

Pittsburg District

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Fall 2018 Sampling Results

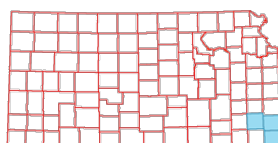
Eight water bodies were sampled in the Pittsburg district in October and November of 2018 to monitor the saugeye, channel catfish, and panfish populations: Bone Creek, Chanute City Lake, Crawford State Fishing Lake, Mined Land Wildlife Area (“Trout Pit” on Unit #30, “Whitmore Pits” on Unit #7, and Unit #6), Neosho State Fishing Lake, and Thayer City Lake (new). On pages 2-9, you will find species specific results to aide in your fishing plans for the upcoming year!



I can't wait to
get outside and
fish in 2019!



Me too, Connor..
Me, too!

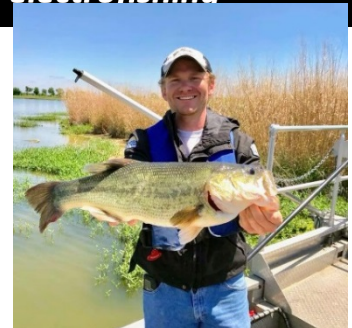
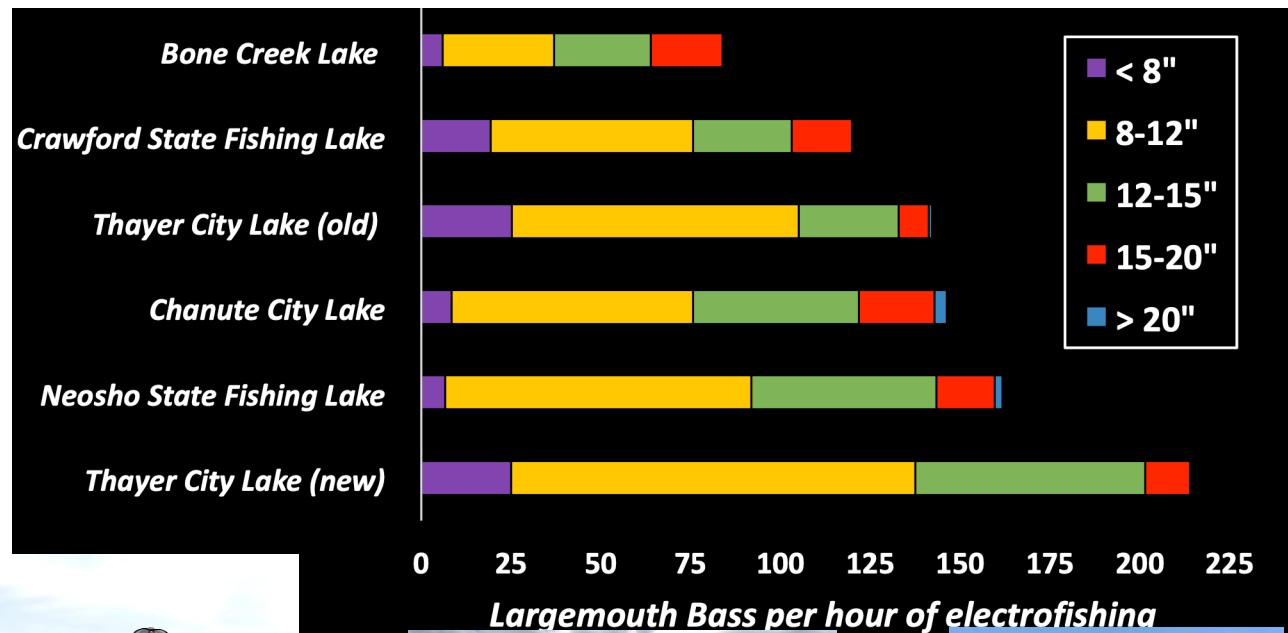


Largemouth Bass

Largemouth Bass were sampled in May of 2018 at Bone Creek Lake and Crawford State Fishing Lake (SFL). Data from the May 2017 (i.e., Neosho State Fishing Lake and Thayer City Lakes (new and old)) and May 2016 (i.e., Chanute City Lake) electrofishing sampling efforts was included in the graph below to provide anglers with the most recent sampling event at each of the lakes in the district. Anglers can once again expect the southeast portion of Kansas to provide quality bass populations.

Thayer City Lake (new) and Neosho State Fishing Lake contain the highest densities of Largemouth Bass in the district with catch rates exceeding 150 bass per hour. Thayer City Lake (new), Neosho State Fishing Lake, Chanute City Lake, and Thayer City Lake (old) all have lots of fish and a few fish that will reach 20 inches. Last, but not least, don't overlook the strip pits on Mined Land Wildlife Area, as well. Grab the fishing poles, take a friend, and throw a Ned Rig or a spinnerbait!

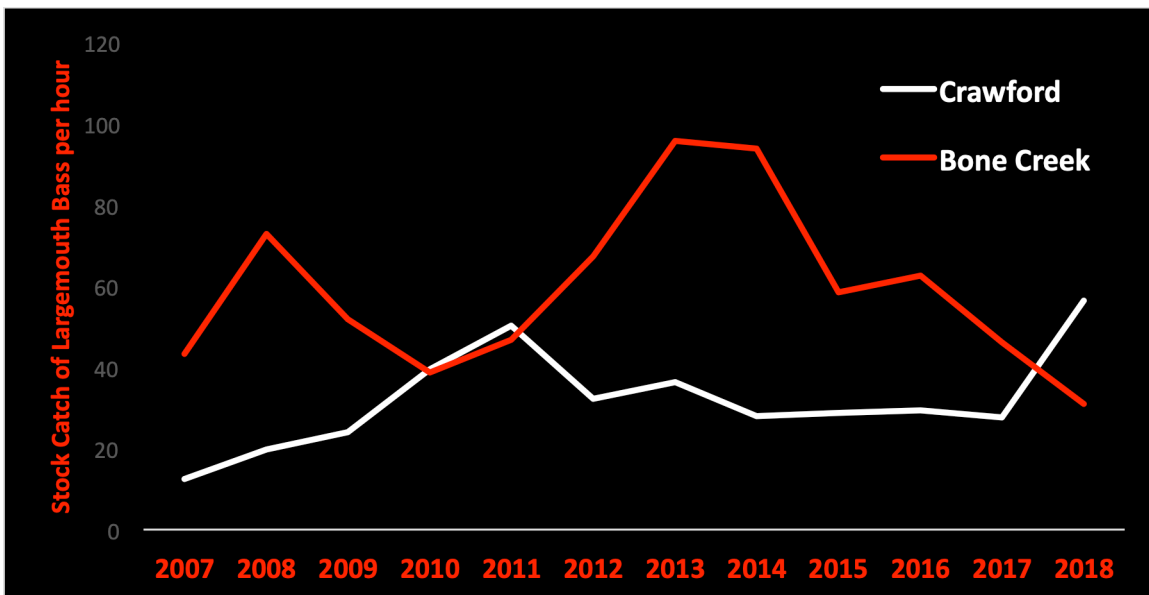
Bone Creek Lake and Crawford SFL both were sampled in the late part of May when the water temperatures were reaching 80 degrees, which may have caused a lower sample size after the fish had already moved off the shallows and into deeper water. There's still lots of bass and a few that will reach sizes up to 21 inches, so don't overlook Bone Creek and Crawford in 2019. Crawford SFL is seeing a resurgence in the population after being infected with Largemouth Bass virus (LMBV). I go into more detail on Pages 3 and 4.



Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV)

Since the discovery of Largemouth Bass virus (LMBV) in Crawford SFL in 2007, a positive trend in the population was found in the 2018 sample. In 2007, a total of 67 and a stock catch rate of 12.41 Largemouth Bass per hour were collected in nearly three hours of electrofishing effort. This was a concern to KDWPT fisheries staff and led to the lake being tested for LMBV. The results were positive. In 2018, a total of 63 and a stock catch rate of 56.29 Largemouth Bass per hour were collected in one hour of electrofishing effort. This shows a higher abundance and better quality in the Largemouth Bass population, since the discovery of LMBV in 2007. This is a trend that has been noticed by fisheries researchers and biologists. After the initial decline, it has been right around the 10 years post-infection that the population resurges and improves.

In 2018, fisheries staff from the Emporia Research and Survey office undertook a study to identify the distribution of Largemouth Bass virus (LMBV) in Kansas. A number of lakes were sampled across Kansas and additional water bodies were found to have LMBV. Unfortunately, Bone Creek Lake came back as positive. It was a concern that catch rates, especially of Age-0 and Age-1 size classes of Largemouth Bass, have been declining. This is a concern of mine and I will continue to monitor the population closely.



If you notice back in 2010, we had our initial decline in the Largemouth Bass population at Bone Creek with the subsequent increase of catch rates until 2013. Could this have been the time period when LMBV became present in Bone Creek? The general consensus is that although LMBV is present and infects Largemouth Bass in Bone Creek, the fish will become resistant to the virus and gradually increase in abundance in the 10-year-time period. Anglers can still find fish to catch at Bone Creek, but they must take steps to prevent the spread of LMBV by cleaning, draining, and drying their boat before moving to other nearby water bodies.

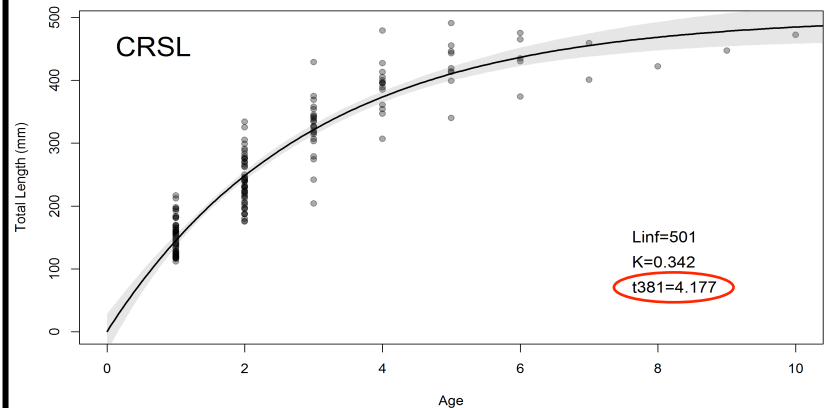
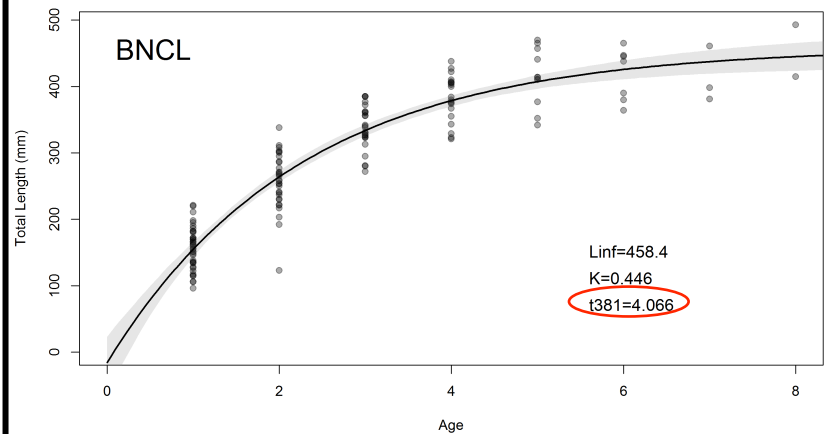
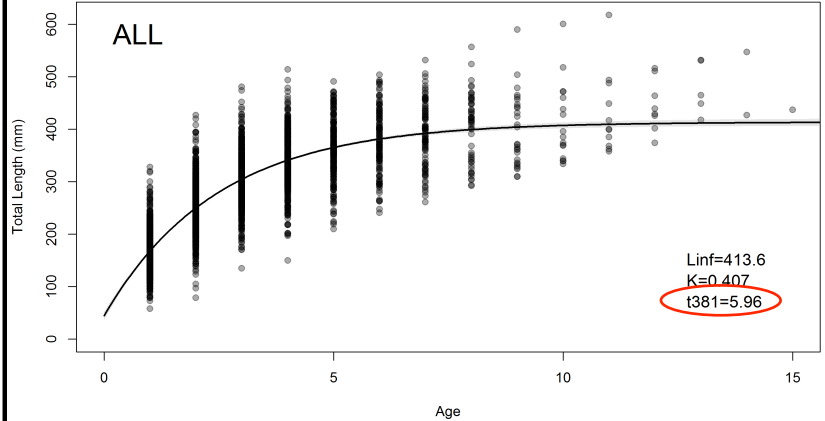
Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV)

To further explain the virus and its impact on the Largemouth Bass population, age and growth information was analyzed for Bone Creek and Crawford.

Growth potential curves were developed for both lakes. Both graphs are indicating that the population growths are above the "statewide average."

This means that, despite Largemouth Bass virus (LMBV) being present in both Bone Creek and Crawford SFL, the Largemouth Bass in both lakes are growing rapidly in relation to their age. To further put this in context, the statewide average to reach 381 millimeters, or 15 inches, is approximately six years. Bass in the Bone Creek population reach 15 inches at approximately 4 years, which is similar to the Crawford SFL population as it takes just over 4 years to reach 15 inches.

The von-Bertalanffy growth models are good indicators of comparison between lakes and statewide averages. The take-home point is that there does not appear to be significant negative consequences to the bass populations at Bone Creek and Crawford SFL from a growth perspective and in the long-term once they develop resistance to the virus. However, this may not be the case in all waters in Kansas. Research from Texas suggests that LMBV may spread through livewells, so caution is advised to anglers to take precautions to Clean, Drain, and Dry all livewells and your boats after departure from both of these lakes.

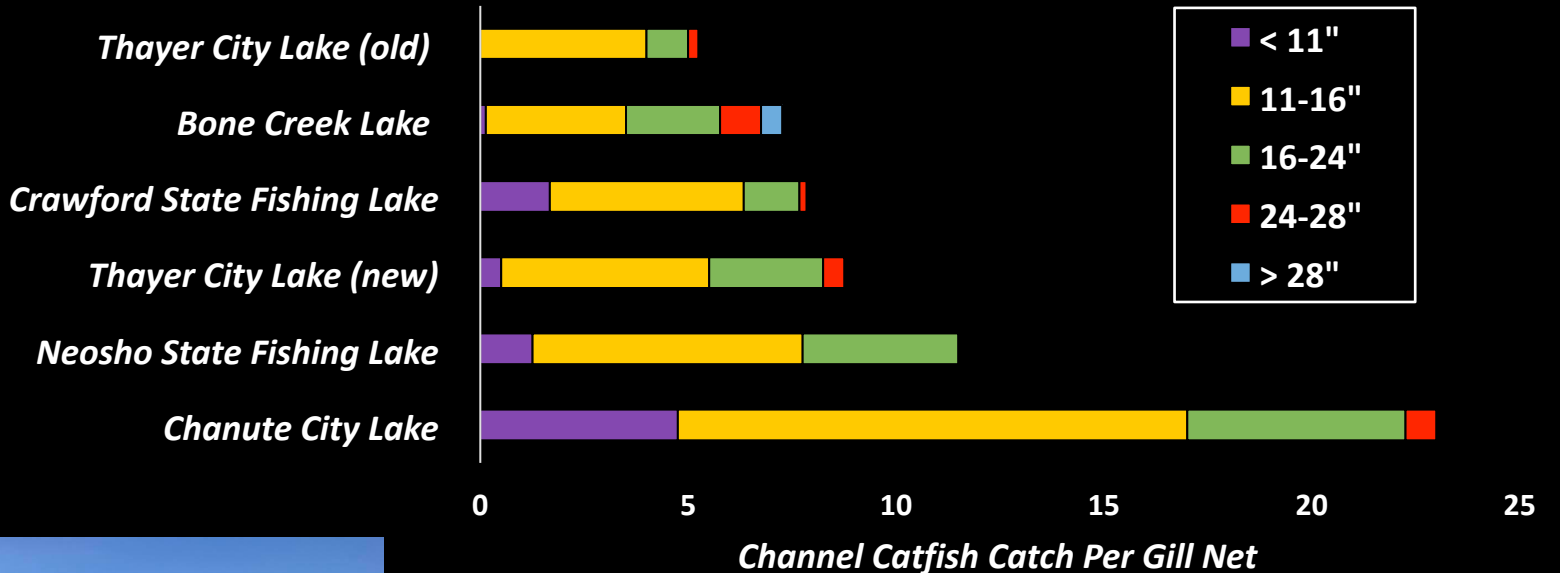


Channel Catfish

Channel Catfish were sampled in October and November of 2018 using experimental gill nets at Bone Creek Lake, Chanute City Lake, Crawford SFL, Neosho SFL, and Thayer City Lake (new). Data from the October 2017 sample was included for Thayer City Lake (old). Supplemental stockings of Channel Catfish occurred at each of these lakes in the fall of 2018. Anglers in the southeast portion of the state, whether they will be targeting catfish for catch-and-release or for consumptive use, can expect a quality fishing experience in these lakes once again in 2019.

Chanute City Lake will continue to have a high density population for anglers to enjoy. The majority of the fish will be 11-16 inches whereas it wouldn't be unexpected to find a few fish over 24 inches. Neosho SFL, Thayer City Lake (new), and Crawford State Park will contain quality numbers of Channel Catfish up to 24 inches with a few reaching lengths of 28 inches. Thayer City Lake (old) will provide anglers with another option of fish reaching lengths up to 24-28 inches, but the majority will be in the 16-24 inch size range.

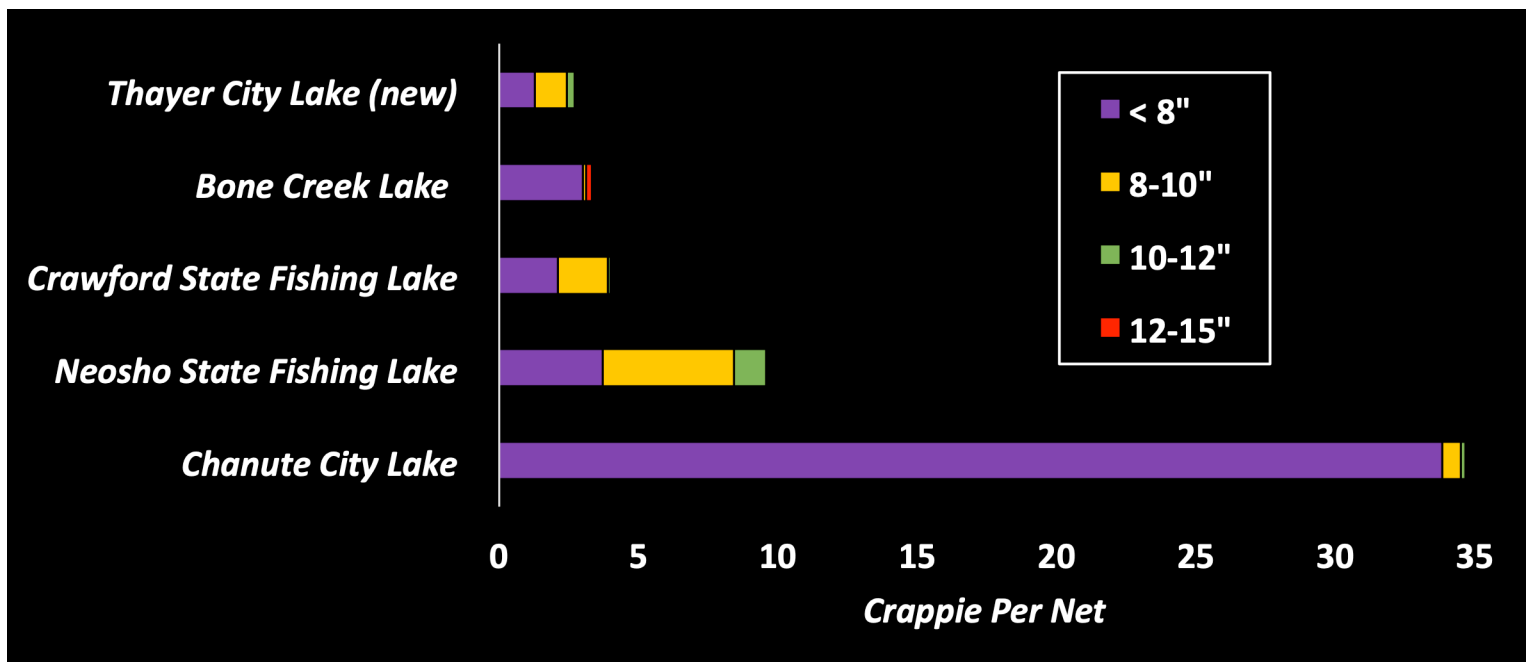
Bone Creek Lake is a unique fishery in the sense that it is a low-density population of Channel Catfish, but will provide anglers with a trophy experience once again in 2019. The largest fish collected at Bone Creek in the 2018 sample was 38.5 inches long and weighed 28.7 pounds. Fish feeders are utilized at this lake currently and shoreline anglers can expect to find fish to be able to take home for table fare. Anglers are encouraged to practice catch-photo-release at Bone Creek as it takes 15-20 years for Channel Catfish to reach lengths over 28 inches.



Crappie

Crappie were sampled in October and November of 2018 using trap nets at Bone Creek Lake, Chanute City Lake, Crawford SFL, Neosho State SFL, and Thayer City Lake (new). Catch rates continue to be respectively lower in these lakes in comparison to lakes across the state, due to the clear and deep water close to the shoreline. Clear water allows for the crappie to see the net and deters them from being sampled. Deep water close to the shoreline prevents us from setting nets in many areas. However, anglers can continue to find crappie. So, grab the crappie poles, dust off the 1/16 ounce jigs and twister tails, and find where they're spawning this year!

Chanute City Lake has crappie and lots of them! The only downside is that the majority are under 8 inches with a few being able to grow past 8 inches into the 8-10 inch range. Neosho SFL saw an improvement in the size structure with fish reaching sizes up to 12 inches. Crawford SFL is similar to Chanute City Lake, having a large portion of crappie 10 inches and less. However, anglers have reported fish up to 12 inches. Bone Creek is notorious for having quality size crappie and this year will not be an exception. While crappie numbers will be lower than the past, anglers can find crappie reaching lengths up to 14 inches. Young-of-the-year (YOY) were sampled in higher numbers in fall of 2018 indicating that a successful spawn last spring and we hope they recruit into the fishery next year.



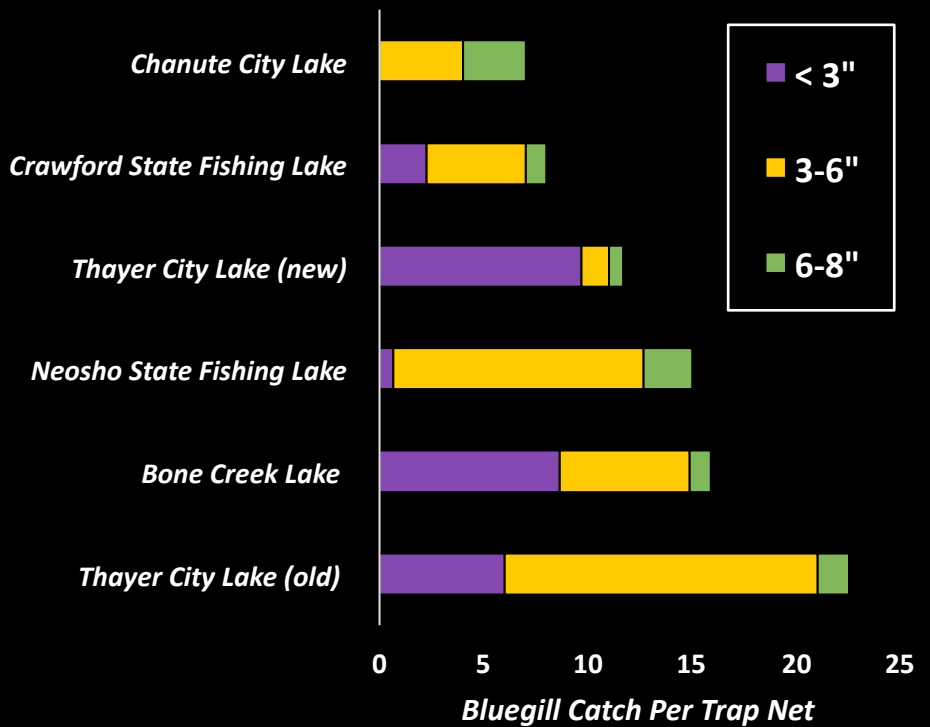
Panfish – Bluegill & Redear Sunfish

Bluegill

Anglers wishing to catch bluegill will be in luck once again in 2019. Grab the fly rod and dry flies, bobber and worm, or small poppers and make it a point to catch a few bluegill this year!

If you're wanting to catch a lot of bluegill for sport, or for bait, both Thayer City lakes and Bone Creek will be the spots to focus your effort. An abundance of fish of all sizes will be waiting for you to cast this spring.

For quality fish over 6 inches, anglers will want to focus their effort at Bone Creek Lake and Neosho SFL. Don't forget about the strip pits on Mined Land Wildlife Area, as well.

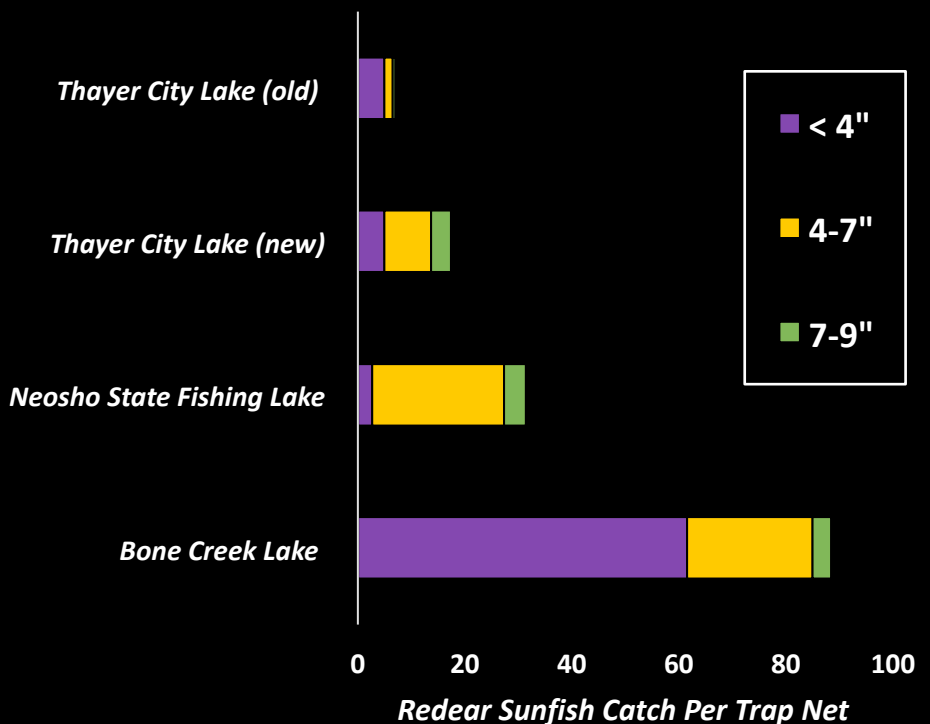


Redear Sunfish

Anglers who are familiar with lakes in this district know full well of the quality Redear Sunfish fisheries nearby!

Bone Creek should be at the top of the list for anglers wishing to catch a few Redears this spring. The quantity and quality of Bone Creek is unmatched in terms of being able to take the kids fishing and having the bobber be taken under consistently.

Neosho SFL and both Thayer City lakes will also provide opportunity for anglers wishing to catch 6-9 inch Redears this year.



Saugeye

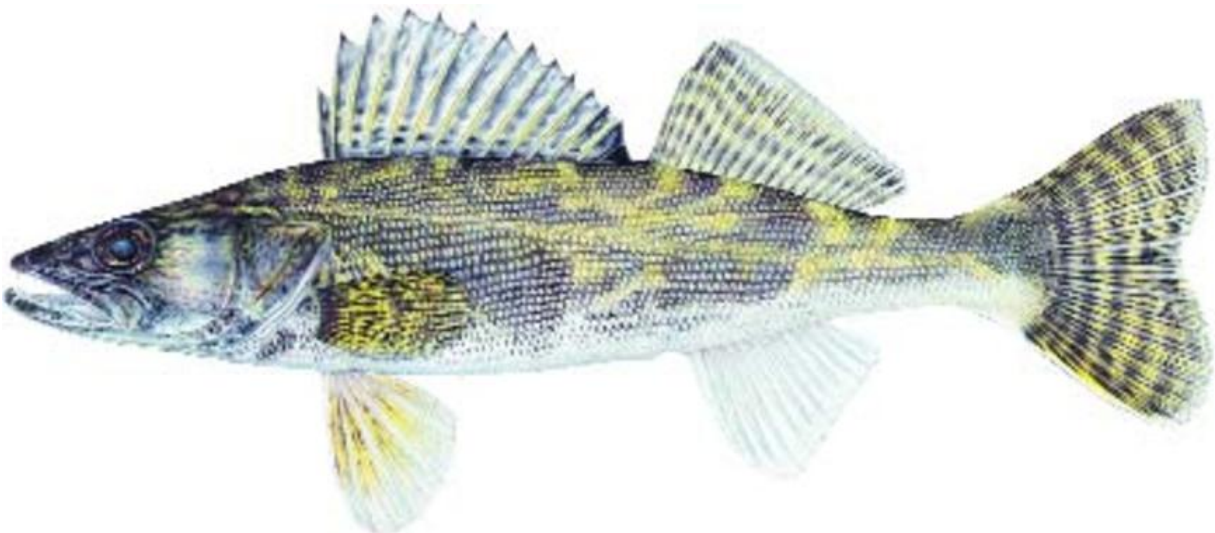
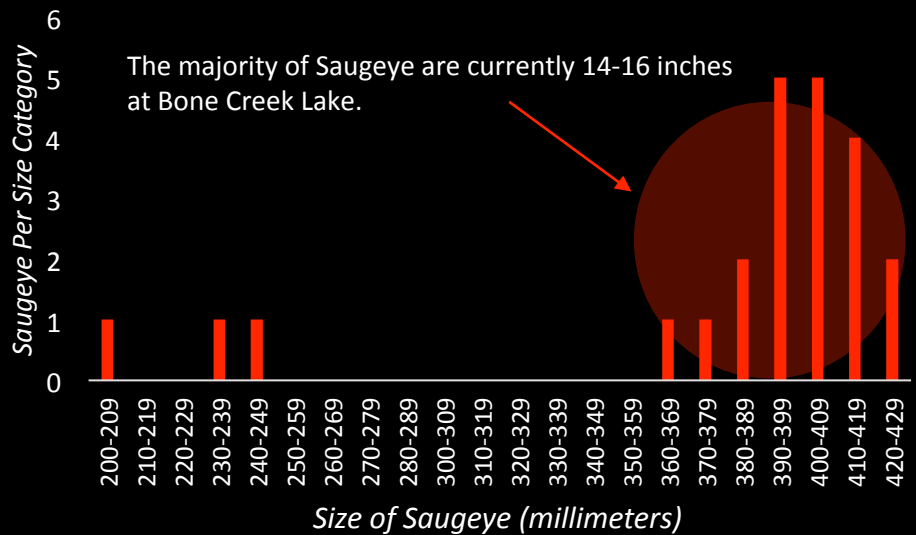
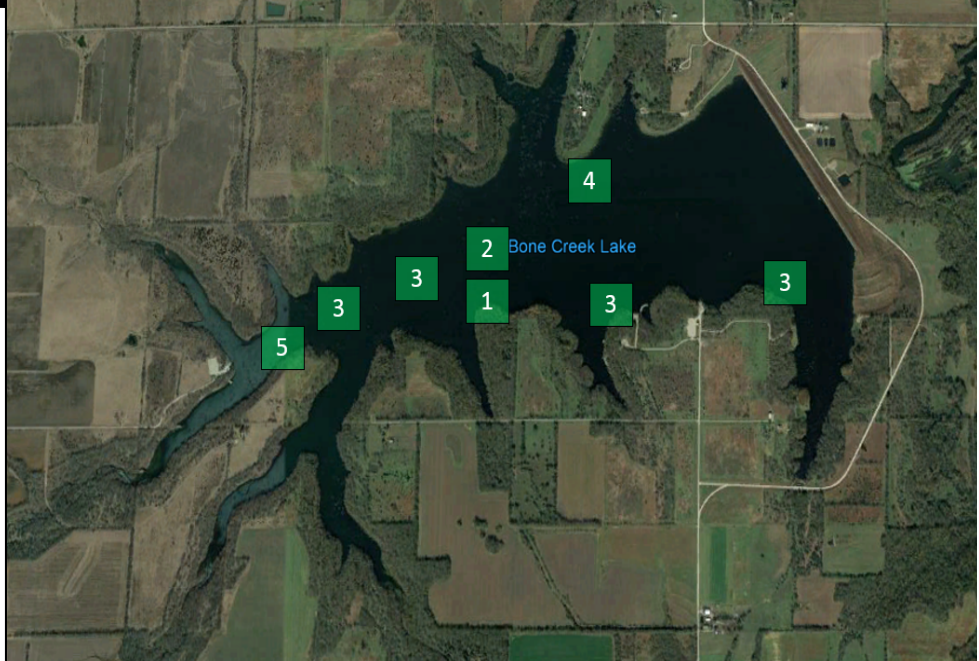
Saugeye

Saugeye were sampled at Bone Creek and Crawford SFL in October of 2018 with gill nets.

Saugeye have been stocked in Bone Creek since 2013. They are managed under an 18-inch minimum length limit and daily creel limit of 2 fish. The population is beginning to take shape with 20 Saugeye being sampled last fall that were in the 14- to 16-inch size range. On the map to the right, it doesn't take long to notice that Saugeye were sampled lakewide with the majority being found on the upper end. The green boxes indicate how many Saugeye were sampled in our gill nets. Anglers can look forward to these fish reaching harvest length within two years.

At Crawford SFL, only one Saugeye was sampled and it was 24 inches long, indicating a low-density population.

Anglers can try drifting on flats and drop offs with a jig and night crawler combo, or by casting twister tails and



Wiper

Wiper

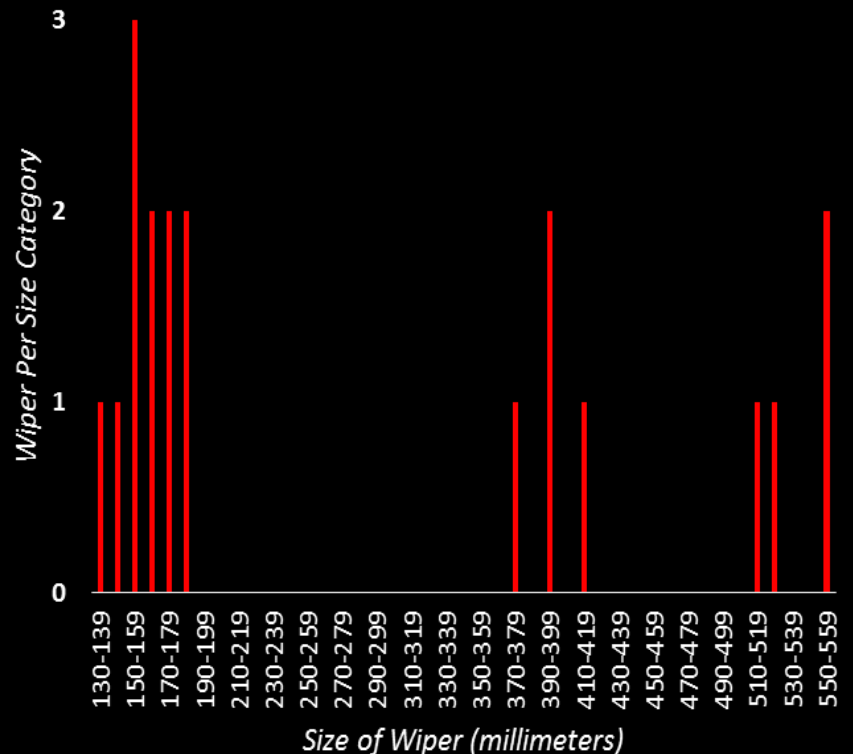
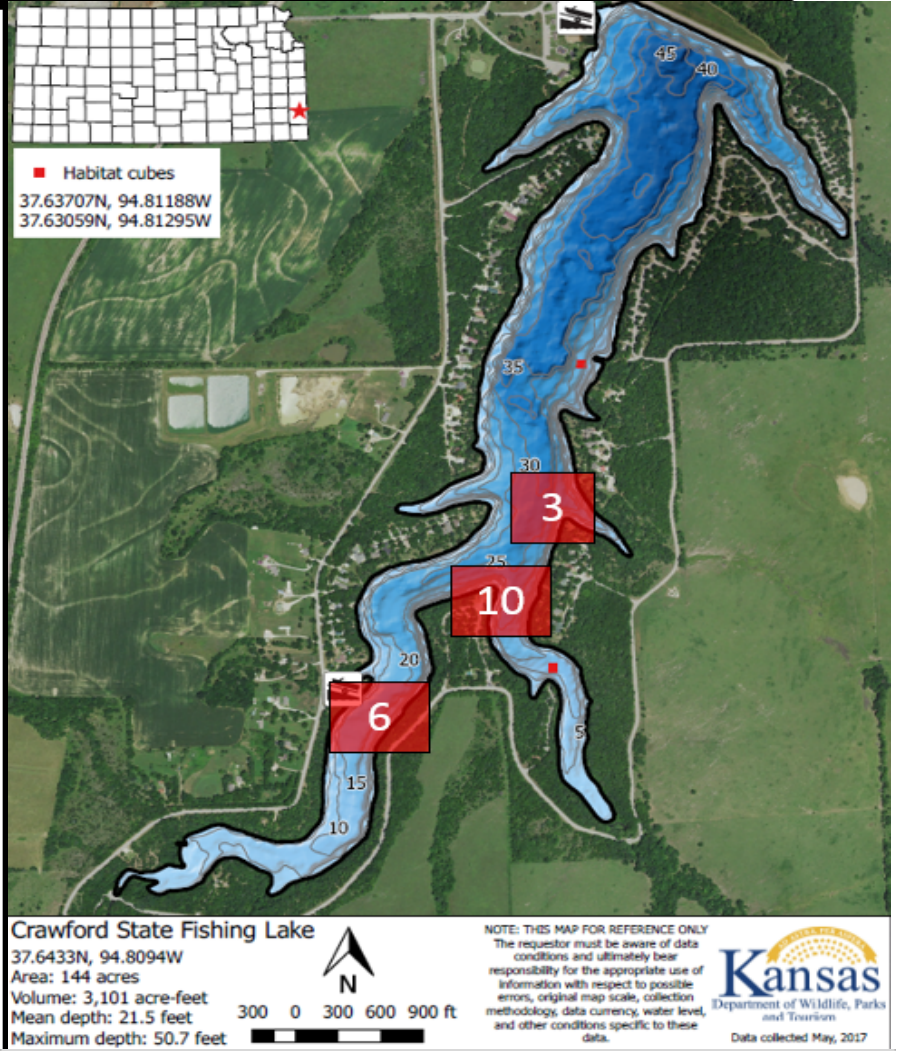
Wiper were sampled at Crawford SFL in October of 2018 using gill nets. The Mined Land Wildlife Area Unit #21 receives stockings of 500 Wiper each fall.

Wiper are currently managed under an 18-inch minimum length limit and a daily creel limit of 2. Wipers were stocked last fall to boost the current population.

On the map to the right, the boxes indicate where Wiper were caught in gill nets. The number in the box shows how many were caught at each location. Anglers should focus their efforts on the upper end of the impoundment.

The length frequency chart below the map and lower right hand corner indicates the size structure of the Wiper sampled. Eleven fish (58%) were sampled that ranged in size of 5-7 inches, 4 fish (21%) were sampled in the 14-16 inch range, and 4 fish (21%) were sampled that were 20-21 inches in size.

Vertical jigging and casting swimbaits are two tactics for anglers to try at Crawford SFL this year.



Rotenone Applied at Neosho SFL

A low-dose rotenone treatment was applied in late December of 2018 at Neosho SFL. This serves as a partial renovation to remove gizzard shad that compete directly with sport fish for food and space.

This is part of an ongoing project in collaboration with KDWPT and Kansas State University to study the food webs of small impoundments and the effect of gizzard shad removal.

Our goal is to improve the Bluegill and Redear Sunfish populations by removing Gizzard Shad that directly compete with these two species by eating invertebrates and degrading water quality. In addition, it will allow for Largemouth Bass to shift their predation on Bluegill and Redear Sunfish to reduce their densities and improve the sizes available to anglers.

The study will continue through 2020 to characterize the effects of a gizzard shad removal on the food web in a small impoundment.



MLWA – Eurasian Watermilfoil

In the late 1990s, Eurasian watermilfoil invaded the strip pits on the Mined Land Wildlife Area and has spread since.

In a recent survey to identify the extent of Eurasian watermilfoil on the Mined Land Wildlife Area, it was found on 20 different units and in 49 strip pits. However, future surveys will be completed to find additional strip pits where boat ramps are not located.

To educate and provide anglers with the locations of these pits where it is currently found, signage was improved on the area. More than 50 signs were placed by entrances and boat ramps where the invasive plant can be found.

Please take precautions and clean, drain, and dry your kayaks, boats, and bait buckets prior to leaving the strip pits.



Fish Habitat Projects Planned

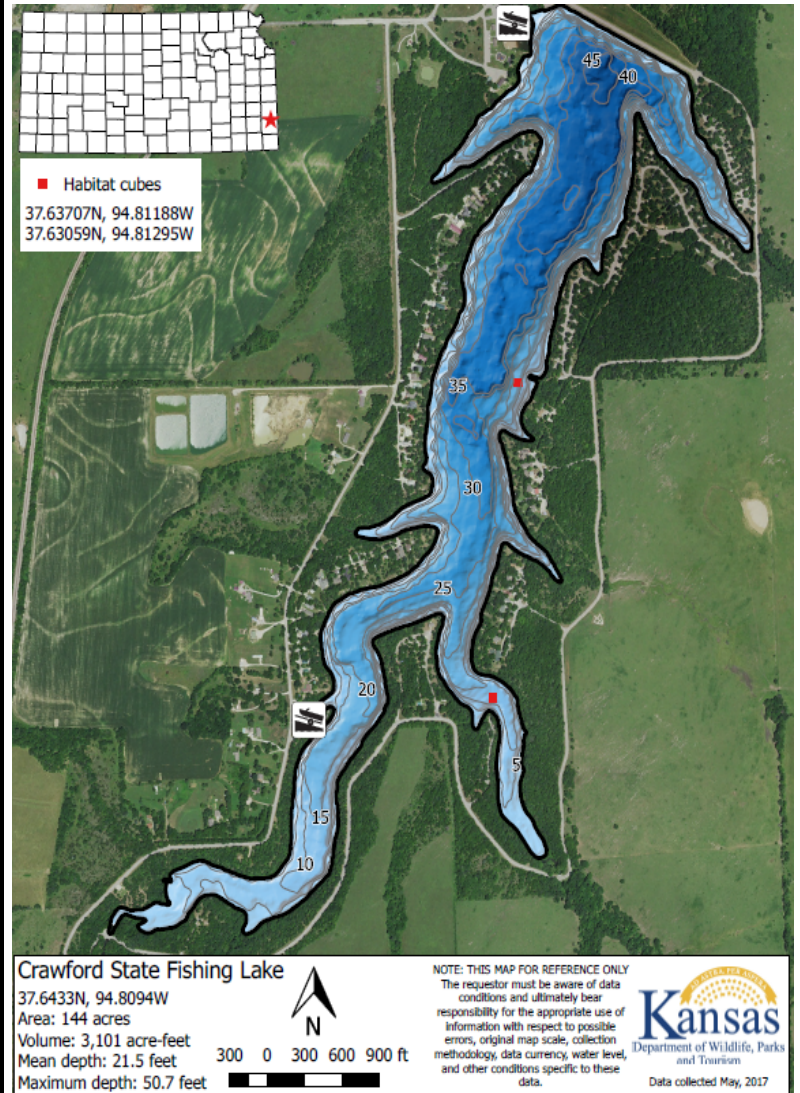
Fish habitat improvement projects are planned for 2019 at Crawford SFL and Mined Land Wildlife Area.

The project at Crawford SFL will entail of submerging nearly 100 cedar trees and 40 PVC habitat structures (“Georgia Cubes”).

The project at Mined Land Wildlife Area is one to be excited about as an angler! KDWPT has developed bathymetric maps for lakes across Kansas like the map to the right. An effort will be made to develop similar maps for the strip pits. This will help anglers identify depth, contours and habitat in each strip pit to aide in identifying which locations to fish. In conjunction with this effort, water quality parameters will be collected.

The GPS coordinates will be placed on our KDWPT website at the following link:
<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas>

The bathymetric maps will be uploaded and placed on our website at the following link:
<https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas/Bathymetric-Lake-Maps>



In Memory of Andrew

Andrew Schaefer, KDWPT Cheney District fisheries biologist, was not only a fellow fisheries biologist, but a friend. He was passionate about everything and anything outdoors: fishing, waterfowl hunting, and making it a point to travel for hunting trips.

He passed away earlier this year at 32 years old. I spent some time fish sampling with him this past spring and I'll never forget how he laughed at me trying to net this Grass Carp. I was lucky to know Andrew.



Cabin fever has officially hit and I can't wait for the weather to warm up. It won't be long before the Crappie, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and Redear Sunfish to move up shallow to spawn.

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