

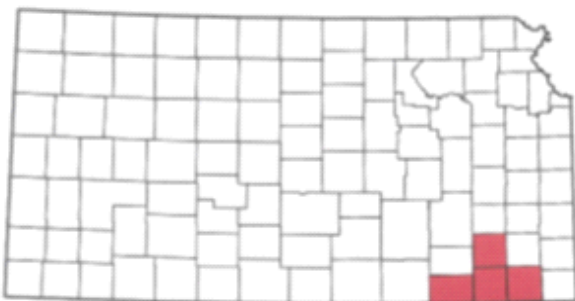
# Independence District Fisheries

**Seth Lundgren**  
**District Fisheries Biologist**  
**Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism**  
**5089 CR 2925**  
**Independence, KS 67301**  
**(620) 331-6820**  
**seth.lundgren@ks.gov**

## Area Happenings

Water has been the theme throughout this spring and summer in the Independence District. Although it was an inconvenience we were able to get all of our fish stocking and sampling done on time. We were also able to place more fishing habitat on Wilson State Fishing Lake during the heat of the summer.

Our standardized sampling this spring included largemouth bass electrofishing at two state fishing lakes, one reservoir, six Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP) lakes, and one wildlife area pond. This summer we also conducted our blue catfish electrofishing survey on Elk City Reservoir.



## Area Happenings Cont...

In conjunction to our standardized sampling, we ran baited hoop nets to evaluate channel catfish populations in two state fishing lakes and three CFAP lakes. Saugeye were also stocked in Parsons City Lake (25,553 fingerlings), Sedan City Lake North (55,000 fry) and Sedan City Lake South (70,000 fry).



*Above:* Saugeye fry being stocked at Sedan City Lake-South.

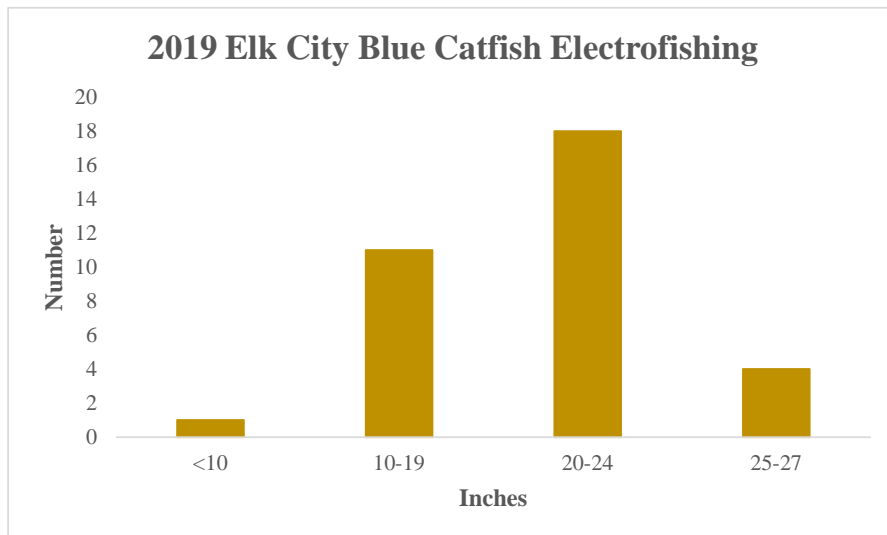
## Elk City Blue Catfish

Once Elk City Reservoir was back to a manageable level we were able to conduct our annual electrofishing sample for blue catfish. On August 20, we were able to sample 34 blue catfish at 12 different locations around the reservoir. These fish ranged in size from 8-27 inches in length with the largest fish weighing 7 pounds.

Although the sample size was fairly small we were able to determine that there are now 5 different age classes swimming around Elk City Reservoir. This includes the original 3 year classes that were stocked (2014-2016), the naturally reproduced year class from 2017, and also a single 8 inch blue catfish that we are waiting for age results to come back (either 2018 or 2019).

Because small blue catfish are difficult to capture, further sampling will need to be conducted this fall with gill nets and also next summer to determine how well these naturally reproduced year classes are doing. That being said, it appears that Elk City Reservoir is growing and reproducing blue catfish.

**Remember that blue catfish in Elk City Reservoir are managed with a 35 inch minimum length limit**, so please release blue catfish under 35 inches in total length. This regulation is put into place in order to protect fish until they can reproduce and become fully self-sustaining. Once we have determined that blue catfish have become self-sustaining the regulations will be reevaluated.



*Above: Size and numbers of blue catfish sampled during August 2019 at Elk City Reservoir.*



*Above: Danci Dollins and Ryan Lies with 4 blue catfish from Elk City.*



*Above: Danci with a 43 pound blue catfish from Wolf Creek Reservoir.*

## Largemouth Bass Sampling

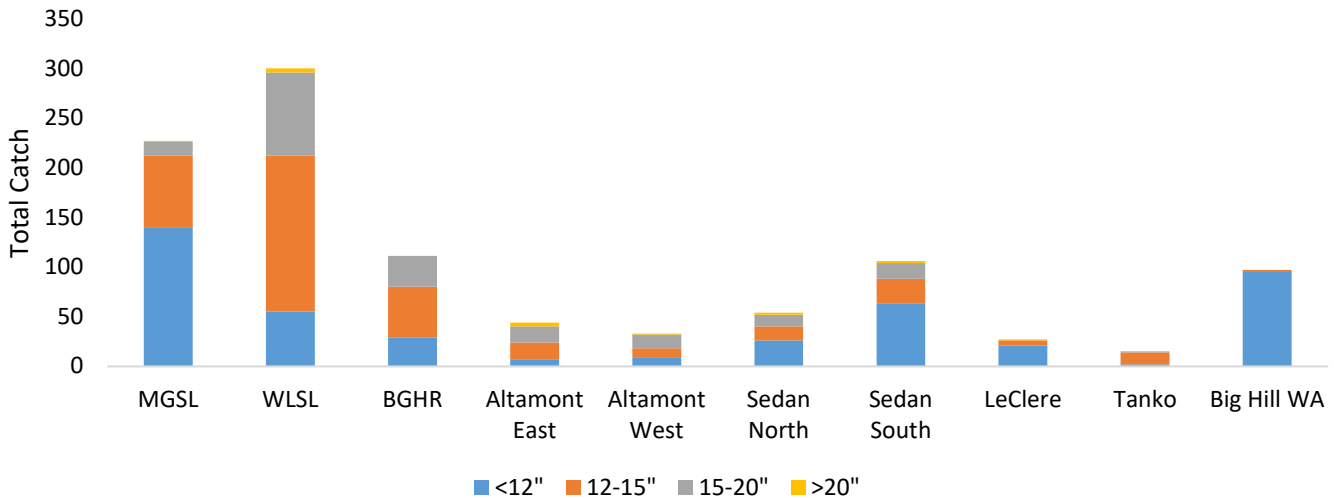
We were able to sneak in all of our electrofishing surveys this spring before most of the rain came. Once again this year we found many great opportunities to catch largemouth bass, whether you are after the big one or just a good chance at catching a bass. This year we sampled:

- Montgomery State Fishing Lake (MGSL)
- Wilson State Fishing Lake (WLSL)
- Big Hill Reservoir (BGHR)
- Altamont City Lake East
- Altamont City Lake West
- Sedan City Lake North
- Sedan City Lake South
- LeClere (Coffeyville)
- Tanko (Cherryvale)
- Big Hill Wildlife Pond North



*Above: Bill Matney and Danci with 4 nice bass from Big Hill Reservoir*

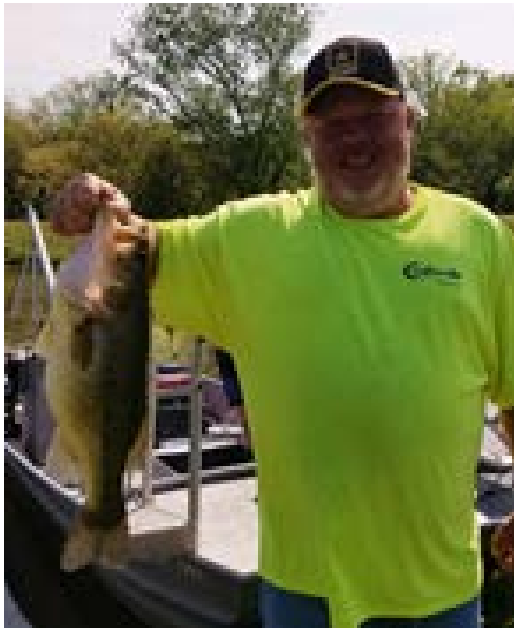
### 2019 Largemouth Bass Electrofishing Data





*Above: Danci holds 2 largemouth bass that are over 20 inches long from Altamont City Lake-East.*

*Below: Steve Smith from the City of Coffeyville holds a 21 inch largemouth bass from LeClere Lake.*



*Above: Dave Clark holds a nice largemouth bass from Montgomery State Fishing Lake.*

*Below: A 20 inch largemouth bass and 16.5 spotted bass from Wilson State Fishing Lake.*



## Largemouth Bass: Tight-lipped or Bucketmouth... Maybe Both

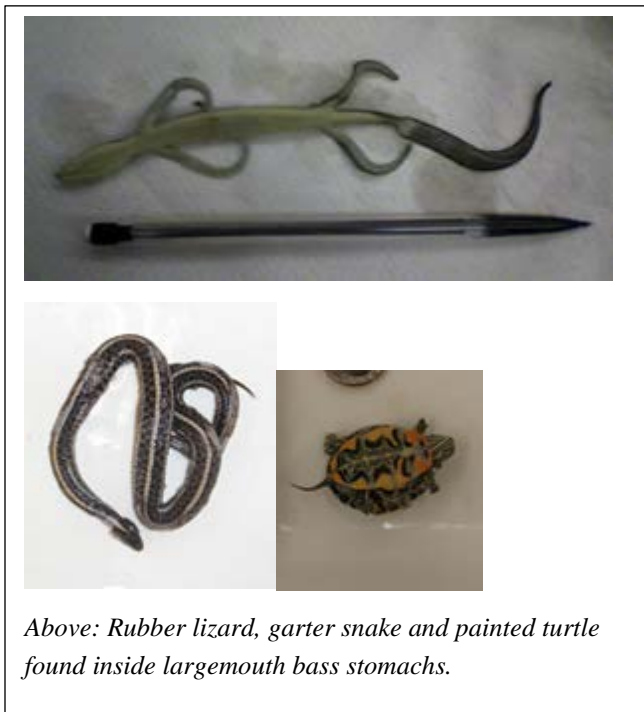
Largemouth bass are America's #1 sought after sportfish, but when asking someone how to catch one you may get several different responses. Someone may tell you "Anyone can catch one, they will bite on anything." Or the next may tell you "Largemouth bass are a finesse fish, your lure and cast location must be perfect to trigger a bite." Well I believe the correct answer is a combination of both depending on the day.

During my graduate school work in Nebraska I looked at 6,245 largemouth bass diets in 8 lakes over a period of 2 years. Each lake was sampled throughout the summer and fall to analyze what they were eating and how much, and the results were very interesting. We saw a wide variety in diet items, with some being very lake specific and some stuff no one expected to find. We also saw a wide range in the amount that the largemouth bass were eating on certain nights, some nights they couldn't eat another bite and other nights every fish hadn't eaten a thing.

The one thing that we found was if largemouth bass in one lake were feeding that night, so were the bass in every other lake and vice versa. We never did find a reason as to why they fed differently depending on the night, even though we looked at weather fronts, air and water temp, moon phases, and everything in-between.



Above: A bird, mouse and large beetle found in a largemouth bass stomach.



Above: Rubber lizard, garter snake and painted turtle found inside largemouth bass stomachs.

Although we never found out what makes them tight-lipped, some nights and bucketmouths the next, we did learn that on days they were feeding they would eat anything. There were a lot of things we expected to find, and did, such as: several species of fish, insects, crayfish, and frogs. It was the things we didn't expect to find that could label largemouth bass as the bucketmouth. We were able to identify several species of mice, voles, shrews, snakes, turtles, and even birds that had found their way into a bass stomach one way or another. We also found many bass that still had soft plastic fishing lures in their stomachs from the unlucky angler's hooks.

## Bucketmouth Continued...

So if you were to ask me the same question on how to catch a largemouth bass, I would have to say it depends on the day. There are going to be some days that you can catch them on anything, but there are also going to be other days that no matter what you do, you just aren't going to get them to bite. Maybe that is why they are the #1 sportfish in America.

### Channel Catfish Netting

We continued our baited-hoop netting for channel catfish again this year. These hoop nets were set in July-August and baited with a soybean and cheese bait to lure catfish into the nets. Time allotted us to sample MGSL, WLSL, Altamont-East, Altamont-West and Edna City Lake.

At MGSL, we were able to set 8 baited hoop nets and captured 608 channel catfish. Channel catfish ranged in size from 10-24 inches, with the largest weighing 4 pounds. Of the fish sampled 38%, or 232 fish, were above the 15-inch minimum length limit. Whether you are looking for fish for the dinner table or getting a youngster hooked on fishing, MGSL offers great opportunity for channel catfishing.



*Above: A 20 pound channel catfish caught at Sedan City Lake North.*

We were also able to set 8 baited hoop nets at WLSL, which yielded a total of 187 channel catfish. The catfish in WLSL ranged in size from 10-25 inches in length, with the largest fish weighing 5 ½ pounds. Of the channel catfish sampled 46.5%, or 87 fish, were greater than the 15-inch minimum length limit. WLSL is another lake that offers a variety of sizes of channel catfish, and can provide a great fishing opportunity for adults and children alike.



*Above: My nephew holding a nice channel catfish he caught from MGSL.*

We were also able to run 3 hoop nets at Edna City Lake for channel catfish this year. In total, we caught 86 channel catfish ranging in size from 9-25 inches long. Of the fish sampled, 47.7% or 41 fish, were greater than 15 inches in total length. Edna City Lake is another lake that offers great numbers of channel catfish ranging in all sizes.

## Channel Catfish Continued...

We also sampled Altamont City Lake-East and Altamont City Lake-West for channel catfish this summer. We ran 3 hoop nets in each lake and totaled 28 fish. Although the numbers were low, the largest channel catfish were sampled in Altamont City Lake-East and Altamont City Lake-West, where catfish over 9 pounds were sampled in each lake. If you are looking to catch large channel catfish and don't care about numbers, both Altamont City Lakes offer a great opportunity to catch a large catfish.

## New Brush Piles at Wilson State Fishing Lake

In June, we were able to add 4 new cedar tree brush piles in WLSL. These new brush piles consist of at least 10 large cedar trees per brush pile. Of the 4 new brush piles added, 3 of them coincide with the Georgia Cube habitat that was placed last winter (see map and GPS coordinates below). These new brush piles will be great habitat for crappie, largemouth and spotted bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish. **Please be advised that placing your own personal brush pile/ fish habitat is illegal, and can be punishable by fine.** These new brush piles are spread out and large enough that they will hold a variety of fish throughout the year.



Above: Locations of the 4 newly added brush piles in WLSL. GPS coordinates: N37°41.706' W95°40.614' N37°41.873' W95°40.427', N37°41.890' W95°40.113' and N37°42.004' W95°40.249'



*Above: Myself holding a 35 pound flathead catfish sampled at MGSL this summer.*

*Below: Ryan Lies with a stringer full of fish caught from Elk City Reservoir during this summer's flood event.*



## **Final Thoughts**

I hope that everyone was able to get out and fish this summer, even with the high water. I was able to get my 2-year old daughter out this summer (pics above) for the first time. She had a blast! If you can, please take a kid fishing. If I can take a two year old, anything is possible! If you want any more fishing information please feel free to contact me at the information listed on page 1 or visit our website at <http://ksoutdoors.com/>

Happy Fishing!