

March 2011

Lawrence District Newsletter



Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks



Special points of interest:

- * Channel catfish angling should be **Good** at Clinton Reservoir.
- * Wiper numbers are up, due to stockings at Lonestar Lake.
- * Kansas fishing isn't what it used to be. It's much more.

2011 Lawrence District Fishing Forecast

Clinton Reservoir

Gizzard shad production appeared to be high enough in 2010 to produce healthy sportfish, as most exhibited good condition. In addition, young shad produced in 2010 were smaller than normal, which allowed predators to utilize them longer for food. Crappie density has been down at Clinton over the past 3 years, bottoming out in

2008. Good spawns in 2009 and 2010 have the population on the upswing, as catch rates improved in both years. The crappie population is still lower than average, but much improved over the 2008 level. Most crappie sampled were 8 and 9 inch fish, with about 25% exceeding 10 inches in length. Based on the 2010 sample crappie fishing should be im-

proved over last year and will be rated **Fair**. Clinton has had one of the better channel catfish fisheries for the last several years. Nothing has changed, other than numbers are slightly down and size is better. Channel catfish angling should be **Good**. White bass sample numbers were good, as they have been since 2008, but size improved greatly with 14 inch fish being common. Assuming these large fish survive the winter, then the white bass run in the spring should be memorable. Angling for white bass should be **Good**. Numbers of wiper sampled in 2010 was low compared to previous years. Although sample numbers were down, size continued to get larger as these fish mature, with most fish in the 4-6 pound range. Wiper were stocked annually from 2003-2006 to establish a roving trophy predator. Stockings were discontinued because wiper density satisfied the goal during 2007-2009. Wiper will be stocked in 2011 to maintain the population. Wiper fishing should be **Fair**. Walleye numbers were down

in 2010 nets, and if real may be a result of high reservoir releases and harvest. Anglers caught lots of young legal fish off the flats this past spring and summer. Walleye fry to the tune of 3.5 million will be requested to improve the walleye fishery. Based on the 2010 sample walleye fishing is rated **Fair**. Sauger catch was low in the 2010 sample, however big fish were caught. Recent stockings have not yielded as good a return as needed to improve the fishery. Hopefully environmental conditions will be just right for one of the stockings and a good year class will result. Sauger fishing will be **Poor**. Largemouth bass numbers were lower than normal for 2010, although bass density has been low for about 25 years. Some quality fish are present as anglers occasionally catch a bass exceeding 7 lbs. Smallmouth bass fingerlings were stocked annually from 2008 through 2010 to try to re-establish this species. So far the results are encouraging, as more smallmouth were sampled than largemouth during 2010 at Clinton.



2008. Good spawns in 2009 and 2010 have the population on the upswing, as catch rates improved

2011 Lawrence District Fishing Forecast (Cont'd from Page 1)

Smallmouth will be stocked again in 2011, then stockings will be discontinued to allow the fishery to hopefully maintain itself. Largemouth/Smallmouth bass fishing should be **Poor**.



Douglas SFL

High numbers and good sized channel catfish were sampled in 2010, and should supply a **Good** fishery in 2011. Fish were caught in most length categories, with 71% exceeding 16 inches in length. Good numbers of redear sunfish were sampled. Size characteristics were fair with 34% exceeding 7 inches in length. Fishing for redear should be **Fair** in 2011. Bluegill should supply a **Fair** fishery in 2011, as almost 68% exceeded 6 inches long. The black crappie population is finally established, as fair numbers of young of the year (YOY) fish were sampled verifying that survival of spawned crappie had occurred. The fishery still will require time (couple of years) to mature into a real fishable population, so the forecast is **Poor** but improving. Largemouth bass numbers are high. Anglers can catch many bass on an outing, but most fish are small. Angling for this species should be **Fair**.

Leavenworth SFL

Redear sunfish are plentiful at Leavenworth SFL and exhibit excellent size with 16% exceeding 9 inches. This species is rated **Good**. Bluegill are another story unfortunately as size characteristics are poor with only 7% exceeding 6 inches. Because of small size bluegill is rated **Poor**. Channel catfish sample numbers were down somewhat, but size remained good, with 72% exceeding 16 inches. Overall, channel catfish angling should be **Good**. Few crappie were captured in nets, but the ones sampled exhibited good size. Angling for this species should be **Fair**. Wiper numbers were lower than the goal, although size was OK. This species is rated **Fair**. Largemouth bass are abundant and are of fair size. This species should provide **Good** angling in 2011.



2011 Lawrence District Fishing Forecast (Cont'd from Page 2)

Miami SFL

Numbers of crappie sampled were down compared to the last several years, but size remained very good. Crappie fishing should be **Good**. Similarly, bluegill catch was down, but size characteristics were good with 50% of fish exceeding 6 inches and over 6% exceeding 8 inches. Bluegill angling should be **Good**. Moderate numbers of channel catfish possessing excellent size qualities were sampled. This fishery is rated **Fair**. Miami SFL largemouth bass population ranked #1 in the Lawrence District overall when catch rate and size characteristics are examined. A catch rate of 152/hour was observed (anything over 75/hour can be considered high). In addition, over 30 bass per hour greater than 15 inches in length were sampled indicating the lake has good quality fish. Needless to say this lake is rated **Good** for Largemouth bass. This lake was renovated several years ago and the bass fishery has been good ever since. Anglers should come ready to deal with an abundance of cover, as over 250 brush piles have been placed in the lake.

Lonestar Lake

Big redear sunfish have been a component of the Lonestar fishery since the mid- 1980s after it was renovated. Density of redear is not great, but every year some 11 inch individuals are observed. Over 94% of redear sampled were greater than 7 inches and 63% exceeded 9 inches. Redear fishing is rated only **Fair** due to low numbers present. Bluegill numbers are much higher than redear's and supply more angling opportunities. About 80% of bluegill were greater than 6 inches and 2 % exceeded 8 inches. Angling for bluegill should be **Fair**. Black crappie numbers were good and so was size with 86% exceeding 8 inches, and 16% greater than 10 inches. Fishing for crappie should be **Good**. A good channel catfish fishery was sampled at Lonestar. High numbers possessing good size were netted. Over 61% exceeded 16 inches. Channel catfish angling should be **Good**. Wiper numbers are up, due to stockings. However, most fish are young and small. Some of the older fish do exceed 15 inches, but most are under this length. Wiper fishing should be **Fair** in 2011. Lonestar has been the perennial best largemouth bass lake in the Lawrence District for years. This year the number of bass greater than 15 inches long fell 38% compared to the 2009 sample. Largemouth bass virus was detected here in October 2008. This virus usually causes mortality in older, adult largemouth bass and may explain the decline mentioned above. Numbers of bass were good, with an electrofishing catch rate of 106/hour. Local bass anglers have reported catching good numbers, but not as many big fish as normal during 2010. Largemouth bass fishing should be **Good**.



Take a Kid Fishing

2011 Lawrence District Fishing Forecast (Cont'd from Page 3)

Lake Miola

Few bluegill were sampled and are likely under-represented in the sample. Good size characteristics were observed as they have been for the past several years. The bluegill fishery should be **Fair** in 2011. Crappie numbers were up and with good size characteristics should supply a **Good** fishery in 2011. Numbers of channel catfish sampled were very good at Miola. Size of fish was OK with 37% larger than 16 inches. This fishery is rated **Fair**. Moderate numbers of saugeye were sampled, 20% exceeded 15 inches. Saugeye fishing is rated **Fair**. Moderate numbers and sizes of white bass were sampled in fall nets. Anglers caught tremendous numbers of white bass during the end of October and in November. Even so based on the sample this fishery is rated **Fair**. Moderate numbers of wiper of small size were sampled. Wiper fishing should be **Fair** in 2011. Largemouth bass electrofishing catch rate was down in 2010 and may be due to windy, cool temperatures on the day it was sampled. Still catch rate was 86/hour with most of the larger fish in the 12-15 inch length range. This fishery is rated **Fair**.



Lake Shawnee

Bluegill sample characteristics yielded a good population, with quality length fish present. Almost 54% of bluegill sampled were greater than 6 inches and 5% exceeded 8 inches. This fishery should supply **Good** angling in 2011. Crappie numbers were higher than years past and possessed good size characteristics with 97% greater than 8 inches and 8% exceeding 10 inches. Crappie should be **Good** in 2011. Fair numbers of channel catfish were sampled at Lake Shawnee. Many fish were larger than 16 inches in length. Fishing for this species should be **Fair** in 2011. Number of walleye sampled in 2010 was low, but size was improved. Over 90% of walleye netted were longer than 15 inches. This fishery is rated **Fair**. Many white bass were sampled and over 43% exceeded 12 inches, so fishing should be **Good**. Good numbers of wiper were sampled, some quality was present as 16% exceeded 18 inches in length. This fishery should provide **Fair** angling in 2011. Lower numbers of largemouth bass were sampled at Lake Shawnee compared to the past several years, but catch rate was still fairly high. Some big fish are still there as 29% of fish sampled were greater than 15" in length. Body condition was low, indicating lack of suitable size and/or density of prey. Largemouth bass fishing should be **Good**. Numbers of smallmouth bass were lower than the previous 2 years, although numbers for this species has varied greatly over the years at Shawnee. Most smallmouth bass sampled were less than 12 inches long, but anglers catch fish over 19 inches in length every year. Largemouth/smallmouth bass fishing should be **Fair** in 2011.

Trout Fishing Going Full Speed

Kansas Department supported trout fishing in the Lawrence District has been underway this season since Oct. 15th at Lake Henry (Clinton State Park), Auburndale Park Stream (I-70 and McVicar), and Lake Shawnee. A KDWP trout permit is required of persons 16 and older. Anglers 15 and under may fish for trout without a permit if they adhere to a 2 trout per day limit. In addition, all residents 16 through 64 years old and non-residents 16 and older must also have a valid fishing license. Trout permits are available at KDWP offices, most county clerk offices, license vendors, or online at kdwp.state.ks.us. Trout are stocked 7 times per season at Lake Henry and Auburndale Park Stream, whereas Lake Shawnee receives two large stockings – one in October and the other in February. If you love to fish and winter is getting you down give trout a try they enjoy the cold weather! Also, Lake Shawnee has a heated dock to help keep anglers warm on cold, blustery days.



Fish Habitat Project Underway at Clinton Reservoir

Fisheries habitat normally degrades, as reservoirs age. Brushpiles supply habitat for a variety of fish species including; bluegill, crappie, and largemouth bass. This shelter may provide ambush sites for larger predators, or if the structure has small enough hiding spaces may help juvenile fish avoid predation. Some species feel more secure during spawning, if they have overhead cover. If a brushpile is configured properly it provides that type of cover.

Brushpiles are usually great places to fish over, as structure loving fish such as those mentioned above will home in on them if they are available. Locating trees in varying depths in an area helps ensure that some fish will be present at that location almost year around.

Clinton State Parks staff have been busy cutting cedar trees from along roadways within Clinton State Park to minimize blindspots for motorists. Trees are being stockpiled near a boat ramp, and concrete blocks are attached with # 9 galvanized wire. When a sufficient quantity of trees have been prepared, a tractor with loader picks up anchored trees and loads them on the habitat barge. The barge takes trees to predetermined locations and weighted trees are shoved off the barge into the water, where they sink to the bottom. Locations are marked with GPS. Coordinates will be listed in upcoming newsletters as this project progresses.



GPS (NAD 83) Coordinates of newly constructed brushpiles at Clinton Reservoir March 2011

1. N38.93035° W095.34921°
2. N38.93261° W095.34933°
3. N38.93063° W095.34953°
4. N38.93256° W095.34912°
5. N38.93248° W095.34822°
6. N38.93022° W095.35049°
7. N38.92954° W095.35011°
8. N38.93269° W095.35529°

For additional information contact:

Richard Sanders
Fisheries Biologist
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
798 N 1415 Road
Lawrence, KS 66049
785-832-8413

richard.sanders@ksoutdoors.com