



# Kansas City District Fisheries Newsletter

## *Biologist's Notes*

It has been a very active summer here in the Kansas City District and again the time seemed to pass by in blur. It has been a fairly wet summer as a number of large and flashy rain events occurred in the Kansas City area. The latest big event occurring on the evening of August 21st and morning of August 22nd, greatly raising the water levels of some area waterbodies, especially in the southern part of the district. Hillsdale Reservoir went up 8 feet in 24 hours. Time will tell how this high water will ultimately affect fish populations. Although, high water will add nutrients and food to the system boosting productivity, the duration of the high water and the rate of releases may cause some fish to be flushed from the system.

There were many other activities occurring in the Kansas City District during summer 2017. Spring largemouth bass sampling was completed (summary on Page 2). The Urban Channel Catfish Stocking Program was continued, stocking catchable size channel catfish (12-18 inches; 0.75 to 1.5 pounds average per fish) at 20 waterbodies across the Kansas City District (14,845 pounds of channel catfish stocked in 2017). Also, numerous youth aquatic education and fishing events were held during the summer, many conducted with the outstanding assistance of the Fishing's Future organization (I personally want to express my gratitude for their continued support).

As we transition to the fall season, remember that great fishing opportunities still exist. Forage fish, such as young-of-year gizzard shad are very abundant in the fall. As water temperatures cool, game fish become more active and feed on forage fish to fatten up for winter. For best success, match baits to the prey base of your particular waterbody and hold on for some action. Good luck and **get out there and fish!**

"takemefishing"

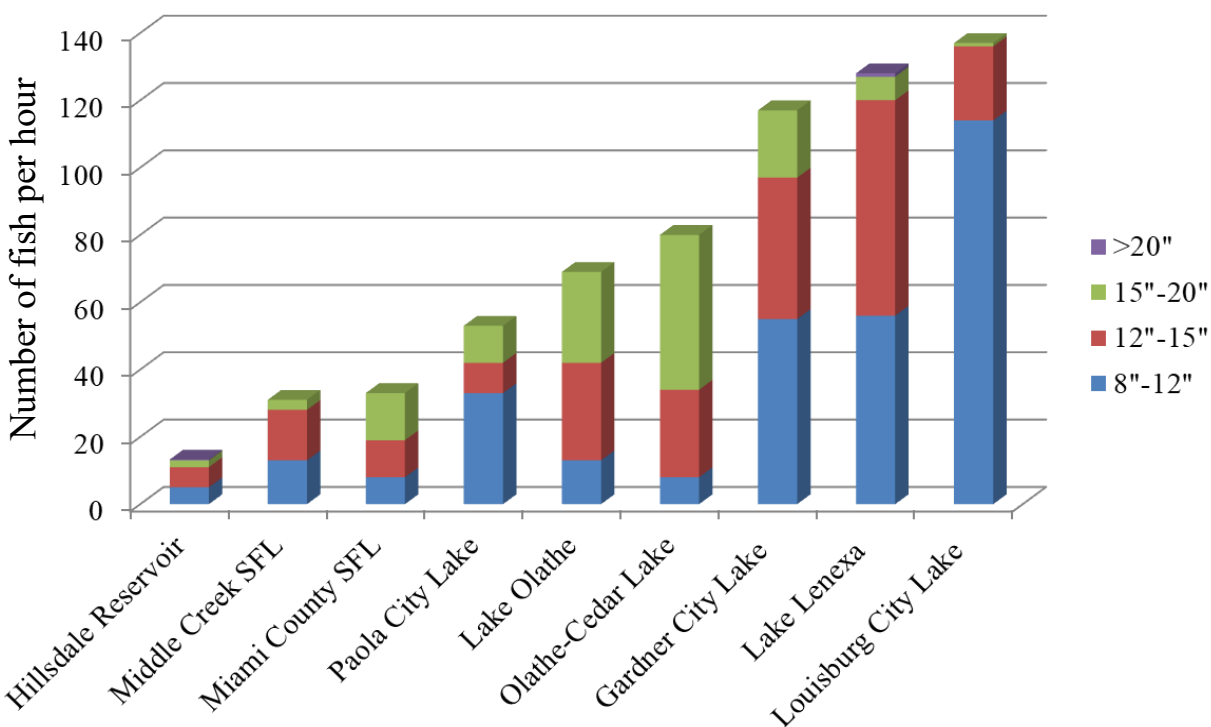


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## 2017 Kansas City District Largemouth Bass Spring Sampling Summary

Fisheries biologists use a variety of gear to sample fish depending on species, season, and environmental conditions. Every spring, district fisheries biologists around the state use electrofishing boats to assess black bass populations. Black bass sampling is conducted during the spring when the bass are in shallow waters and can be caught more efficiently. This sampling allows biologists to assess relative abundance, length structure, and condition of black bass populations. Below is the largemouth bass sampling summary for the Kansas City District in 2017. This information is a good guide to current largemouth bass populations at some area waterbodies. As the figure below shows, there is good size structure to the largemouth bass population in several waterbodies (e.g., Lake Olathe, Olathe-Cedar Lake, and Gardner City Lake), and some other waterbodies have very high abundance of smaller largemouth bass (e.g., Lake Lenexa and Louisburg City Lake).



*KDWPT Conservation Officer Vince Wonderlich displays a nice Gardner City Lake largemouth.*



*Prime examples of Olathe-Cedar Lake largemouth bass.*

## Hillsdale Reservoir Walleye Population: A Deeper Look

Walleye are a much sought after species at Hillsdale Reservoir. In the Kansas City District Spring 2017 Newsletter, I wrote about the Hillsdale Reservoir crappie population and illustrated some factors that are currently shaping some characteristics of the crappie population (see <http://ksoutdoors.com/content/download/48730/495727/version/1/file/KC+District+Fish+News+Spring+17.pdf> for more Hillsdale crappie information). Given the popularity of walleye at Hillsdale Reservoir, I will discuss management, regulations, and characteristics of the current Hillsdale walleye population.

Hillsdale Reservoir is currently 1 of 2 waterbodies in the state of Kansas which is used as a broodstock waterbody for walleye (the other being Cedar Bluff Reservoir; walleye eggs are also collected at El Dorado Reservoir for saugeye production). Hillsdale and Cedar Bluff Reservoirs provide enough walleye eggs to produce walleye fry and fingerlings to stock in waters statewide! The current walleye regulations at Hillsdale Reservoir are primarily aimed at protecting the broodstock fish. The current walleye regulation at Hillsdale Reservoir is an 18 inch minimum length limit with a 5 fish daily creel limit. By and large, we feel the regulations are achieving the goal of broodstock protection.



*Eggs being collected from female walleye.*

Fish populations are dynamic, internal and external environmental forces can cause changes in population characteristics (e.g., survival, recruitment, harvest, emigration, etc.). Annually, each fall, we use nets to sample and evaluate fish populations. We evaluate relative abundance, population size structure, and fish condition. Performance of regulations is always a consideration during this evaluation. During spring walleye egg collection efforts I also evaluate adult walleye size structure and sex ratio (male to female). Kansas walleye populations in general are characterized by fast individual growth, limited recruitment, and high harvest rates.



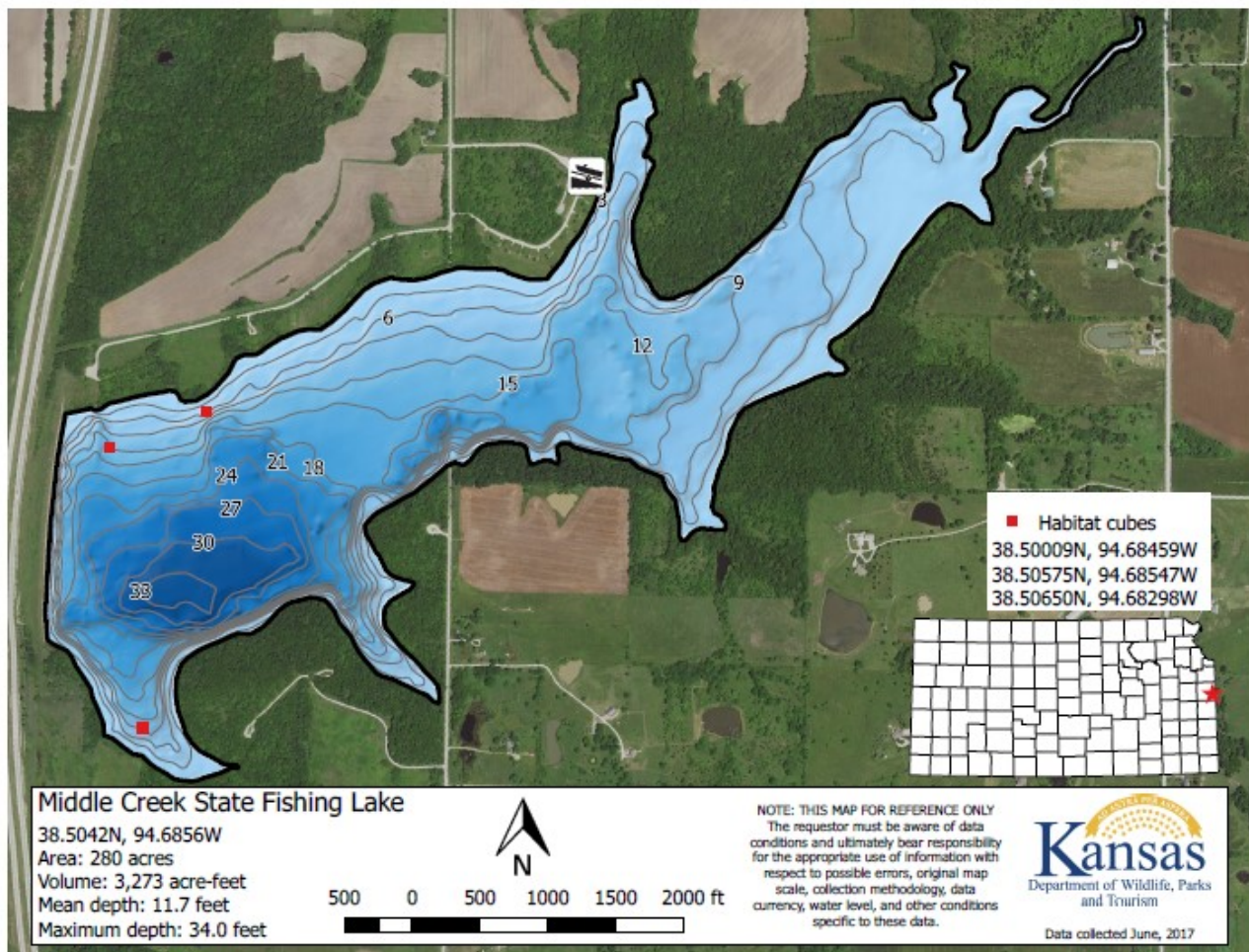
*Sampling walleye at Hillsdale Reservoir.*

Currently the Hillsdale walleye population is dominated by 13-17 inch fish. Anglers have had a lot of success catching this size of fish in 2017, with not a lot of success catching harvestable size fish (> 18 inches). I suspect this is because of very large year classes of fish from 2014 and 2015. This is not necessarily a bad thing, it just means a very large proportion of the population is made up of these year classes and size range. There are still many > 18 inch walleye to be caught, but due to sheer numbers of 2014 and 2015 fish, they are proportionally a minority. Hopefully these strong year classes hold on through time, thus translating to higher abundance of large walleye in the future. This fall I plan to age some of the walleye sampled to further evaluate year class strength and growth. Look for updates in the future.



*Next generation of a Hillsdale Lunker.*

## Bathymetric Maps Now Available From KDWPT



There are bathymetric maps of select community lakes and state fishing lakes now available on the KDWPT website or you can reach them by following this link <http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas/Bathymetric-Lake-Maps>. Staff from the KDWPT Emporia Research Office mapped the waterbodies over the past year. Maps will be used for both management activities and as an invaluable resource for anglers to locate favorable fishing spots. Locations of added artificial habitat structures (indicated by red squares) and other points of interest are also included on the maps if available. Mapping of more waterbodies might be available in the future.

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