

## **CRAWFORD POND HISTORY & MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013**

### **HISTORY:**

This 15 acre body of water and immediately adjacent property was leased to the Washington County Conservation Board without cost starting in May of 1991. The predominant intention was to permit the public to fish (which everyone was allowed to do, anyway) while providing it the protection it needed.

Immediately following the original lease, the WCCB created a small parking area near the northwest corner of the pond, built some fence and gates around it to prevent vehicles from driving onto the adjacent crop areas, and stopped vehicular access from the east.

In most subsequent years, the WCCB has placed a significant amount of broken concrete along the north and east edges of the pond in an effort to curtail wave erosion of the shorelines (the north shore being County Road G-36. Additionally, WCCB staff added a great deal of submerged fish structure (utilizing the ice as a platform), installed goose and wood duck nesting structures, and made an effort to have the area properly signed and enforced.

### **FISHERIES HISTORY:**

At the beginning of the lease arrangement, Crawford Pond was locally famous as an area with huge largemouth bass (some approaching 7 pounds) and bluegills. It had a few crappies and a fading large bullhead and rare huge catfish population. Other species, such as walleyes and flathead catfish, were occasionally taken (likely stocked by well-meaning fishermen).

Once the WCCB began managing the property, structure was added to the deeper areas of the pond first. This served to concentrate the **bluegills** into those areas during the winter months, resulting in ice fishermen assisting with the reduction of the bluegill population. Around 1994 the pond began to come into balance, and the 4-6" bluegills began to commonly reach 8" in length.

At about that same time, **red-eared sunfish** were introduced in an effort to control the snail population, with the goal of breaking the life cycle of a common parasite there called yellow grub. Red-eared sunfish have proven extremely successful there in both limiting the grub infestations and becoming a popularly pursued fish (many exceeding 10").

**Largemouth bass**, a fish Crawford Pond has always been famous for, continue to flourish. Anglers are reminded that Iowa DNR Regulations apply to all fish there, which includes a 15" minimum length on largemouth bass.

Since 1996, **channel catfish** have been actively stocked on a regular basis into Crawford Pond. Anglers continue to harvest good numbers and a wide variety of sizes of these fish.

White & black **crappies** inhabit Crawford Pond. Their population seems to cycle, with occasional size classes and numbers to significantly thrill anglers.

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crappies was also beginning to dominate the fishery, resulting in a stunting situation for them and

**LONG TERM MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT:**

The WCCB is blessed to be allowed to manage this facility for public use. We make every effort to carry out our responsibilities, including enforcement of reasonable regulations, mowing & cleanliness, and protection of the pond itself (both the fishery and the shorelines).

Continued public cooperation in the keeping this property clean and safe is paramount to its remaining open for public access. We remind our patrons that we specifically do not have the hunting or trapping rights for this area.

The Washington County Conservation Board pledges to do our part, making every effort to continue to have Crawford Pond available for public use, which includes balancing amenities and developments present with the will of the owner.

**MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY:**

The WCCB operates Crawford Pond under the general guidance of the Park Management Philosophy.