2014 State Updates

Kentucky

Urban Fishing Program

During 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013 a total of 96,001 channel catfish and 124,000 rainbow trout were stocked in the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) lakes. The program currently includes 39 lakes in 24 counties. Lake owners provide a 25% in-kind match to offset stocking costs. A memorandum of agreement is in place with all lake owners enrolled in the FINs program.

An exploitation study was conducted for stocked channel catfish and rainbow trout at three FINs lakes. From the exploitation study we conclude the catfish are caught quickly after stocking. In all three study lakes the median of tag returns was within the first 7 days after stocking. At two of the larger lakes (> 6 acres) less than one third of catfish are initially harvested. However, at the smaller lake (1 acre) anglers are more likely to keep their catch. It appears that anglers are more likely to harvest larger stocked catfish at all three lakes. In all three study lakes the catfish stocked in March were harvested at a higher rate, while catfish stocked in May were caught most quickly. The trout are not caught as quickly after stocking as the catfish. The median of the tag returns was 2-3 weeks after stocking. The exploitation rates were highly variable depending on the lake. Harvest rates ranged from 28% at Upper Sportsman's Lake to 75% at Middleton Mills Shelterhouse Pond. Corrected catch rates at all three lakes exceeded 80% of stocked trout. The trout appear to be highly susceptible to angling and utilized by anglers at these FINs lakes. The size of trout at all stockings was quite similar and no differences were observed in harvest rates based on size. However, judging from the creel survey the harvest rate was likely higher than the exploitation study indicated. The tag was removed the first time the fish was caught, but the creel survey suggests the fish are being caught multiple times before ultimately being harvested.

Advertising and marketing continue in an attempt to raise awareness of the FINs program, increase participation, and boost license sales. Flyers promoting the FINs program were distributed at boat shows, schools, license vendors and agencies involved with the FINs program. A 1-page advertisement for the FINs program appeared in the 2012-13 and 2013-14 Kentucky Fishing and Boating Guide. Additionally, a 1-page stocking table appeared in the 2012 and 2013 Kentucky Afield calendars. Kentucky Afield radio interviews were conducted to promote the FINs program. Kentucky Afield television also did a short segment on the addition of Jacobson Park Lake in Lexington to the FINs program. Other television and radio interviews were conducted in the Louisville, Lexington, Cincinnati, and Madisonville markets to promote the FINs program. News releases specific to each lake were used to make local anglers aware of the FINs program and fish stockings. The FINs website and kiosks near the lakes were routinely updated with stocking information.

Spring electrofishing sampling was conducted at 25 FINs lakes in April and May 2012. Samples were run to gather information on species composition and catch rates. Furthermore, tandem hoop nets were used to sample channel catfish populations at nine lakes in October and November 2012.

A statewide angler attitude survey was conducted on-site at 27 of the FINs lakes. Angler attitude surveys indicated that young anglers (≤ 15 years old) made up a large proportion (29%) of anglers observed fishing at FINs lakes. Many of the anglers fishing at these lakes were not familiar with the FINs program and 44% were not aware Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources stocked the lake with fish. The department's website or word-of-mouth seemed to be the primary means of information for those anglers who were aware of the fish stockings and FINs program. Anglers traveled short distances to fish at the lake with very few anglers traveling > 30 min. The angler attitude survey indicated the majority of anglers preferred fishing for channel catfish. The overwhelming majority of anglers (85%) are highly satisfied with their overall fishing experience at the FINs lakes.

A creel survey was conducted in conjunction with the attitude survey and exploitation study at Alexandria Community Park Lake and Middleton Mills Shelterhouse Pond. Fishing pressure remained extremely high at both lakes (> 4,000 man-hr/acre). Channel catfish were the most caught species at Middleton Mills Shelterhouse Pond, while rainbow trout were the most caught species at Alexandria Community Park Lake. Overall, trout were the most harvested species at both lakes. Catch rates for all fish species was 1 fish/hr for both lakes.

The FINs program expanded from 35 lakes in 2012 to 39 lakes in 2013. Jacobson Park Lake in Lexington and James D. Beville Park Lake in Leitchfield were added to the FINs program. An addition of one lake in both the William F. Miles and Fisherman's Park complex in Louisville brought the total lake count to 39.

Use of Flathead Catfish to Reduce Stunted Fish Populations in a Small Impoundment

In June 2007, 417 flathead catfish were stocked in A.J. Jolly Lake in an attempt to improve size structure and growth rates of panfish and other sportfish species including largemouth bass and channel catfish. Additional stockings occurred in September 2009 with 308 flathead catfish and June 2011 with 403 fish. Stocked flathead catfish were fin-clipped and were obtained from Georgia Department of Natural Resources as part of their non-native flathead eradication program. Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery reared 2,862 flathead catfish averaging 5.1 in that were stocked in September 2011 to boost flathead catfish densities.

Spring electrofishing for largemouth bass yielded the second highest catch rate in the 16 years of sampling with a good distribution of bass in all size classes. Significant spawns in 2010 and 2011 boosted the catch rates of bass < 12 in. The PSD value (55) for bass dropped slightly in 2012, but was similar to the average PSD value (57) from the past 4 years. Fall electrofishing for largemouth bass revealed a good spawn in 2012 following two very productive year classes in 2010 and 2011. The mean size of age-0 bass in 2012 (4.9 in) was the second highest observed since 2004. Relative weight values of fall largemouth bass increased as fish size increased. Largemouth bass ≥ 15 in had the highest relative weights, while all size classes appeared healthy.

Spring electrofishing for bluegill netted very few ≥ 6 in bluegill; the population was dominated by sunfish in the 2 – 4 in range. Catch rates for bluegill in 2012 (709.6 fish/hr) was similar to 2011 catch rates (714.4 fish/hr) and was the second highest recorded in 15 years. The catch rate for ≥ 6 in bluegill has

been considerably lower the last six years compared to the long term data. Overall, the bluegill population at A.J. Jolly Lake is dominated by slow growing small fish in poor condition with very few large bluegill present.

Channel catfish were sampled in October using five tandem hoop net sets. Catch rates were the second lowest in the last five years (8.6 fish/set). Stocking was put on hold from 2008 – 2010 due to high densities of small channel catfish present in the lake. Sampled channel catfish ranged in size from 8 – 17 in with the majority of catfish being in the 8 – 12 in size range.

A total of 110 flathead catfish were sampled (2.3 hr of electrofishing) in July 2012 using low pulse (15 pps) daytime DC electrofishing. A total 7.0 hr of spring and fall electrofishing (60 pps) for largemouth bass and sunfish yielded 13 additional flathead catfish. In total, 123 flathead catfish were sampled in 2012. Of the 123 fish sampled, 99 were $\leq$ 7 in (likely from the 2,862 flatheads stocked from Pfeiffer Hatchery in 2011). Twelve of the 24 flatheads captured $\geq$ 8 in were fish from the Georgia stockings, while the other 12 were native fish. Sampled flathead catfish ranged in length from 4.5 to 36.0 in (both native fish; Table 18). There were more flathead catfish sampled in 2012 (123) than in 2011 (49), 2010 (31), or 2009 (17). However, most of these fish were $\leq$ 7 in. Overall, sampling numbers for flathead catfish remained low for the year.

Beginning in 2011, common carp were removed from A.J. Jolly Lake in an attempt to improve water quality. A total of 402 common carp were removed in June and July 2012 from A.J. Jolly Lake. The average weight of carp removed from the lake was 2.88 lbs. An estimated 1,158 lbs of carp was removed in 2012. Additionally, 365 common carp totaling 1,223 lbs were removed in 2011.

In 2009, a catch and release only regulation was implemented at A.J. Jolly Lake to ensure stocked fish were not being harvested by anglers and would remain in the lake to hypothetically control sunfish numbers. To date, sampling efforts for flathead catfish have been ineffective at providing a reliable estimate on the number or size structure of flathead catfish in A.J. Jolly Lake. Bluegill catch rates have increased over the last several years while size structure has decreased.

Oklahoma

Close to Home Fishing Program (CTHFP) **-** Contact - Keith Thomas - Fisheries Biologist (405) 325-7288

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) oversees the CTHFP which has been running for 15 years. The ODWC cooperates with 18 municipalities which includes 50 bodies of water statewide. The ponds range in size from a ½ acre to 60 acres. Three new municipalities signed onto the program in 2013. El Reno, Jenks and Sapulpa entered into a 5 year cooperative agreement with the Wildlife Department. The City of Oklahoma City renewed their commitment to the program by signing up for another 10 years. Benefits of signing onto the program include, fish stockings, fish habitat improvement, technical assistance, weed control, law enforcement and preferred status for angler

access improvement projects. A synopsis of the CTHFP was prepared and presented to the Oklahoma Wildlife Commission.

Central Region - Danny Bowen - Fisheries Biologist - (405) 379-5408

Biologist met with city staff regarding development of new boating access projects at 3 lakes in the region. Regional personnel participated in 14 aquatic education events for local school groups at 2 sites. Native largemouth bass broodstock were collected for statewide production via Holdenville State Fish Hatchery. Collected fin clips from largemouth bass to evaluate FLMB stocking success. Samples were sent off to OU Zoology Department for mDNA analysis.

CR fish introductions 2013:

Species	Number	Size	Sites
Channel catfish	3,732	10 inch	6
Channel catfish	37,232	7 inch	5
Florida LMB	145,500	Fry	2
Florida LMB	85,700	1.5 Inch	3

East Central Region - Jim Burroughs - Regional Supervisor (918) 683-1031

Hoop net surveys were conducted at 5 municipal lakes. Results varied from poor to good. Fish requests for regional water bodies were assembled and submitted to the hatchery section for 2014. Regional personnel assisted with 5 aquatic education events at local ponds.

ECR fish introductions 2013:

Species	Number	Size	Sites
Channel catfish	6,602	10 inch	8
Florida LMB	260	7 inch	2

NE Region **-** Contact - Chris Whisenhunt - ODWC Fisheries Biologist - (918) 299-2334

Night electrofishing was performed on Bixhoma Lake to assess the largemouth bass population. Bixhoma is a 110 A, municipal water supply lake just south of Tulsa. Bass, catfish and bluegill were requested for stocking in 2014 from the ODWC Hatchery Section. Fish management plans were prepared for the 2 newly added CTH ponds.

NER fish introductions 2013:

Species	Number	Size	Sites
Florida LMB	13,000	1.5 inch	1

Channel catfish	19,037	10 inch	10
Rainbow trout	1,456	12 inch	1

NW Region **-** Contact - Ty Harper – Fisheries Biologist – (580) 474-2668

Tandem hoop netting took place at 3 agency owned lakes to channel catfish evaluate stocking rates. Spring electrofishing surveys were performed at agency lakes according to Standard Sampling Procedure regimen. A new boat courtesy dock and ramp was installed at American Horse Lake near Geary, OK. The lake level has been down for several years now due to ongoing repairs to the dam after Hurricane Katrina. A new boat dock was also installed at Lake Elmer (Kingfisher, OK) during renovation work. Assistance was provided at small lake in Woodward, OK in order to reduce shoreline erosion and increase fishing access. Cedar tree brush piles were placed into 2 agency owned lakes in 2013.
NWR fish introductions 2013:

Species	Number	Size	Sites
Largemouth bass	1,650	1.5 inch	1
Largemouth bass	236	8 inch	2
Bluegill sunfish	70,000	1 inch	1
Bluegill & Redear sunfish	300	5 inch	1
Channel catfish	1,000	3 inch	1
Channel catfish	9,152	10 inch	8
Rainbow trout	16,144	10 - 24 inch	3

OKC Region **-** Contact - Keith Thomas - Fisheries Biologist (405) 325-7288

Tandem hoop nets surveys for channel catfish took place at 2 ponds during the period. Catch rates were low for both ponds. Angling pressure appears to be high at most regional ponds. Four ponds were sampled via electrofishing. Largemouth bass, bluegill sunfish and redear sunfish catch rates ranged from low to moderate. Water quality data was collected in July at several CTHFP sites. Data gathered will be reviewed and then incorporated into future management strategies. Creel surveys are proposed to further evaluate the fisheries. Stocking rates may need to be increased. Fish requests for 2014 were prepared and submitted to the respective stocking committee chairperson. Score sheets will be reviewed and then sent in to the ODWC Hatchery Section.

A fish loss study was conducted at a flood retention pond in OKC. This 6 acre pond is open to the public and is being considered as a new CTH site. City officials are concerned that flooding will flush all the fish out and cause a mess downstream . Several loads of catchable sized sunfish and catfish were stocked into the pond. Regional staff monitored the pond before and after rain events. Fish were sampled by hoop netting shocking and angling to count remaining fish. Results showed some fish loss but was determined to be acceptable considering the site conditions. Recommendations to OKC by the ODWC are to add the pond to the CTHFP. Habitat activities included the construction and placement of 200 spider blocks at a recently renovated CTH pond in Jones, OK. Twenty fish feeders were maintained and

2 tons of semi-buoyant fish feed was dispensed. Aeration systems at Dolese, Edwards Park, South Lakes Park and Little River Park were cleaned and made ready for the upcoming summer months. Fifteen aquatic education events were conducted at regional ponds and lakes. Topics included trout fishing, catfish fishing, fish I.D., knot tying, casting, fish cleaning / cooking and outdoor ethics.
OKCR fish introductions 2013:

Species	Number	Size	Sites
Channel catfish	9,990	10 inch	20
Channel catfish	9,742	7 inch	15
BGxGR sunfish	5,088	4 inch	15
Rainbow trout	6,702	10 - 24 inch	3

Stocking evaluation of grow-out channel catfish in Oklahoma's small impoundments - Contact - Chas Patterson - Fisheries Biologist - (580) 474-2668

Channel catfish *Ictalurus punctatus* are stocked in small impoundments throughout Oklahoma as put-grow-take or put-take fisheries. These stockings are necessary to sustain an acceptable sport fishery as natural recruitment of channel catfish in small impoundments is often low. Many small impoundments are stocked annually with grow-out (228 mm) channel catfish at rates as high as 99 fish/ha. Tandem hoop nets have been used to evaluate channel catfish populations on nine small impoundments annually since 2010. In addition, a catfish angler survey was conducted on these impoundments in 2011. Angler survey results indicated angler catch rates were not correlated with relative abundance data. In addition, angler satisfaction of fish caught was fairly similar among lakes although lowest at lakes with stunted populations. Results from the netting data suggests CPUE is highly variable among reservoirs years although growth seemed to be negatively correlated to relative abundance, suggesting density dependence. Consequently, stocking rates were adjusted in 2011 based on growth data. Stocking rates at four impoundments were reduced to 13 fish/ha while stocking continued at 99 fish/ha at three lakes and increased to 150 fish/ha at two lakes. In 2013 size structure appeared to be improving at the four lakes with reduced stocking rates. No changes in the population have been observed at lakes with consistent or increased stocking. Growth will determined once again in 2014 to assess the channel catfish populations. A post stocking manipulation angler survey will also be conducted in 2014 to determine if angler catch and satisfaction has been impacted.

Virginia

Steve Owens
Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries
1796 Highway Sixteen
Marion, VA 24354
540-845-9662
steve.owens@dgif.virginia.gov

Dam Safety at DGIF owned impoundments

DGIF has been working over the last several years towards bringing our agency owned lakes up to compliance with new Dam Safety Guidelines administered through the Dam Safety Program administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. This has been an expensive endeavor, as around 32 impoundments fall into varying categories from high hazard to low hazard. In order to bring several dams into compliance, estimated costs have approached upwards of $3 million. DGIF is faced with prioritizing the recreational importance of agency owned impoundments throughout the state and making hard decisions on whether the money should be spent for upgrades or whether dams will be breached due to the lack of funding. So far a number of impoundments have been upgraded, and several recent projects have come in significantly under budget due to the current state of the economy. Several projects have had completion delayed due to engineering problems.

Statewide WAE Study

Agency personnel will be evaluating stocking densities at three of our DGIF owned small impoundments over a 5-year period. Current protocol dictates small impoundments receive 100 walleye fingerlings/acre. The completion of a recent statewide walleye exploitation study showed that exploitation in small lakes was higher than expected and that these small resources could potentially benefit from a higher stocking rate. Our study design will maintain Lake Brittle as our control site with 100 walleye fingerlings/acre stocked annually. Burke Lake will receive 150 fingerlings/acre and Lake Orange will receive 200 fingerlings/acre during the 5-year study. Statewide stocking protocols for small impoundments will be re-evaluated at the end of the study.