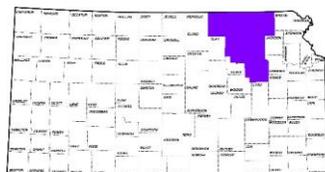


Manhattan Fisheries Newsletter

Spring 2020



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Fishing Forecast for the Manhattan District

KDWPT fisheries biologist routinely sample fish populations around the State. This annual effort is undertaken to gain insight on the fish populations in these lakes to help our management of these populations. We also share the information we collect with anglers interested in learning more about the fish at the lakes they visit. You can find this information at <https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Fishing-Forecast>

The fishing forecast page has a link to each of the most popular sportfish species. After clicking on a species, you then choose the type of water body: lake, pond, or reservoir. Then you are taken to a table that has the most recent sampling data, most of which was collected last fall.

You can use this fishing forecast information to see how your favorite lakes rate for the fish you chase. Raw data doesn't tell the whole story of what is going on, so over the next few pages I will give an overview from each lake in my district that I sampled last fall. Bass data is collected in the spring and that information will be available in my summer newsletter.

Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #1

The channel catfish population has never thrived at this lake but sample numbers in 2019 were greatly improved over the previous five years with some nice sized fish for a small public impoundment. The crappie population is on the downswing and anglers will likely be disappointed with the numbers available in 2020.



Corey with a nice size channel catfish from Pott#1

Continued on page 2

Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #2

The other State Fishing Lake in the county also has a channel catfish population that is doing well as the 2019 sampling data had the second highest abundance recorded in the last decade. This lake is in the Urban Stocking Program and is regularly stocked with channel catfish of a catchable size. Crappie anglers always seem to do well at this lake in the early spring, but sample numbers were rather mediocre last fall.



Couple of typical sized channel catfish that Pott#2 receives through the Urban Stocking Program.

Shawnee State Fishing Lake

This lake is also in the Urban Stocking Program so catching 12 to 18-inch channel catfish is very common at this lake. The lake's crappie are finally getting bigger with the 2019 sample having the highest percentage of the population over 10 inches in twenty years. There is still room for improvement in the crappie fishery, but three years in a row with the average size of fish increasing is a trend that anglers should benefit from. The bluegill population remains a minor component to the fishery, but the redear sunfish population has been doing well the last two years. The lake is occasionally stocked with saugeye to maintain a low abundance population. Normally, saugeye stockings at this lake have limited to moderate survival, but the 2019 stocking effort had an exceptional survival

rate so this lake could develop into a little hole-in-the-wall saugeye fishery in a few years.



Before weighing and measuring these white crappie Ben poses for a picture with them. Also, a picture of some nice size redear sunfish on the measuring board we use at Shawnee SFL.

Washington State Fishing Lake

The crappie are coming! Lots of little crappie in the lake and the best numbers of bigger crappie seen in a long time. I am hoping that crappie don't get overpopulated and stunted again like the population was ten years ago, but that is something to worry about for another day. For this year, the lake should be good for crappie fishermen. Both channel catfish and saugeye numbers are below average for the lake.



Megan posing with a 14-inch white crappie collected at Washington SFL last fall.

Jeffrey Energy Center Make-Up Lake

Another lake with an improving crappie situation. Two year-classes of young fish are upcoming and contributing to the fishery. There should be decent fishing in 2020 for white crappie around 10 inches long. Let's hope this recent crappie spawning success becomes a common theme to maintain this resurgence into the future. Angler harvest put a dent in the exceptional walleye numbers recorded in 2018, but the current population will still offer decent numbers of legal fish for anglers visiting the lake. The white bass fishery continues to be exceptional with elevated numbers of fish and 94% of the white bass sampled last fall were over 12 inches! The wiper population is also doing well with the 2019 sample numbers being above average with most of the wiper from 18 to 20 inches long.



Night electrofishing in the fall is one of the ways we evaluate walleye populations. Tom with one of the bigger walleye collected at Make-Up Lake in 2019.

Jeffrey Energy Center Auxiliary Lake

Crappie sample numbers and angler harvest rates have been steadily increasing since 2015. The 2019 sample showed the population took a step back last year, but abundance is still above the long-term average for the lake. The lake has been maintaining a decent walleye fishery the last few years and this will continue

into 2020. Like nearby Make-Up Lake, the white bass population at Auxiliary Lake has been exceptional for several years. From sampling in the fall of 2019, 88% of the fish collected were over 12 inches. Wiper numbers are trending down due to poor survival from stockings the last few years so most of the fish are bigger at 20 to 24 inches. Channel catfish have been steadily good the last four years.



Wiper are maintained at a lower level at Auxiliary Lake than many other area lakes. The current population is dominated by one year-class. Bryon is holding one of these wipers that is from the 2015 stocking effort.

Pottawatomie Cross Creek Lake

This lake is known for good bluegill fishing. The 2019 sampling data shows that abundance of bluegill is down, but the fish are a little bigger than average. Black crappie numbers are starting to come back up and 81% of the fish collected last fall were between 8 to 10 inches. The lake maintains a pretty good channel catfish population for a small public lake, but fish were on the smaller side in the last sample.

Centralia City Lake

This lake has been the local hot spot for crappie in recent years. Over the last decade, metrics like the number of crappie in the lake, the size of fish, and available forage has all fluctuated widely. Well, in 2016 all those numbers came together to make this lake the best crappie fishery in the state for several years. Unfortunately, that sort of situation is not

sustainable long-term for crappie. Sample data in 2019 show that the lake still has a good crappie fishery, but it will be several steps down from the greatness seen in recent years. The lake has been maintaining a very good channel catfish population for nearly a decade and the 2019 sampling data had 29% of the fish over 24 inches which is an exceptional size structure for the species in Northeast Kansas. Saugeye sample numbers are at a five-year low, but I would still say the lake is a good place to fish for them. From sampling data last fall, 65% of the saugeye were over the 18-inch length limit. Both the white bass and wiper fisheries the last few years can be characterized as low numbers of big fish. There was a large spawn of white bass in 2019 which is not necessary a good thing for the more popular sportfish species in the lake.



Extra pictures from Centralia City Lake. No preference for the lake, just sometimes I remember to actually take pictures. Nice saugeye, one good wiper, white and black crappie, and a chunky channel catfish

Tuttle Creek Reservoir

Not much new to say about the lake. Well, besides the historic flooding in 2019. When the lake is 60 feet high it makes it very problematic to conduct fish sampling, especially the part about running nets in flooded trees. Therefore, I don't have any new sampling data to talk about here. I do have a good hunch that the crappie population got off a big spawn in 2019. Also, I know a lot of the saugeye left the lake during the high releases because of the sheer number that were caught by anglers at Rocky Ford Fishing Area last year. Other than that I am in the dark about what has changed to the fish populations until I can get back out there. Hoping for moderate precipitation in the drainage this year. Good luck on your fishing adventures this year and thanks for reading.



Fancy Creek Road near Highway 77



Picture of the main boat ramp at Tuttle Creek River Pond while we were out rescuing docks.



Pictures from atop Rocky Ford Dam at 30,000 cfs. Weird to see water high enough to go around dam.

Thank you to everyone that helped me last fall and held a fish for the camera: Alex, Ben, Bryon, Lucas, Matt, Megan and Tom.