

GLEN ELDER DISTRICT FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

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As my boys continue to grow I am constantly allowed the chance to experience more and more outdoor opportunities with them. This has made my outdoor adventures that much more meaningful and memorable as we build memories together.

Each boy managed to shoot his first deer last year during their first hour or two of hunting and both said it was something they would never forget. We also took a canoeing/fishing trip to Quetico in Canada and were able to experience true Canadian wilderness as a family. It was a trip we often reminisce about and are constantly planning the next trip north.

This is mentioned as a reminder to everyone that the natural world has so much to offer. Make some time to get out there and enjoy it with your family. Our youth need to be given the opportunity to decide if they enjoy hunting and fishing. These truly are the memories that will last a lifetime!



I hope you enjoy the latest edition of the Glen Elder district newsletter. I will continue to provide information for Glen Elder, Wilson, and Lovewell Reservoirs, Jewell State Fishing Lake, Rocky Pond in Belleville, and Jewell City Lake.

Don't forget to check out the many FISH properties in the area as well. They can offer some great fishing.

If you know someone who would like to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so [HERE](#). If you would like to unsubscribe, please send your info to [Contact Us](#) with "unsubscribe to Glen Elder District Fisheries newsletter" and we'll get you taken off of the list. If you have any questions or comments feel free to send them in.

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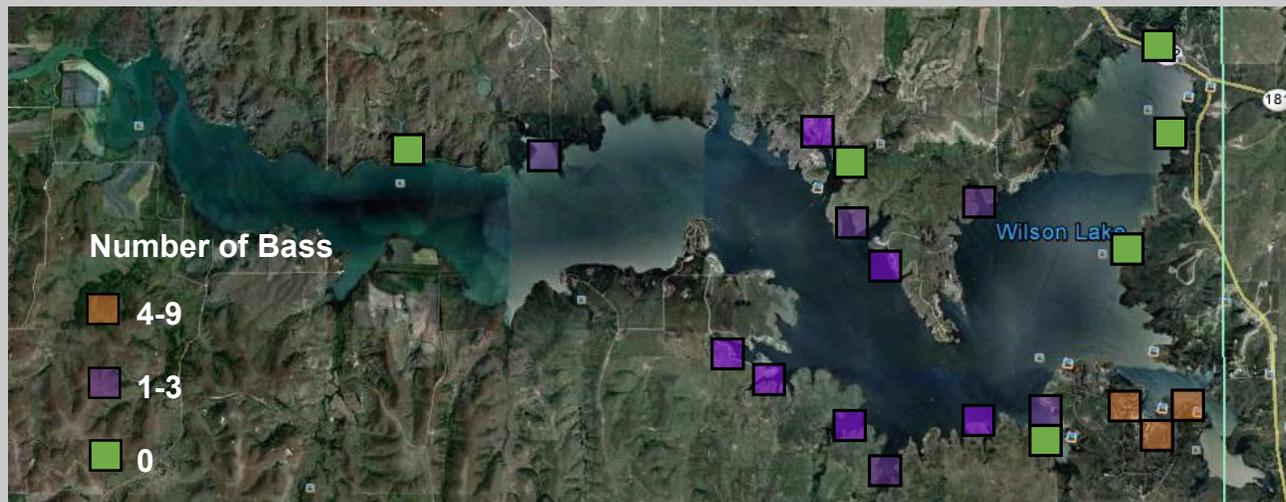
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The Wilson bass sample was hampered by warm water temperatures which moved many of the fish into deeper water, clear water, and high conductivity. This resulted in a poor sample relative to what was actually available in the reservoir. Only 29 largemouth bass and 7 smallmouth bass were collected in 3.4 hours of electrofishing at Wilson. Largemouth bass density rating dropped 61%, preferred rating declined 68%, and lunker rating remained unchanged. Young largemouth bass continue to struggle to recruit into the fishery due to the low water hampering aquatic habitat necessary for survival. Because of this, KDWP stocked 39,000 large fingerlings in June 2013 and 5,000 large fingerlings in June 2014. These larger fish may be able to better survive predation and recruit into the fishery.

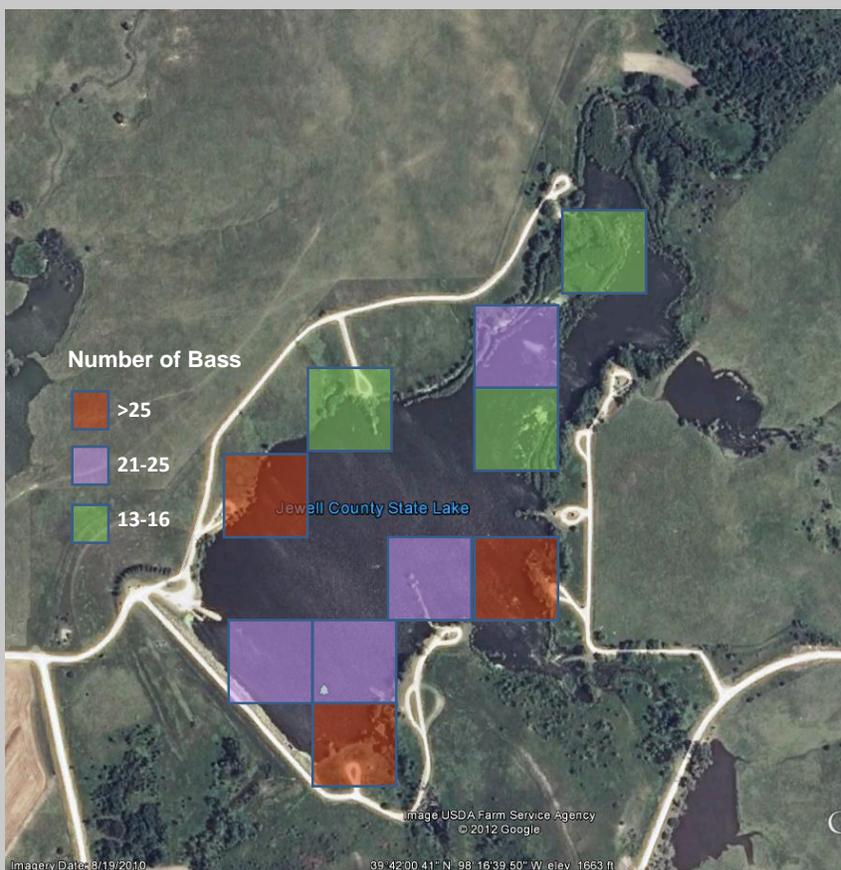
Largemouth bass body condition has been declining recently as a result of the lower water levels. Bluegill and minnow production has been very poor over the last 4 years and directly affected the “fatness” of the largemouth bass population. Redear sunfish were first stocked in 2013 and again in 2014 in hopes that this species can provide a new forage fish for the bass while also feeding heavily on the abundant zebra mussel population.



Of the seven smallmouth bass collected, two were in the 10-11 inch range, three were between 13 and 15 inches, and two were 16 to 17 inches. Summer shoreline seining in August revealed fair numbers of young smallmouth bass in the reservoir. Body condition is slightly better for smallmouth bass, but still only fair. Anglers should expect a small decline in bass angling in 2015, but Wilson will continue to be one of the better bass reservoirs in Kansas.

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At Jewell, 234 largemouth bass were collected during 1.6 hours of electrofishing for a catch rate of 122



fish over 9 inches per hour of sampling. This is an increase from the 2013 catch rate of 106 per hour. The density rating increased from 64.7 in the 2013 sample to 109.8 in 2014. This large increase is due to the 2009 year class growing into the quality size range of largemouth bass. Preferred rating increased 39% while lunker rating remained unchanged. These fish continue to reproduce well with a strong 2013 year class evident with fish between 3 and 7 inches accounting for 15% of the catch. Fish between 8 and 12 inches accounted for 34% of the catch while fish in the protected 13 to 18 inch slot length limit represented 51% of the population. Only

one fish greater than the slot limit was collected, a 19 inch fish that weighed 4 pounds. Fishing prospects for 2014 look very good with high amounts of catch and release and a small chance of catching some larger fish.

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Are Wipers eating all our Crappie and Walleye?

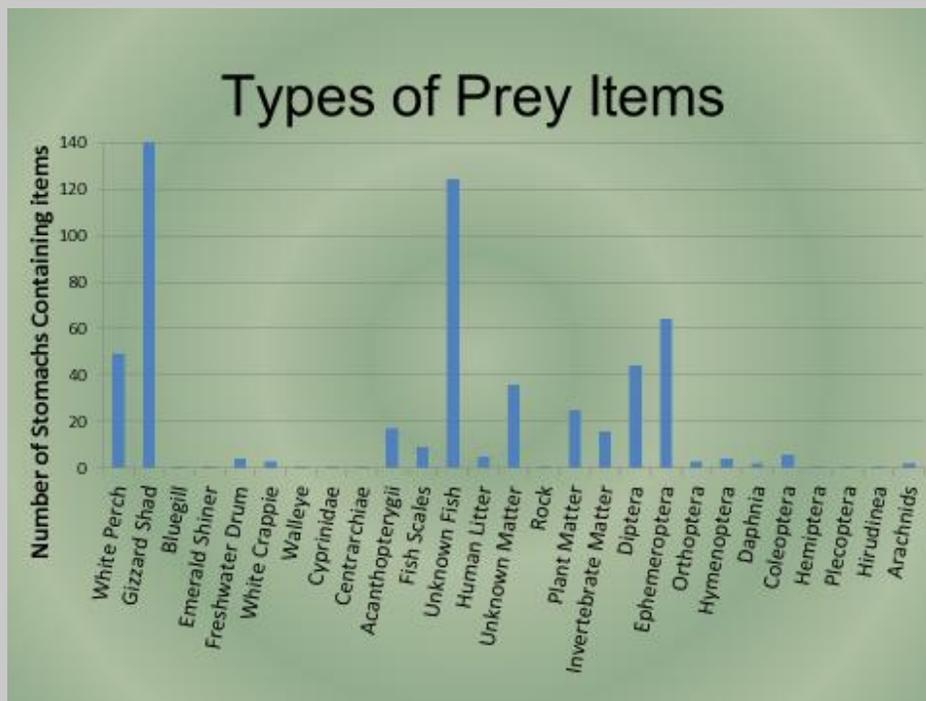
Wipers have been stocked in nearly all of Kansas' major reservoirs due to their popularity among anglers for the tremendous fight they offer and their relentless "never give up" attitude. Pound for pound, anglers will have a hard time finding a fish that can match the pure power a wiper possesses. They are also fine table fare once the red meat is trimmed out and the remaining white meat is prepared properly. Wipers also offer a unique fishery in the summer when other species like crappie and walleye become tough to catch. They remain active during the warmer months and can provide some fantastic topwater action into the fall in most of the state's reservoirs.

Fisheries managers also appreciate the wiper's voracious appetite. Many of the state's reservoirs are home to an abundant forage supply of gizzard shad, however, in some cases there can be too much of a good thing. If the existing predators cannot keep the gizzard shad population in check, too many of the young shad will grow to adulthood and create an excessive biomass of shad. Obviously, a small percentage of the shad need to survive and reproduce to sustain the population, but too many is harmful to the sportfish species and these planktivores often compete with young crappie, walleye, white bass, and bluegill for a limited amount of zooplankton. Shad can overwhelm a population and create an imbalance in the lake. This is where wipers can assist the biologists. A healthy wiper population will consume large quantities of shad throughout the summer and help keep their numbers in check. A balanced fish population consisting of abundant predators, sufficient forage, and some mature shad is what is desired.

Anglers often wonder if wipers are actually doing their job and eating only shad or if they are hurting the fish population by eating the sportfish they have been stocked to help protect. A recent diet study from Cheney and El Dorado Reservoirs in south central Kansas helped to answer this question. Graduate students Scott Brack and Brian Serpan analyzed stomach contents from 464 wipers ranging from 5 to 25 inches in 2013. The results showed that wiper diet varies according to size with fish up to 8 inches primarily consuming invertebrates, 8-12 inch fish fed heavily on white perch, and fish larger than 12 inches most commonly had gizzard shad and other fish in their stomachs.

They were able to further analyze the data to describe the occurrence of individual fish species in the wiper diets. The figure below illustrates that gizzard shad were most often found in the stomach contents with 140 of the 264 wipers with stomach contents containing gizzard shad.

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Second most frequent food item was unknown fish. This could include a wide range of fish species, but was far too digested to make a clear determination. The researchers hypothesized that many of these unknown fish were likely gizzard shad which are digested rapidly and may become unidentifiable. Aquatic invertebrates were also very common followed by white perch which were found in nearly 50 of the stomachs. Only a handful of other fish species were identified in the wiper stomachs including three freshwater drum, two white crappie, one bluegill, and one walleye.

As evidenced by this recent study from two of the state's reservoirs, it appears that wipers are indeed doing an excellent job of consuming large quantities of gizzard shad while avoiding the sportfish and other more desirable species in the reservoir. They will continue to be stocked as a management tool when needed and hopefully anglers will continue to enjoy that strong tug on the other end of the line.



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10th Annual Glen Elder Tournament Results

Despite 20 mph winds, seasonally-cool temperatures, and storms that loomed on the horizon, 125 youth reeled in fish during the 10th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament at Waconda Lake on June 7. Hosted by Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWPT) and the Waconda Lake Association, the five-hour event allowed 139 youth to experience a challenging, but fun-filled day of fishing.

“The fishing was much better this year compared to last year’s cold and very windy conditions, and most anglers were able to bring in a few fish with drum, white bass, and walleye leading the way,” said tournament director and KDWPT district fisheries biologist Scott Waters.

Local volunteers provided 43 boats and ninety percent of the young anglers caught at least one fish, including 236 drum, 125 white bass, 107 walleye, 82 channel catfish, 56 wipers, 10 crappie, 1 largemouth bass, and 1 flathead catfish.

Participants competed for awards in categories such as most fish caught, the biggest fish caught for a given species, and the smallest fish caught. The 2014 tournament winners from each category are as follows:

MOST FISH

- Jaxson Heenan (Lucas), 23 total caught

BIGGEST FISH

- Walleye: Brody Widrig (Beloit), 23.5 inches
- Crappie: Bryanna Kuehn (Beloit), 14.5 inches
- Channel Catfish: Grant Arasmith (Jewell), 27 inches
- White Bass: Payton Hake (Cawker City), 15.5 inches
- Wiper: Michael Boyle (Beloit), 25.5 inches
- Largemouth Bass: Evan Blue (Beloit), 12 inches
- Drum: Nicholas Racette (Natoma), 22 inches

SMALLEST FISH

- Mykayla Valdepena (Beloit), 6.5 inches (walleye)

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"We would like to extend a very special thank-you to all of the boat drivers and volunteers who provided their time and equipment on Saturday, the Waconda Lake Association for providing lunch and helping cover the cost of t-shirts, and Wayne Miner who donated 150 dozen nightcrawlers. I would also like to thank the 80 sponsors who donated nearly \$4,000 in prizes. Because of their generosity, each youth was able to take home a Berkley tackle bag, t-shirt, goodie bag of tackle and gift certificates, and other prizes. Lastly, a special thanks to Connor Chance and the staff of the Glen Elder area office for assisting with the event.

To find out how to fish in next year's event on June 6, contact Scott Waters at (785) 545-3345.



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New Fish Attractors at Glen Elder Reservoir

Over the past couple of years we have been developing and building new forms of fish attractors that will benefit the anglers and the fishery. While much of our habitat works involves the construction of brush piles using cedar trees and cinder blocks, alternative forms of habitat are also being used that appear to work extremely well for attracting fish, both big and small. There are a wide variety of models out there, but the most commonly used at Glen Elder has been the street sweeper design which uses old brushes donated by local city departments that are no longer usable. These are constructed in such a way as to provide permanent tree-like structure. The cost of each of these is less than \$20 and they should provide long-lasting benefits.

Another fish attractor design utilizes 55 gallon drums cut in half and mounted on a PVC frame. This design has been used in other states and has proven effective at attracting a wide variety of species including crappie, bluegill, bass, and forage fish.

Ten of these structures have been placed in Glen Elder Reservoir and plans are to begin construction of more for Wilson Reservoir in 2015. They will offer some outstanding bass habitat for that popular lake.

