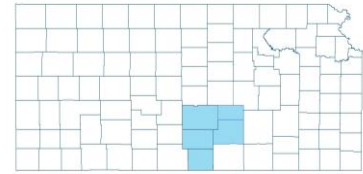


Cheney District Fisheries



Volume 8, Issue 2

Fall, 2017



District News: Cheney, Hutchinson and Wichita Fishing

Hello everyone, summer 2017 is beginning to wind down, and I think we're all looking forward to the cool fall weather ahead. Fall is an underrated time for fishing in Kansas. The fish are often feeding heavily as winter approaches, and you will often have the lake to yourself, since many anglers have hung up their rods for the year and are now focusing on hunting, football and other activities.

Inside This Issue

District News

Fishing Q&A

Hook, Line & Sinker

Cheney Reservoir

Hot Action for Wiper and White Bass

Anglers have continued to report excellent fishing for wipers and white bass this summer. Gizzard shad production has been good this year, which bodes well for wiper and white bass growth, and most anglers are reporting that the wipers they're catching have excellent body condition. In late summer and early fall, keep an eye out for white bass and wipers chasing shad schools to the surface. Often, a flock of gulls will be diving on the shad as well, which can tip you off to the fish activity below. The action can be fast and furious when this is going on, but it may only last a short time. It's best to have a rod pre-rigged with a lure just for this situation. When wipers aren't chasing shad on the surface, trolling shad-imitating crankbaits or slow trolling live shad is a great tactic. As water temperatures cool later in fall, surface activity will become less common, but wiper and white bass fishing can still be excellent. Anglers simply need to adjust their tactics and look for fish associating with drop-offs, humps, and other bottom contours; a good sonar unit can be essential for locating schools of fish at this time.

Blue Catfish Sampled

KDWPT Fisheries staff sampled the blue catfish population at Cheney Reservoir in August as part of a new annual effort to monitor the population's progress. Blue catfish ranging from 10 inches up to 35 inches and weighing up to 27 pounds were recorded. KDWPT began stocking blue catfish at Cheney Reservoir in 2005 with the goal of establishing a new sport fish population for anglers. A conservative minimum length limit of 35 inches was put in place to protect the fish from



KDWPT fisheries biologist
Seth Lundgren with a 35

inch Blue Catfish from Cheney Reservoir.

harvest while the population becomes established. Blue catfish stocking was stopped in 2016, with the hopes that the population size had grown large enough to sustain itself. If we continue to see small individuals in future sampling efforts, we'll know that the population is reproducing.

Wichita Area

Urban Catfish Stocking Wrapping up

The urban channel catfish stocking program is wrapping up for the season. Every summer, KDWPT stocks keeper-size channel catfish in 32 urban fisheries in the Wichita and Hutchinson area. Each fishery will receive one more stocking in mid- or late September this year. The catfish average about 1 pound, but some fish up to 3 pounds are included for extra rod-bending action. East and West KDOT lakes, Cruiser Lake, Chisholm North Lake, Watson Park Lake and Lake Afton are all good bets. To view a full list of lakes in the urban catfish program, visit

<http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Urban-Fishing-Program>.

Trout Season Coming

Trout season will begin again this year on November 1. Winter trout stocking provides opportunities for Kansas anglers to fish for a cold-water species that is normally associated with the freestone streams of the Rocky Mountains and the spring creeks of the Ozarks. District water bodies receiving trout stockings this year will be KDOT East Lake, Vic's Lake and Slough Creek at Sedgwick County Park, and Dillon Nature Center Pond in Hutchinson. Anglers are reminded that KDOT East Lake, Vic's Lake, and Slough Creek are Type 1 trout waters, which require all anglers fishing (except youth 15 and younger) at these locations during the trout season to have a trout permit; additionally, only artificial lures are allowed at Slough Creek. Dillon Nature Center Pond is a Type 2 trout water; only anglers fishing for trout or possessing trout are required to have a trout permit. To learn more about the KDWPT Trout Program, or to view a statewide list of trout stocking locations, visit

<http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Trout-Fishing-Program>.

Elsewhere in the District

Fall Sampling Season Approaching

Fall is a busy time of year for fisheries biologists in Kansas. Beginning in September, KDWPT biologists will sample lakes across the state using a combination of trap nets and gill nets. Trap nets are set adjacent to the shoreline and are excellent for sampling structure-oriented fish such as bluegill and crappie. The nets have a series of funnel-shaped throats that prevent fish from leaving the trap after they enter. Gill nets are set in open water and are excellent at sampling fish such as walleye and wiper. Gillnets catch fish by entanglement. Picture an underwater chain-link fence made of monofilament fishing line, when a fish swims into the net, it gets caught in the mesh by its gill covers, teeth or fins. Biologists use the population data gathered from sampling to make recommendations on future stocking, creel limits, and other management questions.

Over 48,000 pounds of keeper-size Channel Catfish will be stocked in the Wichita and Hutchinson area this year!

Fishing Q&A

Q: How old is the fish I caught?

A: In most cases, it is difficult to estimate the age of a fish by its length. Fish have indeterminate growth, which means they can grow throughout their lives, and the rate of growth can vary from year to year.

How fast fish grow depends mostly on the quantity and quality of food available to them, which is dependent on a host of factors, including water chemistry, weather, and climate. In general, fish grow faster when they are young, and slower as they age, but there is considerable variation among individuals within a population. The only surefire way to be confident of a fish's age is to examine a calcified structure such as a scale, spine, or otolith. As a fish grows, it continually deposits new material on these calcified structures.

Periods of slow growth, such as winter or spawning season, leave an opaque layer on the structure. The layers appear similar to growth rings on a tree stump when viewed under a microscope, with each opaque ring signifying one year of life. Biologists often collect age and growth structures while sampling fish populations. Age and growth data are critical for making informed decisions about fisheries management actions.



At right: An otolith from a Bluegill from Kingman State Fishing Lake. Each opaque white ring signifies one year of growth. This fish appears to be age-4.

Hook, Line and Sinker

If you know someone who might like to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so at this address: <http://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/News>. If you would like to unsubscribe, please send your info to Contact Us with "unsubscribe Cheney District Fisheries Newsletter" and we will get you taken off the list. If you have any questions, comments, or story ideas, feel free to send them.

Andrew Schaefer, District Fisheries Biologist.
andrew.schaefer@ks.gov



There's no place like home, so *Fish Kansas!* - Andrew