

Lawrence District Fisheries

KDWPT Fisheries Division Newsletter

Winter 2017

Fall Test Netting Summary

Netting at Clinton and Melvern revealed better densities of crappie, and the fact that crappie pulled off good spawns in 2016. Crappie numbers have been low for years at both reservoirs, especially at Melvern, so good spawns should go a long way toward improving both populations in the coming years. Channel catfish at both reservoirs continued to have good populations, which should make anglers happy. In addition, white bass populations at both reservoirs should supply high quality angling, as large fish are in good quantities. Smallmouth bass numbers continued to be good at Melvern, but they have fallen off at Clinton due to limited natural production and/or survival of young smallmouth. Walleye and sauger numbers looked much better at Clinton than at Melvern. Walleye/sauger stockings at Melvern over the past five years have not produced strong year classes, so these populations have declined. Wiper density was down at Clinton, but good size quality remained. Fishing forecast information is available online at www.KDWPT under Fishing Reports and Forecast under the Fishing tab. The table below shows some of the notable statewide ranks achieved by Clinton and Melvern compared to other reservoirs using 2016 sampling data.

Table 1. Statewide ranks of selected species at Clinton and Melvern Reservoir based on 2016 sample data.

Lake	Clinton	Melvern
Channel catfish	1	5
Smallmouth bass	-	3
White bass	2	1
White crappie	2	-



Small Lake Netting Summaries

Carbondale City Lake, Douglas State Fishing Lake (SFL), Lonestar Lake, Melvern River Pond, Osage SFL and Lake Shawnee were all sampled this past fall. All waters could be considered fair places to fish for bluegill, but Shawnee, River Pond, and Lonestar would be the best. Anglers pursuing crappie should go to Carbondale, River Pond, and Shawnee, although other lakes had quality fish, as well. All of these lakes, except Carbondale City Lake receive annual stockings to maintain channel catfish populations. Carbondale is unusual because it currently has a self-sustaining channel catfish population, probably due to lack of predation by a low-density largemouth bass population, although this scenario could change if largemouth bass density were to increase. Anyway all of these waters have decent channel catfish angling. Douglas SFL has the highest number of channel catfish, whereas Carbondale, Shawnee and the River Pond had more large fish.

Redear sunfish, or shellcracker as they are sometimes referred to because of their fondness for crushing and eating snails, were found in fishable abundances in two lakes: Douglas SFL and Lonestar. Douglas SFL had the higher abundance and a few more larger fish than Lonestar. Normally Lonestar has the larger redear, measuring up to 11 inches, but they were not observed in 2016 samples. Wiper are stocked primarily into three district small lake waters, including Carbondale City Lake, Lonestar Lake, and Osage SFL. Carbondale CL had the better population, mostly comprised of 16- to 20-inch individuals. One oddity that I felt compelled to report was the increase of yellow perch at Lake Shawnee. Normally, I see maybe one to three individuals during netting, but in 2016 I saw 34 yellow perch in trap nets! These fish ranged from 5.5 to 9 inches in length. So if you want an unusual “trophy” go to Lake Shawnee!



Small Lake Statewide Ranks

Under the small lakes (10 to 1200 acres) heading in the Fishing Forecast information, several district lakes earned distinction. Depending upon the species, there may be close to 70 or more waters in competition. Rankings are listed below. These lakes would be some of the better lakes to fish for species identified in the table.

Table 2. Statewide Rankings for Small Lakes. Carb=Carbondale, DGSL = Douglas SFL, Lone = Lonestar, River = Melvern River Pond, Shaw = Lake Shawnee.

Rank	Carb	DGSL	Lone	River	Shaw
Bluegill			8		7
C Cat		2			
LM Bass		13	9		
WCrappie	2			8	
Wiper	7				
Saugeye	6				
Redear		1	4		



Melvern Reservoir Creel Survey

A March-October creel survey was conducted by a seasonal employee, Brad Admire, to assess harvest characteristics at Melvern in 2016. Most pressure, use, and harvest parameters were lower than historical averages. A total of 20,012 anglers exerted 74,460 hours of fishing effort. A total of 24,368 fish were harvested and another 76,947 were released. Anglers preferred crappie, followed by smallmouth bass, no preference, and channel catfish. Crappie led the way in number and pounds harvested, followed by channel catfish, and white bass. Smallmouth bass were most important, as far as fish released, followed by crappie, walleye and largemouth bass. A total of 4,352 hours of fishing effort was expended by 1,845 anglers in the outlet. Channel catfish dominated harvest by number followed by walleye, and white bass. Most pounds harvested by species in descending order were: channel catfish, blue catfish, and walleye.



2016 Melvern Rearing Pond Results

About 600 pounds of fathead minnows were stocked into the rearing pond March 21. These minnows provided much of the feed for largemouth bass. A total of 6,032 largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked May 19. The pond was harvested September 24. Bass had grown well, averaging 8.4 inches in length and 1/3 pound in weight. A total of 2,985 bass were stocked at five locations at Melvern Reservoir in an effort to increase density. Thanks to the Corps, Emporia State University Biology Club, KDWPT, and Olathe BASS Club members that assisted with the harvest. Special thanks goes to Curtis Keller, Melvern Corps, for taking care of the pond on a day to day basis, especially cleaning the sock. And a special thanks to John Tucker, KDWPT, for helping take care of pelicans that set up on the pond during the last week prior to harvest, and for spending the night with the pond the night before the harvest to monitor water levels.





Photo provided by BASS Nation, Jesse Jordan.



A New Wrinkle For Bass Tournaments

This past summer BASS Nation held an unusual bass tournament at Melvern Reservoir August 6. Each team had to bring an artificial fish habitat structure to place in the reservoir at a site chosen by KDWPT. Fish habitat guidelines were established and approved by the CORPS and KDWPT, these guidelines were listed on promotional material for the tournament. A total of 40 structures were added to the reservoir in the following locations to improve fish habitat.

Latitude	Longitude
N38°29'48.10"	W95°44'44.53"
N38°29'47.60"	W95°44'41.30"
N38°28'51.30"	W95°47'35.60"
N38°28'55.10"	W95°48'03.98"
N38°30'06.92"	W95°50'14.97"
N38°29'49.07"	W95°47'39.20"
N38°30'59.85"	W95°46'18.99"

Good Winter Fishing Opportunities

Anglers are enjoying some good winter fishing for crappie at area reservoirs including Clinton and Melvern. Reports indicate crappie are orienting to brush in 15 to 25 feet of water. Most anglers are using small jigs. Colors vary, but chartreuse or some combination of chartreuse seems to be working well (i.e. chartreuse with blue or black), also grey hair jigs have been working well.

Trout season continues through April 15, and final stockings should occur the week of February 13th, so there is plenty of time to catch them! Plus a 2017 trout permit will be good during the fall as well. So get out and enjoy the great outdoors!

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