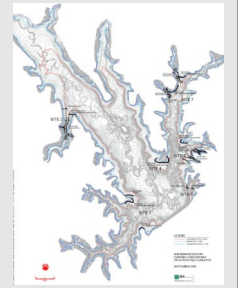


# Sherman Reservoir

## 2013 Angler Survey Summary

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
Brad Eifert, Fisheries Biologist



An angler survey was completed at Sherman Reservoir in 2013 from April through October. During the survey, anglers were counted and interviewed on 6 week days and 4 weekend days per month. In total, there were 70 days surveyed and 399 interviews completed during the seven month time period. A total of 864 anglers were contacted during the interviews. Angler surveys provide estimates of fishing effort, catch and harvest rates, catch per hour, and size structure of the fish caught.

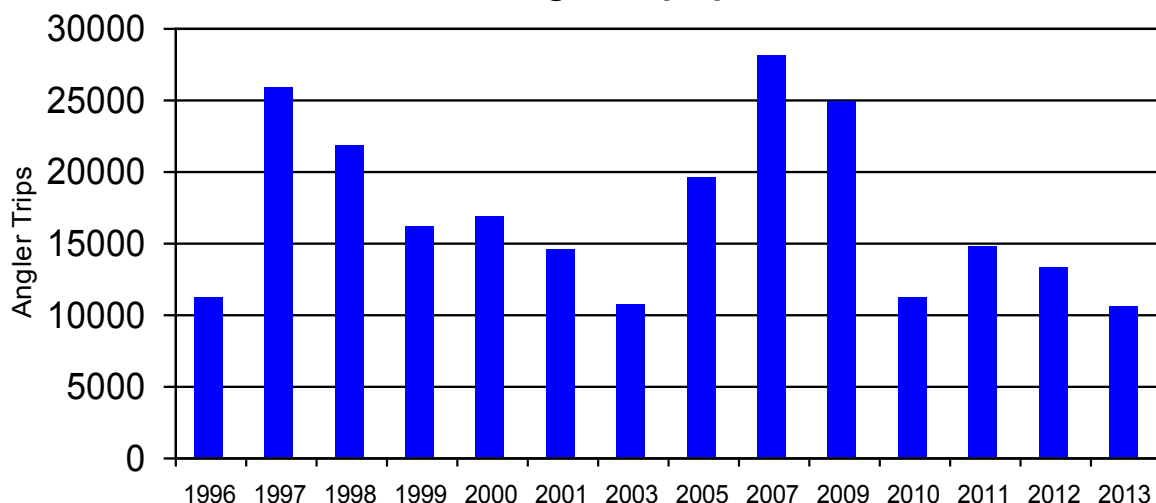
The following text and graphs provide summaries of the 2013 survey with comparison to previous years.

### Fishing Effort Summary

The number of anglers making fishing trips to Sherman Reservoir declined for the second straight year. An estimated 10,563 angler trips were made to Sherman Reservoir during the seven month survey period in 2013. This was the fourth lowest number of angler trips recorded since the inception of the angler surveys in 1996. The average number of angler trips since 1996 is 17,062 and 2007 had the most trips with 28,038.

Anglers spent 57,934 hours fishing (20 hrs/acre), with the average trip lasting about 5.5 hours. Boat anglers comprised 67% of the total trips and bank anglers constituted 33% of the trips. Anglers from 31 different Nebraska counties visited Sherman, with the following counties contributing the most angler trips: Hall (32%), Sherman (18%), Buffalo (13%), Howard (7%), Custer (5%), Lancaster (4%), and Hamilton (2%). Anglers came from three other states (Colorado, Florida, and Indiana) during 2013, but the non-resident anglers made up less than 2% of all anglers utilizing the reservoir.

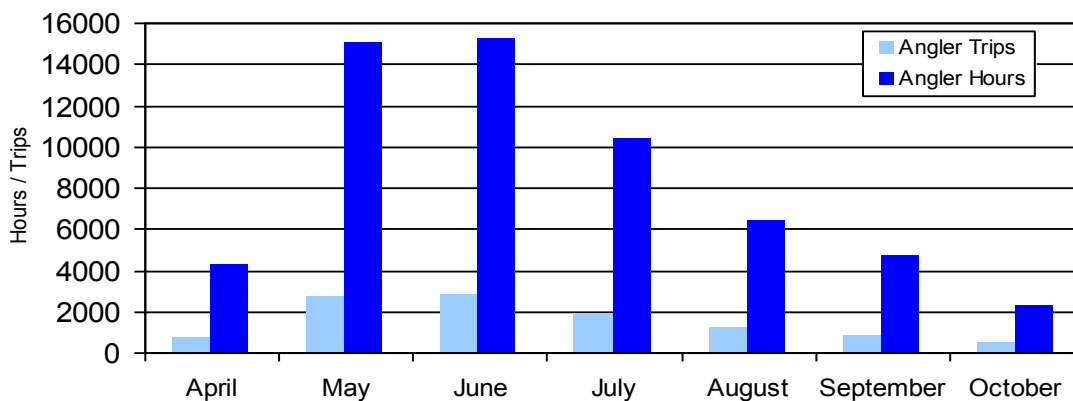
**Total Angler Trips per Year**



## Fishing Effort by Month

Cool and wet spring weather resulted in below average angling pressure during April, but angling use rebounded during the months of May and June. Timely rains throughout the irrigation season resulted in reduced draw-down of the reservoir during the summer months, which allowed for increased angling pressure during July and August. While the fall months provided very good crappie fishing opportunities, windy conditions likely led to a reduction in angler use during the months of September and October.

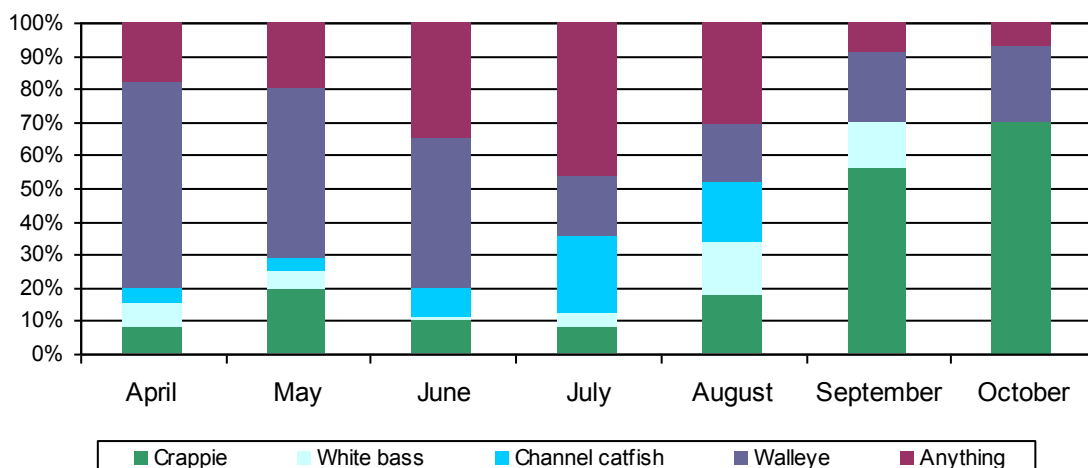
### Fishing Effort Per Month - 2013



## Fish Species Sought by Anglers

Walleye continued to be the most sought fish species during the months of April, May, and June. Channel catfish and white bass were most sought during the summer months of July and August. Most anglers were seeking crappie and walleye during the months of September and October. Walleye were once again the most sought after species at Sherman Reservoir during the entire angler survey period. Overall, 39% of Sherman anglers sought walleye, 17% sought crappie, 9% channel catfish, 7% white bass, and 27% fished for anything that they could catch.

### Species Sought by Month and Entire Survey - 2013



## Channel Catfish

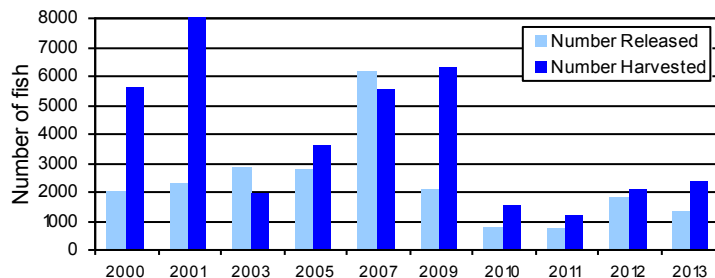
**2013 Regulations:** *No length limit, 5 fish daily bag*

The catch of channel catfish has been on an upward trend over the past four years. A total of 2,372 catfish were harvested and 1,327 were released. The quality of the catfish harvested was improved, as the average length was 19.2 inches and the average weight was 2.9 pounds. The catch rate for anglers seeking channel catfish was 0.33 fish per hour, with the harvest rate of 0.23 fish per hour.

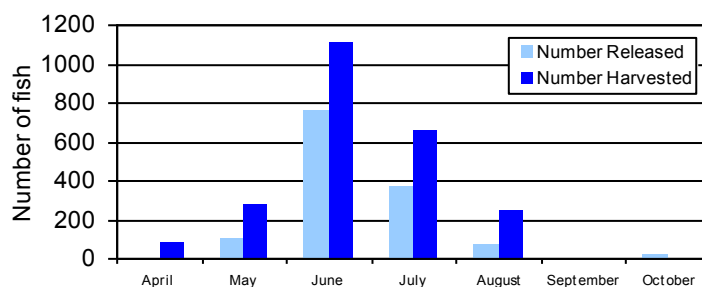
Catfish catch and harvest peaked during June, but remained good throughout July and August. Very few anglers sought catfish during the fall months, resulting in very low catch numbers.



### Channel Catfish Caught Per Year



### Channel Catfish Caught Per Month

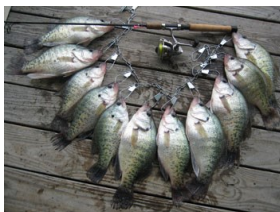


## Crappie

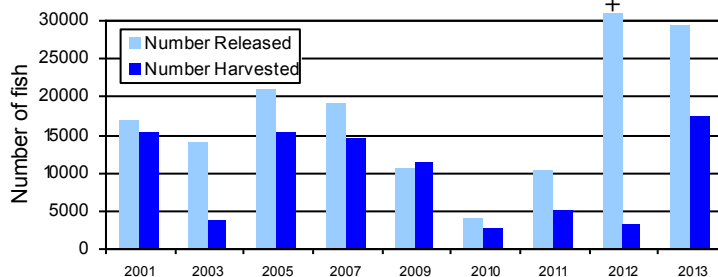
**2013 Regulations:** *10-inch minimum length limit, 15 panfish daily bag*

Total crappie catch was slightly lower, but harvest was the highest observed in the past ten years. Anglers experienced high catch during the spring months, but most fish remained under the 10 inch minimum length limit. Excellent reservoir habitat conditions during the summer months allowed for improved crappie growth rates, resulting in higher abundance of legal sized crappie. This provided improved harvest opportunities during the late summer and fall months.

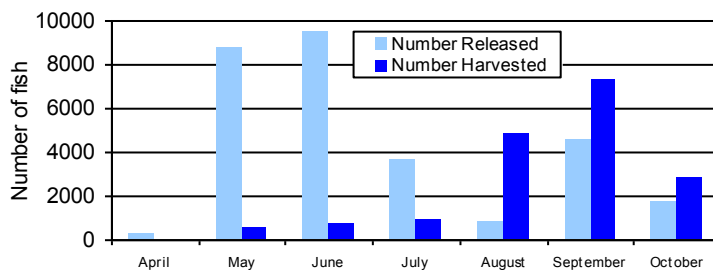
The average length of harvested crappie was 10.4 inches. Anglers targeting crappie caught 2.6 crappie per hour and harvested 0.4 crappie per hour. Angler compliance with the size limit was worse than normal, as about 7% of the harvested fish were less than the ten inch minimum length limit.



### Crappie Caught Per Year



### Crappie Caught Per Month



# Walleye

**2013 Regulations:** Daily bag limit may include 2 walleye greater than 15 inches but less than 20 inches and 1 walleye over 28 inches. There is a slot limit protecting walleye 20 through 28 inches.

Walleye catch continued a downward trend at Sherman Reservoir during 2013 as only an estimated 5,076 walleye were caught during the seven month survey period. The number of walleye released (3,724) was the lowest since 2010, while numbers of harvested fish (1,352) was the lowest since 2005. The catch rate for anglers seeking walleye was 0.13 fish per hour, while the harvest rate was 0.04 fish per hour.



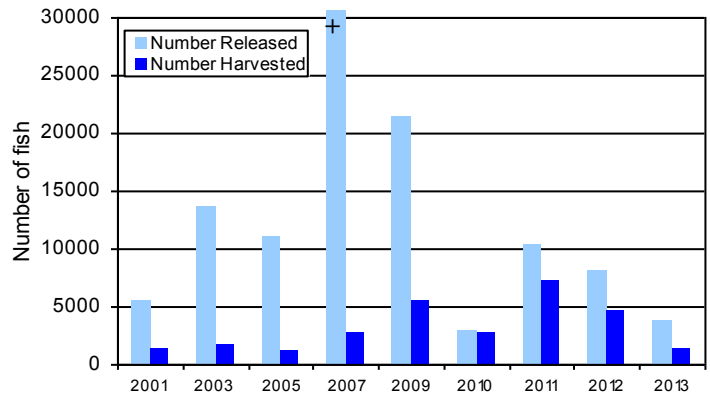
Walleye angling success was best during the months of May and June. The remaining months of the survey had similar, although very low, walleye catch.

With the special walleye regulations in place, nearly 94% of the harvested walleye were between 15 and 20 inches. The average length of harvested walleye was 17.4 inches, which was nearly identical to results observed the past three years. Only 1% of the harvest consisted of fish greater than 28 inches. For released fish, 49% were less than the 15 inch minimum length, 16% were in the 15-20 inch size category, and 33% were in the 20-28 inch protected slot.

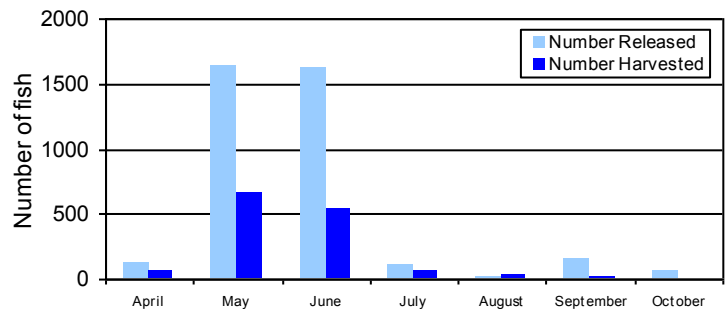
Angler compliance with the walleye size limit was not as good as what has been documented in recent years. While no walleye under the legal length limit of 15 inches were observed, approximately 6% of the total harvest consisted of fish in the protected slot of 20 to 28 inches.



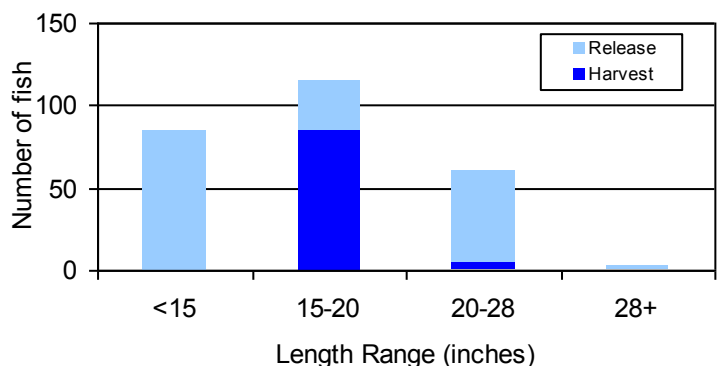
**Walleye Caught Per Year**



**Walleye Caught Per Month**



**Size of Walleyes Caught by Anglers**



# White Bass

**2013 Regulations:** 15 fish daily bag, no more than one fish over 16 inches in daily bag

There has been a declining trend in the white bass catch since 2010. While the number of harvested fish (2,958) remained relatively unchanged from 2012 results, the number of released (1,927) white bass was lowest recorded since 2003. Catch rates for anglers seeking white bass were slightly improved from previous year results, as the catch rate was 0.90 fish per hour and the harvest rate was 0.78 fish per hour.

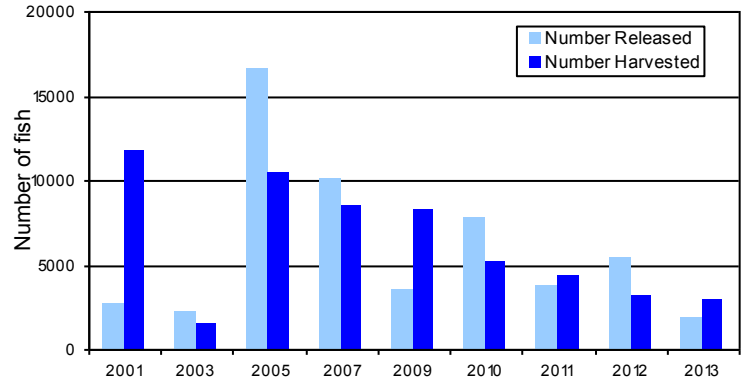


White bass harvest success was in best in May and July. Catch was good in September, but harvest was low.

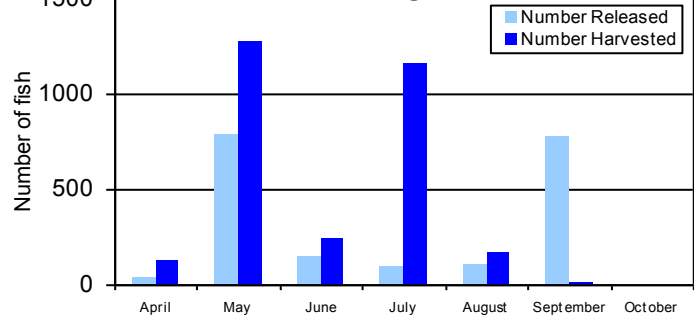
Harvested white bass ranged from 8.5 to 14.5 inches. The average length of white bass harvested during the survey period was 11.9 inches.



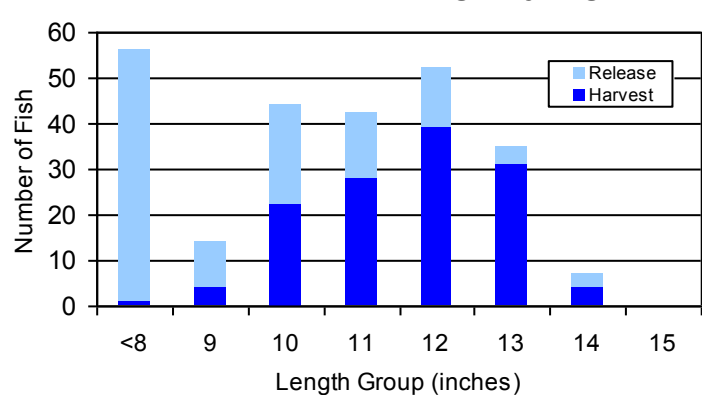
**White Bass Caught Per Year**



**White Bass Caught Per Month**



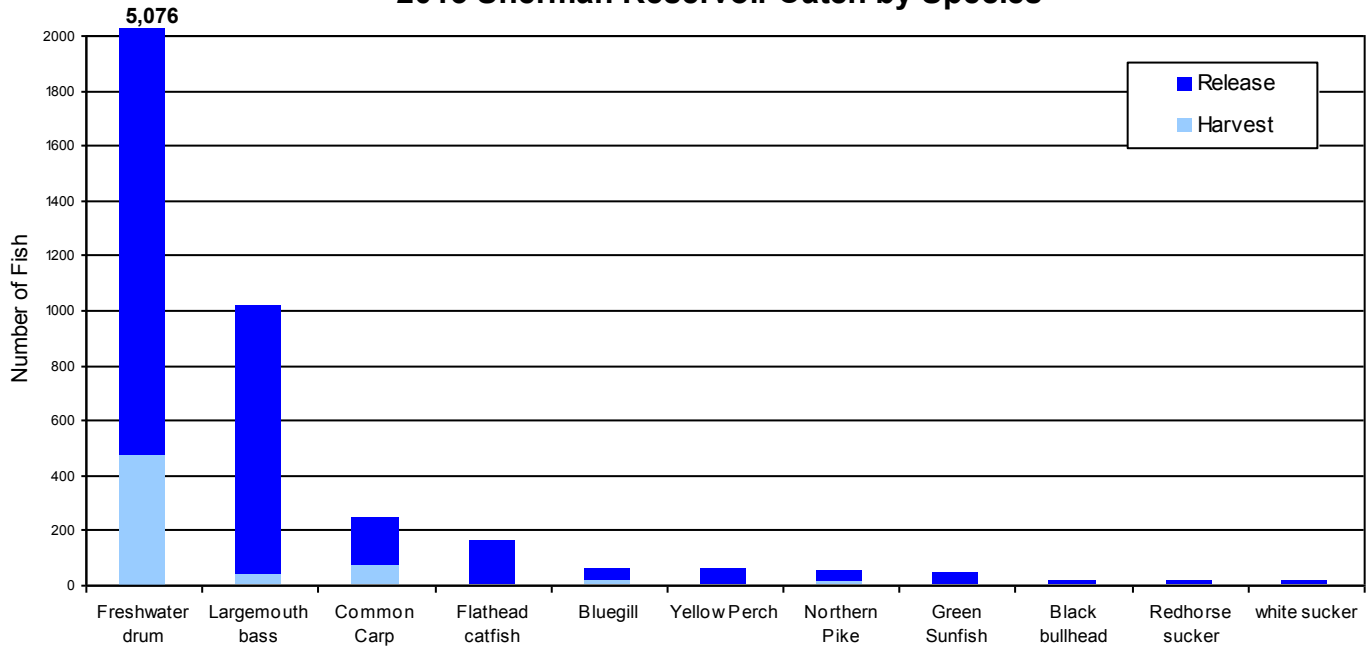
**Size of White Bass Caught by Anglers**



## Miscellaneous Species

There were eleven other fish species represented in the 2013 angler catch. Freshwater drum were most commonly caught, followed by largemouth bass, common carp, flathead catfish, and bluegill.

2013 Sherman Reservoir Catch by Species



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.

District Manager: Brad Newcomb: [brad.newcomb@nebraska.gov](mailto:brad.newcomb@nebraska.gov)

Biologist: Brad Eifert: [brad.eifert@nebraska.gov](mailto:brad.eifert@nebraska.gov)