

Perry District Fisheries Newsletter

Spring 2019

Moss Grows on Trees

Special points of interest:

- Pondweeds
- Life of a biologist
- Take someone fishing!
- Fishing Reports

Okay, moss also grows on rocks and logs and out of the dirt and there are even some aquatic varieties, but in Kansas it is likely that you do not have moss growing in your pond.

I get a lot of calls from landowners in the spring and summer wanting to know what to do about the "moss" in their pond. Some call the green algae on the surface moss while others call the bushy Coontail by the same moniker. And they are always asking what to do about it. The course of action depends on which type of plant you are dealing with.

Most algae problems are caused by excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) entering the pond usually from agricultural runoff or yard fertilizer. The best long term solution for algae is to control the input of these nutrients into the pond by planting buffer strips along the pond edge or along streams that feed into the pond. If tile lines drain into the pond, consider installing a bioreactor. This basin stops and filters some of the nutrients out the water before it gets to the pond.

Aquatic Plants: There are a variety of aquatic plants in our Kansas water's just like there are a variety on land. Similar to their terrestrial brethren there are some good plants and some bad plants. If your pond is choked up and unfishable, chances are you have a whole lot of nuisance weeds in there. The common culprits in Kansas are coontail and muskgrass. They look pretty similar; bushy plants with stems and leaves in whirls like a pine tree. The difference is muskgrass (which is technically an algae)

smells...musky and it usually is much closer to the bottom of the pond. The coontail can take over a pond. Another culprit is curlyleaf pondweed. This can be seen growing under the ice, coming up early spring and dying off by mid June. It can grow in deep water if the clarity is just right and produces via seed, fragmentation, or special pods called turions.

Not all weeds are bad, and fish need some sort of plants for nursery habitat and forage grounds for their prey items. Some good plants to have in your pond include many of pondweeds (e.g., sago, Illinois, floating-leaf, American), wild celery, or water star grass.

Control of plants can be done through either biological control (i.e., Grass Carp), mechanical control (i.e., special cutters or rakes), or chemical control. The chemical you use is going to depend on the plant you are wanting to affect and should be researched thoroughly before application.

If you have any questions about the weeds in your pond, pull some out and send a picture to me, nick.kramer@ks.gov, and I'll be glad to help you identify and figure out a course of action.



Photo: dep.wv.gov

Green Algae: This is the slimy green mats that you usually see on the surface of a pond.

A year in the life of a district fisheries biologist



This past year has really flown by. A lot got accomplished in the past year and at the same time there were a few projects and ideas I didn't quite get around to.

Our field season always gets kicked off with a somewhat chaotic time; the Walleye and Sauger broodstock collection. I think it is chaotic because we have all been cooped up all winter. I am in charge of collecting all of the Sauger for the state's needs. We make some Sauger but we also use the milt from the

Sauger to make a Sauger-Walleye hybrid, called a Saugeye. Last year I was caught off guard and caught all of my required fish the very first day I set nets out. That made for a longer than expected day and we had to call in some back up as we weren't prepared for that many fish on day one.

April is pretty booked up with education programs. In the next article I mention how many kids I take fishing a year. The education programs add nearly 900 more kids on top of that. That is a lot of kids to be teaching about how a catfish makes its noise and that it's whiskers can't hurt you.

We then move into our Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass sampling. This occurs in the tail end of April and most of May and is done by using our electrofishing boat. It is a narrow window that we are shooting for when water temperatures are just right and the bass are up shallow and easy to zap. This year, there are 14 impoundments on the list to get sampled and I'm eager to see them all.

During the summer months we switch over to catfish. We will spend a lot of our time on Perry Reservoir, sampling Blue Catfish via

low-frequency electrofishing. So it is the same as the bass sampling but with different settings that pretty much only target catfish. It is a site to see when a large number of fish all rise to the surface at once. This past year we also began sampling using floatlines, which I am sure you saw if you were out on the water last summer. We were able to sample quite a few larger fish that we just do not see in our other sampling efforts.

We also spend about a day a week traveling around and filling fish feeders at some of the impoundments in each of our districts. Other summer time festivities include investigating fish kills and consulting with land owners about vegetation issues.

Fall is my favorite time on the job. The temperatures are more enjoyable, the trees start to change color, and we get to run gill nets. This, along with our fyke nets, is how we sample all of the other fish I haven't mentioned yet in this article. These nets lead to some cursing at times but also some of my favorite memories on the water. In one net we can catch a variety of fish from a 4 inch Gizzard Shad to a 40 inch Flathead Catfish like in the photo at the beginning of this article.

Take someone fishing... more than once!

I do a few kids fishing events throughout the year. Last year I put a fishing pole in the hand of roughly 650 kids. Of those you would be amazed how many had never been fishing. In most of the groups, only one or two kids will 'fess up to knowing how to cast with a simple Zebco reel (and some of them are iffy).

There is a lot of talk out there surrounding the future of the outdoors. License sales have shown a decline in recent years which is troubling to a license and fee based agency such as the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism. For this very reason we have hired an R3 coordinator to help combat some of these issues. Her goal is three-fold:

- Recruit
- Retain
- Reactivate

We are trying to recruit new anglers and hunters by continuing our kids fishing programs and similar efforts on the hunting side. We are also trying to get people back into the outdoors or reactivate those who used to participate but no longer do.

Once we have successfully recruited new sportsmen or reactivated lapsed participants, the next step is to retain, or keep these people using and enjoying the outdoors. To you and I, the average or avid angler or hunter, this seems easy. "Why would anyone want to stop fishing?" "How could you stop?"

Think back to your first fishing experience. Was it successful in means of quantity of fish or quality of fish? Many anglers today may not have the same experience that helped instill in you that passion for the outdoors.

So the next time you go fishing, why not take a kid along. I'm sure you all know of a kid, whether it be your own, your niece or nephew, maybe your kid's kid, your neighbor, a kid from church. Just take someone fishing, show them some success, get them hooked by letting them hook into a nice fish.

Joan Wulff, the first lady of fly fishing, explained the four stages of an angler. The first being about catching lots of

fish. The second is trying to catch the biggest. Third is going after the difficult or the rare. And finally, the fourth stage is giving back to the sport. We have all caught numbers, size, and rarities, so why not start giving back by helping the next generation get a head start on catching their first fish, their largest fish, or simply their favorite fish.



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Special points of interest:

- Pond Weeds
- A year in the life of a biologist
- Take Someone Fishing
- Help me, Help you

Fishing Reports: Help Me Help You



Have you ever caught a mess of Crappie and thought to yourself, "Man, I wish I could share this experience with someone else." or "The fishing is just too good right now to keep a secret." Perhaps you had some thoughts more along the lines of, "The fishing here just plain stunk today, I hope nobody else has plans of coming out here."

Those of you who frequent the fishing report pages on www.ksoutdoors.com may have noticed that some of the fishing reports leave something to be desired. If you have some information that you would like to contribute to make the reports better, give your biologist a call. We rely on the anglers to provide us with information from each waterbody about what is or isn't biting.

Despite the popularity of social media, the fishing reports section on the website is still one of the most widely travelled portions of the website. In an attempt to provide a better product, I am asking for your help in providing the information for area lakes. Just give me a call and talk fishing. I'm not going to give your secret spot away, I won't even ask for it! I'm just asking that you help your fellow angler out.

You could be providing information that helps a dad give his little boy or girl the opportunity to catch their first fish or help a teenage boy stay out of trouble.

If you're still reluctant to pass along your information, that's fine, you're entitled to that. Just keep in mind, it takes more than you think to completely fish out a population and length and creel limits are in place for a reason and backed by hours and hours of sampling and research.