

Ellsworth District Fisheries



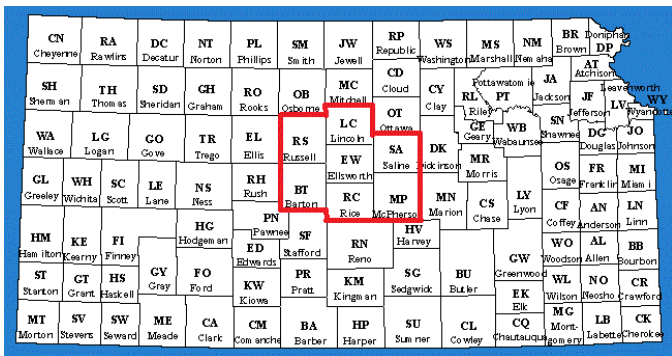
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism Fisheries Division

Fall 2020

District Information

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Counties and Reservoirs

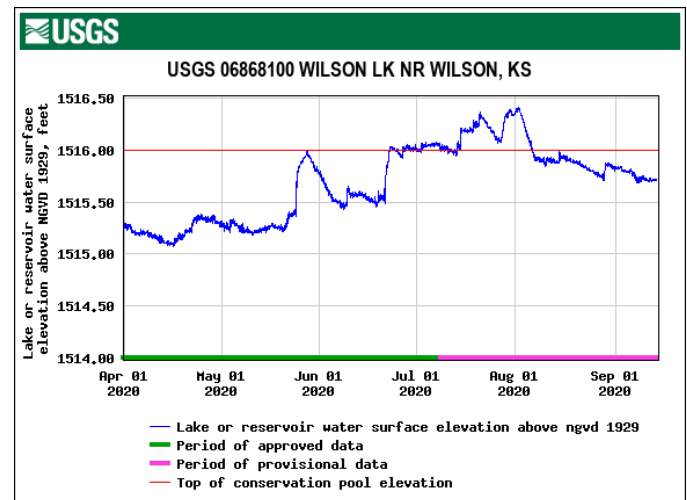


Russell	Wilson Reservoir - 9000 acres
Lincoln	Only leased F.I.S.H. properties
Saline	Saline State Lake (LOW)
	Lakewood Lake - Salina – 6 acres
	Indian Rock Lake – Salina – 1 acre
Barton	Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area
	Stone Lake – Great Bend - 40 acres
	Veteran’s Lake – Great Bend - 13 acres
Ellsworth	Kanopolis Reservoir - 3550 acres
	Holyrod City Lake – 13 acres
Rice	Sterling City Lake - 10 acres
McPherson	McPherson State Lake - 47 acres
	Black Kettle State Lake – 8 acres
	Windom City Pond – 1 acre

Note: Keep in mind that there are various Arkansas River access points throughout the region and F.I.S.H. Program properties. The F.I.S.H. Program leases the angling rights from private landowners to allow you to fish their ponds. Get the latest Kansas Fishing Atlas for details.

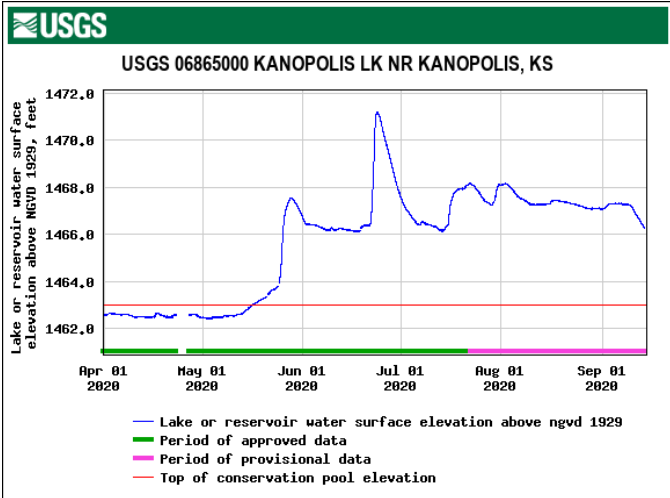
Summer Weather Conditions

Wilson Reservoir) The reservoir has been full for 4 years. Near-record rainfalls in late Spring and throughout June of 2019 brought the reservoir to 11 feet above conservation pool, its highest level since the 1993 flood. The reservoir was mostly stable this summer but was held below conservation pool most of the season due to shoreline erosion repairs throughout Lucas and Minooka campgrounds. The flood of 2019 eradicated much of reed grass that was ubiquitous along the banks and has left most of the shoreline partially bare in 2020.



Kanopolis Reservoir) The water level management plan for Kanopolis allows the lake to fill 4’ above conservation pool, or to 1467’, beginning on March 1st. This year, the reservoir remained below conservation pool until late May, mostly due to low inflows from the river. Rains returned in June and July which allowed for brief spikes in water level. The reservoir will undergo a 10-year inspection of the dam this October. Consequently, it will be lowered below the conservation pool level of 1463 feet. This will limit boat traffic to only the South Boat Ramp. Be cautious of underwater concrete to the east and a sandbar to the west as you leave the boat ramp to head out on your fishing trip.





Note: A different amount of electrofishing effort was used at Wilson in 2018 (2019 = 4.4 hours; 2020 = 6.4 hours); therefore, a conversion was used to correct the 2020 sample.

	2019 sample	2020 sample
Total fish	276	345
% of 8" fish	17%	7%
% of 12" fish	43%	38%
% of 15" fish	39%	54%
% of 20" fish	1%	1%

The overall size of bass at Wilson is getting larger, mostly due to the large year class produced in 2016.

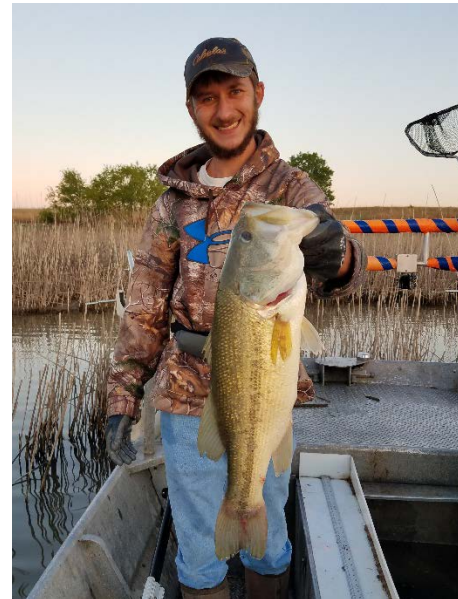
Spring Largemouth Bass Samples



The KDWPT uses electrofishing boats to sample largemouth bass populations throughout Kansas public lakes. The boat works by putting electricity through the water for a short distance to temporarily stun the fish. Stunned fish will come to the surface for easy collection. Random samples are collected throughout the lake. Fish are measured, weighed, and released unharmed. Remember, these are samples and not indicative of every largemouth bass in the lake. This method of sampling does, however allow us to gain an understanding of how the population is changing from year to year. This allows us to monitor the population and implement appropriate management actions to achieve the best populations for our angling constituents.

Wilson Reservoir

The Wilson Reservoir largemouth bass population has progressed and remains one of the best locations for bass anglers in the state. This year, similar to other locations in the state, saw a lot of fishing pressure, especially from bass anglers. The population consists mostly of fish greater than 15 inches and several fish above 6 lbs. have been caught in 2020. There is concern of a lack of recruitment of younger fish to the population.



Travis Riley with a 5-lb Largemouth Bass collected at Wilson Reservoir in May, 2020.

McPherson State Lake

The largemouth bass population at McPherson State Lake continues to provide an above average fishery, and the overall size seemed to increase in the 2020 sample. The population is dominated by fish less than 12". I encourage the harvest of bass below the 13 - 18" slot limit to help minimize competition between these smaller fish. Again, feel free to harvest bass below 13 inches!

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	266	203
% of fish <8"	33%	11%
% of 8" fish	24%	40%
% of 12" fish	25%	24%
% of 15" fish	18%	23%
% of 20" fish	<1%	2%



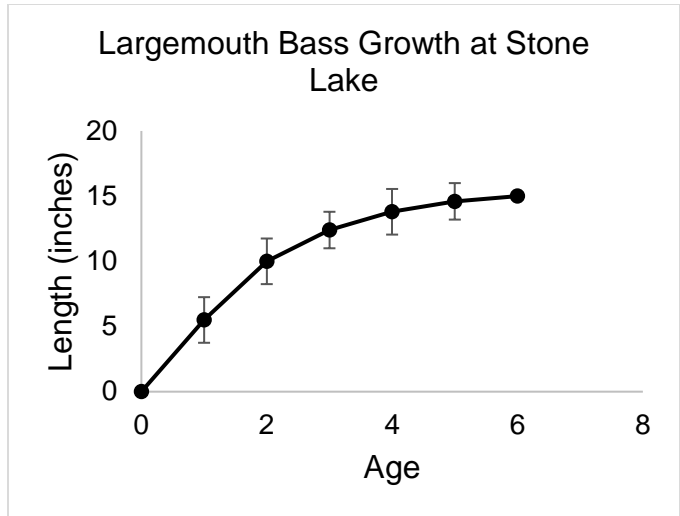
Ryan Pinkall with two, 4 to 5 lb. bass collected at McPherson State Lake in early May 2020.

“I encourage the harvest of bass below the 13 - 18” slot limit to help minimize competition between these smaller fish”

Great Bend – Stone Lake

Stone Lake, located in southern Great Bend is a nearly 30-acre sand pit that provides good sport fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, wipers, channel catfish, flathead catfish, and bluegill. The smallmouth bass population isn't overly abundant but there are some quality fish to be caught. We caught many fewer Largemouth Bass in the 2020 sample and no fish greater than 16 inches were caught. The population is slow growing (see figure below) but provides reasonable numbers for bass anglers.

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	154	81
% of 8” fish	49%	38%
% of 12” fish	49%	57%
% of 15” fish	2%	5%
% of 20” fish	<1%	0%



Largemouth Bass growth estimated from otoliths at Stone Lake, Great Bend in May 2020.



Several Largemouth Bass collected at Stone Lake had fed on crayfish. Crayfish adds diversity to bass diets but isn't a substantial meal by itself for larger, adult bass.

Great Bend – Veteran’s Lake

Veteran’s Lake, located on the NW corner of McKinley and 17th Street is a 13-acre community lake. Veteran’s Lake has been plagued with blue-green algae over the years but due to recent aluminum sulfate treatments the water quality has improved and fish management has resumed. Due to recent fish kills the largemouth bass population has been non-existent. Stockings have revitalized the fishery but only a small amount of fish are greater than 15 inches.

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	63	63
% of 8” fish	78%	66%
% of 12” fish	10%	28%
% of 15” fish	12%	5%
% of 20” fish	0%	2%

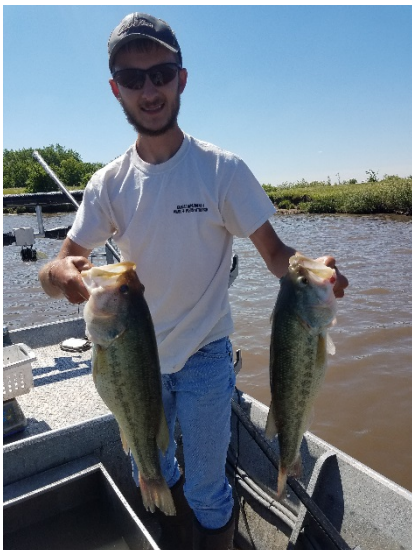


Ryan Pinkall with a 5.4-lb Largemouth Bass collected at Veteran's Lake in April, 2020.

Black Kettle State Lake

This 8-acre state fishing lake is located on the southern edge of McPherson County just east of Moundridge off I-135. It is a shallow, 6-acre pond that includes a boat ramp on the south side. The lake contains a small largemouth bass population consisting of several fish from 2-5 lbs. and is stocked annually with channel catfish.

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	29	29
% of 8" fish	21%	36%
% of 12" fish	37.5%	39%
% of 15" fish	37.5%	25%
% of 20" fish	4%	0%



Travis Riley with two Largemouth Bass weighing over 4 lbs. sampled at Black Kettle State Lake in June, 2019.

Holyrood City Lake

Holyrood City Lake is located 10 miles N of Holyrood, KS or approximately 7 miles SSE of Wilson, KS. The lake was renovated throughout the 2000s but never filled with enough water to begin stocking fish until 2014. The lake filled in 2017 and now provides quality bluegill, largemouth bass, and channel catfish angling opportunities. Heavy precipitation in 2019 and 2020 likely will keep Holyrood full for a while.

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	43	72
% of 8" fish	47.5%	15%
% of 12" fish	35%	69%
% of 15" fish	15%	16%
% of 20" fish	2.5%	0%

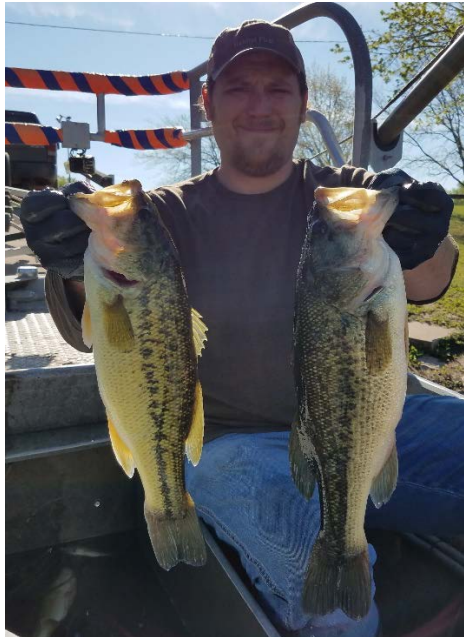


Travis Riley with a 4-lb Largemouth Bass collected at Holyrood City Lake in May 2020.

Sterling City Lake

Sterling City Lake is a 9-acre community lake located within the City of Sterling in Rice County. An algae bloom-induced fish kill in 2013 mostly eliminated the largemouth bass population within the lake. Subsequent stocking of bass and forage has developed an abundant bass population at Sterling.

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	101	146
% of 8" fish	46%	54%
% of 12" fish	28%	30%
% of 15" fish	26%	17%
% of 20" fish	0%	%

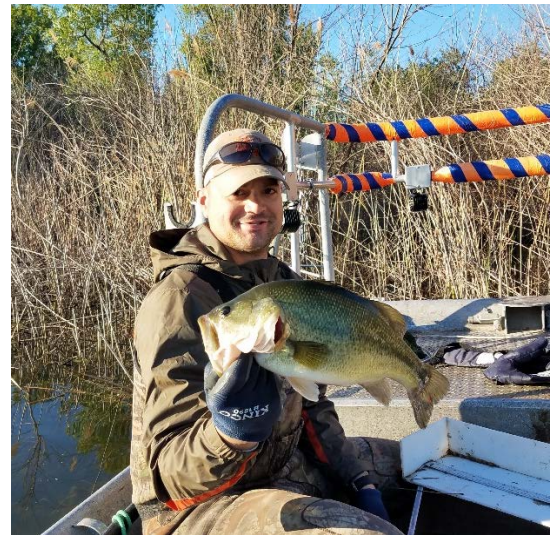


Wesley Sowards with two Largemouth Bass sampled at Sterling City Lake in April, 2020.

Lakewood Lake, Salina

Lakewood lake is located near Lakewood Middle School in northcentral Salina. It is a 5-acre lake noted for its involvement in the winter Rainbow Trout Program and the Urban Channel Catfish Program. The lake was renovated in October, 2016 to eradicate the over abundant carp, gizzard shad, and stunted white crappie populations. It was restocked with Bluegill, Fathead Minnows, and Largemouth Bass in 2017. Unfortunately, heavy rains allowed the re-entry of carp to the lake in June, 2019. There now seems to be Gizzard Shad, Common Carp, and crappie. Fortunately, there is an abundance of 15-inch bass here.

	2019 Sample	2020 Sample
Total fish	155	43
% of 8" fish	26%	7%
% of 12" fish	72%	37%
% of 15" fish	2%	56%
% of 20" fish	0%	0%



Patt Riese with a 3-lb Largemouth Bass collected at Lakewood Lake in early May, 2020.

Saline State Fishing Lake



Saline State Lake filled in 2019 and was mostly devoid of fish. Bluegill and Channel Catfish were stocked in 2019. We stocked Largemouth Bass adults in 2020. Electrofishing for bass will resume in 2021.

First Evidence of Blue Catfish Natural Reproduction at Wilson Reservoir

Blue Catfish have been stocked in Wilson Reservoir from 2006 through 2016. We ceased stocking after 2016 in an effort to determine if natural reproduction is occurring. No natural reproduction was observed in any years prior to 2020. To our excitement, our summer 2020 surveys yielded several specimens from 6 to 8 inches in length, indicating that reproduction occurred during the flood event of 2019. High water was likely the reason and we don't expect Blue Catfish to recruit every year.



Given the longevity of this species, this group of fish could be around for a while and contribute to the fishery for more than 20 years. This is great news for the future of the fishery!

Blue Catfish News Kanopolis Reservoir

We have stocked Blue Catfish at Kanopolis Reservoir since 2008. However, as of 2016 very few of these were seen. As the biologist with access to gill nets, trap nets, and electrofishing I probably only observed 2 or 3 individuals of this species up through 2016. I decided to stock at a higher rate in 2017 and 2018 and those stockings have made an

immediate impact. The population consists almost entirely of those 2 year classes, but an occasional, older fish can be caught. The 2017 stocking now consists of 3-year old fish that have already reached 20 inches. The growth rate of these fish is outstanding compared to Blue Catfish in other Kansas reservoirs. Good things are coming for this species at Kanopolis!

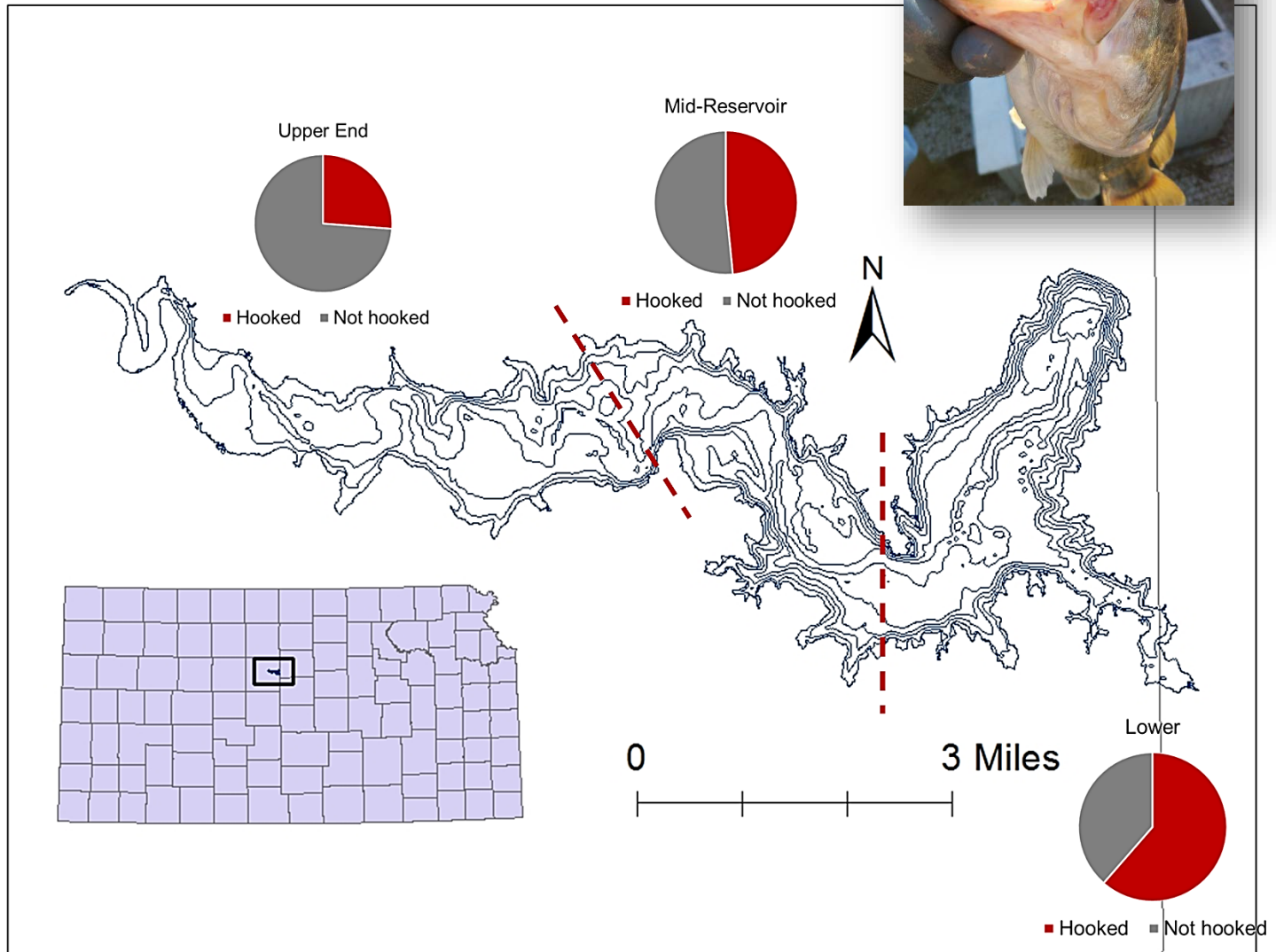
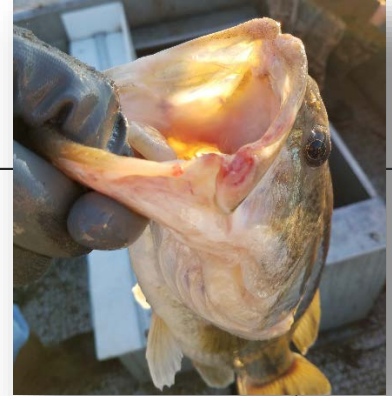


Travis Riley holding two Blue Catfish collected at Kanopolis Reservoir in July 2020. The fish in his right hand is likely from the 2018 stocking while the fish in his left hand is from the 2017 stocking.

In total, we collected 123 Blue Catfish while doing our standard electrofishing samples in July 2020. Most were collected near points and river channel breaks in the middle of the reservoir. However, a group was observed at the mouth of the Smoky Hill River near Horsethief Canyon.

Largemouth Bass Angling at Wilson Reservoir Hook Wound Study

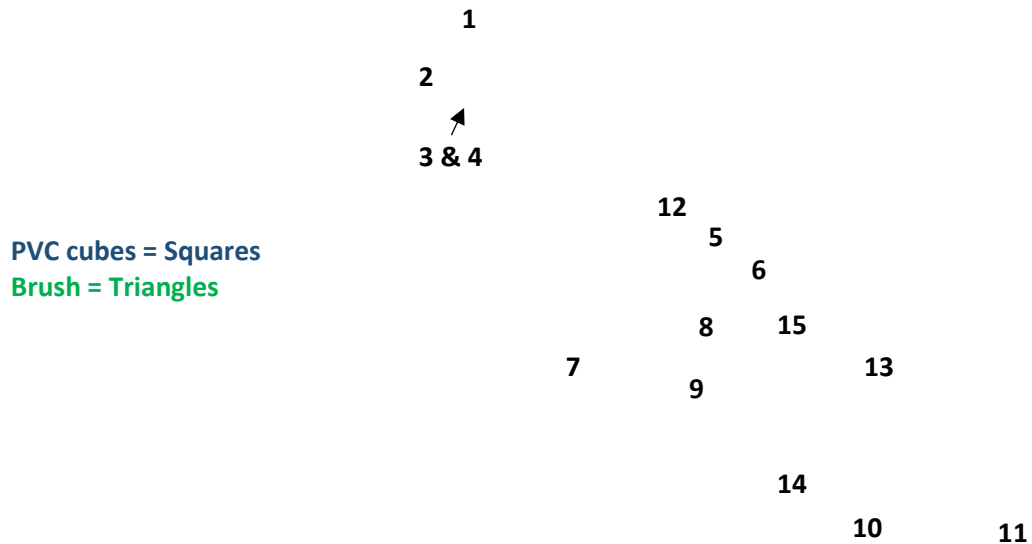
We observed and recorded hook wounds from all Largemouth Bass at Wilson Reservoir during our standard electrofishing surveys in May 2020. We observed hook wounds from 210 of 496, or 42.3%, of all Largemouth Bass encountered. There was a trend of more wounds in the lower end (61%) of the reservoir and less in the upper portion of the reservoir (26%). This is related to fishing pressure as Hell Creek, in the lower end, typically receives constant pressure from bass anglers. Largemouth Bass angling pressure at Wilson has been very high for the last 3 years but it seems that catch and release has been prevalent.



Pie charts are placed near one of the three regions of Wilson Reservoir and indicate the proportion of Largemouth Bass with a hook wound (red) and those without a hook wound (gray).

UPDATED FISH ATTRACTOR MAP

Kanopolis Reservoir Fish Attractors (2016 – 2020)



#	N-latitude DMS format	W-longitude DMS format	Longitude DD format	Latitude DD format	Type	Quantity	Date
1	38° 39' 2.52"	98° 0' 49.32"	-98.0137	38.6507	PVC cubes	14	2016
2	38° 38' 46.356"	98° 1' 2.28"	-98.0173	38.64621	PVC cubes	40+	2016
3	38° 38' 45.276"	98° 0' 57.24"	-98.0159	38.64591	Brush	-	2016
4	38° 38' 43.872"	98° 0' 55.439"	-98.0154	38.64552	Brush	-	2016
5	38° 37' 58.62"	97° 59' 27.599"	-97.991	38.63295	PVC cubes	5	2018
6	38° 37' 48.18"	97° 59' 14.639"	-97.9874	38.63005	PVC cubes	20	2018
7	38° 37' 5.88"	98° 0' 20.879"	-98.0058	38.6183	PVC cubes	22	2018
8	38° 37' 24.492"	97° 59' 30.84"	-97.9919	38.62347	Cubes & brush	20+	2018
9	38° 37' 8.832"	97° 59' 33.359"	-97.9926	38.61912	Cubes & brush	10+	2018
10	38° 36' 27.54"	97° 58' 37.2"	-97.977	38.60765	PVC cubes	13	2018
11	38° 36' 24.948"	97° 58' 2.639"	-97.9674	38.60693	PVC cubes	10	2016
12	38° 38' 10.608"	97° 59' 39.84"	-97.9944	38.63628	Brush	-	2019
13	38° 37' 24.42"	97° 58' 44.4"	-97.979	38.62345	Brush	-	2019
14	38° 36' 26.64"	97° 59' 10.68"	-97.9863	38.6074	Brush	-	2019
15	38° 37' 41.088"	97° 59' 7.44"	-97.9854	38.62808	Brush	-	2020



Parting shot: Travis Riley and Ryan Pinkall holding a 43 lb. Flathead Catfish collected by electrofishing at Kanopolis Reservoir in July, 2020.

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