



A Fisheries Guide to
Lakes and Ponds
of Connecticut

*Including the Connecticut
River and Its Coves*

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Descriptions and Maps of Connecticut River Sites

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Glossary

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LIFE HISTORIES OF COMMON LAKE AND POND FISHES

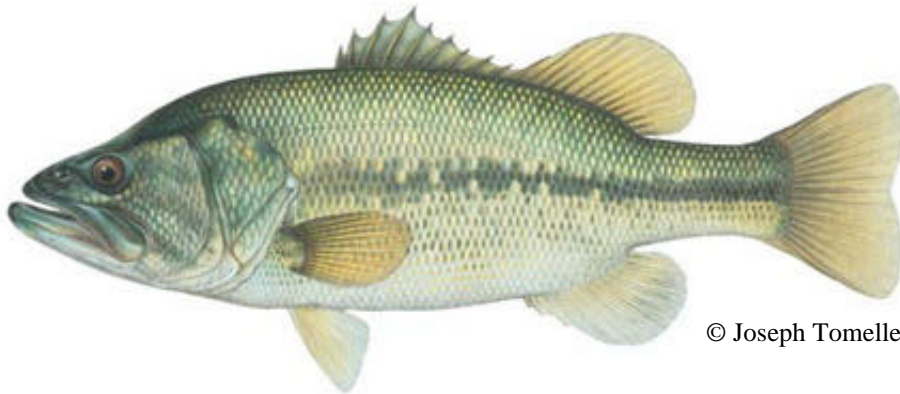
Gamefish

The term gamefish refers to fishes that typically reach a large size and fight hard when caught on rod and reel. They are aggressive fish with strong swimming abilities. For these reasons, they are usually the fish most sought after by anglers. For the same reasons, gamefish are the apex predators in Connecticut lakes and ponds. Apex predators are those that prey on smaller animals and have few natural enemies because of their large size; thus they are at the top of the food web. Apex predators serve an important role in aquatic ecosystems by controlling the populations of smaller fish species. Thus, in most natural systems, a balance is achieved between predators and prey species such that neither becomes so abundant that they overrun their food supply.

Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass

The two “black bass” species are collectively the most sought-after gamefish in most Connecticut lakes and ponds. Creel surveys conducted on three Connecticut lakes that were not stocked with trout found that 45 to 60 percent of the anglers were fishing for bass. Many bass anglers practice catch-and-release, with more than half releasing all of the legal size (12 inches or greater) fish caught. Competitive catch-and-release bass tournaments have also become very popular in Connecticut, with the number of registered events increasing from 124 in 1986 to nearly 700 in 2001.

Statewide regulations on bass in lakes and ponds are a 12-inch minimum length limit and a 6-fish (both bass species in aggregate) creel limit. A number of lakes have been designated as “Bass Management Lakes” and have special length and creel limits. Additional Bass Management Lakes were scheduled for 2002 (see current Connecticut Anglers’ Guide).

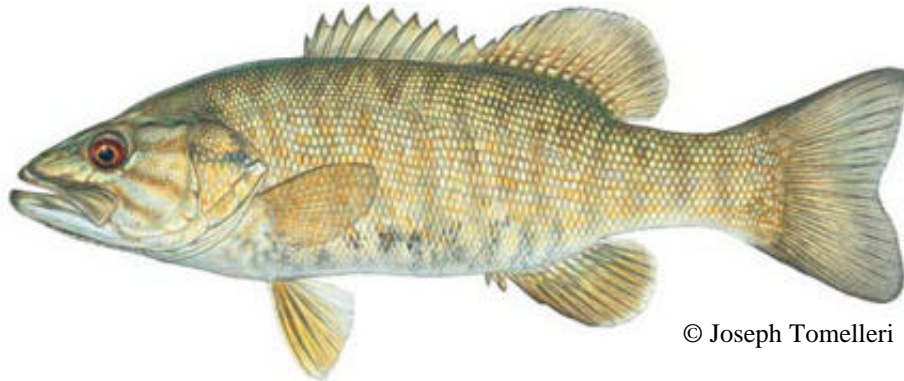


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Largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) are the largest members of the sunfish family (Centrarchidae). Although not native to the state, the largemouth is our most widely distributed fish species and can be found in almost all Connecticut lakes and ponds. It is also the dominant predator in most of our warmwater fish populations. It can thrive in a wide range of habitats, but prefers lakes that have at least a moderate amount of submerged vegetation. Largemouth bass

eat a variety of food items, including fish, crayfish and insects. Bass are generalists in their feeding strategies, sometimes lying near cover and using ambush tactics and sometimes actively foraging for prey. They spawn between mid-May and June in Connecticut. The males build saucer-shaped nests in shallow water (2 to 8 feet) then guard the eggs and later the fry for several weeks after spawning. In Connecticut, it takes largemouth bass 3.6 years on average to reach 12 inches; they can live for 15 years or more. Largemouths commonly grow to 4 or 5 pounds and 18 to 20 inches in length (state record: 12 pounds, 15 ounces).

Largemouth bass are usually dark olive-green on their backs fading to a brassy green on their sides. A dark horizontal band extends from the gill cover to the base of the tail. As the name implies, they have exceptionally large mouths, with the end of the jaw extending to or beyond the back of the eye.



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Smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), also an introduced member of the sunfish (Centrarchidae) family, are more habitat-limited than largemouths, preferring clearer, deeper lakes with rocky shoal areas and less vegetative cover. Because of this, smallmouths occur in only half of Connecticut's lakes. They also are less tolerant of high water temperatures than are largemouths (see Table 2) and are most often found in the deeper, cooler waters when temperatures rise in summer. Smallmouth bass feed on a similar variety of food items as largemouths; however, they are more likely to forage out in the open and are rarely associated with dense vegetative cover. Smallmouth spawning habits are similar to those of largemouths. The male builds a nest in shallow water during late spring (mid-May to June) and guards it for several weeks after the eggs hatch. Smallmouth bass are slower growing than largemouths, averaging 4.4 years to reach 12 inches (state record: 7 pounds, 12 ounces).

Smallmouths are brownish, usually with dark splotches that may form vertical bands on their sides. The jaw extends only to the middle of the eye.

Black Pond

Town(s): Woodstock

73.4 acres

Description: Black Pond is a natural lake within the Thames River Drainage Basin. It is adjacent to Nipmuck State Forest and is relatively secluded. **Watershed:** 319 acres of mostly woods and wetland with little agricultural or residential development. The pond is fed by bottom springs, two small marshes and surface runoff. It drains into Black Pond Brook, which flows south to Bungee Lake and Bungee Brook to the Still River. **Shoreline:** Mostly wooded with only a few residences on the northeast shore and a private camp on the western shore. **Depth:** Max 23ft, Mean 14ft. **Transparency:** Fair to clear; 9-14ft in summer with a moderate tea colored stain. **Productivity:** Moderate (mesotrophic). **Bottom type:** Sand, gravel, boulders and mud. **Stratification:** Partially stratifies in the summer with a temperature gradient beginning at 16ft. Late summer oxygen levels decline to less than 1ppm in deeper water. **Vegetation:** Pickerelweed, pipewort, bulrush and bur-reed are moderately abundant along the northern and western shores. Patches of water-shield, white water-lily and yellow pond-lily are found in shallow areas.

Access: A state-owned boat launch is located on the southern shore. Facilities at the launch include a gravel ramp, parking for 10 cars and picnic tables. **Directions:** From Rte 171, Rte 198 north for 2 miles, right (east) on Camp Rd, launch is 0.5 miles on left. **Shore:** 750ft of shoreline surrounding the boat ramp in the Nipmuck State Forest are open to public fishing.

Fish: Black Pond is stocked during the spring and fall with 1,600 catchable size brook, **brown** and **rainbow trout**. Few trout hold over due to lack of deep-water summer habitat. Black Pond warmwater fish populations appear to be in a relatively healthy state of balance. **Largemouth bass** are common in all sizes with densities of greater than 12" fish being slightly higher than average. **Smallmouth bass** and **chain pickerel** are present at less than average densities. Small **yellow perch** are abundant with slightly above average numbers of big fish. **Black crappie** and **sunfish** (pumpkinseed and bluegill) densities are close to average for all sizes. **Brown bullhead** from 11 to 14" are particularly abundant in the lake. The pond has a higher than average golden shiner forage base. White suckers are also present at low densities.

Black Pond			
Fish Species and Abundance			
	All Sizes	Big Fish	Growth
Gamefish			
Largemouth bass	C	C	Avg
Smallmouth bass	U	U	Avg
Brook trout	C		
Brown trout	C	R	
Rainbow trout	C		
Chain pickerel	U	U	Slow
Panfish			
Black crappie	C	C	Avg
Yellow perch	A	C	Avg
Brown bullhead	A	A	
Sunfish			
Bluegill	C	C	Avg
Pumpkinseed	C	C	Avg
Other			
Golden shiner	A		
White sucker	U		

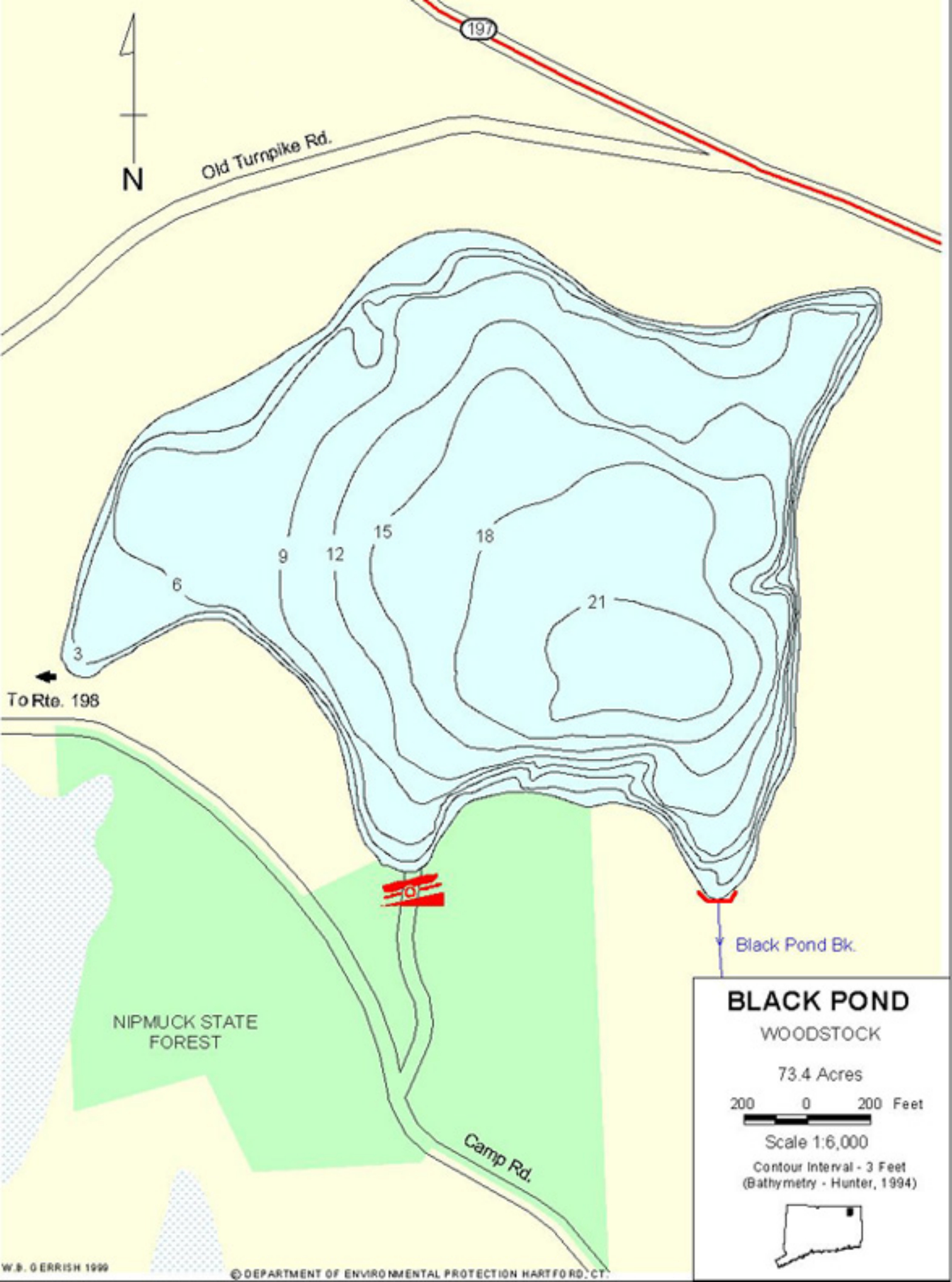
A=Abundant, C=Common, U=Uncommon, R=Rare

Fishing: Should be excellent for bullheads; good for stocked trout, largemouth bass, crappie and perch; and fair for other fish species.

Management: Statewide regulations apply for all species (see current Connecticut Anglers' Guide)

Boating: Motors limited to 5hp (see current Connecticut Boaters Guide).

Comments: Fishing pressure is probably light. The State Record yellow perch (2lb 13oz) was caught here in 1973.



197

Old Turnpike Rd.

N

3

6

9

12

15

18

21

To Rte. 198



Black Pond Bk.

NIPMUCK STATE FOREST

Camp Rd.

BLACK POND

WOODSTOCK

73.4 Acres

200 0 200 Feet

Scale 1:6,000

Contour Interval - 3 Feet
(Bathymetry - Hunter, 1994)

