

Medicine Creek

2014 Survey Summary



Caleb Huber, Fisheries Biologist

Fish populations are sampled each fall at Medicine Creek Reservoir using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish found in open water, such as walleye, white bass, channel catfish and hybrid striped bass. Gill nets are set on approximately the same dates and locations each year to reduce variability. However, environmental factors can play a strong role in catch rate and composition data. Due to this variability biologists look at trends over time when making most management decisions rather than kneejerk decisions based on one data point.

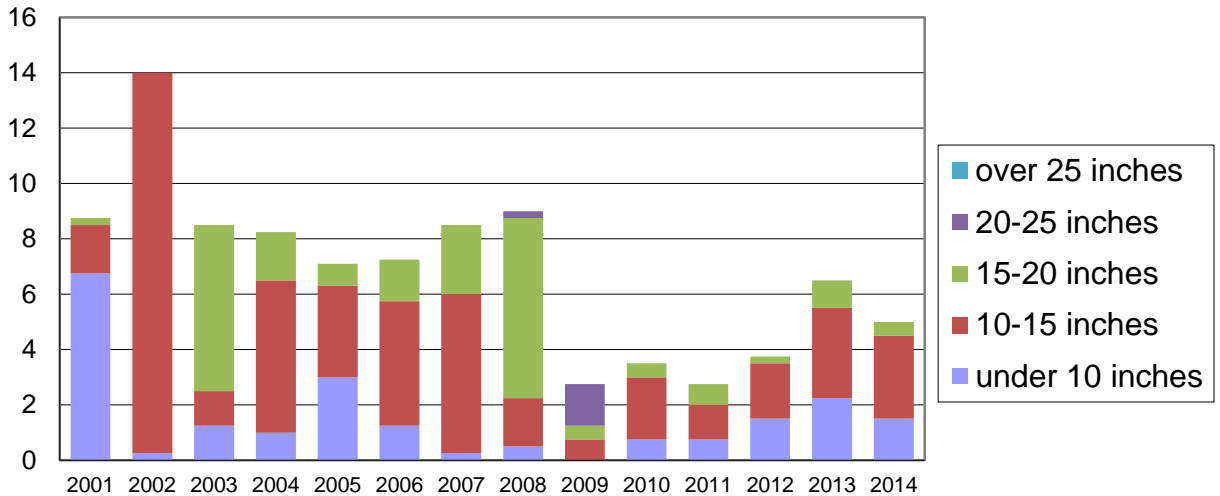
Walleye catch rates have been recovering following a sharp decline in 2009. Biologists sampled 5 fish per net in 2014 which is down slightly when compared to 2013 but is still an improvement compared to past data. Most of the fish sampled were less than 15 inches so anglers may have difficulties catching a limit of fish especially later in the year after most of the legal fish have been harvested. Wipers have started to rebound after the stockings were reinstated in 2013. Biologists surveyed 5 fish per net in 2014 with the vast majority composed of young fish less than 8 inches. Wipers are requested again in 2015.

Channel catfish are a popular sport fish for anglers at Medicine Creek Reservoir. Biologists surveyed 6 fish per net in 2014 and the size structured varied from 11 to greater than 28 inches in length. It is important to point out that Medicine Creek always produces several large catfish each year for those seeking trophy sized catfish.. Staff plan to introduce blue catfish into Medicine creek in the coming years in order to add another opportunity to an already great cat fishing area. White bass numbers declined sharply in 2013 and are still down in 2014. Biologist surveyed 20 fish per net in 2012 but that number dropped to 5 fish per net in 2013 and 4 fish in 2014. White bass tend to have cyclical populations but if necessary fish stocking will be requested in the future to maintain a population of white bass. In addition to the species discussed above, crappie anglers experience limited success and common carp are plentiful throughout the waterbody.

Game and Parks personnel finished an aquatic habitat project at Medicine Creek in 2014. The project includes rock breakwaters throughout the lake and 2 floating fishing piers. These new features will slow the rate of shoreline erosion and provide increased angling opportunities for bank anglers

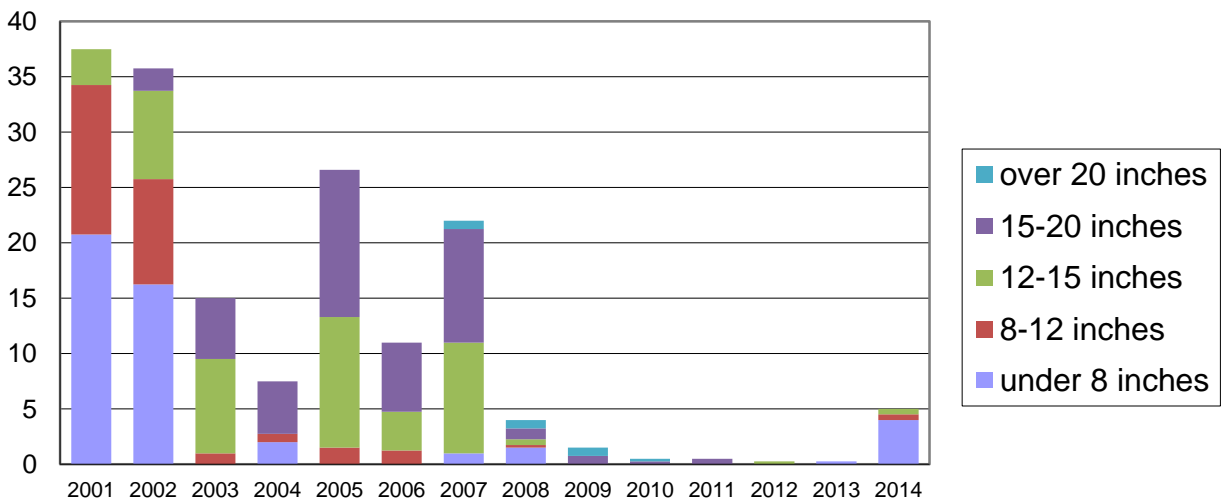
The following graphs show the average number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs. Also included are 2014 summary graphs of some local waterbodies for comparison.

Walleye Catch Per Unit Effort



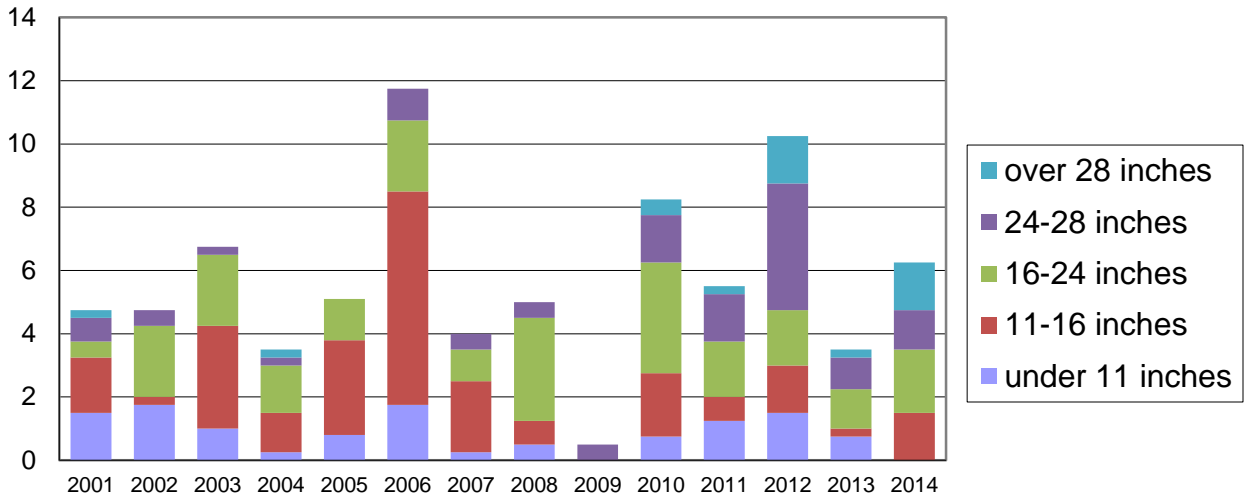
Walleye number appeared to drop markedly in 2009 but have been recovering in recent years. Biologists sampled 5 fish per net in 2014. Most of the fish sampled were less than 15 inches but there were a few keepers available. There were reports of good angling success during the spring especially on the upper end of the reservoir. Increased inflows due to stream augmentation should improve water levels and hopefully fish abundance will respond favorably to the increased inflow.

Wiper Catch Per Unit Effort



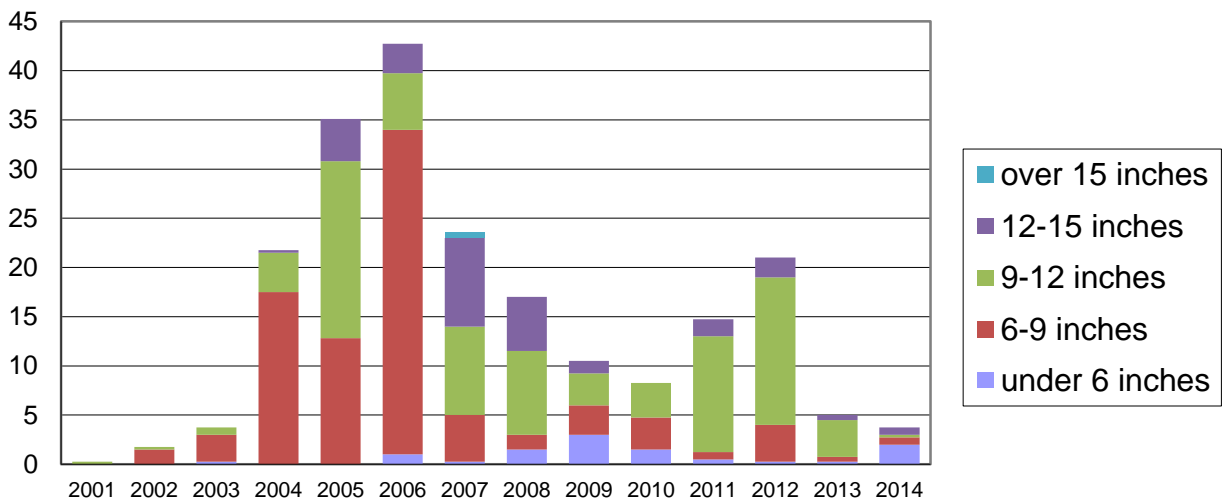
Wiper numbers have been down at Medicine Creek due to a temporary suspension in stocking. Wiper stockings were reinstated in 2013 and 2014 and there has been a positive population response. Biologist sampled 5 wiper per net in 2014 including a couple older adults. The bulk of the catch was young fish less than 8 inches which should continue to grow and provide opportunities for anglers in the future. Wipers stockings are requested for 2015

Channel Catfish Catch Per Unit Effort



Channel catfish populations tend to be fairly stable at Medicine Creek. This is probably due to reliable inflows and strong natural reproduction. Biologists sampled 6 channel catfish per net in 2014 which is just above the average. The size structure is evenly distributed and ranges from 11 to over 28 inches total length. Medicine Creek is a great destination for those seeking catfish to eat and for the trophy catfish angler.

White Bass Catch Per Unit Effort



White bass numbers have been steadily increasing since 2010 but fell off sharply in 2013 and have remained low in 2014. Biologists surveyed 4 fish per net in 2014. White bass numbers can be cyclical but it may be necessary to request white bass stockings if numbers do not improve in the coming years. Water levels will probably be better into the future due to increased inflows which should favor white bass reproduction into the future.

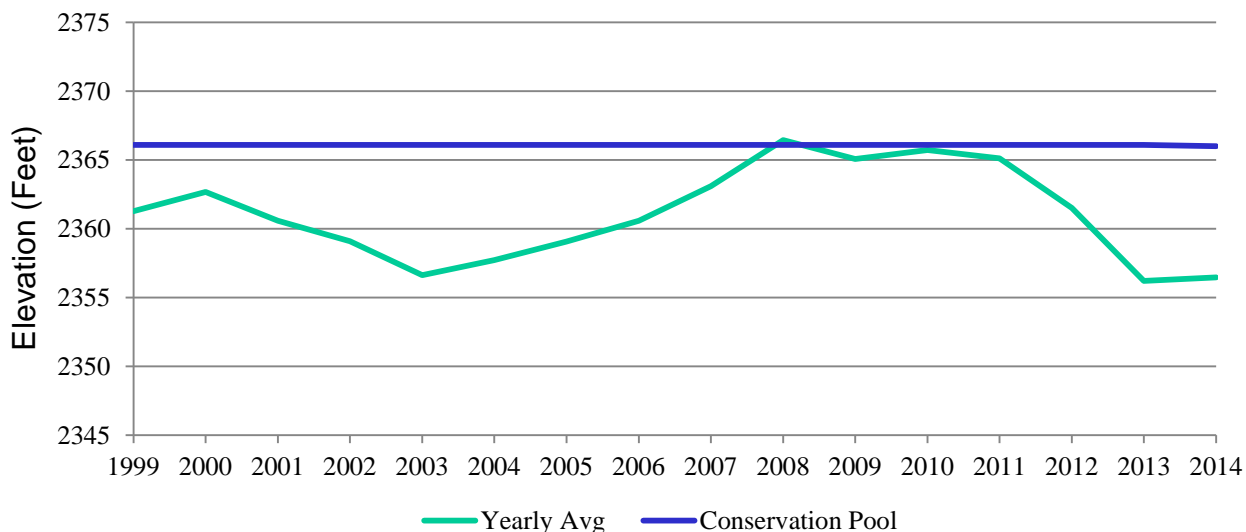
Medicine Creek Fish Stocking Summary

Year	Walleye	Wiper	White Bass	White Crappie
2014	75250 (1.3")	10300 (1.3")		
2013	139,434 (1.25")	19,265 (1.2")		
2012	131,081 (1.2")			
2011	93,556 (1.25")		10,230 (2")	9985 (5.5")
2010	1,911,500 (fry)			9963 (3.25")

Above is a table of fish stockings for the last 5 years at Medicine Creek Reservoir. The species stocked, number stocked, and fish size are presented in the table. Multiple species are stocked annually 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](#)

Average Annual Elevation, Medicine Creek Reservoir 1999-2014

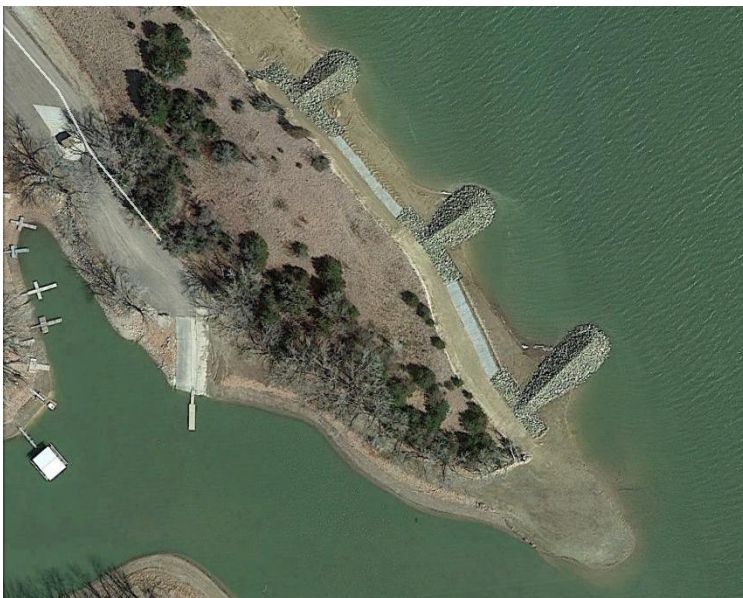


Medicine Creek is the only Southwest reservoir that irrigates annually but also refills due to higher inflows. Medicine Creek normally fills each year and the shape of the data above represent the minimum and maximum annual elevation. The static red line represents the top of the conservation elevation or full pool elevation. Current elevation data can be found by following the link: [Current Elevation](#)



Left: New fishing pier installed at the trail 2 area. This picture is taken at a very low lake level and is a floating pier at normal operating elevations.

Below: Several rock breakwaters near trail 1. In addition to shoreline stabilization, the features will provide angling opportunities.



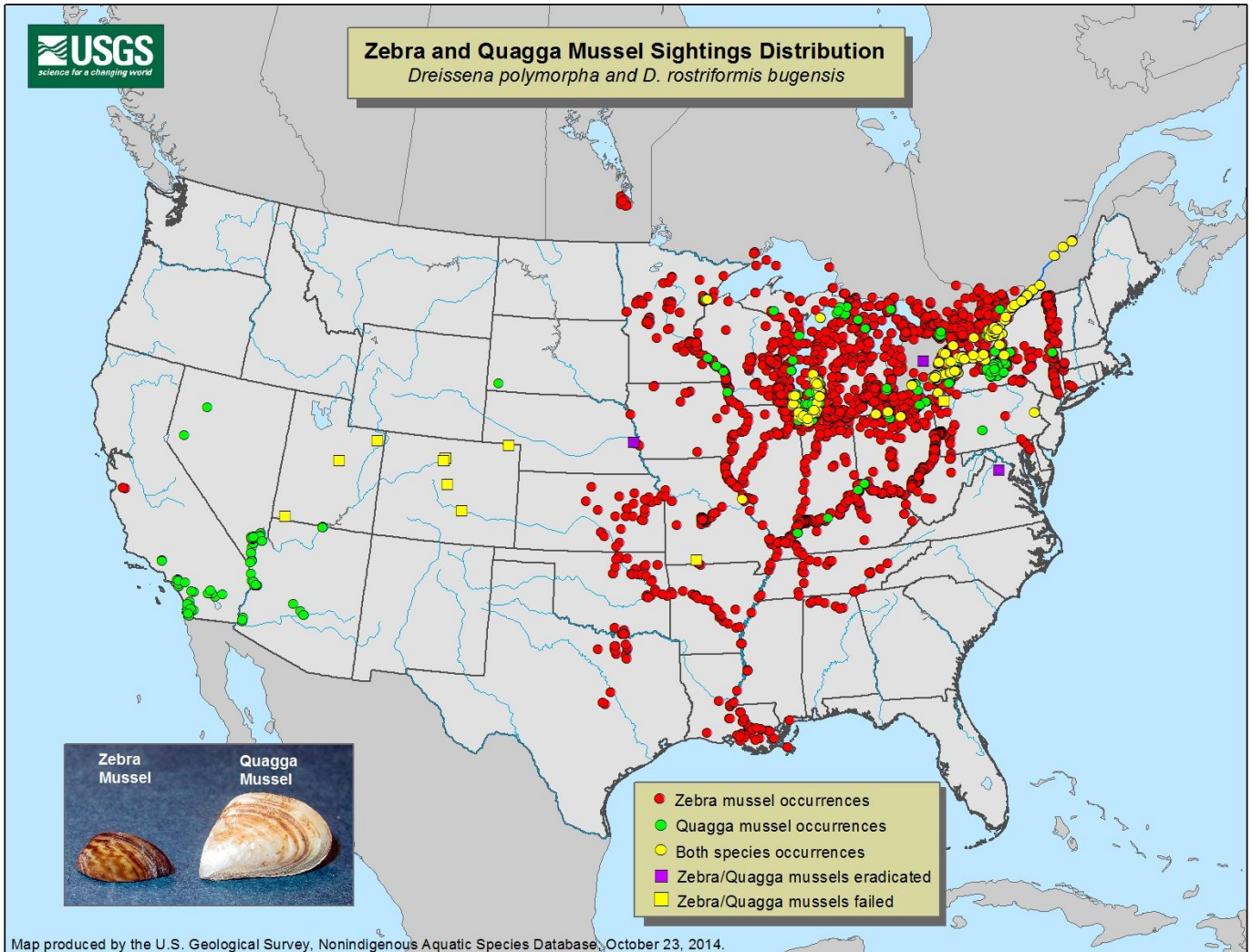
Left: An aerial photo of the trail 1 boat ramp area. Three perpendicular breakwaters will protect the mouth of the bay and prevent further sedimentation due to wave action.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

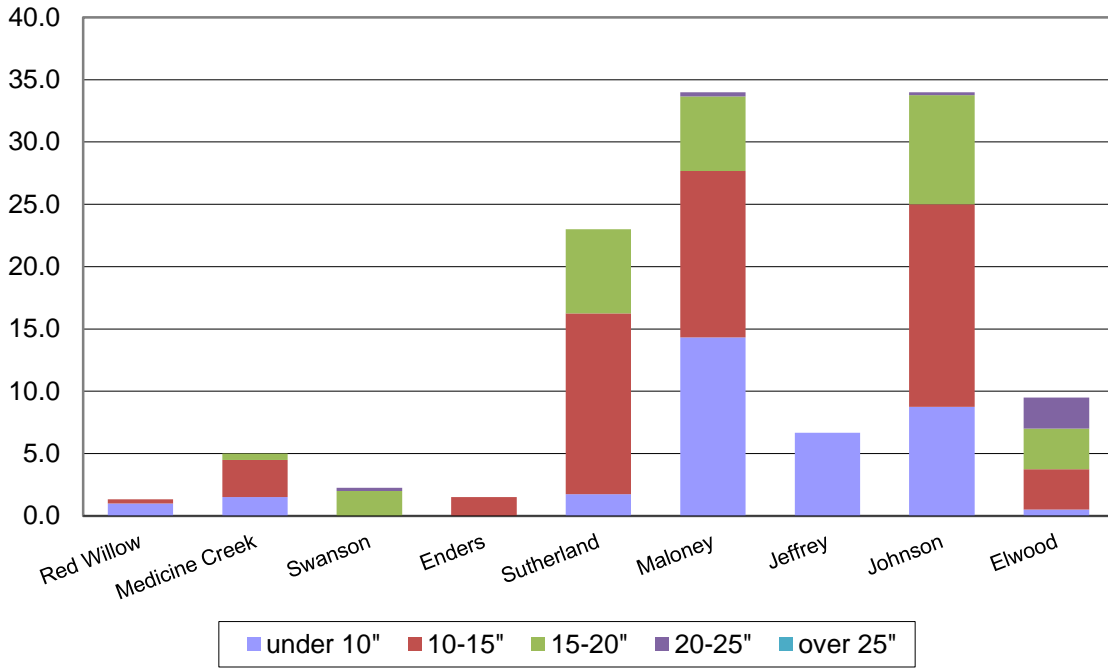
Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

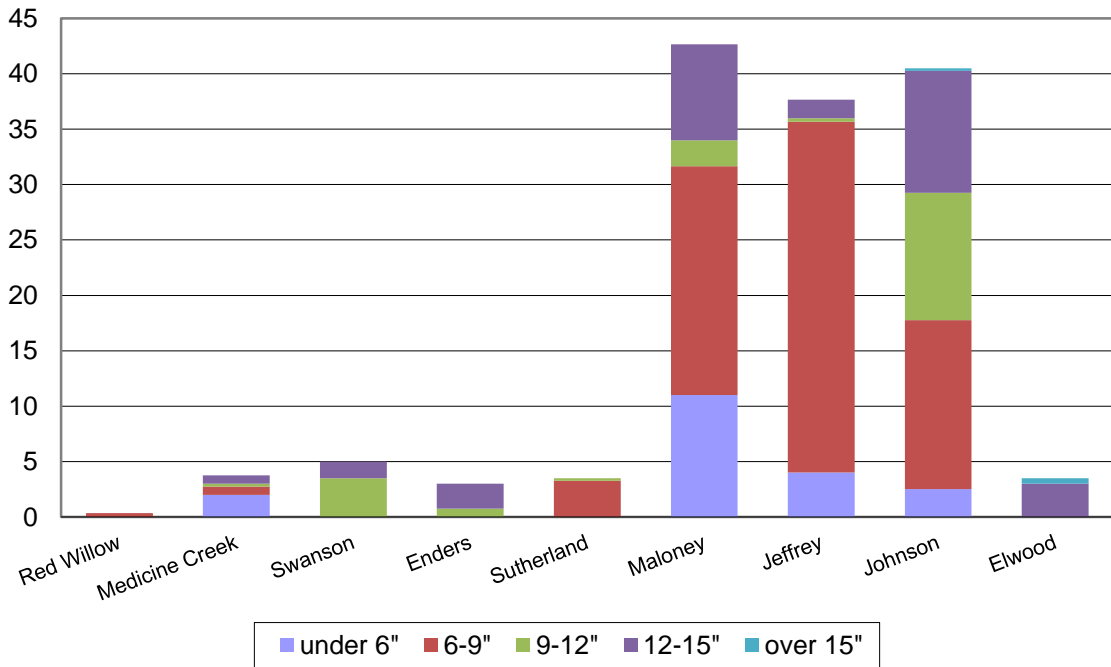


Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are getting closer to Nebraska waters all the time and have the potential for strong negative impacts on the State's aquatic resources. The spread of AIS can be prevented using the Clean, Drain, and Dry technique. Before leaving any water body make sure to drain or dump any standing water and remove debris that might be attached to the boat or trailer. If possible allow the watercraft to completely dry before launching at another area. Follow the link: [Nebraska Invasives Species Program](#) or call 402-472-3133 to report any possible AIS sightings or for more information about AIS in Nebraska

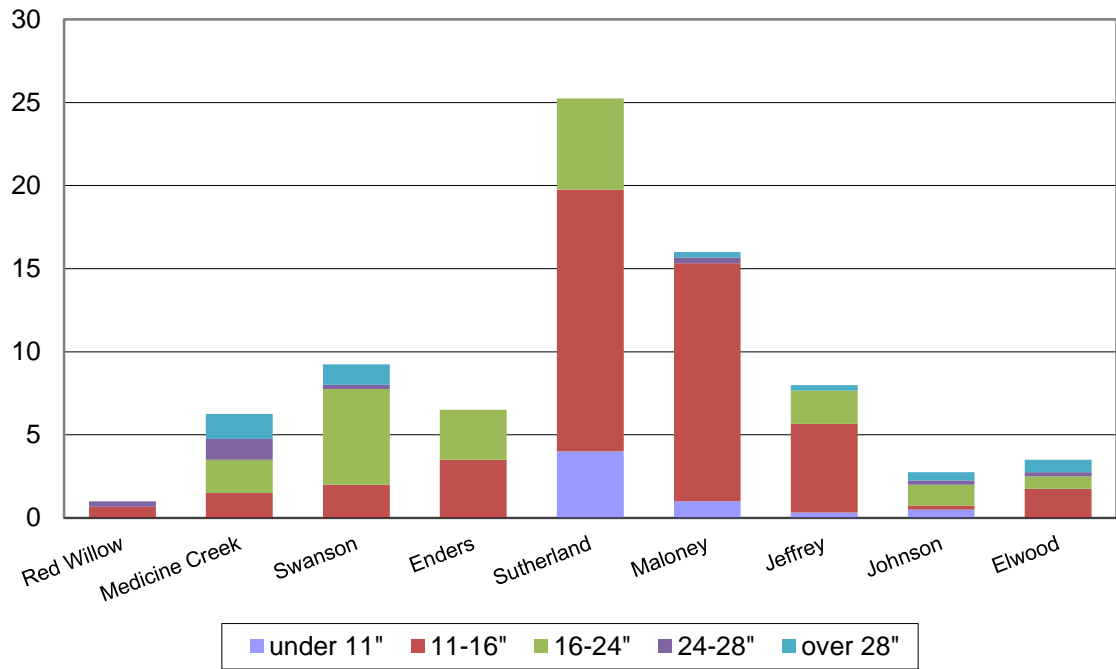
2014 Southwest District Walleye Catch



2014 Southwest District White Bass Catch



2014 Southwest District Channel Catfish Catch



2014 Southwest District Wiper Catch

