



January 15, 2018

Re: Dead Fish and Vultures - Frequently Asked Questions

We have been getting a lot of questions over the past few days about the vultures in our community. This note shares some of that information.

Question: Why are there so many Vultures in the Community recently?

Vultures have come to eat the dead fish. Recent cold weather has dropped the water temperatures below levels that support tilapia. The non-native tilapia, in several of our lakes, have died from this cold weather and have floated to the surface. We know the fish kill is "cold weather" event because only the warm water species are being killed. Mostly tilapia. We have fish kills in 6 or 7 lakes. The vultures have already cleaned up 4 of these lakes.

Question: Shouldn't the fish be picked up and taken away?

That can be done. Aquatic Systems has picked up fish for us in the past. However, several factors impact the timing of this pick up. For example, the fish kill needs to be over prior to pick up. Picking up one day and then having more fish rise to the surface the next day doesn't work. Also, if another cold night is coming in the next few days, it makes no sense to pick up before the cold spell, as the cold will just kill more fish. Aquatic Systems is monitoring our fish kills with us and will recommend when we should pick up the fish.

Question: What is the process for getting rid of the vultures?

Disturbing the roosts of vultures just before dark will make them go to another place to roost for that night. If all the fish are gone, they won't come back the next day. If there are more fish, they will come back the next day to eat. Vultures in the community in the daytime cannot be prevented. The good news is that the vultures will clean up a lot of the dead fish each day.

Question: How long does it take get rid of the vultures?

When we had a lot of vultures at the end of 2014, USDA estimated it would take 4 to 5 weeks of nightly disturbances of the vultures roosts. It actually only took them 2 & 1/2 weeks on that occasion, but that was after the fish kill was over. We are still in the middle of this fish kill with more cold nights expected.

Question: What can we expect?

There is a very cold 33 degree night predicted for Wednesday of this week. By the weekend, the weather should be warm enough to stop the fish kills. At that point in time, the HOA will have any remaining fish picked up. The vultures that have not roosted here will not return because their food source is gone. This is an act of nature. The HOA cannot prevent acts of nature, the HOA can only clean up afterwards, as we did with Hurricane Irma. These things take time and money.

The HOA Board