

GLEN ELDER DISTRICT FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

Volume 7, Issue 2

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism

Summer 2016

Volunteers Are Critical To What We Do

I just wanted to take this opportunity to **THANK** all of the volunteers that help us out throughout the year with a wide variety of projects that we work on. Many of these tasks could not be completed at all or they would take much longer without their help.

One of the most important volunteer groups in my area is the Waconda Lake Association (WLA) based out of Glen Elder. They have been a valuable partner with KDWPT for many years and are always willing to assist with events and work efforts in the area.



The WLA cooks lunch each year for the Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament and the annual Youth and Women's Celebrity Pheasant hunt held in the park. This takes the coordination of many individuals each year to pull off these meals.

I have also had countless volunteer hours of assistance with habitat projects at Glen Elder, Wilson, and Lovewell Reservoirs in the past 13 years. Whether it is cutting cedar trees and sinking them for brush pile construction, building Georgia Cubes, or transplanting aquatic vegetation, their help has been critical to the completion of the work and the improvement of the fisheries. Their pay may only be a free lunch or dinner, but the satisfaction of knowing they are helping improve the fishery is often the best reward.



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New Fish Cleaning Station

The next time you visit Glen Elder State Park, take a moment to check out the new fish cleaning station. The new station was purchased with money from fishing license sales and will be maintained by the Glen Elder State Park staff.

Anglers will appreciate this upgraded version of the former grinder as it is much larger and more powerful. Clogging should not be an issue as it has been in the past, and anglers will enjoy the larger capacity that it offers. Catfish can even be placed in the grinder as long as they fit down the chute.

Even so, anglers are reminded to always turn on the grinder BEFORE placing fish remains into the chute. This is critical to maintain the system and avoid mechanical problems. Also make sure to clean up after you are finished and turn off all of the hoses that are there for your use. The operational life of this new fish cleaning station will be many years if maintained properly.



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Gar, Gar, and More Gar!

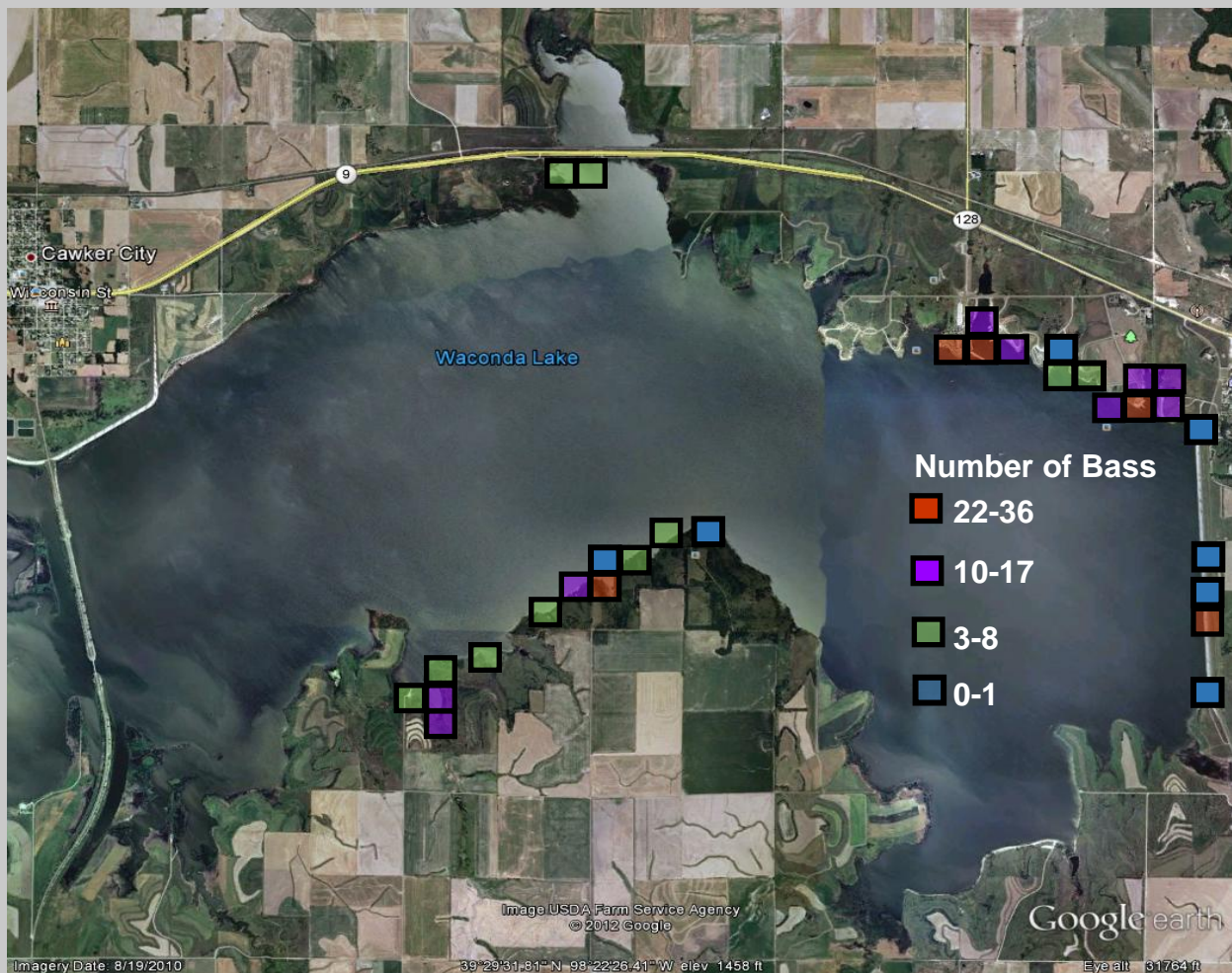
Every few years the Bureau of Reclamation or the Corps of Engineers are required to dewater and inspect the stilling basin below reservoir dams for safety purposes. This requires a complete dewatering of the basin using a large pump that moves the water downstream of a temporary dike that is constructed. KDWPT fisheries biologists are often requested to remove all of the fish left in the basin prior to the job commencing. This can be a very interesting and dirty job, but we never know what we are going to find. The sportfish are hauled back up into the reservoir while the rough fish are disposed of.

In August 2016, we had the opportunity to salvage the Lovewell Reservoir stilling basin. Due to a lack of water flow throughout the summer, we suspect a fish kill occurred and nearly all species of fish were lost with the exception of gar. Over the course of 3 hours, we used multiple seines to remove approximately 700-800 adult gar from the basin, some up to 4-5 feet long! Only a handful of bluegill, channel catfish, and carp were collected. Below are some pictures of the efforts.



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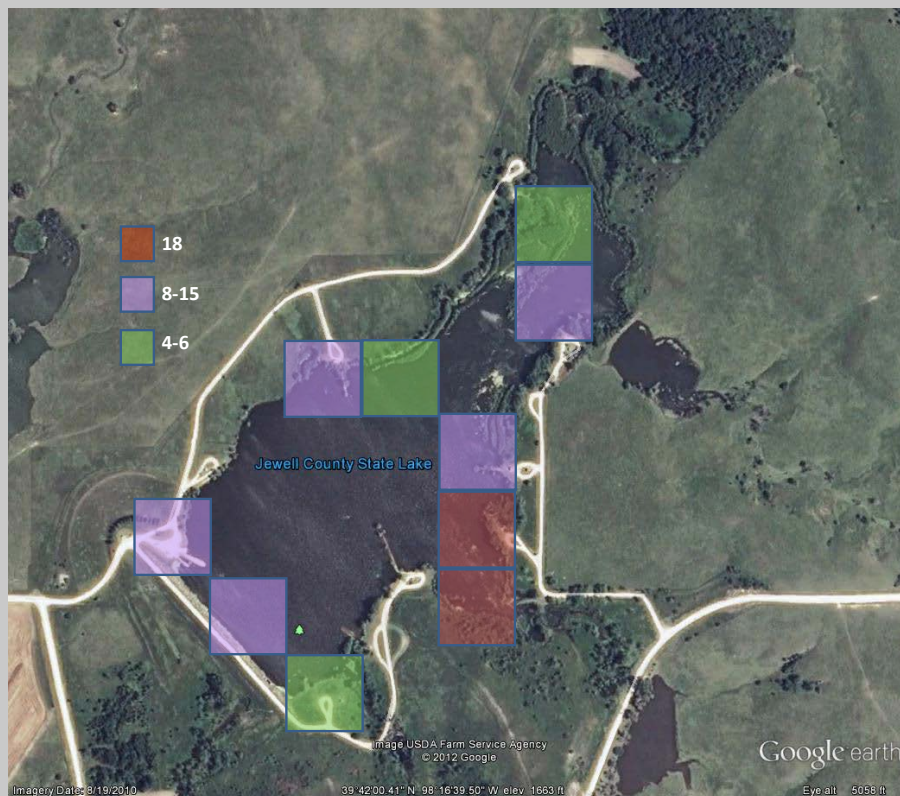
The 2016 spring Glen Elder bass sample consisted of 226 smallmouth bass, 97 largemouth bass, and 1 spotted bass when conducted in April and May. The smallmouth bass density rating increased 91% compared with 2015, the preferred rating increased 142%, and the lunker rating improved from 0.2 to 1.1. Thirty-eight percent of the fish were between 4 and 7 inches, 31% were 8 to 12 inches, 28% were 13-16 inches, and 3% were over 17 inches. The biggest fish weighed 3.9 pounds. The largemouth bass density rating increased 130% compared with 2015 and the preferred rating increased 15%. Sixty-seven percent of the fish were between 4 and 7 inches, 26% were 8 to 12 inches, 2% were 13-16 inches, and 5% were over 17 inches. The biggest fish weighed 3.9 pounds.



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Jewell State Fishing Lake 2016 Bass Sample

At Jewell, 104 largemouth bass were collected during 1.7 hours of electrofishing for a catch rate of 52 fish over 9 inches per hour of sampling. This is a decrease from the 2015 catch rate of 67 per hour. The density rating decreased from 64 in the 2015 sample to 35 in 2016. This large decrease is due to the slot length



limit allowing some harvest of smaller bass in an effort to reduce overcrowding and stunting. Preferred rating decreased 2% while lunker rating decreased slightly. These fish continue to reproduce well with young fish less than 8 inches accounting for 15% of the catch. Fish between 9 and 12 inches accounted for 31% of the catch while fish in the protected 13 to 18 inch slot length limit represented 52% of the population. Only two fish greater than the slot limit were collected. The

biggest fish weighed 4.7 pounds. Fishing prospects for 2017 look good with high amounts of catch and release and a small chance of catching some larger fish.

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Water Willow for Fish Habitat

An important part of our job is to improve habitat conditions for the fish populations we are managing and we use a wide variety of methods to accomplish this. One of the best, but most challenging methods is transplanting aquatic vegetation into areas of need to boost the amount of brood rearing habitat in the water body.

A wide variety of species have been used including American Lotus, smartweed, various species of pond weed, cattails, bulrush, and Eurasian watermilfoil, but studies have shown one of the best vegetation types is water willow.



Water willow is a perennial that grows up to 3 feet tall and forms dense colonies along shorelines and riverbanks. The stem is stiff and does not branch, but forms leaves opposite one another and has a white flower. Studies have shown that this plant provides excellent cover for young fish and can directly improve recruitment of largemouth bass. Crappie, bluegill, and several minnow species also benefit.

In June water willow was removed from Kiowa State Fishing Lake near Greensburg and transplanted to Ottawa State Fishing Lake and Jewell City Lake. Plants were chopped into ½ to 1 foot pieces and scattered around the lake. It is too early to determine if the water willow will take hold, but early results are promising. The above pictures are an example of how resilient water willow is to drought. These plants were planted in summer 2005 (left picture) and thrived for several years, but drought lowered the water level 10 feet and left the plants high and dry. The pond refilled this summer and re-flooded the water willow providing immediate fish habitat (right picture). With stable water levels these plants will flourish and continue to spread.

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12th Annual Glen Elder Tournament Results

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism and the Waconda Lake Association hosted the 12th annual Youth Fishing Tournament at Waconda Lake on Saturday, June 4th, 2016. Approximately 140 young anglers boarded boats with a warm, breezy morning welcoming them on the water. By lunchtime, the wind was gusting 20-25 mph and temperatures had heated up, but the morning allowed for comfortable fishing for all involved.

The fishing was much slower than previous years due to a strong north wind, but the kids still had a great time and most were able to bring in at least a few with drum, walleye, white bass, and channel catfish leading the way. Of the 132 youth who fished on the 39 boats volunteered by local anglers and the 10 youth who fished off the bank, 100 (70%) were able to catch at least one fish. The total of 325 caught fish included 119 drum, 68 walleye (16 legal), 57 white bass, 53 channel catfish, 10 crappie, 7 bluegill, 5 smallmouth bass, 2 carp, a wiper, flathead catfish, largemouth bass, and rainbow trout.

We would like to extend a very special THANK YOU to all of the boat drivers and other volunteers who provided their time and equipment on Saturday, the Waconda Lake Association for providing lunch and helping cover the cost of the t-shirts, and Wayne Miner who donated 150 dozen nightcrawlers.

Also, many thanks to the 89 sponsors who donated nearly \$4,000 in prizes. Because of their generosity each youth was able to take home a new fishing pole, t-shirt, goodie bag of tackle and gift certificates, and other prizes. Special thanks also to Jared Ireland and the staff of the Glen Elder area office for assisting with the event.

Bill Shaffer of KTWU's "Sunflower Journeys" was on hand to document the event which will air in the fall on PBS so be on the lookout for some folks you may know!

Below is a list of the winners in each of the categories:

Most Fish	Austin Roth (Garden City)	29
Biggest Walleye	Gavin Koch (Clifton)	24½ inches
Biggest Channel Catfish	Dylan Thompson (Beloit)	37 inches
Biggest White Bass	Wes Adolph (Beloit)	16 inches
Biggest Trout	Lillee Stevens (Downs)	13¾ inches
Biggest Smallmouth Bass	Emily Middleton (Beloit)	18 inches

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Biggest Largemouth Bass
Biggest Drum
Biggest Bluegill
Biggest Flathead Catfish
Biggest Carp
Smallest Fish

Lillee Stevens (Downs)
Sabastian Ubinger (Edwardsville)
Ely Vernon (Salina)
Sabastian Ubinger (Edwardsville)
Peyton Schoen (Beloit)
Julie Hundley (Downs)

10.5 inches
22 inches
7½ inches
23½ inches
24 inches
6 inches (bluegill)

We plan on hosting this event again next year on June 3rd so mark it on your calendars and look forward to another fun-filled day at Waconda Lake!



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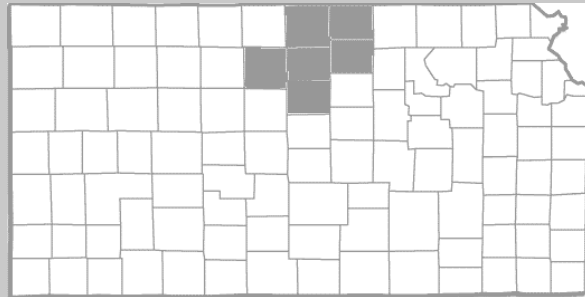
FISH Update

With the wet year we have experienced in 2016 several of the local FISH ponds that had been low or dry refilled and are creating more opportunity for anglers.

In Mitchell County, three FISH ponds have been enrolled since the beginning and continue to offer fine angling. The 14 acre pond south of Beloit is full and offers crappie angling in the spring and winter as well as catfish and bluegill fishing throughout the year. The 22 acre pond south of Beloit refilled in 2015. Adult bluegill, fathead minnows, and adult channel catfish were restocked last fall. Fingerling largemouth bass were restocked this spring and will be big enough for harvest in several years.



The 55 acre pond southwest of Beloit finally refilled this summer after many years of drought kept it well below full pool. The pond looks much different now with all of the trees that have grown in the pond basin, but there is abundant vegetation for young fish to prosper. When shocking the pond this summer we discovered the only species in it are green sunfish and thousands of fathead minnows. This strong forage base will be very important once the bluegill, catfish, and bass are stocked this fall or next spring.



I hope you enjoyed the latest edition of the Glen Elder district newsletter. I will continue to provide information for Glen Elder and Lovewell Reservoirs, Jewell State Fishing Lake, Ottawa State Fishing Lake, Rocky Pond in Belleville, and Jewell City Lake.

Don't forget to check out the many FISH properties in the area as well. They can offer some great fishing.

If you know someone who would like to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so [HERE](#). If you would like to unsubscribe, please send your info to [Contact Us](#) with "unsubscribe to Glen Elder District Fisheries newsletter" and we'll get you taken off of the list. If you have any questions or comments feel free to send them in.

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