

# Elk City District Fisheries

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Winter 2013

## 2012 Netting Season Completed

Fisheries biologists with KDWPT deploy two types of nets to sample fish during fall: trap nets and gill nets. Trap nets are used to sample crappie, bluegill, and redear sunfish and gill nets are used to sample channel catfish, walleye, and white bass. Both types of nets are set in the afternoon, allowed to fish overnight, and retrieved the following morning. In a small lake, like Montgomery State Fishing Lake, standard effort is four trap nets and six gill nets. This can usually be accomplished in one overnight set. Larger lakes require more nets and can take up to a week to sample.

### Trap Nets

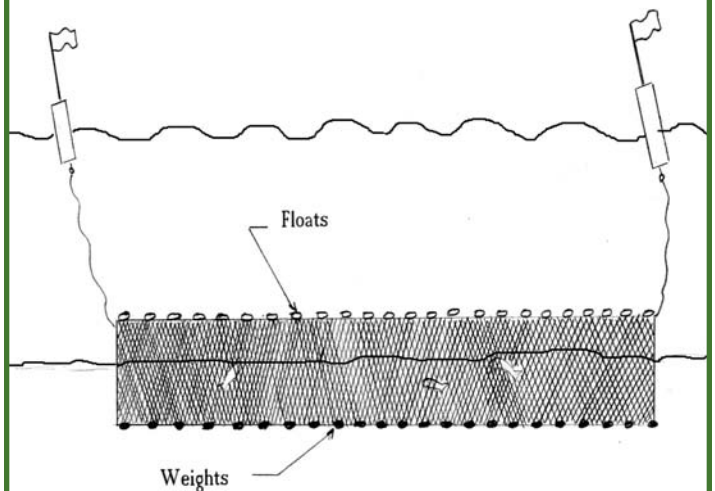


<http://fishwild.vt.edu/afs>

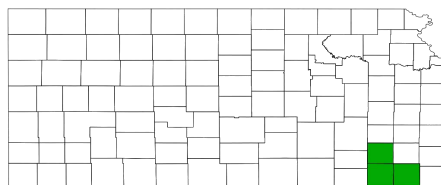
Trap nets are comprised of a 50-ft lead net, two rectangular frames, four hoops, and 1/2-inch netting to tie it all together. The lead net is staked to the bank and forces fish cruising the shoreline toward the frame. Netting between the frames and hoops funnel fish into the back of the trap where they can easily be retrieved, identified, counted, and measured.

### Gill Nets

Gill nets are 80-ft long and comprised of eight different mesh sizes ranging from 0.75-2.50 inches. The different mesh sizes are used to ensure a wide size range of fish are collected. Gill nets have a lead-core line on the bottom and a floating line on top that makes the net fish the bottom 6 feet of the water column.



<http://wimodelboats.org>



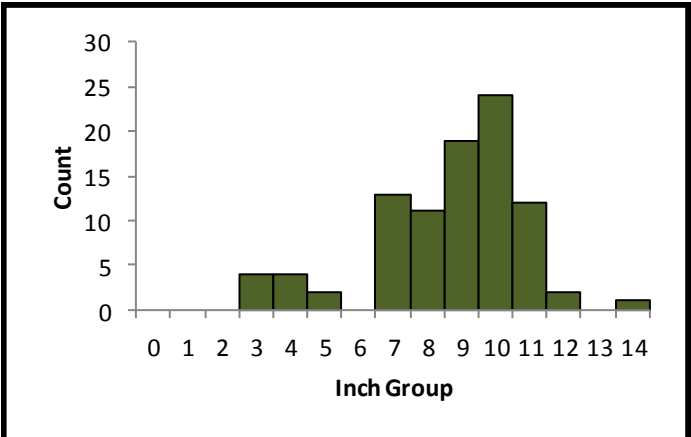
# Big Hill Crappie are Steady

Ninety crappie were sampled in October, 2012 from Big Hill Reservoir. Of those, 83 were white crappie and 7 were black crappie. Sample numbers were down in 2012 compared to 2011 but are consistent with 2008 and 2010 samples. The biggest crappie we sampled in 2012 was 14.5 inches and weighed 1.67 pounds.

*Crappie at Big Hill are managed under the statewide regulation of no minimum length limit and 50 fish daily creel.*



This map shows how many crappie were caught from each sample location.



This figure shows how many crappie within each inch group we sampled. For example, we sampled 20 crappie between 10.0-10.9 inches and 25 crappie between 11.0-11.9 inches.



Crappie	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total CPUE	11/net	30/net	11/net	24/net	8/net
8" CPUE	8/net	25/net	7/net	21/net	7/net
10" CPUE	2/net	16/net	4/net	6/net	4/net



# Elk City Crappie Strong 2012 Year Class

White crappie are the most popular sportfish in Elk City Reservoir. As such, we spend a lot of time trying to better understand the population. Crappie numbers were down a bit in 2012 compared to 2010 and 2011, but there's no cause for alarm. In fact, the 2012 sample looks pretty good. We sampled a lot of 3-inch fish last fall suggesting a strong 2012 year class. Those 3-inch fish will probably be around 7-8 inches next year and should eclipse 10 inches by 2014.

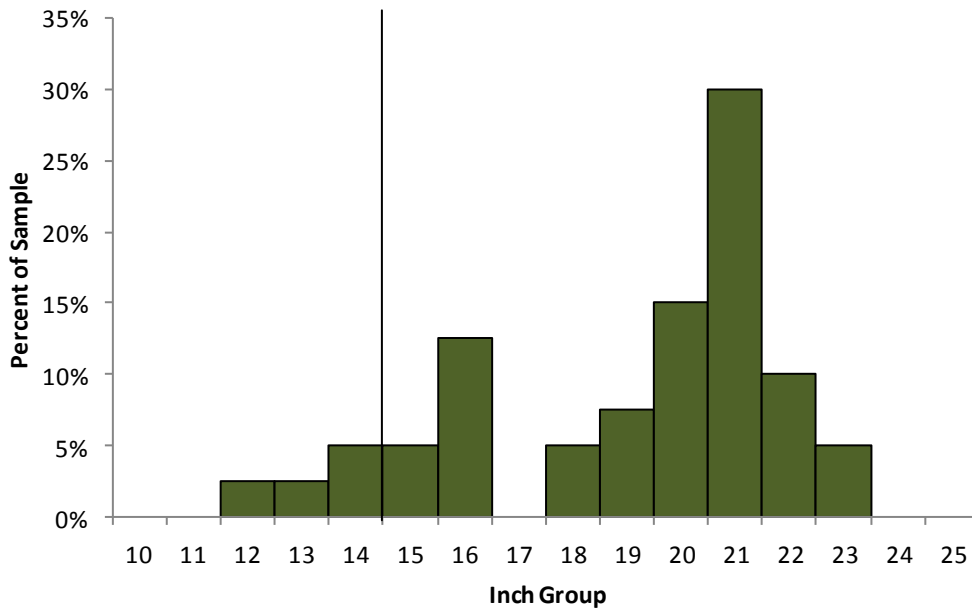
This map shows how many crappie were caught from each sample location.



Crappie	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total CPUE	6/net	12/net	68/net	57/net	36/net
8" CPUE	2/net	3/net	9/net	15/net	5/net
10" CPUE	1/net	1/net	6/net	7/net	2/net



# Good Opportunities for Channel Catfish in Montgomery and Wilson

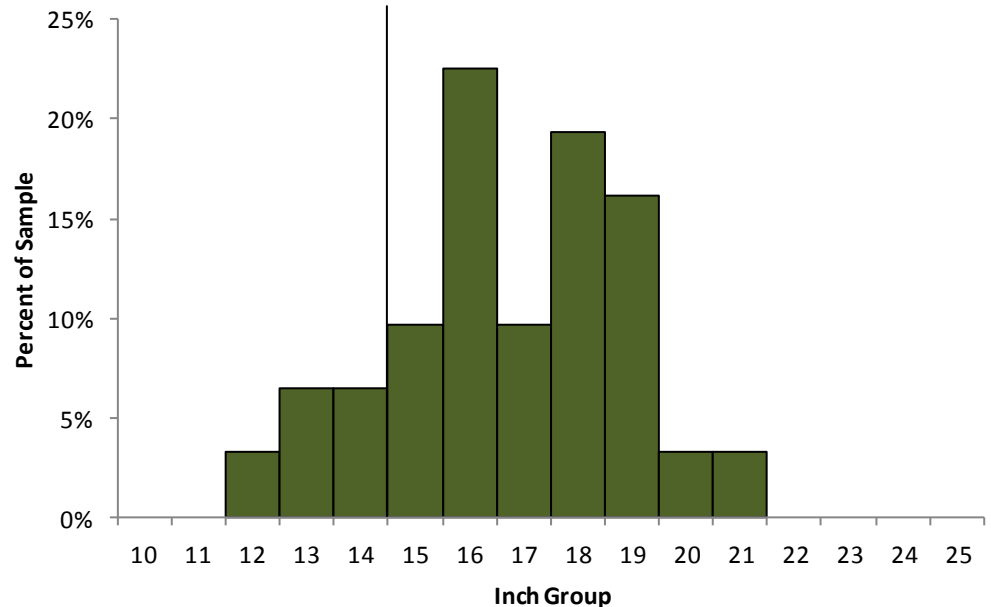


Montgomery State Fishing Lake is a great place to catch channel catfish. Shoreline access is plentiful and fishing spots are easy to get to by vehicle. Perhaps most importantly, the lake harbors an impressive channel catfish population. Try livers on the bottom off of any fishing pier. The west-most pier on the north side of the lake can be especially productive.

The graphs on this page show length distributions of sampled channel catfish in Montgomery and Wilson State Fishing Lakes. To read them, just look at the inch group of interest and see how high the corresponding bar goes on the vertical axis. For example, just over 30% of channel catfish sampled in Montgomery were 21.0-21.9 inches.

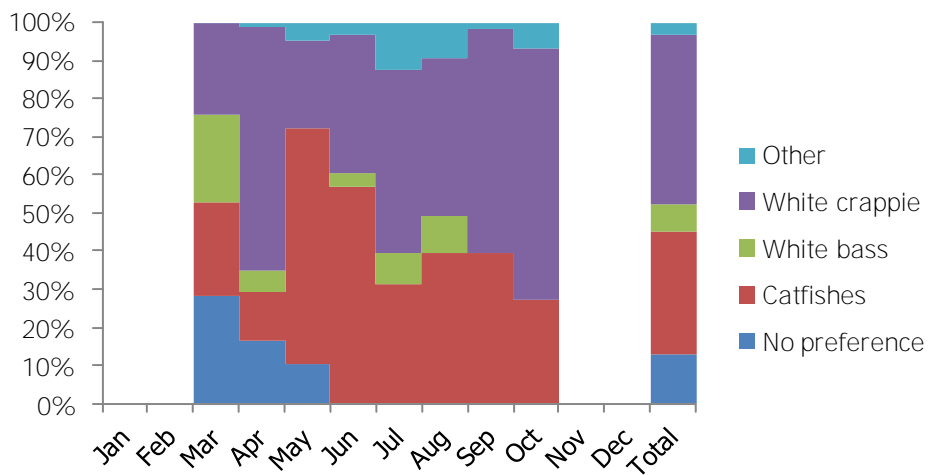


Wilson State Fishing Lake is not known for its channel catfish. However, there are some bruisers that call the lake home. There are numerous access points all around the lake that offer good places to cast your line. An aggressive stocking strategy was implemented from 2005-2011 so channel catfish should be abundant.

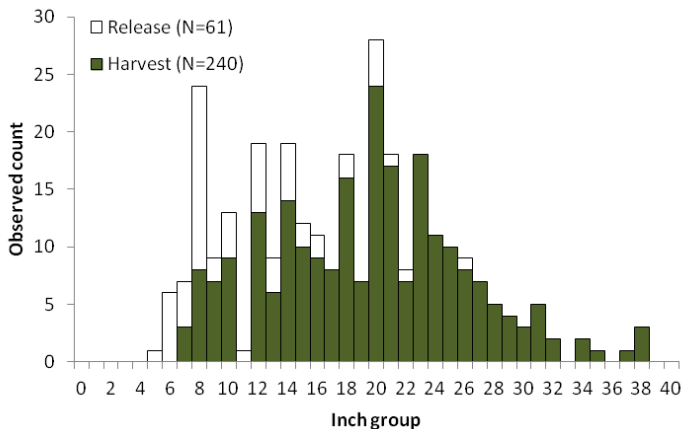
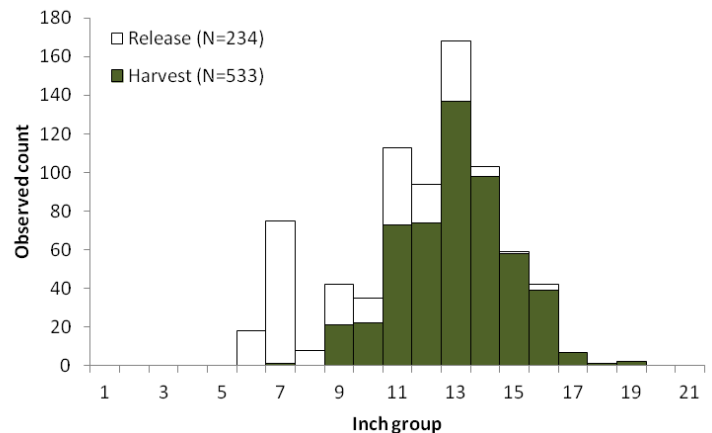


# Elk City Creel Sheds Light on Anglers

Creel surveys are used when we want to better understand how anglers are using a lake. The graph to the right shows angler effort, by month, for the most popular species and species groups. In general, anglers usually fished for catfish and crappie.



White Crappie were the most popular sportfish among anglers in 2012 with 45% of angler effort directed toward the species. An estimated 7,652 crappie were harvested and 3,532 released from March—October, 2012. The graph to the right shows how many crappie in each inch group were observed.



Channel catfish were the second most popular sportfish among anglers in 2012 with 26% of angler effort directed toward the species. An estimated 3,086 channel catfish were harvested and 812 released from March—October, 2012. The graph to the left shows how many channel catfish in each inch group were observed.

**Bill Matney conducted the creel survey in 2012 and will conduct it again in 2013. Bill is retired from the United States Forest Service where he was a Wild Land Firefighter for 18 years. Bill brings a background of both natural resource protection and law enforcement to this position.**





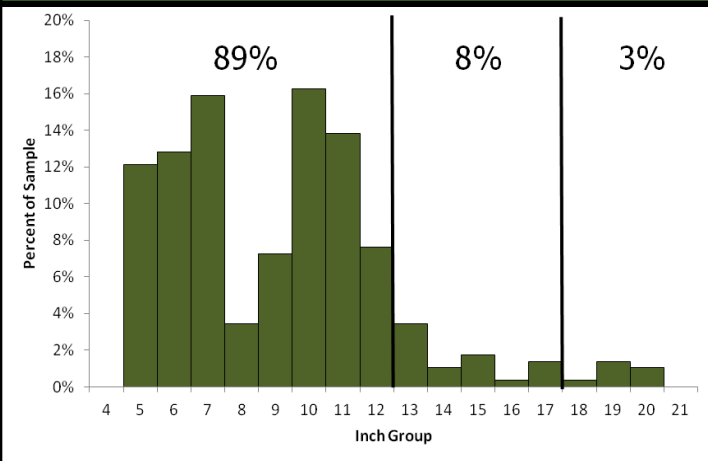
# Small Bass Harvest Warranted in Montgomery State Fishing Lake

One type of regulation we use to manage largemouth bass populations is a slot length limit (SLL). In 2012, 40 different Kansas lakes were managed with a 13-18" SLL for bass. This means that anglers could harvest fish under 13" total length and 18" or over. Fish 13"-17.9" were protected and had to be released. This regulation is usually employed when we want to protect intermediate-sized fish and increase abundance of bigger fish. However, harvest of fish under the slot is required for this regulation to work as intended. Let's look at three length-frequency distributions of largemouth bass populations from three state fishing lakes managed with the same SLL. It's apparent that bass populations in Chase and McPherson are comprised of larger individuals than the population in Montgomery. The real question is why. It's probably related to fish population density. Montgomery has an abundant bass population that is comprised of mostly small fish. If there were less small fish in the lake,

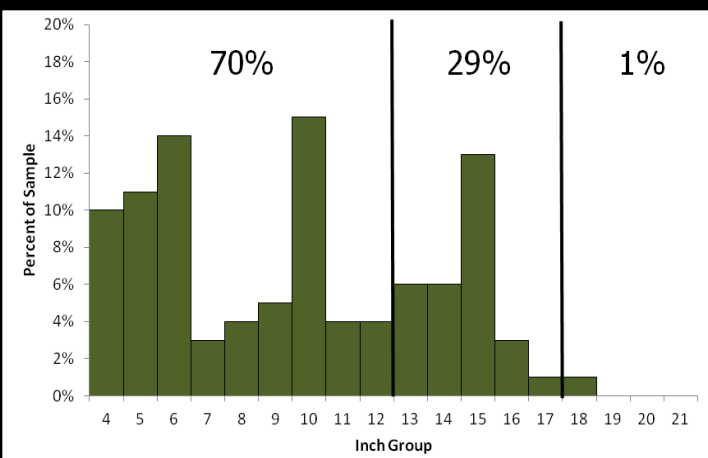
there would be more food for the remaining fish to eat, and ultimately, we'd see and more big fish.

I encourage you to visit Montgomery for a bass fishing trip this spring. There are plenty of fish to catch and you'll have a good opportunity to limit out on fish under 13". A limit of five 12" fish makes a pretty good meal. Give it a shot, you'll thank me when supper's finished. Tight lines.

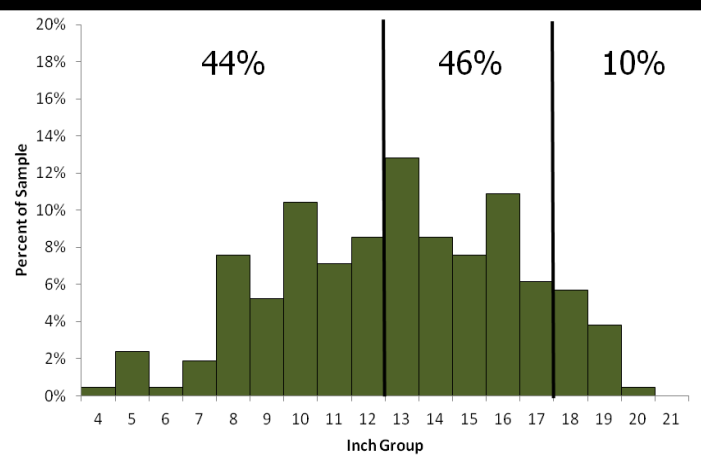
## Montgomery State Fishing Lake



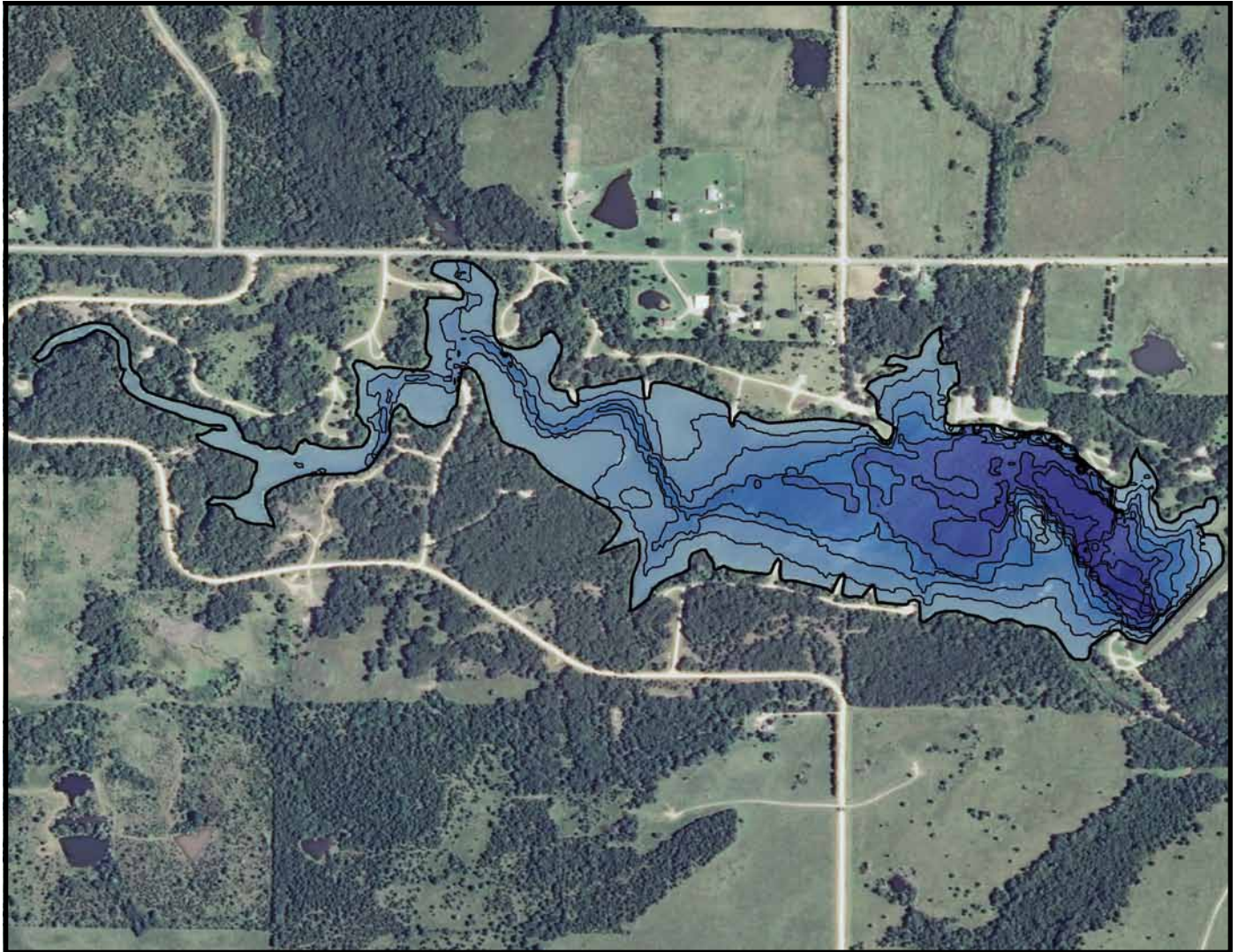
## Chase State Fishing Lake



## McPherson State Fishing Lake



# Bathymetric Maps Available



**We have created bathymetric maps for Montgomery State Fishing Lake (pictured above) and Wilson State Fishing Lake and they are available for distribution. We created these maps to assist anglers in finding areas to target. Fishing reports often mention fishing near 'channel edges' or 'the midwater hump' and these maps should make finding those areas easier. Please contact me if you'd like me to email you a copy of either or both lakes.**

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Ben Neely  
District Fisheries Biologist  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
5089 CR 2925  
Independence, KS 67301  
ben.neely@ksoutdoors.com  
620-331-6820

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