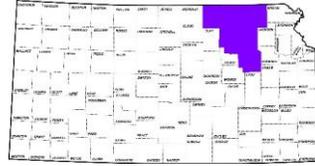


Tuttle Creek Fisheries Newsletter Summer 2019



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Black Bass Sampling Results

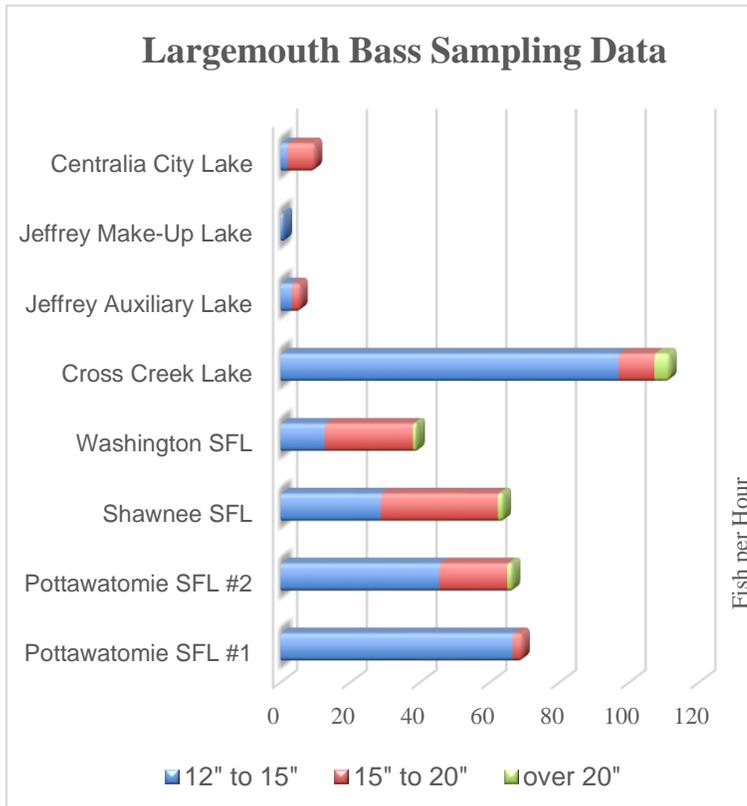
In the spring I get out on the old shocker boat to see what the largemouth bass and smallmouth bass populations look like. Fisheries biologist need to be able to detect changes in the fish populations they manage to be able to effectively manage these populations over time. The electrofishing boat is a handy tool for getting your hands on some fish. It puts electricity into the water that temporarily stuns the fish that are in the electrified field. The fish can then be netted up and moved to a holding tank.

Fisheries biologist for Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks & Tourism use the electrofishing boat for a variety of fish species and situations, but one of the most common uses is to sample black bass populations in the spring when these fish are up shallow. Our other sampling methods are not nearly as effective at collecting black bass as electrofishing, so we rely on this data to tell us what is going on with these species and to be able to detect changes in population dynamics.



Some largemouth bass from sampling at Shawnee State Fishing Lake

Below is the 2019 data for largemouth bass from the lakes in the Manhattan District. The horizontal bars represent how many bass were collected per hour for each length group: blue is 12 to 15 inches, red is 15 to 20 inches and green is fish over 20 inches. Largemouth bass less than 12 inches were not included. The lakes are in no particular order.



Hopefully, looking at this graph can help you visualize how largemouth bass populations are performing at each of these lakes. The number of fish collected per hour can give you an idea how dense a population is at a lake. The size of the fish collected should give an indication of the size an angler can expect to see on the end of their line.

Centralia City Lake, Jeffrey Make-Up Lake, and Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake all have low overall numbers of largemouth bass. However,

Auxiliary Lake is showing some improvements in recent years.

Cross Creek Lake is a shallow fertile lake with decent water clarity and lots of aquatic vegetation which is a recipe for producing a good largemouth bass population. The 2019 sampling effort collected the highest abundance ever recorded at the lake. The lake just has lots and lots of bass right now. Good place to go.



Cross Creek Lake largemouth bass

The largemouth bass population is continuing to improve at Washington State Fishing Lake from some down years. Shawnee State Fishing Lake has been providing the most bass over 18 inches in the Manhattan District for the last decade. Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #2 has a very nice bass population, but these fish can be tricky to catch as this lake can receive high angling pressure due to the good shoreline access and its close proximity to Manhattan. The largemouth bass population is down some at Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #1 with most of the fish being less than 15 inches.

The Manhattan District has some really good largemouth bass angling opportunities. This is just data from some of the public waters in the area and does not include many smaller waters or F.I.S.H. ponds. Good luck finding some bass!

Paddlefish Stocking

I am excited to announce that KDWPT is going to experiment with some new stockings of paddlefish.

This strange but native species is popular with anglers in the southeast corner of Kansas where paddlefish populations are well established. This fish gets its fame from its good table fare and for its large size. Anglers are known to travel long distances to have a decent chance to hook into a fish bigger than 40 pounds.

Well, maybe residents in the Manhattan area will not have to travel so far someday as KDWPT stocked 13,300 young paddlefish into Tuttle Creek Reservoir this summer.



Tuttle Creek Reservoir was stocked with paddlefish from 1992 to 1995. These fish had decent survival rates but there was never evidence of natural reproduction. This species needs a long stretch of river to successfully spawn and there was a low-head dam at Marysville that was preventing their upstream spawning migration in the Big Blue River. This dam failed in the spring of 2018.



Low-head dam upstream of Marysville, KS

Since there is no longer an obstacle for fish to migrate upstream, it is believed that paddlefish could establish a reproducing population in Tuttle Creek and the connected river system.

The stocking this summer was the first step. The plan is to stock about 5,000 paddlefish per year going forward and evaluate this as time goes on. Our hope is that these paddlefish stockings will create a population of adults that could sustain themselves through natural reproduction. If this works as planned, then we could open up some new areas for anglers to target these fish.

KDWPT is evaluating additional potential paddlefish stocking locations in the state, with Perry Lake and Pomona Lake both being considered at this time.



Paddlefish are one of the more interesting fish I get to work with. Commonly called spoonbills, these fish have a distinctively long bill known as a rostrum. The rostrum has electrosensory receptors that can detect the electrical signals emitted by its prey, which are microscopic organisms living in the water column. They then capture these prey by swimming around with their mouth open and filtering the food out of the water.

Since paddlefish are filter feeders, they are not caught by traditional methods. In Kansas, anglers target paddlefish by snagging from March 15th to May 15th, but only in designated areas open to snagging. Hopefully, the Tuttle Creek Lake population develops so a recreational fishery and new snagging locations can be established. Thanks for reading.

Some picture from bass sampling this Spring



Pictures from Pottawatomie SFL#2. Largemouth bass above. A 6.25 pound smallmouth bass to the right. When we netted it I thought it was going to be bigger than the state record, but it was shy by about a half pound. Only a few saugeye in the lake, but they are nice sized. Always see a giant crappie there.



Pottawatomie SFL #2 has a diversity of sunfish species. From left to right: longear sunfish, bluegill, green sunfish, redear sunfish, and warmouth.



The lake also has orangespotted sunfish but I forgot to get one. Hard to get this many to hold still for pics.

Jeffrey Make-Up Lake: shorthead redhorse, wiper and smallmouth bass



At Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake the smallmouth bass numbers are down, but the lake still offers great fishing for the species. Pockets of largemouth bass along the East bank.



Lots of smaller largemouth bass in Pottawatomie SFL #1 and nice bluegill.





Bass fishing getting to be good again at Washington State Fishing Lake



Some nice largemouth bass from Shawnee State Fishing Lake. Also from there, a big white crappie, good redear sunfish, and a bass with a mustache.



A big Thank You to everyone that helped me this spring and posed for a picture: Alex, Ben C, Ben N, Brett, Bryon, Lucas, and Megan. I hope you enjoyed this edition and sorry it is later than usual. Good luck in all your adventures.