

Sherman Reservoir

2016 Fall Survey Summary

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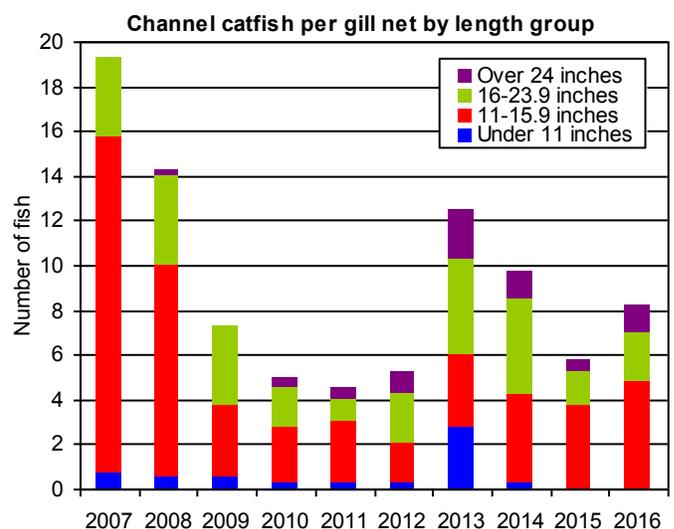
The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during 2016 at Sherman Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Major sportfish populations are sampled each year at Sherman using gill and frame nets. Gill nets are used to sample fish species 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

The gill net catch of channel catfish was slightly improved. Overall, catfish abundance has remained relatively stable at Sherman the past several years and while no catfish less than 11 inches were sampled, there was good representation of catfish in all the other size categories. Catfish ranged in length from 12 to 34 inches, with an average length of 17.2 inches.

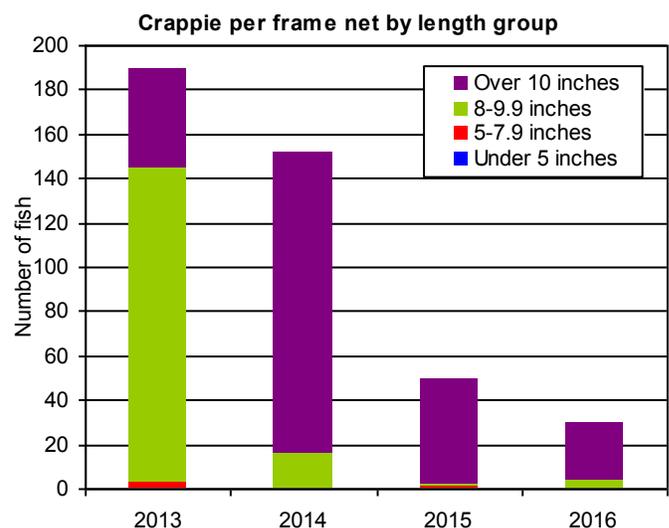
Catfish anglers should expect to find good catfishing opportunities during 2017, with a variety of sizes available.

The daily bag limit for channel catfish on Sherman Reservoir is five fish per day.



Crappie

The time of year crappie are sampled was recently changed from September to May. This change should allow for a better picture of the adult population, as spring sampling tends to capture the larger, breeding individuals of the population. These are also the same fish that anglers are targeting, so it should allow for better estimations of what is available for anglers to catch in the upcoming year. Sherman has had a high abundance of crappie larger than 10 inches the past several years. While currently lower than the high seen in 2014, the abundance of these larger fish has remained relatively stable. This has translated into excellent crappie fishing the past two years. Anglers should continue to find a good number of 10 to 12 inch crappie, but will likely encounter more "short" fish this year.



Crappie regulations for Sherman Reservoir include a 10-inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 15 fish.

Walleye

The walleye gill net catch remains stable at Sherman. The 2016 catch was 13 fish per net, slightly lower than the ten year average of 15.5 walleye per net.

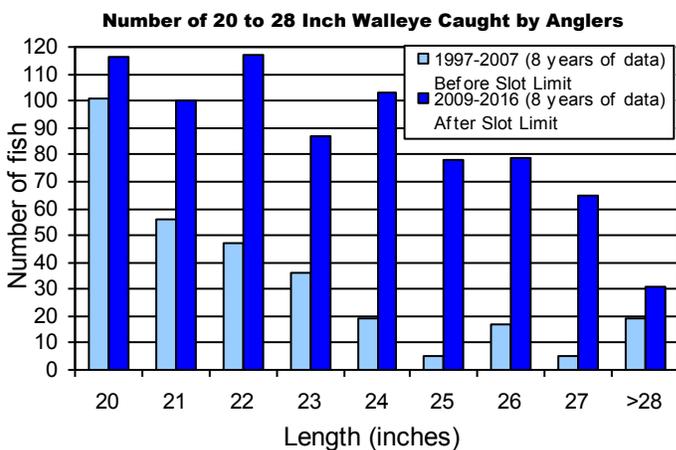
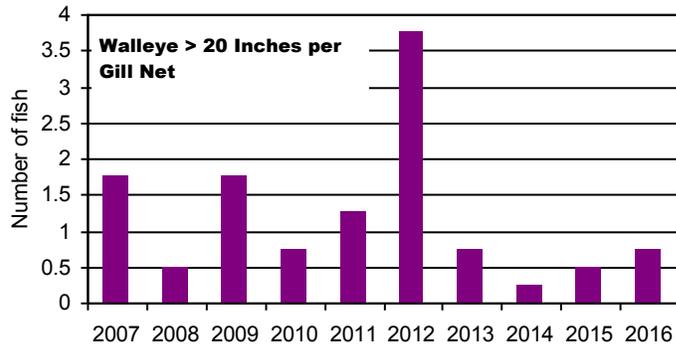
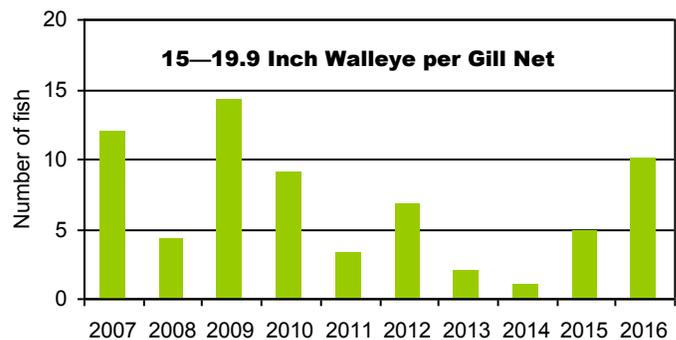
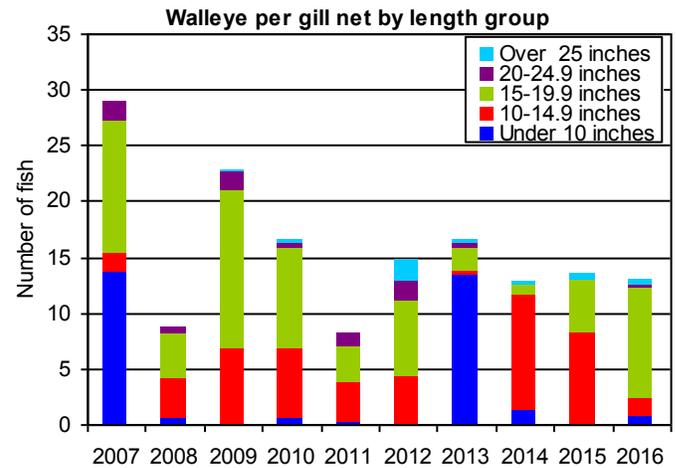
Walleye from the 2016 netting survey ranged from 7.5 to 27 inches, but most of the fish were less than 20 inches. The large 2013 and 2014 year-classes continue to make up the majority of the walleye catch, comprising 76% of the sample. The average length of walleye collected during the survey was 16.0 inches.

Current walleye regulations allow the harvest of two 15 to 19.9 inch walleye. Abundance of fish in this size category has improved the past two years due to successful 2013 and 2014 year-classes. Netting results indicate that 77% of the walleye population sampled at Sherman in 2016 were in the legal harvest slot. The catch of walleye less than 15 inches was lower than average. The 2015 year-class appears small and is not currently contributing much to the fishery. It is too early to determine success of the 2016 class, but at this point there appears to be good abundance of these fish.

Walleye over 20 inches continue to be difficult to capture utilizing standard fall gill nets. An increase in these larger fish has been noticed while collecting brood fish during the spring spawn collection. The data gathered from the annual angler survey also indicates an increase in the number of fish greater than 20 inches caught and released by anglers. Although fall gill nets are not showing an increase, the other sources of data indicate larger fish abundance has improved since the implementation of the slot regulation.

Walleye harvest hit a record high during 2016, as anglers took advantage of the influx of fish from the 2013 year-class. Sampling results indicate high abundance of harvestable fish present for the 2017 angling season, so the good fishing trend should continue. Big fish numbers are also slowly improving, allowing anglers the opportunity to catch a trophy quality fish.

The walleye regulation for Sherman includes a daily bag limit that can include two walleye between 15 inches and not greater than 20 inches and one walleye longer than 28 inches. There is a slot limit protecting walleye 20 through 28 inches.

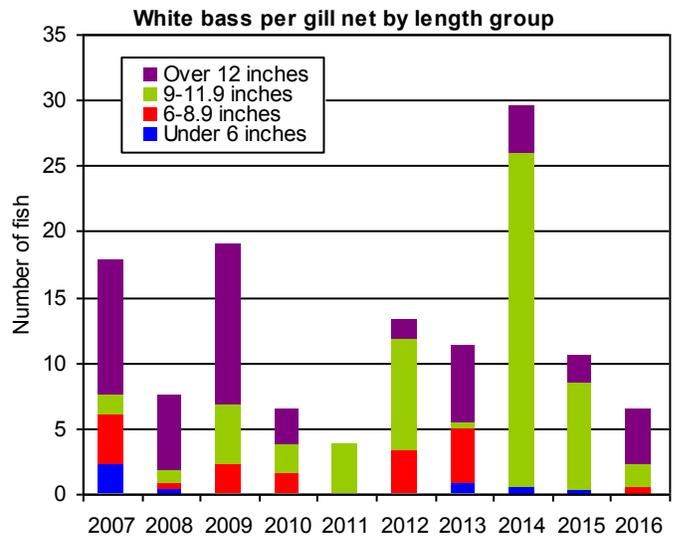


White Bass

White bass declined for the second year, as the catch of 6.5 fish per net was about half the ten year average catch of 12.5 fish per net. Fish from the large 2013 year-class contributed to slightly more than half of the sample. These fish range from 12 to 14 inches. Low abundance of smaller fish could have negative implications for future angling opportunities.

The average length of white bass sampled was 11.3 inches, while the largest fish were just over 13 inches.

White bass angling success has been good the past two seasons and has likely contributed to a decline in white bass abundance. Regardless, there was still good representation of fish over 12 inches, which should provide good angling opportunities in 2017.



The statewide daily bag limit for white bass is 15 fish per day, with only one fish greater than 16 inches.

Sherman Reservoir — Additional Information

Fisheries Division will be conducting walleye spawn collection at Sherman during 2017. Depending on weather conditions, spawn collection begins 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 2016, fisheries staff collected approximately 340 female and 1,000 male walleye for spawning purposes during the five day operation. Eggs and milt were collected from the brood fish and the fish were then returned to the lake. In all, crews collected approximately 241 quarts of eggs from Sherman. Walleye eggs were also collected at Merritt Reservoir and Lake McConaughy. Anglers should also be aware that the water within 150 feet of the dam and the walleye spawning reefs near the west end of the dam are closed to all fishing from sunset to sunrise beginning April 1 and ending April 20.



Scheduled fish stockings for 2017 include 284,000 walleye fingerlings during June.

A detailed bathymetric map of Sherman Reservoir can be found on Nebraska Game and Parks Commission website: <http://maps.outdoornebraska.gov/lakemaps/>

An angler survey will once again be completed at Sherman Reservoir from April through October 2017. This survey is done in cooperation with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 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. Preliminary results from the 2016 angler survey indicated that there were 21,054 angler trips made to Sherman Reservoir, resulting in over 98,000 hours of fishing pressure during the seven month survey period. Catch of various game fish species can be seen in the table below.

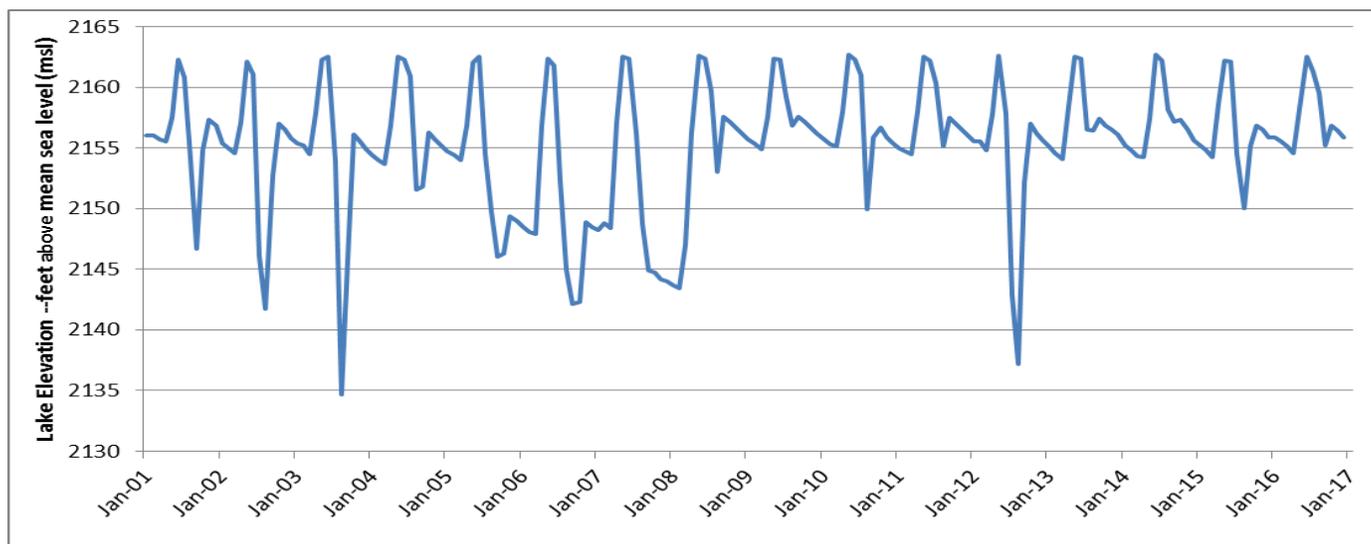
| Species | Harvested | | Released | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Channel catfish | 2,312 | (904) | 1,870 | (698) |
| Northern Pike | 20 | (0) | 76 | (382) |
| White bass | 5,774 | (10,911) | 5,414 | (7,744) |
| Crappie | 11,030 | (18,045) | 11,577 | (6,659) |
| Walleye | 8,071 | (1,767) | 25,409 | (21,488) |

() number in parenthesis represent fish caught in 2015



Current lake elevations can be found on Farwell Irrigation District's website: <http://www.farwellid.org/index.html>. Wet conditions during the summer of 2016 resulted in the lake only dropping approximately 8 feet during the irrigation season.

Sherman - End of Month Elevations 2001-2016



Aquatic Invasive Species – Zebra Mussels

Anglers and recreational boaters should be aware of the threat of zebra and quagga mussels while using Nebraska waters. Currently in Nebraska, zebra mussels have been documented at Offutt Air Force Base, the Missouri River, and Lewis and Clark Lake. Invasive mussels have been documented in most of Nebraska's neighboring states, including over 20 locations in Kansas. Monthly monitoring completed at many Nebraska reservoirs during the last five years have not shown any new evidence of zebra mussels.

Anglers and boaters using Nebraska waters need to be aware of **current regulations** dealing with aquatic invasive species. The following regulations are in effect to help prevent the spread or introduction of unwanted species in Nebraska waters.

- 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.
- It is unlawful to arrive at or leave any waterbody in Nebraska with water other than from a domestic source (such as a water supply system, well, or bottled), except for fire-fighting purposes. This applies especially to boats, their compartments, equipment or containers that may hold water.

A good source of information about invasive species can be found on the University of Nebraska's Invasive Species Project website: <http://neinvasives.com/resources/stop-aquatic-hitchhikers/>

Technicians have been hired the past few years to conduct interviews of boaters and help provide more information about aquatic invasive species.



Comparison of quagga (left) and zebra (right) mussel. Michigan Sea Grant.

Attention motorboat owners operating in Nebraska in 2017:



Boaters whose motorized watercraft are registered in any state other than Nebraska will be required to display a \$15 Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp each year they boat in Nebraska.

This stamp will help fund Aquatic Invasive Species education and inspection programs.

- Note that boat inspections to launch in Nebraska are NOT mandatory at this time.
- This applies to all *motorized* watercraft. Non-motorized craft are exempt.
- Personal watercraft (Jet Ski, Waverunner, Sea Doo, etc.) are required to have this stamp.
- Boats registered in Nebraska pay the fee via their registrations and are exempt from displaying the sticker.

This stamp is available online at www.outdoornebraska.org



From the “Buy A Permit” page, look for this link: 

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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Biologist: Brad Eifert, brad.eifert@nebraska.gov