

# Independence District Fisheries

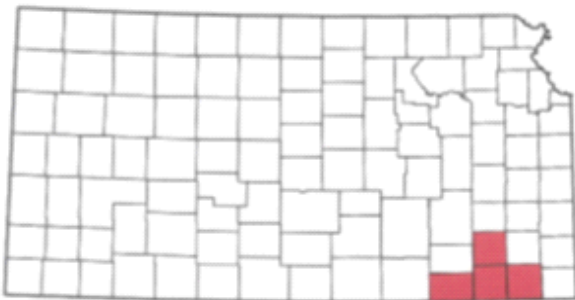
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## Area Happenings

This spring and summer were once again filled with fish stocking and sampling in the Independence Fisheries District.

This season brought the stocking of walleye, saugeye, largemouth bass, and paddlefish.

Black bass electrofishing was conducted on one federal reservoir, two state fishing lakes, and 3 CFAP lakes. Blue catfish electrofishing was completed on Elk City Reservoir with some interesting findings. Channel catfish netting was conducted at two state fishing lakes, two CFAP lakes, and one wildlife area pond.



## Fish Stocking

Thanks to hatchery efforts, some unique opportunities occurred for fish species to be stocked. Some of these stockings were due to an abundance of fish, some due to the Lake Tanko renovation, and some for a species reintroduction to expand its current range.

Walleye fry were once again stocked into Big Hill Reservoir and Wilson State Fishing Lake. Saugeye fry were stocked into Parsons City Lake, Sedan City Lake North and South, and Altamont City Lakes East and West. Saugeye fingerlings were stocked into Parsons City Lake and Elk City Reservoir.

Largemouth Bass fingerlings were stocked into Lake Tanko and Parsons City Lake. Paddlefish intermediates (measuring from 6-8 inches) were stocked into Elk City Reservoir.

## Fish Stocking Continued

Lake	Species	Size	Number
Big Hill Reservoir	Walleye	Fry	1,200,000
Wilson State Fishing Lake	Walleye	Fry	110,000
Elk City Reservoir	Saugeye	Fing	78,956
Parsons City Lake	Saugeye	Fry	1,000,000
Parsons City Lake	Saugeye	Fing	51,019
Sedan - North	Saugeye	Fry	70,000
Sedan - South	Saugeye	Fry	75,000
Altamont - East	Saugeye	Fry	46,000
Altamont - West	Saugeye	Fry	26,000
Lake Tanko	Largemouth Bass	Fing	1,400
Parsons City Lake	Largemouth Bass	Fing	98,386
Elk City Reservoir	Paddlefish	Int	16,093

More saugeye were stocked this year than in years past, as well as being stocked back into Elk City Reservoir for the first time in many years. This occurred because of an excess of saugeye produced by our hatchery systems, which allowed more stocking requests to be filled this year than ever. Parsons City Lake received a larger than normal stocking due to this excess as well as an improvement over a partial stocking last year. The abundance of saugeye will hopefully provide an excellent fishery for anglers in the coming years at Parsons City Lake.

Largemouth bass were also stocked at Parsons City Lake to enhance their population. This lake can provide quality opportunity for bass angling; however densities remain low. This largemouth bass stocking will probably bolster the population enough to provide more angling opportunities and also increase the breeding population in the future.

You may have noticed the odd-ball added to the district stocking requests. Paddlefish were reintroduced into Elk City Reservoir this summer for a few different reasons. First and foremost, paddlefish were reintroduced in Elk City Reservoir with the intentions of some of them going through the dam and expanding the genetics of the Verdigris River/Oologah Reservoir, as the fish stocked are from Keystone Reservoir in Oklahoma. Secondly, they were stocked to expand their range above the Elk City Reservoir dam. Some of you may have seen these fish at the spillway during times of high water but cannot make it thru the dam upstream. Lastly, if they will persist in the reservoir there is the potential of having a paddlefish fishery in the future, and with the growing potential of Elk City Reservoir and the Keystone Reservoir genetics there is potential for very large fish.



Above: One of the fingerling saugeye stocked into Elk City Reservoir.



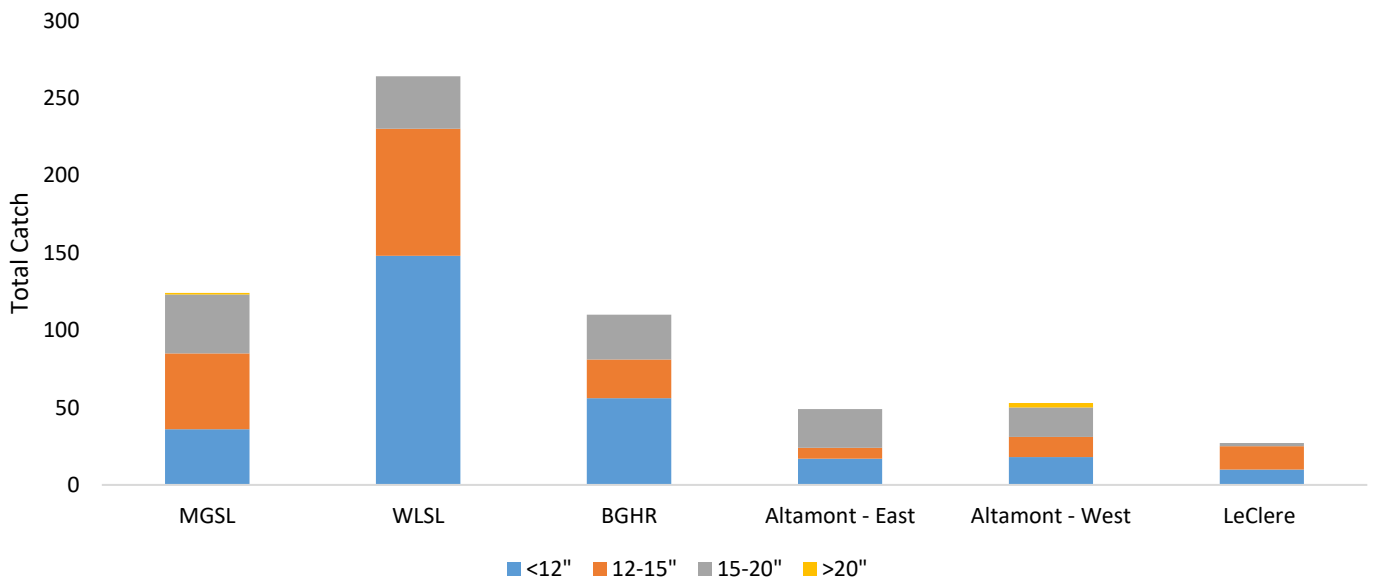
Above: Paddlefish being stocked at Card Creek boat ramp.



Above: One of the paddlefish stocked at Card Creek boat ramp.

## Bass Electrofishing

2022 Largemouth Bass Electrofishing Data



## Bass Electrofishing Cont...

As many of you know this spring had weather systems that were difficult to predict. With colder temperatures lasting longer and a quick warm up, the spring spawn happened quickly. This was apparent in our spring bass electrofishing as well. We did see good numbers of fish (as you can see in the lakes sampled above), however the number of larger fish (> 20") was down this year.

Montgomery (MGSL) and Wilson State Fishing Lakes (WLSL) showed large numbers of medium size fish (12-18 inches) with a few larger individuals showing up in each lake. WLSL also showed large numbers of spotted bass once again. In total we sampled 46 spotted bass in WLSL, with the majority of fish ranging from 12-15 inches.

Big Hill Reservoir was more difficult to predict when to sample, and we struggled to collect as many fish. As with the state fishing lakes, medium size fish were plentiful and the larger ones more difficult to sample. We were also able to sample 22 smallmouth bass in Big Hill Reservoir as well, with the largest being just over 18 inches.

Both Altamont City Lakes showed good numbers of largemouth bass for their size. They also had some of the bigger fish sampled this spring, with a couple of fish over 21 inches long being sampled.

LeClere Lake in Coffeyville also showed decent numbers for its size, and offers decent numbers of bass up to 15 inches.



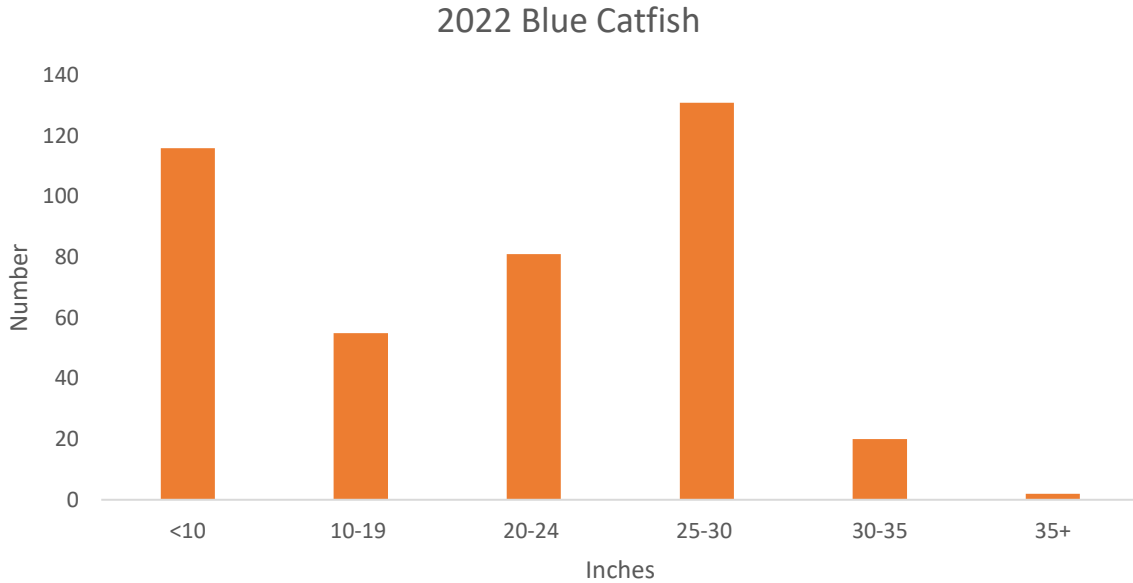
*Above: Me holding a nice largemouth and smallmouth bass from Big Hill Reservoir.*

*Below: Mike Sanders holding a 21-inch largemouth bass from Altamont City Lake- West.*





# Blue Catfish



Blue catfish were sampled via electrofishing on Elk City Reservoir during August and September. In total we were able to sample 407 blue catfish during those sampling events. The graph indicates that we did sample a few fish that were greater than the 35-inch minimum length limit. The bigger surprise was the number of fish that were under 20 inches, and even the number of blue catfish that were only a couple inches long (fish that were hatched this year). Even more exciting, is it appears that the blue catfish have reproduced for the last 3 years, with naturally produced fish ranging from 2-16 inches.



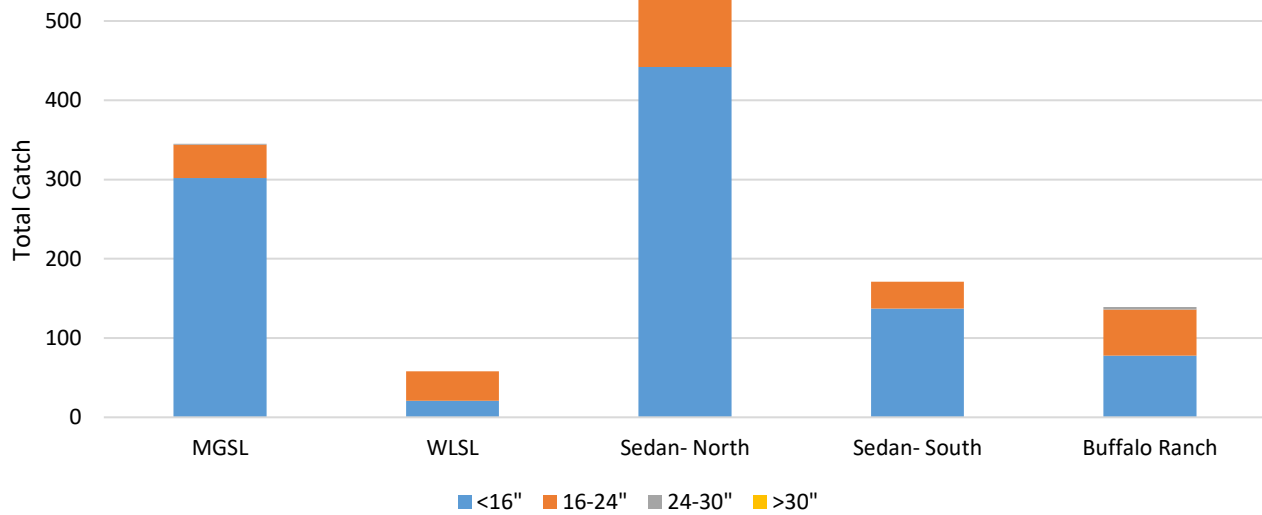
Above: Ryan Lies with a 36-inch, 23-pound blue catfish.



Above: A blue catfish that was hatched in 2022 in Elk City Reservoir.

# Channel Catfish

## 2022 Summer Sampling



Channel catfish were sampled this summer using baited hoop nets at Montgomery (MGSL) and Wilson State Fishing Lakes (WLSL), Sedan North and South City Lakes and the Buffalo Ranch Pond. As you can see we did not find a shortage of channel catfish in any of these lakes. Sedan City Lake – North had outstanding numbers of fish, with MGSL not far behind. However, none of the lakes sampled had a lack of fish for anglers to find. There is a shortage of larger fish in this summer sample, but that is expected as hoop nets have been shown to target smaller channel catfish. If you are looking for channel catfish larger than 24 inches, I would look at Wilson State Fishing Lake as well as Sedan City Lake – North.



Above: My nephew Brayden with a channel catfish



Above: Me with a 20-pound channel catfish from Sedan City Lake – North that was sampled during bass electrofishing.

## Crappie Study Prize Giveaway

As we promised in past newsletters, there were nice hard-sided coolers given away to lucky drawing winners. This drawing was set up in a way that for every crappie tag turned in you were given a chance to win a cooler (1 tag= 1 chance, 10 tags = 10 chances, etc...). We would like to thank everyone who reported tags, it was very important information for moving forward with crappie management on Elk City Reservoir, Big Hill Reservoir and Parsons City Lake. The lucky drawing winners were: Elk City Reservoir – Kyle Stanley, Big Hill Reservoir – Clarence Horton and Parsons City Lake – Brian Baker. Congratulations on winning and enjoy using them on all your future fishing trips!



*Above: Kyle Stanley with the cooler he won for reporting a crappie tag from Elk City.*



*Above: Clarence Horton with his cooler rewarded to him for reporting crappie tags from Big Hill.*

*Right: Brian Baker with his cooler for reporting a crappie tag from Parsons City Lake.*







*Above: Me holding a 35-inch 22-pound blue catfish from Elk City Reservoir.*



*Above: Brayden with a bluegill from MGSL.*



*Above: The local legend and my daughter with a stringer of blue catfish from the outlet of Elk City Reservoir.*



*Above: Mike with a 65-pound flathead catfish from Big Hill Reservoir.*



*Left: Keifer Shipley and myself with some nice Elk City white crappie.*





*Above: My wife Dani and son Sawyer holding a bluegill from Altamont City Lake.*

*Below: My daughter Olivia holding a bluegill from Altamont City Lake.*



*Above: My whole family fishing at Altamont City Lake.*

## **Final Thoughts**

As always it was a busy summer for me, but it also seemed to fly by. I hope this hot, dry summer has left everyone with enough water to go fishing somewhere close (I know of some ponds that have dried up). But with the low water comes opportunity. If you are lucky enough to have a private pond, take the low water conditions and use them to clean out silt, do bank stabilizations and place some fish habitat.

Also, don't miss out on the great opportunities this fall and winter to go fishing. Bank fishing is getting good once again and the winter crappie bite can be great. Finally, as I always do, I encourage everyone to take a kid fishing. If you have any questions or want to know more about fishing, feel free to contact me or go to [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com).

Happy Fishing!