

# Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

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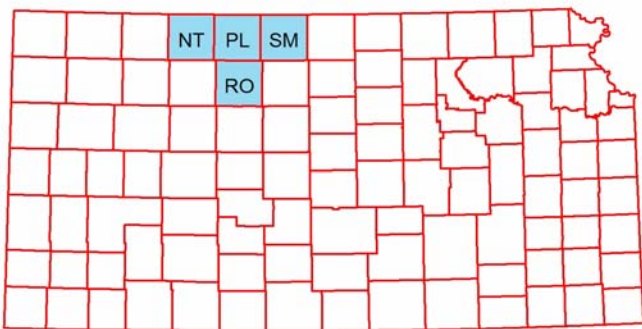
2011

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## Welcome to the Stockton Fisheries District

The Stockton District consists of four counties in northwest Kansas. They are Rooks (RO), Phillips (PL), Smith (SM) and Norton (NT). The district consists of three main reservoirs; Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius; one state fishing lake, Rooks State Fishing Lake; two Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes, Logan City Lake and Plainville Township Lake; and various Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (FISH) properties, which consist of 41.4 acres of ponds in Smith and Rooks counties and 6.05 miles of stream access on the North and South Fork Solomon rivers.



## 2011 FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR

As of April, 6 2011, the reservoir elevation was 1.76 feet below conservation pool. All ramps are usable at this level.

**BLACK BASS - Fair.** The largemouth bass population is dominated by 8- to 12-inch fish, which accounted for 26 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 5- to 8-inch size range accounted for 39 percent of the sample, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 32 percent, and fish over 18 inches accounted for 3 percent. Spinner, crank and artificial baits should work well in Rock Point and Old Marina coves, along the dam and bluffs, the coves between Rock Point and the outlet gates and the coves along the south road. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and spotted bass is in effect.**

**CATFISH - Fair.** Channel catfish fishing should be fair and flathead fishing will probably be poor this year. Channel catfish are scattered over a wide size range with the majority of fish being in the 16- to 24-inch size range. Young of the year fish in the 8- to 10-inch size range accounted for 5 percent of the fall sample. Fish in the 11- to 16-inch size range accounted for 29 percent, quality fish in the 16- to 24-inch size range (3 to 5 pounds) accounted for 50 percent, and fish over 24 inches accounted for 14 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 12.54 pounds. Flatheads are also present in a wide range of sizes with 5- to 20-pound fish being in the population. These catfish should congregate around the dam, north and south shore breakwaters and along the bluffs. Also, with all the water coming in from the South Fork Solomon River these fish should be up to the West end by Bow City and Methodist Camp. They can be caught on rod and reel, setlines or trotlines using traditional bait's like shad and shad gizzards, shrimp, stink and dip baits and night crawlers.

## Webster Continued

**BLACK CRAPPIE – Good.**  
**WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair.**

The high water levels this past year produced another good crappie spawn with 36 percent of the fall sample consisting of 2- to 6-inch fish and 7 percent being 6- to 8-inches. Hopefully these fish will recruit on up to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 57 percent being 8 to 13 inches in length. Webster's density rating for black crappie (8 inches and above) is first among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest crappie sampled was a black crappie weighing 1.20 pounds. Look for the crappie around the North and South shore fish attractors, the breakwaters on the North and South sides, along the dam and in Rock Point Cove and Old Marina Cove. Best bait's are jigs, jigs with minnows under a bobber or small slab spoons.

**RAINBOW TROUT - Very Good to Excellent.**

The Webster Stilling Basin, a 6-acre impoundment below the dam, is stocked five times (Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, & Mar) each trout season. Each stocking consists of 2,100 trout averaging approximately one-half-pound each with an occasional bigger fish thrown in to make it exciting. Projected stocking dates are usually around the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. The South Fork Solomon River above Webster has enough flow in it again this year to release trout and they have been stocked at one site, which is the low water crossing on N. Road. The site extends one-half mile downstream and approximately one mile upstream of the crossing.

**WALLEYE - Good.** There is going to be a lot of 8- to 15-inch fish caught this year with the potential for catching keeper walleye also being good. Individuals in the 8- to 15-inch range accounted for 79 percent of the fall sample and 15- to 20-inch fish accounted for 19 percent. The potential for catching a few larger fish (20 inches plus) also exists this year, accounting for 2 percent. Webster's density rating for walleye (15 inches and above) is tenth among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest walleye sampled in 2010 weighed 5.15 pounds. Look for the walleye to be up along the dam in March and April as they come into spawn and then move out onto the flats in May. During the spawn the best baits to use are

## Webster Walleye Continued

jigs, Roadrunners and crankbaits. When they move out to the flats, get those night crawlers out. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**

**WHITE BASS - Good.** This population is currently dominated by fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 80 percent of the fall sample. Individuals in the 6- to 9-inch size range accounted for 11 percent of the sample and fish in the 9- to 12-inch size range accounted for 9 percent. The biggest fish sampled weighed 2.43 pounds. Webster's density rating (9 inches and above) is second among all reservoirs in the state this year. Surface action should provide some exciting opportunities throughout the reservoir during the summer as they chase the shad around, so keep an eye on the sky and follow the gulls. Trolling diving lures and casting Roadrunners should also be productive.

**WIPERS - Good.** The supply should be good again this year. Fish in the 6- to 15-inch size range accounted for 33 percent, and fish in 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 60 percent. Larger fish (20 inches +) accounted for 7 percent of the sample, so hang on to those fishing rods. Webster's density rating (12 inches and above) is seventh among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2010 weighed 6.81 pounds. There should be some surface action this year as they feed on shad and casting bucktail jigs into the wind around the corners of the Dam should be productive, as well.



## 2011 FISHING FORECAST KIRWIN RESERVOIR

As of April 6, 2011, the reservoir elevation was 0.19 feet above conservation pool. Usable boat ramps at this level include the North and South Shore ramps.

**BLACK BASS - Poor.** The largemouth bass population is dominated by 4- to 8-inch fish accounting for 77 percent of the sample. Fish in the 8- to 12-inch size range accounted for 15 percent, and fish over 15 inches accounted for 8 percent. The higher water levels this past year kept a lot of terrestrial habitat inundated. With this newly inundated habitat, the 12,936 fingerling largemouth bass that were stocked in June of 2009 and the numbers of 4- to 8-inch fish coming on should make for some pretty good fishing within the next few years. The best locations for finding bass are going to be along Crappie Point and back toward Scout Cove, the cove up by Gray's Park, the cove by the North Shore and South Shore ramps and along the dam and outlet area. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**

**CHANNEL CATFISH - Fair.**

**FLATHEAD CATFISH - Fair.**

The overall supply of channel catfish is fair as fish were scattered over a wide size range. The population is currently dominated by fish in the 11- to 24-inch size range. Individuals in the 8- to 11-inch size range accounted for 17 percent of the fall 2010 sample. Fish in the 11- to 24-inch size range accounted for 71 percent, and fish over 24 inches accounted for 12 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled in 2010 weighed 11.80 pounds. The supply of flatheads is also fair with most of the fish in the 14- to 19-inch size range accounting for 50 percent, and 19-inch-plus fish accounted for 50 percent. The biggest flathead sampled in 2010 weighed 3.50 pounds. As the water starts warming up, these fish will be coming up shallow to feed, so best fishing will be in the upper ends of coves and shallow areas using shad sides and gizzards. Also, the channels should be up in Bow Creek and the North Fork Solomon Rivers with all the water that's coming in. These fish can be caught on rod and reel and/or setlines or trotlines using shad sides and gizzards, shrimp and stink or dip bait.

**WHITE CRAPPIE - Good.**

**BLACK CRAPPIE - Good.**

Both white and black crappie numbers are on the rise, due to the higher water levels. The high water levels this past year produced another good crappie spawn with 85 percent of the fall sample consisting of 3- to 8-inch fish. Hopefully these fish will recruit on up to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 15 percent of the sample being 8- to 15-inch fish. The density rating for white crappie at Kirwin (8 inches and above) is fifth, and for black crappie (8 inches and above) it ranks second among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2010 was a black crappie weighing 1.65 pounds and a white crappie weighing 1.55 pounds. Crappie should be concentrated around the North and South shore fish attractors and drop offs and can be caught using jigs, jigs tipped with minnows or small slab spoons and can be caught up in the shallows of coves and off the dam during the spawn using jigs or jigs tipped with minnows under a bobber.

**WALLEYE - Good.** There will be some catch and release this year since individuals in the 9- to 15-inch range accounted for 32 percent of the sample. However, there will be some nice catches of harvestable walleye - fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 61 percent, and fish in the 20- to 24-inch size range accounted for 7 percent of the 2010 fall sample. The density rating at Kirwin (15 inches and above) is eighth among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 4.20 pounds. These fish can be caught off the dam during the spawn in March and April casting jigs, Roadrunners or crankbaits. After the spawn, get those night crawlers out and fish the flats and drop offs. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**

**WHITE BASS - Good.** This population is currently dominated by fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 82 percent of the 2010 sample. Individuals in the 6- to 9-inch size range accounted for 12 percent and fish 9 to 12 inches long accounted for 4 percent. Most of the fish will be running in the 1- to 1.5-pound range. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 1.89

### Kirwin White Bass Continued

pounds. The density rating at Kirwin (9 inches and above) is eleventh amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Surface action should provide some exciting opportunities throughout the reservoir during the summer months as these fish chase shad, so keep an eye on the sky and find the gulls. Trolling diving lures should also entice these fish into biting.

**WIPERS - Good.** The supply is strong and the quality of this fishery is good as well. Individuals in the 6- to 15-inch size range accounted for 71 percent of the fall 2010 sample. Fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 25 percent, and fish 20 inches plus accounted for 4 percent. The density rating for wipers (12 inches and above) at Kirwin is eighth among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 6.29 pounds. Casting bucktail jigs into the wind along either side of the dam, Knob Hill, between Bluegill and Crappie points and around Cottonwood Grove could be productive. Also, look for some good top water action this summer on calm days as these fish feed on shad.

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### **2011 FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR**

As of April 6, 2011, the reservoir elevation was 6.71 feet below conservation pool. Usable ramps at this level include the East and West Leota Cove ramps and the Spillway ramp on the south side. **A creel census will be conducted at Sebelius from March thru October of this year.**

**BLACK BASS – Good.** The largemouth bass population is dominated by 8- to 12-inch fish accounting for 55 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 3- to 8-inch size range accounted for 8 percent of the sample, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 28 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 9 percent. The density rating for Sebelius largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is second among all reservoirs in the state. Good numbers of spotted bass are also present with 43 percent being in the 3- to 11-inch size range and 57 percent being in the 11 to 17 inch size range. The density rating for spotted

### Sebelius Black Bass Continued

bass (11 inches and above) is first among all reservoirs in the state this year. Spinner and artificial baits should work well in Leota Cove, along the dam, Shoen's Cove and up the river channel by the sandpit. Fish the rocky areas for the spots. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and spotted bass is in effect.**

**CHANNEL CATFISH – Good.**  
**FLATHEAD CATFISH – Fair.**

According to 2010 netting results, the supply of channel catfish is good with 17- to 24-inch fish being particularly plentiful. Individuals in the 11- to 15-inch size range accounted for 24 percent, fish 17- to 24-inches accounted for 56 percent, and fish 20 inches and above accounted for 25 percent of the sample. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 22.55 pounds. Also, flathead numbers are on the rise, and these big cats have become an important component of the catfish fishery. Individuals 14 to 18 inches long accounted for 33 percent and fish 18 inches plus accounted for 67 percent of the fall sample. The biggest flathead sampled in 2010 weighed 4.42 pounds. These fish can be caught off the public fishing dock when they congregate around the fish feeder, around Leota Cove, along the dam, up west by the Marsh Dike and around the Sandpit using shad sides and gizzards, night crawlers, stink bait or shrimp.

**BLACK CRAPPIE – Good.**  
**WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair.**

Currently, crappie are present in good numbers for blacks and fair numbers for whites. Both the black and white crappie had good spawns this past year, so hopefully they will recruit on up to make for some good fishing in the years to come. Crappie in the 2- to 5-inch size range accounted for 87 percent of the sample, fish in the 5- to 7-inch size range accounted for 2 percent and fish 8- to 15-inches accounted for 11 percent. While fish under three-quarters of a pound are likely to dominate the catch this year, some fish in the 1- to 1.5-pound range will be taken as well. The density rating for Sebelius black crappie (8 inches and above) is third among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest white crappie sampled weighed 0.89 pounds and the biggest

## Sebelius Crappie Continued

black crappie weighed 1.14 pounds. These fish can be found around the public fishing dock, marina slips, fish attractor's or up in the coves using jigs, jigs tipped with minnow under a bobber or small slab spoon.

**SAUGEYE - Good.**

**WALLEYE - Fair.**

Catch rates will be pretty good again this year, and the opportunity for harvest will low for saugeye and fair for walleye. The saugeye population is starting to come back with 8- to 15-inch fish accounting for 81 percent, fish 15 to 18 inches long accounted for 14 percent, and harvestable fish in the 18- to 26-inch size range accounted for 5 percent of the 2010 fall sample. Sebelius still holds the current state record (9.81 lbs.), which was caught in November 1998. The density rating at Sebelius (14 inches and above) is second among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest saugeye sampled weighed 6.38 pounds. The supply of walleye is fair with the majority of fish running in the 15- to 18-inch size range. The density rating at Sebelius (14 inches and above) is twelfth among all reservoirs in the state for walleye this year. The biggest walleye sampled weighed in at 2.03 pounds. Look for these fish to be up by the dam in March and April and then move to the flats in May, so get those jigs, crankbaits and night crawlers ready. **An 18-inch length limit is in effect for saugeye and walleye.**



*A 6.1 pound Sebelius Saugeye caught in the Fall of 2010*

**WIPERS - Good.** The supply is strong, and the quality of this fishery is good, as well. Fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range are especially plentiful with larger fish available, as well. Individuals in the 7- to 12-inch size range accounted for 9 percent, fish 12 to 15 inches long accounted for 59 percent, fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 23 percent and larger fish (20 inches plus) accounted for 9 percent. The biggest wiper sampled in the fall of 2010 weighed 4.77 pounds. The density rating at Sebelius (12 inches and above) is second among all reservoirs in the state this year. Bucktail jigs that are cast into the wind along the north shore have been effective, as well as fishing night crawlers and shrimp on the bottom in Leota Cove and using live bait off the drop offs outside of Leota and Concrete coves. Could also be some good top water action this summer as these fish feed on shad.

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## Fishing Information

You can visit the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks website at [www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us) for a wealth of fisheries information. When you click on the fisheries tab at the top of the page you can access all kinds of information like fishing in Kansas, where to fish in Kansas, how to fish, fishing frequently asked questions (FAQ's), are fish safe to eat, tournaments, special fishing programs, aquatic nuisance species (ANS), hatcheries, fish stocking records, state record fish, fishing reports, fishing forecast, fish regulations, fishing fees, fish identification and public fishing images. If you can not find the information you are looking for from the website, you can call or stop by any of the area, park or regional offices.

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## Fishing Information Night Videos

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks conduct's Fishing Information Nights or FIN's as we call them. These meetings are usually held in middle to late February or early March and are informational meetings in which each biologist gives an outlook on the fishing for the upcoming year for the reservoirs that they manage. These presentations can be viewed at the following website:

<http://kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Fishing/Fishing-Forecast/Fishing-Info-Nights/2011-Presentations>

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## Creel Survey at Sebelius

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will be conducting a creel survey at Keith Sebelius Reservoir this season, which starts on March 1, 2011 and runs thru October 31, 2011. Therefore, we would appreciate it if anglers get approached by our creel clerk Larry Johnson, they take a few minutes to answer some questions so that we can get some good harvest and fishing pressure data for Sebelius Reservoir. Thank you for your patience and cooperation with this year's creel survey. Hope everyone gets out to do some fishing and especially to enjoy the great outdoors.



*Youth Fishing at Webster Stilling Basin*

The weather and water is starting to warm up, therefore, the fishing should also start getting better. If you get out fishing and would like to post a fishing report you can do so at <http://ksfishing.blogspot.com/>. We would really like to hear about your fishing trip.

Hopefully this newsletter has given you some information that will make your outings more pleasurable and memorable. So get out there, take a friend with you and take advantage of the many opportunities that are available. Good luck, be careful and enjoy the great outdoors.

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... and FISH KANSAS!**

