GUIDELINES FOR HARVESTING FISH IN DEER LAKE

History and Objectives

In 2001Deerlake initiated stocking with hybrid bluegills, redear sunfish, largemouth bass, and trout according to recommendations from the *Pond Management Guide* of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

The objective of stocking is to maintain a balance between top predators (e.g., bass) and smaller prey species (e.g., sunfish.) To prevent overcrowding by one species or the other, fish populations must be monitored and harvested properly. Fish harvesting is an important factor in pond management when fish reproduce naturally as do our warm water species such as bass and sunfish. Trout normally do not reproduce in ponds and often do not survive the warm water temperatures typical of late summer.

Monitoring

This is usually done by one of two methods: harvesting data from anglers (number of fish caught) and by seining. Once overcrowding is discovered, it can usually be corrected by removing more of one species or adding more of the other. If overcrowding persists, the lake may have to be drained, poisoned with rotenone and restocked with correct bass-to-bluegill ratio. Correcting an unbalanced fish population is a lot more trouble than keeping it in balance from the start. For this reason it is important to keep undesirable species such as other sunfish, crappies, bullheads, carp, suckers, shad and shiners out of the pond. **LIVE MINNOWS SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR BAIT.** Prevention is much easier than the cure!

FISH HARVESTING REGULATIONS

Proper harvesting is an important factor in lake management.

Bass	**No limit on bass under 12 inches** **All bass over 12 inches should be carefully released**
Bluegills & **Redear sunfish**	**Six (6) fish per person**
Trout	**October through April: One trout per day per person** **May through September: No limit**

These limits are subject to change.
Please consult recent postings at the lake and on the Deerlake website.

Last revised by Lake Management Committee: Summer 2020