

Rtn Texas Parks & Wildlife Choose Aquatic Attractor Lights at Inks Lake

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Partnerships Revitalize Fishing at Inks Lake, a Hill Country Gem

ATHENS—Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Inland Fisheries and State Parks divisions have partnered with other private groups to develop habitat enhancement projects to improve fishing opportunities at Inks Lake the past three years. Selected sites have been refurbished with brush, gravel and light structures designed to attract fish to areas accessible by boat and bank anglers.

Four open-water brush attractors were installed in September 2013; three Aquatic Attractor Underwater lights were installed at the state park's south pier in August, 2013; and a brush and gravel bed complex was installed at the state park's north pier in February 2011.

Brushpiles attract cover-seeking species like black basses, crappies, sunfishes and catfishes; gravel beds attract spawning sunfishes; and Aquatic Attractor Underwater lights attract pelagic species like white bass, striped bass and hybrid striped bass. These structures provide habitat for the entire food chain, topped off by the large predator species anglers seek. When combined, these Aquatic Attractor Underwater lights can be very productive.



TPWD District Fisheries Supervisor Marcos De Jesus said, "These types of projects can be costly and labor-intensive; however, they become possible due to partnerships with groups committed to conservation." Eagle Scout candidate William Patterson, along with Troop 5 of the Boy Scouts of America, led the joint efforts behind the open-water brushpile attractors. TPWD and other volunteers have committed to each of these projects, improving fisheries habitat at Inks Lake. The installed habitat structures are designed to facilitate fishing for all angler types by concentrating fish and improving catch rates. The enhanced pier sites give state park visitors and campers the opportunity to make bank fishing an important component of their trip. Both piers have been enhanced to attract all game fish species available at Inks Lake.

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Inks Lake (768 acres) is easy to overlook, lying between area fishing giants Lake Buchanan and Lake LBJ. Like other rocky Hill Country lakes, this lake can be challenging for anglers, giving it an undeserved reputation for poor fishing. “The truth is this lake is a hidden gem that offers quality fishing opportunities,” said De Jesus. Recent fisheries surveys have revealed good abundance of large black bass, sunfishes and catfishes. The best five largemouth bass caught during a recent electrofishing survey weighed 39 pounds (an average of 7.8 pounds per fish). Temperate basses, such

as white bass, also offer excellent seasonal fishing opportunities.

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Furthermore, with the improved light structures, pier fishing is available all night to overnight guests, and with free fishing at state parks, a fishing license is not required. Terry Rodgers, Inks Lake State Park manager, said, “The improvements to the fisheries at Inks Lake have been excellent! We have been educating our park visitors to become anglers through fishing programs, and by enhancing the habitat, we have improved fishing opportunities.”

GPS coordinates for the structures and directions to Inks Lake State Park, which offers the only

public boat ramp access to the lake, can be found online on the TPWD website,

[Location of Aquatic Attractor Underwater Lights!](#)

De Jesus said, “These aquatic habitat projects improve fishing opportunities at Texas reservoirs. If any person or group wants to participate in these types of reservoir habitat restoration projects on local lakes, they are encouraged to become a member of Friends of Reservoirs. See www.waterhabitatlife.org for details or contact your local district fisheries management office.”