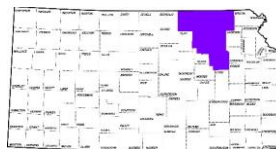


Tuttle Creek Fisheries Newsletter

Summer 2016



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Black Bass Sampling Results

Spring is a great time of year for fishing as many fish species are up shallow and close to the bank. That is why spring is also good for black bass sampling. Across the state, KDWPT fisheries biologist use this time of year to evaluate largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass populations at area lakes.

Bass are collected with an electrofishing boat that puts electricity into the water. This temporarily stuns the fish that are in the electrified field in front of the boat. The stunned fish are netted up and moved to a holding tank in the middle of the boat. The fish are counted, weighed, measured and then returned to the lake.

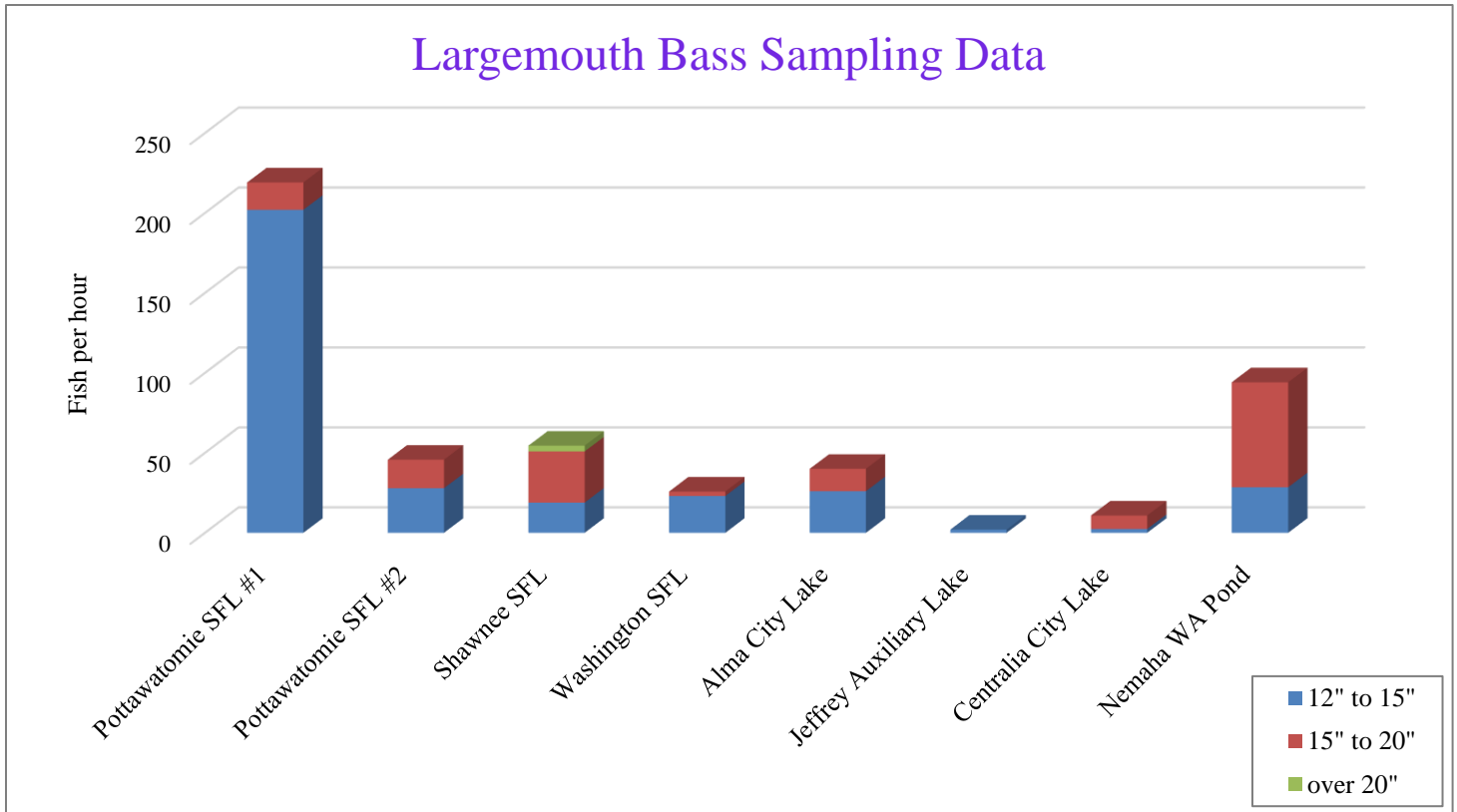


Data collected from each fish is entered into a KDWPT database. After some number crunching,

fisheries biologist are able to use the collected information to evaluate how black bass populations are doing in each lake sampled.

It is difficult to know how many fish are in a lake or to get an actual density of fish. So a lot of the time, abundance is used to evaluate fish populations. Abundance is defined as the number of fish collected with a certain amount of effort. For electrofishing this is expressed as fish per hour. It may sound fancy, but it is the same as saying we went fishing for 5 hours and caught 20 crappie, which is 4 fish per hour. However, the electrofishing boat is very effective at catching fish of all sizes, so the abundance values are usually representative of the actual fish population.

On the next page is a graph for largemouth bass for all lakes sampled in the Manhattan District in 2016. Hopefully this graph will help you to better understand and compare largemouth bass populations at local lakes. The vertical bars represent how many bass were collected per hour for each length group: blue is 12 to 15 inches, red is 15 to 20 inches and green is fish over 20 inches. Largemouth bass less than 12 inches were not included. The lakes are in no particular order.

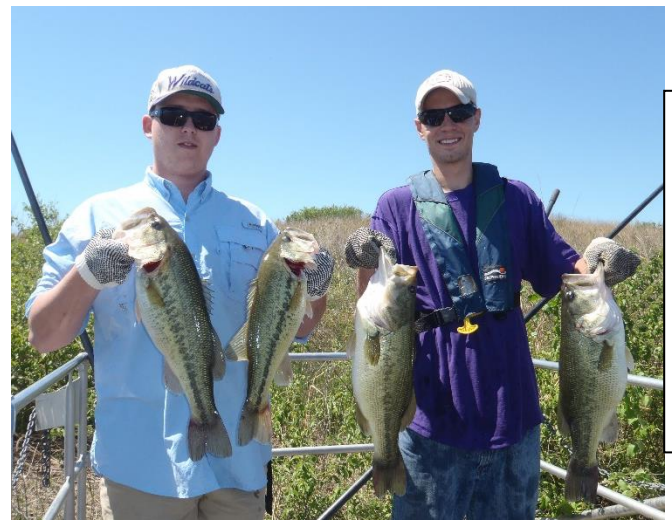


As you can see, Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #1 has a lot of largemouth bass in it this year. A lot. The 2016 spring electrofishing sample was a new record high for number of bass per hour at the lake. The lake normally ranks in the top 10 lakes in Kansas for abundance of largemouth bass over 12 inches. This year I expect the lake to compete for first place. The lake is a great place to get a kid started on fishing as it is full of easy to catch sized largemouth bass.

Several other lakes in the district have good largemouth bass populations, but it is hard to compare them to Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #1 since it has such high numbers this year. Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #2 is one of those lakes. It has surprisingly good numbers of largemouth over 15 inches for a high use lake. However, these fish have seen a lot of lures over the years and can be tough to catch unless you are willing to try a variety of techniques on them.

Shawnee State Fishing Lake has been the big bass lake in the Manhattan District for some time now. I am always amazed to see that many bass over 18

inches when I sample there. This year we recorded the highest number of fish per hour in 8 years.



Shawnee State Fishing Lake

There is an angler creel survey going on at Shawnee SFL this year. Catch data and opinions from anglers help fisheries biologist customize the management on a lake towards anglers that actually fish that lake. So if you get approached by a creel clerk that is your opportunity to share your experiences and opinions with us. Thanks for all who take part.

The largemouth bass population at Washington State Fishing Lake has been recovering from some down years. The current population is dominated by 12 to 15 inch fish and hopefully these fish will continue to grow well.

Alma City Lake has a decent bass fishery and the lake is finally full this year after being so low for so long. Most of the largemouth bass at Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake are from some recent good spawns and are below 12 inches. Numbers of bass at Centralia City Lake have been quite low for over 10 years, but this spring we collected the highest number of small bass since 1998 so hopefully a recovery is in the making. The pond on the Nemaha Wildlife Area has excellent numbers of bass over 15 inches for a small public impoundment.

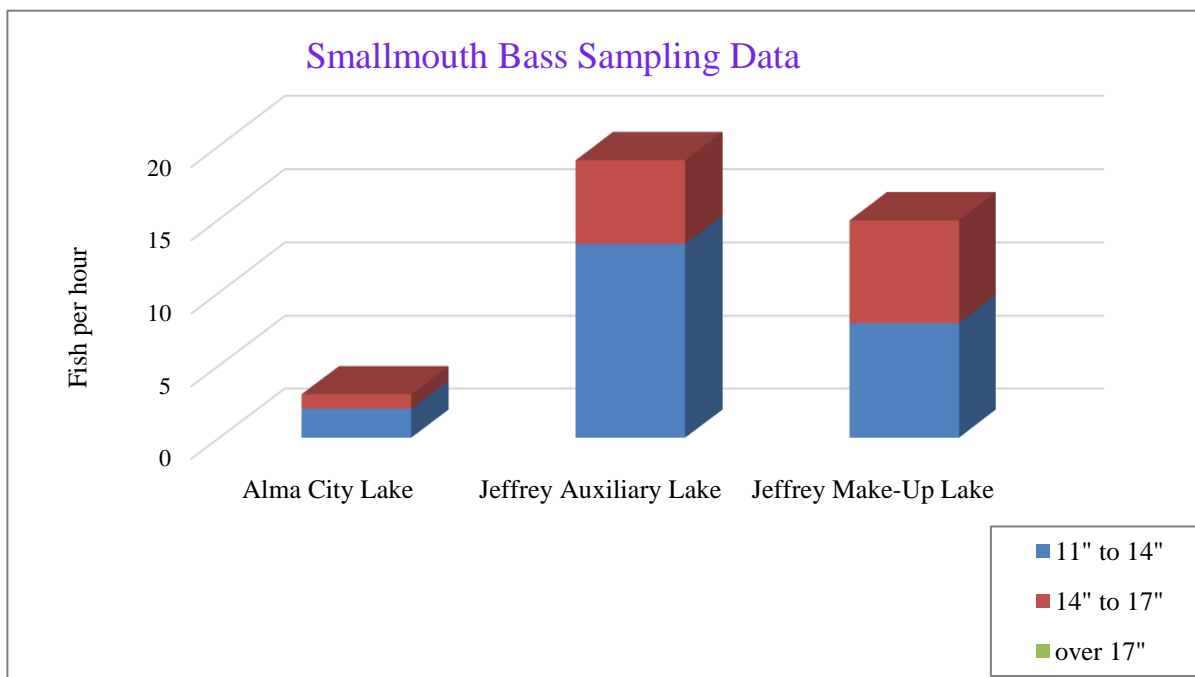
Next up is a graph for smallmouth bass for lakes in the Manhattan District from this spring. The blue bars represent fish from 11 to 14 inches, red is 14 to 17 inches and green is fish over 17 inches. However, there were no smallmouth bass over 17 inches sampled in area lakes this spring. This is not uncommon as the larger smallmouth tend to be in deeper water and out of range of being shocked by the electrofishing boat.

The two lakes on the Jeffrey Energy Center continue to have very good smallmouth bass populations. Auxiliary Lake (the larger, lower lake) had the highest number of fish per hour on record. Smallmouth bass are well spread out on the lake and can be found along any of the rocky banks.

The smallmouth bass population at Jeffrey Make-Up (the smaller, upper lake) has been above average the last few years because the species has had some good spawning success the last 6 years. The most recent sample had the highest percentage of bigger fish in over a decade.

A few other lakes in the Manhattan District have low abundance smallmouth bass populations. Alma City Lake has a few living along the dam and North bank. Sample numbers were below average at Pottawatomie SFL #2 this spring and all of the fish were below 11 inches. Smallmouth were stocked into Shawnee SFL in 2012 and a successful spawn has not been documented yet.

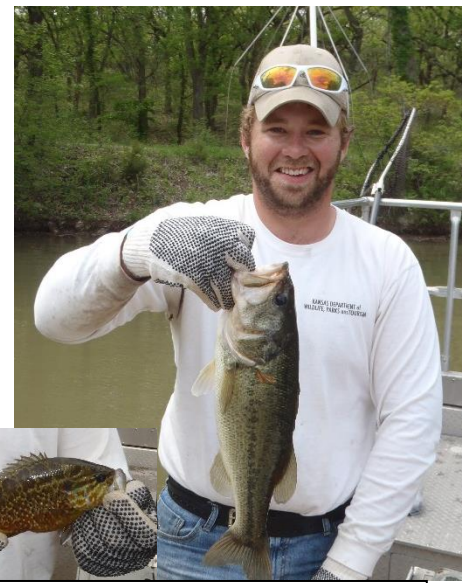
Pictures of some of the fish we saw this spring can be found on the next two pages. We are out on the lakes for bass sampling but we will pick up other species for a quick photo. All fish were released to be caught again.



Good luck fishing this summer!!!



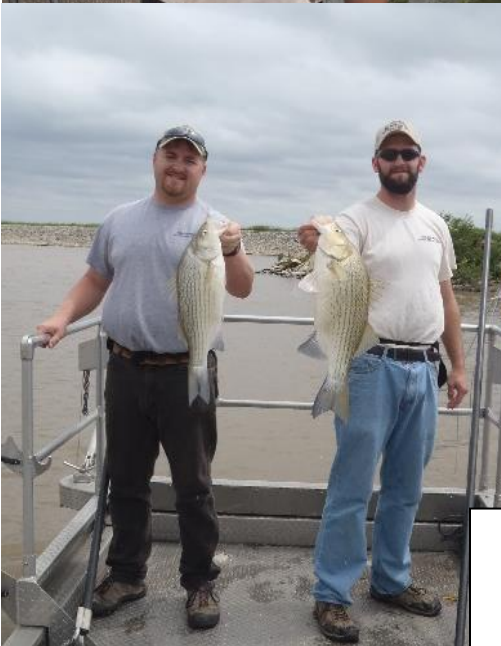
The biggest bass we saw at Pottawatomie SFL#1



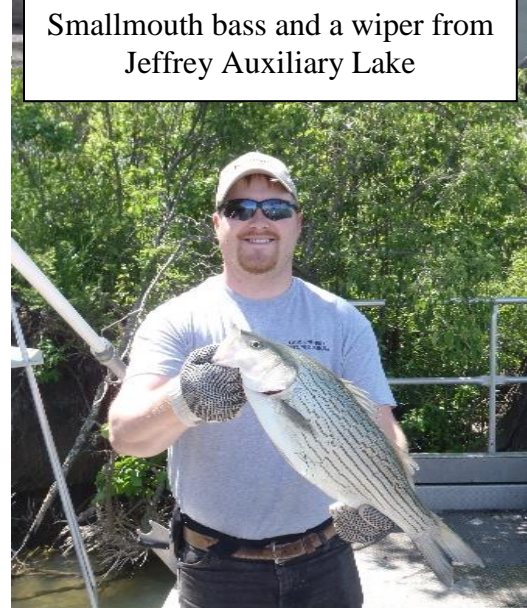
It was muddy when we were at Pottawatomie SFL#2 but we saw some nice crappie and a big warmouth while bass sampling



Smallmouth bass and a wiper from Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake



Smallmouth bass, some wiper and a nice flathead catfish we saw at Jeffrey Make-Up Lake





Smallmouth bass and largemouth bass from Alma City Lake. We also saw a grass carp there that is 48" long, which is 2" longer than the current state record!

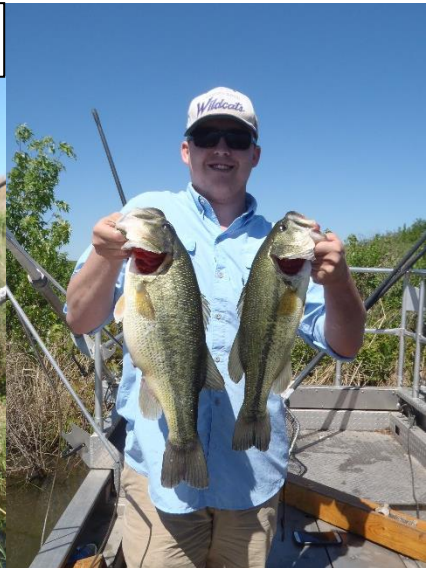


The big fish from Centralia City Lake at 5.17 lbs

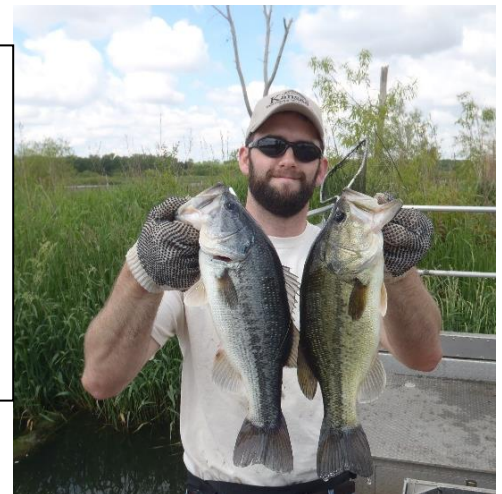


Washington State Fishing Lake

Shawnee State Fishing Lake



Some nice largemouth bass from the Nemaha Wildlife Area Pond. A cool place to visit. We see a few bass with a blue color variation there. Not something I have seen at other area lakes.



A big Thank You to all the fish holders that helped me this spring: Corey, Bryon, Micah, Alex, Megan, Ben and Jeffrey!