

Tuttle Creek Fisheries Newsletter Summer 2013

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What is F.I.S.H.?

The acronym F.I.S.H. stands for Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats. This is a state wide program where Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism leases private property from the landowner to allow public fishing access. The goal of this program is to increase the number of places to fish and to expand the diversity of fishing opportunities around the state.

There are a variety of waters enrolled in F.I.S.H.; from a typical farm pond and small prairie stream, to small lakes and large river access points. This leads to a wide range of fish species available in the different water types. All ponds are stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. Some of the larger impoundments are stocked with other species, such as: crappie, redear sunfish, or walleye. A few of the stream stretches offer chances to catch smallmouth or spotted bass. The river spots have typical riverine fish, such as flathead catfish, blue catfish, white bass, carp and many more, like shovelnose sturgeon. You can catch about anything that swims in Kansas by going to some of the different F.I.S.H. locations around the state.

The Manhattan District is rich with F.I.S.H. waters. Below is a table with the available F.I.S.H. locations in each county.

County	Number of		
	Ponds	Stream Stretches	River Access
Washington	12	3	1
Marshall	13		2
Nemaha	17		
Riley	5	1	
Pottawatomie	10	1	1
Wabaunsee	4	1	2

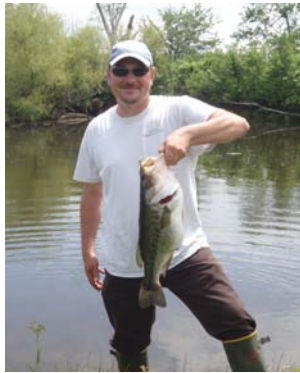
One of these ponds is in the middle of a housing development in the North East part of Manhattan and another you have probably seen on the South side of I-70 near Paxico.



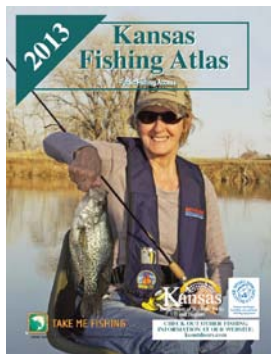
Pond in City of Manhattan



Rural pond in Pottawatomie Co.



Sampling a Wabaunsee Co. F.I.S.H.



What is F.I.S.H.?

Most of the F.I.S.H. properties in the Manhattan District can be accessed from major roadways or a short drive down a gravel road. The rest of them are off the beaten path a bit, which may require going down a limited maintenance road or hiking across a pasture to get to the water. It does take a little sense of adventure to go out and find some of these properties. However, those fishing holes offer anglers the chance at seclusion on a low use area.

Unlike most of the public fishing waters in Kansas, there is not much sampling done on F.I.S.H. ponds on an annual basis. It is difficult to get a big boat in a lot of these ponds and with the large number of ponds it is hard to keep up every year. So, unfortunately, I cannot tell which of these ponds will be the best in any particular year. However, I am always surprised at how good some of these ponds are for bass, bluegill, and crappie. In addition, every pond is stocked with channel catfish every few years, so there is always some available.

The Kansas Fishing Atlas has the location of all public fishing spots in the state; including F.I.S.H. ponds, streams, and river sites. You can find the atlas at KDWP offices, local vendors, or online at ksoutdoors.com. F.I.S.H. locations are open to public access either year-round or March 1st through October 31st. The time frame open is posted at each property or it is stated in the atlas. The atlas will also tell you if boats are allowed and how many acres a pond is or how many miles of stream are open. Impounded F.I.S.H. waters have a daily creel limit of two channel catfish and two largemouth bass. In addition, the largemouth bass need to be 18 inches or longer to keep them. All other Kansas fishing regulations and statewide creel limits apply.

I hope you take the opportunity to visit some of the many private waters open to public access through F.I.S.H. Good luck on your next fishing adventure!

New Fish Stocking

The fishery at Centralia City Lake has been struggling the last few years. Invasion of the common carp has nearly wiped out aquatic vegetation at the lake. Loss of this habitat has greatly reduced the largemouth bass population. Unfortunately, due to some limited stocking success from 2006 through 2009, saugeye numbers are below average for the lake. These reduced numbers of large predators has allowed white crappie densities to get quite high, resulting in a stunted population of smallish crappie. In addition, the gizzard shad population is expanding, which will likely only worsen the small crappie problem. High densities of shad can inhibit young fish growth via competition for food and shad can quickly grow too large for small crappie to feed on them. To help rectify these problems, wiper were stocked at the lake this spring. Wiper are a large, open-water predator that will help keep gizzard shad numbers in check and reduce the numbers of small crappie so a higher percentage can grow to 10 inches or more. Wiper will also provide an additional angling opportunity at the lake. Wiper densities and their effect on other fish species will be closely monitored in the future to evaluate the impacts of this additional species at the lake. The wiper stocked this spring should grow to about 10 inches by this fall. Anglers may start catching some of these small wipers yet this summer. The statewide wiper creel limit is two per day.

Black Bass Sampling Results

Every spring fisheries biologists around the state use generator powered electrofishing boats to sample waters in their districts for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. These fish are then weighed, measured, and released. Then biologists use this data to assess these bass populations by looking at things like body condition, size structure, and abundance. For electrofishing, abundance is determined by how many fish we collect per hour. This can vary some, depending on habitat types, water clarity, temperature, etc. Regardless, this is still an important statistic for anglers because these numbers can be used to speculate which lakes will have the better bass fishing in a particular year.

Below are two tables: one for largemouth bass and one for smallmouth bass from waters in the Manhattan District that were sampled in 2013. Very small fish were not included in these tables. Data was rounded to the nearest whole number. Lakes are in no particular order.

Largemouth Bass Waters	Fish/hour	Percentage in each length group			
		8 - 12"	12 - 15"	15 - 20"	20 - 25"
Pottawatomie SFL #1	289	56	34	10	
Pottawatomie SFL #2	155	49	28	21	2
Shawnee SFL	94	21	21	57	1
Washington SFL	25	60	40		
Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake	5		63	37	
Centralia City Lake	19	5	21	63	11
Pottawatomie Cross Creek Lake	109	50	44	6	
Nemaha Wildlife Area Pond	129	21	75	4	



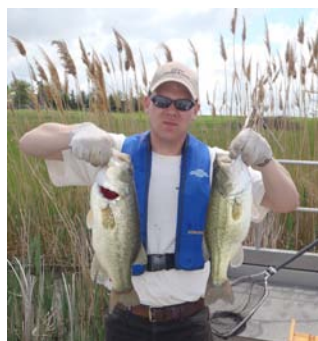
Smallmouth Bass Waters	Fish/hour	Percentage in each length group			
		7 - 11"	11 - 14"	14 - 17"	17 - 20"
Pottawatomie SFL #2	10	58	17	25	
Jeffrey Make-Up Lake	12		85	15	
Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake	15	44	40	16	



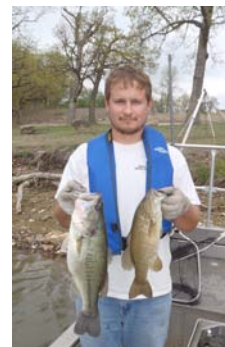
The number of fish collected per hour gives you an idea of how dense the population of bass is at a particular lake. The percentage of the fish that were collected in each length category tells you what size fish you can expect to catch. For example, looking at the largemouth bass data, there were fewer fish per hour at Shawnee SFL than Pottawatomie SFL #1. However, Shawnee SFL has a much higher percentage of 15 to 20 inch fish. Another example would be Centralia City Lake: the number of bass per hour was low, but most of the fish sampled were large. In general, looking at this data can help you determine where you would like to try bass fishing. Overall, I believe the Manhattan District has some really good black bass fishing this year.



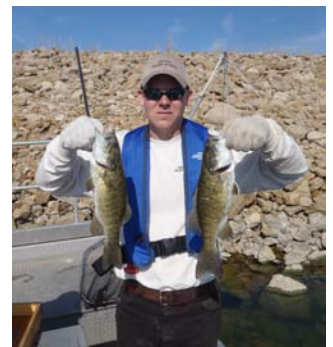
Shawnee State Fishing Lake



Centralia City Lake



Pottawatomie SFL #2



Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake