

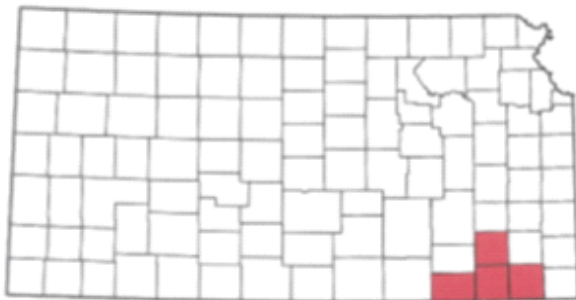
Independence District Fisheries

Seth Lundgren
District Fisheries Biologist
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
5089 CR 2925
Independence, KS 67301
(620) 331-6820
seth.lundgren@ks.gov

Area Happenings

Once again fall and winter were busy in the Independence District. Fall sampling was conducted in October and once again gill nets and trap nets were set at 2 Federal Reservoirs, 2 State Fishing Lakes and 2 CFAP Lakes. We were also busy stocking fish into several different water bodies throughout the fall and winter months.

Brush piles were added to 2 lakes in the district this winter to improve fish habitat and provide fishing opportunities. These brush piles provide habitat and cover for a variety of fish species including crappie, bass, bluegill and catfish.



Fish Stocking

Channel catfish were stocked into several lakes in the district during the month of October this year. Rainbow trout were also stocked through the Winter Fishing Opportunities (WFO) program into Tanko in Cherryvale and also LeClere in Coffeyville. We were fortunate enough to get some larger walleye, which were stocked into Big Hill Reservoir in November.



Above: Mike Hassler from the Meade Fish Hatchery stocking walleye in Big Hill Reservoir.

Fish Stocking Continued....

Fish Stocking Locations and Numbers

Lake	Species	Number
Montgomery SFL	Channel Catfish	3,716
Wilson SFL	Channel Catfish	2,756
Elk City Kids Pond	Channel Catfish	120
Tanko	Channel Catfish	632
Tanko	Rainbow Trout	522
LeClere	Channel Catfish	249
LeClere	Rainbow Trout	648
Parsons Tolen Creek	Channel Catfish	150
Big Hill Reservoir	Walleye	1,378
Sedan City Lake- North	Channel Catfish	1,518
Sedan City Lake- South	Channel Catfish	1,756
Neodesha City Lake	Channel Catfish	100

Hatcheries from around the state were able to provide us with enough channel catfish to fulfill all of my stocking requests. Channel catfish were stocked as intermediates (~10 inches in total length). Stocking at this size gives them a great chance at survival and can provide angling opportunities the next summer.

Also, note that a new water body, Neodesha City Lake, is now enrolled in the Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP), and received a channel catfish stocking this fall.

Additionally, the hatcheries were able to provide almost 1,400 walleye that averaged 9 inches in length. These fish were stocked in Big Hill Reservoir at this large size to increase their survival and reduce the likelihood of predation by other fish species.



Above: High water this summer allowed many fish species, including channel catfish, to have excellent reproduction.



Above: Me holding a 48 1/2 pound grass carp sampled at LeClere Lake in Coffeyville this past fall.

Left: One of the 9-inch walleye stocked at Big Hill Reservoir this past October.

New Fish Habitat for MGSL and Parsons City Lake

Fish habitat was placed at Montgomery State Fishing Lake (MGSL) and Parsons City Lake this winter. At MGSL 5 brush piles were enhanced. These brush piles expanded upon existing brush piles that were either small in size or mostly deteriorated away.

At Parsons City Lake 14 brush piles were added to the lake to enhance fish habitat and fishing opportunity. Of these 14 brush piles, 12 are placed in areas easily accessible by shore anglers.

The GPS locations of the habitat structures are included below and also available on the KDWPT website. These habitat structures will congregate channel catfish, largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill and redear sunfish of all sizes.

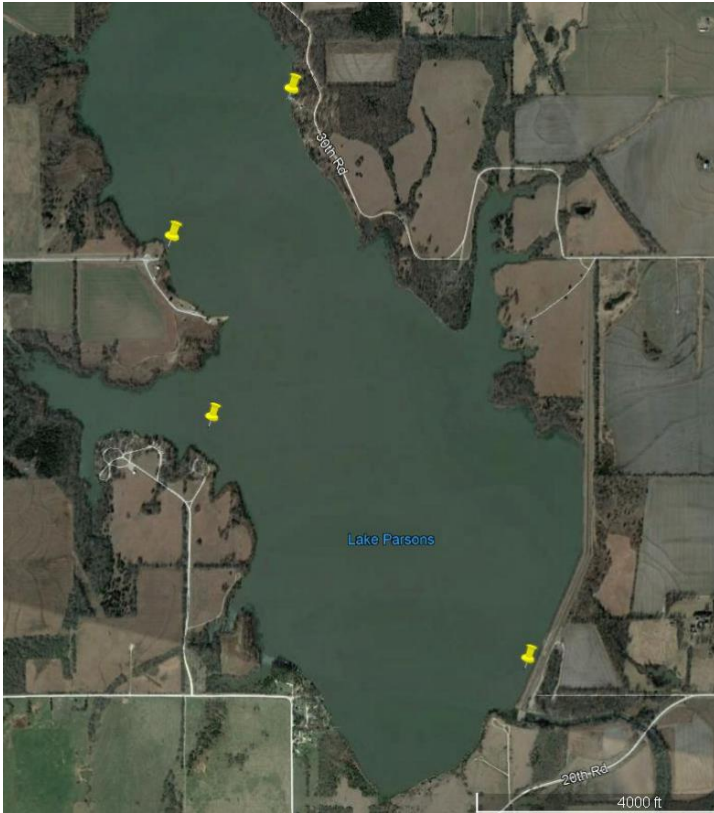


Above: Cedar trees ready to sink at MGSL.

Below: Locations of enhanced brush piles at MGSL.



Habitat Continued...



GPS Coordinates MGSL:

37.162392° -95.688944°

37.164267° -95.688769°

37.164769° -95.690974°

37.164403° -95.691311°

37.162813° -95.694903°

GPS Coordinates Parsons City Lake:

37.399567° -95.333417°

37.407617° -95.346667°

37.413589° -95.348347°

37.418494° -95.343336°

Please feel free to contact me about any further information on these brush piles or for the GPS coordinates for the habitat in the campground area.

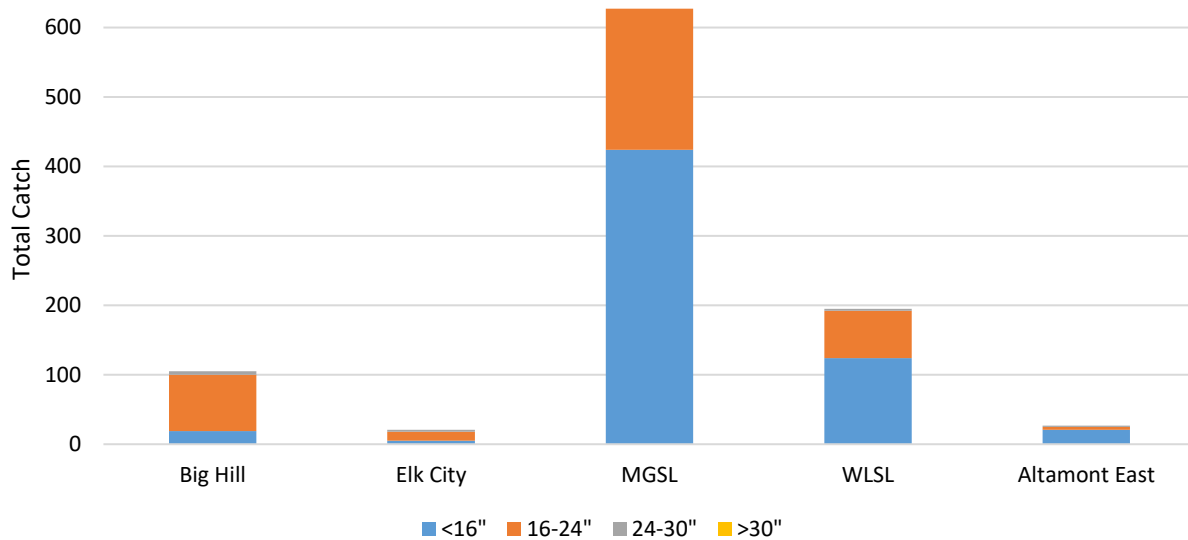
Above and Below: Locations of brush piles in Parsons City Lake, bottom picture is in the campground.



Fishing Forecast

Channel Catfish

2019 Channel Catfish Sampling



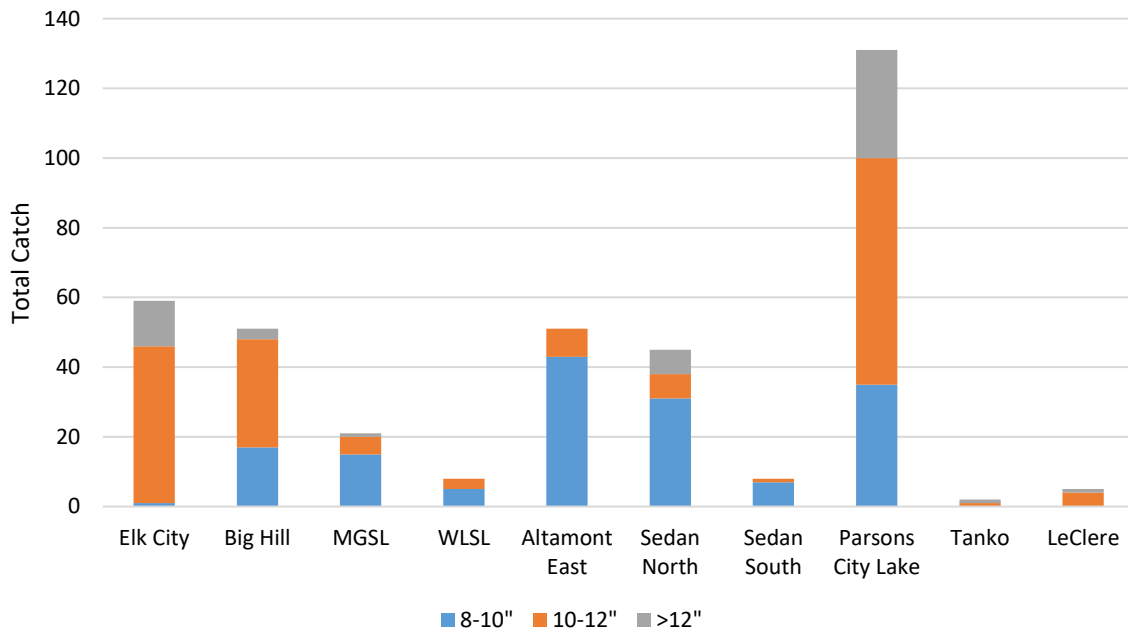
Our channel catfish sampling data shows there are many places nearby to find good catfishing. If you are an angler who likes to simply catch fish and take a few home for the frying pan, then I would suggest taking a trip to Montgomery State Fishing Lake (MGSL) or Wilson State Fishing Lake (WLSL). These state fishing lakes offer great shoreline access, as well as boat ramps to accommodate any type of angler. Another overlooked catfish lake is Big Hill Reservoir. Although Big Hill Reservoir is known as a bass and crappie lake, channel catfish are abundant and on average, larger sized than the other lakes sampled. Elk City Reservoir has always been known as a great catfishing lake, and this year should be no exception. Other lakes that were not sampled that have great channel catfishing opportunities include Parsons City Lake, Sedan City Lake- North, and Bartlett City Lake.

Crappie

In 2019, a lot of effort was expended to sample crappie populations at many lakes around the state. In the Independence District we were able to sample 10 water bodies for crappie. Many of the angler favorites like Elk City Reservoir, Big Hill Reservoir and Parsons City Lake all showed great numbers of 10-14 inch crappie. However, there are a few other lakes that may get overlooked. Both Altamont City Lake- East and Sedan City Lake- North showed good numbers of crappie, with many fish exceeding 10 inches. Other opportunities to find quality crappie fishing include MGSL and WLSL.

Fishing Forecast Continued...

2019 Fall Crappie Sampling



Above: White crappie sampled from Sedan City Lake- North.



Above: Some nice channel catfish from Elk City Reservoir.

Fishing Forecast Continued...

Recommended Fisheries

Often times I talk to anglers who just want to find a place to catch anything. For those anglers I would recommend looking no further than your local lakes. Many city lakes and state fishing lakes have good populations of bluegill and redear sunfish. These fish species are prevalent and easily catchable with a small piece of worm below a bobber, which is perfect for children and adults alike.

Some recommendations I would make to find bluegill and redear sunfish in your area would be: MGSL, WLSL, Edna City Lake, Altamont City Lake- East and West, LeClere, Tanko, and Sedan City Lake- North and South.



Above: Local fishing legend smiling with a bluegill.



Above: Connor Ossowski with a 26 inch saugeye from Parsons City Lake.

Other recommended fisheries would be to check out the saugeye fisheries we have available. Saugeye look and taste like a walleye, and they can be caught in the same way as walleye. Parsons City Lake as well as Sedan City Lake- North and South all offer saugeye fishing opportunities.

Elk City Reservoir has a phenomenal white bass fishery. Catch rates of white bass in gill nets were the highest they have been in 5 years. Look for white bass to run into the Elk River in March-April. White bass can also be found near the shore in the spring and fall in the state park and along the dam. Plastic swim baits and minnows work well for white bass.

Hot Summer Night Catfish Bite

I get a lot of questions on where are the channel catfish biting, especially during the summer months. Typically the questions sound something like “I caught them here this spring and now I can’t get a bite, why aren’t they biting?” Typically the answer is not why they aren’t biting, but more of the location of the fishing spot. More times than not, the thought process is to cast fishing baits as far as possible to the deepest part of the lake, that’s where the water is cooler and thus the fish. Right? While that theory of fishing deep water can pay off in the early spring, it is almost always the least likely spot to find fish in the heat of summer.

Now that I have you confused as to why fish wouldn’t choose to be in the cool water, I can shed some light (or maybe lack thereof) as to why fish are not in deep water in June-September. In the heat of the summer, when water temperatures rise, an invisible layer (called a thermocline) is established where water at the bottom of the lake does not mix with the water at the surface. The depth of water where this occurs varies by lake and by year, but is usually around the depth at which sunlight can no longer penetrate. Since the cooler, deeper water does not mix with surface water, and algae cannot get light to produce oxygen, there is no oxygen for fish or other organisms.

So what is the secret to finding and catching channel catfish during the heat of the summer? During my summer catfish surveys last year at MGSL, I was able to catch over 600 channel catfish in water that was 3-5 feet deep. Since there is no oxygen in the cool water, fish have no choice but to be in the warm shallow water. Another strategy that will increase your catch and help avoid a sunburn, is to fish at night. Catfish will feed more at night during the hot months of summer, and tend to be more inactive during daylight hours.

So my answer to “Why aren’t the catfish biting?” is more than likely they are biting, you are simply casting right over their heads. If you want more success channel catfishing this summer, night fish in the shallows (2-6 ft).



Above: Ryan Lies with a nice catch of summer catfish



Above: Danci Johnston with some Elk City crappie.



Above: 4 flathead catfish sampled from Wilson State Fishing Lake.



Above: My daughter starting to get the hang of fishing.

Final Thoughts

I hope this spring and summer find you drier than last year. If not, take advantage of those dry days and go fishing! Hopefully this newsletter gives you plenty of information and motivation to get out there and explore new lakes; or perhaps to target a different species of fish you have never caught.

Whatever you choose to target, on whichever lake you choose to fish, be sure to share the experience with someone. No matter the age, young or old, I can't think of a person who has not enjoyed a day on the water reeling in fish, big or small. If you want any more fishing information, please feel free to contact me at the information listed on page 1 or visit our website at <http://ksoutdoors.com/>

Happy Fishing!