



# Sportfish Stocking

## Overview

The Division of Wildlife stocks more than 40 M fish each year to enhance sport fishing throughout Ohio. A variety species and stocking approaches are used to diversity opportunities. These approaches most often provide fisheries that would not otherwise exist due to habitat constraints, or the types of fish stocked.

## Fisheries Management Goals

- **Harvest.** Most fishes are stocked for anglers to catch and keep to eat. Often, these include Saugeye, Walleye, Yellow Perch, Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, hybrid striped bass, and Bluegill.
- **Trophy.** Some fishes are stocked to create opportunities to catch large, trophy-sized fish, such as Blue Catfish, Muskellunge, or Steelhead. Anglers dedicated to catching these are often practice “catch & release” fishing in the hopes that smaller fish they catch and return to the water will ultimately grow to trophy sizes.
- **Rehabilitation.** Newly renovated waters, or those that have experienced fish kills or die offs, are sometimes stocked with native populations that are typically self-sustaining but need a temporary boost. For example, Largemouth Bass and Bluegill are sometimes stocked following the restoration or repair of a lake dam that required water to be drawn down.

## Stocking Approaches

- **Put-and-Take.** P-T stocking creates immediate fishing success for fish sufficiently large to keep. These stockings take place in small or confined waters and are directed toward youth, families, disabled, or senior anglers and are sometimes associated with special fishing events or programs.
- **Put-Grow-Take.** P-G-T approaches involve stocking fish at smaller sizes (e.g., fry, fingerling, advanced fingerling, or yearling life stages) with the intent of them growing in the wild for two or more years before reaching sizes that anglers are interested in catching.
- **Put-Grow-Sustain.** P-G-S stockings is the least used approach. It is applied in special situations where populations need to be augmented with fish that will build naturally reproducing and self-sustaining populations.

## Life Stages and Stocking Rates

The DOW stocks five different life stages of fishes, each representing differing investments of resources. Success of stocking results from proper selection of the life stages and numbers of fish to stock based on the purpose of the stocking and factors including the habitat, existing fish community, and fisheries management goals. Raising larger fish is more expensive than smaller ones, but stocking smaller fish usually requires stocking greater numbers of fish to accomplish similar results. The most cost-effective and efficient strategies are determined through fisheries surveys, monitoring, assessment, and research.

Life stage	Size at stocking	Age at Stocking	Stocking rate (# / acre)	Species
Fry	¼ - ½"	1 - 2 weeks	500 – 1,000	Hybrid Striped Bass, Saugeye, Walleye, Yellow Perch
Fingerling	1 - 2"	1 - 2 months	100 - 250	Bluegill, Hybrid Striped Bass, Largemouth Bass, Saugeye, Walleye, Yellow Perch
Advanced fingerling	6-10"	4 - 6 months	1 - 50	Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, Muskellunge
Yearling	8-12"	11 - 18 months	12 – 25	Brown Trout, Channel Catfish, Steelhead
Catchable	10-12+"	2+ years	Varies	Bluegill* (*7-8"), Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout

***A searchable database of fish stocking records from 1970 to present is available at: [wildohio.gov](http://wildohio.gov).***