



pond. The original bass stocked as fingerlings must support the first 5 years or more of the pond's bass fishing. Therefore, harvest them lightly!

Light harvest means not removing more than 20-25 pounds of bass per acre each year. Record length and weight of all fish taken from the pond. (Recording information about caught-and-released fish also can be useful.) After the year's quota has been taken, release all further bass caught.

There are many ways to manage harvest in an established Michigan bass pond, especially if panfish have also been stocked. Since panfish can easily overpopulate and stunt in Michigan ponds, it is important to protect the sizes of bass that are effective panfish predators. Bass 12 to 16 inches (30-46cm) are effective predators on 3-5 inch (8-13cm) panfish like the bluegill.

The easiest way to insure that these panfish predators are available is to release all 12-16 inch bass. Once the pond contains a healthy population of this size bass, you can harvest a few 10-12 inch bass (25-30cm) and those over 16 inches. Harvesting some of the 10-12 inch bass will help select for the fastest growing fish. Since slower growing fish will be 10-12 inches for a longer time than the faster growing fish, they will be more likely caught than the faster growing fishes.

At any time that bass of a certain size appear thin and poorly-fed, harvest bass of that size more heavily. If a bass weighs less than 95% of the standard weight for its length, it is too thin. Use the graph on this page to check whether your bass are of standard weight.

Channel Catfish

If you stock channel catfish as

Determining whether a bass or bluegill is of proper weight for its length. Weigh the fish to the nearest half ounce or 10 grams, if less than ¼ pound. If heavier, it may be weighed a bit less precisely. Measure length to the nearest eighth inch or millimeter. Plot weight on the vertical scale and length on the horizontal scale. Draw a horizontal line lightly with pencil at the fish's weight and a vertical line at its length. If the point where the two lines intersect is on the heavy curved line, the fish is of standard (or average) weight for its length. If the point lies above the curve, it is heavier than average. If it lies below the curve, the fish is underweight.