HERMAN BROTHERS FISHERIES

Electrofishing Survey Results/Data/Recommendations

Lake Thunderbird Report 2025

Lake Thunderbird — Spring 2025 Electrofishing Evaluation

Survey Window: early morning electrofishing runs • **Lake Size:** ~120 acres • **Surface Temp:** 63°F

Executive Summary

Lake Thunderbird presents as a fertile, mid-sized fishery with solid predator biomass, good forage, and low current vegetation cover following a recent ProcellaCOR treatment. Habitat is excellent in 10–20 feet of water but sparse in the shallows (2–6 feet), leaving limited nursery cover for young-of-year fish. Forage levels are currently good, and shad/bluegill recruitment should benefit predators this season.

The largemouth bass population is not over-abundant; sizes ranged from 8–19.75" with relative weights generally moderate. Thirty-five LMB were sampled for genetic testing, and results will guide stocking decisions. Black and white crappie were present across 8–12.5", while bluegill were abundant but small-bodied (3–8"). Redear sunfish showed healthy individuals up to 10". Channel catfish were present with quality fish to 25" (9 lbs).

Management Priorities (2025–26):

1. Drop more shallow habitat/structure to supplement the sparse 2–6' cover zone.
2. Stock 15 largemouth bass 6-8” per acre. $3.65 each.
3. Use the remaining budget to stock hybrid striped bass 8-10” and walleye 8-10”.
4. Continue to monitor vegetation response post-treatment, as cover levels will shape fish recruitment.

Habitat & Vegetation

- **Habitat:** Very good from 10–20 ft; poor in shallow nursery zones (2–6 ft).

- **Vegetation:** Suppressed due to ProcellaCOR application; currently low. Vegetation will likely rebound—critical to monitor since plant coverage strongly influences recruitment

of bluegill, crappie, and bass.

- **Recommendation:** Place artificial habitat (trees, brush, MossBack structures) in <6 ft zones to balance shallow refuge with angling access.

Forage Base

- Overall forage levels are strong, with good shad and panfish numbers observed.
- Bluegill are numerous but mostly small (3–7"), showing recruitment but limited size structure.
- Redear sunfish appear healthy, including individuals >9".
- Forage abundance will support continued predator stocking, especially hybrid striped bass.

Species Results

Black Crappie

Observed in both spring runs, most between 9–10.5".

Length (in)	Notes
9.0	Run 1
9.5	Run 1
10.5	Run 1
9.5	Run 1
8.25	Run 2
10.25	Run 2

10.5	Run 2
8.0	Run 2

White Crappie

Healthy distribution from 9–12.5".

Length (in)	Notes
10.25	Run 1
10.0	Run 1
9.0	Run 1
11.75	Run 1
9.0	Run 2
12.5	Run 2
10.5	Run 2

Bluegill

Numerous but small-bodied; max 8".

Lengths (in)	Notes
3.0–8.0	Majority between 4–6"

Redear Sunfish

Good condition with quality individuals.

Length (in)	Notes
7.25	Run 1

6.25	Run 1
8.75	Run 1
6.0	Run 2
8.75	Run 3
10.0	Run 3

Green Sunfish

Length (in)	Notes
4.5	Run 1

Largemouth Bass

Tagged and vialed for genetics. Sizes spanned 8–19.75", weights mostly 0.4–4.4 lbs.

Tagged LMB

Tag #	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Vial ID / Notes
276	19.0	4.28	Genetic
277	18.0	4.04	Genetic
278	17.0	2.96	Genetic
279	17.0	2.56	Genetic
280	18.5	4.00	Genetic
281	13.75	1.46	Genetic
283	10.75	0.62	Genetic
284	15.25	2.00	Genetic
—	11.75	0.80	—
287	18.5	3.70	Genetic

288	10.0	0.40	Genetic
289	16.0	2.22	Genetic
290	14.5	1.60	Genetic
—	10.0	—	—
291	19.75	4.40	Genetic
292	10.5	—	Vial 0837
293	14.25	1.64	Vial 0860
294	15.0	1.76	Vial 0840
295	11.5	0.72	Vial 0865
296	16.0	2.26	Vial 0843
297	16.75	2.50	Vial 0851
298	11.0	0.68	Vial 0859
299	15.25	1.86	Vial 0839
300	17.25	2.86	Vial 0848
400	10.0	0.46	Vial 0838
399	8.0	0.26	Vial 0847
398	13.5	1.42	Vial 0844
397	14.25	1.60	Vial 0856
396	10.75	0.56	Vial 0863
395	14.0	1.46	—
394	13.5	1.34	Vial 0862
392	14.0	1.48	—
391	17.75	3.10	—
390	11.0	0.64	—

389	16.0	2.00	—
388	11.0	0.56	—
387	17.75	2.96	—
386	16.0	2.48	—
385	12.5	0.88	—
384	15.5	2.04	—
393	10.0	0.42	Vial 0845
—	11.0	0.56	—

Genetic-tested LMB (no tags)

Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Vial ID
13.25	1.30	0836
15.75	1.82	0841
11.75	0.72	0842
12.0	0.70	0846
14.0	1.48	0849
11.5	0.76	0850
16.5	2.16	0852
16.0	1.80	0853
17.5	2.88	0854
14.5	1.48	0855
10.0	0.42	0857
15.0	1.76	0858
18.0	2.98	0861
14.0	1.20	0864

10.5	0.48	0866
18.5	3.24	0867
9.0	0.28	0868
9.0	0.30	0869

Channel Catfish

Length (in)	Weight (lb)
25.0	9.0
24.0	7.0

Diagnosis & Recommendations

- **Habitat:** Drop additional woody and artificial structures in 2–6 ft depths to supplement the weak shallow cover zone.
- **Predators:**
    - **Largemouth Bass:** Stock **1**5 per acre (≈1,800 fish total) at 6–8" each year for the next 2 years. Cost = $3.65 per fish (~$6,570 per year). This will strengthen the predator base, improve size balance, and drive forage utilization.
    - **Hybrid Striped Bass:** Use available budget to stock 8–10" hybrids as bonus predators. Excellent for open-water shad control and creating a unique angling opportunity.
    - **Walleye:** Supplemental stocking of 8–10" fish is recommended with remaining budget. These will serve as a bonus species and diversify harvest opportunities.
- **Crappie:** Protect mid-sized fish for spawning. Current numbers appear stable but should not be heavily harvested until stronger year classes are established.
- **Catfish:** Current biomass is good. No additional stocking required in 2025.

- **Vegetation Monitoring:** Evaluate vegetation recovery by midsummer 2025. If regrowth remains low, prioritize habitat installation. If regrowth is heavy, selective herbicide or raking near docks/fishing access may be needed.

Conclusion

Lake Thunderbird is in an excellent position to continue developing into a diverse and productive fishery. The habitat, forage base, and predator populations are all present, but adjustments are needed to strengthen predator balance and ensure long-term sustainability. By stocking largemouth bass at 15 per acre over the next two years, the lake will establish a stronger predator base capable of thinning down abundant forage and smaller panfish. Supplemental stockings of hybrid striped bass and walleye will not only diversify the angling experience but also provide important open-water predation to keep shad and other forage in check.

Equally important will be monitoring vegetation recovery following the recent treatment and installing additional shallow-water habitat to replace lost cover. Together, these steps will create a balanced fishery capable of producing quality bass, bonus predators, and a well-rounded panfish fishery. With proper follow-through on the outlined recommendations, Lake Thunderbird is set to provide excellent fishing opportunities for years to come while maintaining a healthy, resilient fishery. Please let us know if you need anything at all!

Sincerely,

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