

Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

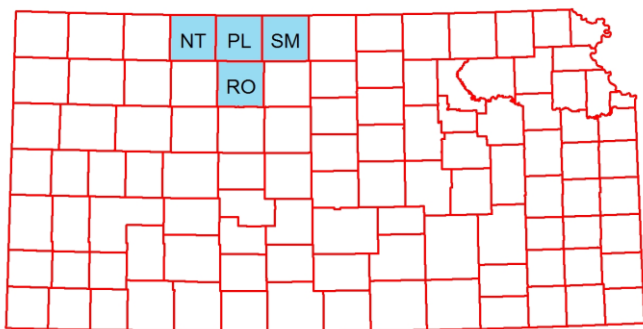
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Welcome to the Stockton Fisheries District

The Stockton district consists of four counties in northwest Kansas. They are Rooks (RO), Phillips (PL), Smith (SM) and Norton (NT). The district consists of three main reservoirs – Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius; one state fishing lake – Rooks; two Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes – Logan City lake and Plainville Township lake; and various Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (F.I.S.H.) properties, which consist of 89.5 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 FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR

WEBSTER RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is approx. 22.42 feet below conservation pool (as of Jan. 1, 2016). The Morel and Old Marina Cove boat ramps are currently high and dry and not usable at this time. However, all the other ramps are usable.

BLACK BASS – Poor The largemouth bass population is dominated by 15- to 20-inch fish, which accounted for 100 percent of the sample. Two largemouth bass were collected during our spring bass sample and a half dozen more were observed during other sampling. The biggest largemouth bass sampled this year weighed 2.07 pounds. The density rating for Webster largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 10th amongst all reservoirs in the state. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Webster. Two smallmouth bass were collected during the spring bass sample and a couple more fish were observed while conducting other sampling. Spinner, crank and artificial baits should work well along the east side of Rock Point, along the dam, breakwaters and bluffs. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

CHANNEL CATFISH – Fair Channel catfish are scattered over a wide size range with the majority of fish being in the 16- to 24-inch size range. Fish in the 11- to 16-inch size range accounted for 18 percent, quality fish in the 16- to 24-inch size range (3 to 5 pounds) accounted for 82 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 3.89 pounds.

FLATHEAD CATFISH – Fair Flatheads are also present in a wide range of sizes, including 5- to 50-pound fish. These catfish should congregate around the dam, north and south shore breakwaters and along the bluffs.

They can be caught on rod and reel, setlines or trotlines using traditional baits like shad and shad gizzards, shrimp, stink and dip baits and night crawlers.



Webster 46.60 pound Flathead – Fall 2014

BLACK CRAPPIE – Fair WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair

A fair crappie spawn was produced in 2015 with 28 percent of the fall sample consisting of 2- to 4-inch fish and 12 percent being 5 to 8 inches. Hopefully these fish will recruit on up to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 32 percent being 8 to 10 inches in length and 28 percent being 10 to 15 inches in length. Webster's density rating for black crappie (8 inches and above) is 8th among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest crappie sampled included a white crappie weighing 1.45 pounds and black crappie weighing 1.02 pounds. Look for the crappie around the North and South shore fish attractors, the breakwaters on the North and South sides and along the dam and outlet. Best baits are jigs, jigs with minnows under a bobber or small slab spoons.

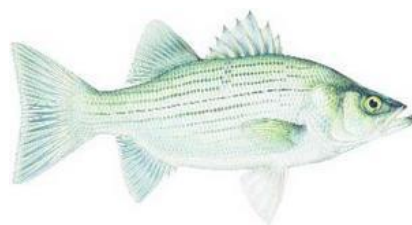
RAINBOW TROUT – Very Good to Excellent.

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 one-half pound each with an occasional bigger fish thrown in to make it exciting. Projected stocking dates are usually around the 1st of the month.

WALLEYE - Fair There is going to be a lot of keeper fish caught this year with 100 percent of the fall sample being over 15 inches. Webster's density rating for walleye (15 inches and above) is 9th among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest walleye sampled in 2015 weighed 2.64 pounds. Look for the walleye to be up along the dam in March and April as they come into spawn and then move out onto the flats in May. During the spawn the best baits to use are jigs, Roadrunners and crank baits. When they move out to the flats, get those night crawlers out. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**

WHITE BASS - Good This population is currently dominated by fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 69 percent of the fall sample. Individuals in the 6- to 12-inch size range accounted for 28 percent and fish over 15 inches accounted for 3 percent of the sample. The biggest fish sampled weighed 1.52 pounds. Webster's density rating (9 inches and above) is 11th among all reservoirs in the state this year. Surface action should provide some exciting opportunities throughout the reservoir during the summer as these fish chase the shad around. Trolling diving lures and casting Roadrunners should also be productive.

WIPERS – Good The supply should be good again this year. Fish in the 8- to 16-inch size range accounted for 15 percent and fish in 16- to 20-inch size range accounted for 85 percent. Larger fish (20 inches +) were not sampled this year; however, you should still hang on to those fishing rods. Webster's density rating (12 inches and above) is 10th among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2015 weighed 3.06 pounds. Surface action should be pretty good as these fish feed on shad, as well as, casting buck tail jigs into the wind around the corners of the dam and trolling diving lures around the lower portion of the reservoir.



2016 FISHING FORECAST KIRWIN RESERVOIR

KIRWIN RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is approx. 16.15 feet below conservation pool (as of Jan. 1, 2016). Usable boat ramps at this level include the South Shore ramps only. Also, remember the boat closure that is in effect until April 1, 2016.

BLACK BASS – Poor One largemouth bass was collected during the spring sample; however, additional bass were observed while performing other sampling around the reservoir. Some of the best locations for finding bass are going to be along Crappie Point and back toward Scout cove, the cove up by Gray's Park, the cove by the North Shore and South Shore ramps and along the dam and outlet area. Smallmouth bass have also been reported being caught around crappie point. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**



CHANNEL CATFISH – Fair; FLATHEAD CATFISH – Fair The supply of channel catfish is fair and fish were scattered over a wide size range. Fish in the 8- to 16-inch size range accounted for 26 percent, fish in the 16- to 24-inch size range accounted for 43 percent, and fish over 24 inches accounted for 31 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled in 2015 weighed 17.59 pounds. The supply of flathead catfish is also good with 100 percent of the fish sampled being 20 to 25 inches. The biggest flathead sampled in 2015 weighed 6.08 pounds. The density rating for Kirwin Flatheads (20 inches and above) is 8th among all reservoirs in the state. As the water starts warming up, these fish will be coming up shallow to feed, so fish the upper ends of coves and shallow areas using shad sides and gizzards. Also, the channels should be up in Bow Creek and the North Fork Solomon Rivers. These fish can be caught on rod and reel and/or setlines or trotlines using shad sides and gizzards, shrimp and stink or dip bait.



Kirwin 17.59 pound Channel - Fall 2015

WHITE CRAPPIE – Good; BLACK CRAPPIE – Good White crappie numbers are higher than last year and black crappie numbers are higher, as well. This past year produced another good crappie spawn with 95 percent of the fall sample consisting of 2- to 5-inch fish and 2 percent being 5- to 10-inches. Hopefully these fish will recruit on up to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 1 percent being 10 to 12 inches in length and 2 percent being 12 to 16 inches in length. The density rating for white crappie at Kirwin (8 inches and above) is 22nd, and for black crappie (8 inches and above) it ranks 7th among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2015 was a white crappie weighing 1.45 pounds and a black crappie weighing 1.37 pounds. Crappie should be concentrated around the North and South shore fish attractors and drop offs and can be caught using jigs, jigs tipped with minnows or small slab spoons and can be caught up in the shallows of coves and off the dam during the spawn using jigs or jigs tipped with minnows under a bobber.



WALLEYE – Good There will be some catch and release this year since individuals in the 7- to 15-inch range accounted for 46 percent. However, there will be some nice catches of harvestable walleye; fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 37 percent, fish in the 20- to 25-inch size range accounted for 15 percent and fish 25 inches plus accounted for 2 percent of the 2015 fall sample. The density rating at Kirwin (15 inches and above) is 5th among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 6.23 pounds. These fish can be caught off the dam during the spawn in March and April, casting jigs, Roadrunners or crank bait's. After the spawn, get those night crawlers out and fish the flats and drop offs. **A 15-inch length limit is in effect.**



Kirwin Walleye – 2015

WHITE BASS – Good This population is currently dominated by fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 51 percent of the 2015 sample. Individuals in the 5- to 9-inch size range accounted for 28 percent, fish in the 9- to 12-inch size range accounted for 10 percent, and fish over 15 inches accounted for 11 percent. Most of the fish will be running in the 1- to 2-pound range. The biggest fish sampled this year weighed 2.06 pounds. The density rating at Kirwin (9 inches and above) is 8th among all reservoirs in the state this year. Surface action should provide some exciting opportunities throughout the reservoir during the summer months as these fish chase shad, so keep an eye on the sky and find the gulls. Trolling diving lures should also entice these fish into biting.

WIPERS – Good The supply is good and the quality of this fishery is good, as well. Individuals in the 7- to 10-inch size range accounted for 29 percent of the fall 2015 sample. Fish in the 10- to 15-inch size range accounted for 4 percent, fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 63 percent and fish 20 inches plus accounted for 4 percent. The density rating for wipers (12 inches and above) at Kirwin is 5th among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this year weighed 4.70 pounds. Casting bucktail jigs into the wind along either side of the dam, Knob Hill, between Bluegill and Crappie points and around Cottonwood Grove could be productive, as well as trolling diving lures along the river channel and dam. Also, look for some good top water action this summer on calm days as these fish feed on shad.

2016 FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR

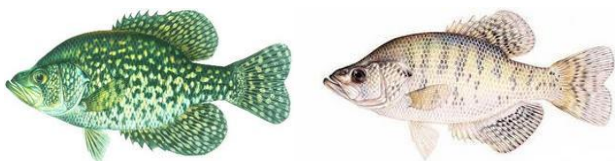
SEBELIUS RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is approx. 16.56 feet below conservation pool (as of Jan. 1, 2016). Usable ramps at this level include the East and West Leota Cove ramps. A creel survey will be conducted in 2016.

BLACK BASS – Excellent The largemouth bass population is dominated by 12- to 15-inch fish, accounting for 88 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 3- to 8-inch size range accounted for 4 percent of the sample, fish in the 8- to 12-inch size range accounted for 1 percent, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 88 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 7 percent. The biggest fish sampled this year weighed 3.49 pounds. The density rating for Sebelius largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 1st among reservoirs. Good numbers of spotted bass are present with 66 percent being in the 3- to 11-inch size range, 22 percent being in the 11- to 14-inch size range and 12 percent being in the 14- to 17-inch size range. The density rating for spotted bass (11 inches and above) is 1st among reservoirs in the state this year. Spinner and artificial baits should work well in Leota Cove, along the dam, Shoen's cove and up the river channel by the sandpit. Fish the rocky areas for the spots. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and spotted bass is in effect.**

CHANNEL CATFISH – Fair; FLATHEAD CATFISH – Fair According to 2015 netting results, the supply of channel catfish is fair with 24- to 30-inch fish being fairly common. Individuals in the 17- to 24-inch size range accounted for 25 percent and fish 24 inches and above accounted for 75 percent of the sample. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 8.51 pounds. These fish can be caught off the public fishing dock when they congregate around the fish feeder, around Leota cove, along the dam, up west by the Marsh Dike and around the Sandpit using shad sides and gizzards, night crawlers, stink bait or shrimp. No flatheads were caught in the fall sample; however, quite a few were observed while conducting other sampling.



BLACK CRAPPIE – Good; WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair Currently, crappie are present in good numbers for blacks and fair numbers for whites. Both the black and white crappie had good spawns this past year, so hopefully they will recruit on up to make for some good fishing in the years to come. Crappie in the 2- to 5-inch size range accounted for 98 percent of the sample, fish in the 5- to 10-inch size range accounted for 1 percent and fish 10 to 15 inches accounted for 1 percent. While fish under three-fourths of a pound are likely to dominate the catch this year, some fish in the 1- to 1 ½-pound range will be taken as well. The density rating for Sebelius black crappie (8 inches and above) is 1st among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest black crappie sampled weighed 1.44 pounds and the biggest white crappie weighed 1.21 pounds. These fish can be found around the public fishing dock, marina slips, fish attractors or up in the coves using jigs, jigs tipped with minnow under a bobber or small slab spoon.



SAUGEYE – Good; WALLEYE – Fair Catch rates will be pretty good again this year and the opportunity for harvest will be good for saugeye and fair for walleye. The saugeye population is starting to come back with 7- to 14-inch fish accounting for 19 percent, fish 14 to 18 inches accounted for 54 percent and harvestable fish over 18 inches accounted for 27 percent of the 2015 fall sample. Sebelius still holds the current state record (9.81 lbs.), which was caught in November 1998. The density rating at Sebelius (14 inches and above) is 1st among all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest saugeye sampled weighed 4.05 pounds. No walleye were sampled in 2015; however, there should still be some harvestable walleye in the reservoir. Look for these fish to be up by the dam in March and April and then move to the flats in May, so get those jigs, crank baits and night crawlers ready. **An 18-inch length limit is in effect for saugeye and walleye.**

WIPERS - Good. The supply is strong and the quality of this fishery is good, as well. Fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range are especially plentiful with larger fish available, as well. Individuals in the 5- to 15-inch size range accounted for 5 percent; 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 52 percent and larger fish (20 inches plus) accounted for 43 percent. The biggest wiper sampled in the fall of 2015 weighed 14.67 pounds. The density rating at Sebelius (12 inches and above) is 1st among all reservoirs in the state this year. Bucktail jigs cast into the wind along the North shore have been effective, as well as fishing night crawlers and shrimp on the bottom in Leota cove and using live bait off the drop offs outside of Leota and Concrete coves. There could also be some good top water action this summer as these fish feed on shad.



Sebelius 14.67 pound wiper – Fall 2015

Fishing Information

You can visit the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism website at www.kdwpt.state.ks.us 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 like fishing in Kansas, where to fish in Kansas, how to fish, fishing frequently asked questions (FAQ's), are fish safe to eat, 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.



Available KDWPT Fishing Videos

The KDWPT Fisheries Division video committee recently re-released a 24-minute video titled, "Fisheries Management in Kansas." Originally released in 2002, the video details techniques used by agency fisheries management and hatchery personnel to create and maintain quality fishing opportunities across the state. The video is available on the KDWPT YouTube channel and at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J31chlla9Tk>

KDWPT has released the "Walleye for Tomorrow" video and uploaded the video to the KDWPT YouTube channel. The video can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/8BMsifSvf-U>

A 25-minute video entitled "Kansas Crappie Bonanza," covers Kansas crappie fishing during spring, summer, fall, and winter with tips and tactics to make you a better crappie angler. The video can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sazyEuIT_bk

KDWPT has released the Urban Fish Stocking Program video. It can be found at <http://youtu.be/5l4QiSfsQbQ>

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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: ProtectKS Waters.org

Creel Survey at Keith Sebelius Reservoir

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will be conducting a creel survey at Keith Sebelius Reservoir this season, which starts on March 1, 2016 and runs thru October 31, 2016. Therefore, we would appreciate it if anglers get approached by our creel clerk Gary Williams, please take a few minutes to answer some questions so that we can get some good harvest and fishing pressure data for this impoundment. Thank You for your patience and cooperation with this year's creel surveys.

Carp Removal at Webster

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism contracted with commercial fisherman who had a market for common carp to remove rough fish from Kansas waters and they chose Webster Reservoir. On Sunday, December 6 they cast out a 6,000-foot, 3-inch mesh seine just west of Old Marina Cove and returned on Monday, December 7 to finish pulling the net. The net stretched out over a mile and the men worked for over 10 hours on Sunday. They finished up on Monday, corralling the fish into a catch pen located just west of Old Marina Cove. They loaded 12,293 pounds of fish onto their boats that Tuesday and Wednesday, then loaded them onto a refrigerated trailer destined for the New York fish markets.



Commercial carp removal at Webster



6000 feet of 3-inch seine cast out to catch carp

The group is hoping to come back in the spring, around Easter, to seine for carp again since it is the premiere time to get them, especially with the lake being down as far as it is and having the carp concentrated into a smaller area. The more carp that get removed from the lake means that much more room for sport fish.



Carp waiting to be removed from Webster

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



The weather and water are starting to warm up, and the fishing will get better. If you get out fishing and would like to post a fishing report you can do so at <http://ksfishing.blogspot.com/>. We would really like to hear about your fishing trip.

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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