

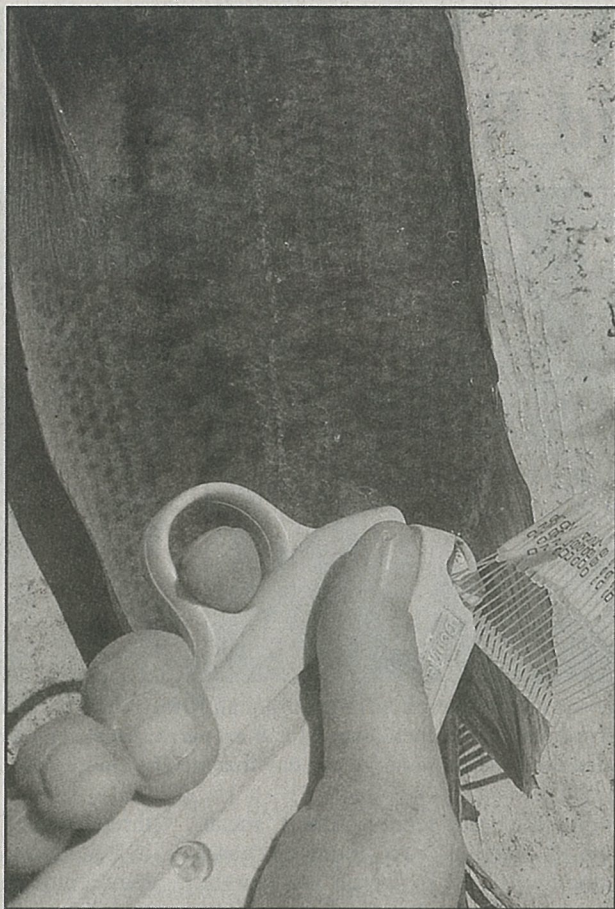
might talk to DNR about getting this changed.

Adding new bass to your lake, especially if it's an older lake, is a good idea to freshen your genetics. There are a few choices out there. To make it clear, there are only two naturally occurring subspecies of largemouth bass. The northern bass are known for their aggressive nature, and Florida bass are known to grow large in size, but are less aggressive and difficult to catch when large. The F1, also called tiger bass, is a cross of a pure Florida and a pure Northern. The F1 is a good choice for most because it has the qualities of both. However, if you want to produce the next world record, you probably will need a pure Florida. A lake

full of pure Florida bass can be some tough fishing, and pure Florida bass are hard to find and quite pricey.

For existing lakes, we now sell more northern bass than any others. They are extremely aggressive and most clients want to catch bass. They might top out at 6 to 8 pounds in the Southeast, but that is a big bass to most. We have stocked them with great success. Catch rates go up with the northern-strain largemouth that are stocked, plus it seems the competition turns on native bass as well. Future offspring will have more aggressive genetics as well. We usually mark the bass by clipping the pelvic fin or tagging so they are not removed when harvesting. There have been many fish-tag companies that have come and gone, but Floy Tag has been around for years. Their simple method of inserting a tag below the in the dorsal fin leaves the bass unharmed. You can track seasonal growth as well as success in capture, and it is just dang fun to do.

When shocking client Ed Walsh's lake outside of Macon last year, we rolled a bass that was tagged 4 years prior. The tag was covered with algae,



Your very own tagging program can provide valuable information about the growth and catch rates of bass in your pond.

but a little scratch with the thumbnail and the number was legible. What was most interesting was Ed said he had never caught this bass, and that he was shocked in the exact same spot.

You actually can determine the genetics of your bass. We started last year submitting liver samples to Texas A&M for determination. They can tell you if the bass is pure northern, pure Florida, F1 or a mix of genetics known as Fx. Once you know your genetics, you can make plans to tweak in the direction of your choice with future stockings.

So there you have it. You should be on your way to producing some wall-hanging bass. The timing is right so get started now. Evaluate the pond or hire someone to assist you, and begin implementing some of the recommendations mentioned in the last two articles. Let the wife know I said you have to go to the pond to remove some bass. Tough I know, but somebody has got to do it.

*Editor's Note: For more information, contact the author, fisheries biologist Greg Grimes, at <greg@lakework.com>.*



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