

# Swanson Reservoir

# NEBRASKA

## 2021 Survey Summary – GAME



PARKS –

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Fish populations are sampled each fall at Swanson Reservoir using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish such as walleye, white bass, channel catfish and wipers. Gill nets are set on approximately the same dates and locations each year to reduce variability. Environmental factors can play a strong role in catch data. Due to this variability, biologists look at trends over time when making management decisions.

Walleye catch dipped to just over 4 per net in 2021. After positive initial returns on advanced fingerling stockings, it appears we are not getting consistent recruitment out of the alternate year fry stockings. Discussions are ongoing on how to best resolve the issue in the future as we continue to evaluate this stocking strategy. There are 15,500 advanced fingerling walleye requested for fall 2022.

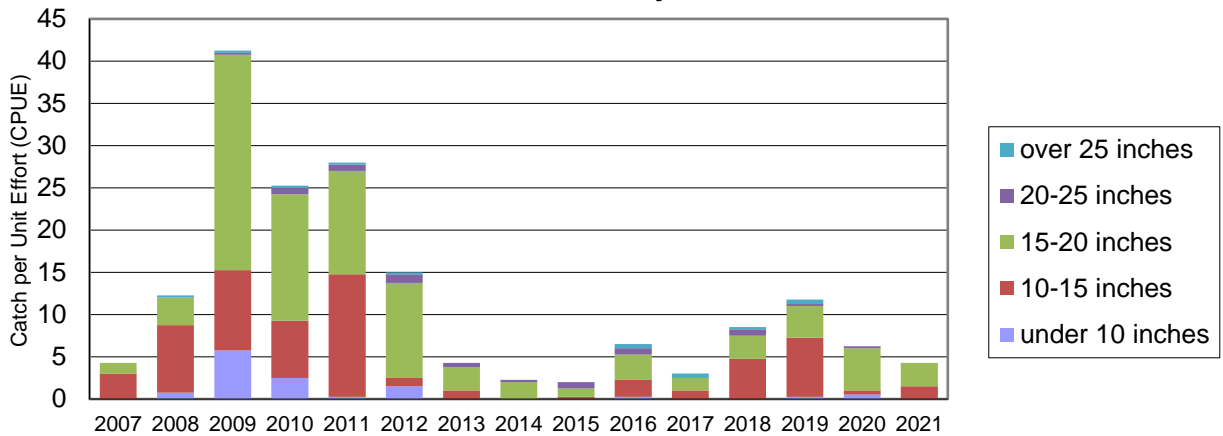
The large wiper year class observed in 2018 surveys is still dominating the population. In 2021, Swanson had the highest wiper catch in the state at just over 17 per net. More than 14 per net of those fish were over 15 inches. For anglers targeting wipers, the number and size structure will provide an excellent opportunity. We will continue to monitor the success of wiper fry stockings to prevent an overabundance of wipers in the future. There are 15,500 wiper fingerlings requested for spring 2022.

After a low channel catfish sample in 2019, stocking strategies were adjusted to include larger fish. The population has responded well with 13 channel catfish per net being sampled in 2021. With multiple length classes, including a few fish over 28 inches, Swanson will provide anglers with excellent channel catfishing in 2022. There are no channel catfish requested for 2022. Blue catfish survey numbers were low again in 2021 with only 1 per net being sampled. Every fish surveyed was over 30 inches and will provide a trophy fishery as intended. There are 15,500 blue catfish requested for fall 2022.

Swanson will receive an upgraded fish cleaning station at Spring Canyon in 2022. The new Barracuda unit will be better equipped to handle catfish and be a welcome addition for Swanson anglers.

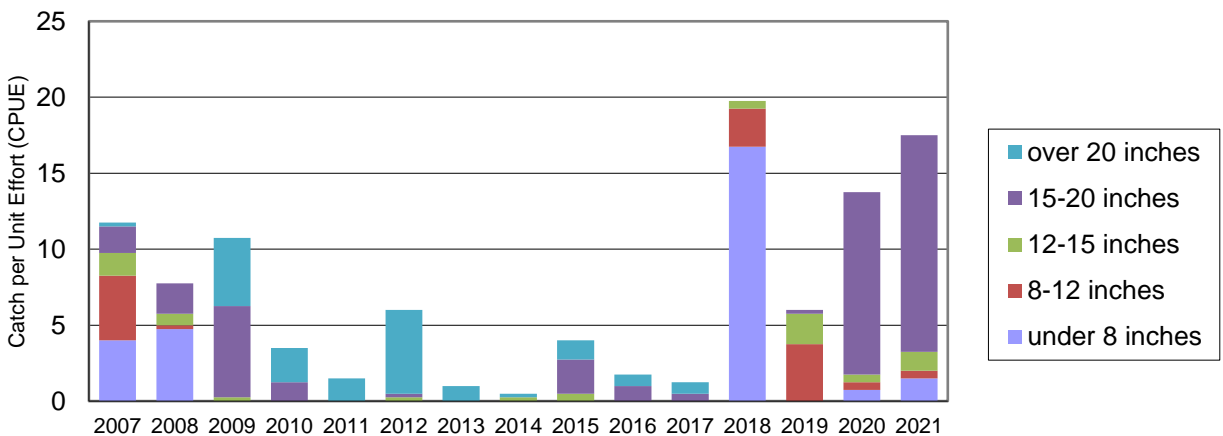
The following graphs show the average number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs.

## Walleye



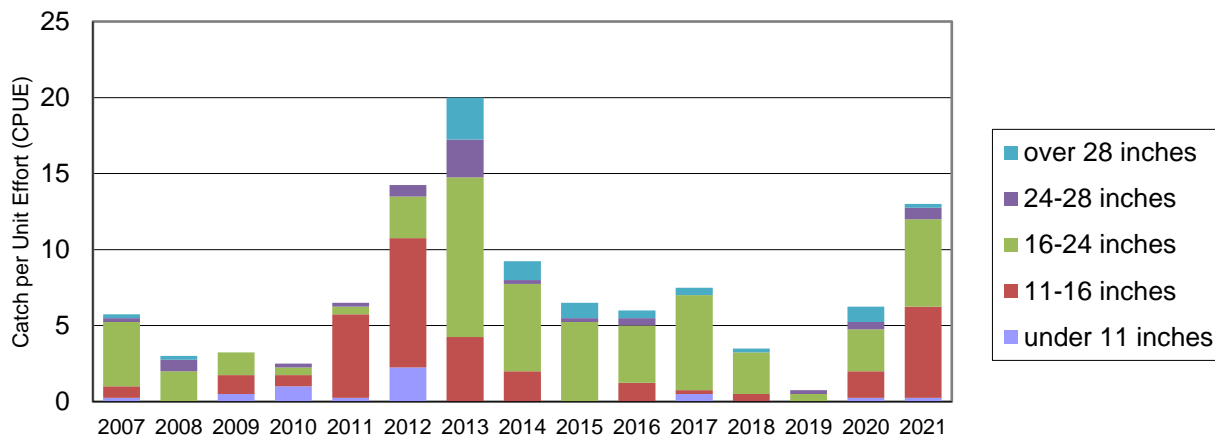
Biologists sampled just over 4 walleye per net in 2021. Several of those fish were over 15 inches. Our alternate year fry stockings have not performed as well as we had hoped. Discussions are ongoing on how to improve our success on years opposite of the advanced fingerling stocking. There are 15,500 advanced fingerlings requested for fall 2022.

## Wiper



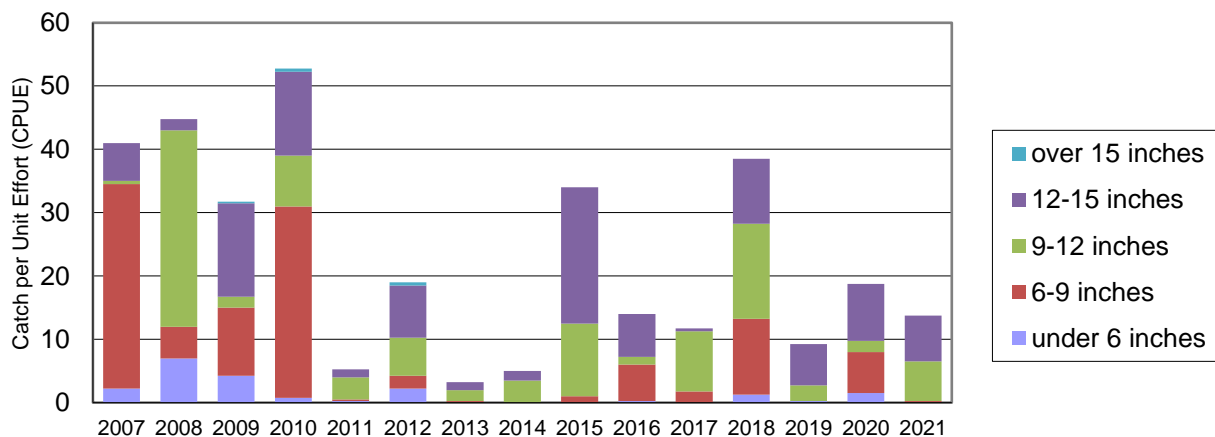
Wiper numbers have been variable at Swanson due to inconsistent stocking availability and changing stocking requests. The large 2018 year class continues to dominate the survey. Future stocking strategies will continue to utilize fry stockings to maintain the population on a more consistent basis. Biologists will continue to monitor the population and reduce stockings if needed to prevent an overabundance of wipers. There are 15,500 wiper fingerlings requested for spring 2022.

## Channel Catfish



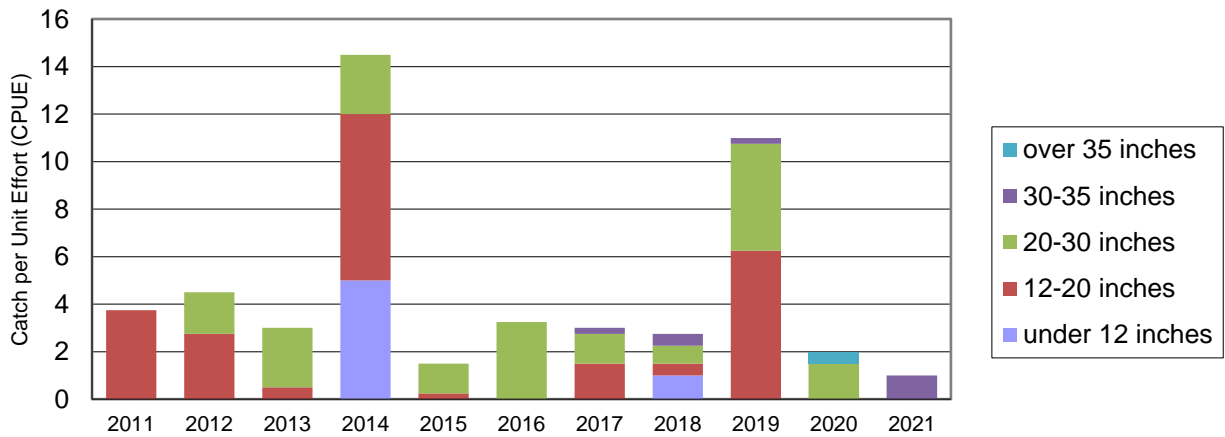
After concerns with the downward trend observed in channel catfish, stocking strategies were adjusted in 2020 to include larger fish. After two consecutive years of stocking the larger fish, the population climbed up to 13 fish per net in 2021. Included in that survey were a couple fish over 28 inches, highlighting the trophy potential Swanson channel catfish continue to have. Biologists will continue to monitor the situation in 2022 and will adjust stocking plans if deemed necessary. There are no channel catfish requested for 2022.

## White Bass



Biologists sampled just over 13 white bass per net in 2021. The 13 per net sampled is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest total in the state and the Swanson survey had the most 12 to 15 inch fish. The outlook for white bass fishing in 2022 is excellent.

# Blue Catfish

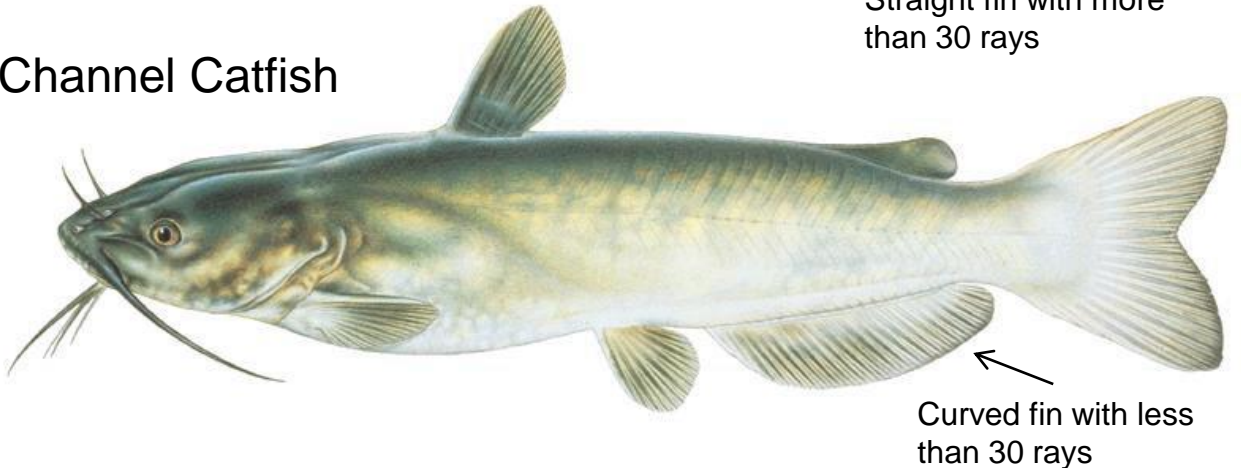


Blue catfish were introduced to Swanson in 2008, with the goal of providing a unique trophy fishing opportunity for catfish anglers in Southwest Nebraska. Blue catfish have been requested regularly since then in hopes of reaching that goal. In 2021, 1 per net was sampled but all were over 30 inches. There are 15,500 blue catfish requested for fall 2022. It is important that anglers take care to positively identify catfish that are harvested because blue catfish are managed under different regulations than channel catfish. Due to natural variation in color, catfish species are most easily identified based on the anal fin.

## Blue Catfish



## Channel Catfish

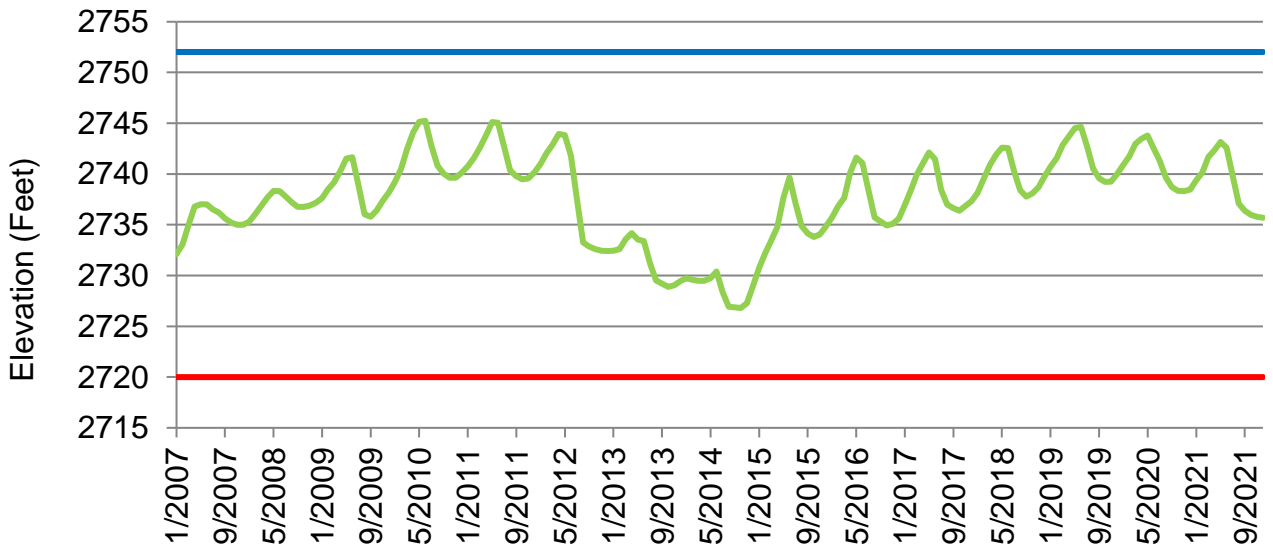


## Swanson Reservoir Fish Stocking Summary

Year	Walleye	Wiper	Channel Catfish	Blue Catfish	Yellow Perch
2021	2,186,188 (fry)	425,000 (fry)	7,375 (10")	5,750 (4")	
2020	13,512 (7.5")	17,500 (1")	9,000 (10.5")		
2019	2,200,000 (fry)				
2018	13,910 (7")	500,000 (fry)		2,866 (12")	
2017	323,476 (1.5")	16,135 (1.5")	16,176 (5")	4,450 (13")	187,789 (1.5")

Above is a table of fish stockings over the last 5 years at Swanson Reservoir. The species stocked, number stocked, and fish size are presented in the table. Multiple species are stocked annually at Swanson and a comprehensive database of fish stockings can be found at the Nebraska Game and Parks website or by following the link below. [Stocking Database](#)

## End of Month Elevation, Swanson Reservoir 2007-2021



Water elevation is a constant management concern at Swanson Reservoir. The dark blue line indicates the top of the active conservation pool, the green line indicates the end of month reservoir elevation, and the red line indicates the top of the inactive pool. More detailed information and current reservoir elevation data can be obtained by following this link: [Current Elevation](#)



# STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

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Aquatic invasive species (AIS) have reached Nebraska! Zebra mussels are currently established in Lewis and Clark Reservoir, Offutt AFB pond, and the Missouri River. Anglers and boaters should be on the look out for personnel performing boat inspections and decontaminations statewide. Please email: [ngpc.ais@nebraska.gov](mailto:ngpc.ais@nebraska.gov) or call 402-471-7602 to report any possible AIS sightings or for more information about AIS in Nebraska.

## Preventative Steps and Regulations

- It is unlawful for a boat to arrive at or leave any body of water in Nebraska with water other than from a domestic source except for fire-fighting purposes. Drain water before leaving an area
- It is unlawful for a boat or trailer to arrive or leave a launch area with any aquatic vegetation from that waterbody still attached. Boat blinds cannot use plants listed as invasive species or noxious weeds
- Wash mud off waders. Felt-sole waders are not allowed

## Nonresident Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp

Motorized watercraft registered outside Nebraska are required to purchase and display the Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp before launching from any Nebraska boat ramp. Stamps must be affixed on the starboard side toward the rear of the boat above the waterline. The fee for each stamp is \$18 dollars and includes the \$3 issuing fee. Stamps can be purchased online or at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Offices.



Left: Zebra Mussel  
Right: Quagga Mussel