

Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

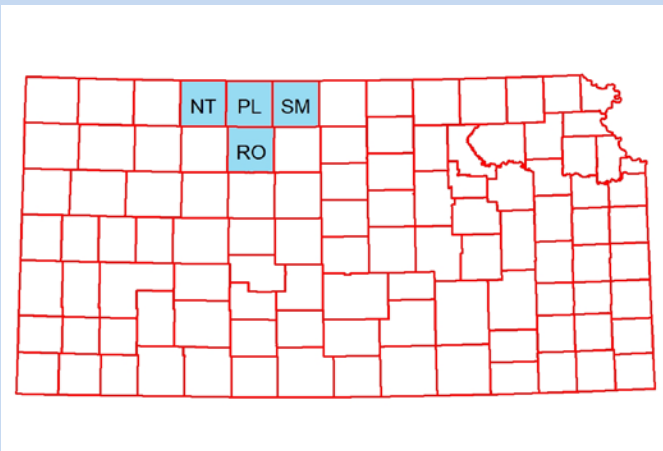
Volume 1, Issue 1 Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, Fisheries Division 2021

Written By:

Mark A. Shaw, District Fisheries Biologist
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism
Webster Area Office
1140 10 Road
Stockton, KS 67669
(785) 425-6775
mark.shaw@ks.gov

Welcome to the Stockton Fisheries District

The Stockton District consists of four counties in northwest Kansas. They are Rooks (RO), Phillips (PL), Smith (SM) and Norton (NT). The district consists of three main Reservoirs; Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius, one state fishing lake; Rooks State fishing lake, four Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes; Logan City lake, Plainville Township lake, Agra City Lake and Lenora City Lake; and various Walk In Fishing Access (WIFA) properties which consist of 63.5 acres of ponds in Phillips, Smith and Rooks counties and 3.80 miles of stream access on the North and South Fork Solomon rivers.



2021 FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR

WEBSTER RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is 0.28 (as of May 13th, 2021) feet above conservation pool. All the boat ramps are usable at this elevation.

BLACK BASS - Good. The largemouth bass population has really turned around due to the high water and the stocking of 64,385 fingerlings on May 17th of 2017 and 82,055 fingerlings on May 16th of 2019. The resident structure is currently dominated by 12 to 15-inch fish accounting for 66.92 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 4 to 8-inch size range accounted for 0.75 percent, fish in the 8 to 12-inch size range accounted for 5.26 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 27.07 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 3.99 pounds. The density rating for Webster largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 2nd amongst all reservoirs in the state. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Webster. Spinner, crank and artificial baits should work well along the east side of Rock Point, Old Marina Cove, along the dam, breakwaters and bluffs. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

CHANNEL CATFISH - Good.

FLATHEAD CATFISH - Good.

Channel catfish fishing should be good this year. Channel catfish are scattered over a wide size range with the majority being in the 11 to 15-inch size range. Fish in the 8 to 11-inch size range accounted for 4.76 percent, fish in the 11 to 16-inch size range accounted for 52.38 percent, quality fish in the 16 to 24-inch size range (1.5 to 5.5 pounds) accounted for 42.86 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 3.84 pounds. Flatheads are also present in a wide range of sizes with

5 to 50-pound fish available. These catfish should congregate around the dam, north & south shore breakwaters and along the bluffs. They can be caught on rod and reel, setlines or trotlines using traditional bait's like shad and shad gizzards, shrimp, stink and dip bait's and night crawlers.



BLACK CRAPPIE – Good. A good crappie spawn was produced in 2020 with 48.42 percent of the fall sample consisting of 3 to 6-inch fish. Hopefully these fish will recruit on up to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 38.60 percent being 6 to 10 inches in length and 12.98 percent being 10 to 15 inches in length. Webster's density rating for black crappie (8 inches and above) is 4th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest crappie sampled were a white crappie weighing 0.84 pounds and black crappie weighing 0.92 pounds. Look for the crappie around the North and South shore fish attractors, the breakwaters on the North and South sides and along the dam and outlet. Best baits are jigs, jigs with minnows under a bobber or small slab spoons.

RAINBOW TROUT - Very Good to Excellent. The Webster Stilling Basin, a 6-acre impoundment below the dam, is stocked five times (Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb & Mar) each trout season. Each stocking consists of 2,100 trout averaging approximately ½ pound each with an occasional bigger fish thrown in to make it exciting. Projected stocking dates are usually around the 1st of the month.



WALLEYE - Good. There is going to be a fair number of keeper fish caught this year with 37.29 percent of the fall sample being over 15 inches. There will also be some catch and release this year since individuals in the 7 to 15-inch range accounted for 62.71 percent. Fish in the 15 to 20-inch size range accounted for 25.42 percent and fish in the 20 to 25-inch size range accounted for 8.48 percent and fish over 25 inches accounted for 3.39 percent of the 2020 fall sample. Webster's density rating for walleye (15 inches and above) is 8th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest walleye sampled in 2020 weighed 6.60 pounds. Look for the walleye to be up along the dam in March and April as they come into spawn and then move out onto the flat's in May. During the spawn, the best baits to use are jigs, road runners and crankbaits. When they move out to the flats, get those night crawlers out. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**

WHITE BASS - Good. This population is currently dominated by fish in the 12 to 15-inch size range which accounted for 82.54 percent of the fall sample. Individuals in the 7 to 12-inch size range accounted for 15.87 percent, fish 12 to 15 inches accounted for 82.54 percent of the sample and fish over 15 inches accounted for 1.59 percent. The biggest fish sampled in 2020 weighed 1.53 pounds. Webster's density rating (9 inches and above) is 9th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Surface action should provide some exciting opportunities throughout the reservoir during the summer as these fish chase the shad around. Trolling diving lures and casting road runners should also be productive.

WIPERS - Good. The supply should be good this year. Fish in the 5 to 16-inch size range accounted for 11.11 percent, fish in 16 to 20-inch size range accounted for 81.48 percent and fish 20 to 25-inch size range accounted for 6.79 percent and fish over 25 inches accounted for 0.62 percent. Larger fish (20 inches +) accounted for 7.41 percent, therefore, you should still hang on to those fishing rods. Webster's density rating (12 inches and above) is 1st amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2020 weighed 9.18 pounds. Surface action should be pretty good as these fish feed on shad, as well as, casting buck tail jigs into the wind around the corners of the Dam and trolling diving lures around the lower portion of the reservoir.

2021 FISHING FORECAST KIRWIN RESERVOIR

KIRWIN RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is 0.57 (as of May. 13, 2021) feet above conservation pool. Usable boat ramps at this level include the North and South Shore ramps.

BLACK BASS - Good. The largemouth bass population has really turned around due to the high water and the stocking of 86,555 fingerlings on May 16th of 2017 and the stocking of 82,294 fingerlings on May 30th of 2019. The resident structure is currently dominated by 15 to 20-inch fish accounting for 73.75 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 4 to 8-inch size range accounted for 2.50 percent, fish in the 8 to 12-inch size range accounted for 7.50 percent, fish in the 12 to 15-inch size range accounted for 16.25 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 73.75 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 2.92 pounds. The density rating for Kirwin largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 6th amongst all reservoirs in the state. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Kirwin. Spinner, crank and artificial baits should work well along the Dam, around the North and South shore boat ramp coves, around Bluegill and Crappie points and up in Bow Creek. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

CHANNEL CATFISH - Good. The overall supply of channel catfish is good as fish were scattered over a wide size range. Fish in the 4 to 11-inch size range accounted for 6.67 percent, fish in the 11 to 15-inch size range accounted for 30.00 percent, fish in the 15 to 24-inch size range accounted for 50.00 percent and fish over 24 inches accounted for 13.33 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled in 2020 weighed 7.66 pounds. The supply of flatheads is also good. Flatheads are present in a wide range of sizes with 5 to 50-pound fish being in the population. As the water starts warming up, these fish will be coming up shallow to feed, so fish the upper ends of coves and shallow areas using shad sides and gizzards. Also, the channels should be up in Bow Creek and the North Fork Solomon Rivers. These fish can be caught on rod and reel

and/or setlines or trotlines using shad sides and gizzards, shrimp and stink or dip bait.



Kirwin 23 lb. Channel catfish – 2012

WHITE CRAPPIE – Good. White crappie numbers are higher than last year, and black crappie numbers are higher as well. This past year produced another good crappie spawn with 63.88 percent of the fall sample consisting of 2 to 6-inch fish and 6.20 percent being 6 to 8-inch fish. Hopefully these fish will recruit on up to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 4.04 percent being 8 to 10 inches in length and 25.88 percent being 10 to 14 inches in length. The density rating for white crappie at Kirwin (8 inches and above) is 23rd and for black crappie (8 inches and above) it ranks 2nd amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2020 was a white crappie weighing 1.98 pounds and a black crappie weighing 1.49 pounds. Crappie should be concentrated around the North and South shore fish attractors and drop offs and can be caught using jigs, jigs tipped with minnows or small slab spoons and can be caught up in the shallows of coves and off the Dam during the spawn using jigs or jigs tipped with minnows under a bobber.



WALLEYE - Good. There will be some catch and release this year since individuals in the 8 to 15-inch range accounted for 57.32 percent. However, there will be some nice catches of harvestable walleye - fish in the 15 to 20-inch size range accounted for 32.92 percent, fish in the 20 to 25-inch size range accounted for 6.10 percent and fish over 25 inches accounted for 3.66 percent of the 2020 fall sample. The density rating at Kirwin (15 inches and above) is 3rd amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 7.47 pounds. These fish can be caught off the Dam during the spawn in March and April casting jigs, roadrunners or crankbaits. After the spawn would get those night crawlers out and fish the flats and drop offs. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**



Kirwin Walleye – 2019

WHITE BASS - Good. This population is currently dominated by fish in the 11 to 15-inch size range which accounted for 39.39 percent of the 2020 sample. Individuals in the 4 to 8-inch size range accounted for 33.34 percent, fish in the 12 to 15-inch size range accounted for 39.39 percent and fish over 15 inches accounted for 27.27 percent. Most of the fish will be running in the 1 to 2-pound range. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 2.64 pounds. The density rating at Kirwin (9 inches and above) is 19th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Surface action should provide some exciting opportunities throughout the reservoir during the summer months as these fish chase shad, so keep an eye on the sky and find the gulls. Trolling diving lures should also entice these fish into biting.

WIPERS - Good. The supply is good, and the quality of this fishery is good as well. Individuals in the 7 to 10-inch size range accounted for 31.87 percent of the fall 2020 sample. Fish in the 10 to 15-inch size range accounted for 26.37 percent, fish in the 15 to 20-inch size range accounted for 37.36 percent and fish 20 inches plus accounted for 4.40 percent. The density rating for wipers (12 inches and above) at Kirwin is 4th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 7.36 pounds. Casting bucktail jigs into the wind along either side of the Dam, Knob Hill, between Bluegill and Crappie point's and around Cottonwood Grove could be productive, as well as trolling diving lures along the river channel and dam. Also, look for some good top water action this summer on calm days as these fish feed on shad.

2021 FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR

SEBELIUS RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is 5.93 (as of May. 13, 2021) feet below conservation pool. Usable ramps at this level include the East and West Leota Cove ramps.

BLACK BASS – Good. The largemouth bass population is dominated by 8 to 12-inch fish accounting for 33.33 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 3 to 8-inch size range accounted for 22.88 percent of the sample, fish in the 8 to 12-inch size range accounted for 33.33 percent, fish in the 12 to 15-inch size range accounted for 28.25 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 15.54 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 4.32 pounds. The density rating for Sebelius largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 1st amongst all reservoirs in the state. Good numbers of spotted bass are also present with 50.00 percent being in the 3 to 11-inch size range, 25.00 percent being in the 11 to 14-inch size range and 25.00 percent being in the 14 to 17-inch size range. The density rating for spotted bass (11 inches and above) is 3rd amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Spinner and artificial baits should work well in Leota cove, along the dam, Shoen's cove and up the river channel by the sandpit. Fish the rocky areas for the spots. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and spotted bass is in effect.**

CHANNEL CATFISH – Fair. According to 2020 netting results, the supply of channel catfish is fair with 8 to 16-inch fish being fairly common. Individuals in the 8 to 16-inch size range accounted for 100.00 percent of the sample. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 1.07 pounds. No flatheads were caught this year in the fall sample, however, quite a few were observed while conducting other sampling around the reservoir. These fish can be caught around the fish attractors, around Leota cove, along the dam, up west by the Marsh Dike and around the Sandpit using shad sides and gizzards, night crawlers, stink bait or shrimp.



BLACK CRAPPIE – Good. Currently, crappies are present in good numbers for blacks and fair numbers for whites. Both the black and white crappie had good spawn's this past year, so hopefully they will recruit on up to make for some good fishing in the years to come. Crappie in the 2 to 5-inch size range accounted for 60.00 percent of the sample, fish in the 5 to 10-inch size range accounted for 27.96 percent and fish 10 to 15 inches accounted for 12.04 percent. While fish under $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound are likely to dominate the catch this year, some fish in the 1 to 1 1/2-pound range could be taken as well. The density rating for Sebelius black crappie (8 inches and above) is 3rd amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest black crappie sampled weighed 1.64 pounds and the biggest white crappie weighed 0.88 pounds. These fish can be found around the public fishing dock, Marina slips, fish attractor's or up in the coves using jigs, jigs tipped with minnow under a bobber or small slab spoon.

SAUGEYE - Good. Catch rates will be pretty good again this year and the opportunity for harvest will be good for saugeye and poor for walleye. The saugeye population is doing rather well with 8 to 15-inch fish accounting for 15.32 percent, fish 15 to 18 inches accounted for 64.52 percent and harvestable fish over 18 inches accounted for 20.16 percent of the 2020 fall sample. Sebelius still holds the current state record (9.81 lbs.) which was caught in November 1998. The density rating at Sebelius (14 inches and above) is 1st amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest saugeye sampled weighed 4.01 pounds. No walleyes were sampled in 2020, however, should still be some harvestable walleye in the reservoir. Look for these fish to be up by the Dam in March and April and then move to the flats in May, so get those jigs, crank bait's and night crawlers ready. **An 18-inch length limit is in effect for saugeye and walleye.**

WIPERS -Good. The supply is strong, and the quality of this fishery is good as well. Fish in the 6 to 15-inch size range are especially plentiful with larger fish available as well. Individuals in the 6 to 15-inch size range accounted for 48.34 percent, 15 to 20-inch size range accounted for 46.36 percent and larger fish (20 inches plus) accounted for 5.30 percent. The biggest wiper sampled in the fall of 2020 weighed 15.19 pounds. The density rating at Sebelius (12 inches and above) is 2nd amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Bucktail jigs that are cast into the wind along the North shore have been effective, as well as fishing night crawlers and shrimp on the bottom in Leota cove and using live bait off the drop offs outside of Leota and Concrete coves. Could also be some good top water action as these fish feed on shad.



Sebelius 15.19 pound wiper – 2020

Fishing Information

You can visit the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism website at <http://ksoutdoors.com> for a wealth of fisheries information. When you click on the fisheries tab at the top of the page you can access all kinds of information like where to fish, reports and forecasts, seasons and limits, fees, licenses and permits, species and fish records, aquatic nuisance species, learn about fish and fishing, hatcheries, special fishing programs, certified bait dealers, tournaments, fish consumption advisories, blue-green algae and report violations. If you cannot find the information you are looking for from the website, you can call or stop by any of the area, park or regional offices.



Protect Our Waters

Stop aquatic hitchhikers!



Clean. Drain. Dry.
Every lake, every time.

Use it where you catch it.
One bait, one lake: Do it for the future's sake.

Know the rules. Visit: **ProtectKSWaters.org**

All the Stockton District waters are currently open to fishing during this COVID-19 outbreak. However, I would highly advise that you continue to utilize social distancing (at least 6 feet from one another) and do not congregate at the boat ramps. I would also like to ask that everyone using the Stockton District waters be especially diligent in helping to stop the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS), especially zebra mussels.

Zebra mussels now inhabit Glen Elder, Wilson and Cedar Bluff. So far Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius do not have them so let's try to keep it that way. Thank you in advance for helping to keep them out of the Stockton District.

Hopefully this newsletter has given you some information that will make your outings more pleasurable and memorable. So, get out there, take a friend with you and take advantage of the many opportunities that are available. Best of luck, be careful, stay healthy and enjoy the great outdoors.

Mark A. Shaw
District Fisheries Biologist
Webster Area Office

All articles are copyright of Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism and cannot be copied or distributed without permission from KDWPT.