

constitutes angling quality and satisfaction is the ultimate measure of a pond's success. Much of this bulletin is written to help the many pond owners and users who aren't satisfied with their fishing. But if the fishing in your own pond does satisfy you, enjoy it, and don't pay too much attention to what others say is a more successful kind of pond.

Because satisfactory fishing is so much a matter of personal taste (some people are disappointed at anything less than trophy-sized bass or trout, while others are delighted with catching stunted bluegills or bullheads), we try not to tell owners and users what **the** right kind of pond or pond management is. Instead, we explain principles and describe alternatives from which to choose.

## **Caution! Are You Sure You Want a Pond?**

Creating and managing a pond can require substantial time, effort and money. There is risk of waste or prop-

erty damage. Matters of legal liability, such as injuries and drownings are of concern. Another problem is overabundance of aquatic weeds. Trying to prevent or control them can be frustrating, although we'll provide information to ease the job.

Many owners soon discover that having a fishing pond is a bit like having a pet or an automobile. It needs to be well cared for if it is to serve its purpose. Trying to maintain a prime fishing pond is like striving to keep a hunting dog or racing car in good shape. Performance depends on great attention to details. Do you really have time for that?

## **Natural Ponds and Artificial Ponds**

Many naturally-formed ponds exist in the Michigan landscape. They typically have marshy, gradually-sloping edges. Many of them have only a few feet of water at the deepest point, not enough to maintain good fishing, but fine for wildlife. Natural marshy or swampy

ponds can be highly enjoyable just for the sights and sounds, possibly also for the hunting they offer. If such a pond provides some fishing, it's a bonus. If a natural pond is deep enough (about 15 feet or more) to furnish proper habitat for a flourishing fishery, then the owner is fortunate indeed.

This bulletin should help in realizing added fishing from natural ponds, whether they are of low or high potential. However, owners are cautioned that radical management, especially in the form of reshaping the basin or altering plant life to benefit fish, may destroy some wildlife habitat or damage other features which the owner values. Natural ponds may be protected by state laws to preserve the wildlife values of wetlands.

The artificial pond, designed for maximal fish abundance and minimal maintenance, is quite different from most natural ponds. It has steeply-sloping banks, an average depth over 8 feet, and a maximum depth greater than 15 feet, no matter what the surface area.