



Woodson District Fisheries News

Summer 2018

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Woodson State Fishing Lake Update



The spillway project at Woodson State Lake is still ongoing, and now we are anticipating a completion date of early fall. Even though this project is taking longer than anticipated, I like to look at the silver lining. The delayed completion of the project has allowed the lake to grow a tremendous amount of smartweed throughout the whole lake bottom. The smartweed is probably 6 feet tall and will play an integral part in fish production when stocking time rolls around. Along with the smartweed, cottonwood and willow trees are sprouting in some areas and will provide additional habitat when the lake fills. When the lake refills and this vegetation is flooded, it will create a scenario called trophic upsurge (a fancy term that basically means really productive water). This “really productive water” scenario can last several years and will help form the backbone of the fish population. Fish growth will be outstanding and will provide some excellent fishing opportunities for all species stocked.

Now let's talk about the habitat improvements we've made to the lake. Since my last newsletter I have added 90 more Georgia Cubes, which pushed the total amount of cubes in the lake to just over 200. Many different large clusters of cubes were placed around the lake. I placed many cubes around the piers on the East side of the lake to enhance the shoreline fishing opportunities. I also focused on areas that were near large drop-offs or near the creek channel that runs through the lake. We have also added more than 100 brush piles to the lake. The brush piles will range in depth from 3 feet down to 25 feet. I have marked all habitat locations with my GPS but have not created a map yet or posted the new locations online.



This picture was taken near the boat ramp looking southeast across the lake.



Looking North from the same spot as previous photo.

Springtime Electrofishing Results



Lake	Total	Stock CPUE	RSD S-Q (8-12")	RSD Q-P (12-15")	RSD P-M (15-20")	RSD M-T(20-25")	Biggest Fish
Gridley City Lake	112	140	5	89	7	0	1.81
Garnett North Lake	256	183	29	46	24	0.42	4.65
Yates Center City Lake	219	145	41	43	16	1	5
Garnett South Lake	148	218	6	63	29	2	5.2
Y.C. South Owl	103	65	31	47	22	0	3.68
Coffey County Lake	37	13	3	49	48	0	3.3
Garnett Cedar Creek	191	83	24	34	36	6	5.79
Lebo City Lake	68	44	13	45	42	0	3.26

The table above shows the electrofishing results of each lake sampled this year. CPUE or catch per unit effort is used to define how many bass stock length (8") or greater are caught in the amount of time sampled. The other columns depict the percentage of fish for each length group sampled. Catch rates of largemouth bass went largely unchanged from the previous year according to the spring electrofishing survey. High-density bass populations still include Garnett North Lake, Garnett South Lake, Yates Center City Lake, and Gridley City Lake. I consider Garnett Cedar Valley Reservoir the best largemouth fishery in my district. The density is not quite as high as the previous lakes mentioned, but the quality of bass available is outstanding. This population has excellent growth supported by good gizzard shad production and a stunted crappie population. Garnett South Lake was sampled for the first time in two years and it is still boasting an excellent bass population for a small body of water. We saw 30 percent of our sample represented by fish over 15 inches, which is 11.5 percent higher than the previous sample conducted in 2016. Garnett North Lake produced the highest catch rate during the spring survey. We sampled 256 largemouth bass in 1.3 hours, which yielded a catch rate of just over 183 fish/hour of electrofishing. Usually when lakes have densities this high, populations tend to be skewed towards smaller fish that are typically skinny. Fortunately, this isn't the case at Garnett North due to highly productive water that can support large populations of fish. The bass sampled at North Lake were healthy and the numbers are indicating a well-balanced population.



Blue Catfish Sampling



Summertime electrofishing for blue catfish continued at John Redmond and Coffey County Lake. This year at John Redmond, we more than doubled our sample from last year, catching 219 blue cats. The sample was dominated by fish less than 12 inches long, which made up almost 71 percent of the total catch. We caught 65 blues that ranged from 12-20 inches, which are considered stock length fish, and only one fish over 20 inches was caught. The fish pictured above was 27 pounds, and we found three around that size while we were scouting one day, but we were unable to find the bigger fish during the official sample. Fish weighing up to 30 pounds have been reported by anglers, but they are not as numerous as the small fish right now. It is evident that the blues have had some successful spawns in recent years and if the fish will stay in the lake they should grow well.

Our sample at Coffey County Lake was not as good as the previous year as far as total catch and number of bigger fish sampled. We only sampled 65 fish this year compared to 182 last year. This year we only caught two fish in the 30- to 35-inch range and two fish in the 35- to 45-inch range, and last year we captured 27 and 31 fish of the same respective lengths. I don't think the population has changed that much, we just had trouble finding fish in the sampling time frame. Of the 65 fish sampled, we caught 39 fish less than 20 inches. We were even able to sample some fish just over 4 inches (pictured on the right). Seeing these young fish is encouraging, and hopefully they can escape predation long enough to contribute to the population.



Clean, Drain, and Dry Your Boat



This is a picture of Eurasian Watermilfoil that was found at Gridley City Lake this summer. This is an invasive aquatic plant that spreads rapidly once it is established and can form dense mats that can be a hindrance to anglers and boaters. This serves as a reminder to clean all of your fishing equipment thoroughly when you leave a body of water. It only takes one little seed or plant fragment to transfer this plant from one body of water to the next.