

Fish Orlando! Overview
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management
June 2005

The greater Orlando urban region houses over 60,000 acres of fresh water, providing many exciting angling opportunities for the 2 million local residents and over 40 million yearly visitors from around the world. Florida is the "*Fishing Capital of the World*" and what better gateway to promote our outstanding freshwater resource than centrally located Orlando, Florida.

The mission of Fish Orlando! is to create, conserve, and promote convenient and quality fishing opportunities in the greater Orlando area with emphasis on bringing quality fishing to families. To accomplish this mission, the project practices management strategies based on applied science and maintaining elaborate communication with our stakeholders. Fish Orlando! is the largest of the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management's community-based fishing projects and encompasses 17 ponds or lakes (1,105 acres) in Orange and Seminole counties. The project has four full-time staff, a budget of approximately \$200,000, and is funded by a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration Program (Wallop/Breaux).

Currently, the Fish Orlando! Program has two main components: The FAB FIVE and the URBAN PONDS. The FAB FIVE are five water bodies managed for quality-size fish and/or a unique fishing experience. The URBAN PONDS are water bodies managed for beginning anglers and those that love to eat their catch. Both provide quality family fishing including various events, programs and promotions. To support these activities we have formed partnerships with the City of Orlando, City of Ocoee, Orange County, BASS PRO SHOPS and a variety of other business and volunteer/civic groups.

Project Highlights include:

- 354,000 channel catfish and 136,000 sunshine bass have been stocked since 1997
- 10 fishing piers and 3 boat ramps provide angler access
- 200,000 Fish Orlando! fishing maps have been distributed to anglers
- Since 1997, more than 16,000 young anglers attended project-sponsored instructional fishing clinics and over 26,000 anglers and their families attended fishing derbies.
- Turkey Lake Park features a boat loaner program: for \$15 daily, anglers may rent a Bass Tracker boat with electric trolling motor, donated by BASS PRO SHOPS Outdoor World.