

# Tuttle Creek Fisheries Newsletter Summer 2012

Ely Sprenkle, District Fisheries Biologist

Tuttle Creek State Park, 5800A River Pond Road, Manhattan, KS 66502  
www.ksoutdoors.com ely.sprenkle@ksoutdoors.com (785) 539-7941



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Fishing at Tuttle Creek
- 2 New Walk-In Hunting  
New Fish Stocking
- 3 Black Bass Sample Results

## DISTRICT UPDATE

To help prevent the spread of invasive species, new laws regulating the use of wild caught bait have been passed in Kansas. More information can be found at [ProtectKSWaters.org](http://ProtectKSWaters.org)

## Fishing at Tuttle Creek

2012 has been a really good year for fishing at Tuttle Creek Reservoir.

The reservoir has some of the best crappie numbers in almost 20 years, and anglers took full advantage of the bounty this spring. With the warm spring, crappie were up shallow for spawning by the first of April in the upper end of the reservoir. With the warm start to spring, I was surprised that the crappie spawn lasted so long. Ripe females were still shallow into mid-June. I talked to a lot of anglers who did great this spring and told me they filled their livewells with 11-inch-plus crappie all spawn. There will still be plenty of fish available for awhile because most of the population is 9 to 10 inches. Crappie are in their summer pattern now and can still be caught for those anglers who know how to catch them during the heat of summer. A good starter is to try brush or rocky areas in 10 to 12 feet of water. Another is to try jigging right next to standing timber. KDWP put out a how-to crappie fishing video called "Kansas Crappie Bonanza" that can be found in the video archives at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com).

Saugeye numbers have improved greatly the last few years at Tuttle Creek. In addition, most of the fish in the last sample were over the 15-inch minimum length limit. Fisherman caught quite a few this spring while targeting crappie. This action got more people fishing for saugeye this year. Anglers who have been trying for saugeye have reported doing well for keepers. Some of the best spots have been Carnahan Cove, Tuttle Cove and the dam. Night crawlers and crankbaits have been the most productive baits. Anglers are also catching saugeye below the dam in the river and in the River Pond. Both of these places are good for shore anglers.

White bass fishing has been great so far this summer. Overall, white bass numbers are below average for the reservoir. However,



Saugeye from River Pond



White Bass from Tuttle Creek

### Tuttle Creek Reservoir Fishing Forecast

there are some really big ones around. I have received several calls from people thinking they have caught a new state record. None of these fish were big enough, but I have seen and heard of numerous white bass caught weighing more than 4 pounds. Anglers report casting jigs along the bank in the Stockdale area or McIntire Cove has been the best way to catch white bass this year. However, some of the biggest ones were caught farther north in the reservoir.

Even though Tuttle Creek has good numbers of big channel catfish right now, I have not seen great harvest rates so far this year. There is plenty of summer left and I expect things to pick up soon. There has been good catfish harvest from the tubes area below the dam. Low release rates this year have allowed for a lot of people to do well at the tubes. The place can get crowded, but it is usually worth it.

I hope you do well on your next fishing adventure and good luck!

## New Walk-In Hunting Opportunities by Wes Sowards

The Voluntary Public Access - Habitat Incentives Program (VPA\_HIP) has allowed KDWP to sign up numerous, new Walk-In Hunting Access properties throughout the state in the past year. There have been over 4,000 acres of prime hunting ground added within the Manhattan district alone. This program has targeted landowners who have enrolled portions of their land into the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program as well as the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program which allows portions of a crop field to be converted to native grasses and wildflowers. These new properties should harbor some excellent opportunities to harvest upland game birds, turkey, and deer, as well as rabbit and squirrel. The VPA-HIP funds have also allowed KDWP to improve over 2,900 acres of currently enrolled WIHA properties. These wildlife improvements range from planting food plots, native grasses and wildflowers, and shrubs to invasive species control and disking and interseeding CRP to create valuable brood-rearing habitat for upland game birds. These properties will be included in the next edition of the Kansas Hunting Atlas that will be available at any KDWP office and various retailers. You can also view these properties online at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com). I hope that you have a very memorable hunting season this year.

## New Fish Stocking

At Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #2, gizzard shad numbers can get rather high, and the population is often dominated by shad over 11 inches long. High densities of shad can inhibit sunfish production via competition for food and space. Furthermore, once shad grow that large, most of the lake's sportfish are unable to consume them. To help reduce gizzard shad numbers, wiper were stocked at the lake this spring. Wiper are a large, open-water predator that will hopefully reduce the numbers of all sizes of gizzard shad. They will also provide an additional angling opportunity at the lake. The initial wiper introduction was a low-level stocking to prevent the population from dominating the fishery. Wiper densities and their effect on other fish species will be closely monitored in the future to evaluate the impacts of this additional species at the lake. The wiper stocked this spring should grow to about 10 inches by this fall. Anglers may start catching some of these small wipers yet this summer. The statewide wiper creel limit is two per day.



Gizzard Shad



Recently stocked fry

## Black Bass Sampling Results

Every spring fisheries biologist around the state use generator powered electrofishing boats to sample waters in their districts for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. These fish are then weighed, measured, and released. Then biologists use this data to assess these bass populations by looking at things like body condition, size structure, and abundance. For electrofishing, abundance is determined by how many fish we collect per hour. This can vary some, depending on habitat types, water clarity, temperature, etc. Regardless, this is still an important statistic for anglers because these numbers can be used to speculate which lakes will have the better bass fishing that year.

Below are two tables: one for largemouth bass and one for smallmouth bass from waters in the Manhattan District that were sampled in 2012. Very small fish were not included in these tables. Data was rounded to the nearest whole number. Lakes are in no particular order.

Largemouth Bass Waters	Fish/hour	Percentage in each length group			
		8 - 12"	12 - 15"	15 - 20"	20 - 25"
Pottawatomie SFL #1	136	45	42	12	
Pottawatomie SFL #2	84	57	34	8	1
Shawnee SFL	81	34	16	47	2
Washington SFL	14	56	30	15	
Jeffrey Make Up Lake	1		100		
Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake	8	33	56	11	
Centralia City Lake	8			71	29
Alma City Lake	93	22	60	17	1
Nemaha Wildlife Area Pond	231	13	83	4	

Smallmouth Bass Waters	Fish/hour	Percentage in each length group			
		7 - 11"	11 - 14"	14 - 17"	17 - 20"
Pottawatomie SFL #2	11	31	25	38	6
Jeffrey Make-Up Lake	22	81		19	
Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake	30	50	41	9	
Alma City Lake	7	67	17		17



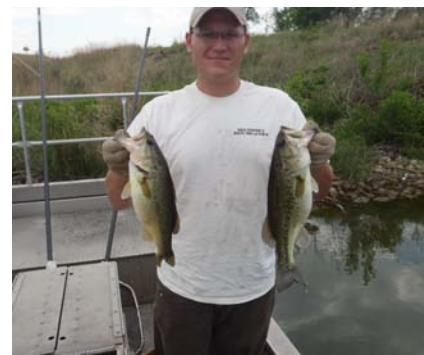
The number of fish collected per hour gives you an idea of how dense the population of bass is at a particular lake. The percentage of the fish that were collected in each length category tells you what size fish you can expect to catch. For example, looking at the largemouth bass data, there were fewer fish per hour at Shawnee SFL than Pottawatomie SFL #1. However, Shawnee SFL has a much higher percentage of 15 to 20 inch fish. Another example would be Centralia City Lake: bass per hour was quite low and there were no little fish. This would suggest that largemouth bass are not recruiting at this lake. Overall, I believe the Manhattan District has some really good black bass fishing.



Shawnee State Fishing Lake



Alma City Lake



Pottawatomie SFL #2