

Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

2015, Issue 2

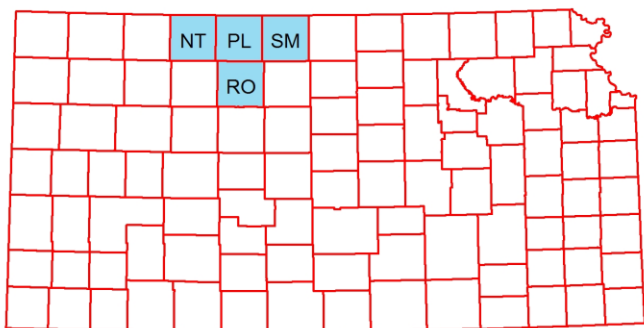
Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, Fisheries Division

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Welcome to the Stockton Fisheries District

The Stockton District consists of four counties in northwest Kansas: 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; two Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes, Logan City lake and Plainville Township lake; and various Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (FISH) properties, which consist of 97.5 acres of ponds in Phillips, Smith and Rooks counties and 3.80 miles of stream access on the North and South Fork Solomon rivers.



2016 BASS FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR



* Webster 2013 smallmouth bass

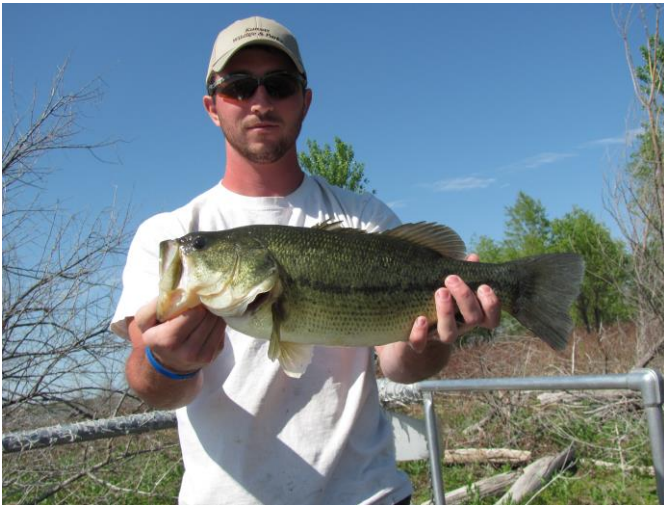
BLACK BASS - Poor.

The black bass population has really taken a nosedive this past year. This is due to the fact that Webster Reservoir is currently approximately 22 feet below conservation pool and the habitat that the bass rely on is pretty much gone. The largemouth bass population, however, is dominated by 15- to 18-inch fish, accounting for 100 percent of the sample (two largemouth bass were caught). The biggest largemouth bass sampled weighed 2.07 pounds. Also, two smallmouth bass were sampled this year with both fish being in the 6- to 9-inch size range. 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. With the lower water levels the bass should be concentrated to the areas mentioned above. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

2016 BASS FISHING FORECAST FOR KIRWIN RESERVOIR

BLACK BASS - Poor.

The largemouth bass population at Kirwin is in a little better shape than what the sampling results show. Only one largemouth bass was sampled this year at Kirwin; however, I had reports of bass being caught by anglers throughout the summer. Also, while performing our shad sample in August, we did observe some largemouth bass. Did not see or sample any smallmouth bass this year. The best locations for finding bass are going to be along Crappie Point and back toward Scout Cove, the cove by the North Shore and South Shore ramps and along the dam and outlet area. With the lower water levels, the bass should be concentrated to the areas mentioned above. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**



* Kirwin largemouth bass

2016 BASS FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR

BLACK BASS - Good.

The Sebelius largemouth bass population is dominated by 12- to 15-inch fish, accounting for 88 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 3- to 7-inch size range accounted for 4 percent of the sample; fish in the 8- to 11-inch size range accounted for 1 percent of the sample; fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 88 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 7 percent. The biggest largemouth bass sampled weighed 3.49 pounds. Good numbers of spotted bass are also present with 33 percent being in the 3- to 7-inch size range, 33 percent being in the 8- to 10-inch size range, 21 percent being in the 11- to 13-inch size range and 13 percent being in the 13- to 16-inch size range. The biggest spotted bass sampled weighed 1.81 pounds. Spinners and artificial baits should work well in Leota Cove, along the dam, Shoen's Cove and up the river channel by the sandpit. Concentrate your fishin in the rocky areas for the spots. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and spotted bass is in effect.**



*Sebelius spotted bass

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

Rainbow Trout Season Starts November 1st

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.

Drought Continues to Cripple Webster District Fisheries

Despite the rains during July, the area reservoirs, state fishing lakes and community lakes remain extremely low and/or dry. Webster reservoir was too low for the Webster Irrigation District to release water this year and remains at approximately 21.7 feet below conservation pool. The Kirwin Irrigation District was able to release water this year for irrigation. The elevation at Kirwin is approximately 15.8 feet below conservation pool. The Almena Irrigation District was not able to withdraw water for irrigation from Keith Sebelius, thus the reservoir is approximately 16.3 feet below conservation pool. Boats are still able to get onto all the reservoirs at this time; however, it is most likely that come October 1, NO boats will be able to get onto Kirwin due to the seasonal boat closure.

Rooks State Fishing Lake is in a lot worse shape than the reservoirs and remains DRY at this time. The two CFAP lakes, Logan City Lake and Plainville Township Lake have water, however, they are extremely low at this time. Hopefully it won't quit raining yet and these water bodies will be able to catch a little water before winter arrives.

Habitat Work at Kirwin

Staff spend three weeks this summer putting habitat back into the reservoir at Kirwin. The concrete truck was called for concrete to make weights to sink the trees and hold them in place. Cedar trees were then cut down and moved to a central location for loading onto a trailer. They were then loaded onto a trailer and hauled to either the Bluegill Point parking lot or the north side of the dam by the low water ramp to be unloaded and staged for sinking. Trees were loaded on the habitat barge and taken out to their final resting place around the existing four fish attractors. All four of the fish attractors received new trees and fish were seen using them the same day we put them in. The south two fish attractors received 88 cedar trees each and the north two attractors received 63 trees each. These new trees should make for some good fishing this fall and winter. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and provide us with adequate ice so that these trees can be sampled with jigs and slab spoons to make sure that fish are using them and calling them home. After all, they say "build it and they will come," right? I hope so. Hope everyone gets the chance to get out and fish this new structure.



* Habitat work at Webster 2014



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 about fishing in Kansas, such as where to fish, how to fish, frequently asked questions (FAQ's), tournaments, special fishing programs, aquatic nuisance species (ANS), hatcheries, fish stocking records, state record fish, fishing reports, fishing forecast, fish regulations, fishing fees, fish identification and public fishing images. 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.



* A very satisfied Kirwin angler

Young of the Year Shad Sampling Results

Young of the year (YOY) shad sampling was completed this past August at Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius reservoirs. Young of the year shad are sampled at 10 random sites throughout the water body and then sampled for 360 seconds of EFT (energized field time). 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 the larger fish to utilize. These YOY fish are the ones that help sustain all the other fish and maintain them through the winter. The goal is typically around 250 fish per site with 50 percent of them being less than 70 mm long. All three reservoirs are looking pretty good with most of the fish being able to utilize them for food.



* Young of the year shad sampling 2014

At Webster 61 fish were caught at each site with 7 percent of the sample being less than 70 mm, however, 52 percent were less than 80 mm. Kirwin produced 1,841 fish per site with 96 percent being less than 70 mm and Keith Sebelius produced 1,155 fish with 68 percent being less than 70 mm.

The summer is coming to a close, schools are starting back up and football and hunting seasons are quickly approaching. However, there is still a lot of good fishing to be had as the water starts to cool down and the fish begin feeding up for winter. So 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 opportunities that are available. Good luck, be careful and enjoy the great outdoors.

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**Get your friends, get your family
... and FISH KANSAS!**



*Brian with 40+ inch 2015 Keith Sebelius flathead