

Fishing at Heritage Oaks

Residents at Heritage Oaks enjoy fishing in several of our 25 lakes. Each lake has a variety of fish, with Florida Largemouth Bass and sunfish such as Bluegill, Redbreast, Redear, or Spotted Sunfish being the target species. Fishermen use fly-casting or spin-casting rods depending on their preference. No permit is required but the fishing is catch-and-release. Fishing in lakes that have common grounds is open, but fishing is restricted on private land unless permission is granted. No fishing from the golf course side of a lake is permitted.

Florida Largemouth Bass – The Florida Largemouth Bass is the most targeted species in our lakes for fishermen. It is the State Fish Species for freshwater systems. The Florida strain of largemouth bass is different from its Northern counterpart in several ways. The Florida subspecies can grow to over 10 lbs while the Northern subspecies rarely grows above 10 lbs. It has been reported that a 13 lb bass was caught here at Heritage Oaks several years back. While the Northern strain prefers a rocky substrate, the Southern strain prefers a grassy substrate from which it can ambush its prey.



Healthy Lakes Initiative and the Florida Largemouth Bass – As our Healthy Lakes Initiative proceeds and our lakes become more ecologically sustainable, we will see a commensurate increase in the stability of our fish population, particularly the largemouth bass and bluegill. The successful breeding of both species is dependent or improved with aquatic vegetation along the littoral zone (shoreline shallow water area). Populations of Tilapia which can become substantially abundant interfere with nesting areas for both bass and bluegills. Keeping the Tilapia populations reduced and under control enhances the breeding success of other fish. The



The bass prefer nesting in quiet, vegetated areas, while the bluegills build depressions alongside the vegetation. The vegetation along the littoral zone provides habitat for colonization of invertebrates, a staple of sunfish. As reproductive and nursery function is improved the species become naturally sustainable without the need for stocking.