



Biologist's Notes

If you are like me, as the weather warms in the spring my thoughts drift to getting on the water and fishing as much as I can. This issue of the Kansas City District Fisheries Newsletter contains the Kansas City District's 2016 Fishing Forecast. The forecast can be a valuable tool for planning upcoming fishing trips, a guide to areas in which to focus your effort, or that extra motivation to explore a new waterbody.

Springtime is a very eventful time here in the Kansas City District. We had another successful year of walleye egg collection at Hillsdale Reservoir, approximately 37 million walleye eggs were collected to help produce walleye and saugeye statewide. The early-spawned largemouth bass project is entering the fourth year of research (update on page 4). The Urban Channel Catfish Stocking Program is in full force with 22 area waterbodies stocked once a month (March-September) with catchable size (12-18 inches; 0.75-1.5 lbs.) channel catfish (19,969 lbs. of channel catfish stocked in Kansas City District annually). Habitat improvement projects and numerous youth fishing events are scheduled area wide. These are just a few of the numerous projects to be excited about here in the Kansas City District.



Nice female walleye caught for egg collection at Hillsdale Reservoir this spring.

"takemefishing"



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2016 Kansas City District Fishing Forecast

Hillsdale Reservoir

The timing and duration of the high water Hillsdale received in 2015 was very beneficial to fish production. Catch rate of young-of-the-year white crappie was 21 fish/net night (highest rate in past 5 years) and walleye and largemouth bass year-class production was very good as well. You should be able to harvest more white crappie in 2016 as well, as 38% of sampled fish were > 10 inches (also proportionally the highest in 5 years). Although fall catch rate of stock-length walleye (> 10 inches) was low to moderate (2 fish/net night), we saw good numbers and plenty of big walleye (both males and females) during egg collection this spring. We are anticipating good things in the future from the largemouth bass population as there is high abundance of young fish, hopefully the size structure will follow suit and improve. Twenty-three percent of stock-length largemouth bass sampled last spring were > 15 inches. Good angling opportunities are expected for white crappie and white bass, and fair to good opportunities for channel catfish, largemouth bass and walleye in 2016.



*White crappie sampled at Hillsdale Reservoir
fall 2015.*



*Walleye sampled at Hillsdale Reservoir
fall 2015.*

Miami State Fishing Lake

Miami State Fishing Lake has a tremendous fishery for pan fish right now. Numbers and size structure for bluegill and crappie (both white and black) are some of the best in the state. Seven percent of black crappie and 45% of white crappie sampled reached lengths > 12 inches, and several individuals reached lengths 14-16 inches. Good channel catfish and largemouth bass opportunities exist at Miami SFL as well. Miami SFL does have a dense stand of curly-leaf pondweed, which is an invasive nuisance plant species. Curly-leaf pondweed comes on aggressively in the spring time and by early May covers 95% of the waterbody. The good news is warmer water temperatures causes senescence in the plant and the stand will be gone by early June. We will spot treat with aquatic herbicide in an attempt to clear some areas for fishing.

2016 Kansas City District Fishing Forecast Continued



16.5 inch black crappie sampled at Miami SFL fall 2015.



Mike Katzer with the City of Olathe displaying some nice wiper caught at Lake Olathe.

Middle Creek State Fishing Lake

Both species of crappie (white and black) appear to be down right now. Catch rate during fall sampling for crappie was low and the majority of the fish appear to be in the 8-10 inch length range. Largemouth bass numbers are lower than desired as well, although a good number of cooperative largemouth bass have been showing up in the angler survey this spring. Decent channel catfish opportunities exist at Middle Creek SFL and white bass and wiper fishing heats up as summer progresses. A few very large flathead catfish can be found around timber and vegetation edges as well.

Kansas City District CFAP Waterbodies Forecast

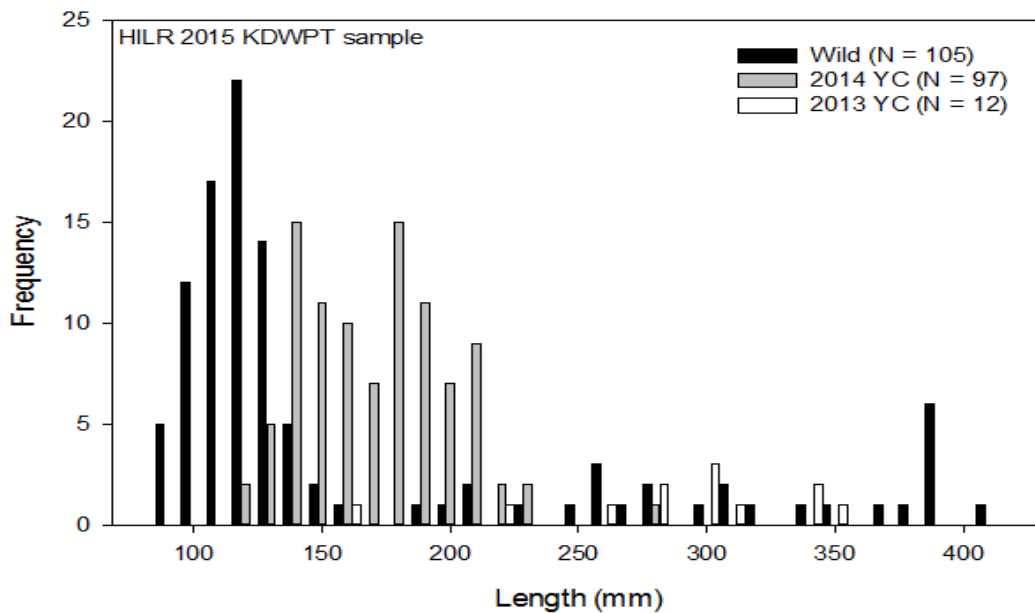
	Gardner City		Olathe Cedar		Paola City	Spring Hill
	Lake	Lake Lenexa	Lake	Lake Olathe	Lake	City Lake
Bluegill	Good	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair
Crappie	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Poor	Poor
Channel Catfish	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Good
Largemouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
Saugeye	Poor	N/A	Fair	Good	Good	N/A
White Bass	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A	Poor	N/A
Wiper	N/A	N/A	N/A	Good	Fair	N/A

* **Bold** indicates best bets

Early-spawned Largemouth Bass Stocking Project Update

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has been conducting a research project on largemouth bass in Hillsdale and Clinton Reservoirs which will hopefully lead to increased angler success and more stable largemouth bass populations. The project is aimed at evaluating stocking of early-spawned largemouth bass. The idea behind the project is that advanced sized largemouth bass will be large enough at the time of stocking to immediately begin feeding on the abundant forage fish available, giving the stocked largemouth bass the best chance for increased growth and survival. The early-spawned largemouth bass are produced at a rearing facility at the Meade State Fish Hatchery. The project was initiated in 2013 and analysis will run through 2017.

Genetic samples have been taken from largemouth bass sampled during standardized spring sampling and from largemouth bass caught by tournament anglers to help determine early-spawned largemouth bass' contribution to the overall population. Preliminary genetic results are in, and we are observing some encouraging things.



Wild spawned largemouth bass are indicated by the black bars and the 2014 and 2013 year-classes of early-spawned hatchery largemouth bass are indicated by the gray and white bars respectively. The take home message from the genetic analysis is that early-spawned largemouth bass are contributing members to the population at Hillsdale Reservoir (at this time we are unsure if this is additive or compensatory), also up to at least age 1 the early-spawned largemouth bass appear to have a competitive advantage and are growing faster. It is important to remember that these results are very preliminary, but are also very promising.

In 2015, 219,000 early-spawned largemouth bass were stocked into Hillsdale Reservoir over three separate days. During these stockings, the water level of Hillsdale Reservoir was up an average of 5 feet. This was probably a best case scenario for the survival and growth of the young-of-year largemouth bass due to increased habitat provided by a large amount of flooded terrestrial vegetation.



"Georgia Cube" Fish Habitats make their way to the Kansas City District



Starting in 2015, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has been adding "Georgia Cubes" synthetic fish habitats to numerous statewide waterbodies. The "Georgia Cubes" were originally designed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and consist of black corrugated pipe on a PVC frame in the shape of a cube three feet tall, four feet wide, and four feet deep. The structures quickly accumulate periphyton, a complex mix of algae, fungi, and bacteria, which in turn attracts insects and fish. The "Georgia Cubes" have numerous advantages compared to traditional added habitat structures (e.g., cedar trees) which include: cost efficient, easy to place, and will last up to 3 times longer than natural brush piles with no deleterious effects on water quality. The "Georgia Cubes" have also been shown (with sonar and underwater video images) to hold fish as well if not better than natural structures!

Cooperation and assistance from the local Kansas B.A.S.S. Nation chapters and other bass clubs has been instrumental in the construction and placement of these structures statewide. To facilitate placement process of the structures many groups have assisted in onsite assembly and used their own boats for placement. These fish habitats are now ready to be constructed and placed in some KC district waterbodies. I currently have the raw material for 40 "Georgia Cubes", 20 will be placed in Lake Olathe and 20 will be placed in Middle Creek State Fishing Lake. GPS locations of all statewide fish attractors (natural and artificial) are available at the KDWPT website, www.ksoutdoors.com. Click on "Fishing" then click on "Google KMZ file of KS Fish Attractors" under the "Fishing Opportunities" menu. Anglers can also find the file by entering "fish attractor GPS" in the search box on the home page. Check out this informative video link of KDWPT staff installing "Georgia Cubes" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ed-S7ky4cXI>.

If any individuals or groups are interested in assembly and placement of these habitat structures please contact the KDWPT Kansas City District Office.

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www.ksoutdoors.com

