

FALL 2020

CHENEY DISTRICT FISHERIES

Volume 11, Issue 2



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FISHING PROGRAMS

Master Angler Award Program

Are you a Master Angler? Prove it! Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism has a program called the Master Angler Award Program. If you catch a fish in Kansas large enough to qualify, you will receive a Master Angler Award certificate! Sizes of each species as well as a certificate application form can be found here:

<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Master-Angler-Award-Program>

Trout Program

Trout season runs from November 1st through April 15th. KDWP&T will stock certain urban waters with adult sized trout ready to be caught. For more information on the Trout program including stocking locations and stocking dates click here:

<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Trout-Fishing-Program>

Remember that KDOT East, Vic's Lake, and Slough Creek are Type 1 trout waters and all anglers fishing those waters November 1st - April 15th must have a trout permit.



Urban Fishing Program



KDWP&T has created the Urban Stocking Program to provide local fishing opportunities. Adult sized Channel Catfish (3/4lb-3lbs) are stocked in many public waters in Reno and Sedgwick counties. These fish are harvestable size and ready to catch. For more information on stocking locations and dates click here:

<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Urban-Fishing-Program>

SAMPLING OVERVIEW: Largemouth Bass



Figure 1. Largemouth Bass electrofishing fish per hour catch rates for fish under 8 inches.

Largemouth Bass Electrofishing

Largemouth Bass were sampled via electrofishing during May of 2020. The flooding in 2019 appears to have benefitted Largemouth spawn as shown by an increase in Sub-stock (<8") Bass in a handful of lakes as can be seen in Figure 1. The high water likely gave Bass access to better spawning habitat they wouldn't have in a normal year. Figure 2 shows the number of fish sampled per hour of electrofishing broken down into size classes. Keep in mind, this graph does not represent the abundance of largemouth in each lake. Just because catch rates were higher in a certain lake does not mean that there are more fish but rather the density of fish may be higher.

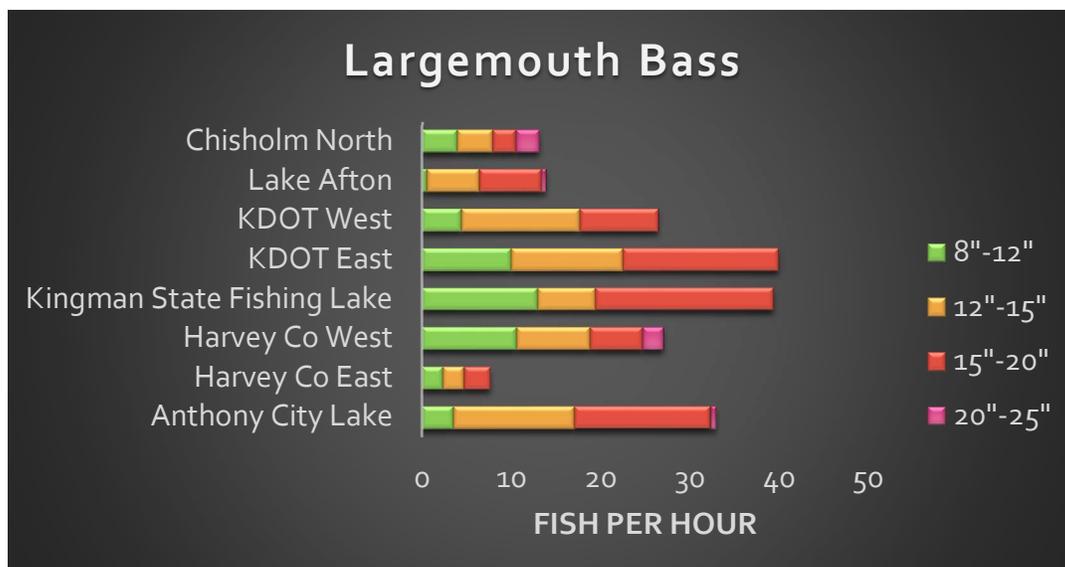


Figure 2. Largemouth Bass electrofishing fish per hour catch rates broken down by size class.

SAMPLING RESULTS: Largemouth Bass



Kingman State Fishing Lake

Largemouth Bass were sampled at Kingman State Fishing Lake in May and June of 2020 via electrofishing. Catch rates for all sizes of Bass were 68 fish/hr. This was higher than catches rates from 2018 and 2013, similar to 2014 and 2017 and lower than seen in 2015. The catch rates were increased by a large amount of smaller fish which are likely a strong year class from 2019. This year class may be from the high water in 2019, stocking of fingerlings that same year, or a combination of both. The catch rate will only give us an estimate of relative abundance which we can compare between lakes and between years but does not estimate how many fish are actually in the lake. To get an estimate of the number of Largemouth in Kingman, a mark and recapture study was performed in June of 2020. The study resulted in an estimate of 610 fish with 95% confidence intervals of 446 to 857. This density of Largemouth Bass should allow for fast growth and provide large fish. Yet, the largest Bass sampled in 2020 was just over 4lbs. Also, the weight of these Bass compared to their length did not suggest they were overly healthy. I believe the Largemouth in Kingman are being limited by poor water quality caused by Common Carp and Bullhead catfish. We know from our netting samples that there is ample forage with multiple sunfish species. However, the increased turbidity caused by Carp activity creates limited visibility and decreases the ability of predators to hunt. Despite its problems, Kingman is likely your best bet at catching a 3lb fish.

SAMPLING RESULTS: Largemouth Bass



Anthony City Lake

There was a slight increase in catch rates for larger (>15") Bass in 2020 compared to previous years at Anthony city lake. However, this increase is not considered to be significant. Still the population is comprised of mostly larger fish. Anthony City Lake did not see an influx of smaller fish like other lakes. Ideally, we would like to see more smaller fish to help balance the population and provide future angling opportunities. The lake does provide anglers with the opportunity to catch a larger fish as multiple fish over 5lbs were sampled. Anglers should target vegetation when trying to catch Bass at Anthony City Lake.



Harvey County East and West Lake

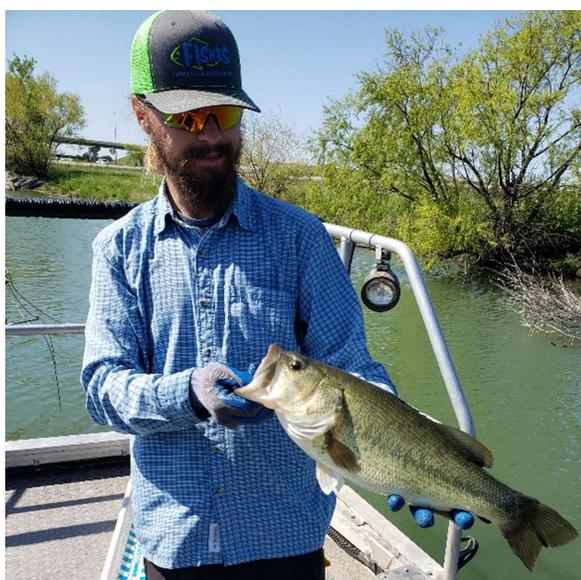
Catch rates for Bass at the East lake were lower than previous years with only 14 fish sampled. This may be due to poor water quality, lack of spawning habitat, and loss of fish during flood events. In the West lake, catch rates were decent similar to previous years. A handful of larger fish have now been sampled each of the last few years (pictured left). While there are not many fish in the West lake, there is opportunity to catch a 4-5lb fish.

SAMPLING RESULTS: Largemouth Bass



Lake Afton

Only 32 Largemouth Bass were sampled in 2020. Most fish were under the 18" minimum length limit. There were a few 5-6" Bass sampled which suggested they had a successful spawn in 2019. Time will tell as to what degree this new year class will contribute to the fishery. The Largemouth are limited in Lake Afton by a lack of habitat as well as an abundance of White Perch. These White Perch will prey on Bass fry and compete for food with juvenile Bass. Unfortunately, it appears that the White Perch had a very successful spawn in 2019. Anglers looking to catch a Largemouth at Lake Afton should target areas with vegetation.



KDOT East Lake

Catch rates for Bass at KDOT East were higher than the previous 10 years. This was caused from an abundance of Bass <8" likely spawned in 2019. It will be interesting to see how this year class grows and contributes to the fishery with the lakes small size and high fishing pressure. While there were no fish over 20", there was a decent amount in the 15-20" range that should provide good angling opportunities. Anglers should try areas that have the least amount of pressure.

SAMPLING RESULTS: Largemouth Bass



KDOT West Lake

Like some other lakes in the area, the Largemouth at KDOT West Lake also saw an increase in smaller fish. The high water seen in 2019 really did benefit many Largemouth populations. While the West lake did not see the numbers of fish that the East lake saw, we did sample a few bigger fish in the West lake. There is a lot of structure in the lake providing lots of areas for Bass to hide. Anglers may find that hard to access areas may yield more fish.



Wichita Chisholm North Lake

Like other lakes in the area, the Largemouth sample at Chisholm North was dominated by 5-6" fish. The Lake is somewhat lacking in habitat so the high water in 2019 was likely crucial for the Largemouth to spawn. While the majority of fish were small, there are a few large fish scattered around. The Lake has lots of access for fishing as well as a healthy Bluegill population. As with most urban fisheries, anglers should consider multiple methods as these Bass likely see many different lures.

SAMPLING RESULTS: Blue Catfish



Cheney Reservoir

Sampling for Blue Catfish at Cheney Reservoir resumed in 2020 with mixed results. Blue Catfish were sampled via electrofishing and juglines. Juglines are used to sample larger fish that electrofishing sometimes does not sample. Sampling from both gears suggest that there is a low abundance of Blues in Cheney with only 106 fish sampled. However, the majority are bigger fish. More fish were sampled at or over the 35” minimum length limit in 2020 than previous years (Figure 3). The larger Blues appear to be in good condition as their weight to length ratios are well above average. This suggests the larger Blues may have good growth. Keep in mind that Blue Catfish are slow growing fish. Blue Catfish have been stocked into Cheney from 2006 to 2016. Since 2016, we have not seen any small Blues indicating that they were not reproducing on their own. That is, until this year. We sampled 6 fish 10” or smaller (pictured below) which are presumedly a result of the flood of 2019. These 6 fish were collected to verify their age so we can determine exactly what year they hatched. Studies have shown that Blue Catfish recruitment is variable, and they may need certain conditions to spawn.

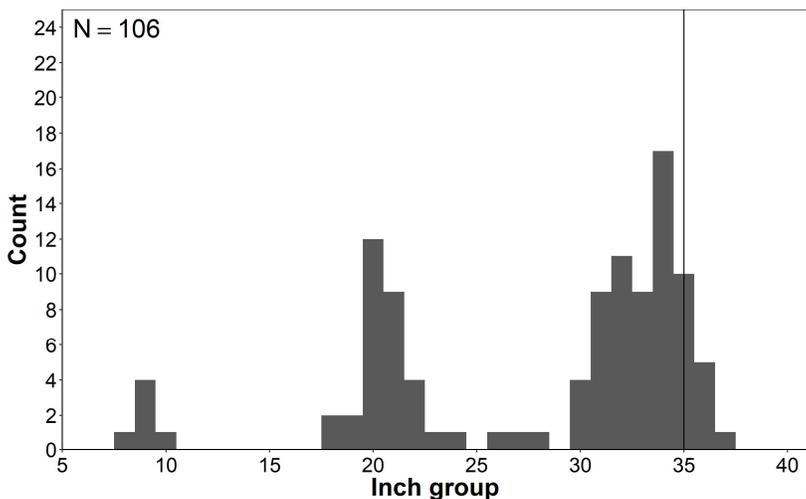


Figure 3. Blue Catfish length frequency sampled from electrofishing and juglines in 2020. The black vertical line represents the 35” minimum length limit.

SAMPLING RESULTS: Blue Catfish



Cheney Reservoir

The presence of these sub 10" fish is evidence that the Blue Catfish have reproduced naturally in Cheney. Unfortunately, the successful spawn may be directly correlated with a flood. The flood in 2019 does not happen often which may mean that natural recruitment could be rare. Figure 4 shows the size distribution of Blue catfish sampled with multiple gears types. This graph does not compare the number of fish found in each year but rather the range of different sizes sampled in each respective year. By looking at this graph you can see there are not many years where small fish have been sampled. The good news is that studies have shown that a few strong year classes can support a population of Blue Catfish for many years. Future sampling will determine how strong the (presumed) 2019-year class is and whether stocking efforts will be required to sustain the fishery.

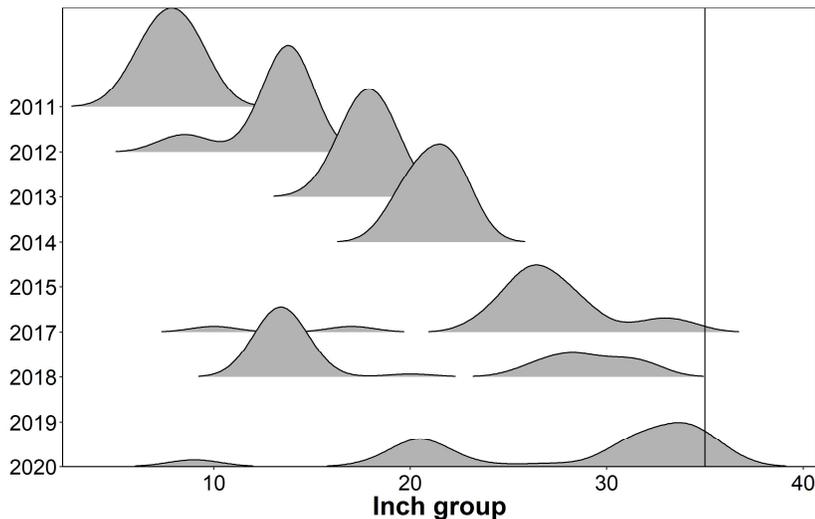


Figure 4. Blue Catfish ridgeline plot from multiple sampling gears from 2011 to 2020. The black vertical line represents the 35" minimum length limit.

Bonus Fish!



22lb Channel Catfish from Cheney sampled while jug-lining for Blues.



6lb Saugeye caught at Lake Afton while electrofishing for Largemouth Bass.



60lb Flathead Catfish sampled at Cheney while electrofishing for Blue Catfish.



Unknown size Flathead Catfish sampled at Cheney while collecting bait for jug lines. We didn't bring the big scale that day.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Adam Urban, my intern for his help with sampling as well as everything behind the scenes that made sampling possible. I would like to thank Arlen Cooley, Bryan Sowards, Carson Cox, David Breth, Jeff Conley, Jace Reichenberger, Richard Rogers, Travis Riley, and Vance Frick for their help with sampling this spring and summer.

Spread the word!

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Go rip some lip!

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Get your friends, get your family
... and FISH KANSAS!

