

Lawrence District Fisheries

KDWPT Fisheries Division Newsletter

Winter 2020

2019 Fall Test Netting Results for Clinton and Melvern Reservoirs

High water levels at both Clinton and Melvern flooded a lot of shoreline cover providing an abundance of habitat for sportfish and gizzard shad. Samples taken in 2019 showed record numbers of young gizzard shad production at both reservoirs. Juvenile largemouth bass were plentiful in flooded vegetation at both lakes. Finally, trap net sampling at Melvern showed that an excellent crappie spawn occurred.

Unfortunately, the water level was too high at Clinton to set trap nets, so a proper crappie assessment was not possible. Although, based on angler catches this winter the crappie fishery is probably pretty good, and it would not be surprising if Clinton had a good crappie spawn too. The table below compares 2019 sample catch rates for Clinton and Melvern. Both reservoirs have low density blue catfish populations, as catch rates were less than 1 blue catfish per net night. Melvern's channel catfish sample catch rate was about 3 times that of Clinton's, but both should supply good angling for this species. Bear in mind that Clinton was about 11 feet high at time of sampling and this may have affected catch rates. Low numbers of sauger and walleye were captured at both locations. White bass catch rate was much better for Clinton than for Melvern, although quality fish are present at both reservoirs. Moderate numbers of wiper were caught at Clinton (none are present at Melvern), which provided excitement to lucky anglers that hooked one, as many exceeded 5 pounds.

Table 1. Sportfish Catches Per Net at Clinton and Melvern Reservoirs, 2019. * unable to sample in 2019.

	Clinton	Melvern
Blue catfish	0.6	0.3
Channel catfish	2.1	6.4
Sauger	1.0	0.1
Walleye	1.2	1.6
White bass	10.3	2.3
White crappie	*	14.1
Wiper	1.5	N/A

Small Lake Fall Netting Summary

Species summaries for small lakes fall test netting samples give the angler an idea of where to go for his or her favorite fish. So the best lake(s) to fish for each listed species would be: black crappie at Melvern River Pond, bluegill at Lonestar, channel catfish and redear at Douglas SFL, saugeye at Carbondale City Lake, walleye at Lake Shawnee, white bass at Carbondale City Lake, white crappie at Carbondale City Lake or Douglas SFL, and wiper at Melvern River Pond. For more information, look on the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks Tourism website under Forecast.

Table 2. Sportfish Catch Per Net at Small Lakes Within the Lawrence District, 2019. * denotes highest value.

	Carbondale	Lonestar	Douglas SFL	MELR River Pond	Osage SFL	L. Shawnee
Black crappie	0	4.5	11.8	15.0*	0	1.1
Bluegill	4	60.3*	12.8	27.5	0.8	7.4
Channel catfish	6.3	4.3	8.7*	4.5	3.0	4.1
Redear sunfish	0	7	53.3*	13.0	1.8	0.1
Saugeye	4.8*	0	0.5	0	0	0
Walleye	0.5	0	0	0	0.3	2.3*
White bass	8.7*	2.8	1.8	0	3.8	5.1
White crappie	4.8*	3.8	4.8*	2.5	0.8	3.9
Wiper	0.5	0.2	0	4.8*	0.2	3.1



Channel catfish

Statewide Crappie Age and Growth Study Underway

White crappie samples were collected during October 2019 at many water bodies across the state; including Clinton, Melvern, and Carbondale City Lake. Bony structures from the head, known as otoliths, were excised and will be aged to shed light on longevity, growth, and mortality. This information will help biologists better manage crappie in the future.



White crappie

Study to Compare Saugeye Versus Walleye Performance in Kansas Lakes

Walleye are a member of the perch family, percidae, and members of this family are known collectively as percids. Walleye struggle to produce good fisheries in some Kansas lakes. Often, saugeye (sauger-walleye cross) are stocked into these lakes where walleye did not do well and have provided better fisheries. A number of study lakes will compare saugeye versus walleye stocking success to see which produces the best fishery. Clinton and Melvern Reservoirs have been stocked with 3.5 million walleye fry annually to maintain their populations, however sample catches continue to show low density populations. During the study, 1.75 million saugeye and 1.75 million walleye fry will be stocked at the same time at each reservoir to give each equal opportunity to recruit to the population. Annual gill net surveys will assess how each is progressing and after 3 to 5 years a decision will be made regarding the direction to take to improve the percid fishery at each study lake.



Saugeye

New Fish Habitat Structures at Melvern Reservoir

KANSAS State Chapter of B.A.S.S. members constructed 53 Georgia Cubes and Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism staff placed them into Melvern Reservoir in December of this past year. These structures should provide enhanced fisheries habitat for largemouth bass and other sportfish. GPS coordinates (datum NAD 83) of these new habitat sites are listed below. For a complete listing of fish habitat placed by Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism and volunteers go to our website.

Latitude	Longitude
N38.48501	W095.83835
N38.48421	W095.83845
N38.48594	W095.82925
N38.48643	W095.82001
N38.48464	W095.81834
N38.48380	W095.80865



Georgia cubes about to be placed at Melvern Reservoir

Chasing Away Cabin Fever!

Even though winter's cold can keep some of us off the water, for those willing to brave frigid temperatures can pay big dividends. Crappie are bunched up on channels and "deep" structure, and if you can find a school of fish ready to bite the action can be fast and furious. Of course this type of fishing usually requires a boat, unless you can find a dock to fish off of to get you to deep water. Melvern Reservoir, Hillsdale Reservoir and Lake Shawnee have heated docks to provide some comfort on cold winter days. Shore anglers can fish for trout at a number of venues. There are over 30 KDWPT trout

stocking locations and some Cities and Counties have their own trout stocking programs to provide winter fishing opportunities. Soon, winter killed shad will abound in area lakes triggering increased feeding by channel and blue catfish. When this happens, fishing for catfish can be outstanding from the shore. Don't miss it!



Rainbow trout. Photo provided by Rob Dunham, Pomona/Eisenhower State Park Ranger

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