

# Kansas City District Fisheries Newsletter

Spring 2019

## Biologist's Notes

Spring 2019 is well underway and fishing and outdoor opportunities are heating up along with the weather. Fisheries management activities in the Kansas City District are in full swing, as well. It was a very successful year for the walleye egg collection project at Hillsdale Reservoir. Our catch rate of walleye and number of eggs collected improved from the previous two years. Approximately 26.7 million walleye eggs were collected this spring at Hillsdale Reservoir to help meet our statewide goal. Walleye eggs were also collected at Cedar Bluff, El Dorado, and Kirwin Reservoirs. Statewide, we were able to surpass our collection goal. Coupled with good hatch rates, an abundance of walleye and saugeye fry were produced and stocked in waters across the state.

The Urban Channel Catfish Stocking Program will continue for the Kansas City District in 2019. Twenty-one area waterbodies will be stocked with channel catfish (average size 12-18 inches; 0.75-1.5 pounds each) between March and September 2019. A total of 15,315

pounds of channel catfish will be stocked in the Kansas City District in 2019. As always, ongoing fish habitat projects and angling education events will be occurring throughout the area over the course of the year, so please feel free to contact me if you or your group is interested in participating in any of these events.

This issue of the Kansas City District Fisheries Newsletter contains the Kansas City District's 2019 Fishing Forecast. The forecast can be a valuable tool for planning upcoming fishing trips, a guide to areas in which to focus your efforts, or that extra motivation to explore a new waterbody. There are numerous opportunities to target a variety of species within the district, so do not let a moment pass you by. **GET OUT AND FISH!**



*KDWPT's Don George displays a nice female walleye from Hillsdale Reservoir's 2019 egg collection effort*

"takemefishing"

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# 2019 Kansas City District Fishing Forecast

## Hillsdale Reservoir

Angling opportunities at Hillsdale Reservoir will be numerous in 2019. Recently, there have been several reports of the fishing really heating up at Hillsdale Reservoir. The crappie have moved shallow and reports are reflecting what I sampled last fall. Hillsdale Reservoir, for the second year in a row, is rated as the top reservoir in the state for crappie density. Catch rate from fall 2018 sampling was 45 fish/net night, with 26% of sampled crappie exceeding 10 inches (which is the minimum length for harvest), while 52% of sampled crappie occurred in the 8- to 10-inch range. The walleye population's size structure is really desirable right now with a good abundance of harvestable size fish (>18 inches), evidenced from incidental catches in our trap nets last fall and what was sampled during spring walleye egg collection efforts. Catch rate of stock-length channel catfish was 6 fish/net night in the fall 2018. Most of the channel catfish population occurs in the 16- to 24-inch range and Hillsdale is ranked as the third best reservoir in the state for channel catfish density. Catch rate of largemouth bass continued to decline in 2018. Evaluation of stocking early-spawned largemouth bass will continue in 2019. Hatchery-reared, early-spawned largemouth bass comprised 39% of sampled largemouth bass in 2018, with representatives from 6 different year classes. Timing and duration of high-water events seem to play an important role for recruitment of both wild and stocked largemouth bass.



*A nice keeper walleye sampled at Hillsdale last fall*

## Miami State Fishing Lake

Abundance for the pan fish populations (bluegill, redear sunfish, white and black crappie) slightly decreased across the board in 2018. Size structures for each of the populations are still skewed toward smaller fish, with the majority of bluegill occurring in the 5- to 6-inch range and the majority of crappie occurring in the 6- to 8-inch range. A new sunfish regulation went into effect at Miami State Fishing Lake in 2019 aimed at increasing size structure of sunfish populations and creating trophy opportunities (view Kansas City District Summer 2018 Newsletter for more detail of this regulation and the research behind it: <https://www.ksoutdoors.com/content/download/50532/511570/version/1/file/KC+District+Fish+Summer+18.pdf>). Catch rate from fall 2018



*A few of these monsters (62 pound paddlefish) have been showing up in fall samples at Miami SFL. Always a nice surprise!*

sampling for channel catfish was 2 fish/net night, with the majority of the sampled fish occurring in the 11- to 16-inch range. Catch rate for largemouth bass in 2018 was steady with 56% of sampled largemouth bass exceeding 15 inches in length, so there are some nice ones to be caught. Miami State Fishing Lake does have a dense stand of curly-leaf pondweed, which is an invasive nuisance plant species. Curly-leaf pondweed grows most during the cooler months with peak density occurring in May. Warmer water temperature causes senescence in curly-leaf pondweed and the stand will be gone in early June.

# 2019 Kansas City District Fishing Forecast

## Middle Creek State Fishing Lake

Catch rate for channel catfish at Middle Creek State Fishing Lake was 7 fish/net night in fall 2018; the population is still balanced and in good shape with both smaller and larger individuals available to anglers. Largemouth bass numbers are less than desired, but have steadily improved over the past 5 years and early-spawned largemouth bass have been stocked the past 3 years to help increase abundance. Catch rate of crappie (both species combined, white and black) improved to 26 fish/net night in 2018, and size structure metrics indicated a near balanced population with both smaller and larger individuals. Catch rate of saugeye was the best in 5 years with 85% of sampled saugeye exceeding 18 inches in length. There are fair opportunities for white bass, wiper, and flathead catfish, each with some large individuals to chase.



*An example of the nice size wiper in Paola City Lake*



*15.5-inch crappie sampled at Olathe Cedar Lake*

## 2019 Kansas City District CFAP Waterbodies Forecast

	Gardner City Lake	Lake Lenexa	Olathe Cedar Lake	Lake Olathe	Paola City Lake
Bluegill	Good	<b>Good</b>	Fair	Fair	Good
Crappie	Good	Fair	<b>Good</b>	Fair	Good
Channel Catfish	Good	Fair	<b>Good</b>	Fair	Fair
Largemouth Bass	Good	<b>Good</b>	Good	Fair	Fair
Saugeye	Poor	N/A	Poor	Poor	<b>Fair</b>
White Bass	Poor	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Fair</b>
Wiper	N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor	<b>Good</b>

**Bold** indicates best bet\*

# A Second Christmas at Paola City Lake

The City of Paola annually collects Christmas trees for recycling. Working with city staff we have been able to repurpose these trees into fish habitat. For the past 2 years, we have created a number of brush piles (or added to existing structures) within the waterbody. A big thanks to Joe Ball and the City of Paola for coordinating this effort. A number of these habitats are placed where anglers can access them casting from shore, and should be great areas for targeting for panfish, largemouth bass, and catfish.

GPS Coordinates for all brush piles at Paola City Lake:

**N 38.58540, W 094.84338**

**N 38.58954, W 094.84549**

**N 38.58493, W 094.84037**

**N 38.59411, W 094.84538**

**N 38.58334, W 094.84544**

**N 38.58928, W 094.85039**

**N 38.58596, W 094.84532**



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