

Focus on fish, wildlife with a farm pond

Head and shoulders
Photo of DC or
Soil Conservationist
here

By _____,
District Conservationist, Natural
Resources Conservation
Service, _____ County.

The water a farm pond offers to wildlife makes it an ideal centerpiece for a high quality fish and wildlife habitat area.

The pond's location, design, surrounding plantings, and management all contribute to how successful it can be in meeting your expectations.

Get technical help. While you make the decisions, you don't have to know everything about a farm pond and wildlife plantings yourself. Conservationists with the Natural Resources

Conservation Service and biologists with state fish and game agencies have a good deal of experience in designing farm ponds and wildlife areas. Check with them for ideas, technical help, and possibly sources of financial help to build your pond.

Location, location, location.

Before you build, you'll want to make sure the pond will hold water, that there's enough runoff or springwater to fill it, that it will be deep enough, won't fill prematurely with sediment, etc. The NRCS office can help. Rules of thumb are to have about 20 acres of land that drain to the pond for each surface acre of pond water. That land will produce cleaner pond water, longer pond life and higher fish populations if it's forest, grassland or pasture rather than cropland.

Surround with plantings for erosion control and habitat.

Seeding grass or legumes around the pond is good for both erosion control and wildlife habitat.

Native grasses with forbs, or grass/legume mixes both work well for wildlife nesting and cover. Trees and shrubs can also be planted for escape and winter cover and food. This surrounding buffer area is especially important for wildlife habitat and pond life if the pond is built within crop fields. If the pond is built in a pasture, it should be fenced. Livestock can trample and ruin pond banks, muddy the water and destroy fish spawning nests. Run a pipe from the pond to a tank below for their water.

Stocking fish. Your state fish and game agency may stock fish free of charge if your pond meets their criteria. In any case, the pond could be stocked with fish you might want to catch.

Consider bluegill, largemouth bass, and channel catfish. For more information, stop at our office at (Number) (Street) in (city), or visit the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov Or, visit the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute website at

www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov



Properly built and placed, with surrounding plantings, a farm pond can be the farm's show-case for wildlife habitat for years.

Wildlife Ways Did you know....



Bass tend to school in groups of similar size fish. If you catch one bass, you're likely to catch more nearby. Bass lie in wait behind cover and ambush their intended prey; find them near rocks, wood, weeds, submerged cover, deep water, etc.