

Census shows anglers like Sebelius Lake

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks conducted a creel census at the Keith Sebelius Reservoir, Cedar Bluff, Clinton, Fall River and Melvern Reservoirs from March 1 through Oct. 31, 2003 with some shocking results.

According to the survey, Sebelius Reservoir had the highest number of angler hours per acre at 115.12, with the next closest reservoir being Cedar Bluff at 26.32 hours per acre.

Anglers per acre at Sebelius totaled 35.24 followed by cedar Bluff with 8.27. the actual

number of fish harvested ranged from 6.93 to 19.38 fish per acre with Sebelius Reservoir being on top again.

The greatest yield of fish harvested by weight also occurred at Sebelius with an estimated weight of 61.30 pounds of fish harvested per acre, followed by Clinton Reservoir with 13.89 pounds harvested per acre. Of the 61.3 pounds per acre at Sebelius, channel catfish accounted for 31.2 pounds followed by

10.11 pounds of wiper, 7.33 pounds of saugeye, and 5.43 pounds of black crappie.

The total number of fish released at the five reservoirs ranged from 1.31 to 61.48 fish per acre with the highest number of fish released at Sebelius Reservoir (mostly saugeye and largemouth bass).

The estimated weight of fish released per acre ranged from .54 at Fall River to 96.58 at Sebelius Reservoir.

FISHING REPORT:

Sebelius Reservoir — Lake temperature is 62 degrees. The lake is 16.37 feet below conservation pool.

Black Bass — Good. The 15" length limit on largemouth bass has been temporarily removed due to the rapidly declining water levels. the 15" length limit on spotted bass remains in effect. The largemouth population is dominated by 12" to 15" fish; this size range is overly abundant. There are also fair numbers of spotted bass. Plan on fishing the rocky areas for the spots!

Bluegill — Fair. Bluegill in the 6" to 9" range should provide some exciting action at times, especially during the spawning season.

Catfish — Excellent. According to netting results, the supply of channel catfish is very good with 3 to 8 pound fish being especially plentiful. Also, flathead numbers are on the rise and these big cats are becoming an important component of the catfish fishery.

Crappie — Fair. Both white and black crappie numbers have dropped dramatically due to harvest, the effects of natural mortality, and receding water levels over past seasons. The receding water levels, however, should concentrate fish to areas containing habitat such as the main-

tained fish attractors. Currently, crappies are present in fair numbers and are scattered over a wide size range. While fish under 3/4 of a pound are likely to dominate the catch this year, some magnums in the 1-2 pound range will be taken as well.

Saugeye/Walleye — Excellent. The saugeye population is outstanding with 52 percent of the sample being represented by 16" to 18" fish. Fish over 18" accounted for 24 percent of the fall sample. The possibility of catching a state record saugeye exists at Sebelius. The current state record (9.81 pounds) was caught at Sebelius in November 1998. The supply of walleye is modest with a majority of fish running in the 15" to 18" size range. An 18" length limit is in effect for saugeye and walleye.

Wipers — Excellent. The supply is strong and the quality of this fishery is pretty good. Fish in the 2 to 6 pound range are especially plentiful and larger fish are abundant too. Fish in the 15" to 20" range accounted for 31 percent of the fall 2003 netting sample and larger fish (20"+) accounted for 18 percent.

SEBELIUS RESERVOIR RESOURCES:

Trails and scenic views

In the center of the park, the Prairie Dog Nature Trail is 1.4 miles long and ambles through native prairie and wildlife food plots. It is a great area for wildlife viewing. Two vintage 19th century buildings are preserved in the park. A one-room schoolhouse (just south of the park office) and the recently renovated adobe house (north of Prairie Dog Campground) are snapshots of Kansas history. Food plots and a waterfowl refuge have been established to enhance wildlife watching. In addition to the park's namesake, pheasant, canada geese, wild turkey, badger and mule and white-tailed deer can be observed.

Office and restrooms

The park office is usually open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday through Saturday. However, you may want to call before making a special trip. Wear a personal floatation device when boating. The reservoir is low.

The water is on in the park. and there are new vault restrooms at the public fishing dock .

Boating and fishing

Relax and enjoy the historic sites, picnic shelters and small swimming beach. Fishing is excellent in the Sebelius Reservoir. Saugeye, wiper, largemouth bass, channel catfish and crappie give anglers a variety to test their skills. There is a two-lane boat ramp on the east end of the park with parking available for over 100 units.

Fishing contest continues until September

T & D Bait Shop of Norton will once again be holding their fishing contest, which is sponsored by Budweiser.

Last year's winners were: Brandon McChesney, Norton, green sunfish; Danny Carmen, Gem, carp; James Placey, Norton, channel catfish and bullhead catfish; "Bobber" Bill Klein, Norton, wiper; Sam Batson, Jr., Norton, crappie; Craig Stephens, Bertrand, Neb., walleye; Eli Bozarth, Norton, large mouth bass; Kendra Burk, Lochbuie, Colo., blue gill; Scott Critchfield, St. Joseph, Mo., saugeye; and Nathan Rummel, Ludell, flathead catfish. Each of the winners were awarded a \$25 gift certificate.

The bait shop will also be holding their monthly drawing again, where two of the eleven contest leaders — walleye, crappie, saugeye, wiper, blue gill, green sunfish, channel catfish, bullhead catfish, flathead catfish, and carp — will win either \$25 cash or a \$25 gift certificate to T & D Bait Shop.

So far this year, Brittany Urban, Oberlin, is in the lead for the biggest fish contest with a 24 1/4", 6 pound 4 ounce wiper.

The T & D Bait Shop Fishing Contest will end Sept. 30, 2004.

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