

# MILFORD DISTRICT FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

**KDWP**

**Fisheries Division**

**Spring 2022**

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## Fishing Forecast for the Milford District

Every year, KDWP 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. 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. Anglers can find forecasts for individual species found around the state (i.e., Largemouth Bass, Walleye, Blue Catfish, etc.) or combined groups (i.e., black basses, crappie, temperate basses, and

percids). The percids category is the Walleye, Sauger, and Saugeye family.

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.

Pictured below is an example of the 2022 Fishing Forecast for Saugeye in reservoirs.

Reservoirs					
WATERBODY	Density	Preferred	Lunker	Big Fish	Rating
	(>14")	(>18")	(>22")	(LBS.)	
SEBELIUS	10.80	6.90	0.40	5.67	G
COUNCIL GROVE	5.33	1.87	1.00	6.89	G
KANOPOLIS	2.85	1.65	0.20	5.75	F
CLINTON	0.38	0.13	0.00	2.72	F
POMONA	0.17	0.00	0.00	2.10	F
WEBSTER	0.08	0.08	0.00	3.13	F
TUTTLE CREEK	0.05	0.05	0.00	3.21	F

**Milford Reservoir Results**

Black Crappie catch rates in 2021 were the highest since 2017 at 6.3 fish/net. The majority of the individuals collected were between 8.5” and 9.5”. White Crappie catch rates slightly decreased from 2020 to 2021 to 8.7 fish/net. 27 individuals were collected below 5.25”. The rest of the sampled individuals ranged from about 6.75 to 13.5” with the most abundant length group being 10”. Bluegill catch rates were the highest since 2017. The high number of fish less than 3” in this sample contributed to the higher catch rates. Bluegill samples continue to be dominated by smaller individuals with few fish seen greater than 8” being sampled. Beginning in 2021, Blue Catfish populations will be assessed with boat electrofishing data. Every fish except for one was under the 25-40” protected slot limit. In August, 99 individuals were collected via juglines. Of those 99 individuals, 78 were under the slot, 18 were in the slot, and three were above the slot. The first set of 100 juglines experienced low catch rates due to placing the bait too far down the jugline. The second set of 100 juglines experienced higher catch rates after baits were placed higher on the line. 169 Blue Catfish were collected with core panel gill nets in the fall. 154 individuals were below the slot limit with the remaining 15 individuals were in the protected slot. In 2021, Channel Catfish catch rates were the lowest in the last five years at 1.0 fish/net. This is the second consecutive year where catch rates were

below 2 fish/net. The average length was about 14.5” with a range of about 10-28.75”. Gizzard Shad catch rates have remained consistent over the past five years at 5.1 fish/net. Gizzard Shad lengths ranged from 5-17.75” similar to 2020 lengths. Walleye catch rates dropped from 4.4 to 2.5 fish/net in 2021. Fifty individuals were collected in 2021 with only one individual was above the 21” MLL. The average length of collected individuals was 17”. In 2021, White Bass catch rates were the highest in the past five years at 6.9 fish/net. White Bass ranged from 5.5 to 16.5” with the most abundant length category being 12.5”. Wiper catch rates in 2021 (8.1 fish/net) were similar to catch rates in 2020 (8.3 fish/net). Wiper lengths averaged 19” with a range of about 13 to 24.5”.

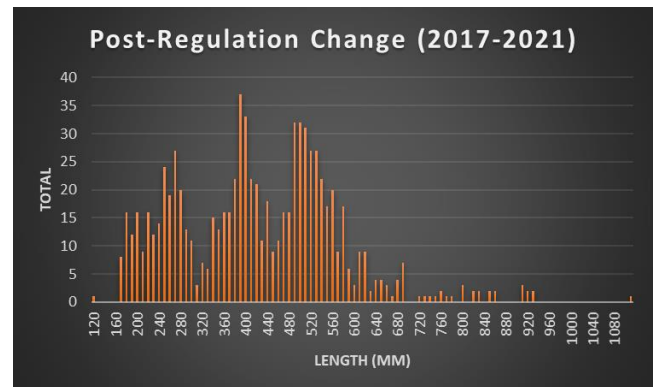
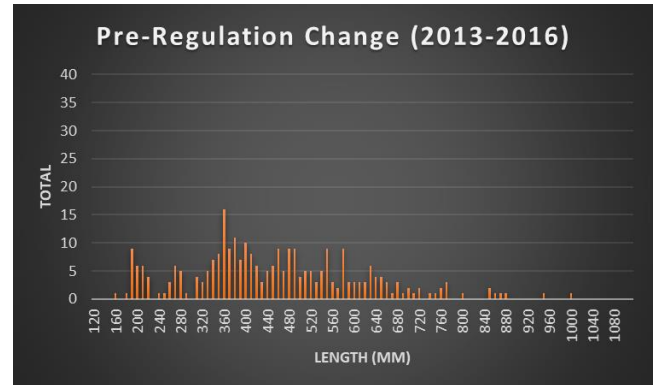


Clint Thornton, KDWP Wildlife Biologist, pictured with a nice Blue Catfish collected with juglines at Milford Reservoir

**Milford Regulation Evaluations**

Since 2017, Milford Reservoir has seen regulation changes on Blue Catfish, Walleye, and Wipers. In 2017, KDWP (now KDWP) implemented a 25-40" protected slot with a daily creel limit with no more than 1 fish over 40". This evaluation compares data pre/post regulation change. Until 2021, gill nets have been used to assess Blue Catfish populations. For comparison purposes, 2021 gill net data were used to compare to pre/post regulation changes. Blue Catfish catch rates were higher during post years (2017-2021) compared to pre years (2013-2016) as seen in the table below. 282 Blue Catfish were collected during the pre-regulation timeframe. 40 of those fish would have fell into the current protected slot. During the post-regulation timeframe, 834 Blue Catfish were collected with 49 individuals in the protected slot. Mean body condition (Wr) has ranged from 82-125 across the various categories from 2013-2021.

Year	CPUE
<b>Pre</b>	
2013	3.1
2014	2.6
2015	2.7
2016	5.7
<b>Post</b>	
2017	12.5
2018	9.1
2020	11.7
2021	8.5

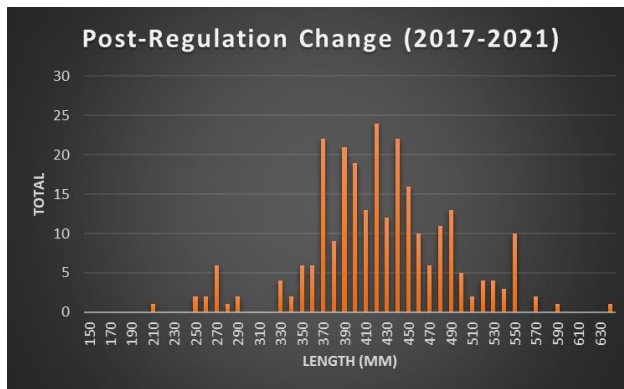
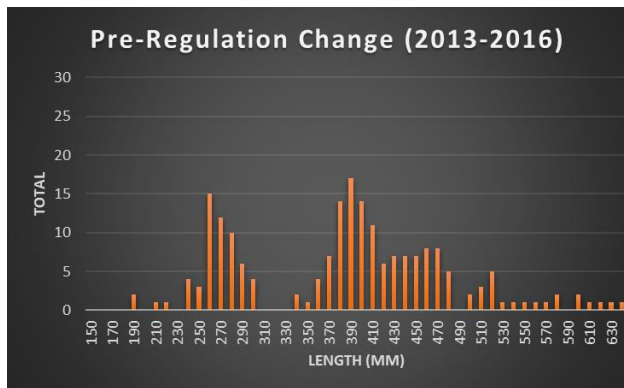


In 2017, KDWP (now KDWP) implemented a 21" MLL with a daily creel limit of 2 fish/day. Walleye populations are assessed with core panel gill nets in the fall. The table below provides CPUE values from pre and post regulation change years while the two figures below provide length data from pre and post years. 200 Walleye were collected during the pre-regulation timeframe compared to 262 Walleye being collected during the post-regulation timeframe. Prior to the regulation change in 2017, catch rates of fish greater than 21" were relatively low. Prior to the new regulation (2013-2016), thirteen fish above 21" were collected. However, since 2017, eighteen 21" fish have been collected. Noticeable increases in 370-490 mm and 550 mm fish have occurred during the post-regulation

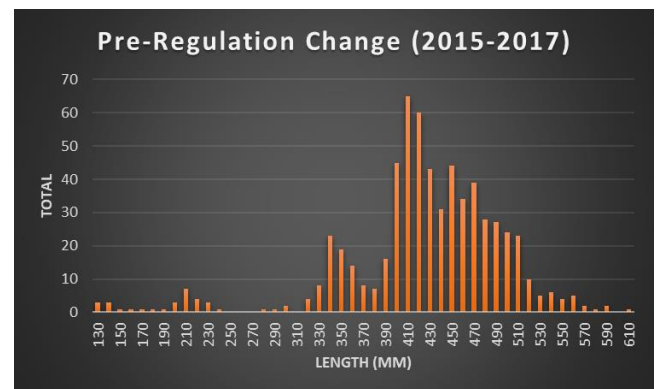
phase. Walleye mean body condition has ranged from 79-108 which includes all categories.

Year	CPUE
<b>Pre</b>	
2013	2.7
2014	0.9
2015	2.9
2016	3.6
<b>Post</b>	
2017	4.4
2018	1.8
2020	4.4
2021	2.5

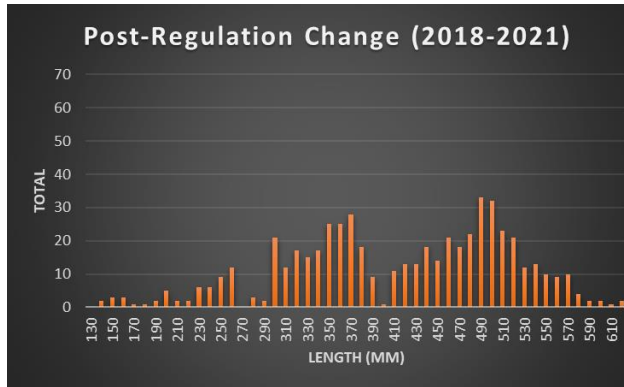
collected compared to 537 during the post-regulation years. Lengths have ranged from about 5"-24.5" since 2015. The table below provides CPUE values from pre and post regulation change years while the two figures below provide length data from pre and post years. 410- and 420-mm fish had the highest total count of fish collected during the pre-regulation timeframe. However, 490- and 500-mm fish were the two length groups with the highest count during the post-regulation timeframe. Wiper mean body condition has ranged from 68-101 across all categories since 2015.



Year	CPUE
<b>Pre</b>	
2015	13.4
2016	13.4
2017	4.9
<b>Post</b>	
2018	10
2020	8.8
2021	8.1



In 2018, KDWP (now KDWP) increased the daily creel limit from 2 fish/day to 5 fish/day. Wiper populations are assessed with core panel gill nets in the fall. During the pre-regulation years, 633 fish were



**Council Grove Reservoir Results**

Bluegill catch rates were 0.9 fish/net in 2021. The five-year average is 1.92 due to above average years in 2017 and 2020. Lengths averaged from 1.5-6". For the first time in the past five years, Channel Catfish catch rates were below 2 fish/net. Lengths ranged from 6.25-25.5" with an average of about 18.25". 78% of sampled individuals were greater than 17". After a catch rate of 12.1 fish/net in 2020, catch rates in 2021 dropped to 2.5 fish/net which was similar to catch rates from 2019. 74% of sampled individuals were of stock size or greater. In 2021, saugeye catch rates were the highest in the past five years at 5.5 fish/net. While saugeye lengths ranged from about 8.75-26", the average length was 18.5". 89% of sampled individuals were greater than the 15" MLL. After experiencing extremely low catch rates in 2020, the White Bass catch rates in 2021 increased 6-fold. Individuals sampled ranged from 6.5-15.5" with 24% of the sample measuring about 8.75". Only one individual was collected between 9.5" and 12.25". Like previous years, White Crappie catch rates remain high. Smaller individuals continue to contribute to those

catch rates. In 2021, 53% of sampled individuals were greater than 4" with 27% of the sample were about 3.25". Wipers continue to remain in low abundance. Only 18 individuals have been sampled since 2017. While wipers are low in numbers, they do have good size.



Sam Urquidez, KDWP Seasonal Employee, pictured with a nice Saugeye (above) and some nice White Crappies (below) from Council Grove Reservoir

**Geary State Fishing Lake Results**

Black Crappie catch rates were the highest in 2021 since 2018. Only 20 individuals were collected between 2018 and 2019 while 42 were collected in 2021 alone. 71% of individuals were 4" or greater with some individuals reaching preferred and memorable sizes. Bluegill catch rates in 2021 were the highest over the past five years with a catch rate of 65 fish/net. However, 60% of collected individuals were 3" or greater. Channel Catfish catch rates 5.6 fish/net in 2021. All fish collected were between 11-25.25" with an average of about 16.75". In 2021, a research project evaluating population dynamics of Flathead Catfish in small impoundments began. Geary State Fishing Lake is one of the lakes in the study planning to go through 2022. Electrofishing catch rates were 13.5 fish/hr. Lengths ranged from about 8-41" during the 2021 portion of this study. 88% of collected individuals were of 8" or greater. Gizzard Shad catch rates nearly doubled from 2020 to 2021. 90% of sampled individuals were stock size or greater with lengths from 8-12.25". The remaining 10% of individuals collected ranged from 4.75-5.5". Saugeye catch rates over the past three years have been similar at about 3 fish/net. Length ranged from about 16.25-28" with an average of about 19". However, 93% of the fish ranged from 16.25-20.5". 64% of sampled individuals were of harvestable size (18" MLL). There was the one 28" fish that weighed about 7 lbs. White Bass continue to remain in low abundance with a

catch rate of less than 5 fish/net since 2017. In 2021, White Bass catch rates were 1.4 fish/net with mainly larger individuals collected. Lengths ranged from about 8.75-16.75" with an average length of about 13.75". White Crappie catch rates increased 19-fold from 2020 to 2021. While catch rates did increase, 74% of the sample were individuals less than 4" with only 26% greater than 4". Even though larger individuals weren't as abundant, individuals up to 12" were represented in the 2021 sample.



Ernesto Flores, KDWP Fisheries Biologist, pictured with a nice Saugeye (6.97 lbs!) from Geary State Fishing Lake



**“New” Herington City Lake Results**

Black Crappie catch rates in 2021 were the highest in the past five years at 11.3 fish/net. 73% of sampled individuals were 4” or greater. Many fish sampled were around 5.5-6.25”. Black Crappies continue to be less abundant than White Crappies but provide anglers with additional species to target. Like previous years, White Crappie catch rates continue to be dominated by individuals less than 4” (81% of the sample). The remaining 19% of individuals collected were larger individuals with fish being collected up to 11”. Over the past five years, Bluegill continue to remain in low abundance. Sampled individuals ranged from about 1.25 to 7.5” with only 59% being 3” or greater. Channel Catfish catch rates were the second highest in 2021 over the past five years at 8.2 fish/net. Also, 85% of sampled individuals were 9” or greater. Lengths ranged anywhere from about 7.5-24” with an average of 15”. Gizzard Shad catch rates were up about 8-fold from 2020 to 2021. 93% of the sampled individuals were less than 6” suggesting a strong year-class could begin to move through. Walleyes continue to remain in low abundance. Only 30 individuals have been collected over the past five years with most of those fish being caught from 2017-2019. In 2021, White Bass catch rates have been the lowest (3.8 fish/net) over the past five years just one year after the highest catch rates were reported in 2020 (23.4 fish/net). In 2021, wiper catch rates (6.8 fish/net) were fairly similar to those from

2020 (8.2 fish/net). Wiper lengths were approximately 15-22.25” with an average length of 18.5”. 76% of collected individuals were above the MLL (18”).

**Final Thoughts**

With the 2021 fishing year over, a new year of angling opportunities awaits us during 2022. Anglers who utilize our Kansas waters should experience great fishing opportunities across our state targeting a variety of species. I hope this information provides some helpful information on fish populations in the Milford District. Good luck this spring and take a kid fishing! If you want more information, please feel free to visit our website at <http://ksoutdoors.com>. Have fun and good fishing!