

Sherman Reservoir 2010 Fall Survey Summary



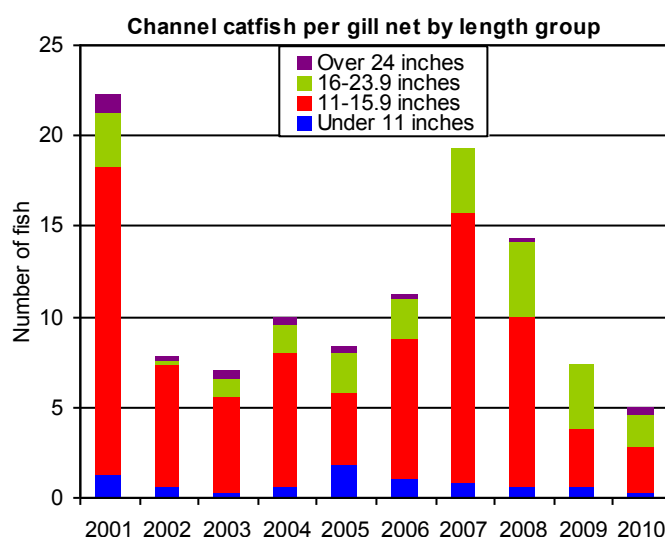
Brad Eifert, Fisheries Biologist

The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during September 2010 at Sherman Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Fish populations are sampled each fall at Sherman using gill and frame nets. Gill nets are used to sample fish species found primarily in open water, such as walleye, while frame nets are used to sample shoreline oriented species, such as crappie. The nets are set each year at approximately the same locations and dates as previous years. This reduces variability and allows for trend comparisons of species abundance and size distribution. The following graphs show the total number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs.

Channel Catfish

Channel catfish abundance continued a downward trend for the third consecutive year. The catch of five fish per net is less than half the ten year average of 11.2 fish per net. Fish were sampled in all length categories, but most of the catch consisted of 11-24 inch catfish. The average length of catfish was 16.3 inches and the largest fish collected was 29 inches. The abundance of fish greater than 24 inches was slightly improved.

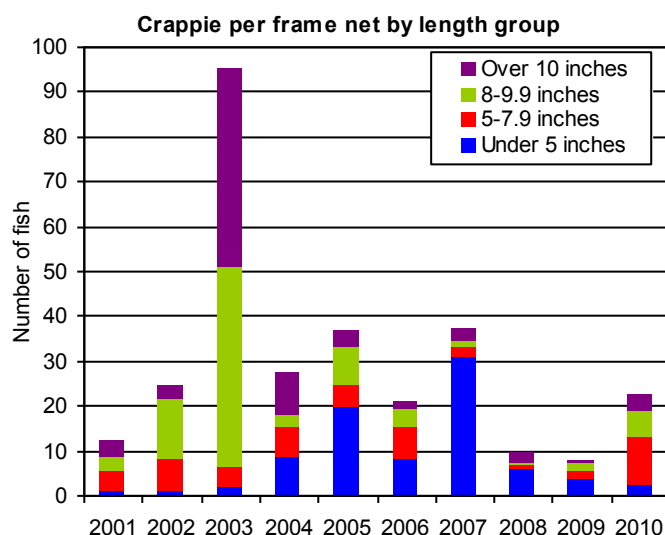
Although abundance is lower than average, channel catfish anglers should still find good angling opportunities for intermediate size catfish. Odds of catching a trophy size channel catfish also are fairly decent. Anglers are reminded that the statewide daily bag limit for channel catfish was reduced to five fish effective January 1, 2011.



Crappie

Crappie catch was improved and was the highest recorded since 2007. Improvements were noticed in all size categories, except for the less than five inch category. Good recruitment has resulted in increased abundance of crappie in the 5 to 8 inch size group, which should provide good fishing in the future. The abundance of fish greater than ten inches was the highest since 2005, as approximately 37% of the crappie collected exceeded the 10-inch minimum length limit. The average length of white crappie collected during the survey was 9.3 inches and the largest crappie were 13 inches.

The current crappie population should provide for improved angling opportunities during 2011. Anglers are reminded that the daily bag limit for panfish was changed to 15 fish per day effective January 1, 2011. Sherman Reservoir also has a 10-inch minimum length limit on crappie.



Walleye

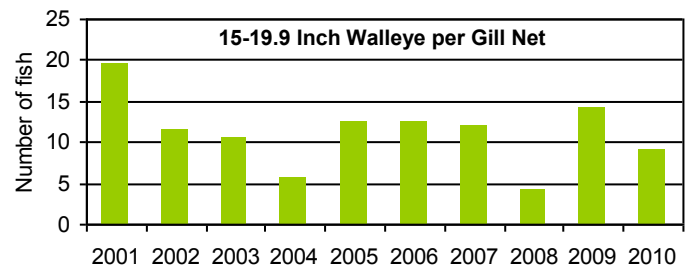
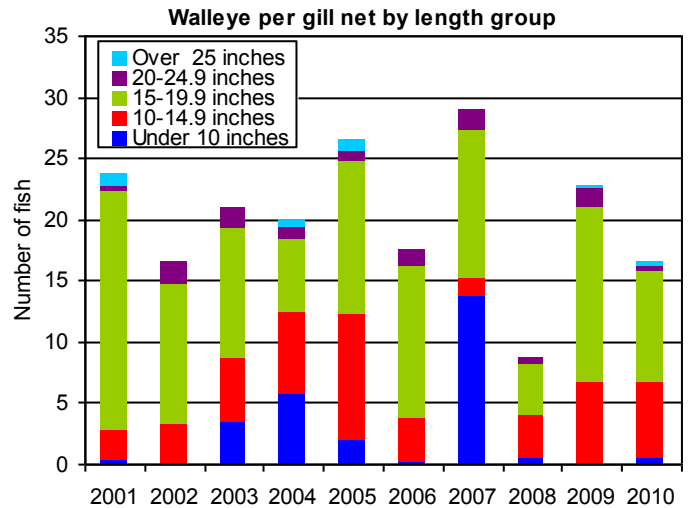
The walleye gill net catch was lower last fall at Sherman Reservoir. The catch was 16.5 walleye per net, which is slightly lower than the ten year average catch of 20.3 walleye per net. Walleye were captured in all size groups, but the majority of fish sampled ranged from 10 to 20 inches. The abundance of fish less than 15 inches was unchanged from 2009 results. Most of the fish in this size category range from 12.5 to 14.5 inches and will start contributing to the harvest during 2011.

There was a decline in the catch of 15 to 20 inch walleye. The catch dropped from 14 fish per net to 9 fish per net, slightly below the ten year average of 11.2 fish per net. Over the past ten years, fish in this size group have ranged from 29 to 82 percent of the total walleye sample collected each year, with an average of 56%. In 2010, 55% of the walleye sampled were in this size category.

Abundance of walleye from 20 to 25 inches was also slightly lower and abundance of fish greater than 25 inches was similar to 2009 results. The average length of walleye collected in the survey was 15.8 inches and the largest fish caught was 26 inches.

Currently, the new walleye regulation at Sherman has been successful in allowing anglers increased opportunities for harvesting walleye, but it so far has not caused a major increase in the abundance of fish greater than 20 inches.

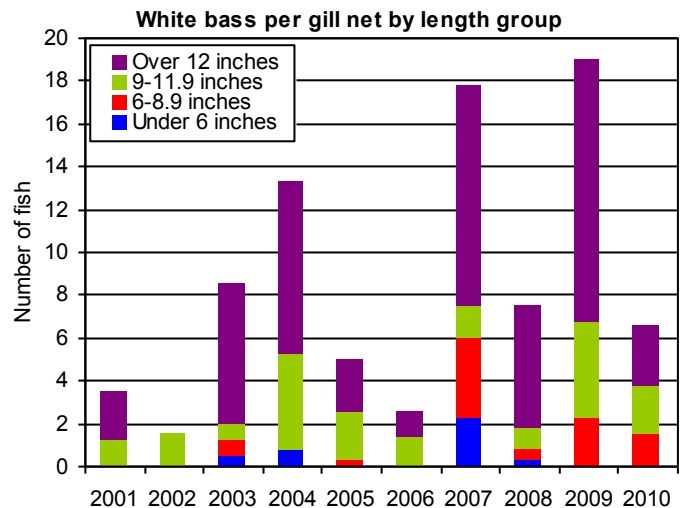
Walleye fishing success at Sherman got off to a slow start during the spring and early summer of 2010, but success was much improved during the late summer and early fall. Anglers should find very good angling opportunities again during 2011, as there are abundant numbers of walleye in the 15 to 20 inch harvest slot. Fish greater than 20 inches remain lower than average, but chances of catching trophy walleye should still be high at Sherman Reservoir. Anglers are reminded that they are allowed a daily bag limit of two walleyes greater than 15 inches but less than 20 inches and one walleye greater than 28 inches. Walleye from 20 to 28 inches are protected and must be released.



White Bass

White bass abundance has been very good the past four years at Sherman. While the catch in 2010 was lower than the high catches experienced in 2007 and 2009, it was only slightly lower than the 10 year average catch of 8.5 white bass per net. Size structure of the population continues to be excellent, as several size groups are well represented. Age-2 fish are most numerous and range from 10 to 12 inches. Abundance of fish greater than 12 inches remains high and made up 42% of white bass sample. The average length of white bass collected in the survey was 10.8 inches and the largest fish were 14 inches.

Anglers experienced very good fishing for white bass during 2010 and this should continue into 2011. There is currently good abundance of fish greater than nine inches and chances of catching white bass greater than 13 inches should be high.



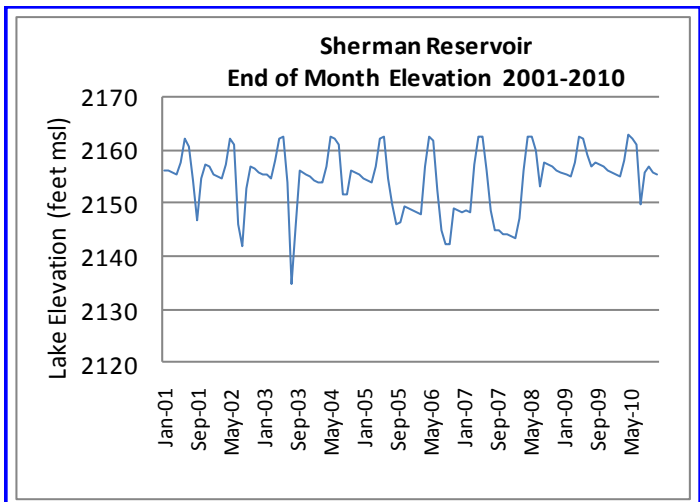
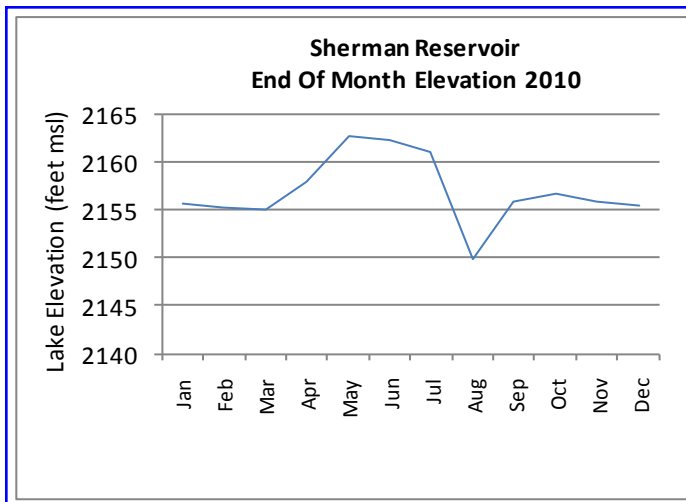
Sherman Reservoir — Additional Information

Fisheries Division will likely be conducting walleye spawn collections at Sherman during 2011. Depending on weather conditions, spawn collection will begin the last week of March or the first week of April and normally lasts for one to two weeks. Walleye are collected along the dam at night and disturbance to anglers is minimal. During 2010, four nights of walleye egg collection were completed, with 108 quarts of eggs collected.



Anglers should also be aware that the water within 150 feet of the dam and the new walleye spawning reef near the west end of the dam is closed to all fishing from sunset to sunrise beginning April 1 and ending April 20.

Current lake elevations can be found on Farwell Irrigation District's website: <http://www.farwellid.com/index.html>. Wet weather conditions during the summer of 2010 reduced irrigation demand and Sherman was only drawn down approximately twelve feet.



Boaters at Sherman Reservoir are reminded to use caution to avoid the rock structures placed in the reservoir, especially during high water when structures may be partially under water. White posts with reflective tape mark all structures, with buoys and lights added at some sites.

An angler survey will be completed at Sherman Reservoir from April through October 2011. This survey is done in cooperation with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Unit. The survey has been on-going since 1996 and has provided valuable information on angling pressure, catch rates, harvest rates, and numbers and types of fish caught. Anglers are encouraged to take the time to answer the questions from the creel clerk.



Fish stocking in 2010 consisted of 160,000 walleye fingerlings. Fish stocking in 2011 will include 140,000 walleye fingerlings.

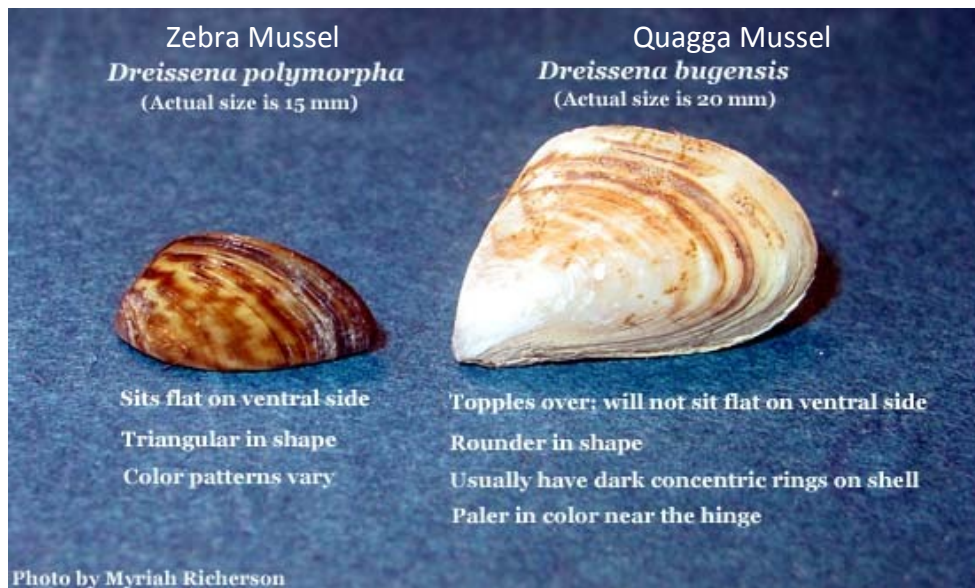


A detailed bathymetric map of Sherman Reservoir can be found on Nebraska Game and Parks Commission website: <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/sherman.pdf>

Zebra & Quagga Mussels

Anglers and boaters need to be aware of zebra and quagga mussels while using Nebraska Lakes. While no mussels have been identified at Sherman Reservoir, zebra mussels have been confirmed at Zorinsky Lake in Omaha and are present in several reservoirs in Kansas and Colorado. Monitoring was completed at Sherman Reservoir and other Nebraska reservoirs during 2010 and no evidence of mussels were found. Unfortunately, adult mussels were found during the fall of 2010 at Zorinsky Lake by a private citizen. This lake is currently closed to public access and efforts are being made to eradicate the mussel population. Statewide monitoring efforts will be expanded in 2011 to determine if mussels are present in other water bodies.

Invasive mussels will attach to almost any surface and have detrimental impacts on industry (power plants, water intakes, irrigation, etc), native fish and mussels, and recreational users (fouling boat motors, impacting beaches, etc). Invasive mussels cause an estimated \$5 billion per year in economic impacts in the United States for monitoring and control efforts. Inadvertent transfer by humans is the major source of new infestation for zebra and quagga mussels; primarily by boats, boat trailers, and fishing gear. Boaters and anglers are reminded that it is important to **clean, drain and dry** their equipment and boats before moving to different bodies of water. Anglers and boaters are encouraged to educate themselves on these and other aquatic invasive species. An excellent source of information regarding invasive species can be found on the University of Nebraska's Invasive Species Project website: <http://snr.unl.edu/invasives/>.



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**

Please remember:

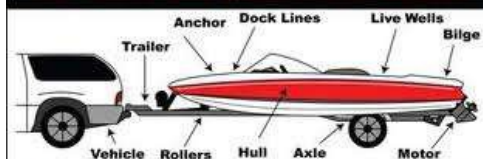
CLEAN • DRAIN • DRY

Boats and Equipment

www.kdwp.state.ks.us



LOOK FOR MUSSELS HERE



CHECK YOUR BOAT, TRAILER AND VEHICLE

For additional information about fisheries management at Sherman Reservoir please contact the NGPC Kearney office at 308-865-5310 or by email at the addresses listed below.

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