



**KANSAS  
WILDLIFE  
& PARKS**

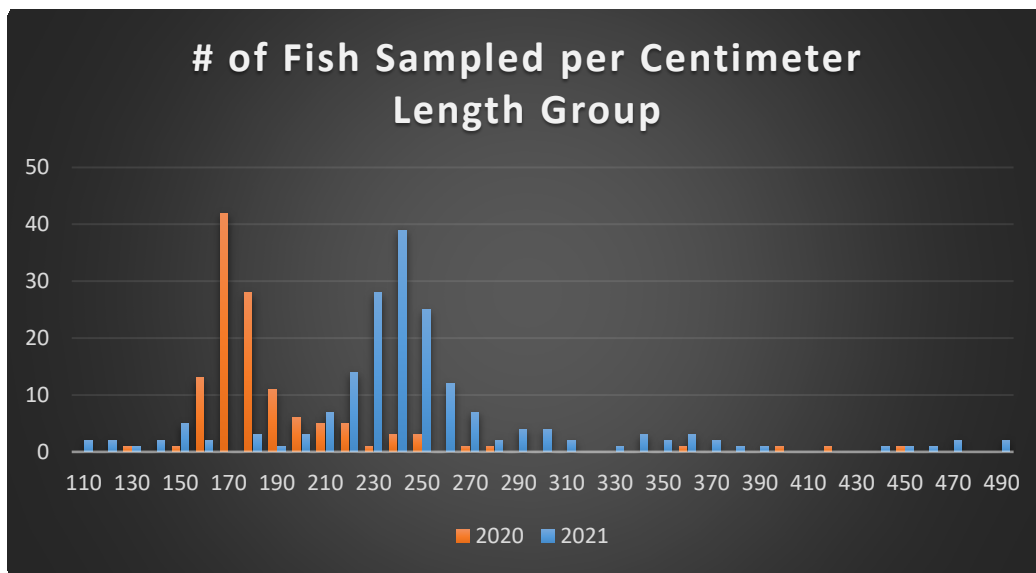


# Woodson District Fisheries News

Summer 2021

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## Woodson State Fishing Lake Largemouth Bass Growth



We completed our second annual Spring electrofishing survey in early May, and overall, I was pleased with the results. We captured 185 fish in 1.22 hours, which resulted in a stock catch per unit effort (CPUE) of 137 fish/hr. The term stock CPUE refers to the number of fish captured greater than a standardized stock length which for bass is 8". The stock CPUE is used to give us an estimate on the relative abundance of a species. Typically, with largemouth bass, managers shoot for stock CPUE's around 100 fish/hr. Basically, we captured 137 bass over 8" in 1.22 hours. Of the 185 total fish captured, 18 were below 8", 141 fish were considered stock length (8-12"), 17 fish were in the quality length group (12-15"), and 9 fish belonged to the preferred length group which includes fish ranging from 15-20". The largest fish sampled weighed 4.5 lbs. and is a fish that was part of adult brooders I stocked in 2019. The graph above shows the size distribution of fish sampled in 2020 and 2021. From this graph you can also see how well the fish are growing. You can see that the majority of the population is grouped up in the 220–270-millimeter range (roughly 8.5"-10.5"), but there are some outliers that are ranging from 290mm-390mm (11"-15"). The fish on the far right of the graph are

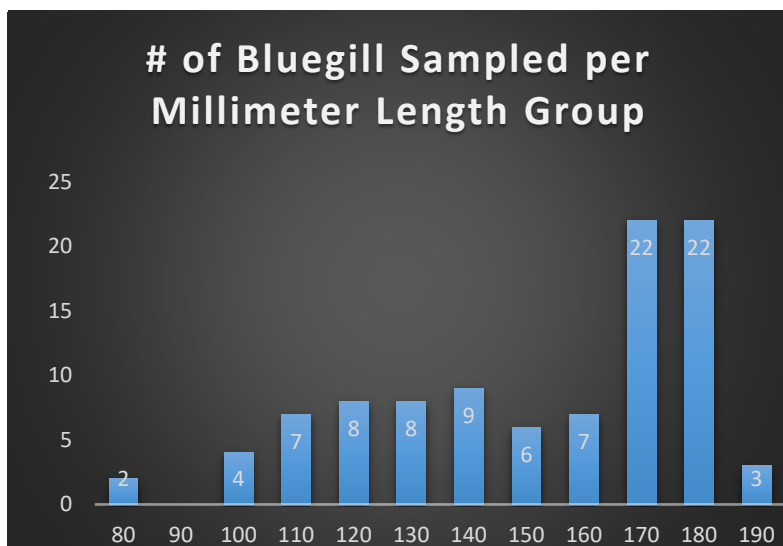


part of a group of adult fish that were stocked in 2019. So, if we just look at the biggest cluster of fish, we can confidently say the fish have grown anywhere from 60-90 mm (2"-3.5") in one year. This growth rate is consistent with past age and growth studies at multiple lakes around the state. The fish will continue to have good growth for another couple of years before it will start to taper off. Currently, the population is providing some great catch and release opportunities as the 8-12" fish are biting aggressively and can make even the most novice angler feel like they know what they are doing. Using light tackle and small lures will produce a lot of bites for you, but anglers shouldn't be afraid to throw bigger baits to target the larger fish in the lake. There have been reports of 3 and 4 pounders being caught.



## Woodson State Fishing Lake Bluegills

To maintain good consistent growth of predator fish like largemouth bass, a strong forage base is needed and in small impoundments bluegills are the perfect building block for a strong forage base. Bluegills are prolific spawners and usually spawn multiple times throughout the growing season. Which is good because it takes about 8-10 lbs. of bluegills for a bass to gain 1 lb. To put this in perspective this would be roughly 140-180 4" bluegills. So, what does the current bluegill population look like at Woodson? Well, we did a short electrofishing survey in May to assess the population and ended up sampling 98 bluegills in just under one hour for a stock CPUE of 102 fish/hr. We captured 38 stock length fish (3-6") and 60 quality length fish (6-8"). The graph below shows the number of fish captured in each millimeter length group. Two obvious length groups stick out from the rest, those being the 170 mm and 180 mm fish which accounted for almost 45% of the sample. These large adult bluegills are important for sustaining the population as the abundant, gape-limited 8-10" bass feed aggressively on the young bluegills. Currently, I would say that the population is looking pretty good and with the amount of vegetation available, the bluegills should thrive.



# 2021 Spring Electrofishing Results

Lake	Total Catch	Fish/hr.	# of 8-12"	# of 12-15"	# of 15-20"	# of 20-25"	Big Fish
Gridley City Lake	136	207	23	71	39	0	3.15
Garnett City Lake North	193	169	61	51	33	0	4.5
Garnett City Lake South	93	165	24	36	19	0	3.6
Garnett Cedar Valley Reservoir	130	48	27	37	23	4	5.96
Lebo City Lake	48	43	21	11	9	0	4.82
Yates Center South Owl	104	77	29	34	33	0	4.34
Yates Center City Lake	174	149	58	85	21	2	5.53
Woodson State Lake	185	137	141	17	9	0	4.5
Coffey County Lake	39	13	1	8	30	0	5.5

Most of the lakes in my district produce good largemouth bass populations, and they are all within in an hour's drive of each other, so they are not real spread out. Your best chances at catching lots of bass are going to be at the lakes that have catch rates over 100 fish/hr. Lakes like Gridley City Lake, Garnett North, Garnett South, Yates Center City Lake, and Woodson State Lake. Gridley City Lake showed some improvement this year as far as size structure goes as we saw a large increase of 15"+ fish in the sample. Other lakes that showed population improvements include Garnett Cedar Valley Reservoir, Yates Center South Owl, and Yates Center City Lake. While we did not see an increase in the number of bigger fish captured at Cedar Valley Reservoir, we did see an increase in fish below 8" and fish 8-12" which is a good sign for future population growth. The historically wet spring of 2019 took a toll on the largemouth population at Cedar Valley Reservoir, so it is good to see some resurgence. Both Yates Center Lakes showed higher catch rates of fish in the 15-20" range, and at Yates Center City Lake we even sampled two fish over 20" (pictured on the right) which doesn't happen very often. The largemouth bass population at Yates Center South Owl may not be as dense as the Yates Center City Lake but the fish usually have better body condition, they are plumper, than those at the city lake. Yates Center City Lake has provided a high-density largemouth bass population for over 20 years, but the size structure of the population has been generally skewed towards quality length fish (12-15"). Preferred and memorable length fish represent only a small portion of the population due to competition resulting in slower growth. Currently the population is dominated by 13-14" fish, but these fish are protected by the current slot length limit of 13-18". That's why I'm proposing a 15-21" protected slot length limit so anglers will be able to harvest those abundant 13-14" fish. Consistent harvest rates are important to optimize the benefits of the slot length limit. By increasing harvest rates on fish below the slot limit, competition is reduced, and growth should be improved resulting in more fish in the preferred and memorable length groups.



## Coffey County Lake

While I'm holding a beautiful 4.8 lb. smallmouth from Coffey County Lake, both populations of black bass continue to struggle to bounce back from the effects of Largemouth Bass Virus. As the table above indicates we only captured 39 largemouth bass in 3 hours for a dismal 13 fish/hr. The number of 15-20" fish was good to see, but the continued lack of fish below 15" is discouraging. The smallmouth population isn't in any better shape and in fact, the numbers would suggest that it is in worse shape than the largemouth population. We captured only 22 fish in 3 hours for a catch rate of 7 stock length fish/hr. The sample included 12 fish ranging in size from 17-20", 8 fish 14-17", 1 fish that was 13", and 2 stock length fish 7-11". Much like the largemouth bass population, the smaller size classes of fish are not showing up in the sample still suggesting the young of the year fish are struggling to successfully recruit to the population.



## Zebra Mussels Found at Lebo City Lake

Recent veliger sampling at Lebo City Lake came up positive for zebra mussels, and after further investigation several adults were found attached to rocks in the lake. Peak mussel density is estimated to be 2-3 years out. This means Lebo City Lake is now considered an ANS Water which means **no live fish or aquatic bait may be possessed** when departing from the lake. Also remember that livewells and bilges shall be drained, and the drain plugs removed from all vessels leaving any waters of the state before transport on any public highway. Please do your part to help stop the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species and **CLEAN, DRAIN, AND DRY all equipment that comes in contact with the water.**



Questions or Comments about anything in the district please contact me, Justin Morrison at 620-637-2748 or email me at [justin.l.morrison@ks.gov](mailto:justin.l.morrison@ks.gov)

If you need to contact a local game warden for this area their numbers are listed below.

Allen County: 620-212-0183

Anderson: 785-221-2694

Coffey County: 620-207-3151

Woodson County: 620-875-1976