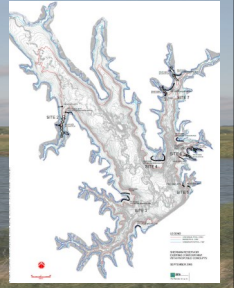


Sherman Reservoir

2016 Angler Survey Summary

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Brad Eifert, Fisheries Biologist



An angler survey was completed at Sherman Reservoir in 2016 from April through October. During the survey, anglers were counted and interviewed on approximately 10 week days and 6 weekend days per month. In total, there were 118 days surveyed and 1,031 parties interviewed during the seven month time period. 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 2016 survey with comparison to previous years.

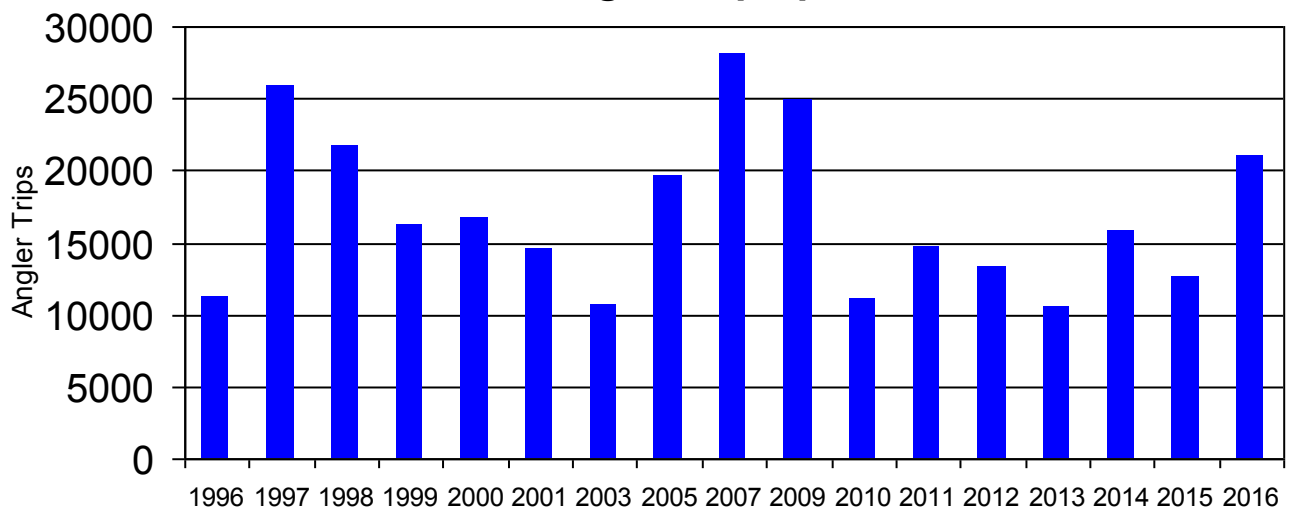
Fishing Effort Summary

The number of anglers making fishing trips to Sherman Reservoir increased during 2016 and was the highest recorded since 2009. An estimated 21,054 angler trips were made to Sherman Reservoir during the seven month survey period.

There were 692 bank anglers, 337 boat anglers and three bow fisherman interviewed during the survey period. When the data is extrapolated, bank anglers spent 24,872 hours and boat anglers spent 73,456 hours of angling effort during the survey. Total effort spent was 98,328 hours fishing.

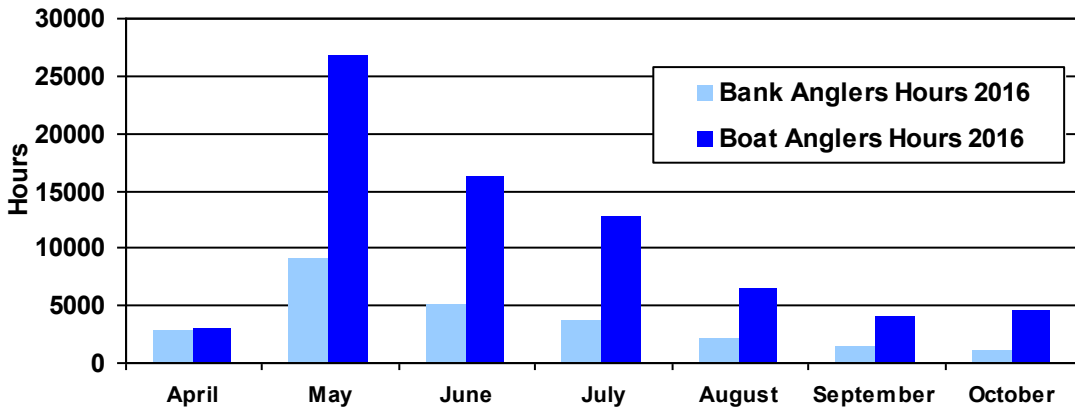
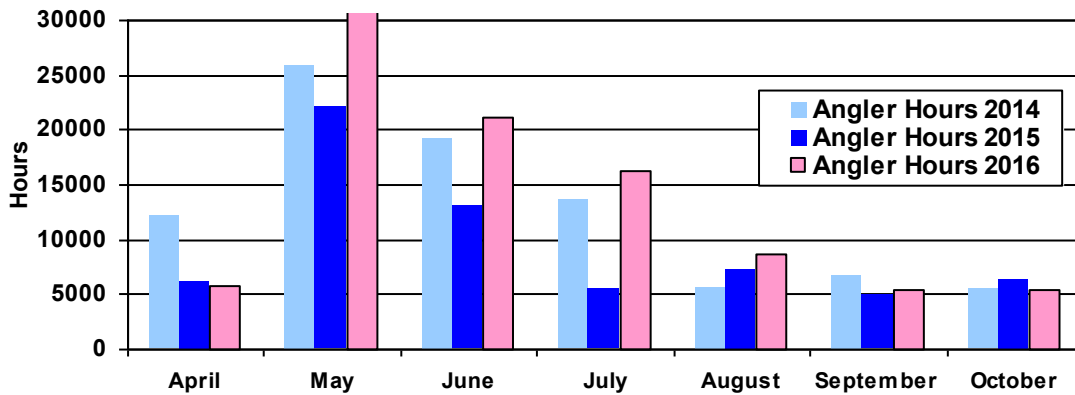
While most anglers who fish Sherman were from Nebraska, anglers from eleven other states were contacted during the survey. Nebraska anglers originated from 109 different communities and 45 counties from across the State. The most common counties represented in the survey included: Hall (37%), Buffalo (13%), Sherman (10%), Howard (5%), and Custer (5%).

Total Angler Trips per Year



Fishing Effort by Month

The months of May and June were the busiest months for angling at Sherman. High reservoir levels throughout the summer months allowed for higher than average use during the months of July and August.



Supplemental Questions

Several supplemental questions were also asked of the anglers during the survey.

How many days is your current fishing trip? 72% responded with one day, 13% - two days, 9% -three days, and 6% - four days or longer.

Rate the importance of angling in relation to other recreational activities on a 5-point scale. 67% rated it a 5, 22% rated it a 4, 9% rated it a 3, 1% rated it a 2, and 0.3% rated it a 1

Where will you clean your harvested fish today?

58% did not harvest fish that day, 24% would clean their fish at the lake (cleaning station, campground), 18% would clean their fish off-site, and 0.4% gave their harvested fish away

Where will you dispose of your remaining live baitfish? 60% of the respondents did not use live baitfish, 21% were going to dispose of the baitfish off-site, 14% were going to dispose of baitfish on-site (includes fish cleaning station, dumpster, bank, or given to another angler), and 4% had no live baitfish remaining.

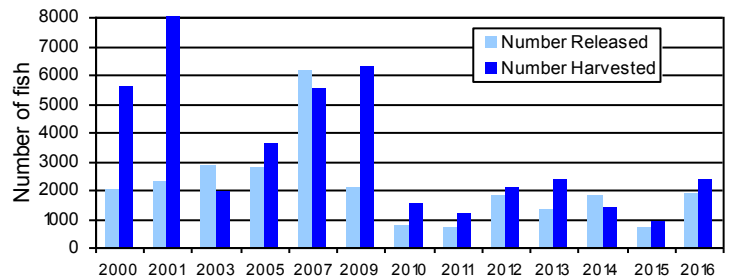
Channel Catfish

2016 Regulations: *No length limit, 5 fish daily bag*

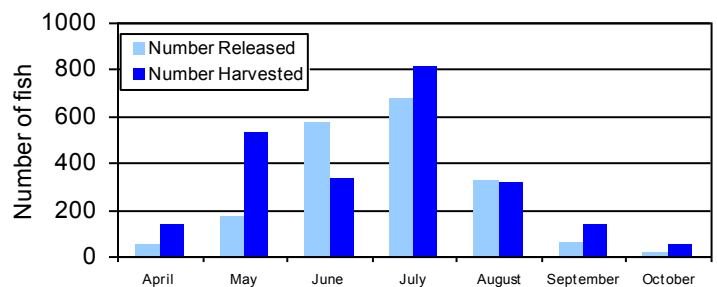
Channel catfish catch improved during 2016, with 4,200 fish caught and 2,312 harvested. Catfish caught during the survey ranged from 5 to 36 inches. The length of harvested catfish ranged from 11 to 34 inches and the average length was 19.7 inches. While the month of July had the highest total catch of channel catfish, the best catch rates for anglers seeking catfish were recorded in September. Anglers caught 0.41 fish/hour and harvested 0.32 fish/hour during September.



Channel Catfish Caught Per Year



Channel Catfish Caught Per Month



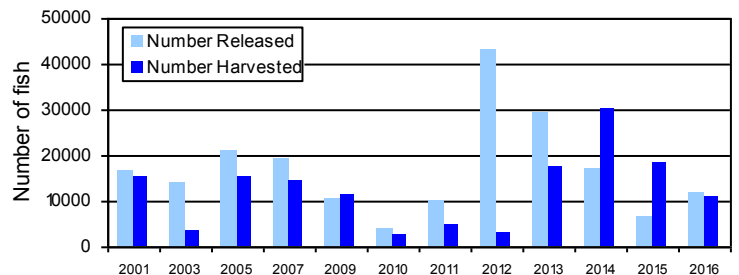
Crappie

2016 Regulations: *10-inch minimum length limit, 15 panfish daily bag*

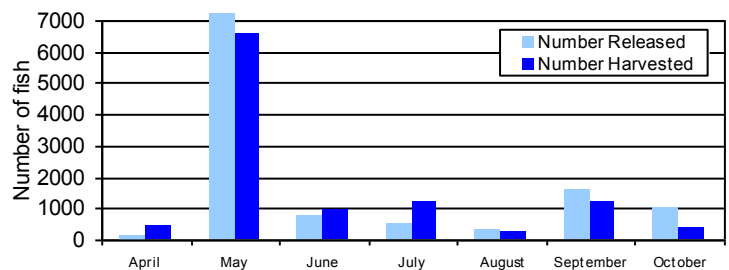
Crappie catch was the lowest recorded since 2011. There was a total of 22,607 crappie caught, with 11,030 of those harvested. Approximately 31% of the total catch of crappie consisted of fish shorter than the ten-inch minimum length limit. Crappie that were harvested ranged from 8 to 14 inches, with the average length of 10.9 inches. Compliance with the size limit was excellent, as less than one percent of the harvest consisted of fish below the minimum length limit. May was the best time to catch crappie, although fishing was also good during the fall months. Catch rates during May for anglers seeking crappie was 0.66 fish per hour and the harvest rate was 0.37 fish per hour.



Crappie Caught Per Year



Crappie Caught Per Month



Walleye

2016 Regulations: *Daily bag limit may include 2 walleye between 15 inches and not greater than 20 inches and 1 walleye longer than 28 inches. There is a slot limit protecting walleye 20 through 28 inches.*

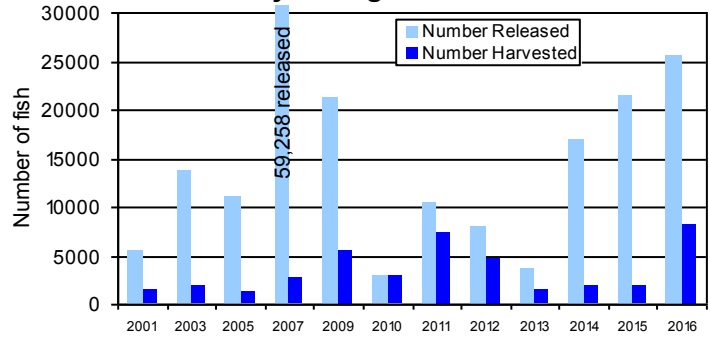
Walleye catch was greatly improved in 2016 and harvest was the highest recorded in the history of the creel survey at Sherman. Total catch was 33,479 walleye, with released fish totaling 25,409 and harvested fish totaling 8,071. Walleye caught by anglers during the survey ranged from 5 to 29 inches. When the total angler catch is broken down by size groups: 57% of the catch was less than 15 inches; 37% was between 15 and 20 inches; and 6% was greater than 20 inches.

The vast majority of harvested walleye ranged from 15 to 17 inches and the average length was 15.7 inches. Compliance with the length regulation was good, as 3% of the total harvest was smaller than 15 inches and 1% was in the 20 to 28 inch protected slot. May and June were the best months for catching walleye at Sherman this year. Catch rates for anglers seeking walleye were 0.6 walleye per hour and harvest rates were 0.18 fish per hour.

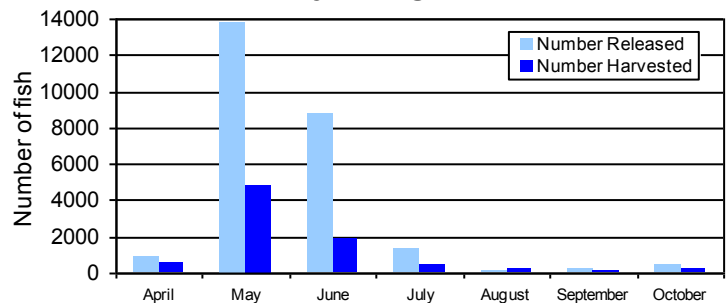
It appears that the walleye population at Sherman Reservoir has responded favorably to the restrictive length limits that were enacted in 2009. Angler catch has steadily increased the past three years. Harvest numbers are higher than before the size limit, even though anglers are now restricted to a two fish daily bag limit. There has also been an increase in the number of angler caught fish larger than 20 inches. Future success of the walleye length limit will be dependent on successful walleye recruitment and compliance from the anglers pursuing walleye at Sherman.



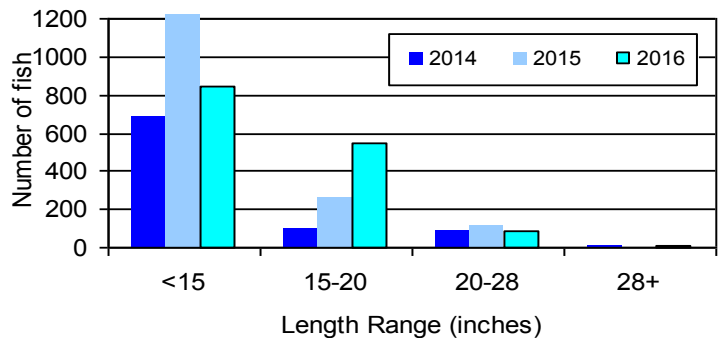
Walleye Caught Per Year



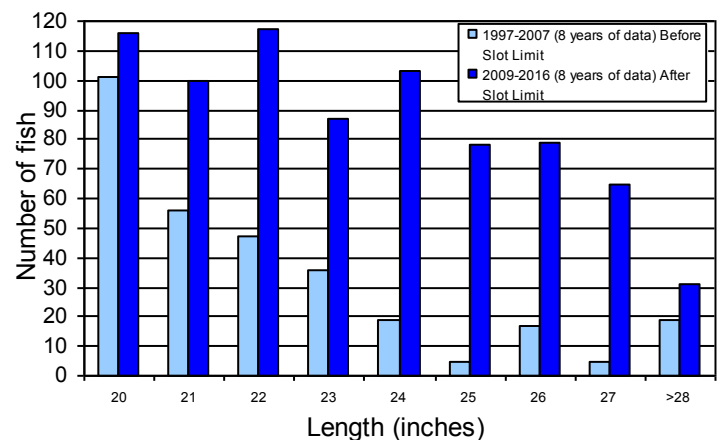
Walleye Caught Per Month



Size of Walleyes Caught by Anglers



Number of 20 to 28 Inch Walleye Caught By Anglers

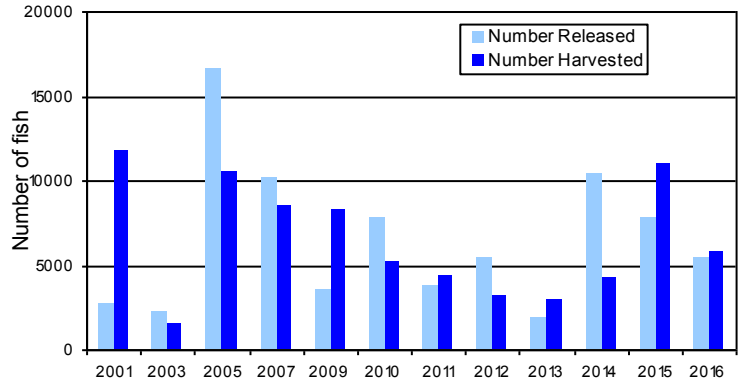


White Bass

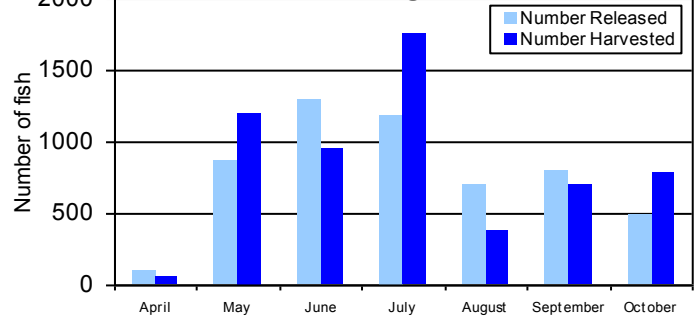
2016 Regulations: 15 fish daily bag, no more than one fish over 16 inches in daily bag

Although the catch of white bass was not as high as observed during 2015, the harvest was improved over results seen during the 2011-2014 time period. There were a total of 11,188 white bass caught and 5,774 harvested in 2016. Harvested fish ranged from 10 to 15 inches and the average length was 11.9 inches. July had the highest catch and harvest of white bass, but May and June were also good months for anglers. The highest catch rates by anglers seeking white bass were in September and October when anglers caught 1.1 and 2.5 fish per hour, respectively.

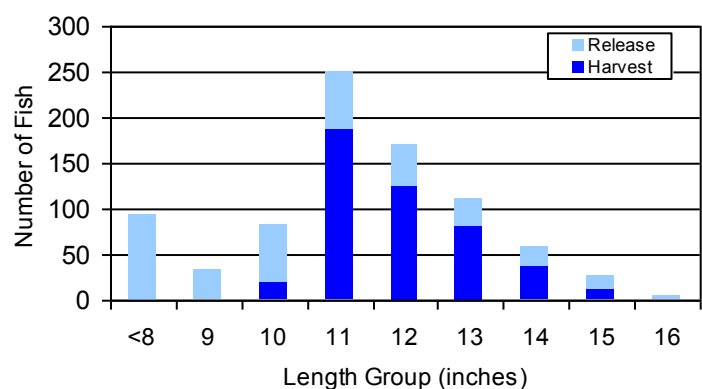
White Bass Caught Per Year



White Bass Caught Per Month



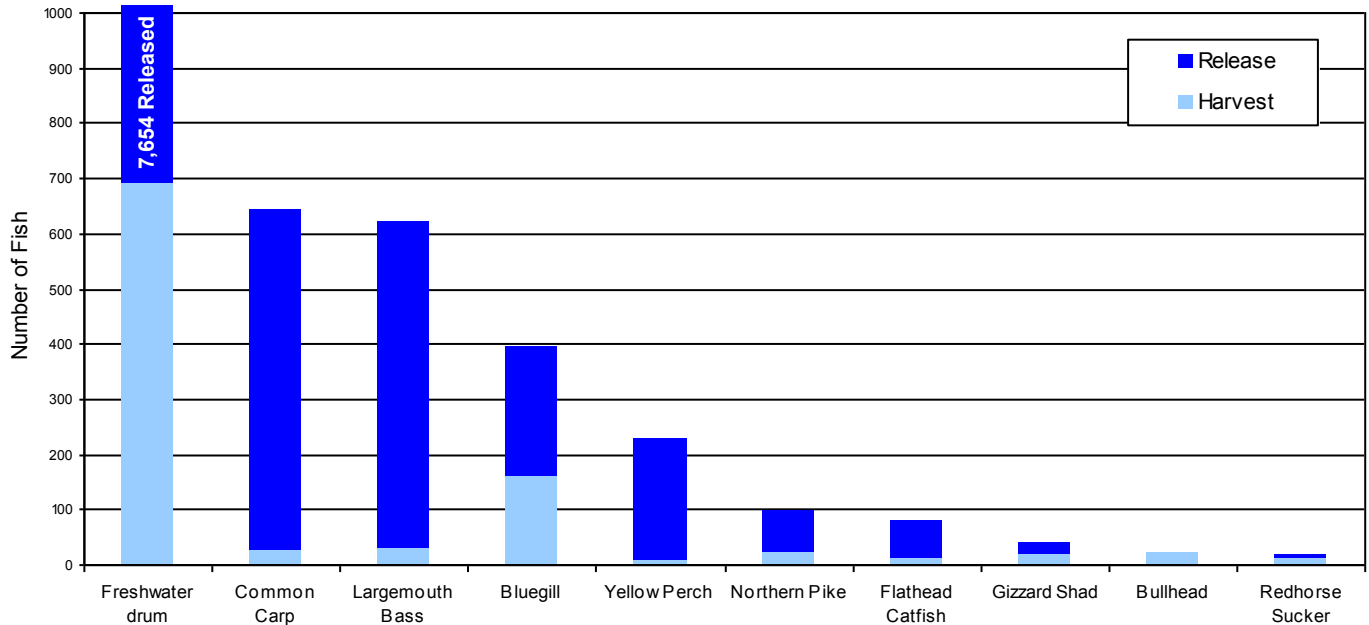
Length of White Bass Caught by Anglers



Miscellaneous Species

There were ten other fish species represented in the 2016 angler catch. Freshwater drum were most commonly caught, followed by common carp, largemouth bass, bluegill, yellow perch, northern pike, flathead catfish, gizzard shad, bullheads, and redhorse suckers.

2016 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

Biologist: Brad Eifert: brad.eifert@nebraska.gov