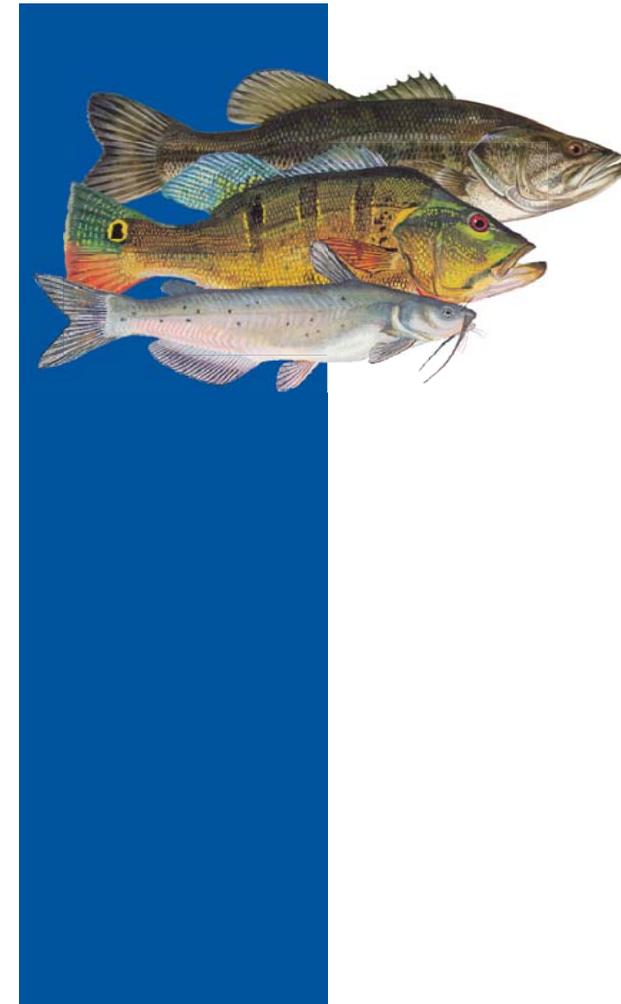


Tropical Fish Management Area

Miami-Dade County



Tropical Fish Management Area (FMA) is managed by the **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) South Region Fisheries Management Section**. This FMA was created in 1990 and benefits from a number of enhancements designed to improve fishing and angler access at this site. Tropical FMA is a cooperative project between the FWC and **Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces**. **Sport Fish Restoration** funds pay for 75% of this project. These monies are federal tax dollars collected from the sale of fishing equipment and accessories to support access improvements, educational programs, aquatic habitat improvement, and fisheries research.

Tropical FMA is the northernmost of three lakes located within the park. It is characterized by clear water, shellrock bottom, and abundant native and exotic vegetation. The lake is twelve acres in size, although in recent years management activities have focused on the southern half of the lake.

Fish feeders



Feeders dispense food automatically.

Fish feeders have been placed in Tropical FMA in order to provide food and increase the growth rates of fish that are already present as well as those that are stocked. The feeders dispense fish food automatically several times per day. They provide the best locations to catch catfish and sunfish within the FMA. Although

they do not eat the fish food directly, largemouth bass are also attracted to the feeders by the baitfish and smaller sportfish that congregate around them.

Stocking



Channel catfish are 6-8" long when stocked.

Approximately 6,000 channel catfish are stocked in Tropical FMA annually. Since 1990, over 100,000 catfish have been stocked in the lake. These fish do not reproduce well in south Florida lakes, so they are stocked each year in order to maintain high numbers for anglers.

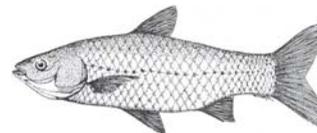
Aeration system

Two blower pumps and multiple airstones have been installed to provide Tropical FMA with a constant supply of oxygen to reduce the possibility of low-oxygen fish kills. This "insurance" protects the investment in time, equipment, and stocking that has been made here.

Vegetation management



Hydrilla



Grass Carp

Control of undesirable plant species and introduction of beneficial plant species is practiced to enhance habitat for fish as well as to improve angler access within Tropical

FMA. Recently hydrilla, historically a problem within the lake, has expanded and is being treated by the County and FWC. Triploid grass carp have also been introduced by FWC to control hydrilla. **Any triploid grass carp caught must be released unharmed immediately.**

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Special regulations

In order to provide better angling, special regulations are in place to protect fish populations within Tropical FMA:

- Channel catfish daily bag limit: 6.
- Panfish daily bag limit: 20.
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.

A fishing license is required for residents from 16 to 64 years of age, and for nonresidents 16 or more years of age, to fish by any method, including cane poles, on a Fish Management Area.

Directions

Take S.R. 826 (Palmetto Expressway) to SW 40th Street (Bird Road). Head west and get into the left-hand lane immediately to turn into the park. You can also take the Florida Turnpike to the SW 40th Street exit. Travel east to Tropical Park, which is on the south side of the road. For park information, call 954-791-1025.



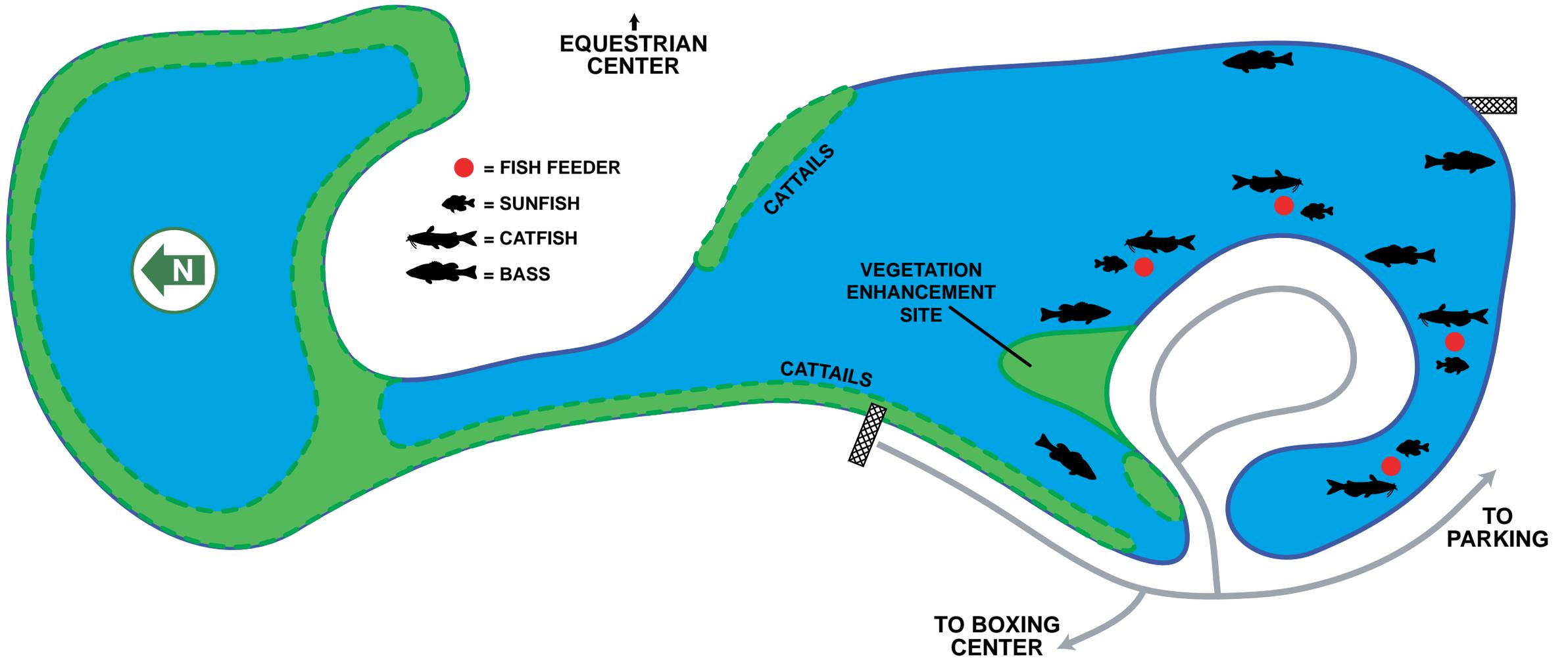
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Fish species present (and how to catch them)

Bluegill and redear sunfish — These popular and cooperative panfish are found around the fish feeders and near vegetation or structure. Live worms or crickets fished a few feet under a small bobber are a sure bet. Doughballs and small pieces of cut hot dog also work well. Good lures include small jigs, beetle spins, and tiny spinners. Flyrod anglers can score with small popping bugs, wet flies, and nymphs.



Channel catfish — This species has been documented at over ten pounds in the lake. They are readily found at the

fish feeders and in deeper “holes” in the lake. Chicken and beef livers work well as baits, as well as commercial “stink baits” sold in bait and tackle shops. Fish directly on the bottom, or deep under a small bobber. Catfish are rarely taken on lures.



Largemouth bass — Bass are both plentiful and large in Tropical FMA, with individuals close to nine pounds being documented in the lake. Standard bass lures including plastic worms, minnow imitations, and spinnerbaits work well. Weedless lures are preferred



due to the amount of vegetation present. Medium to large popping bugs and streamers will produce fish for flyrodders. Shiners are the best bait. Anglers using bait should set the hook quickly to prevent deep-hooked fish, as all bass caught must be released unharmed immediately.

Spotted tilapia — This is an exotic species from Africa that has become established in the lake. A reluctant biter, it can still be caught on live worms and doughballs fished under a small bobber, but seldom shows interest in lures. The firm white meat provides excellent eating. It is illegal to transport any exotic fish alive or to release it into another water body.

