

# Lawrence District Fisheries

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KDWPT Fisheries Division Newsletter

Summer 2019

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## **Record Water Levels at Clinton and Melvern Reservoirs Should Enhance Fisheries**

High water levels at Clinton and Melvern Reservoirs reduced angling pressure over much of the high use months (i.e. April, May and June), due to access problems (i.e. no boat ramps open at Clinton and only one boat ramp useable at Melvern). Bank access was near non-existent as water flooded tree-lined shores. As a result, fewer fish were removed from these reservoirs. Both lakes greatly increased in size; so essentially fish populations had more living space, better spawning habitat, and more food – more of everything they need to thrive. Some fish will be flushed out when water is evacuated, but overall the outlook is very positive.

Figure 1. Mother Nature supplies an abundance of high quality fish habitat.

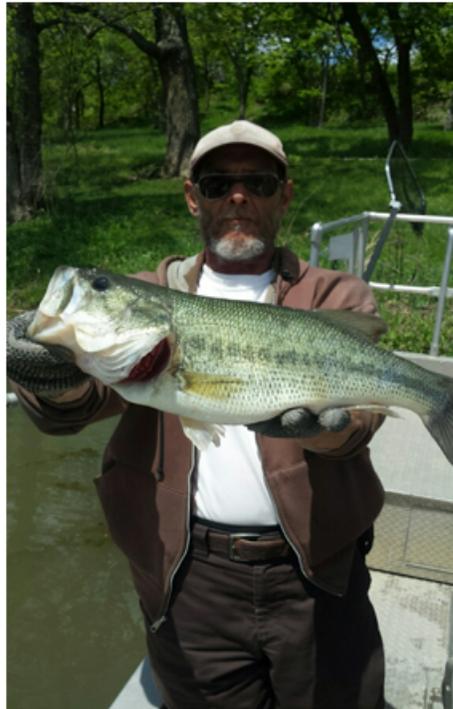


## Best Places to Fish for Largemouth Bass in the Lawrence District

The table below ranks lakes that were sampled this spring for largemouth bass, supplying anglers with an idea of ideal places to fish. Lakes were ranked two ways. Each lake received a ranking for catch rate of bass greater than 8 inches long and another ranking for bass greater than 15 inches long. Anglers wishing to catch the most amount of bass, without regard to size, should go to lakes ranking highest in catches greater than 8 inches long; Anglers wanting to catch larger fish should target those lakes ranking highest in fish greater than 15 inches. The highest ranking is 1. The best lake to fish, according to the table, is Lake Shawnee, ranking first in both number of bass greater than 8 inches and 15 inches. Other top choices include: Douglas State Fishing Lake and Lonestar. The River Pond ranked last for bass less than 8 inches, but 3<sup>rd</sup> for fish greater than 15 inches long.

Table 1. Largemouth bass electrofishing catch rates ranked for lakes sampled this spring.

Lake	Carbondale	Lonestar	Douglas SFL	River Pond	Osage SFL	L Shawnee
Rank # > 8"	4	3	2	6	5	1
Rank # > 15"	5	4	2	3	6	1



## Melvern Blue Catfish Samples

Melvern Reservoir was sampled via electrofishing to assess its blue catfish population this summer. Sampling indicated a low density population. Sixty-eight sites were sampled yielding 65 blue catfish. Most of the fish caught were in two length categories: 11-15 inches and 23-27 inches. Two blue catfish longer than 30 inches were sampled, but in general, large fish were uncommon. Blue catfish populations usually take a long time to fully develop, because they mature slowly and it takes awhile to build up a large enough broodfish population. More restrictive regulations (i.e. a 35-inch minimum length limit and 5 per day creel limit) were imposed a few years ago to improve density and number of young breeding stock. The goal is to improve blue catfish natural production to improve overall numbers of blue catfish in this population.



### **Gizzard Shad Production**

Much higher numbers of young-of-the-year gizzard shad were sampled at Melvern in 2019 than in the past seven years; this should help all predators survive and grow. Young-of-the-year shad (especially those ranging from 1.5 to 3 inches long) provide excellent prey for virtually all of Melvern's sportfish, including: crappie, white bass, walleye, sauger, black bass and catfish species). Most young-of-the-year shad sampled in 2019 ranged between 3 and 4 inches long. More small shad would have been beneficial for crappie growth, but larger predators should be able to utilize these shad.



### **Smallmouth Bass Stocked Into Clinton Reservoir**

Smallmouth bass were stocked into Clinton Reservoir from 2008 through 2011 to reestablish the population. Year classes of smallmouth were established each year stocked and the population flourished. However, natural production/survival was not high enough to sustain the fishery, so 8,836 fingerlings were stocked this past May. Stockings will be requested annually to try to improve the smallmouth bass population and sustain it at an acceptable level for angling.

Smallmouth bass fingerling stocked into Clinton Reservoir. Josh Jagels photo.



## Take a Kid Fishing!

If you have kids, grandkids, or neighborhood kids, think about taking them fishing. It is a good wholesome activity that will get them away from electronic devices for awhile. If you do not know of any kids, consider volunteering for public fishing events sponsored by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, or local city, county or civics groups. You might even consider becoming a Certified Angling Instructor through Fishing's Future ([fishingsfuture.org](http://fishingsfuture.org)) – a volunteer organization that certifies anglers to become instructors to assist or host their own fishing events. Seeing a kid catch their first fish is a special memory that neither the child nor you will ever forget!



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