

New Strawn District Fisheries

Summer edition 2016

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2016 Paddlefish Season



This spring provided the perfect weather conditions for the paddlefish season which ran from March 15-May 15. Heavy rain events provided the necessary water flow need to produce a good migration of paddlefish up the Neosho River. In the New Strawn District two locations are available to snag paddlefish during the open season and they include Burlington City Dam and Iola City Dam. Both locations produced fish but it seemed like the Burlington dam was more consistent. Anglers had good

success catching a variety of sizes from 15 pounds up to 60 pounds. The majority of the fish caught were in the 30-40 pound range. The paddlefish is a prehistoric long-lived fish with a cartilaginous skeleton and its range is limited to the Mississippi River Basin. They feed by swimming with their mouth open to filter plankton out of the water. Their large “paddle-shaped” snout has sensory receptors that can detect weak electric signals

produced by their prey. These fish are highly mobile and have the ability to travel several hundred miles upstream or down depending on water flow and the amount of obstructions such as low head dams. To help sustain the population in the Neosho River, about 5,000 intermediate sized (8-12") fish have been stocked almost every year over the last ten years into John Redmond Reservoir. These fish are acquired from the Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery in Oklahoma where they are raised. Since the Neosho River flows south into Oklahoma and eventually into Grand Lake, many fish stocked into John Redmond could eventually end up in Grand Lake. Chetopa, Kansas is probably the most well-known snagging location in Kansas, but other



locations include the Marais des Cygnes River below the Osawatomie Dam and the Marais des Cygnes on the upstream boundary of the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area downstream to the Missouri border. A paddlefish permit is required to snag paddlefish and there are different regulations at each location so make sure you read the paddlefish regulations on page 7 of the Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary before planning your trip next spring.

2016 Basscast- A Quick Summary of My 2016 Electrofishing Sample

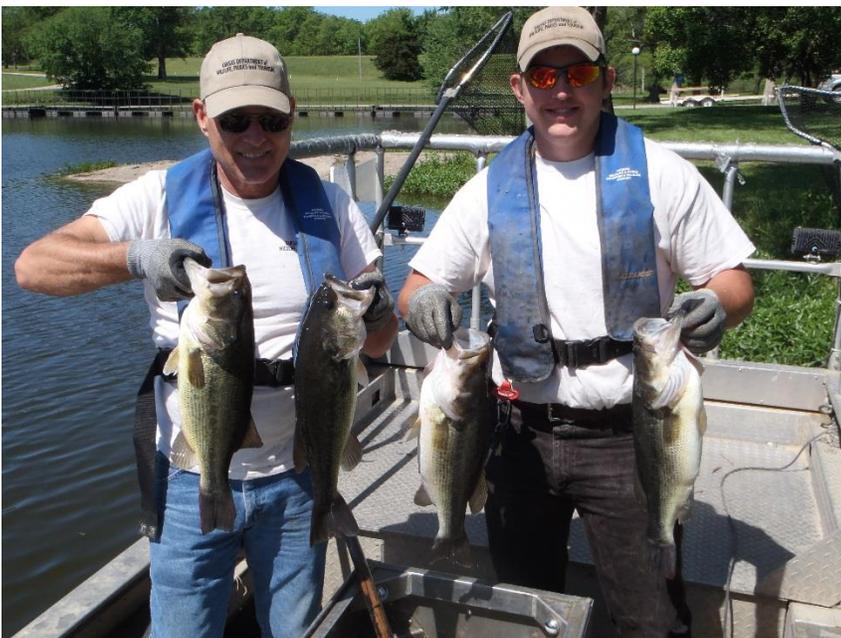
Lake	Total	Stock CPUE	RSD S-Q (8-12")	RSD Q-P (12-15")	RSD P-M (15-20")	RSD M-T(20-25")	Biggest Fish
Gridley City Lake	185	197	63.2	29.2	7.6	0	1.87
New Strawn City Lake							
Garnett North Lake	205	200	40.1	46.35	13.54	0	3.96
Yates Center City Lake	190	136.61	49.02	37.25	13.73	0	3.31
Garnett South Lake	187	287.93	38.92	42.51	18.56	0	4.07
Y.C. South Owl	143	77.34	39.39	39.39	21.21	0	4
Wolf Creek	99	62.88	30.12	20.48	39.76	9.64	2.99
Garnett Cedar Creek	128	75.82	18.97	41.38	31.03	8.62	6.53
Woodson State Lake	148	71.59	64.29	23.02	10.32	2.38	5.49
Lebo City Lake	55	41.32	42	38	20	0	3.79

The highlighted data is all smallmouth bass and does not correspond to the same RSD values as largemouth bass. RSD values for smallmouth are as follows: RSD S-Q (7"-11"), RSD Q-P (11"-14"), RSD P-M (14"-17"), and RSD M-T (17"-20").

The New Strawn District continues to provide some great bass fishing opportunities. The Garnett Cedar Creek Reservoir sample really stood out this year with nearly 9% of the sample being represented by fish 20" or more. There was a slight increase in the catch rate at Cedar Creek and the size structure indicates excellent growth of the population from last year's sample. This lake provides a real good chance for an avid bass angler to catch fish over 6 pounds. We sampled three fish over 6 pounds with the largest (pictured right) at 6.54 lbs. There is an abundance of shad and stunted crappie in this lake that provide an excellent forage base for bass. Woodson State Lake has been on an upward trend over the last few years and this year was not any different as we saw an increase of 30 fish/hr. in our sample. The fish were in excellent shape, and the largest fish sampled this year at Woodson was 5.5 lbs. Good numbers of fish over 18" seem to be available and should provide some good opportunities.



A substantial increase of fish caught at Garnett South Lake resulted in a large spike of the catch rate to 287 fish caught per hour. Even though we saw a slight decrease in fish over 15" this year, this population is in really good shape and continues to produce some great opportunities. Other lakes that



provide pretty good opportunities include both Yates Center lakes and Garnett North. Gridley City Lake was a disappointing sample even though we caught nearly 200 fish/hr. Most of the fish we sampled were 8-12" and very few fish were over 15". We should have seen more fish in the 15-18" range, but that wasn't the case. The overall body condition of the fish was also less than desirable so it seems that the current population is too numerous for the available habitat and forage resources. Another sample will be conducted in the fall and we may potentially remove some fish in the 8-12" category to reduce pressure on the system. Lebo City Lake

seems to be in downward trend with consecutive years of below average samples. The population at Lebo appears to lack good reproduction and recruitment to boost the population so plans will be made to stock some largemouth to rejuvenate the population.

If smallmouth bass is what you are looking for, look no farther than Wolf Creek. Now you may not find many fish over 3 lbs., but the sheer number of fish available makes Wolf Creek an excellent lake for smallmouth bass fishing. Good numbers of fish are available from 14-18" and make up a good portion of the population. Creel data shows that smallmouth bass are the number one caught and released species at Wolf Creek. Last year,

just over 18,000 smallmouth were caught, and this year there has already been 22,612 smallmouth caught. Pound for pound, smallmouth bass are one the hardest fighting species you can find. If you have never had the pleasure of reeling one in, Wolf Creek is a great place to start.



Wolf Creek Blue Cat Electrofishing



This year's electrofishing sample for blue cats was the best to date. We were able to sample six fish 30 lbs. or larger with the largest just under 36 lbs. Our total catch for the sample was only 27, but compared to the previous years where we sampled 5 or less this is a vast improvement. We saw more than 27 fish, but unfortunately my two chase boats couldn't get to all of the fish when they surfaced. This sample gave us a better picture of some of the larger fish in the lake. We see a few when we gill net but are limited because of the mesh size of the net. To get a better understanding of growth rates we are planning to collect pectoral

spines for the KDWPT research team to process and give us accurate age data. Collecting spines is minimally invasive and does not harm the fish as opposed to using otoliths in which the fish has to be euthanized.

Boy Scout Habitat Project

Boy scouts with Burlington Troop 155 and several Wolf Creek employees volunteered to help out with a habitat project this summer. Wolf Creek Environmental Services Biologist Wes Fleming provided all of the materials needed and had a perfect spot to remove a bunch of cedar trees. A skid steer and tree saw was graciously provided by a

Wolf Creek land permittee, and saved a lot of back breaking chainsaw work. The trees were drug onto my 28 foot habitat barge, anchored with several cinder blocks, and then wrestled off of the boat at our designated location. We created a very large pile north of the hot water area in the old creek channel, and marked it



with a buoy. We also dumped some trees at the end of the hot water area dike. I would expect both piles to be real productive this fall and winter when the water cools down.

Yates Center City Lake Redear Sunfish

This year during my spring electrofishing sample for largemouth at Yates Center City Lake, I decided to sample the redear sunfish as well. Generally panfish, such as the redear, are sampled during the fall using trap nets.

Well, I haven't been pleased with my trap net samples over the last few years and decided to try electrofishing as a supplemental method of sampling. Boy was I surprised with the results. We sampled 124 redear, and most of them were over 8" with a good number over 10" like the one pictured that measured 11". In contrast, my trap net samples would yield about 24 redear and show only a few fish over 8". Redear sunfish are excellent table fare and can be easy



to catch using worms under a bobber. They are typically found a little deeper than bluegill and usually near vegetation. If you are looking for something different to “tickle” your taste buds, I encourage you to try your hand at catching some redear sunfish.

TIGHT LINES!

