

Hidden Harbour Lake Association Newsletter December 2017

As the year comes to a close the HHLA committee wanted to report back on the results of the Water Quality Testing and Fish Study conducted earlier this year. Aqua Doc Lake and Pond Management was engaged to study the quality of the water and population and health of the fish in Hidden Harbour Lake. The last time a study of this nature was conducted was in 2004. A summary of the report's findings and recommendations are below. To review the entire reports, go to:

- * <http://www.hiddenharbour.org> - Click on Read More under Lake Association
- * Click on [HH Lake 2017 Fishery Report](#) and/or [HH Lake 2017 Water Quality and Plant Report](#)

Summary:

The results of the water quality testing indicate the lake is in excellent condition to support recreational swimming and boating. This includes great water clarity, very low E. coli bacteria counts, and limited areas of nuisance aquatic vegetation. But the trade-off for good swimming and boating is the lake fishery is considered to be out of balance between the bass and blue gill populations. Being out of balance is not a significant problem but it is less than ideal for the production of trophy class bass. The removal of the nuisance vegetation over the years has reduced the necessary coverage for fish. The committee has always stated that the management of the vegetation presents a challenge to the delicate balance needed in the lake to provide good swimming and boating as well as good fishing.

A survey of residents was conducted a number of years ago regarding the importance they placed on various aspects of living on the lake. They were rated in order of importance:

1. Swimming
2. Boating
3. The Baja
4. The presence of weeds
5. Fishing

Consequently, the HHLA committee has always placed a higher priority on the quality of swimming and boating, vs. quality fishing. Using the findings of the reports we will continue this focus, with some, although a lesser emphasis on the fish population.

Recommendations:

1. Continue annual water quality monitoring of the lake. (The committee has committed to a 3 year contract for water testing.)
2. Continue annual spot chemical treatment application of aquatic plant management designed to reduce boat prop and swimming entanglement and prevent overall spread of undesirable aquatic plant populations. (The committee has committed to 2018's treatment of the lake.) Continue to minimize the amount of nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus) entering the lake by following good practices for [lawn fertilizer management](#)
3. Continue Canada Goose suppression tactics. (Funds have been included in the 2018 budget to continue the goose egg addling.)
4. Harvest the common carp from the lake. (The committee will publish new fishing guidelines for the lake effective in the 2018 season.)
5. Consider stocking of Bluegill as a supplement to current forage fish base. (The committee is first investigating means of providing habitat coverage for the fish without impeding the boat and swimming activities of the lake.)

The HHLA committee is please to provide the results of these reports. We appreciate the interest and passion lake residents exhibit regarding the lake and its condition. We welcome comments and suggestions regarding these reports or any activity regarding the lake. Please send them to Siotkowski@sbcglobal.net.

**Hidden Harbour Lake
2018 Fish Management Guidelines**

Carp

- We are encouraging our fisherman to target and harvest carp, regardless of size, to reduce the population. Fishermen can target common carp by using pieces of canned corn or dough balls
- Fishing tip: Chum with whole kernel corn. Rig small hook with split shot, bait corn, cast out and open bail. Let fish pick up and run for one minute, set hook and hang on.

Bluegill and Sunfish

- Catch and Release - Discontinue bluegill and sunfish harvesting until the fishery is back in a well balanced condition. Both bluegill and sunfish are the primary forage species with bluegill being the most dominate forage species in the lake

Largemouth Bass

- Less than 13" in length – limit two bass per day
- Greater than 13" in length – the average fisherman should catch and release.
- Exception – underweight (85% of normal) bass larger than 13" may be harvested

All Other Species – Catch and release

We ask all residents to adhere to this year's fishing guidelines. The quality of fishing at the lake depends on your cooperation. An excessive harvest of any species will only worsen our balance problem with the overall fishery. Thank you.

For any questions or suggestions, please contact any lake committee member.