

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT FISHING NEWSLETTER

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Special Points of Interest:

- *Early-spawn largemouth bass project off to a good start*
- *Brushpile fish attractors refurbished at Olathe—Cedar Lake*
- *Urban fishing program provides good catfish angling opportunities*

BIOLOGIST NOTES

Mother Nature played yet another trick on me this spring that affected our walleye egg collection efforts at Hillsdale Reservoir. Last year, the walleye work crew was wearing t-shirts during the project due to the above average temperatures, but this year was the complete opposite. Below average temperatures caused everyone to bundle up in every piece of thermal clothing they own. I had to get to the lake early every morning to chisel the ice out from the drain on the boat to put the drain plugs in! Water temperatures were 39 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit, so our walleye catch rates were somewhat low this year. Overall, we collected 14 million eggs at Hillsdale Reservoir this spring. We worked hard for what we captured, but we were able to collect enough walleye eggs to meet the statewide demand. Once the warmer spring weather finally arrived, we were able to complete our spring electrofishing surveys to evaluate largemouth bass populations in area lakes. You can read highlights from the spring electrofishing surveys later in this issue. The arrival of summer means the busy season for our aquatic education program. Cur-

rently, we have conducted 32 kids fishing clinics with a total just over 1,100 participants. I hired two seasonal employees to help with the fishing clinics and other projects this summer. Amber and Dylan have done a great job this summer helping with numerous projects. I also hired a creel clerk (Dennis) to conduct a creel survey on Hillsdale Reservoir. If Dennis interviews you at Hillsdale, please be courteous and provide the requested information to help us get a handle on fishing pressure and harvest at Hillsdale Reservoir. We helped the US Army Corps of Engineers with the addition of some deep water habitat into Hillsdale Reservoir this summer. Brushpiles were created in 18-20 ft. of water to provide summer and winter fish habitat (see GPS locations at right). I also provided an update on our early-spawn largemouth bass project at Hillsdale Reservoir in this newsletter issue. The project utilizes a new technique to improve the bass population at Hillsdale Reservoir. It is going to take some time to be able to evaluate the project on largemouth bass population at Hillsdale Reservoir, but so far it is going well. Good luck and good fishing!



My 2013 seasonal fisheries staff, Dylan and Amber.



NEW brushpiles installed near Marysville area of Hillsdale Reservoir: Here are the GPS locations (Datum NAD83):

N38.67901 W094.89870, N38.67630 W094.89902, N38.67630 W095.90158, N38.67360 W094.90623, N38.67268 W094.90611



Amber holding a five lb. largemouth bass captured during spring electrofishing at Hillsdale Reservoir.

2013 KANSAS CITY DISTRICT ELECTROFISHING SUMMARY

Electrofishing is a fisheries technique we use in the spring of the year to evaluate largemouth bass populations in our district waters. Below is a brief summary of the 2013 sampling results:

Lake Lenexa: Spring electrofishing indicated a high density largemouth bass population. Although many of the largemouth bass are small, there are some nice bass as well. Our largest bass captured in 2013 was approximately 6.1 lbs.

Cedar Lake: Catch rate of largemouth bass was 84 fish/hr of electrofishing indicating a relatively high abundance. The largest bass captured weighed 4.7 lbs. This year was an anomaly with more smaller bass captured than previous years of sampling.

Gardner City Lake: Spring electrofishing indicated a relatively high abundance of largemouth bass with a catch rate of 157 fish/hr of electrofishing. Size structure improved slightly as more fish over 15 inches were captured in 2013 than in 2012. The biggest fish captured was 5.5 lbs.

Lake Olathe: Good numbers of largemouth bass were captured at Lake Olathe this spring (catch rate = 135 fish/hr of electrofishing). The biggest bass captured was 4.4 lbs.

Paola City Lake (Lake Miola): Catch rate of largemouth bass was 68/hr of electrofishing in 2013. A protected slot limit was enacted on this location in 2013. Hopefully the regulation will help improve the size structure of bass population. The biggest bass captured during electrofishing was 4.1 lbs.

Middle Creek State Fishing Lake: Spring electrofishing indicated a relatively low abundance of largemouth bass in 2013 with a catch rate of 15 fish/hr. A few larger individuals are available to anglers as the biggest fish captured was approximately 3 lbs. Habitat improvements are planned for this location to help improve this population.

Miami State Fishing Lake: Spring electrofishing indicated a high abundance of largemouth bass with a catch rate of 208 fish/hr of electrofishing. Due to the high density of bass, bass size structure is dominated

by small individuals. The biggest bass captured during spring electrofishing was 3 lbs. A protected slot limit is proposed for 2014 to help improve the size structure of the bass population.

Hillsdale Reservoir: Catch rate of largemouth bass during electrofishing was 10 fish/hr indicating a low relative abundance of bass. Some larger fish are available to anglers as the biggest bass captured was 5 lbs. (see above photo). A project aimed at improving the largemouth bass population is in progress at Hillsdale Reservoir (see page 3).

Osawatomie City Lake: Catch rate of largemouth bass was 380 fish/hr of electrofishing in 2013. Size structure metrics indicated that the largemouth bass population is dominated by small individuals. A protected slot limit is in effect at this location. Harvest of bass <13 inches is encouraged to help improve the population.

PROJECT UPDATE: STOCKING EARLY-SPAWN BASS AT HILLSDALE RESERVOIR



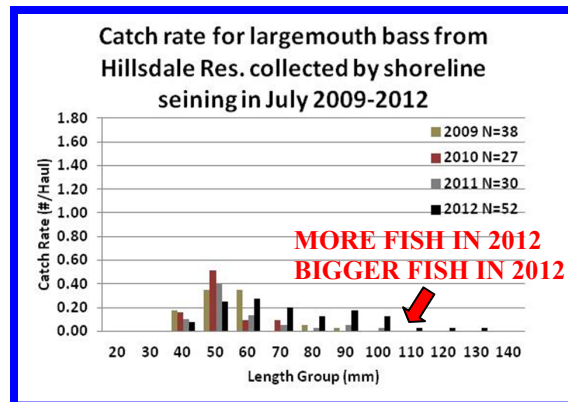
Meade Fish Hatchery Bass Building.



A volunteer stocking fingerling bass into American water willow.



Fingerling largemouth bass stocked in 2013.



Graph Courtesy of R. Marteny.

Largemouth bass are a popular sportfish in Kansas. In a 2006 Kansas Licensed Angler Survey, largemouth bass were the most favored fish among Kansas anglers. In general, largemouth bass populations tend to excel in ponds and small lakes, but are often limited in the larger federal reservoirs. When a reservoir initially fills with water, the newly flooded vegetation provides nutrients and nursery habitat for young bass, therefore good largemouth bass populations develop. However, over time the productivity wanes and the flooded vegetation degrades causing declines in the largemouth bass populations. A new idea to improve bass populations is to produce early-spawned young bass so that they have a size-advantage to consume prey within the reservoir. Since 2010, KDWP's Meade Fish Hatchery has produced early-spawned bass by manipulating the photoperiod (length of daylight) and water temperature inside their facility. The result is larger sized young bass than what would be produced naturally in the reservoir. The early-spawned bass have been stocked into Hillsdale Reservoir since 2010. Since 2010, over 500,000 largemouth bass and over 500,000 bass fingerlings have been stocked into Hillsdale Reservoir. Early indications from the 2010 and 2011 stocking seem to indicate that some increase in the number and size of young bass at Hillsdale (see graph above). In 2013, genetic samples were collected from the parents of the offspring used for the 2013 stocking. During our annual population sampling, we will be able to collect DNA from the bass and determine whether it is a stocked fish or a naturally produced fish. Over time, we will be able to evaluate the contribution of the stocked fish to the fishery. If the stocked fish make a significant contribution to the bass population at Hillsdale, the early-spawned stocking program could be expanded to other reservoirs. Time will tell, but for now we will continue to stock bass fingerlings at Hillsdale and continue to evaluate the population through annual population sampling.

CFAP STORIES: REFURBISHED FISH ATTRACTORS AT OLATHE—CEDAR LAKE

Cedar Lake is a 56-acre small lake located at the intersection of I-35 and Lone Elm Rd in Olathe. Brushpiles were added to the lake many years ago to provide some cover for fish and also act as fish attractors for fishermen. The brushpiles are a cluster of Eastern Red Cedar trees tied together using heavy gauge wire. The trees are then weighted down using cement blocks to prevent the brushpiles from dislodging from their location. Over time the brushpiles become degraded and lose their quality for fish habitat and as a fish attractor. This summer my staff and I refurbished the brushpiles at Cedar Lake. There are a few brushpiles on the north side of the lake and one NEW brushpile on the south side of the lake. The brushpile on the south side of the lake is within casting distance of the handicap fishing pier. The brushpiles will likely be good locations to fish for largemouth bass and crappie. The largemouth bass population has excelled at Cedar Lake. Although the density of largemouth bass tends to be relatively low, the size structure of largemouth bass is dominated by larger bass. It is not uncommon for us to see a 5 to 6 lb. lunker bass during spring electrofishing sampling. The white crappie population tends to be dominated by smaller individuals. To help improve the size structure of the white crappie population, saugeye were introduced into the lake in 2004. The strategy for stocking saugeye is that the increased predation on white crappie by the saugeye will reduce competition for resources among the white crappie and improve their size. The white crappie population seems to have improved since 2004 with a few larger individuals starting to show up during fall sampling. In 2011, Cedar Lake was rated as the #1 small lake for white crappie fishing in the KDWPT Fishing Forecast. We need to continue to monitor the crappie population, but hopefully the white crappie population continues to improve, and the brushpiles will be a great place to try crappie fishing.



New brushpile located on south side of Olathe—Cedar Lake.



Dylan loading the boat with cedar trees for a new brushpile.

GOT CATISH? KDWPT'S URBAN FISHING PROGRAM IN KANSAS CITY

Channel catfish are a very popular sportfish in Kansas. In urban areas, sometimes the demand for channel catfish exceeds the supply. In efforts to improve channel catfishing opportunities in urban areas, Kansas Dept of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism (KDWPT) created the urban fishing program. Here's how it works: All metropolitan cities with a human population over 40,000 and that have public fishing waters are eligible for the program. KDWPT stocks channel catfish up to two times per month from April through September to help keep up with the demand for channel catfish. The channel catfish are between 3/4-1 1/2 lbs and are purchased from a commercial fish farmer. The Kansas City District has 22 waters enrolled in the urban fishing program, so wherever you live in the Kansas City metro area, there is a channel catfish stocking location nearby. Here is a list of the Kansas City District waters in the program:

Bonner Springs North Park Lake	Olathe—Stagecoach Pond
Lenexa—Mize Lake	Olathe—Frisco Pond
Lenexa—Lake Lenexa	Olathe—Waterworks
Lenexa—Rose's Pond	Olathe—North Waterworks
Overland Park—South Lake	Olathe—Oregon Trail Pond
Overland Park—Wilderness Lake	Olathe—Cedar Lake
Overland Park—Kingston Lake	Leawood—Tomahawk North
Overland Park—Regency Lake	Leawood—Tomahawk South
Olathe—Black Bob Pond	Leawood—Ironwoods Pond
Olathe—East High School Pond	Lake Olathe (stocked 2x)
Olathe—Mahaffie Farm Pond	Gardner City Lake (stocked 2x)



A bucket of channel catfish stocked via the Urban Fishing Program.