

# Cedar Bluff District Fisheries

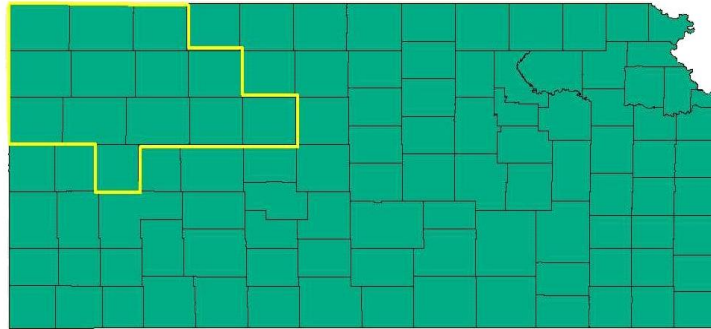
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The above figure shows the 13 counties outlined in yellow that comprise the Cedar Bluff District

## Atwood Township Lake Fish Salvage

Atwood Township Lake is a 30 acre lake situated on the confluence of Little Beaver and Beaver Creeks on the north edge of Atwood, Rawlins County, Kansas. The lake basin is divided into two discrete parts separated by a berm possessing a controlled flow-through tube and an uncontrolled channel that allow connection of the two basins during high volume inflow events from the creeks. The east basin has been sealed to reduce loss of water from seepage and is the primary focus of fisheries management. The west basin is unsealed and does not hold water long during dry weather periods. Most of the time the tributary creeks leading into the lake are dry. But during times of above average precipitation, the west basin can fill and overflow into the east basin. When connection occurs, desirable sportfish emigrate from the east basin into the west basin and undesirable rough fish immigrate into the east basin from permanent pools upstream on the creeks.



Atwood Township Lake

From July 2018 to September 2019 a wet weather pattern prevailed over the Atwood Township Lake watershed. During this period multiple high-volume flow events occurred, and the west and east lake basins were connected from October 2019 to June 2020. At several points during this period, inflow was sufficient to cause flow through the east basin that stimulated additional fish movement.

Subsequent to the above-mentioned time period, dry weather prevailed over the Atwood Township lake watershed. By July 2020 water levels had dropped to the point that the east and west basins were no longer connected. By early August 2020 water level in the west basin had decreased to

*Atwood cont'd...*

the point that the basin had a maximum depth of 3 feet. On August 4 an effort to salvage desirable sportfish was made utilizing electrofishing. Electrofishing was conducted on the west basin until diminishing catch rate of desirable sportfish dictated conclusion of the effort. A total of one 15" saugeye, 11 channel catfish that ranged from 0.5 to 4 lbs., 67 largemouth bass that ranged from 0.3 to 1.5 lbs., and a mix of an unquantified number of bluegill and green sunfish were captured and released into the east basin.



*Salvage crew sorting desirable fish into a fish transport box*

Subsequent to the first salvage effort, water level in the west basin continued to decrease rapidly until September 1 when maximum water depth in the west basin decreased to approximately 1.5" and surface area of the remaining water decreased markedly as remaining water was confined to only the deepest parts of the basin. Based upon the reduced surface area and lack of obstructions on the basin bottom, the decision to attempt an additional salvage effort utilizing a seine was made in hopes of removing as many additional sportfish prior to an inevitable fish kill resulting from poor water quality precipitated by lack of depth. On September 1 a 300" long seine was employed to pull one seine haul through the water remaining in the west pool. The Atwood Township Park Facilities Manager, Kansas Department of Corrections Supervisor and inmate crew, and KDWPT fisheries biologist cooperatively worked to accomplish the effort. A total 265 channel catfish that ranged



*Dead fish, most of which were common carp, in the west basin killed by low water and poor water quality*

from 0.5 to 8 lbs., 78 largemouth bass that ranged from 0.3 to 4 lbs., and a mix of approximately 300 adult bluegill and green sunfish were captured and released into the east basin. An estimated 2.5 tons of common carp were also captured in the seine haul such that hand sorting by personnel conducting the salvage was necessary. Common carp and black bullheads captured in the seine haul were re-released back into the west basin to perish once the basin dried to the point of fish kill. Given the tendency of undesirable rough fish to immigrate into the east basin during inflow events efforts to reduce abundance of these species has been a focus of management past and present.

The combined salvage effort saved wasting approximately \$2,591.25 worth of sportfish. More importantly, the salvaged sportfish were returned to the Atwood Township Lake east basin where they will contribute to angling opportunities for northwest Kansas anglers.

## 2020 WaKeeney District Fish Stocking Report

Lake	Stocking Date	Species	Size	# Stocked
Atwood Township Lake	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	428
Cedar Bluff Reservoir	4/20/2020	Channel Catfish	Fingerling	23,618
	6/5/2020	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	56,426
	6/17/2020	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	32,637
	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	5,453
	10/22/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	2,854
	11/3/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	10,002
Colby-Villa High Lake	4/8/2020	Bluegill	Adult	200
	4/8/2020	Fathead Minnow	Adult	2,000
	4/8/2020	Golden Shiner	Adult	2,000
	6/10/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	100
	6/19/2020	Smallmouth Bass	Intermediate	68
	9/16/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	267
	10/30/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	250
	12/15/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	250
Ellis City Lake	4/15/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	300
	10/22/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	750
Graham Co.-Antelope Lake	10/20/2020	Wiper	Intermediate	412
	10/20/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	2,010
Hays-Vineyard Park Pond	4/16/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	80
	5/6/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	65
	6/10/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	80
	9/16/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	80
Scott State Fishing Lake	10/20/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	4,045
Scott State Park-Barrel Springs Pond	1/21/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	432
	2/17/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	1,238
	3/12/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	594
	10/28/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	518
	12/3/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	638
	12/15/2020	Rainbow Trout	Adult	563
Sheridan State Fishing Lake	11/3/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	1,009
Sherman Co.-Smoky Gardens Lake	4/8/2020	Fathead Minnow	Adult	2,860
	4/8/2020	Golden Shiner	Adult	4,400
	4/15/2020	Channel Catfish	Adult	281
	4/16/2020	Sunfish	Adult	275
	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	561
St. Francis-Keller Lake	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	155
FISH TR Co.-Connor Ponds	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	125
FISH GH Co.-Hofstetter Pond	10/22/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	135
FISH RA Co.-Rippe Pond	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	50
FISH GH Co.-Trexler Lake	9/23/2020	Walleye	Intermediate	200
	10/22/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	411
FISH TH Co.-Wilson Ponds	10/21/2020	Channel Catfish	Intermediate	75

## Cedar Bluff Reservoir Black Bass



*A Cedar Bluff Spotted Bass*

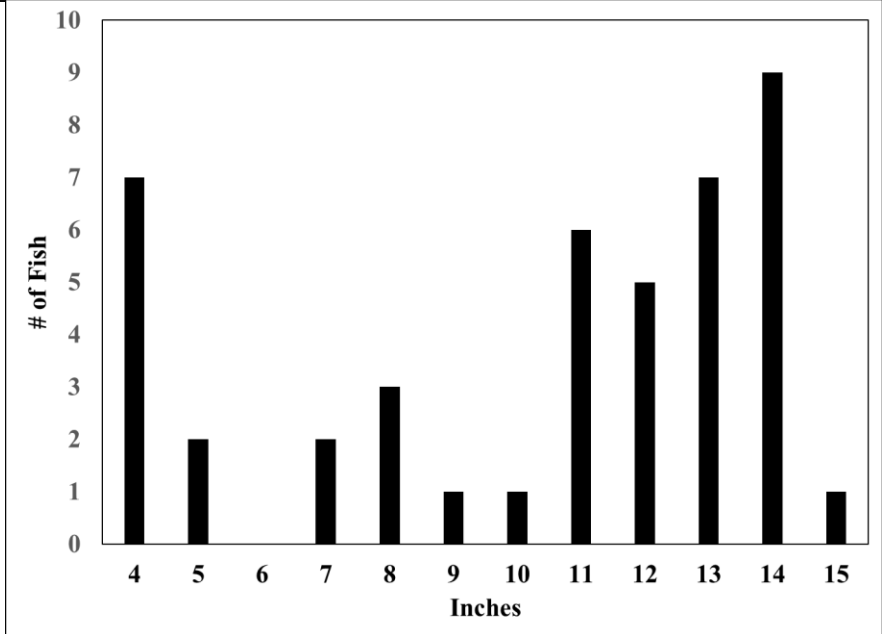
Taxonomically speaking, black bass is the common accepted name for a group of nine species of north American sportfish in the sunfish family (Centrarchidae). Of the nine, three species; largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass inhabit many Kansas waters. Largemouth bass is the most prevalent species in the state and is found in most streams, rivers, and impoundments. But fishable populations of smallmouth and spotted bass inhabit selected waters.

Cedar Bluff Reservoir is home to all three species of black bass and offers the opportunity to complete the Kansas black bass trifecta on

a given outing. Welfare of all three species' populations fluctuate with changes in water level at Cedar Bluff. In general, black bass recruitment and fish condition tend to correlate positively with significant water level increases. Increased water levels flood terrestrial vegetation and increase availability of rock habitat resulting in greatly improved habitat conditions afforded black bass.

Beginning in May 2018, increased precipitation over the Cedar Bluff watershed increased the reservoir water level approximately 17.6 feet and surface area 2,510 acres

and conferred a corresponding increase of optimum habitat to black bass habitat. Populations of all three black bass species have responded positively to increased habitat quality and availability.



*Length-frequency of Spotted Bass captured in all sampling gear at Cedar Bluff during 2020*

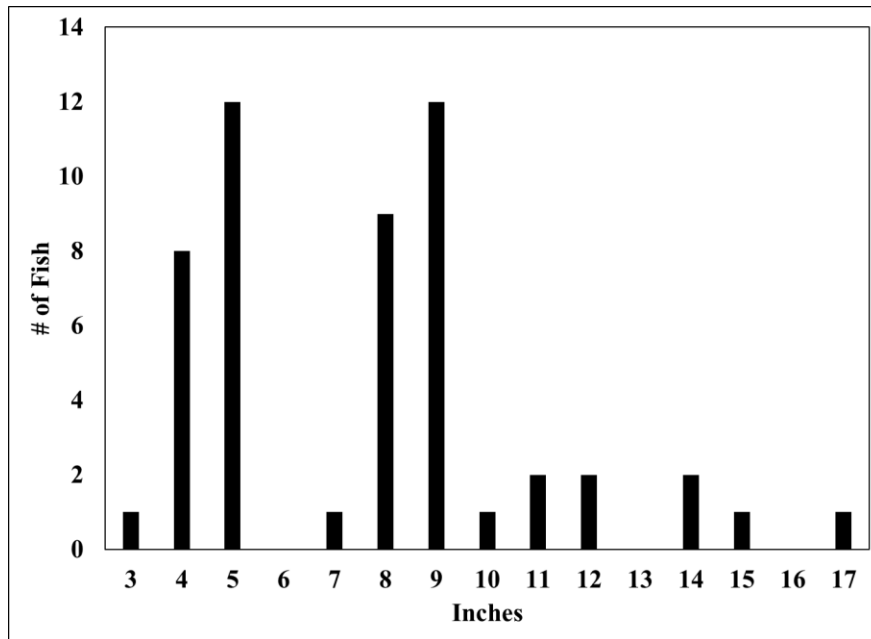
*Black Bass cont'd...*



*Cedar Bluff Smallmouth Bass*

Although largemouth bass are arguably the most popular of the three species, anglers looking to diversify their black bass angling experience should find some attractive opportunities at Cedar Bluff over the next several years. Trophy smallmouth and spotted bass are already present in both populations. But, increased recent recruitment as evidenced by marked increase in small specimens sampled, coupled with good growing conditions as evidenced by excellent body condition that characterized most individuals observed mean good things for future angling prospects. General black bass angling opportunities will continue to improve over the

next couple of years. But to those inclined, some truly special opportunities to catch good numbers and quality smallmouth and spotted bass will be realized by Cedar Bluff anglers.



*Length-frequency of Smallmouth Bass captured in all sampling gear at Cedar Bluff during 2020*