

# Glen Elder District Fisheries

Volume 7, Issue 1

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

Spring 2016

## Kansas Walleye Initiative

By now, anglers may have heard about a new program created by the Fisheries Division of Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism titled the Kansas Walleye Initiative or KWI for short. Simply put, the goal of the initiative is to provide more and bigger walleye for Kansas anglers. Fisheries managers can accomplish this task in several ways, but the focus of the KWI is to alter fishing regulations at several Kansas reservoirs, state fishing lakes, and community lakes as well as increase production of walleye for stocking statewide.

Walleye rank as the 4<sup>th</sup> most preferred species to catch in the state, but 400,000 Kansas anglers only harvest 72,000 walleye annually. Surprisingly, this is less than the annual harvest of pheasants (270,000), quail (258,000), ducks (210,000), and even deer (100,000). These low harvest numbers reflect what a valuable and unique resource Kansas walleye are and stress the need for special regulations and protection to sustain these important fisheries.

Each of the state's federal reservoirs can be classified into one of four management strategies: Harvest, Broodstock, Biological Control, and Trophy. To reach these population objectives, length and creel limits are enforced on all of the state's managed water bodies. This is not a one size fits all fix, thus several regulation options are available to the biologists. As part of the initiative, biologists were asked to review their current regulations and propose changes, if necessary, to better meet their goals. An array of proposed regulation changes will be presented at the April 21 KDWPT commission meeting as a result.

The fish culture section of KDWPT has also been tasked with upgrading the walleye production in both numbers and sizes of fish available for stocking. Walleye fry will continue to be produced, but the fingerling program will be greatly enhanced beginning in 2016. Previous production of walleye fingerlings yielded 1-1.25 inch walleye, but the new protocol will grow fingerlings to 45 mm or 1.8 inches which will greatly improve survival.

Finally, production of intermediate walleye will increase across the state with the development of new techniques to grow walleye to 8 inches by October. These fish will have better survival once stocked and may be used to fill gaps where missing year classes exist.

There is much more to the KWI so feel free to contact me at 785-545-3345 with questions.



# Glen Elder Reservoir

## 2016 Fishing Forecast

Scott Waters—District Fisheries Biologist

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**General Information:** The reservoir is approximately 1.4 feet low as of April 2016. All boat ramps and facilities will be open and usable again this year. Also, be on the lookout for blue catfish which we have stocked each of the last six years.

**Don't forget the new 35 inch length limit on blue catfish at Glen Elder!**

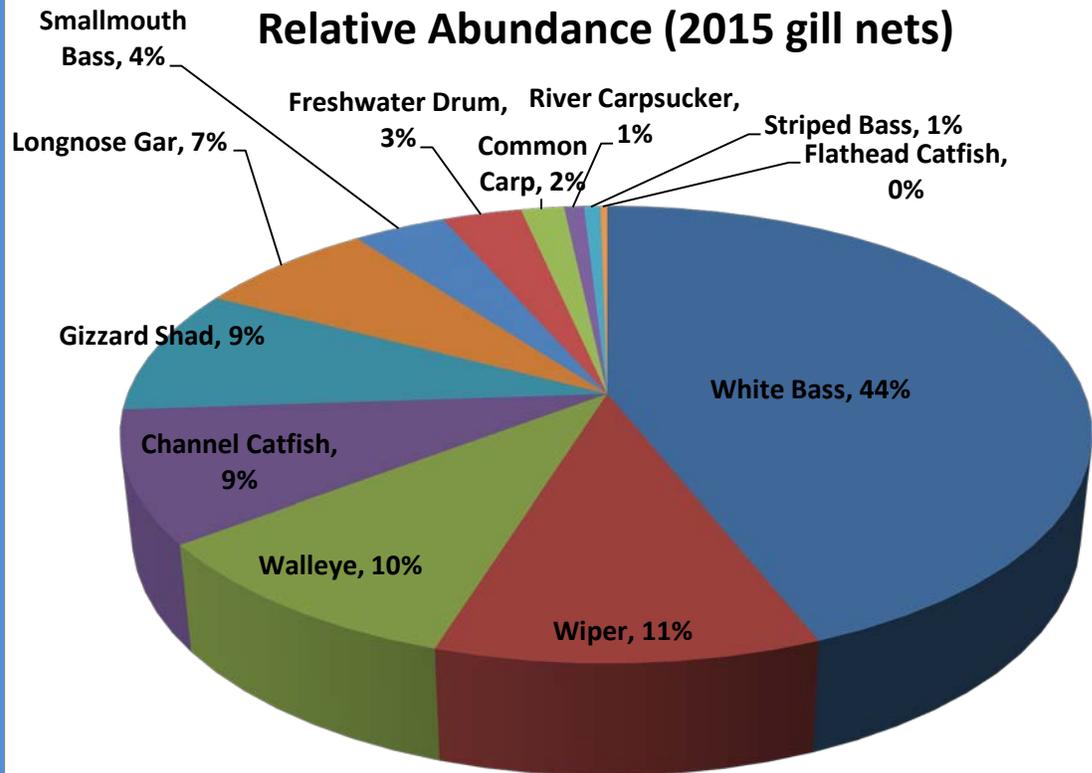


### Special Regulations:

- Blue Catfish—35 inch minimum length limit
- Crappie—Daily creel limit of 20 fish
- Walleye—18 inch minimum length limit
- Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass—18 inch minimum length limit

# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015)



	# Caught	Length (in)		Weight (lb)	
		Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)
Black Crappie	45	8.5	3.0-8.9	0.4	0.3-0.4
Blue Catfish*	32	22.2	8.1-28.1	4.9	0.1-10.2
Channel Catfish	71	19.9	10.8-31.7	3.1	0.4-14.4
Flathead Catfish*	266	18.7	3.7-38.8	4.8	0.1-42.0
Gizzard Shad	68	15.6	5.3-18.3	N/A	N/A
Smallmouth Bass**	160	10.0	4.5-17.1	0.7	0.1-2.5
Walleye	75	17.1	9.3-23.0	2.0	0.2-4.3
White Bass	337	10.8	4.9-16.7	0.9	0.1-2.5
White Crappie	694	9.3	3.0-12.4	0.5	0.1-1.1
Wiper	83	19.5	17.5-23.4	3.9	2.9-6.3

\*Collected during summer electrofishing

\*\*Collected during spring electrofishing

# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

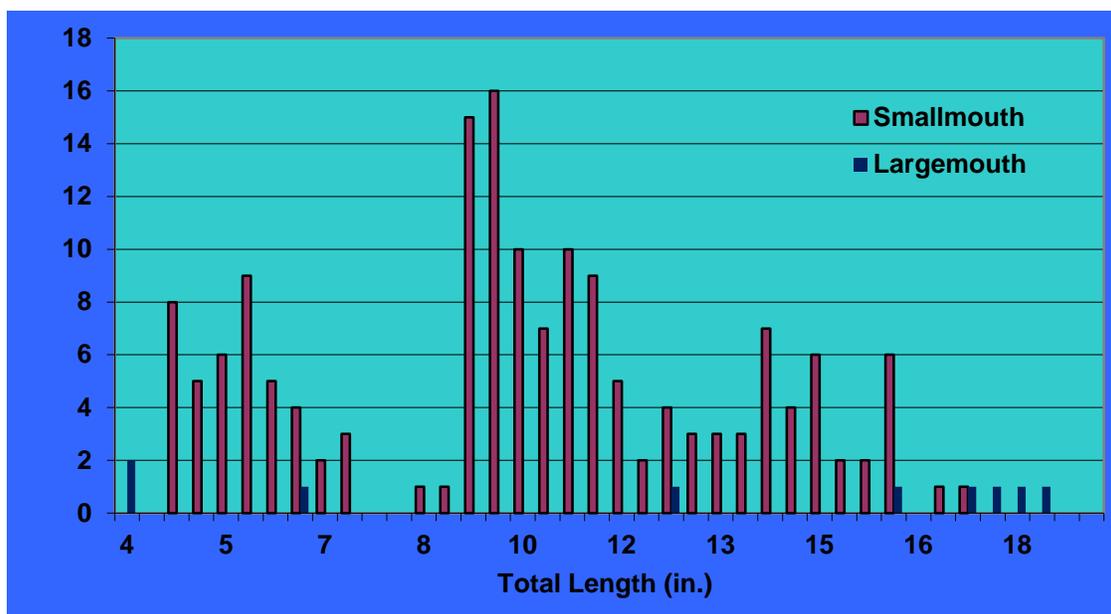
FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## BLACK BASS--GOOD

Smallmouth bass numbers were improved in 2015 with 160 fish collected ranging from 4 to 17 inches and up to 2.5 pounds. The catch rate of fish over 7 inches increased 19% this year following a 42% increase the previous year. This was the best catch rate since 2011. Fish between 8 and 12 inches again dominated the sample accounting for 47%, fish between 4 and 7 inches were 26%, and 13 to 16 inch fish comprised 26% of the catch. No fish over 18 inches were collected this past year although anglers reported fish up to 20 inches. Very good production has occurred the last 3 years with improved numbers of young fish in the sample. Between 2010 and 2012 the catch rate of fish less than 7 inches was 4.7/hour compared with an average of 9.7/hour since. Largemouth bass numbers were slightly improved with nine fish collected between 3 and 18 inches. This is the highest catch rate in 5 years. In addition to several fish over 16 inches, numbers of young fish between



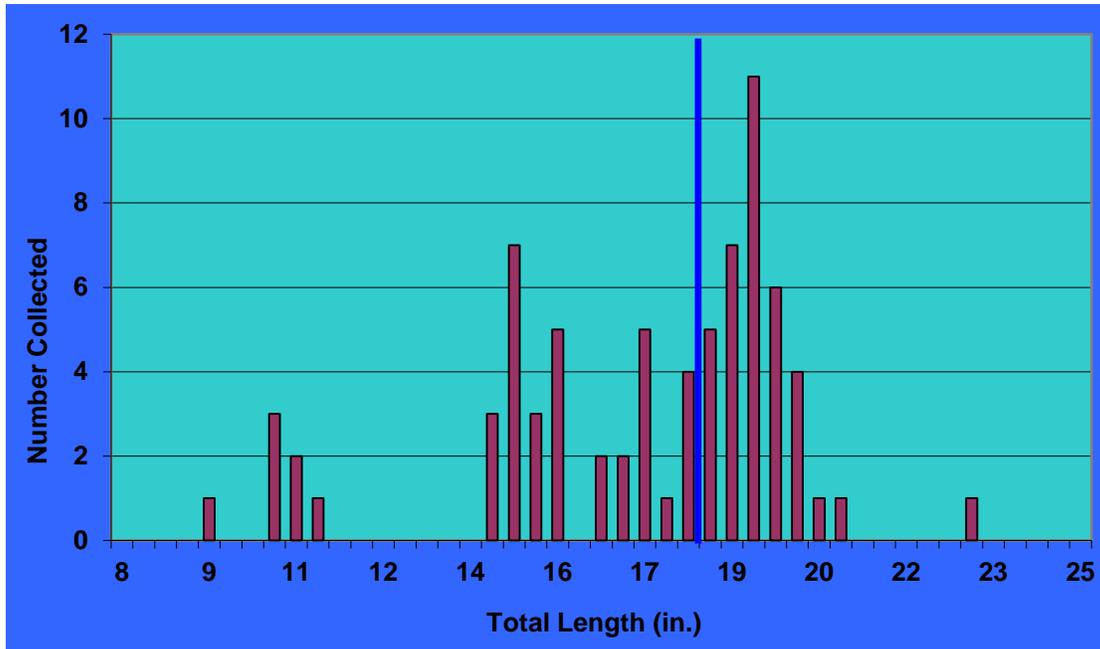
3 and 8 inches have been consistently observed in several areas. Anglers should notice some improvement in largemouth numbers these next few years. Glen Elder ranks among the top five reservoirs in the state for smallmouth bass density (11 inches) and preferred size (14 inches) when compared with the other reservoirs. **18 inch minimum length limit in effect.**



# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## WALLEYE--GOOD



The walleye catch rate improved 23% in 2015 compared to 2014, but the population is still 40% lower than the peak catch in 2011 following the high water that produced big walleye numbers. While the numbers may be down, there is still a nice population of fish that will provide quality angling in 2016. Anglers should have an equal chance of catching short fish and legal fish as the sample showed a 50:50 ratio is available. Glen Elder currently ranks among the top five reservoirs in the state in terms of walleye density (15 inches) and preferred (20 inches) size fish, but has very few trophies. Approximately 47% of the population is between 18 and 21 inches with 29% between 15

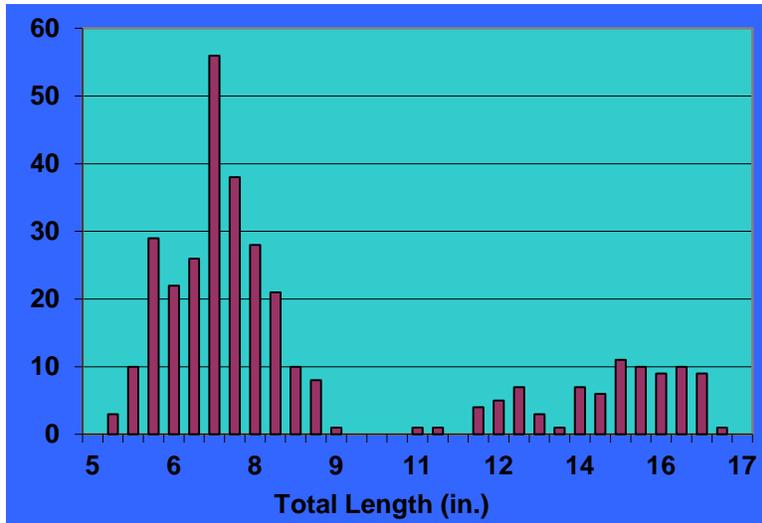


and 17 inches, 23% between 9 and 14 inches, and 1% greater than 21 inches. Fish condition was excellent this past fall due to a very large gizzard shad year class. The 2014 year class (14-16 inches) accounted for 24% while the 2015 year class (9-11 inches) represented 9%. These young fish are the foundation for continued walleye population growth and should boost this population in future years. Walleye were not stocked in 2015 for the first time in over a decade, but natural reproduction produced some fish. Stocking will be resumed in 2016 with a combination of fry and fingerlings.

# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## WHITE BASS--FAIR



White bass numbers were 23% higher in the fall 2015 sample while the number of fish 12 inches and bigger was 40% lower. This decline is directly related to poor white bass production the previous 3 years. Seventy-five percent of the total catch was between 5 and 8 inches, and this strong 2015 year class should provide plenty of young fish to grow into the population and turn the adult numbers around. Fish between 9 and 12 inches accounted for just 6% of the catch and represent the large gap in year classes. There are still fair numbers



of bigger white bass with fish between 13 and 17 inches accounting for 19%. Fish condition was again excellent as the white bass had no problem finding shad this past year. Anglers can try a variety of methods to catch white bass with the spring spawning period up both river forks an excellent bet given adequate inflows. Hot summer days will find whites schooling in open water and chasing shad on the surface while night anglers do very well using floating lights. Fall is often a great time to pull out the slabs and fish along rocky points and other inshore areas, while winter ice fishing may be the best time to catch these guys when they stack up along the river.

# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## WIPER--GOOD

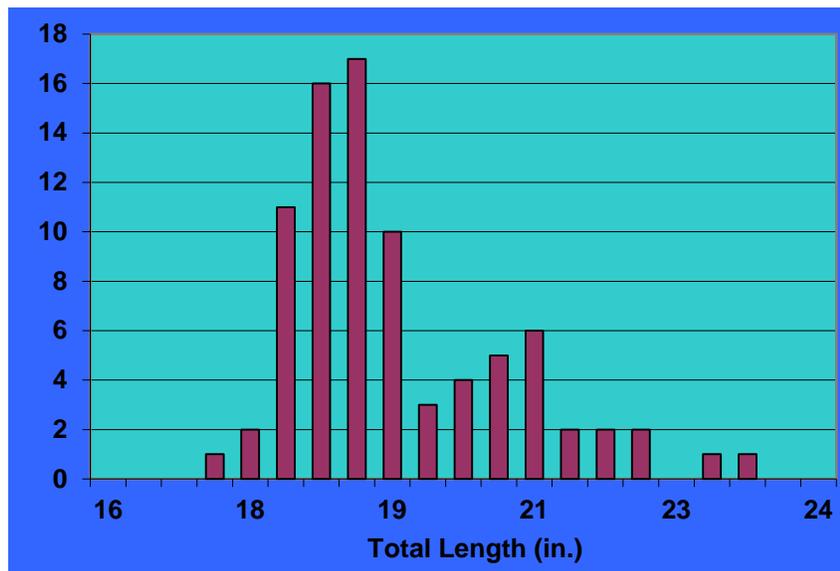


Wipers have been stocked only four times in the past decade (2006, 2008, 2012, and 2013) to keep a moderate number of fish in the reservoir as a biological control for gizzard shad as well as an additional sportfish. They have become a popular species for anglers at Glen Elder due to their rapid growth rate, catchability, and fighting ability. Because wipers were not stocked in 2014 or 2015 the smallest fish are 18 inches with the biggest collected being 23.5 inches. Angler re-

ports this past year indicate fish up to 10 pounds are caught on occasion. The 2015 catch rate declined 9% as expected, but the size structure is excellent. Seventy-seven percent of the fish are between 18 and 20 inches while 23% are between 21 and 23 inches. Body condition was excellent for all sizes. A few large stripers (9-20 pounds) can also be found with ice anglers catching most of them. Stripers were stocked in 2014 and a handful of 15 inch fish were sampled last fall. Anglers can find wipers mixed in with white bass throughout the year, but in general, the wipers tend to occupy the lower

end of the reservoir near the dam and hang out in Walnut Creek much of the year. Slabbing over humps, trolling crankbaits, or casting bucktail jigs off windy points are some of the better methods for catching wipers.

**There is a daily creel limit of 2 wipers per day at Glen Elder!**



# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

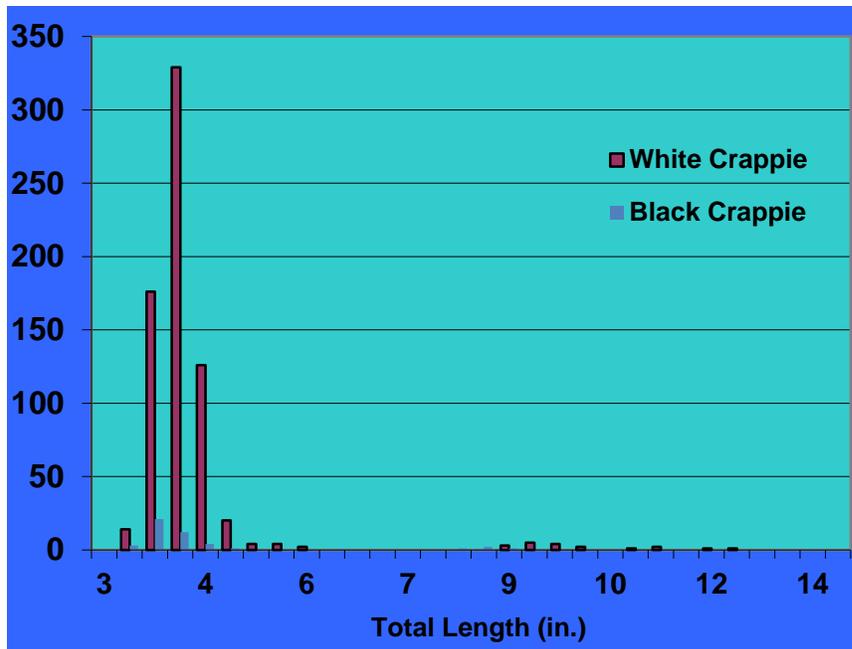
FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## CRAPPIE--POOR

Crappie populations are cyclic with good to excellent numbers being produced from several drought years creating ideal habitat conditions, and a wet period which allows fish to utilize the habitat and produce good numbers of



crappie. Without steady or high water levels, crappie find it difficult to repopulate and their numbers disappear over time via angling and natural mortality. Glen Elder crappie numbers peaked between 2009 and 2013, but have dropped due to poor production since 2010. A small year class was produced in 2014 and there is potential for better production in 2015 thanks to high water. Fishing this year will be tough for anglers, but there are still some fish to be caught. The cold water period when they are schooled up on brush and channel breaks



may be the best time to fish near swim beach point, Campground 3, Harrison Point, and the Cawker causeway. The spring spawn is also a good bet to find some fish, but it will be more difficult to locate and find fish, similar to 2015.

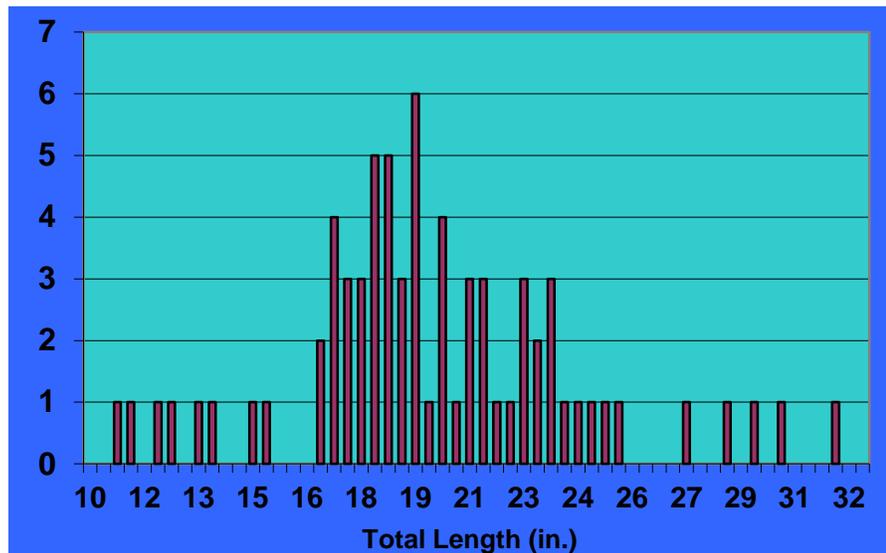
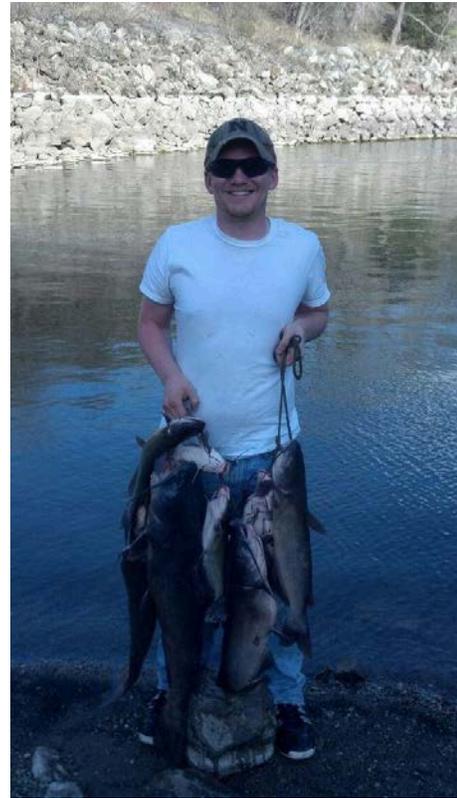
**Don't forget there is a 20 fish/day creel limit at Glen Elder Reservoir!**

# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## CHANNEL CATFISH--GOOD

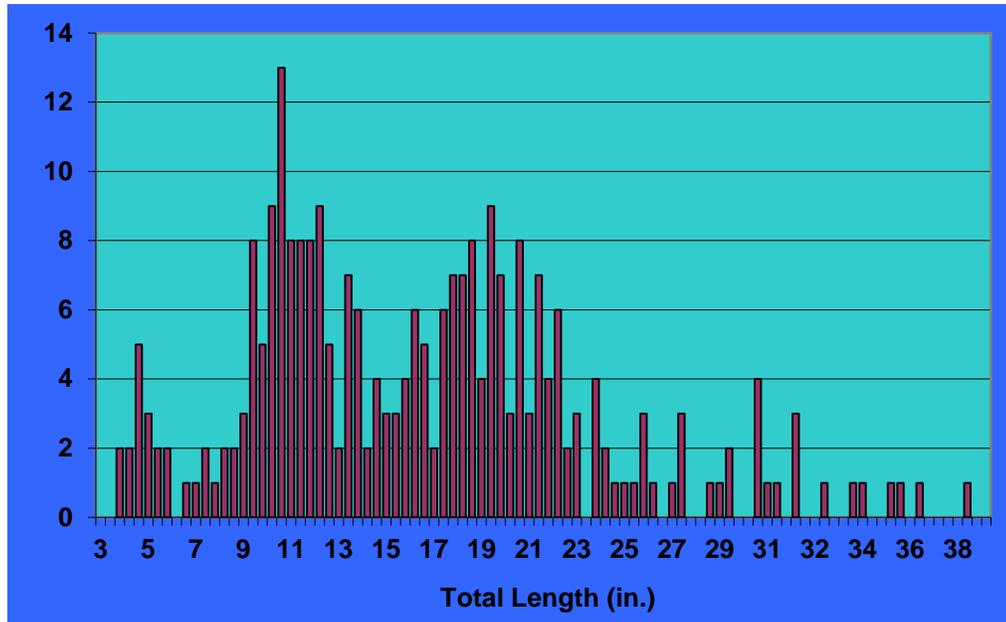
Channel catfish numbers showed a very nice increase this year following 3 years of declining catches. The 2015 catch rate was up 40% compared with 2014 and is similar to the 2012 results, but still 38% lower than the peak of 2011. Angler harvest of channel catfish continues to be relatively high during the summer months with chumming activity dominating the catch, but this population remains one of the best among the state's reservoirs. Size structure will be smaller than last year with the best numbers of fish between 16 and 20 inches as this size group accounted for 52% of the catch. Fish between 21 and 25 inches comprised 27% of the sample, fish 11-15 inches were 11%, and fish over 25 inches represented 10%. Catfish condition remains good for smaller fish and excellent for larger fish.



# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## FLATHEAD CATFISH--GOOD



Flathead catfish are sampled each summer using low frequency electrofishing as the best method for sampling all sizes of flatheads. This year's sample collected 266 flathead catfish ranging from 5 to 39 inches with the biggest fish weighing 42 pounds. Eight percent of the fish were over 10 pounds, but the majority of the catch was much smaller with fish between 10 and 20 inches accounting for 62% of the catch. Flatheads can be caught along the rocky banks during the spawn in June and July and are often found in the brush piles throughout the year. Set line anglers annually have success for both channels and flatheads fishing up west, around Mill Creek, and Walnut Creek.

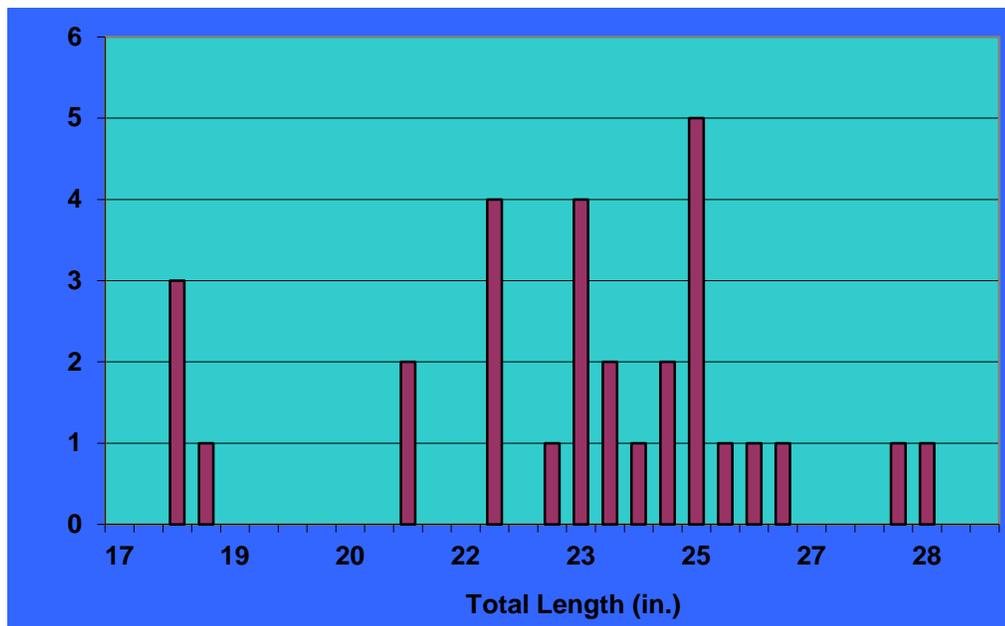


# GLEN ELDER RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## BLUE CATFISH--POOR

Blue catfish have been stocked annually in Glen Elder since 2010 with 60,000 fish stocked. This population will remain at low numbers until the fish reach sexual maturity and are able to reproduce on their own. For that reason, we implemented a 35 inch minimum length limit on blue catfish until they can reproduce naturally. Blue catfish numbers are slowly increasing with fish up to 28 inches and 10 pounds collected this past year. The new 35 inch minimum length limit will protect these fish until they reach reproductive size and the population can be self-sustaining. For now, anglers are required to release all blue catfish less than 35 inches!





# Lovewell Reservoir

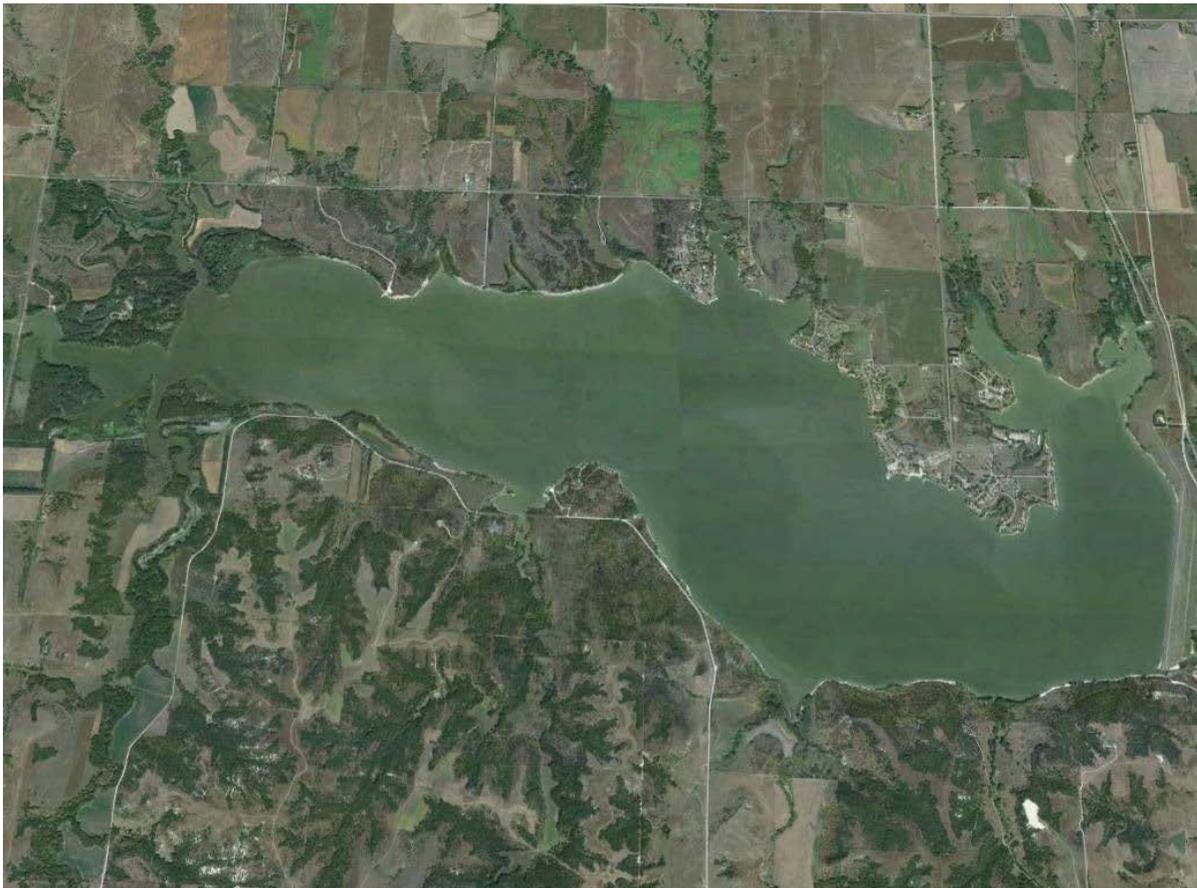
## 2016 Fishing Forecast

Scott Waters—District Fisheries Biologist

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**General Information:** The reservoir is approximately 0.4 feet high as of April 2016. Be on the lookout for blue catfish which have been stocked since 2010. The fish barrier will be in operation again this year beginning in April so keep an eye out for it near the outlet. **Please stay away from the barrier and don't fish next to it!**

**Don't forget the 35 inch length limit on blue catfish at Lovewell!**



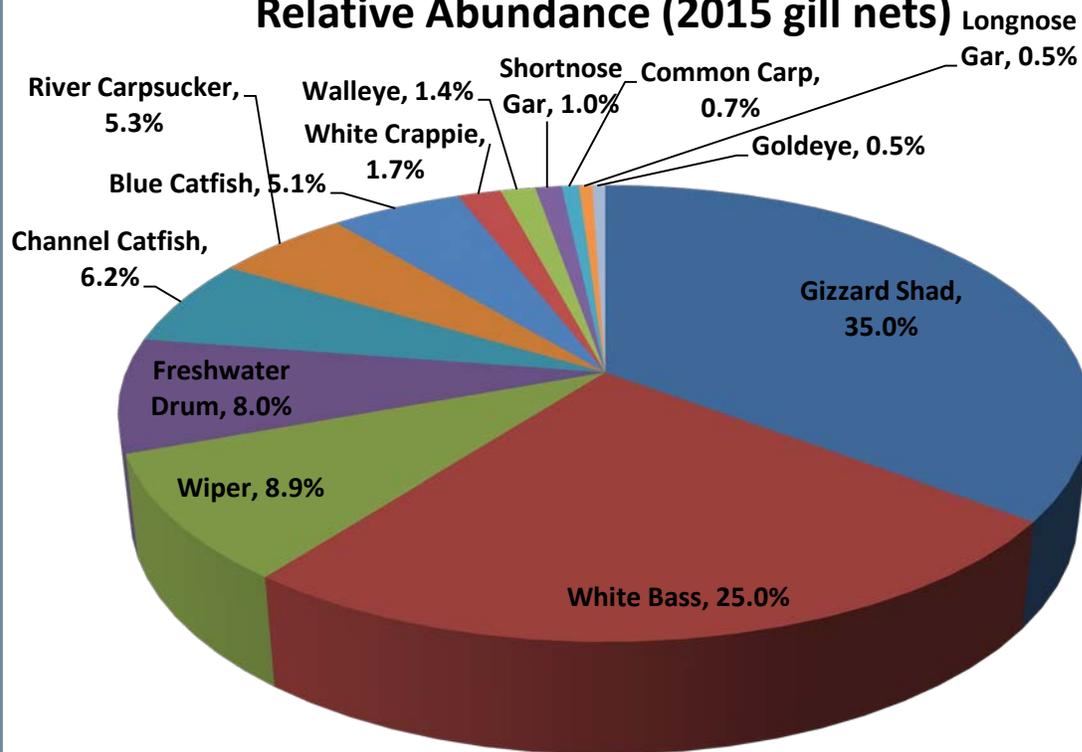
### Special Regulations:

- Walleye—18 inch minimum length limit
- Blue Catfish—35 inch minimum length limit

# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015)

## Relative Abundance (2015 gill nets)



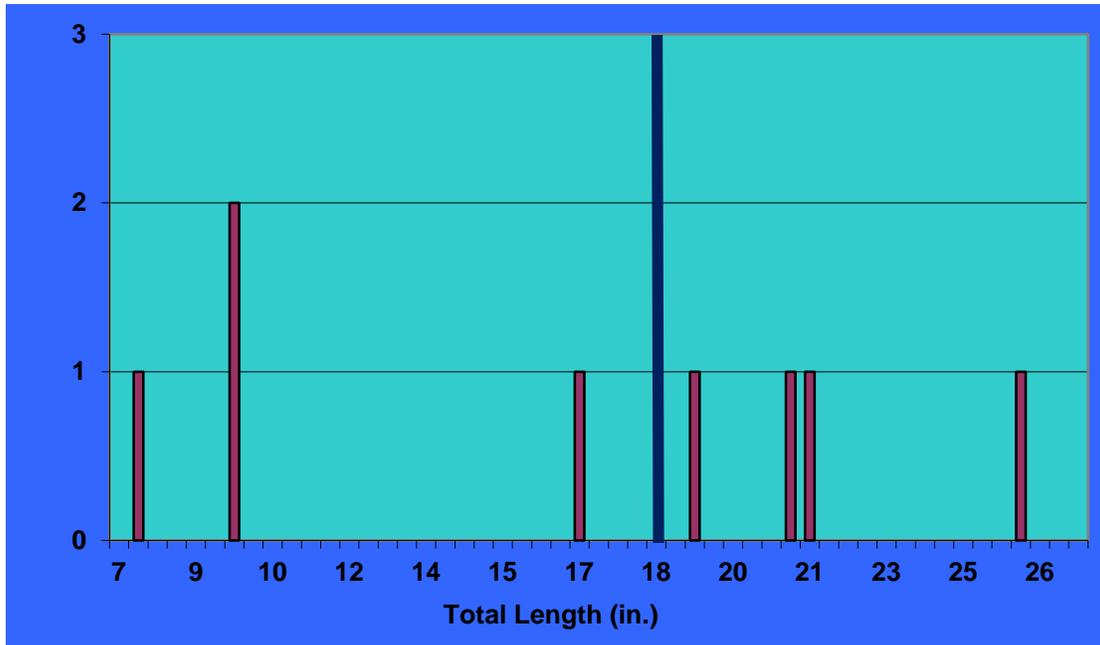
	# Caught	Length (in)		Weight (lb)	
		Average	(Range)	Average	(Range)
Black Crappie	112	7.7	2.6-10.8	0.3	0.1-0.8
Blue Catfish*	92	22.0	12.0-32.9	4.4	0.7-21.5
Bluegill	432	5.7	2.2-6.9	0.1	0.1-0.3
Channel Catfish	36	16.6	7.7-28.1	1.6	0.1-9.3
Flathead Catfish*	48	27.8	4.5-44.3	15.7	0.1-50
Gizzard Shad	205	14.4	4.9-17.9	N/A	N/A
Walleye	8	16.3	7.7-25.8	2.4	0.1-7.2
White Bass	146	8.8	4.9-14.8	0.4	0.1-1.6
White Crappie	1,200	9.5	2.6-14.0	0.5	0.1-1.6
Wiper	52	15.8	12.4-21.9	2.1	0.8-5.4

\*Collected during summer electrofishing

# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## WALLEYE--POOR



Walleye numbers declined this past fall to a near record low for this reservoir due to very poor recruitment in recent years. The total catch rate of 0.5 per gill net is down 75% from the already low catch of 1.8 in 2014 and is 90% less than the high catch rate in 2012 (5.1/net). Recruitment has been lacking each year since 2009 except for 2011, thus the adult numbers have suffered. Anglers harvested good numbers of large walleye in 2013 which may have led, in part, to the reduction in total numbers, but the lack of good recruitment in five of the past six years has also played a major role. Sixty-four percent of the catch was over 18 inches with some very nice fish sampled in the gill

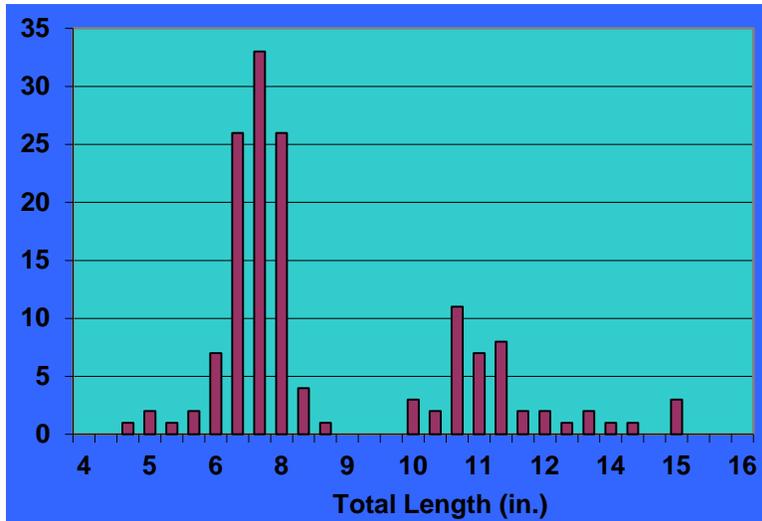


nets and trap nets. Combined, 29% of the catch consisted of age-0 fish (8-10 inches), 21% were between 17 and 19 inches, 14% were 21 inches, and 35% were 25-26 inches. Fish condition remains very good and is similar to the previous year. Fishing continues to be best from late April through mid-June with anglers drifting jig/crawler combos having the best success, especially along 2-mile road. Anglers are encouraged to carefully measure any questionable fish and handle sublegal fish with care. Walleye fry and fingerlings will be stocked in 2016 in hopes of producing a strong year class.

# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## WHITE BASS--FAIR



White bass numbers improved for the first time since 2011 due to a large 2015 year class. Catch rate improved from 2.5 fish per net in 2014 to 8.6 in 2015. The density rating improved slightly from 2.1 to 2.5 while the preferred rating declined from 1.9 to 0.7 and no lunker-sized fish were collected. Anglers will again notice reduced catch rates of larger fish in 2016, but improved numbers of young fish will boost the population over the next couple of years. Another significant fish kill occurred in 2015 consisting of mostly white bass. This follows a large fish kill in May 2013 which resulted in approximately 3,500 dead white bass, mostly large adults. These two kills have made it tougher for



white bass numbers to rebound. The biggest fish sampled weighed 1.6 pounds and the fish were again in excellent body condition. Overall, 70% of the sample was between 5 and 9 inches, 25% were 9-12 inches, and 5% were 13-15 inches. As in the past, the best time to fish for Lovewell whites will be in the summer, during peak irrigation releases. The inlet and outlet areas historically produce the vast majority of whites harvested while summer topwater activity can also be productive. Night fishing using floating lights was fair in 2015, and drifting or slabbing over submerged roadbeds and humps throughout the year is also an effective method for hooking into a nice stringer of whites.

# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

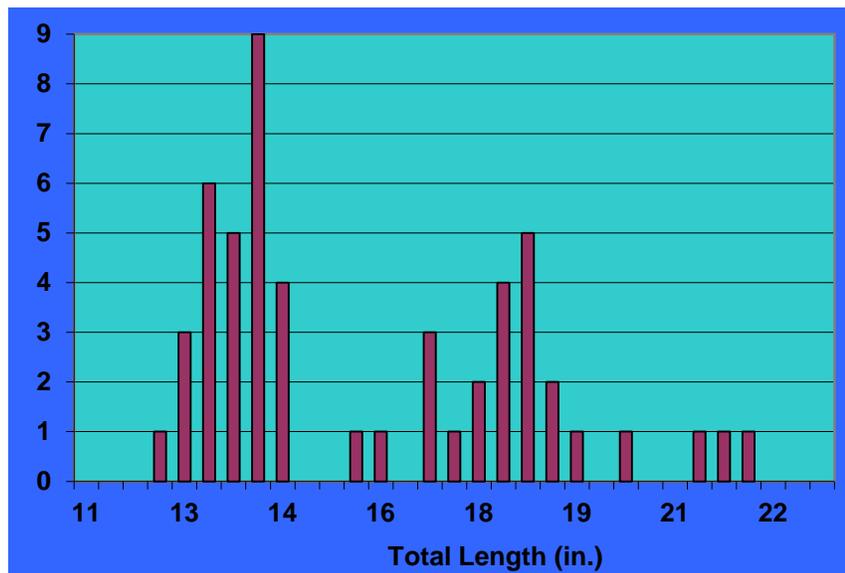
FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## WIPER--FAIR



Wiper numbers remained steady in 2015 with a catch rate of 3.1 per gill net compared with 3.8 in 2014. The small decline in numbers is a direct result of no wiper stockings in 2015 and a lack of fish less than 12 inches. Wipers had been stocked every year since 2010 after stocking on alternate years for a short period. The 2014 stocked wipers have grown well and range from 12 to 14 inches. The 2013 wipers are between 16 and 19 inches while the 2012 fish have grown from 20 to 22 inches. No fish longer than 22 inches were collected this year with the biggest fish weighing 5.4 pounds. Fish condition was excellent due to another strong shad hatch in 2015. Fish between 12 and 14 inches accounted for 54% of the catch, 16 to 19 inch fish represented 38%, and 20-22 inch fish accounted for 8%. Anglers will have limited success this year targeting large wipers, but good numbers of 2-3 pound fish should be available. Approximately 15,000 fingerling and 3,000 intermediate wipers will be stocked in 2016 to help control the large shad numbers in the reservoir due to the addition of the fish barrier. Similar to white bass, decent numbers of wipers

can be caught during the irrigation season as the fish migrate to the inlet and outlet areas. Other anglers report good success for bigger wipers trolling crankbaits and deep-diving rapalas along the north shore and the dam. **Be sure to identify your catch carefully as those young wipers look very similar to white bass. The daily creel limit on wipers is 2 fish!**

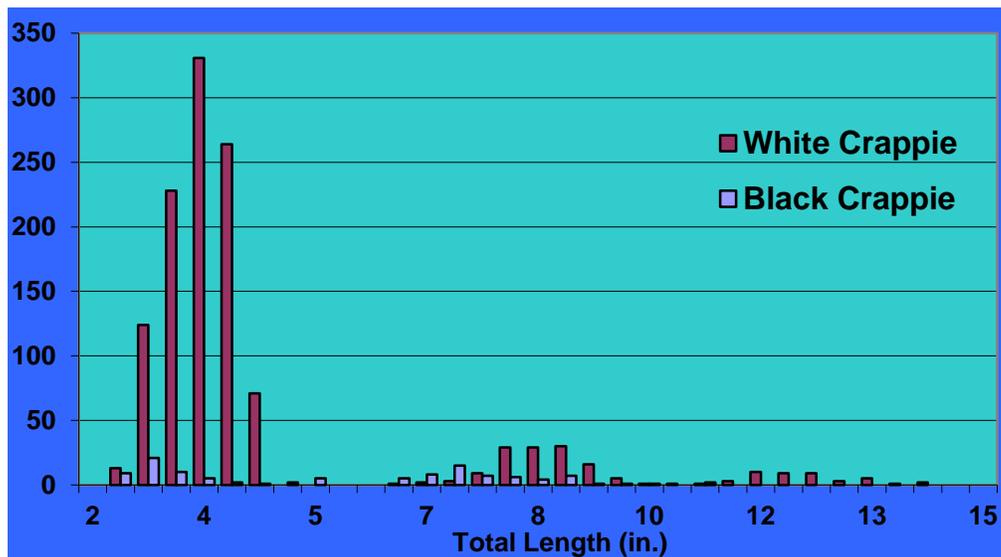


# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## CRAPPIE--GOOD

The crappie population will be improved in 2016 as the number of fish sampled was greater this past fall than 2014. The catch rate of crappie over 8 inches improved 260% from 2.7 per net in 2014 to 9.6 in 2015. While improved, this catch rate is much less than the average of 34.2 from 2011-2013. Of the adults, 79% are between 7 and 9 inches, 18% are between 10 and 12 inches, and 4% are greater than 12 inches. There was a nice year class of white crappie produced in 2014 with an average catch of sixty-four 3-5 inch crappie per net which can hopefully recruit into the fishery. A handful of black crappie were also collected with most of these fish between 6 and 10 inches. They will offer some additional opportunities along with the white crappie. These fish all appear to be very healthy with excellent body condition measured. Several brush piles are maintained to help concentrate fish for anglers, and decent success can be found fishing around the flooded vegetation in Montana Creek and other coves during late April and May when the fish are spawning. We will likely add several hundred more trees to the existing brush piles this year.

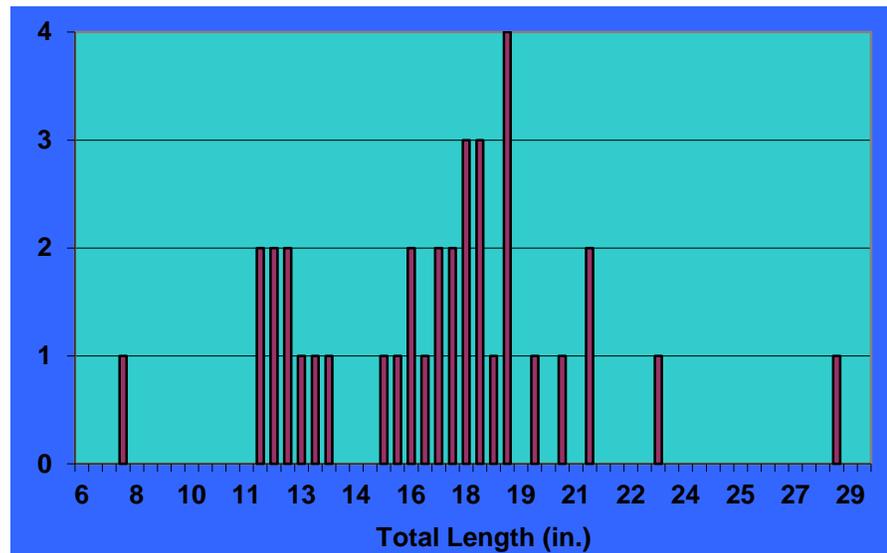


# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## CHANNEL CATFISH--GOOD

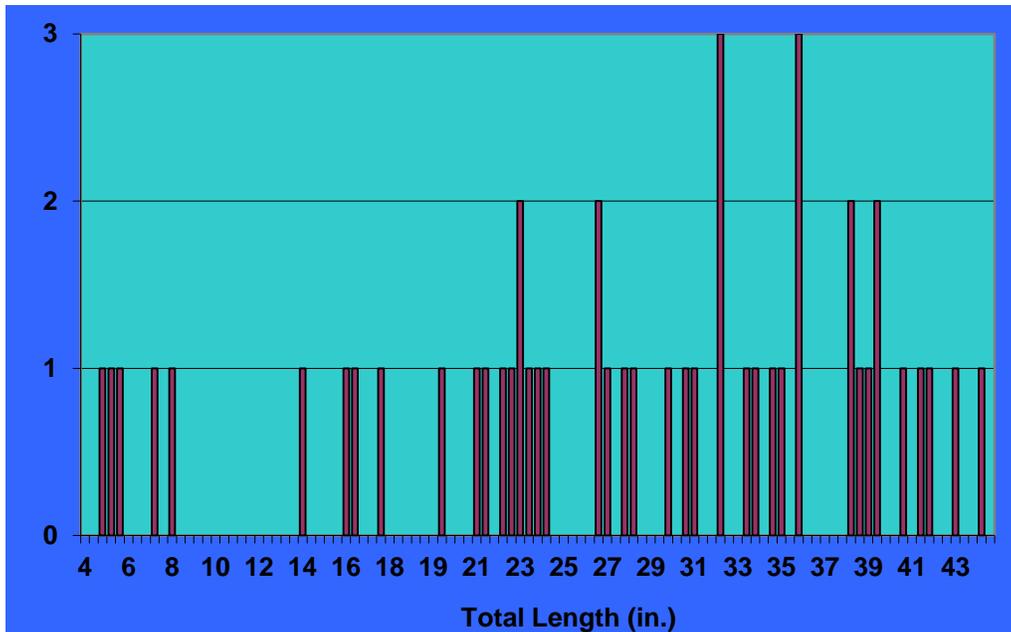
The catfish population will remain good again in 2016 with all sizes of channel cats available to anglers. The fall 2015 channel catfish catch rate was up 71% for all sizes from the previous year, but the number of fish over 24 inches was down 75%, and the number over 28 inches was identical. Fifty-six percent of the fish were between 15 and 19 inches, 28% were 8-14 inches, 14% were between 19 and 23 inches, and 3% were over 28 inches. Channel catfish will be vulnerable in all arms of the reservoir, including Montana, Windmill, and Prairie Dog Creek, as well as up White Rock Creek near the Highway 14 bridge. During peak irrigation releases, catfish can be readily caught close to the inlet and outlet structures, and are susceptible along the dam and other rocky areas during the spawn. Summertime anglers annually have good success chumming over piles of soybeans, wheat, and milo.



# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## FLATHEAD CATFISH--GOOD



Flathead catfish are sampled each summer using low frequency electrofishing as the best method for sampling all sizes of flatheads. This year's sample collected 48 flathead catfish ranging from 5 to 44 inches with the biggest fish weighing 50 pounds. Approximately 35% of the catch was over 20 pounds, 27% were between 10 and 20 pounds, 11% were between 5 and 10 pounds, and 27% were less than 5 pounds. Flatheads can be caught along the rocky banks during the spawn in June and July and are often found in the brush piles throughout the year. Set line anglers annually have success for both channels and flatheads fishing up west, around the inlet, in Prairie Dog Creek, and Montana Creek.



# LOVEWELL RESERVOIR

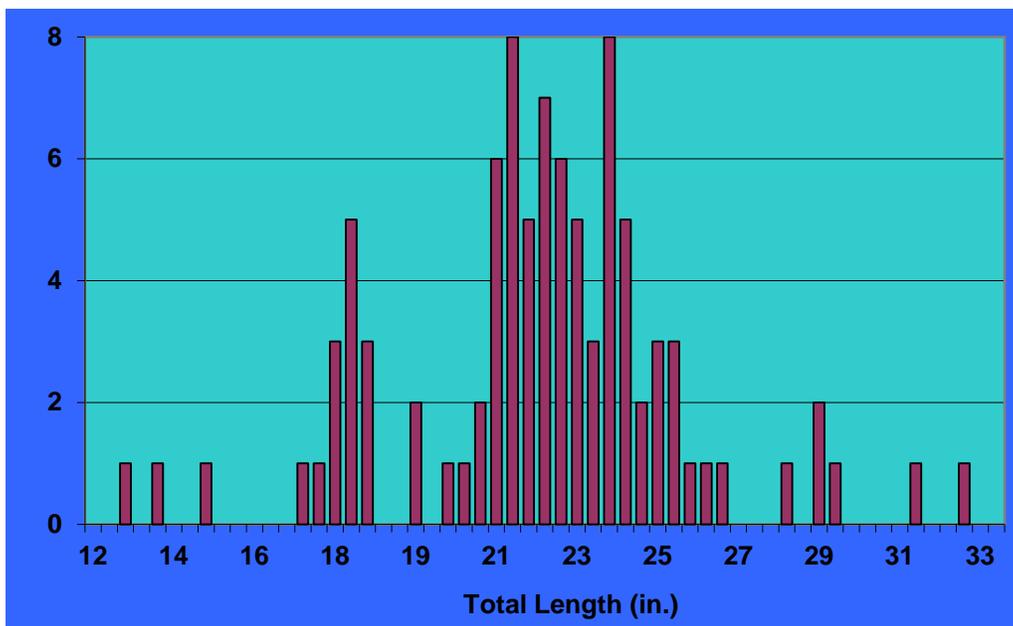
FALL SAMPLING DATA (2015) AND 2016 FISHING FORECAST

## BLUE CATFISH--FAIR

Blue catfish were stocked annually in Lovewell between 2010 and 2014 with 15,000 fish stocked. This population will remain at low numbers until the fish reach sexual maturity and are able to reproduce on their own. For that reason, we implemented a 35 inch minimum length limit on blue catfish until they can reproduce naturally. Catch rates are generally low for most anglers, but more blues are reported each year.



Summer electrofishing yielded excellent results with 92 fish collected. The majority of these fish were found along the river channel between Walleye Point and Oak Hill, and near the dam. Fish size ranged from 12 to 33 inches with the biggest fish weighing 21.5 pounds. These are some of the fastest growth rates found in the country for blue catfish and fish condition was excellent. Blue catfish stocking has concluded and the population should become self-sustaining in the next several years as these fish continue to grow and mature. In the meantime, anglers can continue to enjoy catch-and-release opportunities for this unique species.



## Jewell State Fishing Lake Update

Following extreme drought conditions which persisted through 2008, Jewell State Fishing Lake refilled and has maintained a water level within 5 feet of full pool. This has provided excellent habitat for all fish species and fish production has been great.

Channel catfish highlight the fishing at this 57 acre lake and the population continues to maintain high numbers with fish over 10 pounds readily available. Jewell ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among all of Kansas' lakes in regards to channel catfish density.

Largemouth bass have also prospered and the current slot length limit of 13-18 inches will allow more big fish to be produced in the next couple of years.

Black crappie were stocked soon after the lake refilled with the first year class produced in 2013. These 3 year old fish have grown to 8-10 inches and will provide some fun angling in the next couple of years as they continue to grow.

Anglers who enjoy catching big bluegill and redear sunfish should check out Jewell. Redear sunfish up to 11 inches and 9 inch bluegill were collected last fall. Numbers are down slightly from previous years, but anglers should have a great time catching these panfish this summer.



## Local Events in 2016

### Glen Elder

April 23	Bass Nation Tournament
June 4	12 <sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Fishing Tourn.
June 26	KWA Governor's Cup Tournament
July 9	WLA Multi-Species Tournament
December 10	Youth & Women Pheasant Hunt

### Lovewell

June 12	Kids Fishing Clinic
June 19	Sand Castle Contest
June 19	"Float Your Boat" Contest
August 6	Lovewell Fun Day

**Free Fishing Weekend  
is June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>  
statewide!**

*This is the latest edition of the Glen Elder district newsletter. I will continue to provide information for Glen Elder and Lovewell Reservoirs, Jewell State Fishing Lake, Ottawa 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 for those without a boat.*

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### Scott Waters

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