

Stockton District Fisheries Newsletter

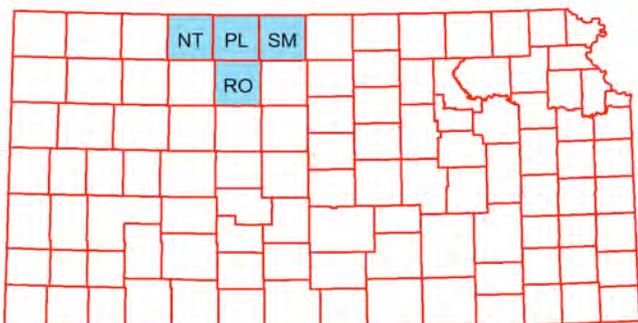
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Welcome to the Stockton Fisheries District

The Stockton District consists of four counties in northwest Kansas. They are Rooks (RO), Phillips (PL), Smith (SM) and Norton (NT). The district includes three reservoirs – Webster, Kirwin and Keith Sebelius; one state fishing lake – Rooks State Fishing Lake; three Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes – Logan City Lake, Plainville Township Lake and Agra City 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.



2019 FISHING FORECAST FOR WEBSTER RESERVOIR

WEBSTER RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is 0.11 (as of Feb. 20, 2019) feet below conservation pool. All the boat ramps are usable at this elevation.

BLACK BASS - Good. The largemouth bass population has really turned around due to the high water and the stocking of 64,385 fingerlings on May 17, 2017. The resident structure is dominated by 4- to 8-inch fish, which accounted for 60 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 8- to 12-inch size range accounted for 29 percent, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 8 percent, and fish over 15 inches made up 3 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 2.90 pounds. The density rating for Webster largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 16th amongst all reservoirs in the state. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Webster. Spinnerbaits, crankbaits and other artificial baits should work well along the east side of Rock Point, Old Marina Cove, along the dam, breakwaters and south bluffs. **A 15-inch length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is in effect.**

CHANNEL CATFISH – Good. FLATHEAD CATFISH – Good. Channel catfish fishing should be good this year. Channel catfish are scattered over a wide size range with the majority being in the 16- to 24-inch range. Fish in the 6- to 11-inch range accounted for 7 percent, fish in the 11- to 16-inch size range accounted for 21 percent. High quality fish in the 16- to 24-inch size range (1.5 to 5.5 pounds) accounted for 48 percent and fish in the 24-inch plus size range accounted for 24 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 13.00 pounds.

Flatheads are also represented in a wide range of sizes with 5- to 50-pound fish being 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 bait's and night crawlers.



BLACK CRAPPIE – Fair.

WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair. A fair crappie spawn was produced in 2018 evidenced by 74 percent of the fall sample consisting of 3- to 8-inch fish. Hopefully these fish will recruit to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 25 percent being 8 to 10 inches long and 1 percent being 10 to 15 inches long. Webster's density rating for black crappie (8 inches and above) is fourth amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest crappie sampled included a white crappie weighing 0.85 pounds and black crappie weighing 0.80 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 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 fish caught this year with 67 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 33 percent. Fish in the 15 to 20-inch size range accounted for 39 percent and fish in the 20 to 25-inch size range accounted for 28 percent of the 2018 fall sample. Webster's density rating for walleye (15 inches and above) is sixth amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest walleye sampled in 2018 weighed 5.62 pounds. Look for the walleye to be up along the dam in March and April as they come in to 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 11- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 53 percent of the fall sample. Individuals in the 6- to 11-inch size range accounted for 41 percent, fish 11 to 15 inches accounted for 53 percent and fish over 15 inches accounted for 6 percent of the sample. The biggest fish sampled in 2018 weighed 1.71 pounds. Webster's density rating (9 inches and above) is 22nd 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 Roadrunners should also be productive.

WIPERS - Good. Wiper numbers are good this year. Fish in the 5- to 16-inch size range accounted for 53 percent and fish in 16- to 20-inch size range accounted for 23 percent. Larger fish (20 inches and longer) accounted for 24 percent of fish sampled, therefore, you should still hang on to those fishing rods. Webster's density rating (12 inches and above) is sixth amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2018 weighed 7.59 pounds. Surface action should be good this summer as these fish feed on shad. Anglers also do well casting bucktail jigs into the wind around the corners of the dam and trolling diving lures around the lower portion of the reservoir.

2019 FISHING FORECAST KIRWIN RESERVOIR

KIRWIN RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is 0.66 (as of Feb. 20, 2019) feet above conservation pool. Usable boat ramps at this level include the North and South Shore ramps.

BLACK BASS – Good. The largemouth bass population has really turned around due to the high water and the stocking of 86,555 fingerlings on May 16, 2017. The resident structure is currently dominated by 8- to 12-inch, which accounted for 69 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 4- to 8-inch size range accounted for 28 percent and fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 3 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 3 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 1.51 pounds. The density rating for Kirwin largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is 18th amongst all reservoirs in the state. A remnant population of smallmouth bass also exists at Kirwin. Spinner, crank and artificial baits should work well along the Dam, around the North 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 – Good.

FLATHEAD CATFISH – Good.

The overall supply of channel catfish is good as fish were scattered over a wide size range. Fish in the 4- to 11-inch size range accounted for 11 percent, fish in the 11- to 15-inch size range accounted for 30 percent, fish in the 15- to 24-inch size range accounted for 28 percent and fish over 24 inches accounted for 31 percent. The biggest channel catfish sampled in 2018 weighed 12.91 pounds. The supply of flatheads is also good. Flatheads are present in a wide range of sizes with 5- to 50-pound fish being in the population. 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 Flathead Catfish

WHITE CRAPPIE – Good.

BLACK CRAPPIE – Good.

White crappie numbers are higher than last year, and black crappie numbers are lower. This past year produced another good crappie spawn with 78 percent of the fall sample consisting of 2- to 7-inch fish. Hopefully these fish will recruit to produce some good fishing in the next couple of years. There are still some bigger fish in the population with 18 percent being 7 to 10 inches in length and 4 percent being 10 to 14 inches in length. The density rating for white crappie at Kirwin (8 inches and above) is ranked No. 8 among reservoirs, and for black crappie (8 inches and above) it ranks No. 1 this year. The biggest fish sampled in 2018 was a white crappie weighing 1.77 pounds and a black crappie weighing 2.16 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 8- to 15-inch range accounted for 59 percent. However, there will be some nice catches of harvestable walleye – fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 21 percent, fish in the 20- to 25-inch size range accounted for 17 percent and fish over 25 inches accounted for 3 percent of the 2018 fall sample. The density rating at Kirwin (15 inches and above) is ranked No. 5 amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 6.56 pounds. These fish can be caught off the dam during the spawn in March and April casting jigs, roadrunners or crankbaits. 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

WHITE BASS - Good. This population is currently dominated by fish in the 11- to 15-inch size range, which accounted for 52 percent of the 2018 sample. Individuals in the 4- to 8-inch size range accounted for 17 percent, fish in the 9- to 12-inch size range accounted for 18 percent, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 52 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 2.33 pounds. The density rating at Kirwin (9 inches and above) is No. 11 amongst 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 to the sky and follow the gulls. Trolling diving lures should also entice these fish to bite.

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 18 percent of the fall 2018 sample. Fish in the 10- to 15-inch size range accounted for 30 percent, fish in the 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 46 percent and fish 20 inches plus accounted for 6 percent. The density rating for wipers (12 inches and above) at Kirwin is No.5 amongst reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 6.21 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.

2019 FISHING FORECAST FOR SEBELIUS RESERVOIR

SEBELIUS RESERVOIR - The reservoir elevation is 9.64 (as of Feb. 20, 2019) 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 8- to 12-inch fish, which accounted for 30 percent of the sample. Largemouth bass in the 3- to 8-inch size range accounted for 25 percent of the sample, fish in the 8- to 12-inch size range accounted for 30 percent, fish in the 12- to 15-inch size range accounted for 26 percent and fish over 15 inches made up 19 percent. The biggest fish sampled this past year weighed 4.44 pounds. The density rating for Sebelius largemouth bass (12 inches and above) is No. 1 amongst reservoirs in the state. Good numbers of spotted bass are also present with 30 percent being in the 3- to 11-inch size range, 29 percent being in the 11- to 14-inch size range and 41 percent being in the 14- to 17-inch size range. The density rating for spotted bass (11 inches and above) is No. 1 amongst 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 – Good.

According to 2018 netting results, the supply of channel catfish is fair with 8- to 16-inch fish being fairly common. Individuals in the 8- to 16-inch size range accounted for 50 percent, individuals in the 16- to 24-inch size range accounted for 17 percent and fish 24 inches and above accounted for 33 percent of the sample. The biggest channel catfish sampled weighed 13.21 pounds. Only one flathead was caught this year in the fall sample, however, quite a few were observed while conduction other sampling around the reservoir. The fish was in the 16 to 24-inch size range. The density rating at Sebelius (20 inches and above) is 6th amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest flathead sampled weighed 2.20 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.

WHITE CRAPPIE – Fair.

Currently, crappies 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 93 percent of the sample, fish in the 5- to 10-inch size range accounted for 5 percent and fish 10 to 15 inches accounted for 2 percent. While fish under .75 pounds 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 No. 2 amongst reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest black crappie sampled weighed 1.06 pounds and the biggest white crappie weighed 0.41 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 – Poor.

Catch rates will be pretty good again this year and the opportunity for harvest will be good for saugeye and poor for walleye. The saugeye population is doing well with 8- to 14-inch fish accounting for 22 percent, fish 14 to 18 inches accounted for 62 percent and harvestable fish over 18 inches accounting for 16 percent of the 2018 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 No. 2 amongst all reservoirs in the state this year. The biggest saugeye sampled weighed 6.18 pounds. No walleyes were sampled in 2018, 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 - Excellent. The supply is strong, and the quality of this fishery is good, as well. Fish in the 8- to 15-inch size range are especially plentiful with larger fish available, too. Individuals in the 8- to 15-inch size range accounted for 58 percent, 15- to 20-inch size range accounted for 21 percent and larger fish (20 inches plus) accounted for 21 percent. The biggest wiper sampled in the fall of 2018 weighed 8.56 pounds. The density rating at Sebelius (12 inches and above) is No. 1 amongst 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. Could also be some good top water action this summer as these fish feed on shad.



Sebelius wiper

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.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!



Please Remember
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Boats and Equipment

www.ksoutdoors.com

ANS Awareness Course
ProtectKSWaters.org

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 are starting to warm up, therefore, 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 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. Best of luck, be careful and enjoy the great outdoors.

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