

MILFORD DISTRICT FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

KDWPT

Fisheries Division

Spring 2019

Written By:

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A New Face (District Fisheries Biologist) in the Milford District

Hello Kansas anglers! My name is Brett Miller and I am the new District Fisheries Biologist in the Milford District. I began on September 17, 2018. I will be responsible for managing waterbodies in five counties (Clay, Geary, Riley, Dickinson, and Morris) in northeast Kansas. I am replacing John Reinke in this position as he is now the Region 2 Fisheries Supervisor. Thank you John for all the years you served this district. I am very excited to learn all that I can about these waterbodies and get to know the many anglers that utilize our resources regularly.

I was born in Sioux City, Iowa and raised in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa. I spent a lot of time growing up fishing with my Dad and Grandpa. I have been fortunate enough to fish states like Iowa, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Nebraska just to name a few. We primarily targeted species such as walleye, catfish, bass, northern pike, bluegills, and crappies.

I started my academic career at Iowa Lakes Community College where I received an A.S. in Environmental Studies/Management in 2012. I transferred to South Dakota State University to pursue my B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science degree where I graduated in 2014. In 2015, I began my graduate school career at the University of Nebraska at Kearney researching white bass and walleye in Harlan County Reservoir in Nebraska. I completed my M.S. degree in Biology in May 2017.

I have been fortunate to work in the fisheries profession in three states. My first fisheries position was helping a Ph.D. student conduct research on eastern South Dakota streams during my time at SDSU. Between my undergraduate and graduate careers, I worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Biological Science Technician in Pierre, SD working with the endangered pallid sturgeon on the Missouri River. After graduate school, I worked as a Conservation Technician II with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in

Kearney, NE conducting research primarily on Harlan County Reservoir and Lake McConaughy. Lastly, I was able to obtain a permanent position with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism as a District Fisheries Biologist based at Milford Reservoir.



Myself pictured with a blue sucker on the Missouri River in Nebraska

Milford Reservoir Results

Milford Reservoir experienced very high water levels in the fall of 2018 which made netting a little more difficult. While we were not able to assess crappie populations this fall, we were able to obtain data on our other sportfish. Blue catfish numbers were slightly lower in 2018 compared to 2017, but long-term have been above average. The largest blue catfish sampled this year weighed about 22 ½ pounds. Channel

catfish have remained steady while numbers appear to line with the five-year average. There were good numbers of wipers caught this year. Wipers numbers almost doubled from 2017-2018. Anglers can expect numbers of wipers to be similar to years past in Milford. The largest wiper sampled came in just under 6 pounds. White bass numbers reported in 2018 have been the highest they've been in five years which suggests that good white bass fishing may be right around the corner. Walleye numbers, in 2018, were lower than years past, but this could be a result of higher water levels impacting catch rates.



Emily Samuel, KSU student, pictured with two nice wipers from Milford



Blue catfishing can prove to be pretty good at Milford!

Council Grove Reservoir Results

Similar to Milford Reservoir, Council Grove Reservoir experienced high water levels in the fall of 2018. Crappie numbers remained consistent in 2018 compared to 2017. The largest white crappie caught in our nets was just over 1.5 pounds. Channel catfish and saugeye appeared to remain steady and consistent with previous catch rates. White bass and wiper numbers were identical in 2018 compared to 2017. The largest wiper sampled was just under 6 pounds.



Jacob Spear, KDWPT Game Warden, pictured with a nice Council Grove wiper!

Geary State Fishing Lake Results

Bluegill numbers (fish/net) in the fall of 2018 are the highest that have been reported over the last five years. However, higher numbers of smaller individuals outnumbered larger individuals. Crappie numbers appeared to be lower than the five-year average, but we will continue monitoring the population over time. Channel catfish numbers in 2018 have been on par with catch rates over the long-term average. Similar to channel catfish, saugeye numbers have also been consistent with previous years. White bass numbers appear to be the lowest in 2018 over the past 5 years averaging about 8 fish/net.

"New" Herrington City Lake Results

Crappie numbers remained consistent with the long-term average. Channel catfish, in 2018, experienced the lowest catch rate in

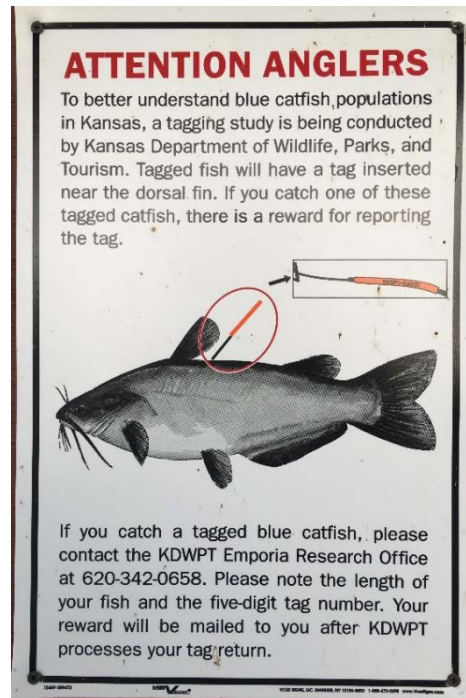
the last five years. However, good numbers of channel catfish are still present. Walleye numbers remained consistent with the long-term average. Higher than average numbers of white bass and wipers were reported in 2018 suggesting good fishing in 2019.

Milford Reservoir Blue Catfish Tagging Study

Fisheries research is important to understanding how our fisheries function. Conducting research allows biologists to gather information from our various fisheries to answer a particular set of questions. With the increasing popularity of blue catfish angling in Kansas, KDWPT had a few questions about the blue catfish population at Milford Reservoir.

Mark-recapture studies have been done on numerous fish species. These studies provide important information such as species abundance and survival. In the summer of 2018, KDWPT fisheries personnel tagged 2,269 blue catfish in Milford Reservoir. In the fall, KDWPT fisheries personnel attempted to recapture tagged individuals to better estimate blue catfish abundance and survival. So far, 21 recaptures have been reported by anglers and 5 recaptures were found by KDWPT staff. Currently, there are estimated to be over 750,000 blue catfish in Milford Reservoir! It is important for anglers to assist in our efforts and call in tagged fish that they catch. Pictured below are signs posted around the reservoir with the

contact information for our research and survey office located in Emporia.



My Final Thoughts

As your new biologist, I will work my hardest to learn and fully understand these incredible systems in Kansas. I can't wait to get out on the water, meet the anglers, and just talk fishing. I am honored to work for the state of Kansas and hope I can work with others to make fishing in Kansas a top destination for anglers. Good luck this spring on your outdoor adventures! I hope this newsletter helps in understanding what's currently happening in our lakes. If you want anymore information please feel free to visit our website at <http://ksoutdoors.com/>. Have fun and good fishing!