

New Strawn District Fisheries News

Spring 2013

Woodson Wildlife Area, 738 Fegan Rd., Toronto, KS 66777
www.kdwpt.state.ks.us justin.morrison@ksoutdoors.com Office: 620-637-2748

A New Season is Upon Us

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 A New Season
- 2 Coffey County Lake Fishing Forecast
- 3 Woodson State Lake Fishing Forecast
- 4 Future Plans for John Redmond
- 5 Gridley City Lake: A Renewed Fishery
- 6 2013 Baitfish Regulations
- 7 Fish ID Quiz

Welcome to another exciting edition of New Strawn Fisheries News. It is the start of a new fishing season for some anglers, but for others fishing season is never really over. The mild winter temperatures have provided some good winter time fishing. But springtime is fast approaching and with spring comes great fishing opportunities.

As the waters begin to warm anglers are going to wonder where they should go for successful fishing trips. One tool that anglers like to use is the annual fishing forecast KDWPT publishes after the first of the year.

So how does the lakes in the New Strawn District stack up against other lakes in the state? Well, overall the New Strawn District will not be lacking in good opportunities this year. In this newsletter, I will highlight the best opportunities in the district. For the complete 2013 fishing forecast, log on to <http://www.kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Fishing/Fishing-Forecast>.

Coffey County Lake

Smallmouth Bass - Good - Coffey County Lake has a great smallmouth bass population. Smallmouth bass were the second most caught species of 2012 in Coffey County Lake. A total of 71 fish were sampled with the largest fish weighing in just over 3 lbs. Coffey County Lake should be on any bass angler's list of lakes to fish this year.

Blue Catfish - Good - Coffey County also contains a good population of blue cats. A total of 69 blue cats were sampled in the fall with the largest fish weighing in at 21 lbs. I have received multiple angler reports of fish over 20 lbs. and fish up to 50 lbs. have even been caught. In 2012, 1,200 blue cats were caught and released and only 459 were harvested. If you are a die-hard blue cat angler and have not tried Coffey County I would suggest you do because large fish are available, catching them just requires a little patience and luck.

Crappie - Good - Crappie fishing will be good again this year. This is a low density population, but that is good because it allows these fish to grow bigger faster. A total of 49 white crappie were sampled during fall netting, but 73% of these fish were over 10" and 24% of those fish were over 12". Trophy sized crappie are out there, laying and waiting for that irresistible bait to be dropped in front of their nose.

White Bass - Good - White Bass has accounted for the most caught and most harvested fish in Coffey County Lake for the past two years. The population is in good shape with 82% of the sampled fish measuring over 12". White bass provide an excellent catch and release opportunity for anglers who are just looking to catch anything. These fish are easily caught year round on small jigs and spinners and like their hybrid counter-part (wiper) they put up a good fight.

Channel Catfish - Good - Along with the previous species listed channel cat fishing will also be good. The fall sample showed good numbers of channel cats, but we did not see anything bigger than 5lbs. I'm sure larger fish are in the lake, but sometimes we just don't see them show up in a sample. There is a lot of nice harvestable sized fish in the lake which should satisfy most anglers who are looking for a nice catfish dinner.

Woodson State Fishing Lake

Largemouth Bass - Fair to Good - Electro-fishing for largemouth bass was not completed last spring due to lack of personnel. However, past data indicates that the largemouth bass population is turning around after being diagnosed with Largemouth Bass Virus in 2007. Catch rates are almost back to the ideal 100 fish/hr., and should provide some good angling opportunities this year.

Channel Catfish - Fair - Fall sampling only indicates a fair population of channel catfish. Most of the fish that were sampled were stock sized fish (11"-16"), and the biggest fish sampled only weighed 3.8 lbs. Woodson has a reputation for producing large channel catfish, and many catfish over 10 lbs. were seen at the feeders during the summer so it could be that my sample is not a good representation of the population.

Crappie - Fair - The total catch for crappie in the fall sample was substantially lower than previous years, but as with the catfish sample, I don't think this is an accurate representation of the population. The data is showing a decline in the larger fish which may be suggesting the population is becoming stunted. I have proposed a change in the crappie regulation, but it will not go into effect until 2014 if the regulation change is approved.

Wiper - Fair - Fall sampling showed a low abundance of wipers, however, all of the fish sampled were over 15" and the largest fish weighed in just over 5lbs. Wipers were stocked in 2011, but these stocked fish were not evident in the fall sample. The current population should provide some exciting action if you are able to find them.



Low water levels at Woodson State Lake allowed us to make improvements on the shoreline habitat.

Future Plans for John Redmond

Sometime this year the conservation pool of John Redmond will be increased two feet to help maintain the water demands downstream of the reservoir. The Kansas Water Office is also proposing a dredging project for the reservoir. Previous studies and surveys have prompted this dredging project because it was found that the reservoir would not be able to meet the water demands in the near future. If you are interested in learning more about what is planned for the reservoir, log on to http://www.kwo.org/projects_programs/JohnRedmondDredging.html .

Gridley City Lake: A Renewed Fishery

The lake is full, well almost full, and the fish are stocked and are waiting for anglers like you to throw them a line! A project that was started by former KDWPT fisheries biologist Leonard Jirak has reached completion and is scheduled to open for fishing on May 1st and a grand public opening is scheduled for May 5th. Species stocked in Gridley City Lake include largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, blue catfish, wiper, black crappie, bluegill, and redear sunfish. Fall netting at Gridley City Lake showed that most species stocked exhibited excellent growth last year, and should provide some exciting angling action this year. Many species have already reached a harvestable size including channel catfish, blue catfish, largemouth bass, bluegill, and maybe a few walleye. This lake will be an excellent spot to take a youngster fishing. So get your rod and reel ready to go because opening day is coming and I am anticipating lots of rod bending action!

2013 Baitfish Regulations

The baitfish regulations of last year were amended for 2013 to allow wild caught bluegill and green sunfish to be used as bait **IF** they are taken from NON-ANS-DESIGNATED water. If wild-caught baitfish are caught in a flowing stream or river, they shall not be transported upstream across any dam or natural barrier. Anglers who purchase bait from a commercial dealer are required to carry the receipt for the live baitfish purchase while fishing. If you have not reviewed the new regulations for 2013, please pick up a copy of the fishing regulations at your local KDWPT office or license dealer. On the next page you will find pictures of fish that are commonly used as bait. It is very important that anglers are able to identify what they are fishing with and what they are catching in order to prevent the further spread of unwanted species. Test your ID skills on the next page and see if you can spot any ANS species. More information on the state's ANS can be found in the 2013 fishing regulations or online at <http://www.kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Fishing/Aquatic-Nuisance-Species> .

See if you can identify the following species.



1. Bluegill 2. Green Sunfish 3. Gizzard Shad 4. (All ANS) From Top: Silver Carp, Grass Carp, and Bighead Carp 5. (ANS) White Perch 6. White Bass

Questions or Comments?

Please contact Justin Morrison

Office: (620) 637-2748

E-Mail: justin.morrison@ksoutdoors.com

