

# Davis Creek Reservoir

## 2011 Fall Survey Summary

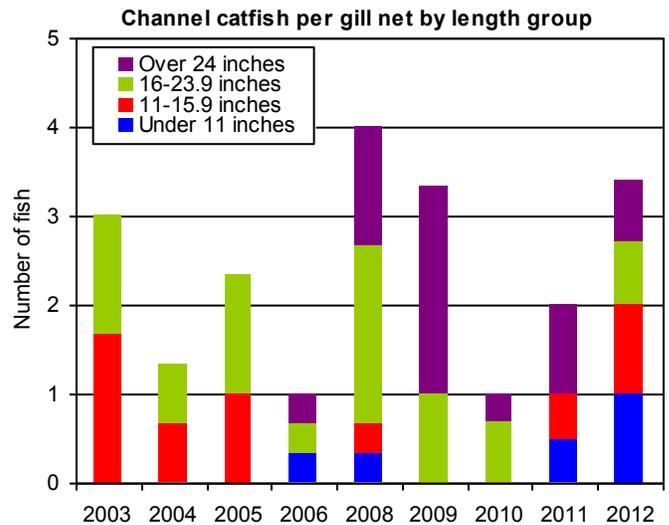


Jeff Schuckman, Northeast Region Fish Manager  
 Phil Chvala, Northeast Region Fish Biologist

The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during September 2012 at Davis Creek Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Fish populations are sampled each fall at Davis Creek 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.

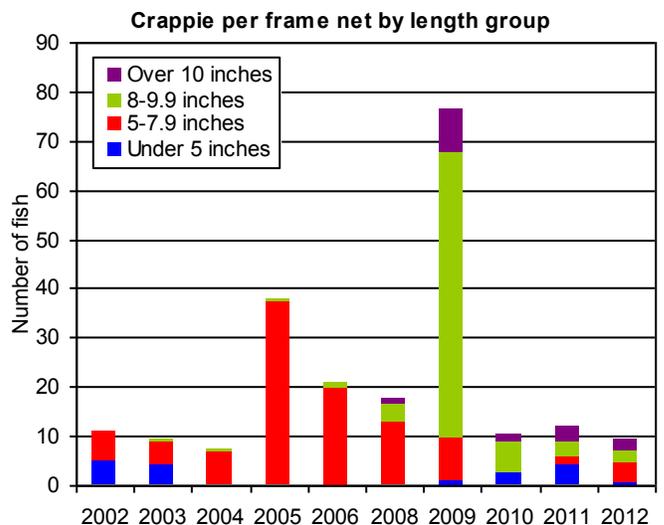
### Channel Catfish

Channel catfish abundance has historically been low at Davis Creek Reservoir and 2012 sampling indicated that remained the case, as the average catch from 2003 to 2012 was only 2.3 catfish per gill net. A nice size distribution is present but consists of very few fish at present. Future catfish stockings, which began in 2012 and will occur in alternate years, should result in higher numbers of catfish for the angler. Catfish anglers should expect fair fishing success in 2013 and opportunities exist for an occasional trophy-size catfish. Anglers are reminded that the daily bag limit for channel catfish is five fish per day.



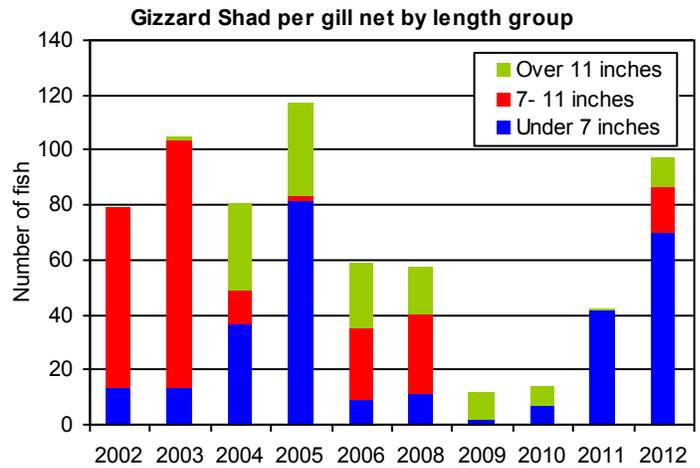
### Crappie

With the exception of 2005 and 2009, crappie catch has been fairly consistent through the years, hovering around 10-20 per net. Catch rates have been very similar for the last three years so anglers should expect crappie opportunities comparable to those of 2011 and 2012. Similar to 2011, multiple size classes were collected in 2012 indicating fairly steady recruitment. Anglers are reminded that the statewide bag limit for panfish is 15 in aggregate per day.



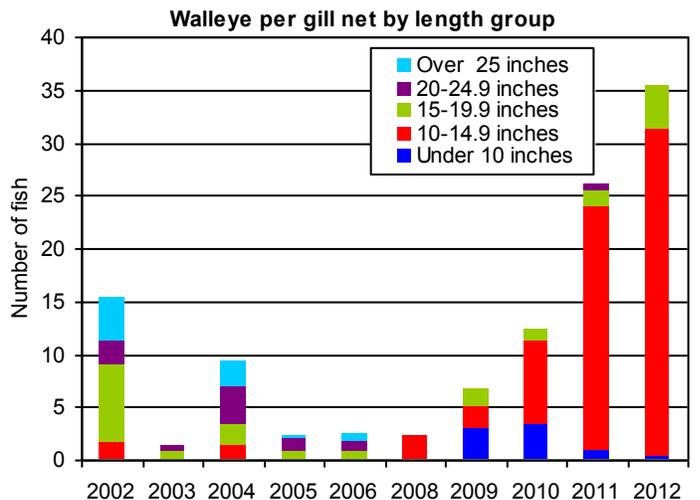
## Gizzard Shad

The gizzard shad population is monitored because they serve as the primary food source for walleye, white bass, and wipers at Davis Creek. Shad abundance declined in 2009 and 2010 but numbers are once again fairly high in 2011 and 2012. The current size distribution of shad is preferable as high numbers of young-of-the-year shad provide excellent prey, providing for good growth rates by sport fish species. A population comprised primarily of intermediate-sized to large shad, as seen in 2006 and 2008, results in increased competition among game fish for limited prey (small shad) and fish condition suffers.



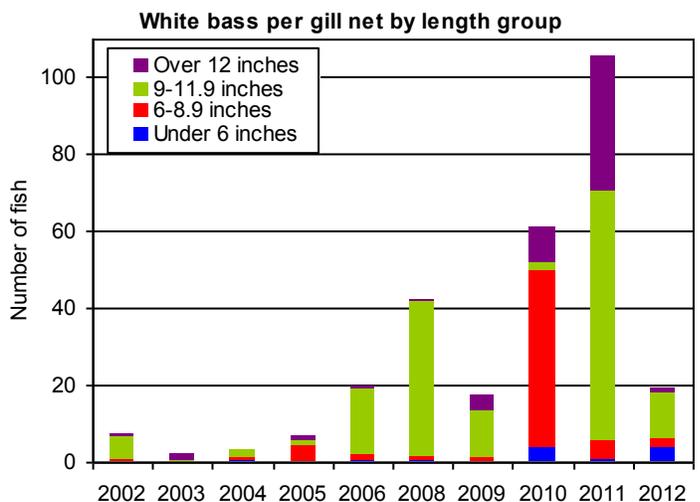
## Walleye

Walleye net catch has greatly improved since annual fingerling stockings were initiated in 2009. The 2010 year class comprised the majority (79%) of the walleye sample in 2012 and averaged about 13.5 inches in length but ranged from 12 to 16 inches. That 2010 year class will certainly provide the bulk of the walleye catch and harvest in 2013. Early spring fishing should produce good catches of fish just under the 15-inch minimum length but that should improve into late spring as many of the fish recruit to harvestable size. Based on the survey data from the last several years, it certainly appears that stocking walleye fingerlings is improving walleye densities at Davis Creek.



## White Bass

The 2011 white bass catch was the highest in ten years and it appeared as though anglers took advantage. The catch rate dropped to about 20 per net in 2012 but the majority of fish were over 9 inches in length which should provide for some harvest opportunity in 2013. Fish were captured in all size categories including a decent number of young-of-the-year that should recruit and provide some good opportunities for white bass in Davis Creek down the road. Abundant prey in the form of age 0 gizzard shad have led to good growth rates for white bass the last couple of years.

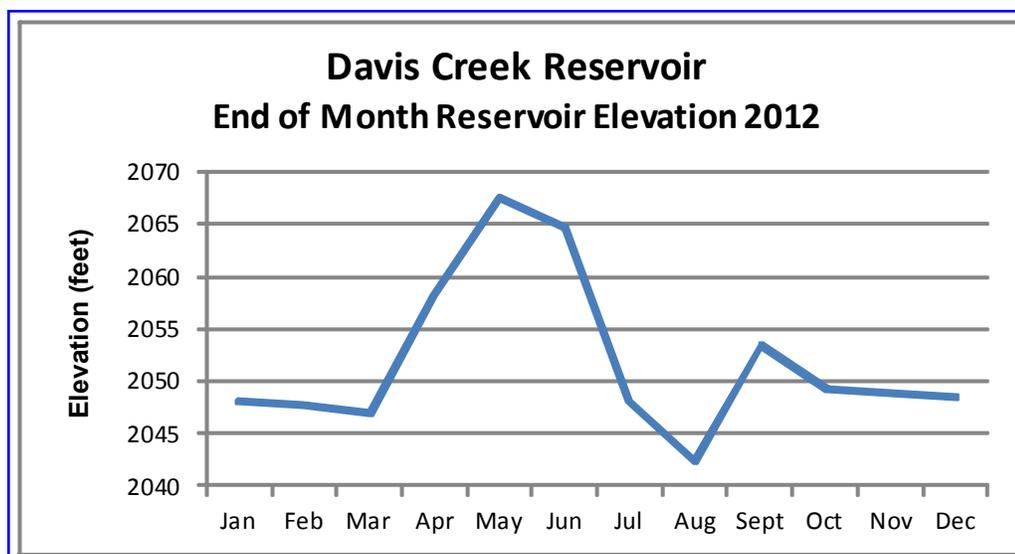


## Wipers

Wipers were stocked in Davis Creek Reservoir in 2009 and 2010. Representatives from both year classes were collected during 2012 sampling efforts. The catch rate was just over 9 per net and almost half of them were over 15 inches. Wipers are being stocked to utilize abundant prey species available in Davis Creek Reservoir and to provide additional angling opportunities. Their abundance has increased since stocking was initiated. The mean catch rates were 1, 4.5, and 9 per net in 2009, 2011, and 2012, respectively.

## Additional Information about Davis Creek Reservoir

Typical of irrigation reservoirs in Nebraska, fluctuating water levels have a large impact on available aquatic habitat at Davis Creek Reservoir. Shoreline habitat is best when the reservoir is near conservation pool and reduced when the reservoir is low in the fall and winter. The addition of deep water habitat structures may improve winter survival of shoreline-oriented fish species such as crappie. Current lake elevations can be found on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation website: [http://www.usbr.gov/gp-bin/arcweb\\_dane.pl](http://www.usbr.gov/gp-bin/arcweb_dane.pl)



Fish stocking in 2012 consisted of 6,520 channel catfish, 63,840 walleye fingerlings, and 7,790 spotted bass. Additionally, wipers are requested annually but are based on availability. The spotted bass are only being stocked for a couple of years to try to create a self-sustaining population.

Information regarding camping facilities at Davis Creek Reservoir can be found at Lower Loup NRD's website: <http://www.llnrd.org/recreation.html>

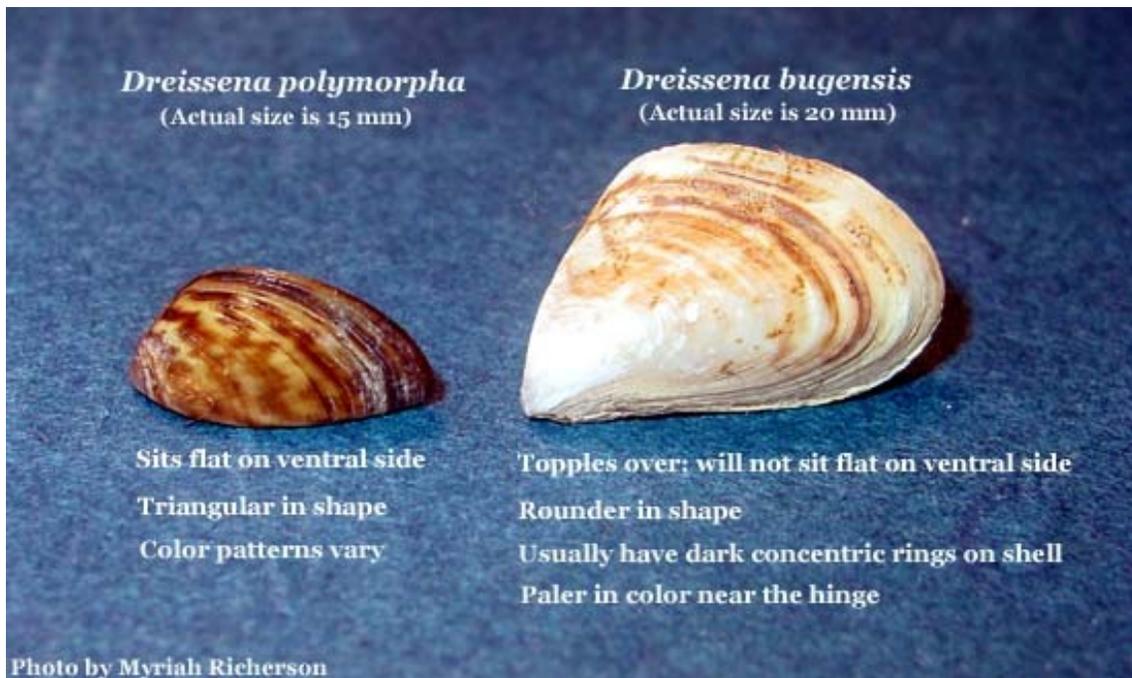


## Zebra & Quagga Mussels

Anglers and boaters need to be aware of zebra and quagga mussels while using Nebraska Lakes. While no mussels have been identified at Davis Creek Reservoir, zebra mussels have been found at Zorinsky Lake in Omaha and are present in several reservoirs in Kansas and Colorado. Monitoring was completed at several Nebraska reservoirs during 2011 and no evidence of mussels were found.

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/>.

**\*\*Special Note to Boat Anglers\*\***—>As of January 1, 2013, new regulations require that any boat that has been on a waterbody must drain all water from all compartments, equipment, or containers before leaving the launch area and that all aquatic vegetation must be removed from the boat and trailer before leaving the launch area. Additional information about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species can be found in the 2013-2014 Nebraska Fishing Guide (pp. 28-29) and at the University of Nebraska website listed above.



For additional information about fisheries management at Davis Creek Reservoir, please contact the NGPC Norfolk office at 402-370-3374, or by email at the addresses listed below.

District Manager: Jeff Schuckman, [jeff.schuckman@nebraska.gov](mailto:jeff.schuckman@nebraska.gov)  
Biologist: Phil Chvala, [phil.chvala@nebraska.gov](mailto:phil.chvala@nebraska.gov)