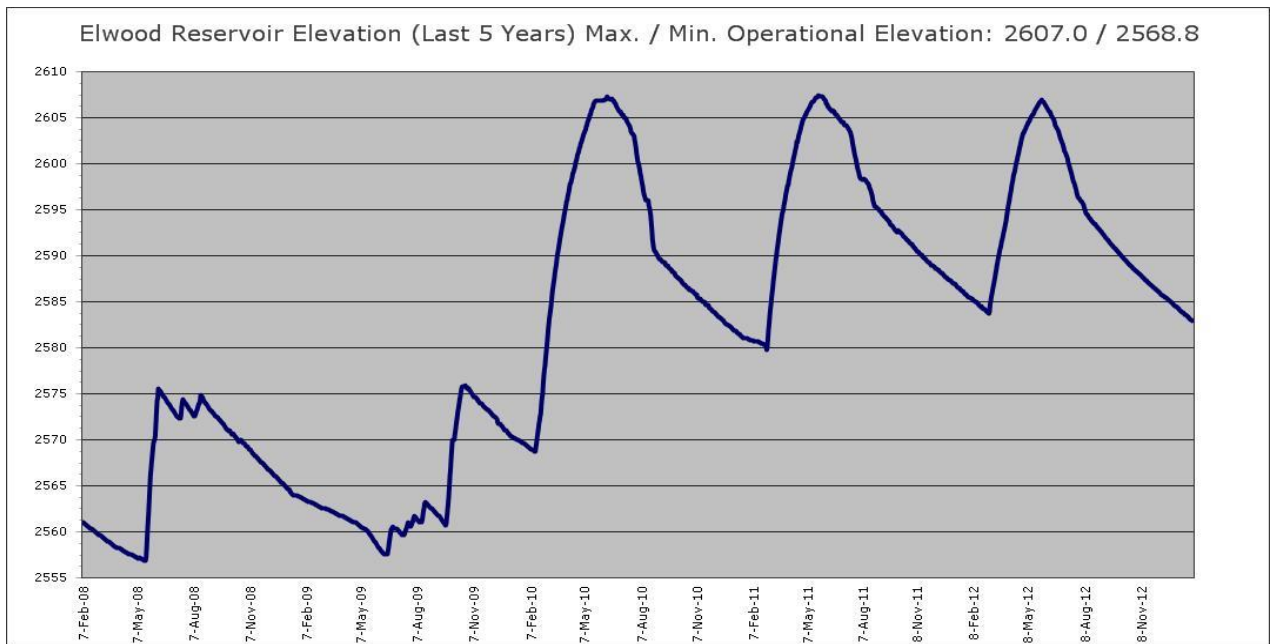


Elwood Reservoir 2012 Fall Survey Summary



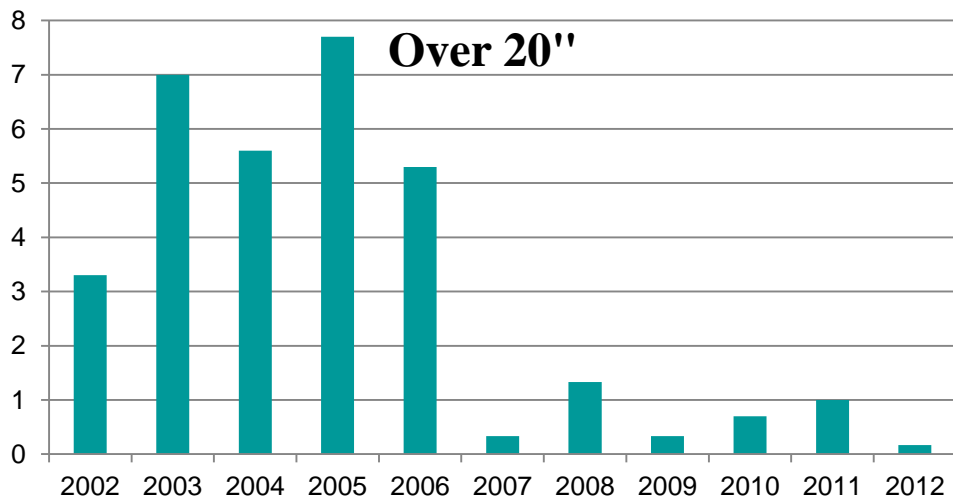
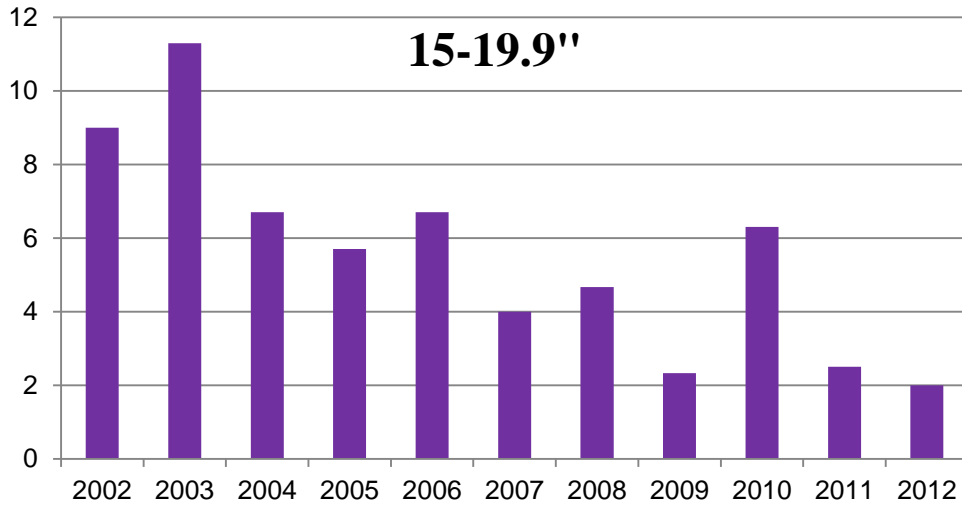
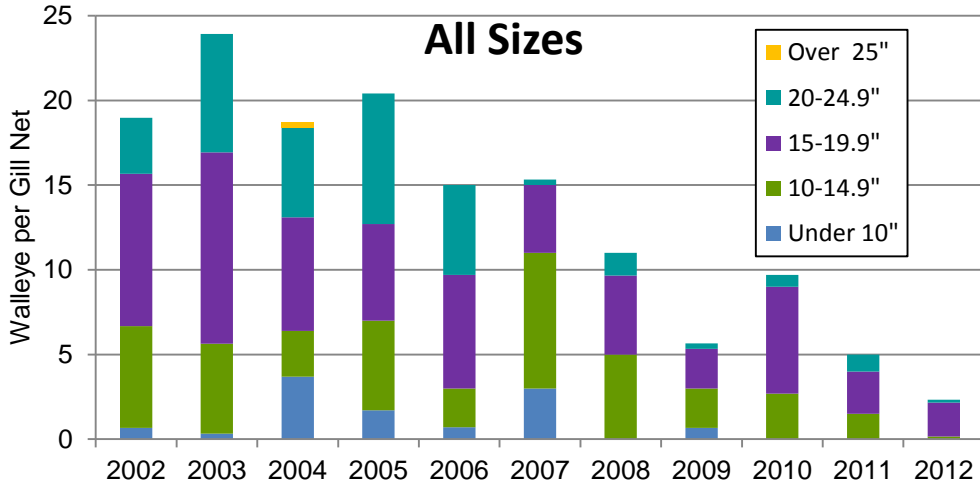
Jared Lorensen, Fisheries Biologist

Elwood Reservoir is utilized by Central Nebraska Irrigation & Public Power District for regulation of irrigation water. After several years of low water conditions, Elwood has filled to conservation pool during each spring since 2010. This occurrence floods approximately 500-600 acres of shoreline and it is expected to fill again in 2013. Drought conditions may influence this spring's rise and the summer drawdown. Track water elevation changes at http://www.cnppid.com/Elevation_Flows2.htm.



The fishery of Elwood Reservoir is sampled every fall using experimental gill nets, a method commonly used to sample species found primarily in open water. These nets are made of clear monofilament mesh strung between a weighted line and a floating line. Gill nets create an invisible wall in the water column that fish cannot sense so they are entangled by their gills as they attempt to move through this mesh. Data collected from these surveys allow biologists to evaluate the population density, size structure, and growth rates for several species. This data provides valuable information to guide decision making scenarios that include fish species stocked, stocking rates and fishing regulations. This information also assists Game and Parks staff in guiding anglers to waterbodies that have the desired populations for fishing.

Walleye



The walleye population declined during the low water years preceding 2010 due to poor habitat availability, reduced prey populations and angling mortality. Since the return of better habitat, survey data has not indicated the desired walleye population response. Only two walleye were sampled per gill net in 2012. More time may be needed before walleye recruit into the population, the survey gear and the expanded habitat. Walleye fingerlings (1.3") were stocked at an approximate rate of 116 per surface acre for a total of 133,595 in 2012. Stockings of 133,000 fingerlings and 1.33 million fry are requested for 2013. In addition to walleye stockings, adult gizzard shad will be collected prior to their spawning season and stocked into Elwood to supplement the existing prey. These additional stockings of walleye fry and gizzard shad are aimed at regaining the walleye population.

Another part of the walleye recovery effort includes a **new harvest regulation** that took effect **January 1st 2013**. This new regulation replaces the protected slot limit (18-24") that was in effect from 2003 through 2012 and is exactly the same as the regulation for walleye at Merritt, Calamus and Harlan reservoirs. A daily bag limit of four walleye may include one walleye from 15 to 18", and three or four longer than 18" and only one 22" or longer in the daily bag. The primary objective is to protect walleye through age three, thereby increasing abundance of larger fish. This regulation will be evaluated and future regulation changes will be dependent on the response of the walleye population to this regulation along with water levels and operation of the reservoir. For more information concerning regulations consult the 2013-14 Fishing Guide at <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/guides/fishguide/pdf/FishGuide.pdf>.

The other rule change that affects Elwood anglers is the statewide striped, hybrid & white bass one-over length daily bag limit regulation. As of January 1, 2013 only one striped, hybrid or white bass may be kept over 16 inches. This regulation change was made to decrease harvest of hybrid striped bass greater than 16 inches.



ATTENTION ANGLERS

Special Regulations for Elwood Reservoir



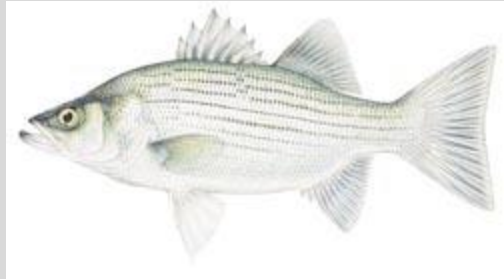
Walleye

Daily bag limit of four (4) walleye may include:

One walleye from 15 through 18 inches

Three OR four walleye over 18 inches

No more than one walleye over 22 inches

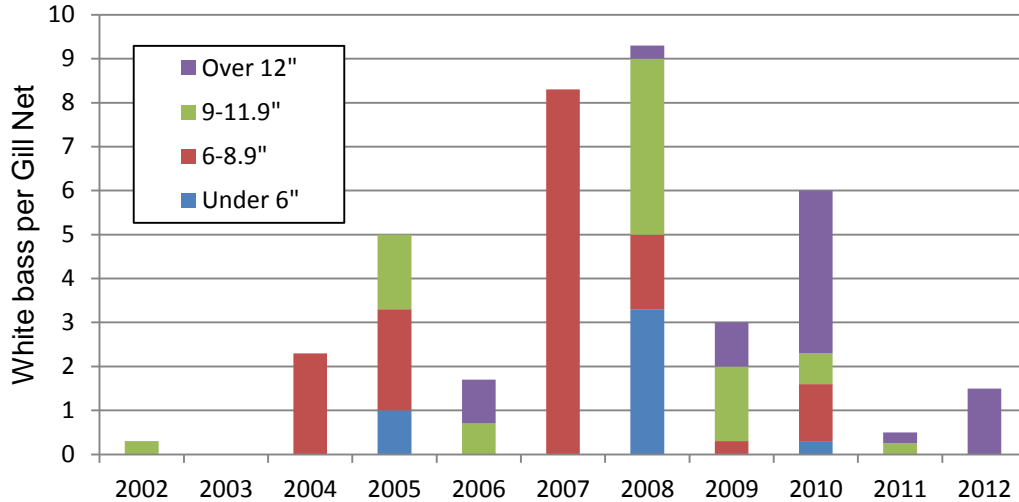


White bass / Wipers

Daily bag limit of three (3) fish (combined)

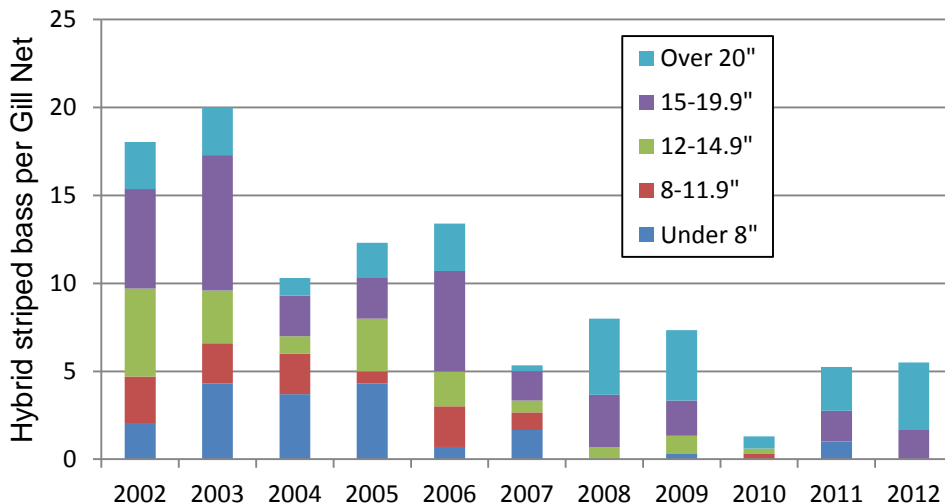
No more than one fish over 16 inches in daily bag

White bass



There has been a resurgence of white bass since 2003 but recent survey data does not show it. White bass survey data is inconsistent from year to year in many reservoir surveys due to their schooling behavior. The white bass population is likely still rebounding and growing into its expanded habitat. White bass (12"+) will be available for anglers in 2013. The white bass regulation at Elwood includes a daily bag limit of 3 (in conjunction with hybrid striped bass) with only one greater than 16".

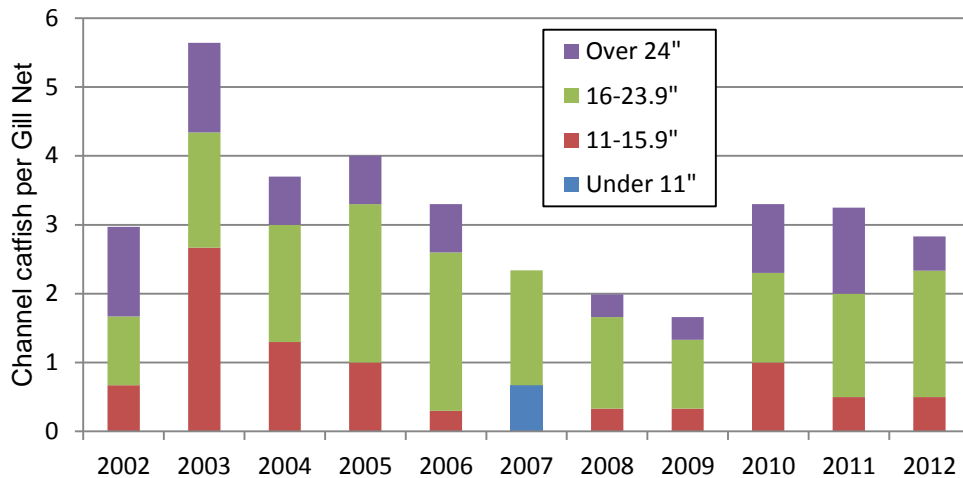
Hybrid striped bass



The declining hybrid striped bass population observed since 2003 can be attributed to poor water conditions from 2004 through 2009. The 2012 survey data may indicate a slight increase with approximately five hybrids captured per gill net with a mean length of 22" during 2012. These fish represented two length groups and six age groups ranging from age 2-8. Continuation of improved water levels will contribute to an improved fishery. Although this population has declined, it will provide a good fishery in 2013. Hybrid stocking is planned for 2013 with 6,650 fingerlings requested.

The hybrid striped bass regulation at Elwood includes a daily bag limit of 3 (in conjunction with white bass) of 15 with only one greater than 16".

Channel catfish



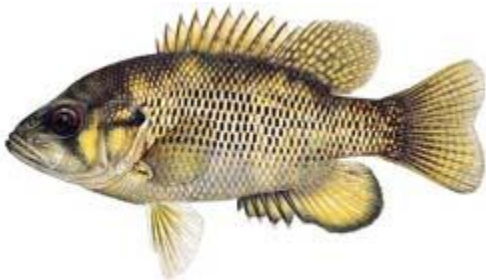
Channel catfish survey data was similar to that observed in 2011. The current population appears to be the strongest observed since 2006. Improved water levels and supplemental stockings in 2007 and 2009 are likely contributing to this observation. Average length of channel catfish sampled in 2012 was 20" with the largest being 29". Chances remain very good to catch a trophy sized channel catfish.

The channel catfish regulation at Elwood includes a daily bag limit of five.

Other

Muskellunge stockings were suspended during the low water period but resumed in 2011 when 664 12" muskellunge were stocked. A stocking of 450 12" muskellunge is requested for 2013. Assuming water operation remains normal, future management will involve maintenance stockings every other year. Muskellunge are regulated with a statewide 40" minimum length limit and daily bag limit of one.

To take advantage of Elwood's unique habitat, rock bass and spotted bass were stocked during 2012. A stocking request of 11,500 spotted bass is in place for 2013. For more stocking details investigate <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/fishing/guides/fishguide/FGstocking.asp>.



For additional information about the fishery of Elwood Reservoir please contact Brad Newcomb, District Mgr. 308-865-5310, brad.newcomb@nebraska.gov Jared Lorensen, Biologist 308-535-8025, jared.lorensen@nebraska.gov

Zebra and Quagga Mussels

Anglers and boaters need to be aware of zebra and quagga mussels while using Nebraska Lakes and continue to **Clean, Drain and Dry** their equipment and boats prior to launching at a new waterbody. While no mussels have been identified at Elwood Reservoir, zebra mussels have been found at Zorinsky Lake in Omaha and are present in several reservoirs in neighboring states. Monitoring was completed at several Nebraska reservoirs during 2011 and 2012. No evidence of zebra or quagga mussels was found.

Anglers and boaters using Nebraska waters this season need to be aware of **new regulations** dealing with aquatic invasive species. Starting January 1, 2013 the following regulations went into effect to help prevent the spread of unwanted species.

- Any watercraft that has been on a Nebraska waterbody must drain the lake water from their compartments, equipment or containers before leaving the launch area. It is illegal to dump baitfish into a Nebraska waterbody.
- Livewells need to be drained prior to leaving a launch area: plan ahead and bring a cooler for harvested fish.
- All aquatic vegetation from that waterbody attached to the watercraft and/or trailer must be removed before leaving the launch area.

For more information regarding these new regulations consult the 2013-2014 Fishing Guide at <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/guides/fishguide/pdf/FishGuide.pdf>.

Find more information concerning zebra and quagga mussels at <http://snr.unl.edu/invasives/> and <http://100thmeridian.org/zebras.asp>.

