

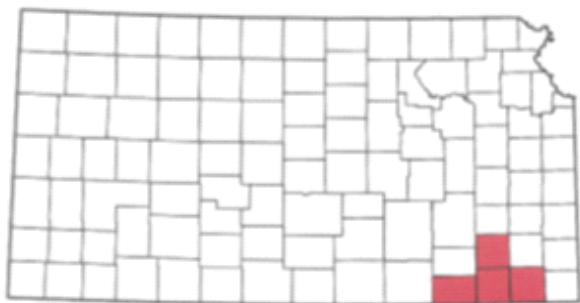
# Independence District Fisheries

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## Area Happenings

This past fall and winter were busy in the Independence District fisheries world. In October, our fall sampling took place, gill nets and trap nets were set at two federal reservoirs, two state fishing lakes and five Community Fisheries Assistance Program lakes. We were also busy stocking fish into several different water bodies.

We were able to improve fishing habitat at a few different lakes in the district, where habitat cubes and brush piles were placed in several locations. A special habitat project was even completed by a Boy Scout in partnership with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT).



## Fish Stocking

This fall, we were able to stock a variety of fish around area lakes. Channel catfish, grass carp and rainbow trout were stocked throughout the fall and winter months. We were also fortunate that the state fish hatcheries had a surplus of channel catfish, and many area lakes and ponds were able to receive some of these fish.



*Above: A pair of catfish weighing in at more than 10 pounds sampled at Altamont City Lake-West.*

## *Fish Stocking (continued)*

### **Fish Stocking Locations and Numbers**

<b>Lake</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Number</b>
Montgomery SFL	Channel Catfish	3,796
Wilson SFL	Channel Catfish	2,906
Elk City Kids Pond	Channel Catfish	167
Tanko	Channel Catfish	665
Tanko	Grass Carp	80
Tanko	Rainbow Trout	504
LeClere	Channel Catfish	300
LeClere	Rainbow Trout	341
Parsons Prairie West	Channel Catfish	102
Big Hill WA Ponds	Channel Catfish	450
Big Hill Overlook	Channel Catfish	110
Altamont City Lake East	Channel Catfish	260
Altamont City Lake West	Channel Catfish	104
Edna City Lake	Channel Catfish	410
Bartlett City Lake	Channel Catfish	465
Buffalo Ranch Pond	Channel Catfish	335



*Above: A channel catfish sampled from Altamont City Lake-East tipping the scales at 10 pounds.*

All channel catfish were stocked as intermediates, approximately 10 inches long. Stocking at this size gives them a great chance at survival and also can provide angling opportunities the following summer.

Rainbow trout were stocked at sizes ready for angler harvest, 8 to 16 inches long. These trout are meant to be taken home and eaten before the water warms up in the spring, as water temperatures in this region get too warm for trout to survive through the summer months. If you are an angler who enjoys catching and eating fish, rainbow trout are a great way to put some fish on the table.

Grass carp, around 10 inches long, were once again stocked into Cherryvale City Lake (Tanko) in an effort to combat overgrown vegetation. Hopefully we start seeing their impact this summer.



*Above: An 11-pound hybrid catfish sampled at Wilson State Fishing Lake.*

## Rainbow Trout Have Come to Coffeyville

The City of Coffeyville has partnered with KDWPT to participate in the Winter Fishing Opportunity (WFO) program to provide funding for rainbow trout stockings in Coffeyville City Lake (LeClere). This past January, the first stocking of rainbow trout occurred, leaving 341 trout for anglers to catch. Moving forward, we plan to expand the program to include two trout stockings – one in November 2019 and one in January 2020. **As a reminder, a trout stamp is required to fish LeClere Lake from November 1-April 15.** The money received from state trout stamps goes directly back into the trout program for future trout stocking events. The foreseeable future looks good for LeClere Lake anglers to continue seeing trout stocked twice a year.



## Local Boy Scout Helps Improve City Lake

Almost a year ago, I was conducting a largemouth bass electrofishing sample at Altamont City Lake (Idle Hour Lake) when I was approached by a city council member. He informed me that a local Boy Scout was wanting to build fish habitat to place in the lake as an Eagle Scout project. I was able to contact Noah Grady from Altamont and worked out the plans for the project. Noah and the Boy Scout troop worked on building ten PVC habitat cubes throughout the summer. On October 13, 2018, I came over with a boat and helped him deploy them (GPS location and map are on the next page). We wanted to set them in an area where all anglers could enjoy them, so they are placed within casting distance of the shoreline in Idle Hour East. These habitat structures have been documented to attract a multitude of fish species, including: largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, bluegill, redear sunfish and a variety of baitfish. Thanks again to Noah for helping make improvements to Idle Hour Lake!



## Local Boy Scout (continued)



Above: Four of the ten habitat cubes ready to be placed in Idle Hour East.



Above: Map of habitat cubes placed in Idle Hour East.  
GPS coordinates: N37°08.408' W95°17.245'

## Fish Habitat for State Fishing Lakes

Fishing habitat was placed at Wilson State Fishing Lake (WLSL) and Montgomery State Fishing Lake (MGSL) this winter. Over the winter, 20 habitat cubes were assembled and submerged at WLSL, forming three new underwater habitat complexes. At MGSL, 15 large cedar trees were cut and anchored, creating three brush piles around the lake. GPS coordinates for these structures are included on the next page and on ksoutdoors.com. These habitat structures will congregate channel catfish, largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill and redear sunfish of all sizes.



Above: Cedar trees ready for sinking at MGSL.

## Fish Habitat (*continued*)



Above: All 20 of the habitat cubes that were deployed in WLSL.



Above: The habitat cubes were tied together in a pyramid shape consisting of four cubes/pyramid.



Above: Locations of the three new cedar tree brush piles at MGSL.

GPS Coordinates: N37°09.769' W95°41.694'

N37°09.887' W95°41.458'

N37°09.746' W95°41.336'



## Fish Habitat (*continued*)



*Above: Locations of the three new habitat cube complexes at WLSL.*

*GPS Coordinates: N37°41.706' W95°40.614'*

*N37°41.873' W95°40.427'*

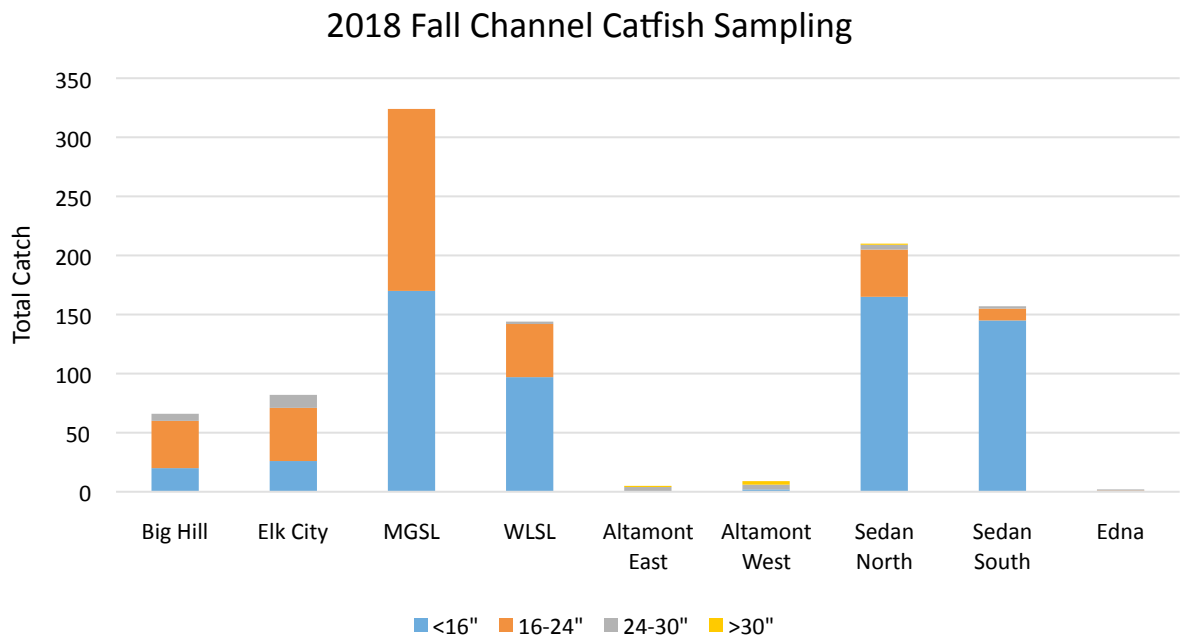
*N37°41.890' W95°40.113'*



*Above: A 28-inch blue catfish sampled from Elk City Reservoir in October.*

## Fishing Forecast

### Channel Catfish



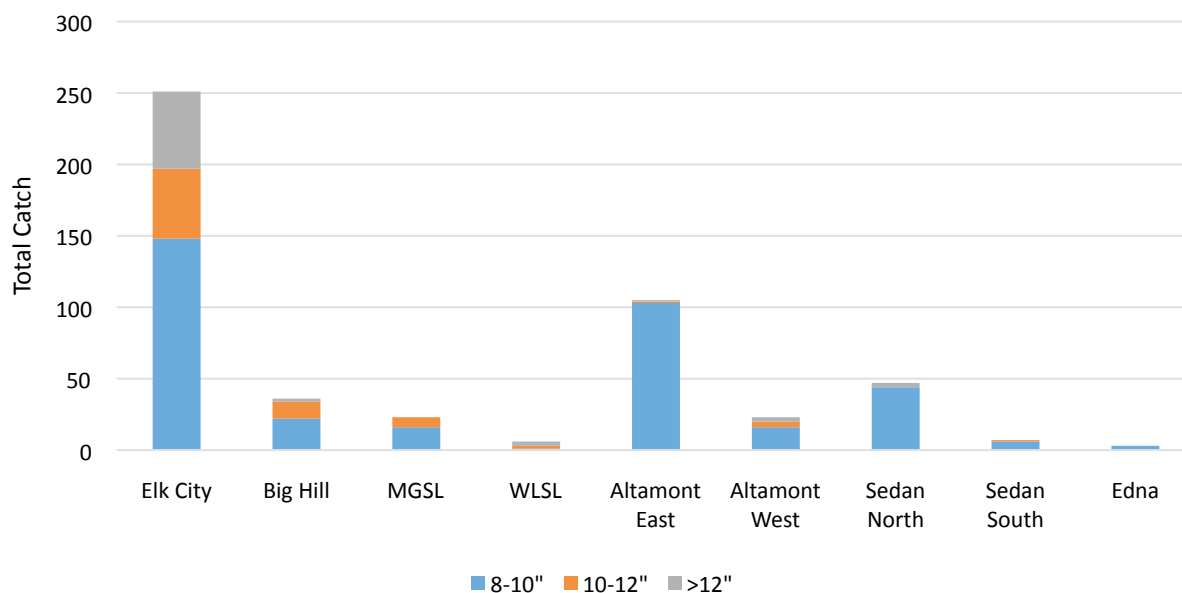
Sampling data from nine different water bodies shows that fishing opportunities for channel catfish are abundant in the Independence Fisheries District. If you're an angler looking to catch a lot of fish – whether for catch-and-release, for the kids' entertainment or for the table – I would head to MGSL, WLSL, or either of the Sedan city lakes. If you're looking to get your hands on one weighing more than 10 pounds, head to Edna City Lake or either of the Altamont city lakes. If you want a mixture of larger fish and numbers, then Big Hill Reservoir and Elk City Reservoir would be your destination. Other area lakes that we didn't sample this year also have abundant channel catfish populations, including Parsons City Lake and Bartlett City Lake.

### Crappie

Our sampling data set shows that if you're an avid crappie angler, Elk City Reservoir is the place to go for both numbers of crappie and large fish. However, many lakes offer great crappie fishing opportunities. Big Hill Reservoir and MGSL offer populations of quality-sized crappie. Other locations that have large populations of crappie include both Altamont city lakes and both Sedan city lakes, however these lakes lack the larger size crappie desired by some anglers. Parsons City Lake was not sampled last year, but it also contains a large population of nice-sized crappie ready for catching.

## Fishing Forecast (*continued*)

### 2018 Fall Crappie Sampling



## White Bass

If you're looking for fast-paced, hard-fighting fish, you may want to hit up some area lakes for white bass. The best time of year is in the spring when they are spawning. Elk City Reservoir has both quantity and quality when it comes to fishing for white bass. Look for white bass up in the Elk River from early spring to summer. Other good spots in Elk City Reservoir include the dam and the Elk City State Park area. In the spring, Big Hill Reservoir also has quality-sized white bass that can be found under the bridge at the north end of the lake.

If you're looking to fish smaller lakes for white bass, try your hand at Wilson State Fishing Lake and Sedan City Lake-South.



*Above: A stringer of white bass caught from the Elk River.*



## Fishing Forecast *(continued)*

### Bluegill/Redear Sunfish

Bluegill and redear sunfish can offer great fishing opportunities for adults and children alike. They're typically easier to find and to catch than a lot of other fish, and they're also great table fare. Almost all of the smaller water bodies in the Independence District have good populations of bluegill and redear sunfish.

Montgomery and Wilson state fishing lakes offer great size and numbers of both species with excellent fishing access from shore. Though, most often you don't need to drive far to find quality bluegill. Both of Idle Hour lakes in Altamont, both Sedan city lakes, and Edna City Lake all offer great fishing opportunities for bluegill and redear sunfish.



*Above: A local angler showing off a nice redear sunfish.*

*Below: Being handled is a female walleye from El Dorado Reservoir that was used to create saugeye later stocked into local lakes.*



### Saugeye

If you're a walleye angler looking for a fishing opportunity in the Independence District, there are a few places you can find saugeye – a hybrid of walleye and sauger. Saugeye are very similar in habits and appearance to walleye. Parsons City Lake has a good population of saugeye with a lot of nice-sized fish. We also stock both of the Sedan city lakes annually with saugeye, creating the opportunity to find harvestable fish in both water bodies.

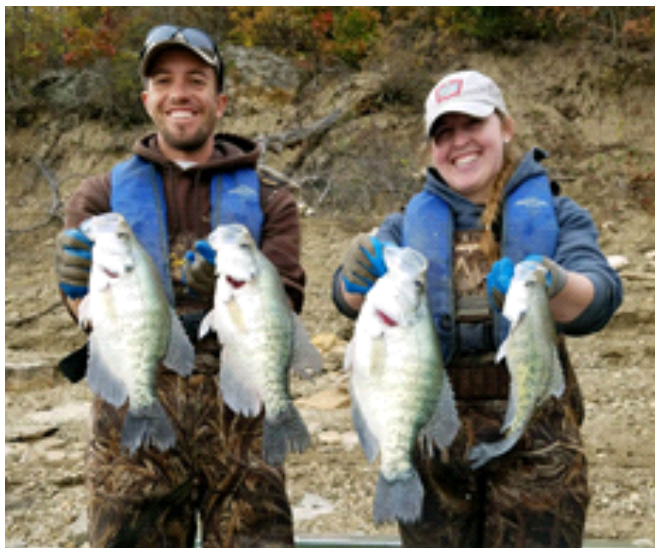
*Below: Some nice angler-caught white bass.*



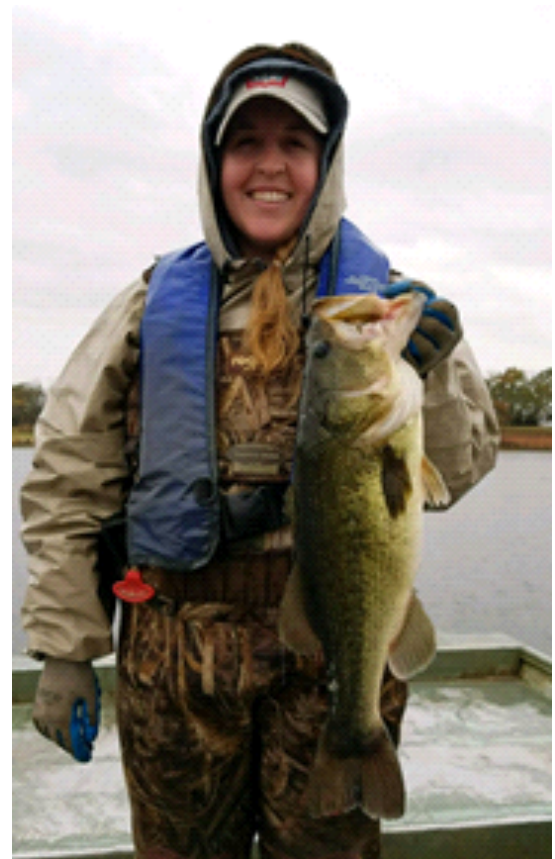
*Below: A channel catfish caught at Parsons City Lake.*



*Below: Crappie sampled from Elk City Reservoir.*



*Below: A largemouth bass sampled at Edna City Lake.*



## Final Thoughts

I hope that 2018 left all of you with many fond memories on the water, whether these memories involved a big fish or just the people you were spending time with. I would like to encourage everyone to get on the water in 2019 and make new memories; take someone new fishing or just catch up with old friends. As always, feel free to contact me with any fisheries-related questions or comments using the contact information on the front of this newsletter, or visit our website at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com).

Happy Fishing!