

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism

Kansas Walleye Initiative Fact Sheet Culture Focus



What is the KWI?

In early 2015, a group of KDWP Fisheries Biologists, Fish Culture Biologists, Fish Research Biologists, and Human Dimensions Specialists met to discuss Kansas walleye management. The goal? More and Bigger walleye for Kansas anglers! Past and present walleye programs, projects, and protocols were reviewed, analyzed, and modified if needed. Future goals and objectives for Kansas walleye programs were set and plans devised to meet them. The Kansas Walleye Initiative was born!



Kansas Walleye Stocking

Historically, KDWP stocked two sizes of walleye---fry and fingerling. Recent research showed that survival was much higher for stocked fingerlings that were at least 1.7 inches in length. A 1.7-inch walleye has fully formed scales making it more durable during the rigors of harvest, loading, transport, and stocking. KDWP hatcheries immediately began growing fish to this new target size to increase survival of stocked fingerlings. The KWI also produced new fry stocking guidelines. Timing, frequency, location, and stocking protocols were updated to ensure the best possible recruitment from fry stockings.



KWI Impacts on Kansas Walleye Production

The exciting Intermediate Walleye Production Program resulted from the addition of larviculture systems at the Milford and Meade hatcheries. The larger a fish is at the time of stocking, the better the survival. The Intermediate Walleye Production Program produces 8-inch and larger walleye. KDWP hatcheries acquired a wide variety of specialty equipment and intensive rearing units to facilitate the goals of the KWI that initiated intensive walleye production. The Milford and Meade hatcheries have seen the most upgrades for intermediate walleye production. In the past, walleye fingerlings were grown from fry in outside rearing ponds and fed upon a natural diet of zooplankton. Walleye raised in the intermediate program are trained to consume a pelleted diet during the indoor tank rearing, where all water parameters can be closely monitored and regulated. Larger numbers of walleye can be grown in smaller areas with greater control as earthen ponds can be replaced with indoor grow out tanks. The larviculture systems start with walleye fry. Phase I produces the 1.7-inch fingerlings in 35 days and these fish are used to meet stocking requests in lakes and reservoirs. Some of the fish from Phase I continue into Phase II where feeding and growth continues. At the end of Phase II, fish are graded by size and enter final grow out in Phase III. Phase III produces 8-inch and larger walleye ready for stocking at 180 days post hatch. This new KWI walleye production capacity is additional to the historical production which continues to produce fry and fingerling walleye, sauger, and saugeye through conventional culture methods. See the table below for increased KWI walleye production totals. KDWP plans to continue expansion and refinement of the larviculture systems and Intermediate Walleye Production Program to keep pace with fingerling and intermediate walleye stocking demands.

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KWI Culture Highlights:

- \$280K annual KDWPT budget enhancement for KWI for feed, utility costs, and the purchase of fingerlings from the private sector
- \$225,000 in equipment enhancements and upgrades at Milford Hatchery
- \$2 million walleye production building being added at Meade Hatchery
- Pond sealing project at Meade Hatchery increased pond space available for rearing fingerlings
- Began producing >8-inch intermediate walleye for stocking in addition to fry and fingerlings
- Met goal of all fingerling production exceeding 1.7 inches prior to stocking
- Added 20 jar hatching rack system to allow hatching of eggs at Meade Hatchery
- Added two full-time employees and extra funding for temporary employees to cover additional workload of increased walleye production

Milford and Meade Fish Hatcheries	Increased Production Through KWI
Eggs Hatched	15 million
Phase I (1.7" fingerlings)	457,000
Phase II (3.5" fingerlings)	134,500
Phase III (>8" intermediates)	105,000



The KDWPT Fisheries Division would like to thank the KDWPT Commission for its continued support of the Kansas Walleye Initiative.

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