



Kansas City District Fisheries Newsletter

Biologist's Notes

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Luke Kowalewski and I am the new KDWPT Fisheries Biologist for the Kansas City District. I started in this position in September 2014. I earned my undergraduate degree at Kansas State University and started my fisheries career in the Manhattan, KS area. I have spent the past seven years doing fisheries work in Nebraska on a variety of projects ranging from chasing pallid sturgeon on the Missouri River, to a statewide angler survey project, to management and control of white perch and gizzard shad, culminating with a Master's degree from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. I grew up in Leavenworth County, KS and I am thrilled to be back to the area I fondly call home to serve the Kansas City District Fishery.

There are some very exciting ongoing projects within the Kansas City District. Walleye egg collection occurs each spring at Hillsdale Reservoir. This spring, 31 million walleye eggs were collected, fertilized, and shipped to Milford Fish Hatchery to produce walleye fry and fingerlings to be stocked across the state enhancing walleye angling opportunities statewide. A program aimed at increasing catch of channel catfish in high-use urban waterbodies allows us to stock 19,969 pounds of catchable size (3/4-1 1/2 lbs) channel catfish throughout the year (March-September) among 22 urban waterbodies. Hillsdale Reservoir is part of an ongoing research project involving stocking of early-spawned largemouth bass to improve angling success and potentially lead to a more stable largemouth bass population. The largemouth bass for this study are spawned up to 2 months early and reared at state fish hatcheries to a size big enough to immediately prey upon young-of-the-year gizzard shad, giving an advantage of increased growth and survival. We are currently in year three of this project and genetic testing of largemouth bass caught during standardized sampling and from tournament anglers will begin to shed some insight to the contribution of stocked fish to the population.

These are just a few shining examples of ongoing projects aimed at providing more fulfilling angling experiences here in the Kansas City District. The most important thing to remember is that you will catch exactly zero fish without a line in the water. **So get out there and fish!**



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2015 Kansas City District Fishing Forecast

Lake Lenexa: The largemouth bass population continues to be at very high density, with the majority of the population in the 8-12 inch length range. A new slot-limit (must release all largemouth bass 13-18 inches) harvest regulation is in effect for 2015, and is aimed at improving the size structure for largemouth bass. Please feel free to harvest the 8-12 inch largemouth bass (5 fish daily creel limit) this will help improve the population. The bluegill population is also at high density, with the majority of the population in the 6-8 inch length range. The high-density largemouth bass and bluegill populations coupled with a large amount of mowed shoreline access makes Lake Lenexa the ideal spot to take a youngster for fishing action.

Olathe—Cedar Lake: Sampled catch rates continue to be good for largemouth bass (123 fish/hr of electrofishing) and white crappie (65 fish/net night) in 2014. Some larger bass are available to anglers with 34% of the population > 15 inches in length. There is a low-density yet high-quality saugeye population in Cedar Lake. All saugeye sampled from Cedar Lake in fall of 2014 exceeded 20 inches, and we also captured the largest saugeye sampled last fall in the state at 6.7 lbs.



Mike Katzer with the City of Olathe holding the largest saugeye sampled last fall in the state.

Lake Olathe: The sampled catch rate of largemouth bass was 152 fish/hr of electrofishing and is the highest catch rate for any waterbody in the Kansas City District. The majority of the largemouth bass population is in the 12-15 inch length range, but some larger individuals (up to 20 inches) are available to anglers. Decent populations of channel catfish, white crappie, and wiper can also be taken on a variety of baits.

Gardner City Lake: Catch of bluegill, black and white crappie all increased during fall sampling in 2014. The size structure for black and white crappie was also impressive with most of the populations being in the 6-8 inch range but some individuals > 12 inches. Catch rate of channel catfish was fair, but some large individuals (up to 30 inches) are available. Not often targeted at Gardner City Lake, the white bass population offers a very good fishing opportunity, with good numbers and almost all the population exceeding 12 inches and some > 15 inches in length.

Miami County State Fishing Lake: A phenomenal white bass fishery is occurring at Miami SFL for a waterbody its size. Excellent numbers and the majority of the population is > 15 inches. Good numbers and size for bluegill, black and white crappie, and channel catfish populations. Size structure of the largemouth bass population still continues to improve since implementation of a 13-18 inch protected slot limit.



Black Crappie recently sampled from Miami SFL.

2015 Kansas City District Fishing Forecast Continued

Paola City Lake (Lake Miola): Largemouth bass numbers and size structure continue to improve since implementation of a 13-18 inch protected slot limit. The majority of the largemouth bass population now exceeds 12 inches with some individuals > 20 inches now available. Good populations of white crappie and wiper also exist in Paola City Lake.

Middle Creek State Fishing Lake: Catch rate for black and white crappie both increased during fall sampling in 2014, with the majority of both populations being 6-8 inches in length. The largemouth bass abundance continues to struggle, but is a balanced population with both larger individuals and smaller recruiting individuals. Channel catfish occur in fair numbers, with the majority of the population being in the 16.5-24 inch length range. Limited numbers of quality fish are available to anglers, for both saugeye and wiper populations.

Hillsdale Reservoir: Catch rates decreased for both black and white crappie during fall sampling in 2014. Most of the white crappie captured were 8-10 inches in length, but a few larger individuals (> 12 inches) are available to anglers. Catch rates for during fall sampling were low for walleye, but we found them in high abundance this spring for egg collection, with some of the biggest females exceeding 28 inches in length. Stocking of early-spawned largemouth bass will continue for 2015 aimed at improving the largemouth bass fishery. Good channel and flathead catfish angling can be expected for 2015, with some large individuals (>30 inches) available to anglers.



KDWPT Biologist Carson Cox holding a nice walleye sampled during egg collection at Hillsdale Reservoir.

An Aggressive Invader: Curly-leaf Pondweed at Miami SFL



If any of you have fished Miami County State Fishing Lake in the past few springs, you certainly have noticed the dense stand of curly-leaf pondweed that has become established. Curly-leaf pondweed is an invasive aquatic nuisance species, and unfortunately Miami SFL provides the perfect growing conditions (ideal depth and water clarity) for the plant. This plant has now expanded its coverage to 90-95% of the waterbody. Curly-leaf

pondweed forms dense mats which potentially inhibit angling and boating activities. This plant can be spread from plant fragments transported by boats and trailers (Continued Page 4).

An Aggressive Invader: Curly-leaf Pondweed at Miami SFL Cont'd

(Continued from page 3) Although this plant comes on very strong in the early spring, it dies back naturally with summer heat when water temperatures rise above 70° F. Peak growth and coverage is normally late-May and early-June, but by July there will be little evidence of the plant. Some chemical management to clear some areas for angling and boat launching was completed in early May.

The good news is the fish populations look great at Miami SFL with good numbers and size structure for crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, and white bass. A near state record quality channel catfish was recently sampled there too! This situation also serves as sobering reminder to clean boats and trailers, to help stop the spread of this aquatic nuisance species.



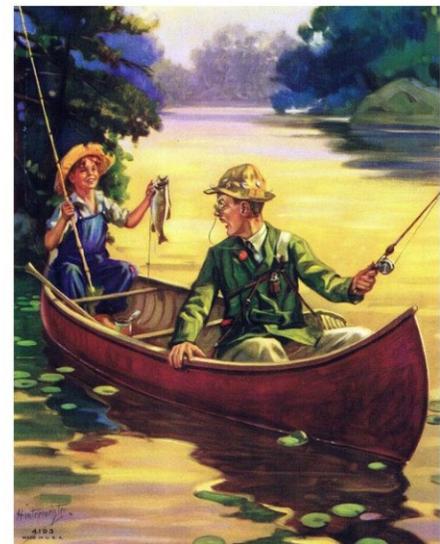
Near state record quality channel catfish recently sampled at Miami SFL.



Remember to clean, drain, and dry!

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