



# PONDerings®

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of **AQUA DOC®**



## Working Full Time on Lake & Pond Management *So You Don't Have To!*

### A Day in the Life of an Aquatic Specialist

Allison Schultz, Aquatic Specialist, AQUA DOC Inc.

As an employee at AQUA DOC one of the most common questions we get is: What do you do on a daily basis? The answer is simple. We protect, manage, and restore freshwater resources, but what does that actually entail?

#### Training and Development

Many of us come into AQUA DOC with a wealth of knowledge relating to biology, environmental science, and/or natural resource management, but some do not – either way is fine. AQUA DOC offers in-house training courses called AQUA DOC University (ADU), which covers a broad range of topics including limnology (the study of lakes and ponds), aquatic ecology, how to use products safely and effectively, and customer service. Training also extends out into the field. Field training at AQUA DOC is unique because it utilizes two-person teams. This method ensures safety and allows for new technicians to gain experience and create opportunities to progress to crew leaders. In addition, Aquatic Specialists work together with Aquatic Biologists and the management team to develop the best solutions for our customers. *(Continued on page 2)*



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## A Day in the Life of an Aquatic Specialist (continued from page 1)

### Duties and Responsibilities

The management of nuisance algae and aquatic plant growth in lakes and ponds is perhaps the most focal responsibility of an Aquatic Specialist. This includes the proper identification of algae and aquatic plants, decisions regarding appropriate product(s) and method of application, and continued monitoring of the waterbody throughout the growing season. Proper communication of this information with our customers is extremely important as well. We are also a great resource for our customers when it comes to different lake and pond management techniques, including fountains and aeration, nutrient mitigation strategies, information regarding fisheries management, and stormwater maintenance.

### Team Building

I came onboard with AQUA DOC two years ago and quickly learned that teamwork fosters both professional growth in my career and continued growth of the company. One of AQUA DOC's most defining features is its employees and the wide range of backgrounds which they possess. This includes people

from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds as well as various lifestyles, experience, and interests. These factors have strengthened the AQUA DOC team with a wide range of perspectives. Despite these differences, we all share a common passion for protecting the aquatic environment.

### The Big Picture

In the field, we deal with many environmental challenges. Many of the waterbodies we manage have water quality issues, growth of invasive species, and harmful algal blooms (HABs). Proper management techniques can help mitigate all of these issues. It is always rewarding to watch a pond transform over the course of the season and fulfill the owner's goals. Great before-and-after pictures are a testament to the hard work of the Aquatic Specialists behind them. AQUA DOC's dedication to both its customers and the growing field of aquatics will help us continue to lead the charge for conserving freshwater resources, one lake or pond at a time.

## Birds in the Aquatic Environment

Matthew Siefert, M.S. Biology, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania

When discussing the impacts of lake and pond management, the topic of conversation often leans toward fish populations. While fish do reap many of the benefits of a well-maintained body of water, they aren't the only animals we can help by managing our waters properly. From small headwaters that host migrating waterthrushes to large lakes that serve as hunting grounds for keen-eyed osprey, nearly all waters are associated with birds to some extent. In this article, I'd like to discuss some of the ways in which lake and pond management can benefit birds, as well as some of the more interesting species you can attract to your water body.

One major problem that plagues waterbodies throughout the United States is the formation of dense mats of invasive vegetation, such as Eurasian watermilfoil or hydrilla, that cover the water's surface. These dense populations can cause a number of problems for birds that live around impaired lakes. The development of a monoculture (a plant community that consists of one species), for example, of whichever aquatic plant has reached nuisance levels can alter the food chain in ways that have negative effects on birds. Waterfowl, such as mallards and canvasbacks, rely on having diverse plant populations that serve as food or habitat for small invertebrates that the ducks will also eat. Dense mats of vegetation may also make it difficult for fish-eating birds, such as Caspian terns, to detect prey by limiting their ability to see into the water column. Large populations of hydrilla have recently been linked to a deadly neurological disease (vacuolar myelinopathy) that has been impacting many species of birds, including bald eagles. When these monocultures are eliminated through various treatment methods, the aquatic plant community is given the chance to diversify and return to its previous state. As more native plant populations return to the water, bird populations will be given the chance to recover as well.

A well-managed pond offers similar benefits to birds, with the added bonus of being able to attract unique species to your own backyard! A wide variety of species can be drawn to backyard ponds at different times of year. Migratory waterfowl, like buffleheads or gadwall, may stop by your pond in the spring or fall. Some species of flycatchers, like the eastern phoebe, are common sights at ponds during the summer. Pond owners who don't fish or own koi may enjoy seeing belted kingfishers or great blue herons hunting near the water's edge. Tree swallows (one of my favorite species) and purple martins are attracted to bodies of water due to the large number of insects that breed in them. Swallows are a fantastic addition to any backyard. Their acrobatic hunting is a spectacle, and their big appetites for the insects flying around the yard is an added bonus!

Many species of birds rely heavily on aquatic ecosystems. It's important to remember that humans aren't the only ones impacted by reduced water quality. When we work to improve lakes and ponds, we are improving them for both the people and animals that live on and around them. If you live near a lake or pond, I encourage you to keep an eye out for what's flying around whenever you're outside. Birds offer an endless variety of interesting colors, songs, and behaviors that are truly a wonder to behold.



# AQUA DOC® Solving problems. Providing Solutions.



BEFORE MANAGEMENT



AFTER MANAGEMENT

## Striving For Excellence

Carter L. Bailey, Aquatic Biologist, AQUA DOC Inc.

As we look across the customer service industry throughout the US, there have been many hurdles to overcome in recent years, including a general lack of staffing, mounting inflation, supply chain issues, rising interest rates, and continued bouts with the COVID-19 virus. The lake and pond management industry is not immune to any of these struggles and is particularly dependent on recruiting, hiring, and training a knowledgeable staff. We cannot say enough about what our team does on a daily basis to maintain aquatic ecosystems and effectively communicate this work to our customers and the general public. This can be challenging at times. Where we see other companies failing to provide a high level of communication and customer service, we have made the commitment to striving for excellence.

For existing customers, we would like to say thank you, and we appreciate your business, and to new and potential customers, we value your time and look forward to an opportunity to earn your business. As a company, we have faced these challenges and persevered by installing new processes or implementing different protocols that have allowed us to be successful. This upcoming field season, we look forward to continuing to provide our customers with an elite level of service that they have come to expect.

At AQUA DOC, we can divide our company into three main categories including Administration, Sales, and Production. All of these three categories have a large role to play in customer service. As you come onboard with our team, you will likely contact us to set up a free on-site consultation, meet with your licensed Aquatic Specialist, and when you choose our services, have them coming back to your property on a consistent basis to manage your waters. At each of these steps, our goal is simple: assess and talk with you about your waters, establish goals, and implement a management plan with predictable outcomes. As we continue to grow our service territory, build our culture, and evolve as a company, we look forward to an exciting future and an opportunity to work with you on your waters.

Learn more

about lakes and ponds on our website!  
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AQUA DOC Team at  
2022 Halftime Picnic



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