

**General Biological Survey of Owlville Pond (Survey #:722051)**  
Everard, Region 7 Fisheries

11/29/2022

Owlville Pond (unnamed pond, FIN#SR-134-8-15-P5439) is a 16 acre waterbody (currently) located in Coventry State Forest, Chenango County. Statewide fishing regulations apply, and public access includes shore and hand launching via a 200-foot carry. The pond is shallow (<10 foot) with vegetation reaching the surface across its entirety. It was initially only 2 acres in size but since the last dam inspection in 1975 it has greatly increased in surface area, presumably, due to beaver activity and limited dam maintenance. Lands and Forest is preparing to return the pond back to its original size to meet the dam safety requirements and is why the pond was chosen for sampling. A concerned local angler hearing about this plan to lower the pond was worried how that would affect the current bass fishing there. The only previous fisheries survey on the pond was a water chemistry survey (704001) in February 2004.

Owlville Pond was sampled on September 7, 2022, with three fyke nets. Nets were fished overnight for approximately 22 hours. Only 12 fish were collected consisting of nine brown bullhead, two pumpkinseed sunfish, and one yellow perch. Two largemouth bass were observed, and fish were seen jumping around the pond, so it is unclear why the fyke net catch was so low. A few weeks later, four technicians sampled the fishery by angling from shore for 2.5 hours and 41 largemouth bass were caught. This was surprising considering the low fyke net catches and that the low dissolved oxygen levels (DO) just under the surface on September 6 (3.9 ppm). The pond likely suffers from low oxygen levels during some summers and winters. The 2004 winter water chemistry survey also suggest this as DO levels were 1.5 ppm just under the ice and 0.9 ppm at five foot which likely resulted in "winter kill" that year.

Though the angling bass catch per unit effort of 4.1/hour was very good and shows that some fish obviously survive during the low DO level periods, it still doesn't justify the expenditure required to update the dam to meet safety requirements needed to keep the pond at its current 16-acre size. Recommendation would be to support Lands and Forest decision to return the pond to 2 acres (or size that meets dam safety requirements). No suggested changes to fisheries management or regulations based on the results of this survey.

