

Sherman Reservoir Fisheries Update — Spring 2025

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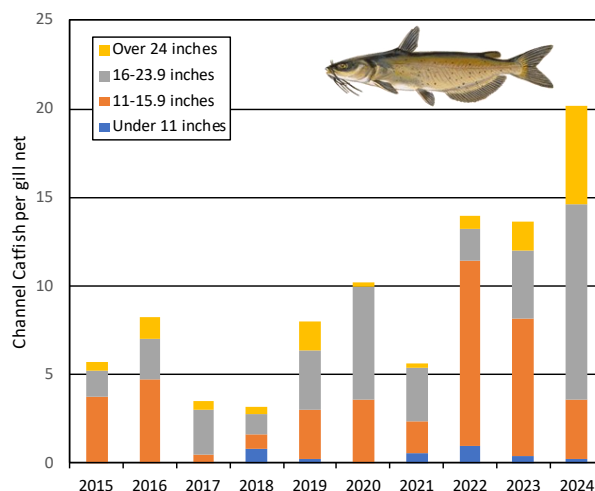
The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during 2024 at Sherman Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Major sportfish populations are sampled each year at Sherman using gill and frame nets. Gill nets are used to sample fish species found primarily in open water, such as walleye and white bass, 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 at Sherman has surged, with the fourth highest catch rate of 20.2 catfish per net. It comes as no surprise that the 2024 catch was above the ten year average of 9.2 fish per net. This increase is likely tied to the success of the 2021 and 2023 stockings. The 2024 fall survey also included an increase in abundance of catfish over 16 inches. Catfish collected in the netting survey ranged in length from 9.4 to 33.9 inches and had an average length of 20 inches.

Catfish anglers should continue to experience good catfish angling and increased opportunities to catch a trophy at Sherman Reservoir during 2025.

Channel Catfish per gill net by length group



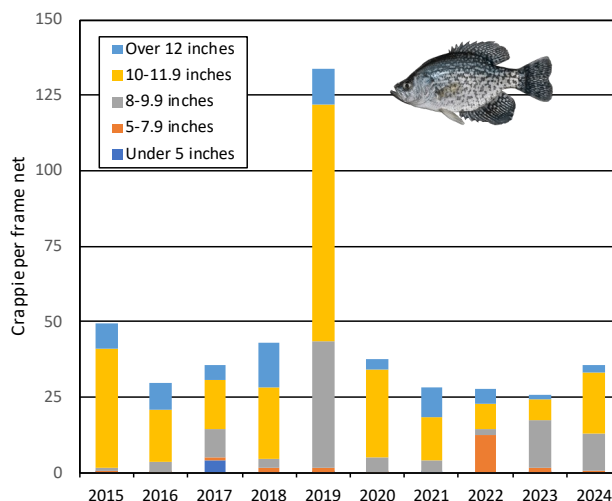
The daily bag limit for channel catfish on Sherman Reservoir is five fish per day, with only one fish greater than 30 inches.

Crappie

Aside from the 2019 catch of 133.8 per net, spring frame net catches of crappie have remained fairly consistent the last 10 years, and the 2024 catch was no exception at 35.9 crappie per net. Crappie collected in the spring netting survey ranged in length from 5.9 to 13.4 inches with an average length of 10 inches. Approximately 65% of the spring catch was comprised of fish larger than 10 inches. Angler surveys conducted at Sherman in 2024 indicated that catch and harvest of crappie was at a 20 year high with an estimated 40,178 crappie harvested.

Anglers should expect similar catch rates of crappie in 2025 to previous years, but anglers may find fewer fish of harvestable size.

Crappie per frame net by length group



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

Walleye

Walleye catch from the fall gill netting survey was on the low end of the spectrum with 7.4 fish per net sampled. In comparison, the ten year average gill net catch at Sherman is 11 walleye per net. Walleye captured in the 2024 fall gill netting survey ranged from 10.2 to 25.6 inches with an average length of 16.7 inches.

Current regulations only allow the harvest of 15 to 19.9 inch walleye at Sherman Reservoir. Since this regulation was implemented in 2009, the yearly net catch of 15 to 19.9-inch walleye has averaged 5.6 fish per net. The 2024 catch of 2 fish per net was the lowest observed since 2014. This decline is likely due to the combination of a poor 2021 year-class and high angling related mortality in previous years. However, the increased abundance of 10 to 15 inch fish is expected to enhance angling opportunities in the coming years.

The gill net catch of walleye greater than 20 inches was almost identical to that of 2023 with a catch of 2.2 fish per net. The catch of walleye greater than 20 inches continues to improve at Sherman, reflecting the positive impact of the slot limit regulation enacted in 2009. This trend shows a steady recovery in larger fish abundance, providing anglers with more opportunities to catch trophy sized walleye.

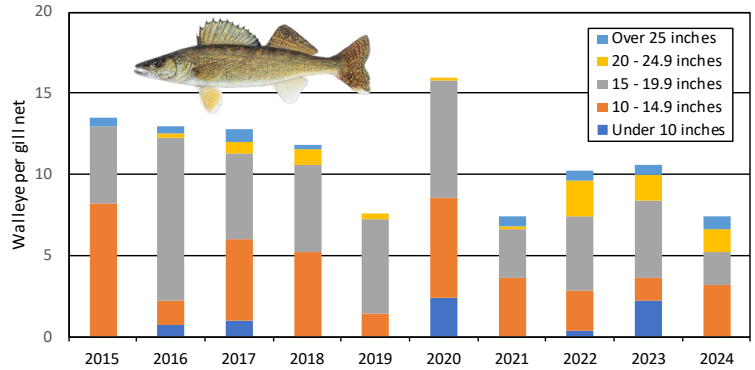
There were nine age-classes of walleye sampled: age-1 comprised 41% of the sample and age-2 fish made up 24%. Age-3 and age-4 fish made up about 15% of the sampled fish. Fish older than age-5 comprised 20% of the catch.

In 2024, the stock contribution of fry and fingerling walleye was assessed by marking them with oxytetracycline (OTC). A sample of 139 young-of-the-year fish were collected in the fall of 2024, revealing that 12% were stocked as fry, 13% as fingerlings, and 75% were from natural recruitment. No difference in stock contribution was found between fish from the reservoir and canal.

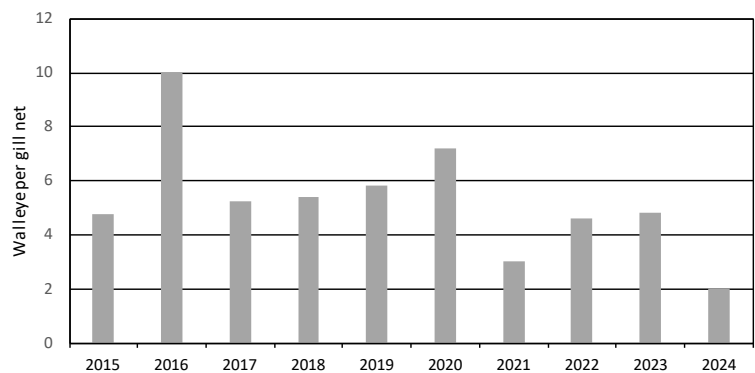
Overall, despite a relatively low catch of walleye in the 15 to 19.9-inch range at Sherman Reservoir, walleye abundance appears to be stable. Anglers targeting walleye at Sherman Reservoir can expect catch rates similar to those seen in 2024, with good opportunities to land larger fish.

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.

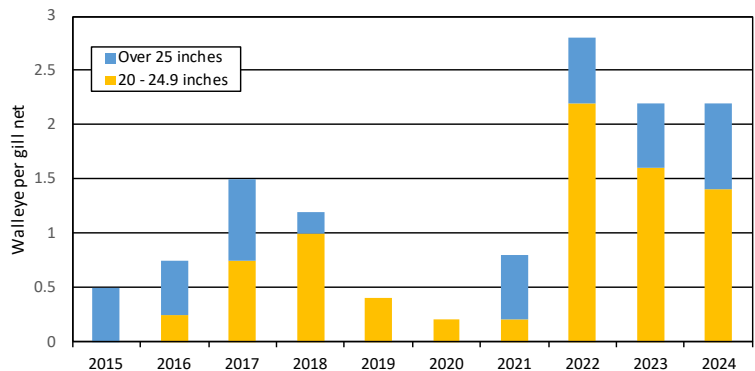
Walleye per gill net by length group



Walleye 15-19 inches long per gill net



Walleye over 20 inches per gill net

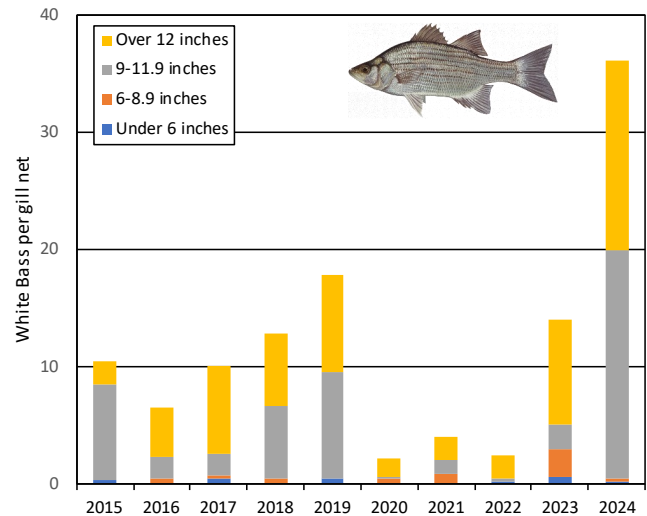


White Bass

White bass catch during the 2024 fall gill netting survey was at a historical high with a catch of 36.2 fish per net. Approximately 25 fish per net higher than the ten year average of 11.6 fish per net. The catch was comprised primarily of fish over 9 inches. Sizes ranged from 5.5 to 16.1 inches and had an average length of 11.7 inches. Eleven age-classes of white bass were sampled with the average age being 3 years. Forty-five percent of the catch consisted of white bass larger than 12 inches. However, the 2024 fall survey found a smaller number of 6 to 9 inch white bass compared to the previous 2023 catch.

With a high abundance of catchable white bass, anglers should expect improved white bass fishing at Sherman Reservoir in 2025.

White Bas per gill net by length group



The statewide daily bag limit for white bass is 15 fish per day, with only one fish greater than 18 inches.

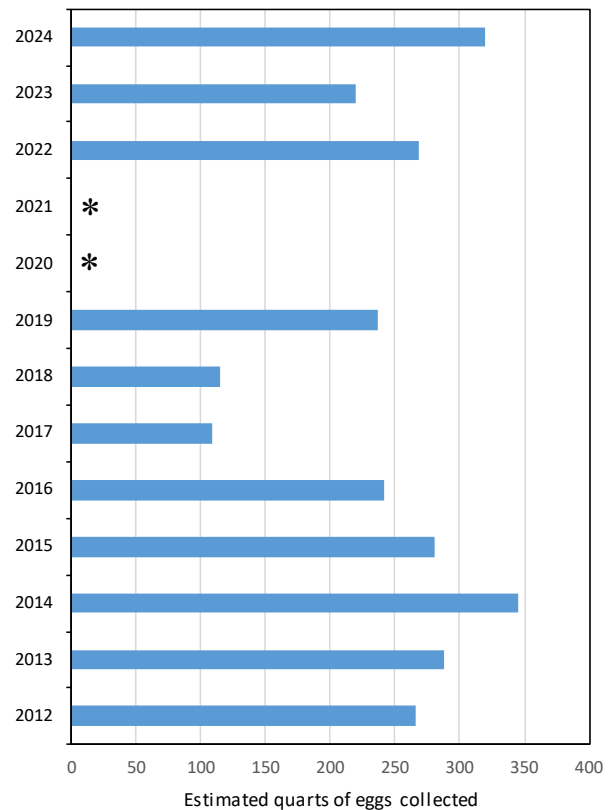
Sherman Reservoir — Additional Information

Walleye eggs were collected at Sherman the past 3 years and spawn operations are planned for 2025. Female walleye are collected using monofilament nylon gill nets during early April. Typically, eight gill nets are set at sunset and reset twice more per night. Female catch was good with a total of 396 fish caught. One-hundred and forty of the females caught were successfully spawned to produce approximately 319 quarts of walleye eggs.

Anglers are reminded 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 1st and ending April 20th.

Walleye are the only fish species scheduled for stocking at Sherman in 2025 and the stocking strategy will differ from previous years. Reviews of the stock contribution from both fry and fingerling stockings has lead to the decision to focus solely on fingerlings in 2025. Tentative plans call for the stocking of 142,000 fingerlings (50 per acre) in early June.

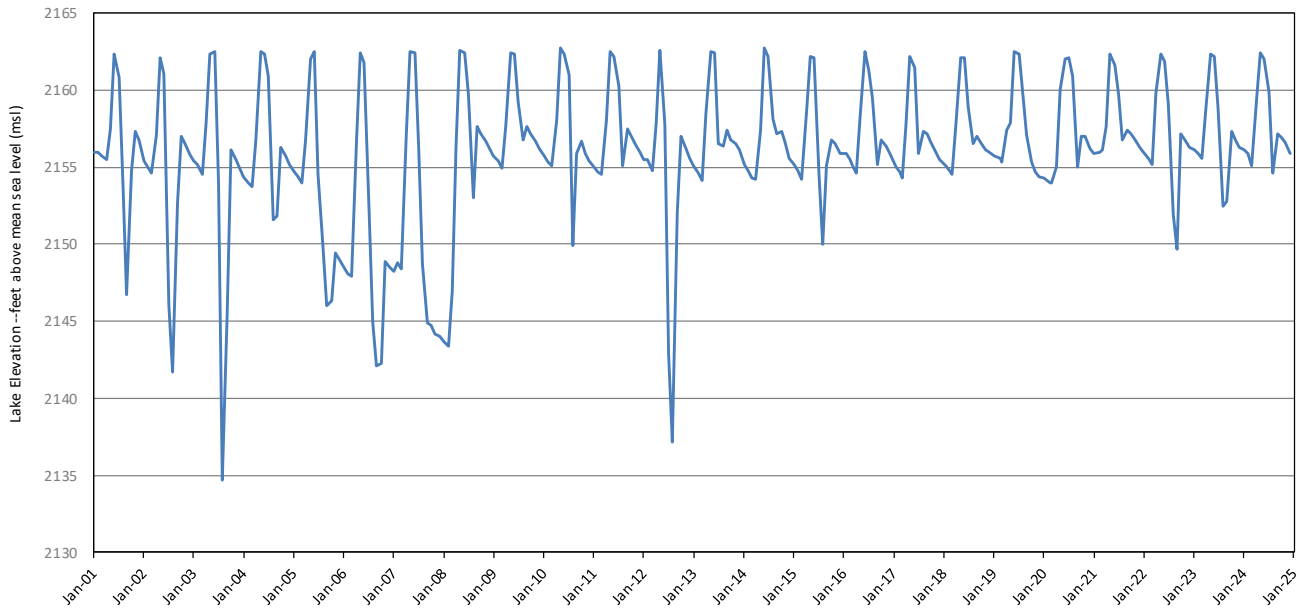
Sherman Walleye Spawn Eggs Collected 2012 - 2024



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

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Sherman End of Month Elevations 2001—2025



Maximum elevation for 2024 was 2,162.4 feet, which was held in the reservoir from May 15 through June 25th. Irrigation drawdown began on June 30th and water dropped to a low elevation of 2,152.5 feet on September 12th. Total drawdown for the 2024 irrigation season was 9.9 feet.

Boaters and anglers are reminded to remain vigilant when it comes to aquatic invasive species, especially zebra mussels. **Boaters are required to clean, drain, and dry their boats between lake visits.** The Game and Parks Commission conducts monthly veliger sampling at Sherman Reservoir through the summer months to look for mussels and other invasive species. They have not been detected in the reservoir. Anglers and boaters are reminded to educate themselves on the regulations regarding invasive species and should take the necessary precautions to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species. Information regarding aquatic invasive species and the regulations that boaters and anglers must follow can be found at <http://outdoornebraska.gov/aquaticinvasivespecies/>



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



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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