

Ellsworth District Fisheries



Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism Fisheries Division

Fall 2019

District Information

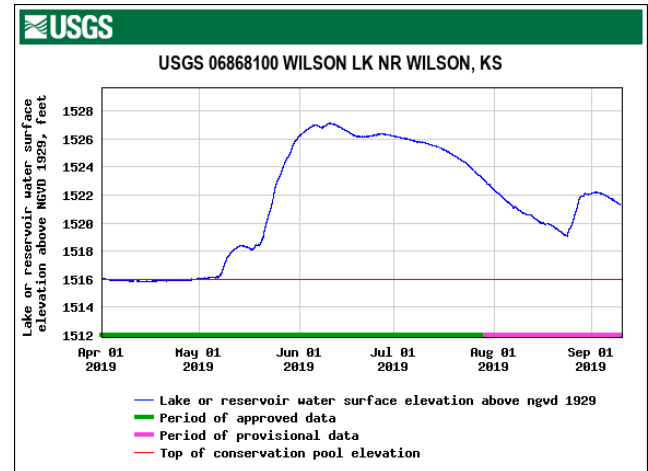
Bryan Sowards – Fisheries Biologist
 Wilson Area Office
 #3 State Park Rd. Sylvan Grove, KS 67481
 (785)658-2465

Counties and Reservoirs

CN Cherokee	RA Raiders	DC Decatur	NT Norton	PL Phillips	SM Smith	JW Jewell	RP Republic	WS Washington	MS Missouri	NM New Mexico	BR Brown	DP Dempsey
SH Shelby	TH Thomas	SD Sheridan	GH Graham	RO Rooks	OB Osborne	MC Mitchell	CD Cloud	CY Clyde	FO Fottawatomie	JA Jackson	AT Atchison	LV Lyon
WA Wallace	LG Logan	GO Gove	TR Trego	EL Ellis	RS Russell	LC Lincoln	SA Saline	DK Dickinson	MR Morris	WB Wabasha	SN Shawnee	DC Douglas
GL Greeley	WH Wichita	SC Scott	LE Lane	NS Ness	RH Rush	BT Barton	RC Rice	MP McPherson	MN Marion	CS Chase	LY Lyon	OS Osage
HM Hamilton	KE Cearny	FI Finney	HG Hodges	ED Edwards	SF Stafford	RN Reno	HV Havre	SG Sedgewick	BU Butler	GW Greenwood	WO Woodson	AL Allen
ST Stanton	GT Grant	HS Haskell	GY Gray	FO Ford	KW Klows	PR Pratt	KM Kingman	SG Sedgewick	BU Butler	EK Elk	WL Wilson	NO Neosho
MT Morton	SV Stevens	SW Seward	ME Meade	CA Clark	CM Comanche	BA Barber	HP Harper	SU Sunner	CL Coffey	CQ Chautauque	MC Montgomery	LB Labette
												CK Cherokee

Summer Weather Conditions

Wilson Reservoir) The reservoir finally filled to conservation pool 3 years ago (Sept 6, 2016), after falling to a record low of more than 10' below conservation pool. Wilson has remained at or near this elevation for the last 3 years. Near-record rainfalls in late Spring and throughout June brought the reservoir to 11 feet above conservation pool, its highest level since the 1993 flood. Most shoreline vegetation has been



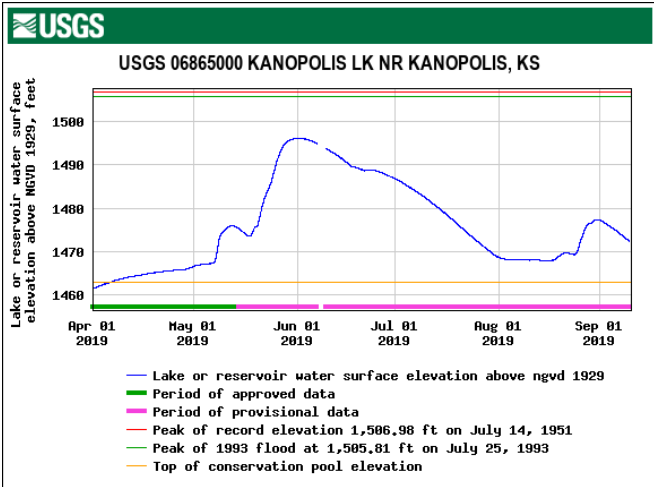
negatively impacted. Although angling was good for most species this summer, it is still unknown to what level the high water has impacted sportfish species at Wilson Reservoir.

Kanopolis Reservoir) The water level management plan for Kanopolis allows the lake to fill 4' above conservation pool, or to 1467', beginning on March 1st. This year, the reservoir remained below conservation pool until early April, due to construction efforts near the outlet. Heavy rains commenced, and the reservoir filled to its 3rd highest level in its history. The only two, higher elevations were in 1951 and 1993. Due to high water levels and dangerous conditions, few anglers have been able to fish at Kanopolis this summer. Good Fall conditions could allow for excellent angling.

Russell	Wilson Reservoir - 9000 acres
Lincoln	Only leased F.I.S.H. properties
Saline	Saline State Lake (LOW)
	Lakewood Lake - Salina – 6 acres
	Indian Rock Lake – Salina – 1 acre
Barton	Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area
	Stone Lake – Great Bend - 40 acres
	Veteran's Lake – Great Bend - 13 acres
Ellsworth	Kanopolis Reservoir - 3550 acres
	Holyrood City Lake – 13 acres
Rice	Sterling City Lake - 10 acres
McPherson	McPherson State Lake - 47 acres
	Black Kettle State Lake – 8 acres
	Windom City Pond – 1 acre

Note: Keep in mind that there are various Arkansas River access points throughout the region and F.I.S.H. Program properties. The F.I.S.H. Program leases the angling rights from private landowners to allow you to fish their ponds. Get the latest Kansas Fishing Atlas for details.





Spring Largemouth Bass Samples



The KDWPT uses electrofishing boats to sample largemouth bass populations throughout Kansas public lakes. The boat works by putting electricity through the water for a short distance to temporarily stun the fish. Stunned fish will come to the surface for easy collection. Random samples are collected throughout the lake. Fish are measured, weighed, and released unharmed. Remember, these are samples and not indicative of every largemouth bass in the lake. This method of sampling does, however allow us to gain an understanding of how the population is changing from year to year. This allows us to monitor the population and implement appropriate management actions to achieve the best populations for our angling constituents.

Wilson Reservoir

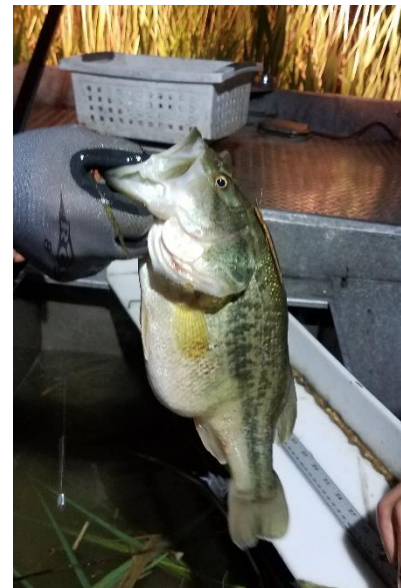
The Wilson Reservoir largemouth bass population has progressed to a very balanced fishery! The lake has remained full for the past 3 years. A full reservoir with flooded reed grass and terrestrial vegetation is a general recipe for improved black bass populations and we're witnessing it at Wilson Reservoir. Improved numbers are due to successful 2016 stockings and recent reproduction by bass within the population. These fish seem to be growing rapidly. We have seen 3-year-old fish measuring 18" in length and some of the older fish that

survived the drought are now reaching lengths greater than 20" and weighing over 5 lbs!

Note: A different amount of electrofishing effort was used at Wilson in 2018 (2018 = 6.0 hours; 2019 = 4.5 hours); therefore, a conversion was used to correct the 2018 sample.

	2018 sample	2019 sample
Total fish	180	276
% of 8" fish	26%	17%
% of 12" fish	45%	43%
% of 15" fish	28.5%	39%
% of 20" fish	0.5%	1%

The overall size of bass at Wilson is getting larger, mostly due to the large year class produced in 2016.



A young bass with incredibly high body condition collected at Wilson Reservoir in May, 2019.

McPherson State Lake

The largemouth bass population at McPherson State Lake continues to provide an above average fishery, but the overall size seems to be decreasing. We collected many more bass in the 2019 sample, but the population is dominated by fish less than 12". I encourage the harvest of bass below the 15 - 18" slot limit to help minimize competition between these smaller fish.

	2018 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	193	266
% of fish <8"	18%	33%
% of 8" fish	25%	24%
% of 12" fish	21%	25%
% of 15" fish	35%	18%
% of 20" fish	>1%	<1%



Jason Black with one of the largest Largemouth Bass sampled at McPherson State Lake in May, 2019.

“I encourage the harvest of bass below the 13 - 18” slot limit to help minimize competition between these smaller fish”

Great Bend – Stone Lake

Stone Lake, located in southern Great Bend is a nearly 30-acre sand pit that provides good sport fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, wipers, channel catfish, flathead catfish, and bluegill. The smallmouth bass population isn’t overly abundant but there are some quality fish to be caught. The population of largemouth bass continues to improve but consists mostly of fish less than 14”.

	2018 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	113	154
% of 8” fish	71%	49%
% of 12” fish	26%	49%
% of 15” fish	3%	2%
% of 20” fish	0%	<1%

Great Bend – Veteran’s Lake

Veteran’s Lake, located on the NW corner of McKinley and 17th Street is a 13-acre community lake. Veteran’s Lake has been plagued with blue-green algae over the years but due to recent aluminum sulfate treatments the water quality has improved and fish management has resumed. Due to recent fish kills the largemouth bass population has been non-existent. The city stocked 160, 9” bass in 2016. We stocked 200, 4-8” bass in 2018. The

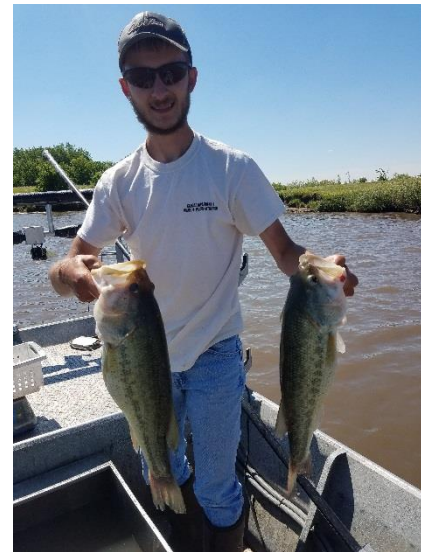
high percentage of 8” fish in the 2019 sample is likely a result of the 2018 stocking.

	2018 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	95	63
% of 8” fish	30%	78%
% of 12” fish	59%	10%
% of 15” fish	11%	12%
% of 20” fish	0%	0%

Black Kettle State Lake

This 8-acre state fishing lake is located on the southern edge of McPherson County just east of Moundridge off I-135. It is a shallow, 6-acre pond that includes a boat ramp on the south side. The lake contains a good largemouth bass population consisting of many fish from 2-4 lbs. and is stocked annually with channel catfish.

	2018 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	31	29
% of 8” fish	14%	21%
% of 12” fish	32%	37.5%
% of 15” fish	54%	37.5%
% of 20” fish	0%	4%



Travis Riley with two Largemouth Bass weighing over 4 lbs. sampled at Black Kettle State Lake in June, 2019.

Holyrood City Lake

Holyrood City Lake is located 10 miles N of Holyrood, KS or approximately 7 miles SSE of Wilson, KS. The lake was renovated throughout the 2000s but never filled with enough water to begin stocking fish until 2014. The lake filled in 2017 and now provides quality bluegill,

largemouth bass, and channel catfish angling opportunities. Heavy precipitation in 2019 likely will keep Holyrood full for a while.

	2017 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	79	43
% of 8" fish	57.5%	47.5%
% of 12" fish	34.5%	35%
% of 15" fish	8%	15%
% of 20" fish	0%	2.5%



The author with two Largemouth Bass weighing over 5 lbs. sampled at Holyrood City Lake in May, 2019.

Sterling City Lake

Sterling City Lake is a 9-acre community lake located within the City of Sterling in Rice County. An algae bloom-induced fish kill in 2013 mostly eliminated the largemouth bass population within the lake. Subsequent stocking of bass and forage has these fish extremely healthy and growing well.

	2018 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	69	101
% of 8" fish	8%	46%
% of 12" fish	58%	28%
% of 15" fish	34%	26%
% of 20" fish	0%	0%



Wesley Sowards with two Largemouth Bass sampled at Sterling City Lake in April, 2019.

Lakewood Lake, Salina

Lakewood lake is located near Lakewood Middle School in northcentral Salina. It is a 5-acre lake noted for its involvement in the winter Rainbow Trout Program and the Urban Channel Catfish Program. The lake was renovated in October, 2016 to eradicate the over abundant carp, gizzard shad, and stunted white crappie populations. It was restocked with Bluegill, Fathead Minnows, and Largemouth Bass in 2017. Unfortunately, heavy rains allowed the re-entry of carp to the lake in June, 2019. There is an abundance of 12-14" bass in the lake.

	2018 Sample	2019 Sample
Total fish	149	155
% of 8" fish	94%	26%
% of 12" fish	3%	72%
% of 15" fish	2%	2%
% of 20" fish	1%	0%



An advanced biology class at Ell-Salina HS assisted with the Largemouth Bass sampling event at Lakewood in April, 2019.

Saline State Fishing Lake OPEN

Great news, anglers! Saline State Fishing Lake is open for fishing! The oft-dry, 35-acre lake – located approximately 4 miles N of Salina (Watkins & Gerard Rds) – has received a surplus of water this spring and has enough water to stock with bluegill and channel catfish ready for the taking.



The department stocked 760 adult Bluegill on June 5th. These will hopefully reproduce several times to provide quality forage for Channel Catfish and future stockings of Largemouth Bass. Channel Catfish have been stocked twice this summer. We stocked 1,800 catfish on June 11th and another 700 on August 9th. There are plans to stock another round of catfish in April and Largemouth Bass around the same time.

Vehicle traffic is allowed from sunrise to sunset only (after which time the gate will be locked). The area is also open to hiking and wildlife viewing. Happy fishing!
#FishKS

Three-year Floatline Assessment of Blue Catfish at Wilson Reservoir

The Blue Catfish population at Wilson is currently managed under a 35-inch- minimum-length limit. We began receiving reports of 35-inch fish being caught and harvested by anglers in 2016. Due to overall slow growth, harvest of the largest individuals in the population, and angler interest,

we felt a new regulation was necessary to focus harvest on the slower-growing portion of the population while protecting those individuals with trophy potential. Therefore, we began a three-year pre-regulation assessment of the population (2017 - 2019).

Beginning in 2020, the population will be exposed to a 32-40-inch protective-slot limit, pending approval from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism Commission. This regulation will allow anglers to harvest those individuals that have grown at slower rates while protecting those that have grown more quickly. This might allow for both adequate harvest and trophy potential.

A new 32-40-inch protective-slot limit is proposed for Blue Catfish at Wilson Reservoir for 2020. The regulation will allow the harvest of only 2 Blue Catfish per day outside the slot, and only 1 of which can be over 40 inches.

Understanding the population metrics at Wilson Reservoir with existing gear is difficult. Catch rates and precision levels of catfish are too low using low-frequency electrofishing and experimental gill nets. This likely relates to the size of individuals within the population and the overall lower density compared to other blue catfish populations across the U.S. Nonetheless, a gear was needed that allowed for sufficient sample sizes to describe the population.

Floatlines are a successful technique for angling blue catfish. Although biased towards larger individuals in the population they can provide reasonable catch rates of adult fish. Therefore, floatlines were used as a supplemental technique to collect blue catfish at Wilson Reservoir. Catch rates and length frequencies were evaluated from 2017 through 2019. They will also be used to monitor the population in response to the new regulation.

Blue catfish catch rates with floatlines were higher than expected in 2017. The technique provided us sufficient numbers to evaluate the adult population.



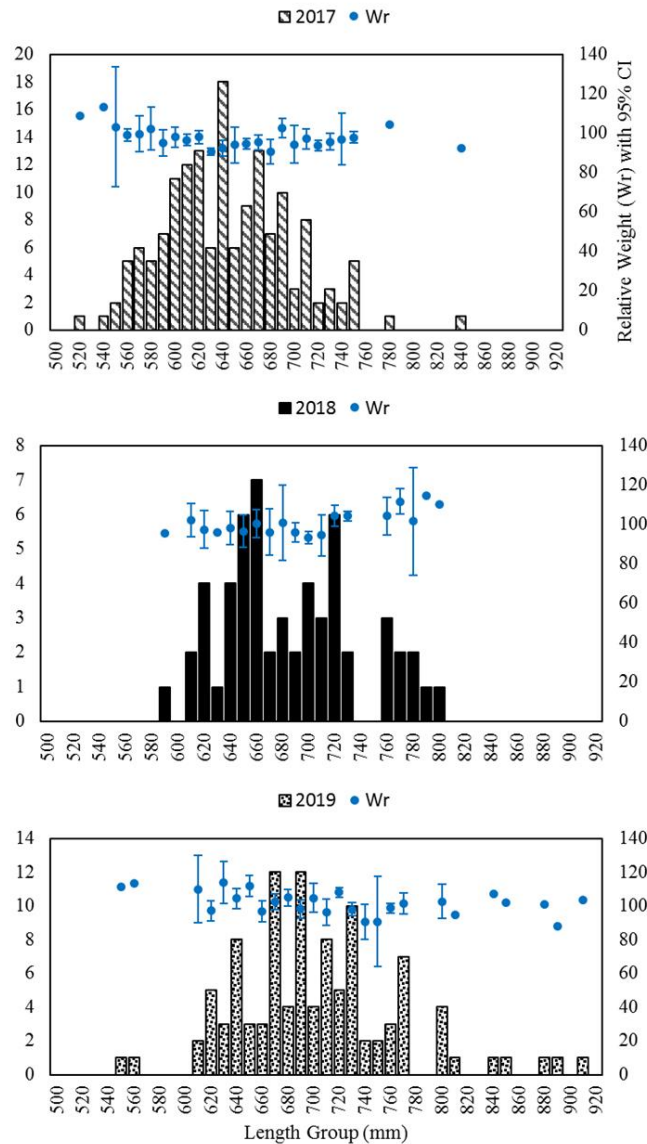
Ernesto Flores displaying two Blue Catfish collected with floatlines in June, 2017.

Catch rates dropped in 2018 due to a change in floatline construction. Modifications were made in 2019 and catch rates increased. Overall, the median size of the sample increased every year of the study, indicating a growing and aging population, as suspected. The proportion of fish within the proposed protective slot increased from 0.6, 0.0, to 5.6% from 2017, 2018, to 2019, respectively.

Table 1) Sample indices from blue catfish floatline surveys from 2017, 2018, and 2019.

	2017	2018	2019
# of Floatlines	300	300	275
# Blue Catfish	157	56	106
Catch rate	0.52	0.19	0.39
Median L (in)	25.4	26.9	27.5

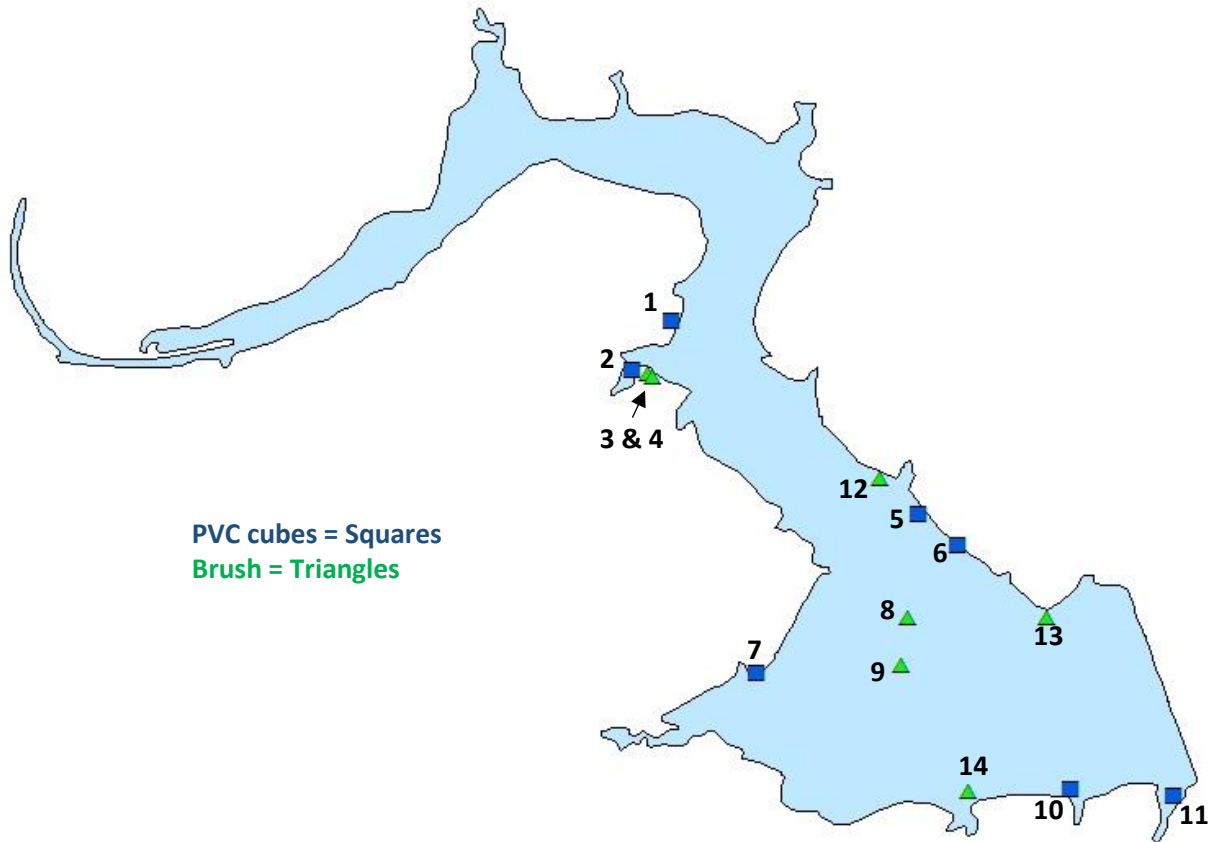
The length frequencies, to the right, show that the population is growing, and many fish will be able to be harvested in 2020, and beyond, with the proposed regulation. This information offers us a great baseline data set that will allow us to monitor the population in response to new harvest regulations.



For help reading the length frequencies remember that 600 mm is approximately 24 inches, while 810 mm would be 32 inches, the bottom of the protective slot. The blue dots indicate the relative weight, or body condition. The body condition is considered good for catfish if the relative weight is above 90 and approaches, or goes beyond, 100. If the relative weight is below 90, there might be a problem with forage availability or some abiotic condition that might be causing stress to the fish.

UPDATED FISH ATTRACTOR MAP

Kanopolis Reservoir Fish Attractors (2015 – 2019)



#	N-latitude DMS format	W-longitude DMS format	Longitude DD format	Latitude DD format	Type	Quantity	Date
1	38° 39' 2.52"	98° 0' 49.32"	-98.0137	38.6507	PVC cubes	14	2016
2	38° 38' 46.356"	98° 1' 2.28"	-98.0173	38.64621	PVC cubes	40+	2016
3	38° 38' 45.276"	98° 0' 57.24"	-98.0159	38.64591	Brush	-	2016
4	38° 38' 43.872"	98° 0' 55.439"	-98.0154	38.64552	Brush	-	2016
5	38° 37' 58.62"	97° 59' 27.599"	-97.991	38.63295	PVC cubes	5	2018
6	38° 37' 48.18"	97° 59' 14.639"	-97.9874	38.63005	PVC cubes	20	2018
7	38° 37' 5.88"	98° 0' 20.879"	-98.0058	38.6183	PVC cubes	22	2018
8	38° 37' 24.492"	97° 59' 30.84"	-97.9919	38.62347	Cubes & brush	20+	2018
9	38° 37' 8.832"	97° 59' 33.359"	-97.9926	38.61912	Cubes & brush	10+	2018
10	38° 36' 27.54"	97° 58' 37.2"	-97.977	38.60765	PVC cubes	13	2018
11	38° 36' 24.948"	97° 58' 2.639"	-97.9674	38.60693	PVC cubes	10	2016
12	38° 38' 10.608"	97° 59' 39.84"	-97.9944	38.63628	Brush	-	2019
13	38° 37' 24.42"	97° 58' 44.4"	-97.979	38.62345	Brush	-	2019
14	38° 36' 26.64"	97° 59' 10.68"	-97.9863	38.6074	Brush	-	2019



Parting shot: A 3.5 lb. Smallmouth Bass caught by using a 5-inch shad, glide bait at Wilson Reservoir in May, 2019.

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