

Pittsburg District Fisheries Newsletter

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Fall 2020

Connor Ossowski
District Fisheries Biologist
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
507 E. 560th Ave
Pittsburg, KS 66762
(620) 231-3173
connor.ossowski@ks.gov

2020 SEK Fishing Forecast & Updates

Thank you for subscribing to the Pittsburg District Fisheries Newsletter. My district includes Cherokee, Crawford, and Neosho counties in the southeast corner of the state. It's been an interesting year with COVID-19, but on the bright side view from the shoreline, it's provided an opportunity to reach back for the fishing poles and enjoy the great outdoors.



Largemouth bass caught from a strip pit on the Mined Land Wildlife Area

What waters are in the district?

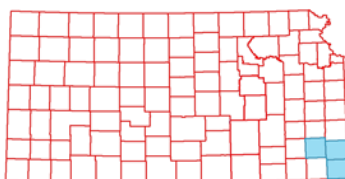
Crawford	<i>Bone Creek Lake (540 acres)</i>
	<i>Crawford SFL (150 acres)</i>
	<i>Mined Land Wildlife Area (1,664 acres)</i>
Cherokee	<i>Empire Lake (800 acres)</i>
	<i>Mined Land Wildlife Area (13,066 acres)</i>
	<i>Shoal Creek</i>
Neosho	<i>Neosho SFL (92 acres)</i>
	<i>Neosho River</i>
	<i>Thayer City Lakes (45 acres & 30 acres)</i>

* There are also other community water bodies enrolled in the CFAP program and other WIFA (walk in fishing access) waters that are open to public fishing access.

Page 2: Bathymetric maps for MLWA

**Page 3: How old are crappie at Crawford SFL?
How YOU can help in growing bigger crappie!**

Page : Summary & Last Cast



Bathymetric Maps for Mined Land Wildlife Area



Bathymetric maps, or water contour maps, are now available for the Mined Land Wildlife Area. This was a significant effort from myself and my summer technicians, so I first want to thank Adam and Logan for their time invested in driving a boat, or paddling a kayak, around the strip pits to produce these maps.

What was the purpose of mapping the strip pits? When I first got to the Mined Land Wildlife Area as the District Fisheries Biologist, I will be honest and say that I was unsure on how to wrap my head around managing nearly 1,000 strip pits. I wanted to get on as many strip pits as possible and mapping them is a good way to do so. As an avid angler myself, I was not sure where to start and where to fish. I key in on specific habitats and shallow water habitats during different times of the year while I am fishing, so I had no idea which pits were better for specific habitats, or where to begin. So, I came up with the idea to put in for a research grant to purchase depth finders to be able to map the strip pits on the Mined Land Wildlife Area. And the best part is that it benefits both me as the fisheries management biologist and YOU ALL as anglers!

This is an ongoing effort, but to this day, we have mapped 64 of the strip pits on the Mined Land Wildlife Area that will be available to you all on our KDWPT website. You can also download the “Explorer” app on your smartphone, search for “2020 KDWPT Fishing Access” and have your location turned on while using the app to access the bathymetric maps that you may use as a depth finder to key in on general water depths.

If you have any questions in regards to the bathymetric maps for the Mined Land Wildlife Area, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me via email at connor.ossowski@ks.gov, or the Mined Land Wildlife Area office at 620-231-3173.



Here is an 18 inch largemouth bass that I caught after viewing the map for this specific strip pit. I found where 15 ft water met a shallow flat of 4 ft water and the bass were feeding on shad. This is an example of how the bathymetric maps will benefit anglers of the SEK!

White Crappie Age & Growth – Crawford SFL

Have you been disappointed in the size of crappie that you catch at Crawford SFL “Farlington Lake”? I know that I sure have. This is a direct cause to a stunted population.

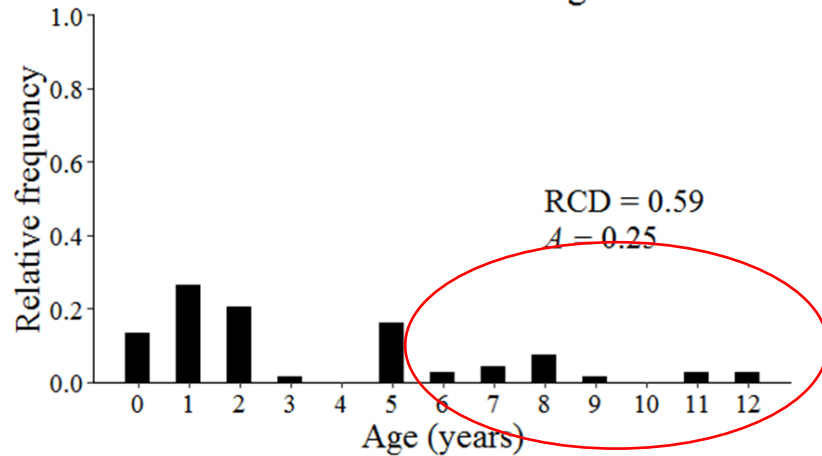
White crappie are notorious for reproducing very quickly in any given year and quickly reaching carrying capacity of the given water body. If there are not enough predator fish species in the system to keep the population in check, they will quickly “stunt” at a small size and not be able to reach preferred lengths. This is the case for Crawford SFL. This is also why I will never recommend stocking white crappie in small farm ponds.

The top graph shows the age structure of the white crappie population. In Kansas, a white crappie life span is expected to be 4-5 years old. Or so we thought... There are white crappie up to 12 years old and only 8 inches long at Crawford SFL currently. I won't get too far into the specifics on what the bottom graph represents with the Von Bertalanffy growth equation. To summarize, it shows the growth potential of the current population. The current growth potential we can expect to see at Crawford is approximately 8 inches long. **NOT GOOD!**

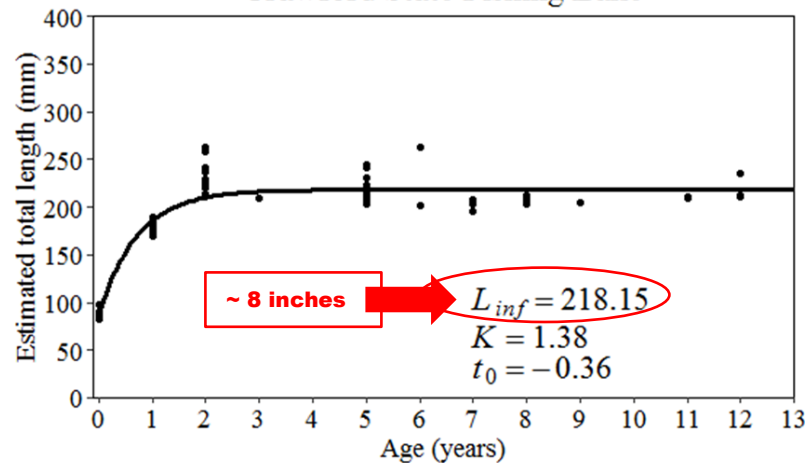
How do we fix this? We increased the number of brushpiles in the lake to concentrate the white crappie near shore for anglers to catch to harvest and for the predator species to prey upon the crappie more effectively. I do believe this will help with the stunted population. I would encourage all anglers to harvest their daily creel limit of 50 crappie per day to open up more space and resources for the crappie to grow. I will also be supplementally stocking largemouth bass and saugeye to increase the populations of both species in the lake as well.

Next time you make it out to Crawford SFL, or “Farlington Lake” to the locals, please consider keeping your daily creel limit of 50 crappie per day to help the crappie population to grow to more preferred lengths!

Crawford State Fishing Lake



Crawford State Fishing Lake

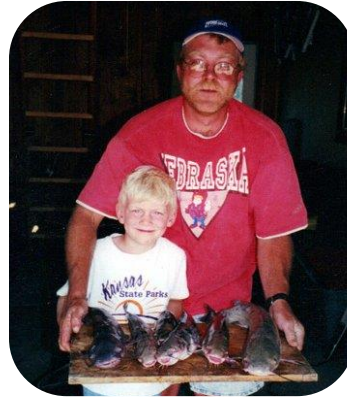


One More Cast!

2020 has been the furthest thing from a normal year, but I hope that you all were able to get outdoors and enjoy fishing with family and friends! SEK has had a drought year in comparison to previous years and many of the lakes and strip pits in the district are up to 4 ft low for the year.

I can't help, but reflect on how monumental spending time with my dad fishing on the shorelines has shaped my life and career. That first cast I made led to becoming a fisheries biologist – it goes beyond the hook and line, but the memories made. All it takes is your time and patience to take someone fishing and introduce them to baiting a hook – you never know how it might shape their life!

I hope that you all get out this fall to enjoy fishing at area lakes and enjoy a safe and happy hunting season! Best wishes to the remainder of 2020 and stay tuned for next spring's edition of my newsletter where I'll update on fish sampling results from this fall!



My dad, Dale, and I after a successful night of fishing at Lovewell Reservoir, circa 1999.



Can you guess what this is?

These are bluegill beds created for the spawn.

They are almost like moon craters!

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