

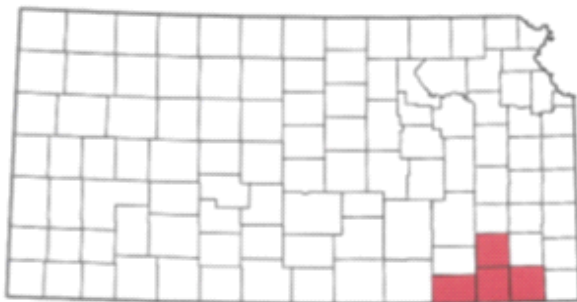
Independence District Fisheries

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Area Happenings

This spring and summer seem to have flown by. However, a lot has been done in the fisheries world here in Southeast Kansas. Everything from fish sampling and stocking to a new hatchery building being opened at the Farlington Fish Hatchery.

Our standardized sampling this spring included largemouth bass electrofishing at two state fishing lakes, one reservoir, six Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes, and two wildlife area ponds. This summer we also conducted our blue catfish electrofishing survey on Elk City Reservoir.



Area Happenings Cont...

In conjunction to our standardized sampling, we ran baited hoop nets to evaluate channel catfish populations in two state fishing lakes and two CFAP lakes. Saugeye were also stocked in Parsons City Lake (25,700 fingerlings), Sedan City Lake North (55,000 fry) and Sedan City Lake South (70,000 fry).



Above: Jacob Christiansen with a female walleye from El Dorado Reservoir. This female was one of many used to produce the saugeye that were stocked in area lakes.

Elk City Blue Catfish

On July 30, 2018 we conducted our electrofishing survey of blue catfish on Elk City Reservoir. This year was a little more difficult and the fish seemed more dispersed throughout the reservoir than last year. In total, we sampled 45 blue catfish at 13 different stations around the reservoir. Blue catfish sampled ranged in size from 9-22 inches, with the largest weighing 3 ½ pounds.

Even though we did not catch the larger size blue catfish in the reservoir, it was the smallest fish sampled that bring hope to the future of blue catfish in Elk City Reservoir. We were able to sample five blue catfish under 10 inches long, which were determined to be fish naturally reproduced in 2017. This is the first sign of blue catfish being able to self-sustain in the reservoir, with hopefully larger year classes in the coming years.

Although these sampling numbers are low and the larger blue catfish were not seen, I remain optimistic. The larger blue catfish seem more susceptible to fall gill net sampling, as last year we sampled fish up to 27 inches long. Fall gill netting will continue again this year on Elk City Reservoir to continue to monitor the population in the lake.

Remember that blue catfish in Elk City Reservoir are managed with a 35 inch minimum length limit, so please release blue catfish under 35 inches in total length. This regulation is put into place in order to protect fish until they can reproduce and become fully self-sustaining. Once we have determined that blue catfish have become self-sustaining the regulations will be reevaluated. I have included an identification guide in this newsletter to help distinguish blue catfish from channel catfish.



Above: Cory Janasek with an Elk City Reservoir blue catfish.



Above: Nine inch, age-1 blue catfish caught from Elk City Reservoir.

Left: Blue Catfish from Elk City Reservoir. Notice how flat the anal fin is on this blue catfish. This is a major identification indicator between blue and channel catfish.

Identification of Blue, Channel, and Flathead Catfish

In the past, blue catfish have been stocked in Kansas reservoirs to provide trophy opportunities to anglers. Recently, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks stocked blue catfish in El Dorado Reservoir in an attempt to control zebra mussel populations. Channel catfish are commonly stocked in small impoundments, such as community and urban lakes. Flathead catfish, while not stocked by the department, are found statewide especially in streams and rivers. All three of the catfish species listed below are native to at least part of the state.

It is important that anglers be able to identify what type of catfish they catch because length limits on blue, channel and flathead catfish can differ in a given body of water. During spawning, male channel catfish adopt a blue color and can be mistaken for blue catfish by anglers. Juvenile (fish 12 inches or under) channel catfish are the only catfish that have black or brown spots. The information below identifies additional key characteristics needed to identify these three fish.

color often pale blue, although white or dark blue and black not uncommon. small head followed by distinct hump in younger fish.

BLUE

Lower jaw even with upper jaw

weights of over 100 pounds reported



forked tail

anal fin longer with 30-35 supporting rays with flat edge



color often brownish-yellow with white belly, juveniles have black or brown spots, spawning males may be dark blue in color

CHANNEL

Lower jaw even with upper jaw

weights rarely over 30 pounds recorded



forked tail

anal fin shorter with less than 30 supporting rays with round edge



color often mottled brown/black and pale yellow

FLATHEAD

Lower jaw extends beyond upper jaw

weights of over 100 pounds reported



no forked tail (square)

anal fin shorter with less than 30 supporting rays with round edge

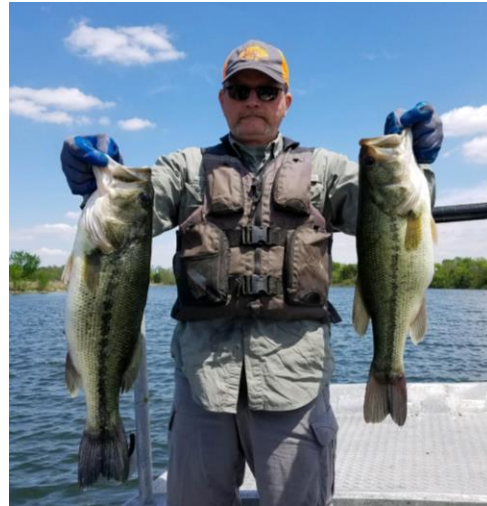
Artwork by Joseph R. Tomelleri



Largemouth Bass Sampling

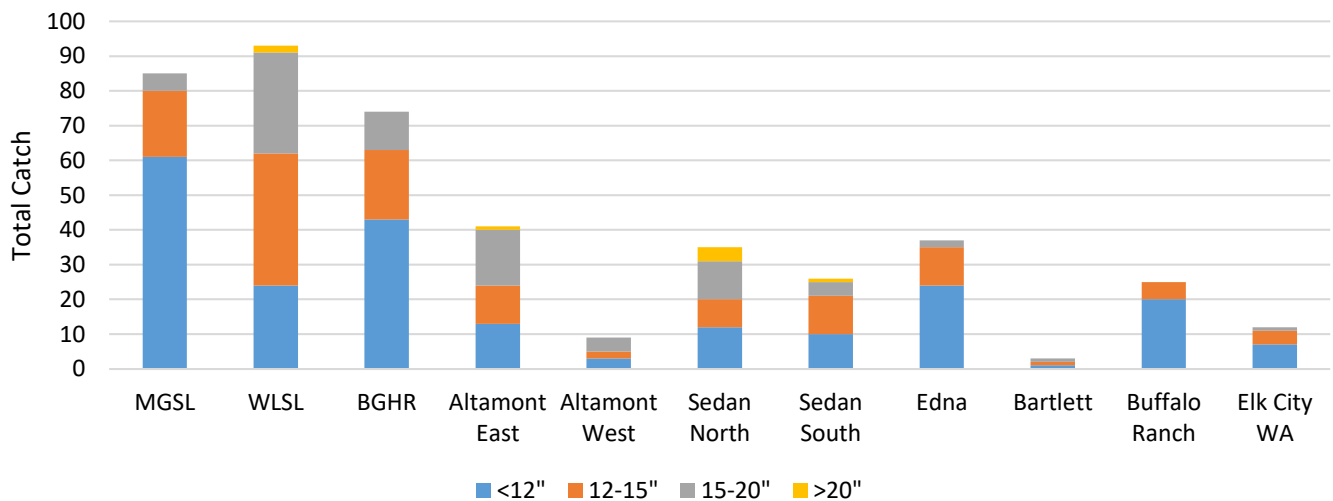
This spring we conducted our largemouth bass electrofishing surveys. I have summarized the data collected below, but overall we saw several lakes with quality bass fishing opportunities for you to take advantage of. This year we sampled:

- Montgomery State Fishing Lake (MGSL)
- Wilson State Fishing Lake (WLSL)
- Big Hill Reservoir (BGHR)
- Altamont City Lake East
- Altamont City Lake West
- Sedan City Lake North
- Sedan City Lake South
- Edna City Lake
- Bartlett City Lake
- Buffalo Ranch
- Elk City Wildlife Area Pond



Above: Bill Matney with 2 largemouth bass over 20 inches long from WLSL.

2018 Largemouth Bass Electrofishing Data





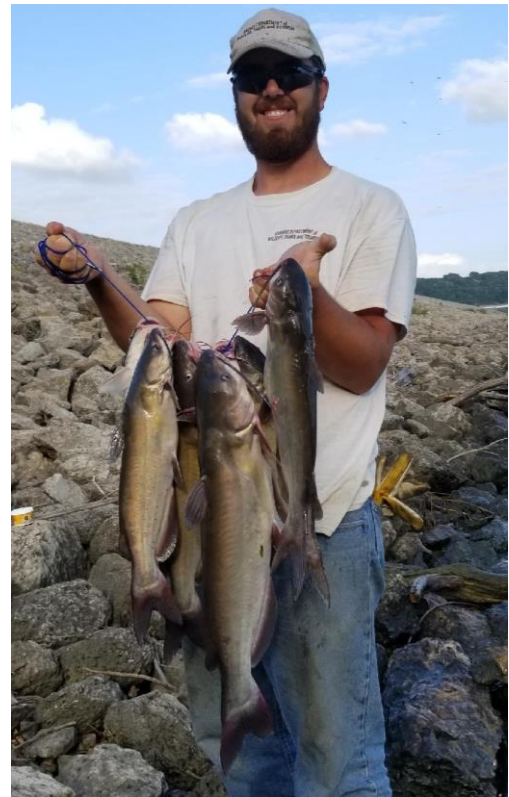
Above: Eric Lindquist holding a couple largemouth bass over 20 inches from Altamont City Lake East.

Channel Catfish Netting

This year we did some supplemental hoop netting to get a better sample of channel catfish. These hoop nets were set in July-August and baited with a soybean and cheese bait to lure catfish into the nets. Time allotted us to sample MGSL, WLSL, Sedan City Lake North and Sedan City Lake South.

At MGSL we were able to set 8 baited hoop nets and captured 266 channel catfish. Channel catfish ranged in size from 10-21 inches. Don't let the small size discourage you, 39.5% of the catfish sampled were 15-18 inches long. So there are plenty to keep the kids entertained or if you like that size for the fish fry.

We were also able to set 8 baited hoop nets at WLSL, which yielded a total of 134 channel catfish. The catfish in WLSL ranged in size from 10-22 inches in length, with the largest fish weighing 7 ½ pounds. There have also been a couple of channel catfish that we have witnessed come out of WLSL this year that have been over 20 pounds. If you are looking for quality size channel catfishing, as well as numbers of fish to keep you entertained, I would direct you to WLSL.



Above: Evan Orr with a nice stringer of channel catfish caught off the dam at Elk City Reservoir.

Channel Catfish Cont...

We also sampled Sedan City Lake North and South this summer with baited hoop nets. Each lake was sampled with 4 baited hoop nets. In Sedan North we were able to capture 187 channel catfish, while we caught 137 catfish in Sedan South. The catfish in Sedan North ranged from 10-26 inches, while Sedan South ranged from 8-23 inches. Both of the Sedan City Lakes offer great channel catfishing, with plenty of catfish of all sizes.



Above: Dave Clark, groundskeeper of MGSL, holding a nice flathead catfish that was sampled during our largemouth bass sampling at MGSL.



Above: Me holding a large flathead catfish sampled at BGHR while electrofishing for largemouth bass.

Final Thoughts

I want to thank everyone for taking the time to read about the happenings in the Southeast Kansas fisheries world. I hope that this summer has been full of fishing adventures for all of you, and that if you didn't catch the "big one" that some fun stories were made along the way. If you want any more fishing information please feel free to contact me at the information listed above or visit our website at <http://ksoutdoors.com/>

Happy Fishing!