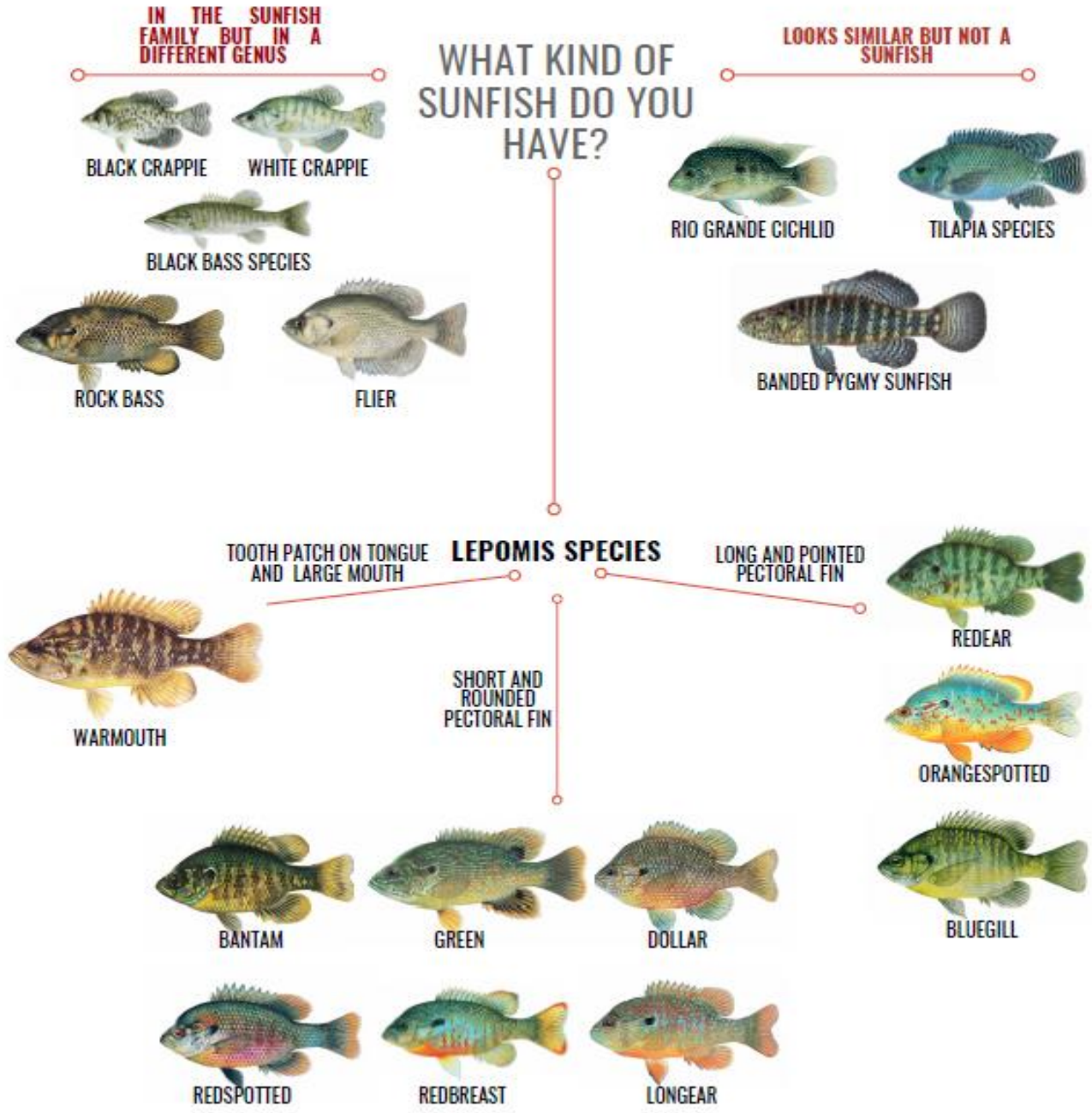
SUNFISH OF TEXAS



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

YouTube Channel:
https://www.youtube.com/c/AgriLifeExtensionPolkCounty

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April 2023

Polk County Produce Growers Breakfast Meeting, Last Friday of Odd Numbered Months

Join us for a fellowship of local growers and garden enthusiast. Meetings allow participants a chance to gain knowledge and skills from vegetable and fruit specialists while also getting to know other growers in the county. Free donuts and coffee courtesy of Polk County Farm Bureau. Meetings occur the last Friday of odd numbered months at 8:00 am. Location is Farm Bureau Office in Livingston. If you will be a first-time attendee, please RSVP by calling the Polk County Extension office.

May 26: County Farm Tour
July 28: Rainwater Harvesting
September 29: Insect Control
November 16: Understanding Food Labels

East Texas Natural Resources Tours

Come join us on free tours of professionally managed sites across east Texas. Guided tours by professionals will allow participants a chance to gain in field knowledge of managing habitats, wildlife, and fisheries resources of east Texas. All tours will depart from the extension office in Livingston at 8:00, but transportation and lunch will not be provided. Tour Schedule: March 3, East Texas Plant Material Center, Winston 8 Ranch, SFA Experimental Forest; May 5, deer management in the field, recovery of bobwhite quail in Polk County; July 7, fisheries management, waterfowl managment. RSVP required May 5: Click Here July 7: Click Here You can also RSVP by calling the Polk County extension office.

Polk County AgriLife Extension You Tube Channel

Make sure to check out your county extension You Tube Channel to catch up on videos. Videos answer many questions the extension office consistently receives and provides valuable education. For spring 2023 a short weekly video highlights the wildflower of the week.

AgriLife Learn

AgriLife Learn online courses provide you access to over 300 courses you can access at any time. These courses range in a variety of topics from childhood development, health and wellness, livestock production, pest management, to gardening. Most of these courses do require a fee but are a great learning tool and provide you access to expert knowledge. Popular courses related to agriculture include tomato growing 101, aquaponics for beginners, equine reproductive management short course, basic plant breeding, and sheep and goat ranching 101. One of the most popular courses in Polk County is beekeeping 101, which is recommended for anyone interested in starting their own hives. For TDA pesticide applicator license holders, AgriLife Learn offers CEU courses. CEU courses include mosquito management, ants 101, herbicide mode of action, minimizing spray drift, and aquatic plant management. Courses can be found at https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu

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Understanding Forage Analysis

Forage analysis is a tool ranchers should utilize to determine the quality of hay they are feeding their livestock. A variety of factors go into making good quality hay and the only way to effectively measure quality is through a forage analysis. Once you receive your results from the lab you can then determine how much and what type of supplementation you need to meet the production goals of your herd. The results from the lab can be confusing especially if you are unfamiliar with terms used in a forage analysis results. Below is explanation of terms used to determine the quality of forage.

Moisture: Ideal moisture in hay should be no more then 15%. Higher percentage can result in spoilage and moldy hay. Spontaneous combustion can occur if moisture levels are extreme.

Crude Protein (CP): Measures the nitrogen content, including both true protein and non-protein nitrogen. Generally, higher quality high will result in a higher crude protein %. Hay for dry cows need to be at least 7%, late lactating 9%, and lactating 11%.

Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF): A measurement of the least digestible plant components such as cellulose. ADF % will increase as maturity of grass increases and can be used as a predictor of forage digestibility.

Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN): TDN % is the sum of the digestible fiber, protein, lipid, and carbohydrate components of forage. TDN is directly related to digestible energy and is good method to calculate rations for beef cattle when diet is primarily forage. Forage that is low quality will have a TDN 45%-52%, medium quality 52%-58%, and high quality >58%.

Ash: Total mineral content found in the forage. Ash occurs naturally in forage but ash % increases due to soil contamination during the harvesting of the hay.

Management Tips

- N-P-K or nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are the three macro-nutrients all plants need. Nitrogen is important for shoot or leaf growth, phosphorus is important for fruit production, and potassium is important for root growth.
- Summer or warm season food plots should be planted in May.
- Best time to manage aquatic weeds in your pond is in the spring months before the increase growth seen during summer months. Effectiveness and cost of treatment will increase during summer.
- Herbicides containing triclopyr such as Remedy or Garlon 4 can be effective in managing woody vegetation such as yaupon and tallow. Triclopyr does not require an applicators license.

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