

# Richland Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter September 2006

803-576-2080



## Fish Pond Stocking



For the best recreational fishing, the recommended species for stocking all new ponds or renovating old ponds are largemouth bass and bream. Catfish may be stocked, if desired. (Crappie are not recommended to be stocked into farm ponds because they tend to overpopulate, resulting in a pond full of stunted fish.) Normal stocking rates are 50 bass and 500 bream per acre.

Largemouth bass are predatory and eat a variety of foods. Their diet includes small fish, frogs, crawfish, and insects. Largemouth bass are well adapted to ponds and reproduce successfully, usually spawning only once a year. They grow rapidly in a pond where food is plentiful. In the spring, when water temperatures reach 60 °F, mature males fan out depressions or "nest" on the pond bottom. Females lay their eggs in the nest. The male fertilizes the eggs, and they usually hatch within four days.

Bluegill and redear sunfish (bream) are also well adapted to ponds and eat a variety of foods. When small, they eat microscopic plants and animals. As they grow, their diet changes to include insects, snails, crawfish, and small fish. If sufficient food is available, these fish grow rapidly. When water temperatures reach 70 to 75 °F in the spring, redear sunfish begin spawning, followed by bluegill when temperatures reach 80 °F. Bluegills may spawn as many as five times in one season, while redear sunfish normally spawn only twice. Bream spawn in groups, and their collections of nests are called spawning "beds."

Bream and catfish are stocked in the fall with bass being stocked the following spring. For best recreational fishing, maintaining a 10 to 1 ratio of bream to bass is desired. When a pond becomes "out of balance" or is not maintaining the 10:1 ratio, fishing is poor or all you catch is small bream, it may be time to eliminate all existing fish and start over. Late summer and fall, is the best time to renovate your pond.

Rotenone is a chemical used to eliminate existing fish. It works by inhibiting a biochemical process in the fish cells, resulting in an inability of fish to use oxygen in the release of energy during normal body processes. In effect, the fish suffocate due to lack of oxygen. Rotenone is an unstable compound that breaks down when exposed to the environment. At warm water temperatures, rotenone may be gone in as few as four days. However, it is a good idea to wait at least a month before restocking. In general, the cooler the water, the longer rotenone persists.

To prepare the pond, reduce the water level as much as possible. This will concentrate fish into a smaller volume of water, reducing the amount of rotenone needed.

For additional information contact the Conservation District Office at 576-2080.

# What is the Conservation Commission?



The Conservation Commission is a voluntary board of 11 members that serve in an advisory capacity to Richland County Council. The Commission is charged with promoting the protection of natural, historical, and cultural resources throughout Richland County by negotiating voluntary protection strategies with landowners.

The Commission is funded by County Council with one-half mill annually for the operation of the Legacy Program and support of the Commission. Our local ordinance provides various mechanisms to negotiate conservation easements, accept donations, purchase property for public benefit, maintenance and education.

The Commission strives to maintain Richland Legacy and protect properties for:

- Open space and scenic views
- Recreational lands
- Wildlife habitat
- Sensitive ecological resources
- Historical buildings and landscapes

For more information, call our office at 2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A, at 576-2084 or visit our website at: <http://www.richlandonline.com/departments/conservation/commission/conservcom.asp>



**Conservation Lands**



**Historical Restoration**



**America's Favorite  
Game Bird  
Widely Available  
in South Carolina**

***Zenaida macroura***  
(mourning dove)

Mourning doves are the leading game birds in North America. They basically cover all of North America and most of South America.

These birds are medium sized, brownish, and with a rounded or pointed, white tipped tail. The males are larger than the females and are slightly brighter colored. Mourning doves like farms, small towns, open wood, scrub, roadsides and grasslands.

Mourning doves are monogamous. Furthermore, some of these pairs stay on as couples thru the winter. After finding a mate, the male initiates the nest selection site. Nest construction takes over ten hours and covers a span of three to four days. The female generally lay two small, white eggs in an open nest. Incubation lasts 14 to 15 days. Both the male and the female share incubating and the feeding of the babies. Mourning doves have the longest breeding season of all North American birds. They can often have three broods in one season.

Mourning doves have widespread migration patterns. Migration originates in the breeding grounds and continues to the southern areas where the doves go to escape the harsh winter months. During migration the birds fly over 1000 miles through hostile environment to reach their winter resting spot.

Mourning doves eat a wide variety of seeds, waste grain, fruit and insects. They prefer seeds that rest on the ground. Occasionally, they eat in trees and bushes when the ground foods have become scarce. 95% of the mourning dove's diet relies on seeds or plant parts. Doves also like to ingest agricultural crops. Those especially coveted are cereal grains such as corn, millet, rye, barley, and oats. On rare occasions, doves can also be seen preying on grasshoppers, ants, beetles, and snails.

Planting and cultivating dove fields is a successful technique to attract and concentrate doves. There are legal guidelines which must be followed in managing dove fields. Information on recommended dove plantings, the legal aspects of dove fields and location of public dove fields is available at the Richland Conservation District Office, Clemson Extension Office and through the SC DNR (Dept. of Natural Resources).

## A Successful Conservation District Has Many Partners!

Joy Sullivan, Program Coordinator with the SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Land, Water and Conservation Division, assists the district with educational programs, commissioner appointments and elections, and grant administration and writing. Being a liaison between the district and the DNR, Joy is available to provide classroom instruction on natural resource topics, or workshops for teachers to be certified in Project WET and other natural resource curricula.



Joy is also the state coordinator of the Envirothon program, a hands-on environmental competition for high school students in grades 9-12. Joy is headquartered in the Lexington USDA Service Center and can be reached in the office at 359-3165 ext. 3, or on her cell at 609-7053.

## 2006 Conservation Farmer of the Year



Commissioner, Heath Hill (R) presents the 2006 Conservation Farmer of the Year award to Jason Carter (L) of Eastover. Jason farms 400 acres of corn and soybeans using the no-till method. Jason's farming operation is diversified in that he has over 40 acres of nursery stock (trees and shrubs). Jason began his farming career with his father but has been farming independently for the past 11 years. Jason is a participant in the NRCS USDA Environmental Quality incentive Program (EQIP).



## **Prescribed Burning Certification Class Being Offered**

Land managers who conduct outdoor burning can reduce their liability by becoming Certified Prescribed Fire Managers. Training sessions are scheduled for Columbia on October 18, Moncks Corner on November 14, and Georgetown on January 18. A Saturday session is also scheduled for Columbia on January 20.

Conducted by the Forestry Commission, the one-day course teaches how to plan prescribed burns that comply with state air quality regulations. The regulations, called Smoke Management Guidelines, are mandatory for all forestry, wildlife, and agriculture burning in South Carolina.

Forestry Commission Training Director Debbie Price emphasized that this is not a beginner's course in prescribed burning. "This is advanced training in smoke management and associated legal issues," she said.

Achieving certification provides burners with limited liability protection under state law. Requirements include passing a written test, documenting one's burning experience, and agreeing to conduct all burning according to standards set forth in the SC Prescribed Fire Act.

To register for any session, contact Debbie Price, 803-896-8483. The cost of the course is \$15; applications are processed on a first come-first served basis. The deadline for registration is three weeks prior to the course.

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For more information, contact: Debbie Price, 803-896-8483.

**Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given from Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote "Conservation Stewardship" within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping educate the students and landowners of Richland County. Become an affiliate member by sending this slip to:**

**Richland Conservation District  
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A  
Columbia, SC 29204**

I would like to become an Individual/Corporate sponsor of The Richland Conservation District

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Basic Membership    | \$50       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Affiliate Member | \$75       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Affiliate Member   | \$125 & up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Affiliate Member   | \$200 & up |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, St., Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Your contribution is tax deductible

### **Richland Conservation District**

#### **Commissioners**

John V. Green, Chairman  
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Kenneth Mullis, Sec./Treasurer  
Heath Hill  
Hemphill Pride, III  
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Mary Ann Hoffman  
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#### **District Staff**

Hugh Caldwell, District Manager  
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant  
Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator  
Doug Deaderick, District Conservationist, NRCS  
Ricky Walker, Civil Engineer Tech. NRCS, Ft. Jackson  
Joy Sullivan, Program Coordinator, DNR

#### **PLEASE NOTE**

The Richland Conservation District Commissioner's Board Meeting will be the second Monday of each month at Lizard's Thicket, 402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC. Each meeting begins at 6:30 PM. The public is cordially invited to attend. For information call 803-576-2080 or email [charliefisher@richlandonline.com](mailto:charliefisher@richlandonline.com).

The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability.