



Woodson District Fisheries News

Spring 2021

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John Redmond Crappie

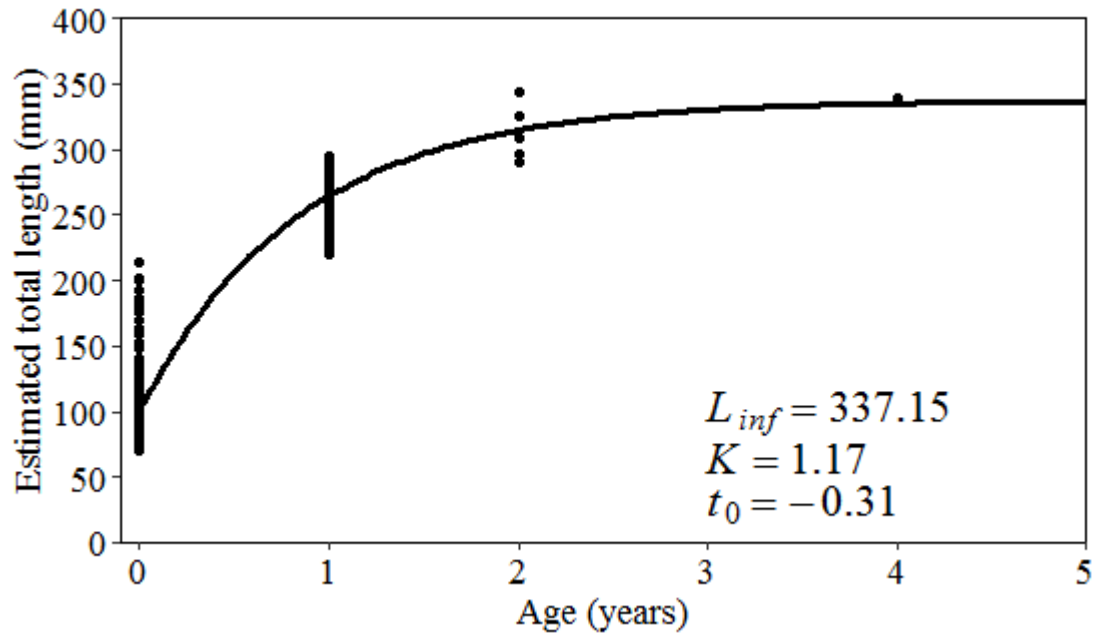


It was just a few short years ago that John Redmond Reservoir was highly ranked in the fishing forecast for crappie fishing, but those days have come and gone as the crappie population has decreased the past five years. Many reservoirs like John Redmond go through similar population cycles of crappie and are often deemed “boom or bust” fisheries. Let’s flash back and examine what created the crappie population “boom” about eight years ago that created some of the best crappie fishing in recent history at the lake. In 2013, the conservation pool was raised 2 feet to allow for more water storage for water users downstream of the reservoir. The pool rise came after a dry 2012 when the lake level dropped five feet and exposed a lot of the lakebed. By May 2013, the lake had refilled and was approximately two feet higher than the new proposed conservation pool of 1041 during spawning time. This essentially flooded hundreds of acres of terrestrial vegetation, creating phenomenal spawning and nursery habitat for all sportfish not just the crappie. Another major contributing factor was the limited releases throughout the spawning and post spawn season which prevented fish from being flushed downstream. Optimal spawning conditions were also observed in 2014, and those

two year classes really bolstered the population and pushed it through 2017. Since 2017, the population has decreased substantially, largely due to the extreme weather events we have had the past few years during the spring spawning season. The extreme rain events followed by prolonged high reservoir releases has had a detrimental impact on the crappie population. This begs the question, if optimal spawning conditions are realized, can the

population experience another “boom” like 14’ and 15’? The answer is yes, and the reason is the extremely fast growth rate of crappie in this system. Recent age and growth data indicates that crappie have the potential to reach 10” at age 1 and by age 2 they are exceeding 12”. A growth rate like this allows the population to bounce back quickly from declines if optimal spawning conditions are realized. Unfortunately, John Redmond Reservoir hasn’t had these conditions the last few years. The current population needs another year of calm spring weather to get it back on track as we captured 660 young of the year crappie in our trap nets indicating a good year class was produced last year. If the upcoming spring is like last year, we should see better crappie fishing returning soon.

John Redmond Reservoir



Note: Photo was taken before the COVID-19 pandemic.

JOHN REDMOND HABITAT WORK



I completed an initial phase of habitat improvement at John Redmond in December. There has never been any sort of habitat work completed at John Redmond, but since the completion of the dredging project I think it's a good opportunity to accentuate the dredge cut with brush making the area even more attractive to fish. The work included sinking 115 cedar trees to create several brush piles both near shore and in the deeper water. These few fish attractors should be fish magnets throughout the year considering the lake is largely void of any substantial habitat. More brush will be added next year to improve fishing opportunities. Since the lake is generally shallow, I will likely focus future efforts in the dredged area to ensure the brush piles are far enough underwater to prevent boating accidents. The coordinates for the current brush piles are below.

N 38° 14.743'

W 95° 45.998'

N 38° 14.658'

W 95° 46.138'

N 38° 14.419'

W 95° 46.767'

N 38° 14.256'

W 95° 46.423'

N 38° 14.722'

W 95° 45.641'

N 38° 14.811'

W 95° 45.694'

N 38° 14.922'

W 95° 45.715'

N 38° 15.222'

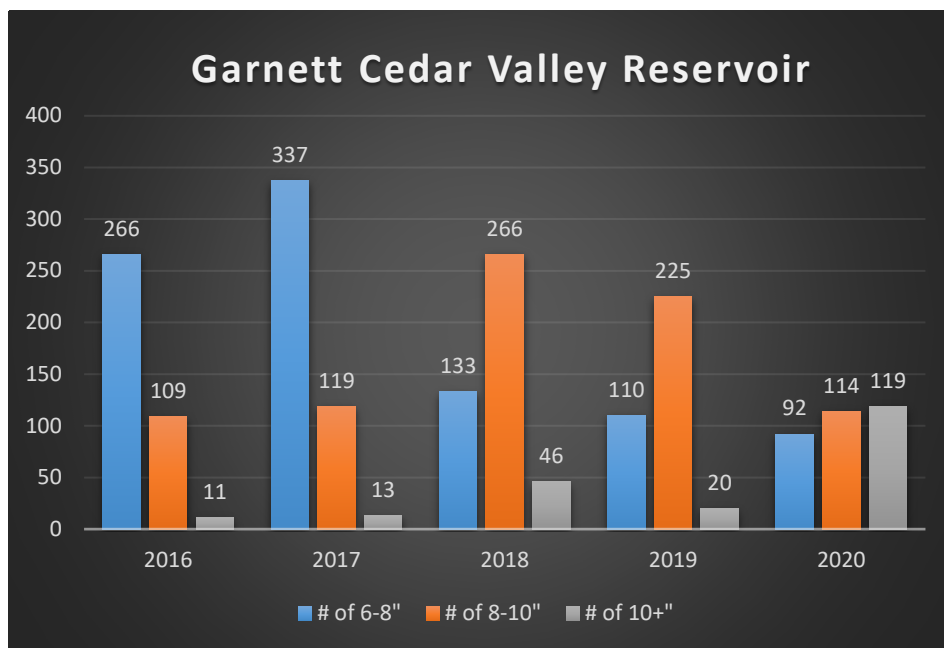
W 95° 45.728'



Garnett Cedar Valley Reservoir

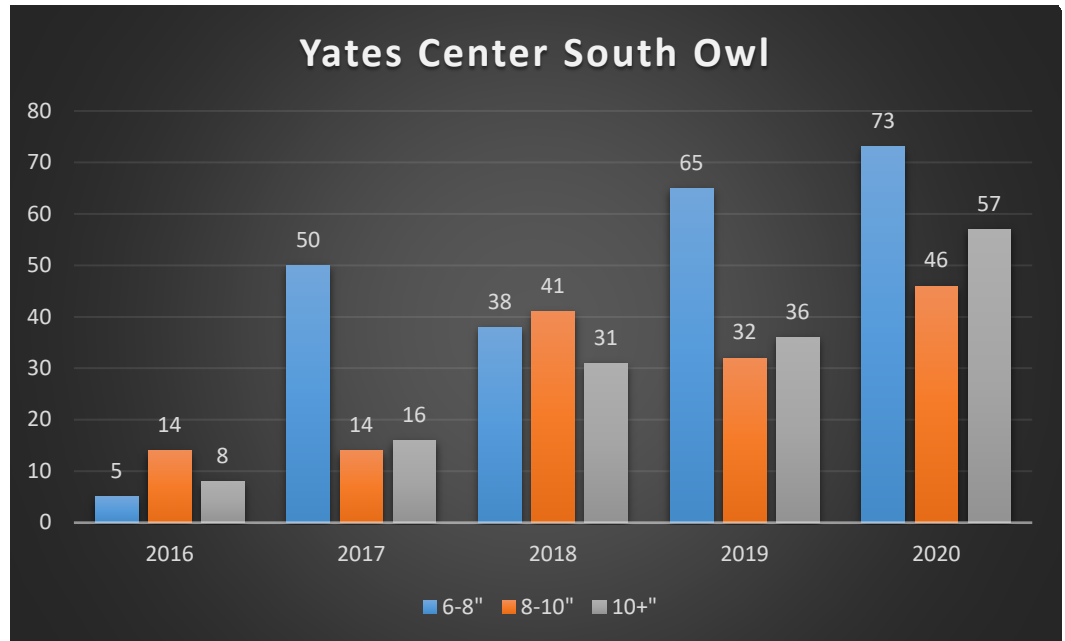


Continuing with the theme of crappie, Garnett Cedar Valley Reservoir is a 350-acre impoundment Southwest of Garnett six miles and has historically produced a dense population of crappie. A population that has been largely stunted until now. I have been stocking saugeye and wipers to add predation on the crappie for several years, but evidence that the stockings were successful has been lacking. Fall sampling revealed that the population has appeared to turn the corner as the graph illustrates. We captured the most fish over 10" I have ever seen and the number of stock length and quality length fish (5"-9" fish) have decreased substantially. I would like to attribute some of this population turnaround to the wiper and saugeye stockings, but I feel like the weather has played a larger part in correcting the population dynamics. I believe the heavy spring rains the previous years resulted in a large portion of the population flushing downstream, which decreased competition for resources and allowed the fish left in the lake to experience faster growth. This is all speculation, but the takeaway from this data is the current population is the best it has been since I started ten years ago, and anglers have already been reaping the benefits according to city personnel.



Yates Center South Owl

South Owl Lake in Yates Center is another one of my city lakes where the crappie population has shown improvement recently. Over the last five years the relative abundance of crappie has increased, but the population has maintained balance because of good growth. The graph illustrates how the number of bigger fish has increased as the population has increased. South Owl is 150 acres in size, shallow, and usually turbid with lackluster habitat, but it still produces a good crappie population. Crappie are generally found near the dam and the several fish attractors that have been placed in various locations. Coordinates for those locations can be found [HERE](#) OR [HERE](#).



Note: This photo was taken before the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 Woodson District Fishing Forecast

Lakes within my district offer a wide variety of fishing opportunities and for the most part stack up well compared to other lakes across the state. See how your favorite species and lakes are looking for the upcoming fishing season below, and for the complete 2021 Fishing Forecast click [HERE](#).

Water body	Bluegill	Crappie	Channel Catfish	Blue Catfish	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye	Saugeye	Wiper	White Bass	Redear Sunfish
Coffey County Lake	Poor	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	N/A	Fair	Fair	N/A
Garnett North Lake	Fair	Fair	Good	N/A	Good	N/A	N/A	Fair	Poor	N/A	Poor
Garnett South Lake	Good	Fair	Fair	N/A	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor	N/A	N/A
Garnett Cedar Valley	Good	Good	Excellent	N/A	Fair	N/A	N/A	Poor	Poor	Fair	Poor
Gridley City Lake	Fair	Fair	Fair	N/A	Good	N/A	Good	N/A	Fair	N/A	Fair
Lebo City Lake	Poor	Good	Fair	N/A	Poor	N/A	N/A	Poor	Poor	N/A	Poor
John Redmond	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor	Good	N/A
Woodson State Lake	Poor	Poor	Good	N/A	Poor	N/A	Poor	N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor
Yates Center City Lake	Fair	Fair	Good	Poor	Good	N/A	Poor	N/A	Fair	Fair	Good
Yates Center South Owl	Fair	Good	Fair	N/A	Fair	N/A	Fair	N/A	Poor	N/A	Fair

Tight Lines!



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