

LAWRENCE DISTRICT FISHING NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2014

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Special Points of Interest:

- *Clinton and Melvern refill*
- *Lonestar best largemouth bass lake in Lawrence District*
- *GPS coordinates of newly constructed brush piles at Carbondale City Lake*

BIOLOGIST NOTES

Oh, what a relief it is! Clinton and Melvern finally filled up. Most area lakes filled in 2013 after the drought subsided, but Clinton and Melvern continued downward. Rains found the right drainages filling both reservoirs during June. Lake goers were very happy, as was the local fisheries biologist!

LAKE LEVEL RISES IMPROVE HABITAT

Terrestrial vegetation had a couple of years during the drought to, in some cases form dense stands. Once Clinton and Melvern refilled, water inundated vegetation stands providing some much needed nursery habitat for largemouth bass and other sunfish species. Nursery habitat provides cover for young bass to avoid predation, thus increasing survival and over time improving the bass population.



SPRING ELECTROFISHING SUMMARIES

Many anglers ask where the best bass fishing is in my district. Usually it depends on what the angler is interested in, quality or quantity. However this year, Lonestar posted the highest figures in each size class, except for catch rate of bass < 8 inches long per hour. That dubious distinction belongs to Douglas State Lake. So Lonestar would be the best lake for largemouth bass based on this year's sample. Other lakes providing good quantity fishing where size is not important would include Douglas and Osage SFLs. Lake Shawnee was second to Lonestar for catch rate of bass exceeding 15 inches.

Largemouth bass catch rate per hour for various lengths in inches.

Lake	< 8	>8	>12	>15	>20
Clinton	1	5	3	3	
Melvorn	4	9	3	2	
Carbondale	11	32	27	10	1
Douglas	42	104	14		
L.Shawnee	11	82	43	15	1
Lonestar	35	164	53	18	4
Osage	19	112	15	4	1
River Pond	28	40	30	11	



Anglers can find fishable smallmouth bass at Lake Shawnee, Clinton and Melvern reservoirs; with Melvern by far being the best. This year a record number of smallmouth were sampled at Melvern and the number of small bass indicate a lot of fish in the pipeline for the future.

Smallmouth bass catch rate per hour for various lengths in inches.

Lake	<8	>8	>12	>15
Clinton	2	7	3	2
Melvorn	31	43	21	8
Shawnee	21	7	4	2





Early spawned largemouth bass being loaded in hauling box aboard boat for transporting to stocking locations at Clinton Reservoir.

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EARLY SPAWN LARGEMOUTH BASS PROJECT

Over 200,000 fingerling largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked in May at Clinton. This was the second year of stockings, with one more to go in the study. The fingerlings arrived in good condition from the hatchery and were taken by boat to previously selected “good habitat” locations. Unfortunately, at the time of stocking the water level was still low so there was not much shoreline cover available. However, cover improved greatly a short time later as rains eventually filled Clinton.

MELVERN REARING POND NEWS

About 6,000 fingerling largemouth bass were stocked into Melvern Rearing Pond May 23. The pond had already been stocked with 600 lbs of fathead minnows and around 100 bluegill adults to provide food for bass. By July 23, bass averaged 6.3 inches long. Food availability looked better at this point than last year, with abundant crayfish, minnows and juvenile bluegill present. Bass still have some time to grow, as harvest will likely occur near the end of September. Target growout size is 8.5 inches in length. These largemouth bass will be stocked into Melvern at several locations to try to increase the bass population for the benefit of anglers.



BLUE CATFISH UPDATE

Clinton and Melvern were sampled this summer for blue catfish. Clinton blue catfish numbers were good revealing the 2nd highest level recorded. Blue catfish were observed at 9 of 10 stations, but netters were unable to capture fish at 2 stations. Fish ranged from 12.5 to 25 inches long, with an average of 20 inches. Melvern yielded 11 total blue catfish at 4 of 10 locations. Blues were 11 to 20 inches long, averaging 13 inches. Needless to say we missed the big fish at Melvern. Anglers catch blues well over 20 pounds frequently at Melvern. Check out Craig Johnson’s impressive blue catfish sampling video recorded at El Dorado at this link:

<http://youtu.be/x8nOfJswLBg>



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AQUATIC VEGETATION CONTROL



Weed cutter boat in action

Aquatic vegetation is a desirable component of any fishery, however sometimes it becomes so abundant as to interfere with angling. Such was the case at Melvern River Pond this summer. Narrowleaf pondweed had flourished to the point that it was growing out to the 7 or 8 foot contour. In order to provide relief for anglers, the weed cutter boat was brought in and after about 7 hours of cutting, the vegetation was brought under control.

CREEL SURVEY

A creel survey is underway at Douglas State Fishing Lake. Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism personnel interview anglers to obtain information related to their fishing trips. Data collected provides much needed insight into the fishery; including fishing pressure, harvest, which species are most important to anglers, as well as a wealth of other data. Creel surveys help determine stocking rates, regulations, and other fisheries management activities that could improve the fishery. So, if you are asked for an interview, please provide one—this information is one of the keys to providing better

fishing.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT VIDEO

Years ago Kansas Wildlife and Parks developed a video to give a brief overview of fisheries management. This video can be found on the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism website and on you tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J31chIla9Tk>



CARBONDALE HABITAT WORK

During March a number of cedar tree fish habitat structures were placed into Carbondale City Lake with the assistance of City staff. GPS coordinates (datum NAD 83) of brush pile locations follow:

1. N38.81753 W095.64292
2. N38.81670 W095.63848
3. N38.81296 W095.64144
4. N38.81636 W095.64674
5. N38.81328 W095.64436
6. N38.81535 W095.64509
7. N38.81488 W095.63847
8. N38.81750 W095.64007
9. N38.81155 W095.64080
10. N38.81157 W095.64693

ANGLER INSTRUCTOR COURSE

A course provided by Fishing's Future in partnership with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism is being offered at various locations around the State as a way to certify angler instructors. This program is similar to the Hunter Safety Instructor program, where volunteers provide instruction to those that need it. Some kids only get exposure to fishing through fishing clinics, derbies, and other similar venues. So the more angler instructors that are available, the more fishing programs can be conducted for kids and their parents. If you are interested in this program go to Fishing's Future website at: <http://fishingsfuture.org/salinakansas>, for more information. Whether or not you become a certified Angler Instructor or not, if you do take a kid fishing this summer, you'll be glad you did. The fishing trip will make memories for the child, and probably for you too!

