

# Pittsburg District Fisheries Newsletter

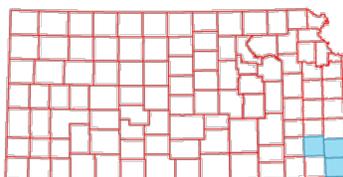
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Spring 2022

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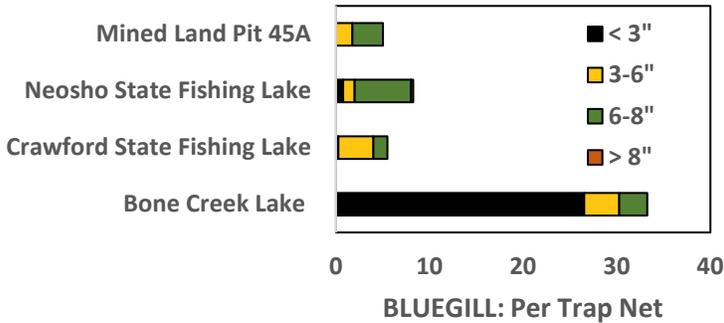
## 2021 Fish Sampling & More!

The Pittsburg District includes Cherokee, Crawford, and Neosho counties. Four water bodies were sampled in the Pittsburg district in October of 2021 to monitor the fish populations: Bone Creek, Crawford State Fishing Lake, Mined Land Wildlife Area Unit #45 Pit A, and Neosho State Fishing Lake. You will find the highlights from the 2021 fall sampling effort in the Pittsburg district, Flathead Catfish project update, habitat enhancement efforts in 2021, and Pond Management Helpful Websites.



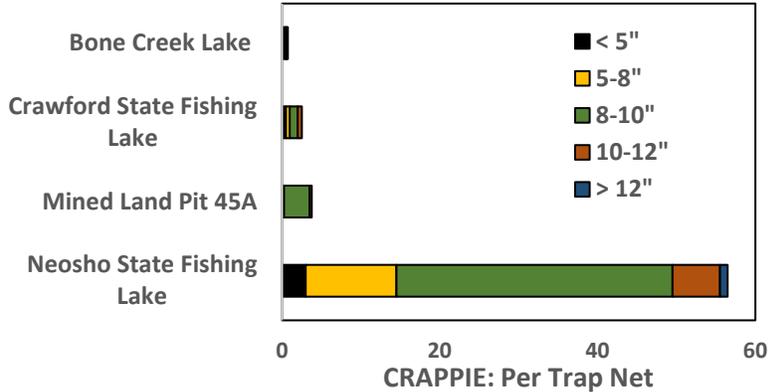
# 2021 Fish Sampling Results

## Bluegill



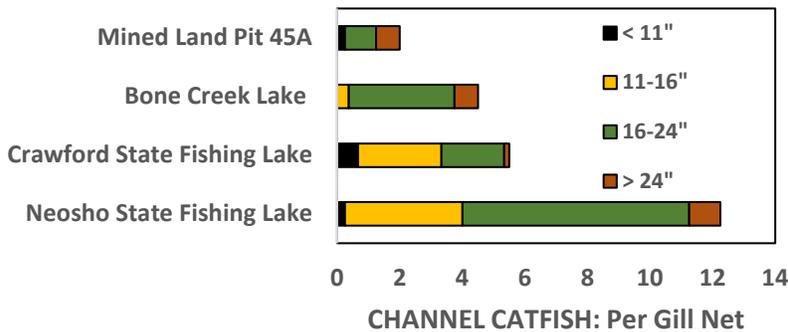
Quality bluegill fishing is how most of us got our start in fishing. The highest quality lakes in the Pittsburg district will be Bone Creek and Neosho State Fishing Lake. The Mined Land Wildlife Area strip pits will provide quality bluegill fishing. Crawford State Fishing Lake will provide opportunity for bluegill as well.

## Crappie



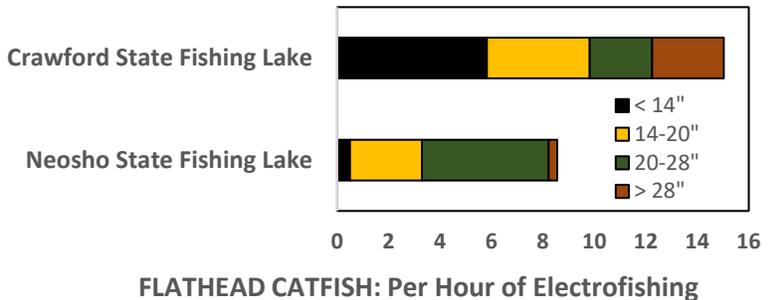
Neosho State Fishing Lake is the place to be for crappie in 2022. Winter drawdowns, reduced gizzard shad population, and increased habitat have helped the crappie population at Neosho SFL. Crawford State Fishing Lake has a stunted crappie population. Anglers are encouraged to keep their daily creel limit of 50 per day to open up space for the crappie to grow. Bone Creek doesn't lend itself well for sampling with trap nets, but quality crappie can be caught in 2022.

## Channel Catfish



Bone Creek Lake has a high quality channel catfish population. Neosho State Fishing Lake and Crawford State Fishing Lake also have quality channel catfish populations. The Mined Land Wildlife Area is stocked every year and is where the current state record was caught. All CFAP properties are stocked each year.

## Flathead Catfish



Crawford State Fishing Lake has the highest quality flathead catfish population in the Pittsburg district. All sizes are represented at Crawford SFL and anglers can have luck fishing lakewide at fish attractor locations. Neosho SFL has a lower density population with the most common size being 20-28". Both lakes are managed under the statewide daily creel limit of 5 per day.

### Other Fishing Opportunities:

**Wiper:** Crawford State Fishing Lake has a population of wipers that reach sizes up to 21". An open water predator, it will be advantageous to focus on drop offs, coves, creek channels, and the wind blown side of the lake when they are congregated feeding on gizzard shad. The Mined Land Wildlife Area has wipers on Unit #21, currently.

**Saugeye:** Bone Creek Lake has a population of saugeye that reach sizes up to 26". The population has established and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2022 KDWP fishing forecast. Crawford SFL has a low-density saugeye population.

**Freshwater Drum:** Crawford SFL has a population that provides anglers with a chance at a lifetime Freshwater Drum!

**Warmouth, Redear Sunfish, Longear Sunfish, oh my!:** The Mined Land Wildlife Area is a place to panfish, as well as Crawford & Neosho!

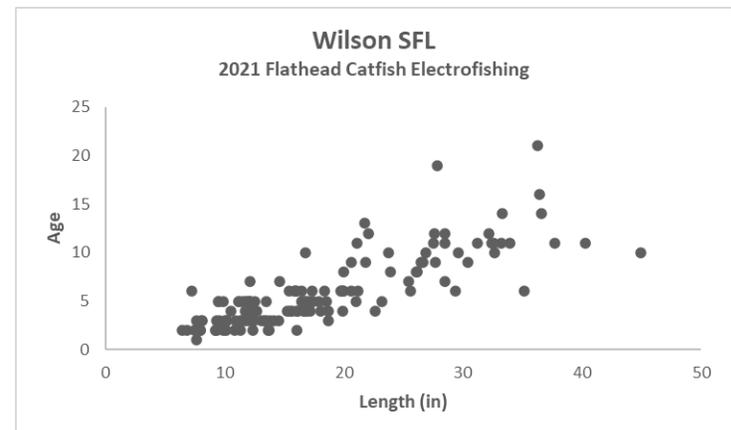
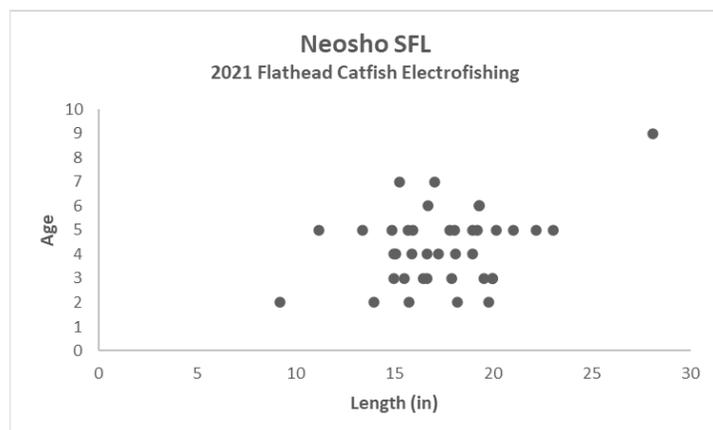
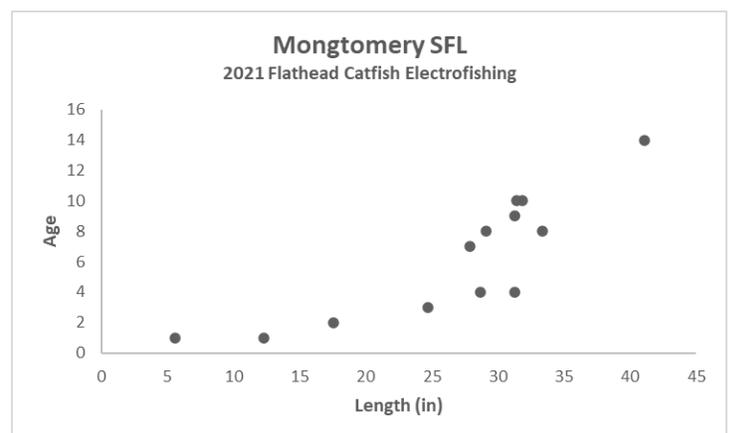
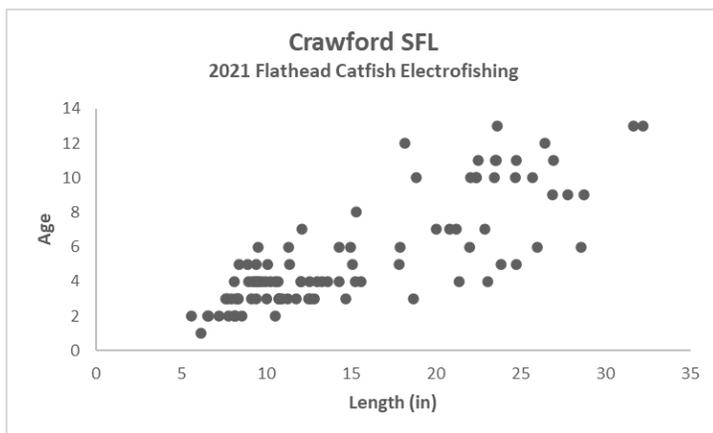
# 2021 Flathead Catfish Project

Fellow KDWP fisheries biologists and I in the state wanted to find out more about Flathead Catfish in small impoundments in Kansas. We weren't sure how fast or slow that Flathead Catfish grow in our State Fishing Lakes, how many Flathead Catfish are in our State Fishing Lakes, and the size structure that inhabit our small impoundments in Kansas. We set out to do just that! Seth Lundgren, Independence District Fisheries Biologist, and myself teamed up to sample four of our southeast Kansas State Fishing Lakes: Montgomery SFL, Wilson SFL, Crawford SFL and Neosho SFL. We sampled each lake three times each month and sampled the same parts of the lake each sampling event. We collected length, weight, sex, and extracted the pectoral spine for aging as well as to serve as a "mark" for future sampling events to see if it had been sampled before. This "mark" allows for us to derive a population estimate on how many Flathead Catfish are in our SFLs.

*Population estimate:* We found that we didn't have as many Flathead Catfish in our small waters as I originally hypothesized. Crawford SFL has an overall population of 383 (250-616) Flathead Catfish and 2.6 per acre, Montgomery SFL has an overall population of 65 (29-156) and 0.6 per acre, Neosho SFL has an overall population of 156 (84-316) Flathead Catfish and 1.7 per acre, and Wilson SFL has an overall population of 423 (326-603) Flathead Catfish and 3.8 per acre.

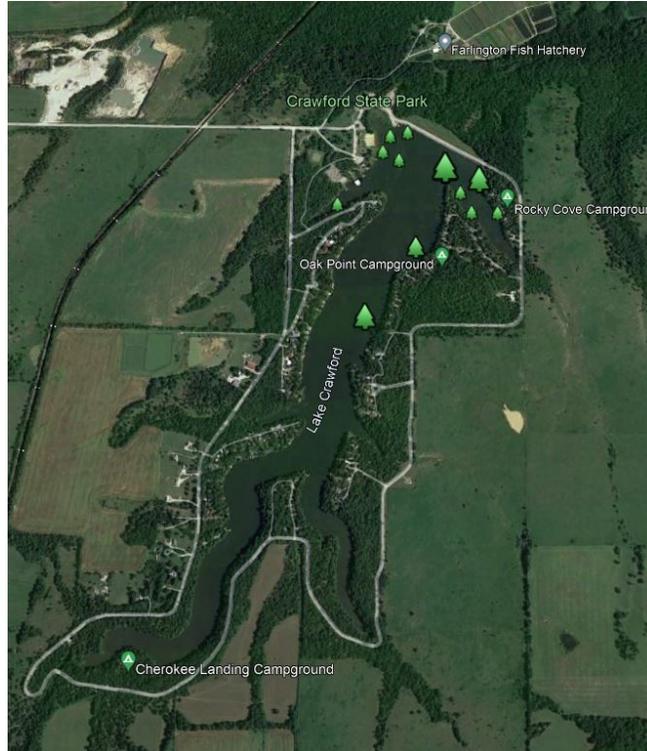
*Age & Growth estimate:* Growth was variable. Males and females had similar growth trends. Below is the age structure for Crawford SFL, Montgomery SFL, Neosho SFL, and Wilson SFL.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you'd like to know more about Flathead Catfish in small southeast Kansas waters.



# 2021 Habitat Enhancement Projects

Habitat, habitat, habitat... You can never have enough habitat when you're managing a pond, lake, or strip pit for fish populations. I love to get out and do habitat enhancement projects and 2021 was no different. Nearly 150 cedar trees were cut by Crawford State Park staff in fall of 2021. KDWP Fisheries Staff then placed it near shoreline access areas and shoreline habitats that will enhance spawning habitat for Largemouth Bass, for example. Below is a map of current fish attractor locations at Crawford State Fishing Lake. Thank you for all of the help, Crawford State Park Staff, fisheries seasonal Ashlynn, and Logan Martin, District Wildlife Biologist!



Featured in last year's newsletter, we also completed a habitat enhancement project on Unit #45 Pit A on the Mined Land Wildlife Area. Nearly 250 cedar trees were sunk to serve as essential fish habitat that will congregate fish for anglers, as well as serve as excellent habitat for fish. I've heard of quite a few crappie up to 16" being caught out of this pit, so get out and enjoy the area!



# One Last Cast!

I receive a lot of phone calls asking for advice for their ponds, specifically aquatic vegetation that may be covering the pond or inhibiting fishing access. I always ask for those of you with questions to send me pictures of the vegetation across the pond and most importantly, close up in hand. To recommend management options, it is vital to know the vegetation to the species level.

There's a website that I recommend to private landowners called "AquaPlant: A Diagnostics Tool for Pond Plants and Algae" that is provided by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. This talks about identifying a aquatic plant, managing a plant with options, fish stocking & pond management, and aquatic vegetation fact sheets.

Here is the link to the website: <https://aquaplant.tamu.edu/>

Another helpful tool is the "Producing Fish and Wildlife From Kansas Ponds" available on our website at the following link: <https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Pond-Management-Program/Producing-Fish-and-Wildlife-in-Kansas-Ponds>



A friend and co-worker, Keifer Shipley, and myself holding up crappie that we caught in the first week of February in 6 ft of water at a southeast Kansas reservoir. Weather is warming up and the crappie spawn will be here before we know it! In the mean time, great fishing is to be had!



My 7-year old lab, Sadie Sue, and I have been taking advantage of the nice days to go scout the wildlife area and maybe find a shed, or two. This is my favorite time of the year to be in nature.

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