

Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

2021, Issue 2

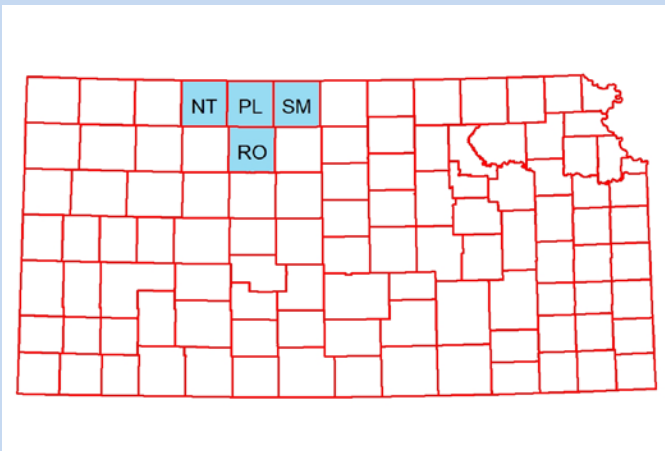
Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks, Fisheries Division

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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 includes three 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 Lake; and various Walk in Fishing Areas (WIFA) properties consisting of 62.5 acres of ponds in Phillips, Smith and Rooks counties and 3.8 miles of stream access on the North and South Fork Solomon rivers.



2022 BASS FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR



BLACK BASS - Good

The black bass population has turned around considerably. This is because Webster Reservoir water levels have remained relatively high and the stocking of 82,055 fingerling largemouth bass into the reservoir in 2019, bolstering the population. The current largemouth population is dominated by 12 to 15-inch fish accounting for 45.38 percent of the 2021 sample. Bass in the 4 to 7-inch size range made up 9.24 percent of the sample, fish in the 8 to 11-inch size range accounted for 8.40 percent of the sample, and fish over 15 inches made up 36.98 percent. By spring 2022, these fish should all be 2 to 4 inches bigger. No smallmouth bass were sampled or observed this year. Spinner, crank, and artificial baits should work well along Rock Point and Old Marina coves, along the dam and bluffs, and between Rock Point and the outlet gates. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect at Webster Reservoir.**

2022 BASS FISHING FORECAST FOR KIRWIN RESERVOIR

LARGEMOUTH BASS - Good

The Largemouth Bass population at Kirwin is looking very impressive! Kirwin Reservoir water levels have remained relatively high and the stocking of 82,294 fingerling largemouth in the spring of 2019 boosted largemouth density. The Kirwin bass population is dominated by 15 to 18-inch fish accounting for 64.36 percent of the 2021 spring sample. Largemouth bass in the 4 to 7-inch size range accounted for 2.97 percent of the sample, fish in the 8 to 11-inch size range accounted for 2.97 percent and fish in the 12 to 15-inch size range accounted for 29.70 percent. Look for a noticeable jump in numbers within the 15 to 18-inch size class of largemouths at Kirwin over the next two years. Some of the better bass angling locations includes the shoreline area between Crappie Point and Boy Scout Cove, coves near the north and south shore boat ramps, and along the dam and outlet area.

A 15-inch length limit is in effect on the harvest of Black Bass at Kirwin Reservoir.



2022 BASS FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR

BLACK BASS - Good

The Sebelius Largemouth Bass population is dominated by 12 to 15-inch fish accounting for 39.90 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 3 to 8-inch size range accounted for 11.45 percent of the sample, fish in the 8 to 12-inch size range accounted for 28.11 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 20.54 percent. The biggest largemouth sampled weighted in at 5.04 pounds. Spotted bass are also present with 25.00 percent being in the 13 to 15-inch size range and 75.00 percent being in the 13 to 17-inch size range. The largest spotted bass sampled weighted in at 2.4 pounds this past spring. However, larger fish have been observed in past years, and are no doubt present. Spinner and artificial baits should work well when targeting gravelly shorelines and the rock outcrops of Leota Cove, along the dam, Shoen's Cove and near the underwater sandpit at the west end. In late April and through the month of May, Sebelius spots forage heavily on the abundant crayfish residing around the rocky habitat.

A 15-inch length limit is in effect on all black bass at Sebelius Reservoir.



**Sebelius spotted bass*

Rainbow Trout Season

There will **NOT** be a trout season at the Webster Stilling Basin this year. The Bureau of Reclamation will be initiating a project to repair and upgrade the main overflow structure. The spillway chute floor will be replaced, necessitating de-watering of the basin. There will be no trout stockings into the stilling basin this year. Sorry in advance for any inconvenience that this will cause. The wintertime trout fishery will return once the stilling basin renovation work is completed.

Fishing Information

You can visit the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks 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 including where to fish, reports and forecasts, seasons and limits, species and fish records, fishing regulations, aquatic nuisance species, learn about fish and fishing, special fishing programs, certified bait dealers, tournaments, fish consumption advisories, blue-green algae and you can also report violators. 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.



Young-of-the-Year Shad Sampling Results

Young-of-the-year (YOY) shad sampling was completed in August at Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius Reservoirs. Baby shad are sampled at ten random sites around the water body and for 360 seconds of EFT (energized field time) per site. When all is said and done one hour of effort is expended at each impoundment. This sample is performed to determine what size the shad are and how many are available for sportfish to utilize. These YOY shad help sustain sportfish health and maintain them through the winter months. The goal is typically around 250 fish per site with 50 percent of them being under 70 mm. All three reservoir samples exhibited excellent forage production indices in 2021.



* Young of the year shad sampling.

At Webster, 1,122 age-0 shad were collected per site, with 4.74 percent of the sample being under the 70 mm threshold for preferred size quality.

Kirwin yielded 2,063 shad per site, with 81.92 percent being under 70 mm while Keith Sebelius produced 6,336 shad with 97.52 percent of the sample being under 70 mm in length.

Sportfish welfare should be characterized by excellent overall body condition when end-of-the-year sampling is conducted in the fall.

The summer is winding down with schools starting back up and football and hunting seasons quickly approaching. However, there is still a lot of good fishing to be had as the water temperatures cool down and sportfish begin feeding up for winter. Don't put the boat and fishing poles away just yet, get out and enjoy the cooler days catching some fish.

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 fishing opportunities available. Good luck, be careful, and enjoy the great outdoors!

Mark A. Shaw
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Use it where you catch it.

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