

Pittsburg District Fisheries Newsletter

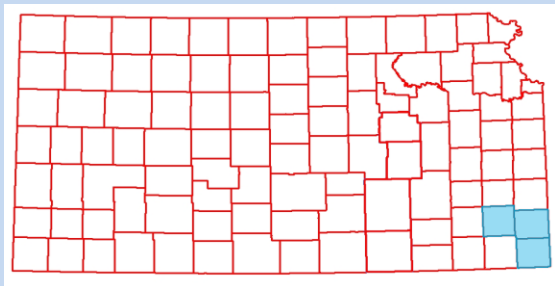
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Fall Will Soon Be Here, and Cooler Water Temperatures Will Increase Fishing Success

Summer has passed quickly, as I've been busy with kid's fishing clinics and derbies, fish sampling, assisting landowners with recommendations on pond stockings and vegetation control, working with KDHE's Surface Mining Section on reclamation projects on the Mined Land Wildlife Area, assisting with hunter education, attending various training sessions, and the never-ending maintenance of equipment. Many of us were limited on the hiring of seasonal help this year, so I've been filling and maintaining fish feeders at Crawford State Lake and the Mined Land Wildlife Area. This is a chore I enjoy. I look forward to getting away from the computer and on the lake at least one afternoon a week. Channel catfish have remained active around feeders, and it is rewarding to sometimes see dozens of big chunky catfish swarming after feed at your feet.



Teaching kids about fishing is a fun and rewarding part of the job as a fisheries biologist. Fishing clinics like this one at Girl Scout Day Camp in Pittsburg were certainly in demand this spring and summer as I was a part of 15 derbies and clinics.

Talk about passing quickly. On May 18, 2014 I began my 40th year working for KDWPT. Oh how the time flies.

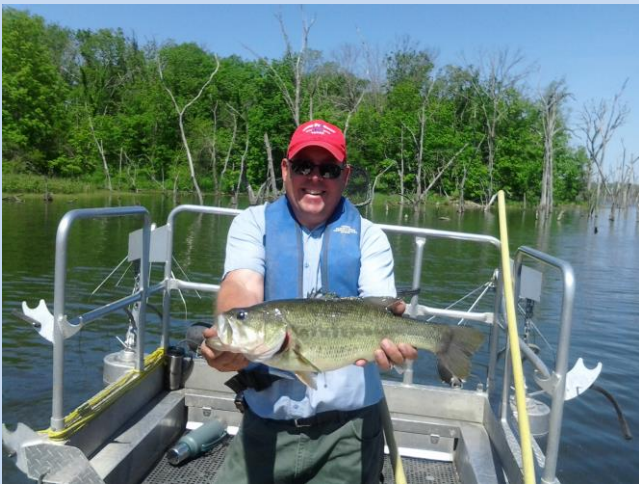
Cooler weather is fast approaching, and fall is a great time to get out and fish. A creel survey on the Mined Land Wildlife Area years ago showed angler catch rates for bass in October were comparable to those in spring. And in the fall, campsites are easy to get, the weather is usually cool and nice, and the fishing can be very good. Bi-weekly trout stockings in Unit #30 of the Mined Land Wildlife Area resume in October. I hope you are ready to get out and enjoy the many opportunities we have here in southeast Kansas.



2014 Spring Bass Sampling Results

Five lakes in the Pittsburg district were sampled by electro-fishing in 2014. Also sampled were Bourbon State Lake and Elm Creek Lake in the Mound City district. Catch rates, length distributions, and body condition from these samplings are closely monitored in order to make the best recommendations for length and creel limit regulations, fish stockings, as well as to inform anglers where the best fishing can be expected through KDWPT's annual spring fishing forecast. The following are summaries of my spring sampling results. The stock catch rate reported throughout is simply the catch rate for bass 8-inches and larger.

Bone Creek Lake – The bass fishery at Bone Creek continues to be one of the best around. A total of 265 largemouth bass were collected by electrofishing at Bone Creek Lake on May 14, 2014. The resulting stock catch rate 93.7 fish/hour is near the record-high 95.9 fish/hour recorded last year. Bass catch rates have shown a steady increase from 39 fish/hour in 2010 to a peak last year. The five-year mean stock catch rate from 2009 to 2013 is 60.0 fish/hour. The quality of the bass fishery at Bone Creek remains good. Thirty-one percent of the stock catch was greater than 15-inches in length, nearing the five-year mean (2009 – 2013) of 34 percent. Body condition of all size groups remained good. The largest bass sampled weighed 5.9 pounds.



James Setina, Project Manager at Public Wholesale Water Supply District #11, shows off one of the big bass collected while electrofishing at Bone Creek Lake.



Funding for seasonal help was slashed greatly in 2014, but thankfully, Teresa Frydendall, an administrative support specialist at KDWPT's regional office in Chanute, stepped up to assist with spring bass sampling. Teresa is shown here displaying two lunkers we sampled at Chanute City Lake in May. The largest fish weighed 5.4 pounds.

Chanute City Lake – The bass fishery at Chanute City Lake looks very good. Our May 5 sampling showed good bass numbers, as well as a high percentage of fish over 15 inches in length. Bass density remains desirable even though the electrofishing catch rate declined from the near record high 120.6 fish/hour last year to 96 fish/hour in 2014. The lake management objective is to maintain a stock catch rate around 100 fish/hour. The length distribution of the bass sample was quite impressive. Fifteen- to 18-inch fish were abundant. Forty percent of the stock catch were fish in this size group. The quality of the fishery has historically been good. In the four preceding years, 15- to 18-inch fish comprised an average 25.6 percent of the catch. Body condition of all size groups remains excellent. Chanute City Lake has an abundance of bass forage in the form of shad and small crappie, and even when bass density has been relatively high, body condition of all size groups has remained excellent. Bass are the primary predator in the lake, and maintaining a high-density population is imperative to control already excessive numbers of crappie, bluegill and shad.

Get your friends, get your family
... and FISH KANSAS!



Crawford State Lake - Largemouth bass numbers at Crawford State Lake remain low. The May 7, 2014 largemouth electrofishing catch was disappointing, as only 28 fish/hour were collected. This catch is a decline from last year's 36/hour, and is also below the 2010-2013 average 40 fish/hour. I would like to see the stock catch rate around 75 fish/hour. The low bass numbers since 2004 can be explained by the discovery of largemouth bass virus at CRSL in June 2007. Bass numbers have yet to completely rebound.

Although bass density is low, the quality of the bass fishery remains very good. The percentage of quality-size fish (12-inch-plus) remained high in 2014, with 79 percent of the catch 12 inches or larger. The population continues to have a very high percentage of preferred-size fish, as 51 percent of the catch were 15 inches or larger.



Crawford State Lake has some good shoreline access near the marina and swimming beach area. This young Pittsburg Middle School student is pleased with the bluegill fishing.



Crawford State Lake has a marina and several floating fishing docks for the shoreline angler.



Neosho State Lake is a family-friendly lake with good shoreline access, nice picnic and primitive camp sites, and even a shelter house.

Neosho State Fishing Lake - A total of 103 bass were collected by electrofishing in the 2014 sampling. The catch rate for stock-size fish (8-inch-plus) fell to 81.4 fish/hour, well below the 116.9 bass/hour last year. The lake management objective is to maintain the catch rate near 100 stock-size fish/hour. The mean stock catch rate from 2010-2013 is 111.3 fish/hour. It should be noted that the 2014 sampling was done in high wind conditions, making the sampling more difficult and less effective. Maintaining a substantial bass population is imperative to exert the predation necessary to control abundant shad and sunfish populations at Neosho State Lake. An 18-inch minimum length limit was implemented in 1999 to promote and maintain adequate predation.

The quality of the 2014 sample was acceptable. Largemouth 12 inches and larger were numerous, as 59 percent of the stock catch fell into this category. The lake management objective is to maintain the percentage of 12-inch-plus fish between 40 and 70. Density of 15-inch and larger fish increased to 22.9 percent, up from 13.8 percent last year. Body condition of all size groups improved and can be classified as good.

2014 Spring Bass Sampling Results... continued

Thayer City Lake (new) - The new City Lake at Thayer is loaded with small bass. A total of 197 largemouth bass were collected in the May 16, 2014 electrofishing sample for a stock catch rate of 140.3 fish/hour. This catch is significantly lower than the 255 fish/hour in 2012, but still exceeds the lake management objective. There are so many bass that competition is severe and few bass are reaching preferred sizes. Eighty-two percent of the 2014 catch were in the 8- to 12-inch size group. Only 1.8 percent of the sample were over 15 inches in length. No fish over 18 inches were collected. Bass numbers will need to come down in order for the remaining fish to grow to larger sizes. Body condition of all size groups was fair to poor, a good indication that there are just too many fish for the available forage.

City of Thayer Completing Access Developments

The City of Thayer has nearly completed a Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) grant to construct a new boat ramp, parking area, courtesy dock, floating fishing dock, and an entrance sign at their 30-acre "old" lake. The boat ramp was sorely needed as boaters formerly had to launch from an unimproved area off the county road at the spillway area.

Total cost of the project is \$33,000, of which \$24,420 will be paid by KDWPT. The city will provide labor and equipment to complete much of the work. Volunteer labor and equipment has also been utilized



This is Thayer's unusable boat ramp site prior to the access developments. Boaters were forced to launch their boat at the spillway area at the south end of the dam just off the county road. This was a dangerous situation that offered poor boat access.



The new boat ramp, courtesy dock, and parking area make boating at Thayer City Lake much safer and convenient. Shoreline access for anglers was also greatly improved.



The new fishing dock at Thayer City Lake will provide a nice new access point from the shore, with parking close by.

Zebra Mussels Discovered at Ash Grove Cement Plant in Chanute

Once zebra mussels were found in Marion Reservoir in 2009, it was a certainty that the microscopic veligers they produce would soon be carried down the Neosho River all the way to Grand Lake. Zebra mussels had been present in Grand Lake for some time, but had not been a problem in Kansas because they cannot travel upstream, only down. Zebra mussels had moved from Marion downstream and into Coffey County Lake (Wolf Creek Power Plant) in July 2012, a result of pumping cooling water from the Neosho.

In late May 2014 it was reported that zebra mussels had been discovered in a small cooling pond at Ash Grove Cement Company in Chanute. Again, this infestation was a result of pumping from the Neosho River. Microscopic veligers from these nuisance mussels are definitely in the Neosho River, and could easily be spread to other area waters. Please follow the clean, drain, and dry protocol for preventing the spread of these unwanted pests and be sure to tell your friends that fish the Neosho to do so as well. Here are the basic guidelines.

CLEAN: Inspect and clean anything that came in contact with the water, including boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, boots and waders, etc. Remove any zebra mussels, other animals, mud, plants and other debris before leaving the area.



DRAIN: Empty all water from engines, livewells, bilges, bait buckets, and every other conceivable space or item that can hold water before leaving the area. Dump live bait on dry land or at bait disposal sites, not into the lake or stream. Never move live fish between bodies of water or up streams.

DRY: All equipment for five days before using it again. If you need to use it sooner, Wash it with 140-degree water (retail car washes are OK; so is a 10 percent water/chlorine solution or hot saltwater) before using your equipment in another body of water.

More information about control of aquatic nuisance species can be found at ProtectKSWaters.org.



\$7,000 Orville-Kent Restitution Fund Now Depleted. More Than 1½ Tons of Catfish Stocked.

In March 2011, KDWPT accepted a \$7,000 settlement from Orville-Kent Food Company in Baxter Springs as part of a penalty for overloading the city's wastewater treatment system with millions of gallons of industrial wastewater. The wastewater caused pollution along a 22-mile-long section of the Spring River in southeast Kansas and Oklahoma. The company was ordered to spend at least \$32,500 on a project to stock fish in or near the watershed of the Spring River. A sum of \$25,500 was awarded to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, where a majority of the pollution occurred. The money in Oklahoma was used for paddlefish stockings in Grand Lake.

KDWPT has utilized its funding to stock catchable-size channel catfish in small community lakes within the Spring River drainage just prior to major kids' fishing events. Local youth, as well as older anglers, have been greatly benefiting ever since.

A total of 3,264 pounds of fish have been stocked preceding eight fishing derbies in Pittsburg and Arma. The derbies have included the Pittsburg 4th of July Derby at Lincoln Park, the Arma Homecoming Derby, and the Little Balkans Derby at Lakeside Park in Pittsburg. The average weight of these fish is 0.75 pounds, so approximately 4,350 fish have been stocked through this project.



Three channel catfish stockings, 500 pounds each, were completed at Lakeside Park in Pittsburg just prior to Little Balkans fishing derbies in 2011, 2012 and 2013. These stockings greatly improved angling success and helped to make lots of kids happy.

Bone Creek Awarded a CFAP Grant for Pavilion

Public Wholesale Water Supply District #11 was recently awarded a CFAP grant totaling \$4,964 for the construction of a pavilion near the east boat ramp and parking area at Bone Creek Lake. PWWSD #11 will provide 26 percent of the cost for this \$6,700 project. The pavilion will be used for bass tournament weigh-ins as well as for family gatherings and special events. Much of the labor for construction of the 24 x 30 foot pavilion will be provided by bass anglers who fish the lake. A memorial plaque recognizing the late Bill Smith is planned. Bill, owner of Alber's Marine in Arma, was a tireless supporter of fishing and boating at Bone Creek, and will be greatly missed.

The CFAP grant program is made available to nearly 240 community lakes statewide for development projects that benefit anglers and boaters. Cooperators are required to pay a minimum of 25 percent of development costs. Applications for these funds is competitive and is based on needs and benefits of the project, participation in CFAP, and the amount contributed toward the project by the applicant. Approximately \$225,000 is available statewide annually.



This courtesy dock at Bone Creek Lake was made possible by one of seven CFAP grants awarded to Public Wholesale Water Supply District #11 since 1997. KDWPT has provided more \$209,000 to develop fishing and boating improvements worth well over a quarter of a million dollars.

