



Wildlife Window - Gone Fishing!

Catch and Release. Don't Eat!

By Sue Remy, Ponds & Preserves Committee

[Woodlands Word – September 2022]



Driving through Rivendell, many residents have seen folks fishing on our ponds. If you are like me, you wonder: “Do they really catch anything? If so, what?” Several varieties of freshwater fish have been spotted in our ponds, including **Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Carp, Blue Tilapia, Mosquito Fish and Gar**. Fish provide a vital food source for larger fish, plus birds, reptiles, and other animals. Fish also eat mosquito larvae and other insects. Some feed on the bottom keeping ponds healthier and balancing the ecosystem. Keeping our ponds healthy and vibrant will encourage more fish to thrive, which attracts more wildlife to our community.

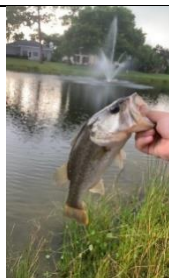
First, let's review a few simple rules about fishing in Rivendell ponds:

- **Yes, fishing is allowed** in our ponds, but only for residents and their guests. Fishing must be done from the shoreline. No boating or kayaks are allowed on our lakes or ponds.
- **We are a “Catch and Release”** community. Do not take or eat any fish from the ponds. The FWC suggests using barbless circle hooks which are easier to remove and cause less physical damage to the fish. Be aware that Herons, Egrets and other large birds found along the shoreline often get hooked by anglers.
- **Be sure to pick up any trash.** Do not leave discarded fishing line behind that can cause damage to birds and wildlife.
- **Alligator Alert!** When fishing, folks must remain observant and cautious with our gators. They have known to follow a fish that has been caught all the way into shore and up the bank. Gators will do whatever it takes to get a free lunch.
- If a homeowner sees someone fishing who they are convinced is not a resident, they should call the **Sheriff's office at 941-316-1201** to report an unknown individual trespassing in the community.

Below, we will learn more details about common fishes found in our ponds:

(Source: myFWC.com)

<p>LARGEMOUTH BASS</p>  <p>Largemouth bass is the best known and most popular game fish in North America. Distinguished from other black bass because the upper jaw extends beyond the rear edge of the eye. Also, the first and second dorsal (back) fins are separated by an obvious deep dip. Black bass spawn in spring, when males fan out a bed and then protect the eggs and fry. Adults eat a variety of fish, crustaceans, and larger insects. (Native)</p>	<p>BLUEGILL</p>  <p>Bluegills have the deep-bodied look of "bream," with a long dorsal fin and slightly forked tail. A dark ear covering and a blotch at the dorsal fins back bottom edge set them apart. Bluegill eat mostly insects and their larvae, including mosquitos. Bluegill spawn throughout summer, congregating in large "beds." Anglers may find 30-40 shallow nests scooped out in sandy areas. (Native)</p>
<p>COMMON CARP</p>  <p>Large, heavy bodied minnow with arched back small triangular head tapering to blunt snout; first ray of the dorsal and anal fins stout, & serrated spine. Its small, subterminal and protrusible mouth contains no teeth; two pair of barbels on the upper jaw; body color brassy green on top grading to bronze or gold on sides with yellowish white belly. Typically they are covered with large, round scales. (Nonnative)</p>	<p>BLUE TILAPIA</p>  <p>Adult Blue Tilapia have blue-gray shading to white on the belly; borders of dorsal and caudal fins with red to pink borders; broken lateral line and the spiny dorsal fin is joined to the soft dorsal fin. In central Florida, anglers can assume most tilapia found in freshwater is a Blue. For spawning, males dig large circular nests with their mouths in shallow water over a sandy bottom. (Invasive)</p>



<- Larry & Nancy Dobias' grandson, Nate caught (& released) this Largemouth Bass beauty on Rivendell Lake. Well done, Nate! (Larry & Nate photos)

->Beware! Never feed Alligators (or any wildlife) so they remain afraid of people. Larry has "Gone Fishing" too.

