

Elk City District Fisheries

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Summer 2013

State Fishing Lakes Good Bet for Bass

This spring we used electrofishing to sample Big Hill Reservoir, Montgomery State Fishing Lake, Wilson State Fishing Lake, and Altamont City Lake. Electrofishing works by emitting an electrical field into the water that stuns nearby fish. Stunned fish are netted, measured, weighed, and released. Information collected from these surveys is used to monitor fish populations in popular lakes and refine management strategies to provide the best possible angling experiences.

Excellent bass samples were collected from each of the reservoirs, but Montgomery and Wilson State Fishing Lakes really stood out. Montgomery produced 293 largemouth bass in just 1.5 hours of electrofishing with seven fish over three pounds. Big fish at Montgomery weighed in at 5.63 pounds. Wilson produced 132 largemouth bass and 93 spotted bass in 1.67 hours of electrofishing. Fourteen of those fish (including one spotted bass) were over three pounds, the biggest largemouth bass was 5.38 pounds, and the biggest spotted bass weighed 3.75 pounds.

A Clinic Your Child Will Enjoy

By: Tucker Kyle

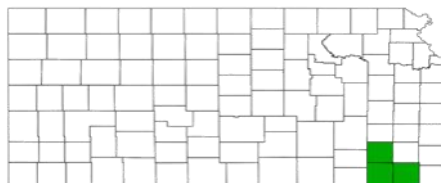
A restless kid in summertime is no rarity, and a 'clinic' visit might not be what your children have in mind as a fun time. But with local fishing clinics offering kids an opportunity to catch fish, eat free food, and win some good prizes, it adds up to a pretty sweet deal. This summer, fishing clinics both at Edna City Lake and Big Hill Overlook Pond targeted children of all ages to come out. KDWP was present at both events, offering free information for parents and fishing equipment for kids, from lures to fish identification cards.

On Saturday, June 8th, Edna's fishing derby started at 8 am sharp. The Edna BEARS planned and hosted the event. There were plenty of prizes to be won, from full-size tackle boxes to bicycles. Trophies were awarded

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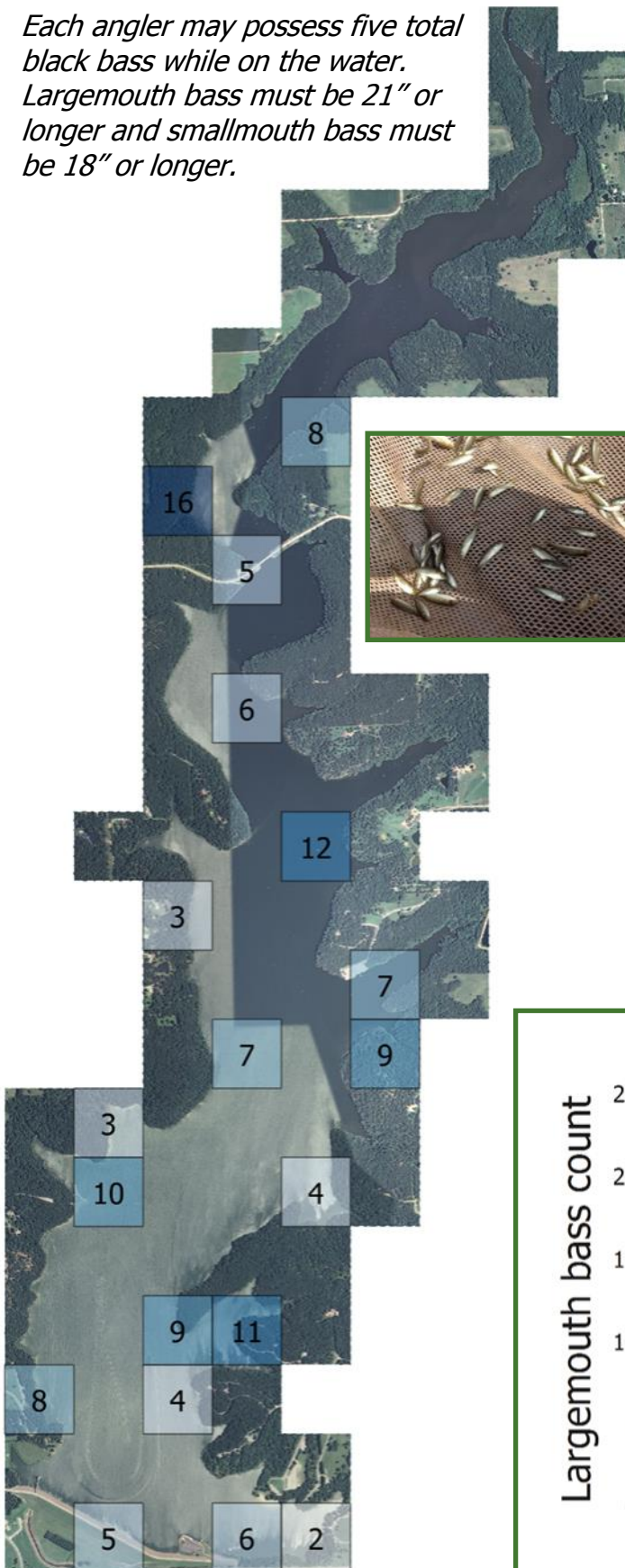


Tucker Kyle is gaining experience in the Elk City Fish and Wildlife Office this summer as she pursues a degree in Conservation Biology from Kansas State.



Big Hill Bass Looking Good

Each angler may possess five total black bass while on the water. Largemouth bass must be 21" or longer and smallmouth bass must be 18" or longer.

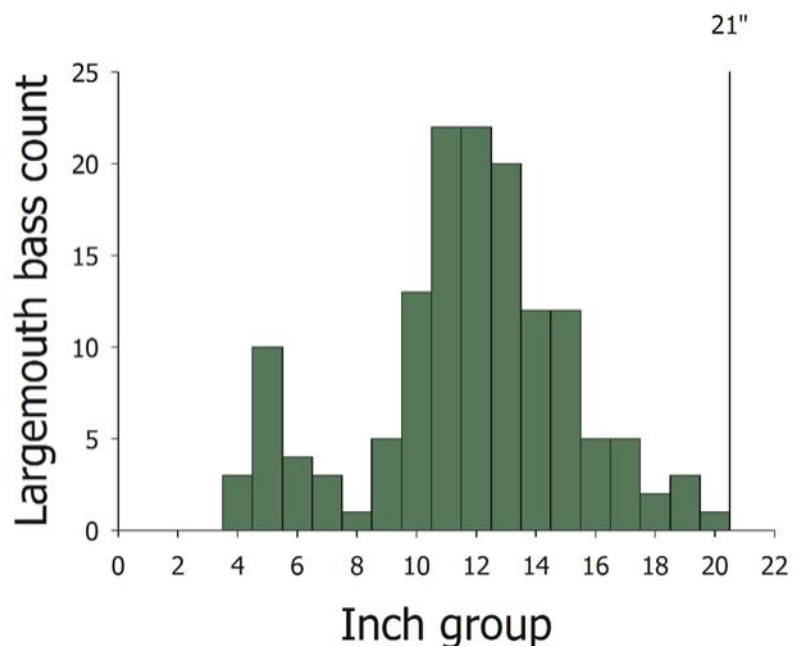


Big Hill Reservoir is commonly in the conversation when people talk about their favorite bass lakes in Kansas. The reservoir is only 1,240 acres, but fishes much larger with its deep coves and abundant timber.

We sampled 143 largemouth bass but only 7 smallmouth bass in 3.34 hours of electrofishing this spring. The largemouth catch rate is pretty consistent with what we've seen the past few years, but smallmouth catch continues to decline.

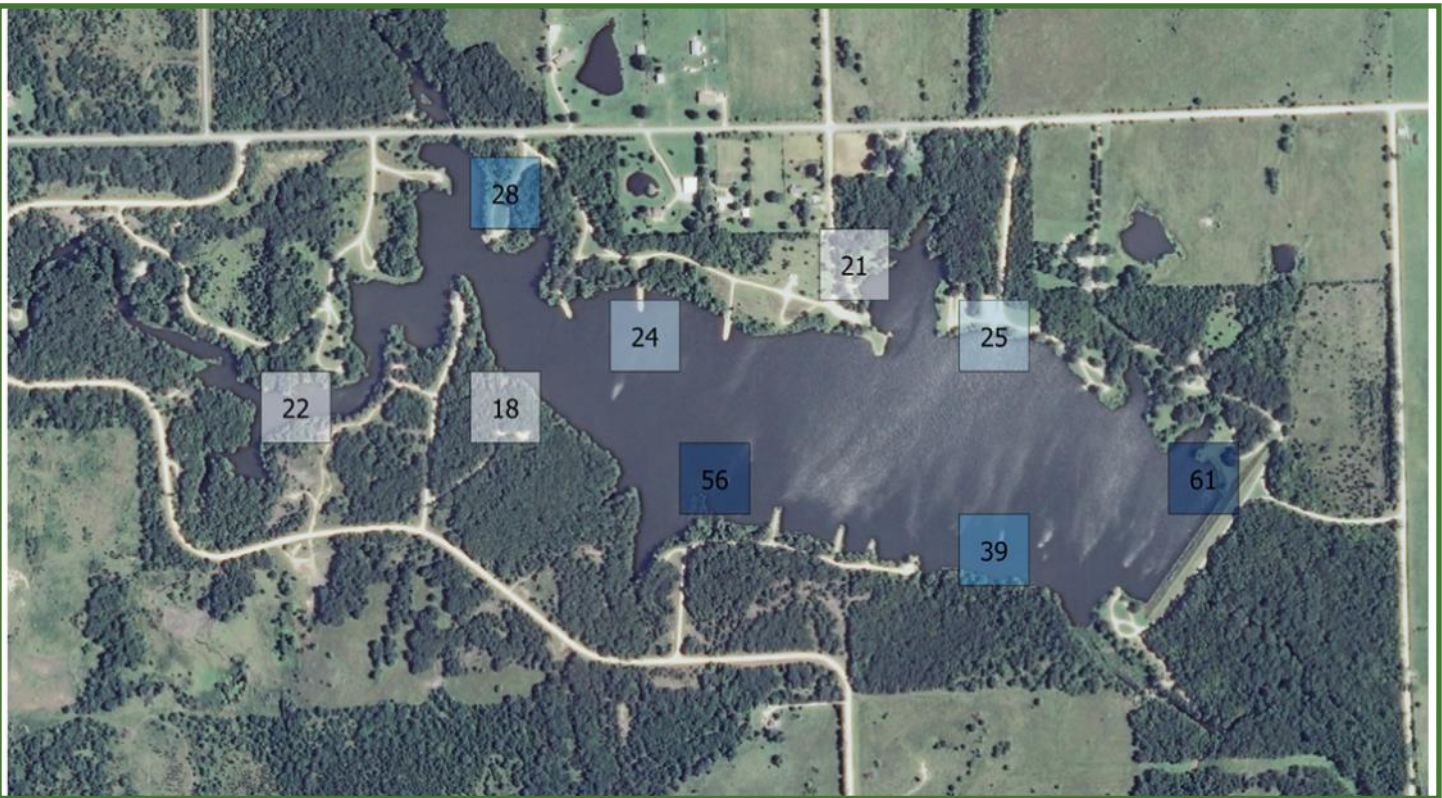
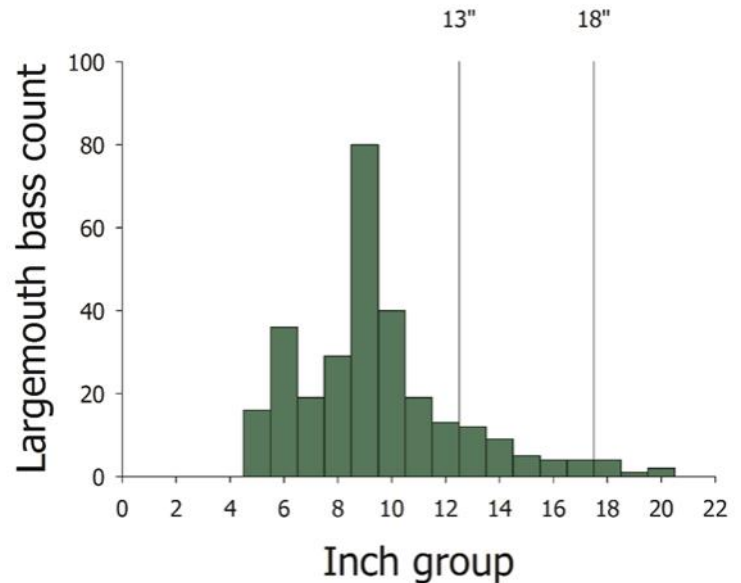
To combat the problem of decreased smallmouth production, we have implemented a three-year stocking program. Beginning this past June, we plan to stock about 6,000 smallmouth bass fingerlings into the reservoir. We hope that by artificially producing three consecutive year classes into the population, we can give them the jump start needed to once again become prolific.

The figure to the left shows where we electrofished at Big Hill in May, 2013. The total number of largemouth bass caught in each station is noted.



Montgomery Has Plenty of Bass

Montgomery County State Fishing Lake harbors an excellent largemouth bass population. The current regulation allows harvest of fish under 13" or over 18". This protects fish between 13-18" so they can continue to grow and replenish the population. This type of length limit, called a slot length limit, has proven useful in many reservoirs for development and retention of quality angling opportunities. However, a slot limit relies on anglers to harvest fish under the slot; in this case, 13". Please consider harvesting your limit of small bass next time you head out. The population will thank you.



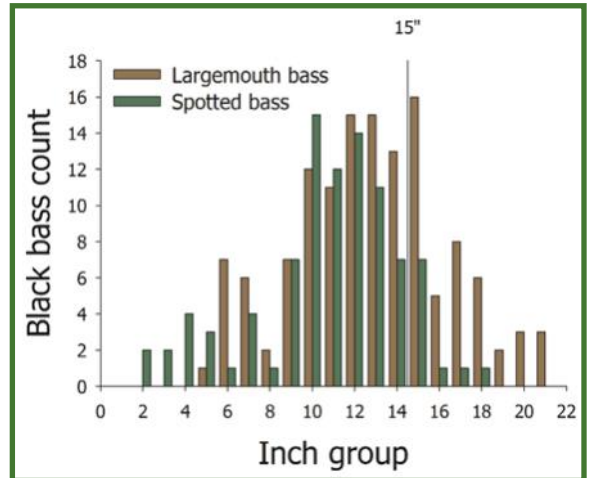
There is a 13-18" protected slot length limit for largemouth bass on Montgomery State Fishing Lake. All fish in this slot must be returned immediately to the lake after capture. Five largemouth bass, either shorter than 13" or longer than 18" may be harvested daily.

There are several reservoir maps with blue blocks and numbers in this newsletter. These represent catch data from our 2013 electrofishing samples. The numbers indicate total number of bass caught at that location.

Wilson Might Be Best Spot Lake in State

Spotted bass are a mystery to many Kansas anglers. This is probably because they are easily confused with largemouth bass and aren't found in many Kansas reservoirs. One reservoir where they are found is Wilson County State Fishing Lake near Buffalo, Kansas. In fact, [the most recent fishing forecast](#) suggested that Wilson was the premier spotted bass destination in the state!

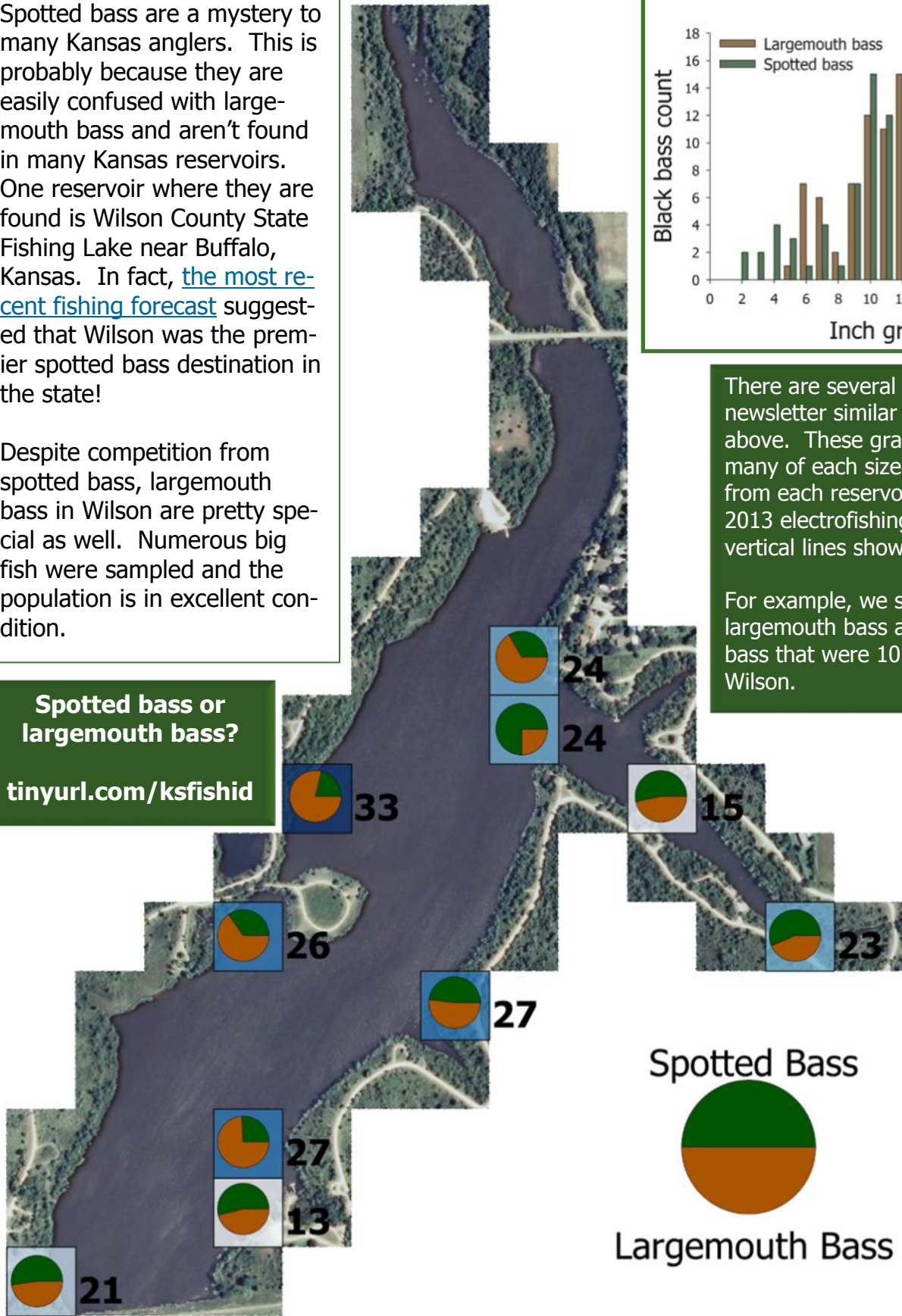
Despite competition from spotted bass, largemouth bass in Wilson are pretty special as well. Numerous big fish were sampled and the population is in excellent condition.





There are several graphs in this newsletter similar to the one above. These graphs show how many of each size fish we caught from each reservoir during our 2013 electrofishing samples. The vertical lines show length limits.

For example, we sampled 12 largemouth bass and 15 spotted bass that were 10.0-10.9" from Wilson.

Spotted bass or largemouth bass?
tinyurl.com/ksfishid



Spotted Bass

 Largemouth Bass


A Clinic Your Child Will Enjoy

By: Tucker Kyle

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for several age groups, as well as trophies for the biggest and smallest fish caught. About 80 children enjoyed the event.

The Big Hill fishing clinic was combined with an 'Outdoor Challenge' program associated with the Governor's Fishing Classic running concurrently on the lake. Kansas Wildscapes and the City of Parsons organized the event and provided an event that nearly 150 local children enjoyed.

The majority of youngsters I approached at Big Hill told me they were excited to catch something, but when asked how they would feel walking away empty-handed, they usually replied how just trying was worth it or that they loved fishing with their family. With Edna fishers, that positive mentality really did seem to be the case as well. Most of the catches seemed to be based on which spot was chosen, with kids who might have stumbled on a spawning bed or nursery spot reeling them in repeatedly. But I never saw one kid who just seemed fed up with empty casts. Those who noticed the lucky fishers really just seemed more motivated to reel in some of their own. I personally believe fishing clinics like these promote genuine sportsmanship and patience for kids among their peers. And with these clinics offering your children the opportunity to come out at absolutely

no cost to you, there's a little reason to not give one a try. Keep an eye on your local newspaper for an upcoming clinic your child will actually be excited to visit.



A young angler poses with a nice bluegill she caught during the Governor's Fishing Classic at Big Hill.

Bathymetric maps available for Montgomery and Wilson State Fishing Lakes

Check lake pages on KDWPT website to download

Upcoming projects

- We plan to continue with lake mapping and produce bathymetric maps for Big Hill and Elk City Reservoirs by this fall
- We are planning on a selective removal of shad from Montgomery State Fishing Lake this winter. This should result in less competition and ultimately lead to bigger sunfish and bass.
- We will be evaluating blue catfish x channel catfish hybrids in Montgomery, Wilson, and Buffalo Ranch beginning either this fall or fall, 2014. We hope to determine if these fish grow faster and are easier to catch than channel catfish we typically stock.

Summer provides fisheries biologists with time to work on habitat projects, conduct youth fishing clinics, and use hoop nets to sample channel catfish. If you see us out and about this summer, feel free to say hello or ask any questions you may have.

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