

MILFORD DISTRICT FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

KDWPT

Fisheries Division

Spring 2020

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Fishing Forecast for the Milford District

Every year, KDWPT district fisheries biologists evaluate our fisheries through standardized sampling conducted across the state. This information is useful to biologists in that we can make better management decisions for our fisheries. We also utilize this information to provide anglers with a fishing forecast each year.

This can be found at

<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Fishing-Forecast>.

This page provides anglers with some basic information for several species for every waterbody those species were sampled in.

For example, blue catfish anglers can search which lakes/reservoirs had the highest density by size class (i.e., density, preferred, or lunker) for the past year to determine which lakes are worth focusing on for blue catfish in the upcoming year. Each biologist gives a rating for each species for the lakes/reservoirs they manage. This can also aid anglers in deciding which lakes may be best for the species they are targeting.

While a fair number of lakes/reservoirs are represented for each species, not every lake may be found due to low densities or possibly not being sampled that year due to an event like flooding. Feel free to reach out to other fisheries biologists around the state if you have any further questions about certain lakes/reservoirs.

Reservoirs
Impoundment density rating

Water	Density (>20')	Preferred (>30')	Lunker (>35')	Big Fish (LBS.)	Biologist rating	3 year average (>20')
ELK CITY	2.25	0.00	0.00	8.67	G	1.39
WOLF CREEK	2.11	0.94	0.11	35.71	G	2.70
MILFORD	2.00	0.10	0.05	22.50	G	2.20
CLINTON	0.69	0.06	0.00	18.00	P	0.50
EL DORADO	0.60	0.00	0.00	11.47	G	0.77
PERRY	0.45	0.05	0.00	20.94	F	0.21
LOVEWELL	0.40	0.00	0.00	9.81	F	0.45
LACYGNE	0.33	0.00	0.00	8.33	F	0.23
JOHN REDMOND	0.30	0.15	0.05	25.35	F	0.10
WILSON	0.27	0.03	0.00	13.12	F	0.42
MELVERN	0.19	0.13	0.06	7.10	F	0.29
COUNCIL GROVE	0.07	0.00	0.00	4.07	P	0.07
KANOPOLIS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.74	P	0.00
POMONA	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.45	P	0.00

Pictured above is an example of what a fishing forecast looks like for the list of reservoirs that blue catfish were sampled in 2018 for the 2019 fishing forecast. Each species can be broken down into lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. The 2020 fishing forecast will be based on sampling events from 2019 which guide anglers to better fishing opportunities in Kansas in 2020.

Milford Reservoir Flooding

Milford Reservoir experienced record flooding in 2019 which halted sampling activities for the majority of the year. Milford Reservoir reached 30.36' above conservation pool which was the second highest water levels ever recorded behind the floods of 1993. Milford Reservoir was above conservation pool for 270 consecutive days which made fishing and recreating quite difficult this past year. Marinas, parks, and others were greatly affected by the flooding. However, fishing is still expected to be good in 2020 despite the excess flooding. In my Fall 2019 newsletter, I touched on how fish populations can be impacted by high water. There's a good possibility fishing will be very good at Milford in the future.

Council Grove Reservoir Results

Similar to Milford Reservoir, Council Grove Reservoir experienced high-water levels in 2019 with the highest level reaching 15.65 feet above conservation pool. Crappie numbers were higher in 2019 but influenced by high catch rates of 2-3" fish while bigger fish were also sampled. The largest white crappie caught in our nets was just over 1.2 pounds. Channel catfish catch rates have remained consistent with previous years. Saugeye catch rates were the highest in 2019 over the past five years with the largest fish at 3.83 lbs. Wiper numbers are remaining consistent with previous years. The largest wiper sampled was just over 8 pounds. White bass catch

rates in 2019 were lower but fish sampled were larger compared to previous years.



Jim Miazga, ESU, and Vanessa Salazar, KDWPT, pictured with some nice Council Grove wiper!



Emily Samuel, KSU, with a nice Council Grove saugeye!

Geary State Fishing Lake Results

Bluegill numbers (fish/net) in the fall of 2019 were the lowest that have been reported over the last five years. Crappie numbers appeared to be lower than the five-year average, but we will continue monitoring the population over time. Channel catfish numbers in 2019 were the second highest in the past five years. Saugeye catch rates were similar to those of 2015 and 2016 after experiencing lower catch rates in 2017 and 2018. White bass catch rates are back to the five-year average with 17 fish/net.

“New” Herington City Lake Results

Bluegill catch rates were the highest in the past five years. Both white and black crappie catch rates increased in 2019 with larger fish being documented. Channel catfish experienced the lowest catch rate in the last five years. However, good numbers of channel catfish are still present. Walleye numbers remained consistent with the long-term average. Higher than average numbers of white bass and wipers were sampled in 2019 suggesting good fishing in 2020.

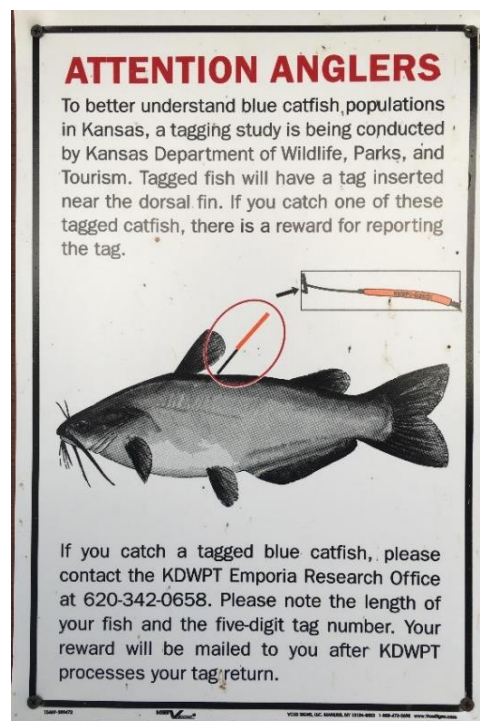
Council Grove City Lake Results

Black and white crappie catch rates were the highest in the past five years. Black crappies have been documented in consecutive years after not being documented in 2015-2017. Bluegills remain to be consistent over the five-year average.

Channel catfish catch rates were the second highest over the past five years in 2019 with larger fish being found. Walleye and white bass are still present, but low densities.

Milford Reservoir Blue Catfish Study Update

KDWPT fisheries biologists have been hard at work trying to answer some research questions about blue catfish in Milford Reservoir the past few years. In my Spring 2019 newsletter I touched on some of the preliminary results from the first year of work. As the project at Milford begins to wrap up, this project will be replicated at El Dorado Reservoir in 2020. 2,342 blue catfish were tagged in the summer of 2018. Resampling events were conducted after tagging to try to recapture tagged fish. Blue catfish were being sampled via boat electrofishing and produced high catch



rates of 342.6 fish/hour of fish greater than 8". Anglers reported 54 recaptures of tagged blue catfish with one fish being caught twice. As the data is currently, there are an estimated 1,043,906 blue catfish in Milford Reservoir above 8" with a little over 16,000 above 25". In 2019, aging information was taken from 123 individuals ranging from 8-40". Blue catfish ranged from 2-18 years old. The largest fish (42"), however, was 14 years old.



4-H Habitat Project

Recently, I was approached by a young man named Ty Cornell and his Dad, Jesse, about wanting to provide some crappie habitat in some of the creeks at Milford. How could I say no? Ty's plan was to provide near-shore habitat out of recycled Christmas trees. I thought this was a great idea and was actually able to give Ty some trees I received from Fort Riley. Jesse and Ty, along with some additional volunteers, are aiming to increase habitat in Curtis Creek, School Creek, and West Rolling Hills. They aim to have this project wrapped up in February. I wanted to showcase some of this work in this newsletter and share some of the photos that were sent to me after the first work day. GPS coordinates will be provided once the project is complete. Great job guys!





My Final Thoughts

As we head into a new decade of great fishing in Kansas, I hope this information can guide each of our coveted anglers on where to fish in the Milford District. Good luck this spring on your outdoor adventures! I hope this newsletter helps in understanding what's currently happening in our lakes. If you want more information please feel free to visit our website at <http://ksoutdoors.com/>. Have fun and good fishing!