

# Sherman Reservoir

## Fisheries Update — Spring 2021

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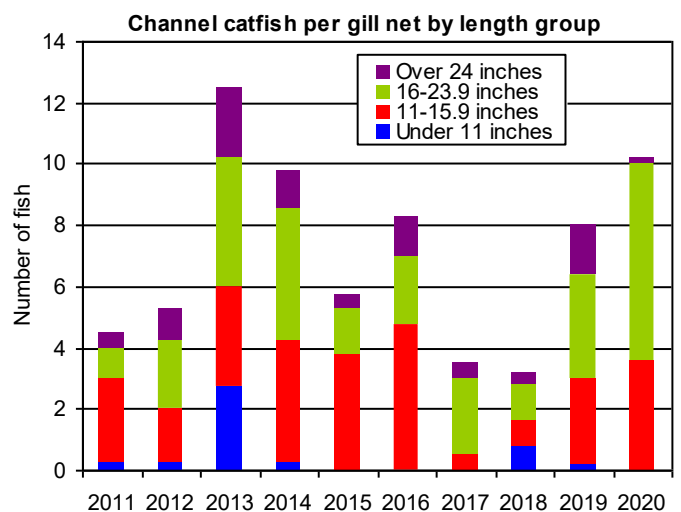
The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during 2020 at Sherman Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Major sportfish populations are sampled each year at Sherman using gill and frame nets. Gill nets are used to sample fish species 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

Following a couple years of low catch rates, channel catfish abundance has been on an upward trend the past two years. The 2020 catch of 10.2 catfish/net was slightly higher than the ten year average gill net catch of 7.1 fish/net. An increase was seen in 11 to 24 inch fish, but there was a small decline in the abundance of fish greater than 24 inches. Catfish collected in the netting survey ranged in length from 11.5 to 27.0 inches, with an average length of 18.2 inches.

Catfish anglers should continue to see good angling opportunities at Sherman Reservoir during 2021, with most fish ranging from 15 to 22 inches.

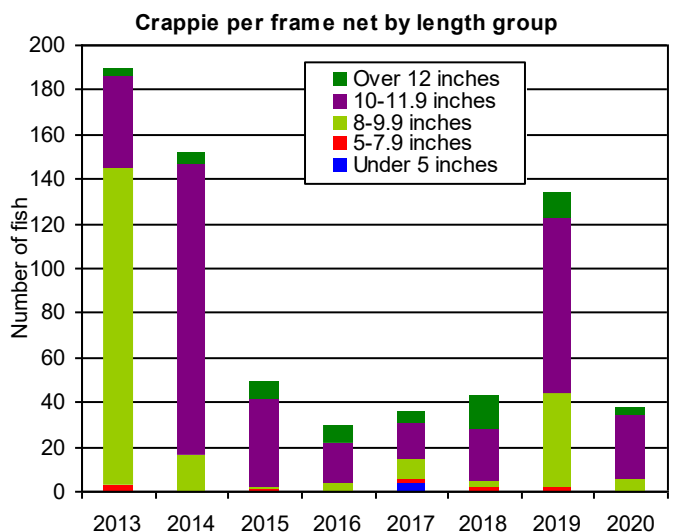
The daily bag limit for channel catfish on Sherman Reservoir is five fish per day.



### Crappie

The spring frame net catch of crappie has shown a wide range of variation during the past eight years, ranging from a high of 189 to a low of 29 fish/net. The 2020 catch fell into the low range as 37 fish/net were sampled. While the majority of the crappie ranged from 9 to 11 inches, fish ranging from 6.5 to 14.5 inches were sampled. The average length of crappie collected in the survey was 10.7 inches. Although the survey net catches have been highly variable, the Sherman crappie population has remained relatively stable the past ten years. Anglers have enjoyed excellent success in most years and in the past two years the average size of harvested fish has been above average. It is expected that anglers may see slightly smaller crappie while fishing in 2021, but angling success should continue to be good.

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

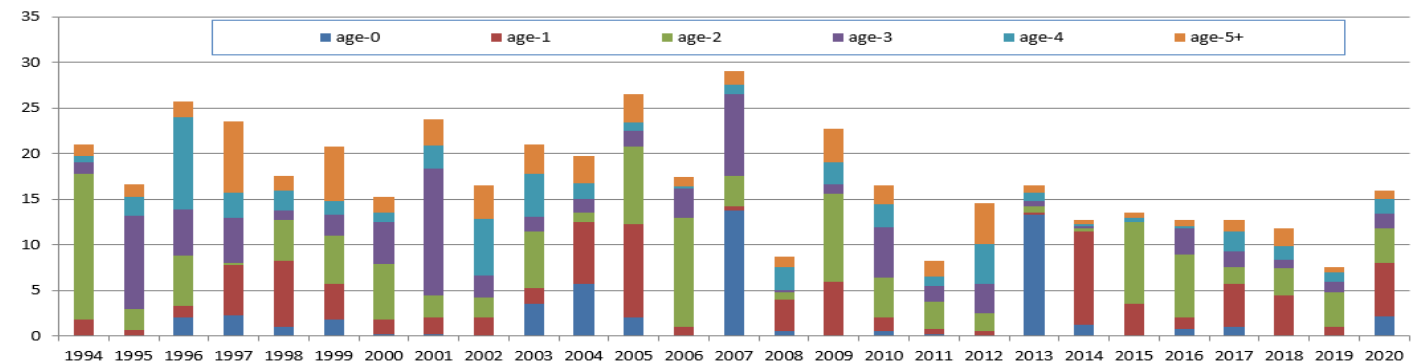
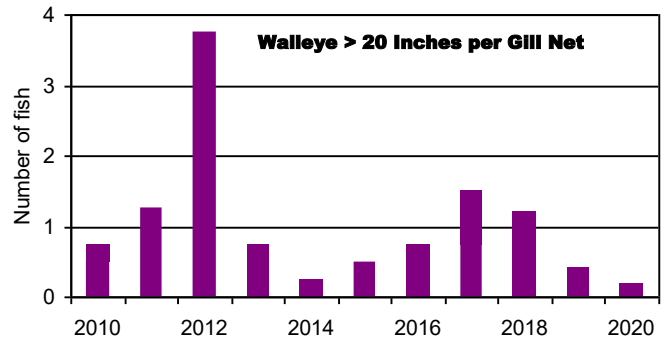
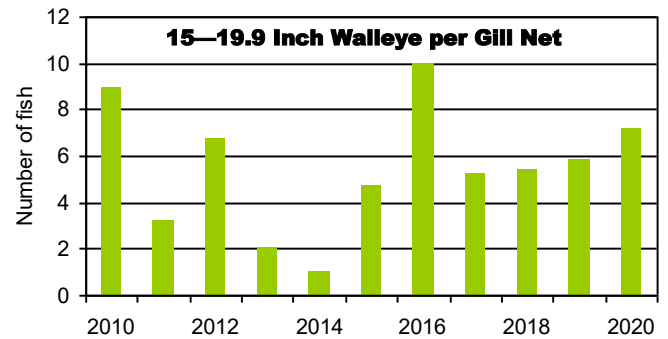
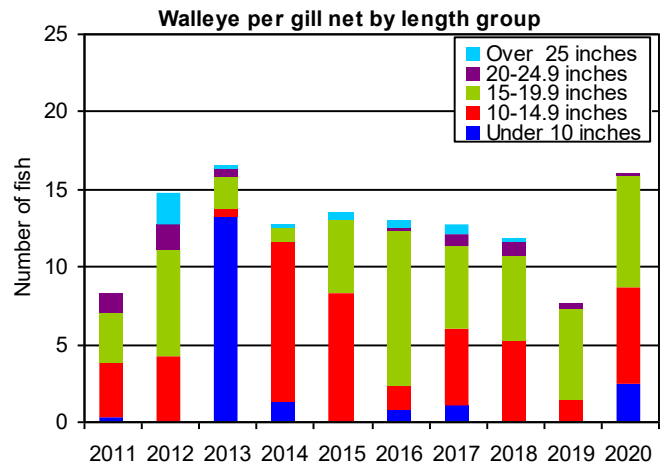


## Walleye

Walleye catch showed improvement in 2020, as 16.0 fish per net were sampled. In comparison, the ten year average catch is 12.7 walleye/net and the long term (31 years) average catch is 16.9 walleye/net.

Walleye captured in the 2020 gill netting survey ranged from 6.7 to 20.0 inches and the average length was 14.0 inches. There were six age classes of walleye sampled; age-1 comprised 36% of the sample, age-2 fish made up 24%, and age-0 fish were 14% of the total catch. The catch of young-of-the-year walleye was the best since 2013 and should translate to a strong year class of fish for future angling opportunities. Walleye age-3 and older comprised less than 5% of the walleye collected in the survey.

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 6.2 fish/net. The 2020 catch was slightly higher than average and was 7.2 fish/net. The gillnet catch of fish greater than 20 inches consisted of only one fish last fall, which translates to 0.2 fish/net. The average catch of walleye larger than 20 inches from 1990 to 2008 was 1.9 fish per net, while the average catch since the current size limit was enacted in 2009 has been 1.1 fish/net. While fall netting results have not indicated an increase in the abundance of walleye greater than 20 inches, angler surveys have documented that anglers are catching higher numbers of fish over 20 inches since the regulation change.

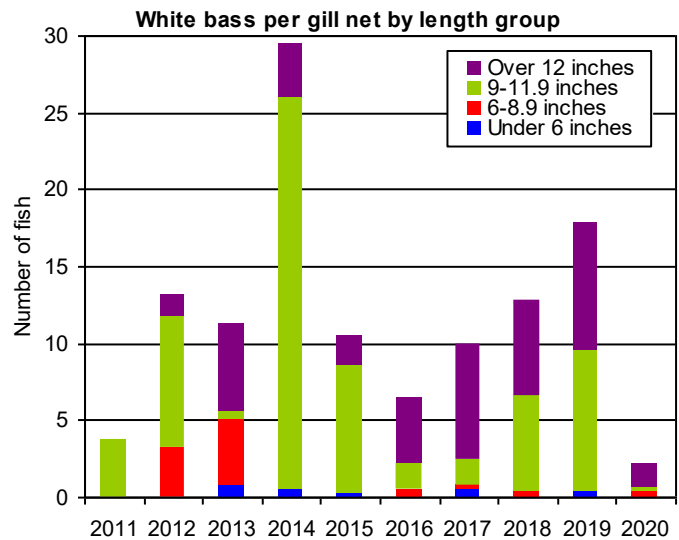


An increase in walleye abundance should allow for improved walleye angling opportunities in 2021, although anglers will probably see a high percentage of their catch being too small to legally harvest. The abundance of walleye in the harvest slot is similar to the past several years and should provide for good harvest opportunities. Large fish abundance remains somewhat of a mystery, but gill net catch the past three years indicates that abundance could be trending downward.

**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 abundance had been trending upward the past three years, but netting results from 2020 indicated a significant drop in population levels. The 2020 gill net catch was 2.2 fish/per net, the lowest documented since 2002 and well below the ten year average of 11.8 fish/net. Fish caught in the sample ranged from 6.5 to 14.5 inches and had an average length of 12.0 inches. While fish of several size groups were collected, the majority of the catch was greater than 12 inches. There appears to still be fair numbers of fish from the large 2015 and 2016 year-classes present in the population. Only a few small white bass were sampled, which could have negative implications for future white bass angling.



White bass anglers have experienced very good success the past few years, but anglers could see a decline in angling success during 2021. Although white bass numbers are down, there is still a fair number of larger fish present in the population which should provide good opportunity for harvestable fish.

**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

There were no walleye egg collection efforts completed at Sherman during 2020 due to concerns regarding the Covid-19 virus. A one day effort of collecting walleye eggs at Lake McConaughy allowed for walleye fingerlings to be stocked at most Nebraska reservoirs, including Sherman during 2020. At this point, there are no plans to collect walleye eggs at Sherman Reservoir during 2021.

Anglers should 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.

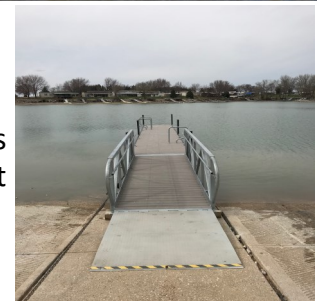
Scheduled fish stockings for 2021 include 284,000 walleye fingerlings which will be stocked during June.

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

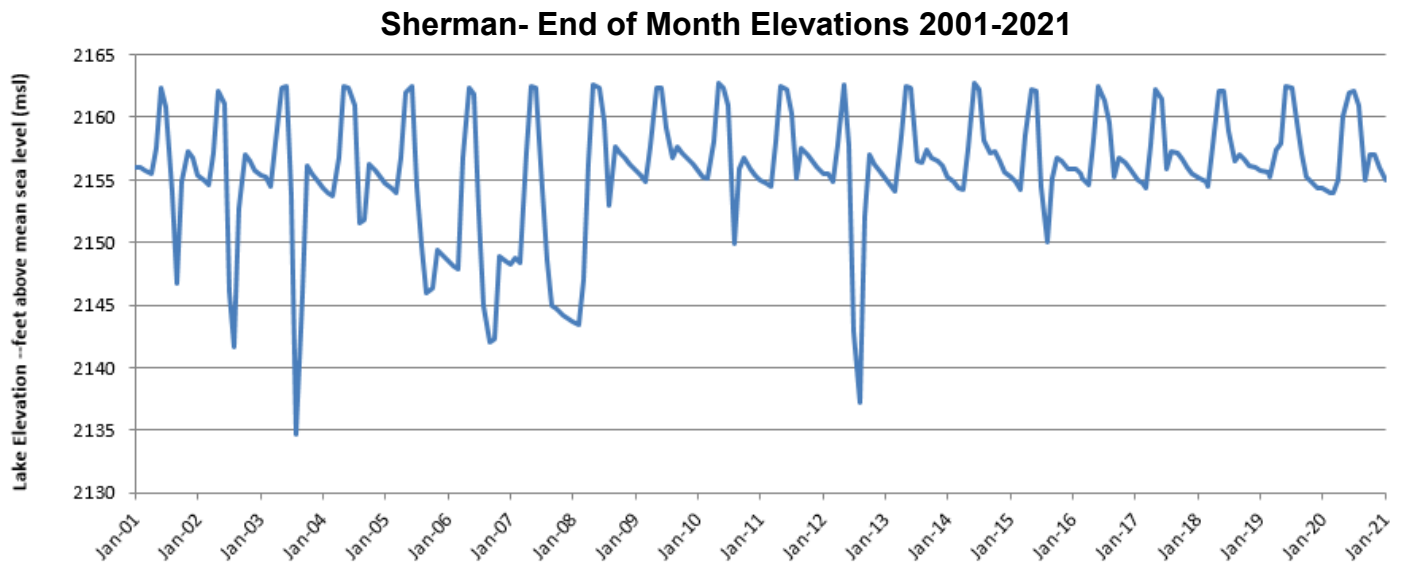
The wave attenuator located in the mouth of the marina bay was repaired and re-installed during the spring of 2020. The attenuator had been removed in 2018 for extensive repairs. Originally installed in 2007, the attenuator has done a good job of reducing wave action in Marina Bay, making it a safer place for boaters during times when the wind blows from the west or southwest.



New boat docks were installed at the Marina Bay and Thunderbay boat ramps during 2020. Plans are in the works to replace the boat dock at the Trail 10 boat ramp during 2021.



Current lake elevations can be found on Farwell Irrigation District's website: <http://www.farwellid.org/index.html>. Lake levels remained fairly constant during the summer of 2020 with the maximum drawdown of approximately eight feet occurring during early September.



Anglers and recreational boaters should be aware of the threat of zebra and quagga mussels while using Nebraska waters. To date, neither of these invasive mussels have been documented in Sherman Reservoir. Currently they are found in Lewis and Clark Reservoir, the Missouri River, and at Offutt Air Force Base Lake. In addition, Glenn Cunningham and Carter Lake near Omaha are listed as suspect water bodies. Sampling is routinely conducted at Sherman and other Nebraska reservoirs to look for invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species. Many reservoirs in surrounding states are already infested with zebras mussels, including over 20 reservoirs in Kansas and several in South Dakota and Iowa. Boaters have the responsibility to educate themselves on aquatic invasive species to help prevent the spread. Additional information can be found online at: <http://neinvasives.com>. Non resident boaters are reminded that they are required to purchase an AIS sticker before launching their boats on Nebraska waters.



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



**Clean, Drain, and Dry all equipment before moving from one waterbody to the next.**



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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