

# Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

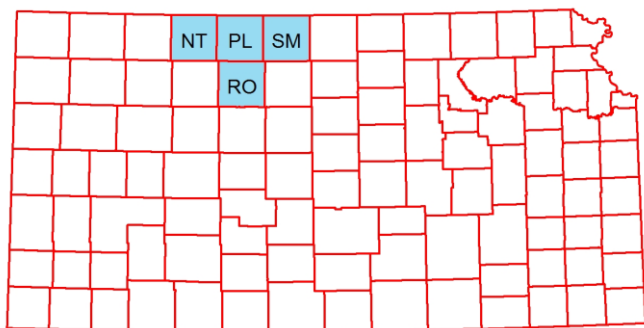
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## Welcome to the Stockton Fisheries District

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 (SFL); Rooks SFL, 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 63.5 acres of ponds in Phillips, Smith and Rooks counties and 3.80 miles of stream access on the North and South Fork Solomon rivers.



## 2018 FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR

**WEBSTER RESERVOIR** - The reservoir elevation (as of April 30, 2018) is 1.30 feet above conservation pool. All the high-water boat ramps are usable.

**BLACK BASS - Fair.** The largemouth bass population was sampled in 2017, with only three young of the year bass being collected. However, 64,385 fingerling largemouth bass were stocked on May 17, 2017 and quite a few of those bass were observed while doing other sampling on the reservoir. Five largemouth bass were caught in the core panel gill nets this fall and another 19 were caught in trap nets, therefore, in 2018 the bass population should see a substantial improvement. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Webster. Spinner, crank and artificial baits should work well along the east side of Rock Point, Old Marina Cove, along the dam, breakwaters and bluff's. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

**CHANNEL CATFISH and FLATHEAD CATFISH - Fair.** Channel catfish fishing should be fair this year. A wide size range of channel catfish is available with the majority being in the 16- to 24-inch range. Fish in the 11- to 16-inch size range accounted for 43 percent, quality fish in the 16- to 24-inch size range (1.5 to 5.5 pounds) accounted for 52 percent and fish in the 24-inch plus size range accounted for 5 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 6.04 pounds. Flatheads are also present in a wide range of sizes with 5- to 50-pound fish in the population. 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 Flathead – 2016*

**BLACK CRAPPIE and WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair.**

A fair crappie spawn occurred in 2017, with 64 percent of the fall sample consisting of 4- to 8-inch fish. 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 4 percent being 10 to 15 inches in length. Webster's density rating for black crappie (8 inches and above) is first amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest crappie sampled were a white crappie weighing 0.38 pounds and black crappie weighing 0.95 pounds. Look for the crappie around the North Shore 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 ½ pound each with an occasional bigger fish thrown in to make it exciting. Projected stocking dates are usually around the first of the month.



**WALLEYE - Good.** There is going to be a lot of keeper walleye caught this year with 76 percent of the fall sample being over 15 inches. There will also be some catch and release this year since individuals in the 7- to 15-inch range accounted for 24 percent. Fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 56 percent, fish in the 20- to 25-inch size range accounted for 18 percent and fish 25-inches-plus accounted for 2 percent of the 2017 fall sample. Webster's density rating for walleye (15 inches and above) is seventh amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest walleye sampled in 2017 weighed 6.32 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, Road runners and crankbaits. 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 9- to 12-inch size range, which accounted for 40 percent of the fall sample. Individuals in the 6- to 9-inch size range accounted for 38 percent, fish 12 to 15 inches accounted for 18 percent and fish over 15 inches accounted for 3 percent of the sample. The biggest fish sampled in 2017 weighed 1.93 pounds. Webster's density rating (9 inches and above) is sixth amongst 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 Road runners should also be productive.

**WIPERS - Good.** The supply of wipers should be fair this year. Fish in the 5- to 16-inch size range accounted for 91 percent and fish in 16- to 20-inch range accounted for 5 percent. Larger fish (20 inches-plus) accounted for 4 percent, therefore, you should still hang on to those fishing rods. Webster's density rating (12 inches and above) is 12th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2017 weighed 4.97 pounds. Surface action should be pretty good as these fish feed primarily on shad. Casting bucktail jigs into the wind on the corners of the dam and trolling diving lures around the lower portion of the reservoir should produce.

## 2018 FISHING FORECAST KIRWIN RESERVOIR

**KIRWIN RESERVOIR** - The reservoir elevation (as of April 30, 2018) is 0.42 feet below conservation pool. Usable boat ramps at this level include the North and South Shore ramps. Will be conducting a creel survey in 2018.

**BLACK BASS - Fair.** The largemouth bass population was sampled in 2017, with only two young of the year bass being collected. However, 86,555 fingerling largemouth bass were stocked on May 16, 2017 and quite a few of those bass were observed while doing other sampling on the reservoir. No largemouth bass were caught in the core panel gill nets this fall, however, 28 were caught in trap nets, therefore, in 2018 the bass population should see a substantial improvement. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Kirwin. Spinnerbaits, crankbaits and plastic baits should work well along the dam, around the North Shore and South Shore boat ramp coves, around Bluegill and Crappie points and up in Bow Creek. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

**CHANNEL CATFISH and FLATHEAD CATFISH - Fair.** The overall supply of channel catfish is fair as fish were scattered over a wide size range. Fish in the 4- to 12-inch size range accounted for 67 percent, fish in the 12- to 20-inch size range accounted for 11 percent, and fish over 20 inches accounted for 22 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled in 2017 weighed 6.71 pounds. The supply of flatheads is also fair. No flatheads were sampled this year; however, quite a few were observed while conducting other sampling activities. 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 Flatheads - 2016*

**WHITE CRAPPIE and 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 90 percent of the fall sample consisting of 2- to 8-inch fish. 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 8 percent being 8 to 10 inches in length and 2 percent being 10 to 14 inches in length. The density rating for white crappie at Kirwin (8 inches and above) is 16th, and for black crappie (8 inches and above) it ranks first amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2017 was a white crappie weighing 1.73 pounds and a black crappie weighing 1.35 pounds. Crappie should be concentrated around the North Shore and South Shore fish attractors and dropoffs 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 8- to 15-inch range accounted for 61 percent. However, there will be some nice catches of harvestable walleye - fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 25 percent, fish in the 20- to 25-inch size range accounted for 14 percent of the 2017 fall sample. The density rating at Kirwin (15 inches and above) is eighth amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 5.60 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 – 2016*

**WHITE BASS - Good.** This population is currently dominated by fish in the 11- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 35 percent of the 2017 sample. Individuals in the 4- to 8-inch size range accounted for 3 percent, fish in the 9- to 12-inch size range accounted for 28 percent, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 56 percent and fish over 15 inches accounted for 13 percent. Most of the fish will be running in the 1- to 2-pound range. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 2.93 pounds. The density rating at Kirwin (9 inches and above) is 15th amongst 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 20 percent of the fall 2017 sample. Fish in the 10- to 15-inch size range accounted for 52 percent, fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 12 percent and fish 20 inches-plus accounted for 16 percent. The density rating for wipers (12 inches and above) at Kirwin is tenth amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 8.46 pounds. Casting bucktail jigs into the wind along either side of the dam, Knob Hill, between Bluegill and Crappie point's and around Cottonwood Grove could be productive, as well, 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.

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### **2018 FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR**

**SEBELIUS RESERVOIR** - The reservoir elevation (as of April 30, 2018) is 11.84 feet below conservation pool. Usable ramps at this level include the East and West Leota Cove ramps.

**BLACK BASS – Excellent.** The largemouth bass population is dominated by 3- to 8-inch fish accounting for 45 percent of the sample. Fish in the 8- to 12-inch size range accounted for 18 percent, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 8 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 29 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 3.12 pounds. The density rating for Sebelius largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is second amongst all reservoirs in the state. Good numbers of spotted bass are also present with 29 percent being in the 3 to 11-inch size range, 50 percent being in the 11 to 14-inch size range and 21 percent being in the 14 to 17-inch size range. The density rating for spotted bass (11 inches and above) is 1st amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Spinnerbaits and plastic 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 and FLATHEAD CATFISH**

– **Fair.** According to 2017 netting results, the supply of channel catfish is fair with 4- to 17-inch fish being common. Individuals in the 4- to 17-inch size range accounted for 66 percent, individuals in the 17- to 24-inch size range accounted for 17 percent and fish 24 inches and above accounted for 17 percent of the sample. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 9.45 pounds. Only two flatheads were caught this year in the fall sample, however, quite a few were observed while conducting other sampling around the reservoir. Both fish were in the 22- to 28-inch size range. The density rating at Sebelius (20 inches and above) is third amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest flathead sampled weighed 9.66 pounds. These fish can be caught around the fish attractors, 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.



**BLACK CRAPPIE – Good.** Currently, crappie  
**WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair.** 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 92 percent of the sample, fish in the 5- to 10-inch size range accounted for 6 percent and fish 10 to 15 inches accounted for 2 percent. While fish under ¾ of a pound are likely to dominate the catch this year, some fish in the 1- to 1 1/2-pound range could be taken as well. The density rating for Sebelius black crappie (8 inches and above) is second amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest black crappie sampled weighed 0.86 pounds and the biggest white crappie weighed 0.73 pounds. These fish can be found around the public fishing dock, Marina slips, fish attractor’s or up in the coves using jigs, jigs tipped with minnow under a bobber or small slab spoon.

**SAUGEYE - Good.** Catch rates will be pretty  
**WALLEYE – Fair.** good again this year and the opportunity for harvest will be good for saugeye and fair for walleye. The saugeye population is doing rather well with 8- to 12-inch fish accounting for 29 percent, fish 12 to 18 inches accounted for 20 percent and harvestable fish over 18 inches accounted for 15 percent of the 2017 fall sample. Sebelius still holds the current state record saugeye (9.81 lbs.), which was caught in November 1998. The density rating at Sebelius (14 inches and above) is second amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest saugeye sampled weighed 5.32 pounds. No walleyes were sampled in 2017; 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 of wipers 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 8- to 15-inch size range accounted for 19 percent, 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 49 percent and larger fish (20 inches-plus) accounted for 32 percent. The biggest wiper sampled in the fall of 2017 weighed 6.26 pounds. The density rating at Sebelius (12 inches and above) is first amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. Bucktail jigs that are 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 dropoffs outside of Leota and Concrete coves. There could also be some good topwater action this summer as these fish feed on shad.



Sebelius 11.67 pound wiper

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## 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 like where to fish, reports and forecasts, seasons and limits, fees, licenses and permits, species and fish records, aquatic nuisance species, learn about fish and fishing, hatcheries, special fishing programs, certified bait dealers, tournaments, fish consumption advisories, blue-green algae and report violations. 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.

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## Creel Survey at Kirwin Reservoir

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) will be conducting a creel survey at Kirwin Reservoir this season, which starts on March 1, 2018 and runs through October 31, 2018. We would appreciate it if anglers who get approached by our creel clerk, Rick Maynard, 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 survey.

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## 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**

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The Stockton District waters are looking pretty good this year with all of them receiving water (some more than others). Also, the weather and water is starting to warm up so the fishing should also start getting better. I would also like to ask that everyone using the Stockton District waters be especially diligent in helping to stop the spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS), especially zebra mussels.

Zebra mussels now inhabit Glen Elder, Wilson and most recently Cedar Bluff. So far Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius do not have them so let's try to keep it that way. Thank you in advance for helping to keep them out of the Stockton District.

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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