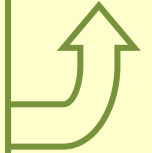


# Tuttle Creek Fisheries Newsletter

Summer 2011

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## DISTRICT UPDATE

Zebra mussels have been found at the Jeffrey Energy Center Lakes and Council Grove Reservoir. Please **Clean, Drain, and Dry** all equipment to help prevent the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species.

## A New Agency

Starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is expanding. The Division of Travel and Tourism is being moved from the Department of Commerce to KDWP. The new agency will be called Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism. The logo will change soon.

Outdoor recreation is already one of the main reasons that people visit our great state. This move will help get the word out about all the opportunities that Kansas outdoors can offer.

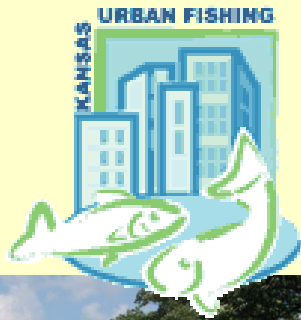
## Channel Catfish Hotspots

The channel catfish is one of the most popular sportfish in Kansas. Reasons for this fame include they are good eating, easy to catch (usually), chance of catching a big one, and they can be found in almost any body of water. However, at many small impoundments, channel catfish do not survive their first year of life very well.

In an effort to improving angling success, KDWP annually stocks many Kansas waters with young channel catfish. The Manhattan District receives about 11,000 intermediate size (8-inch to 10-inch) channel catfish every year for area lakes and ponds. These catfish are raised in KDWP's fish hatcheries and then released to grow into catchable sized fish.

In addition to stocking state raised fish, KDWP also purchases privately-raised channel catfish to stock in certain locations. These fish average  $\frac{3}{4}$ -pound a piece, with sizes varying from 12 inches to 18 inches and a few even bigger individuals mixed in. The main benefit of stocking these large fish is that they are immediately available for harvest. These fish are stocked in high use urban areas, leading to the name Urban Fishing Program.





Recent stockers at Pott. SFL #2

### Channel Catfish Hotspots

Locations in the Urban Stocking Program around the Manhattan area:

Location	Pounds of Fish per Year
Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake # 2	3,519
Shawnee State Fishing Lake	4,692
Fort Riley - 7 Mile Pond	1,000
Fort Riley - Moon Lake	5,600
Fort Riley - Brakenek Lake	2,000
Fort Riley - Pritchard Pond	3,130

These locations get stocked about once a month from April through September, so there is always some fish to catch.

All of these stocking locations routinely produce nice stringers of eater-sized channel catfish. Since these channel cats are raised on fish feed, anglers usually do best on prepared baits, but other traditional catfish baits also work well. It does seem like these farm-raised fish have a taste for minnows in the spring because anglers catch a lot of them while trying for crappie.

Funds from fishing license sales pay for raising little catfish and to buy the larger fish. A fishing license, poles, and bait are all you need to catch some nice channel catfish.

## Results from the Spring Electrofishing Sample

Every spring fisheries biologist around the state use generator powered electrofishing boats to sample waters in their districts for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. These fish are weighed, measured, and released. Then biologists use this data to assess these bass populations by looking at things like body condition, size structure, and abundance. For electrofishing, abundance is determined by how many fish we collect per hour. This can vary some, depending on habitat types, water clarity, temperature, and other factors. Regardless, this is still an important statistic for anglers because these numbers can be used to speculate which lakes will have the better bass fishing. Below are two tables: one for largemouth bass and one for smallmouth bass from waters in the Manhattan District that were sampled in 2011. Very small fish were not counted here. Along with fish per hour, there are also the percentages of the fish that were collected in each length category. Lakes are in no particular order. Pottawatomie SFL #2 looked really good this spring for big fish of both species.

Largemouth Bass Waters	Fish/hour	Percentage in each length group			
		8 - 12"	12 - 15"	15 - 20"	20 - 25"
Pottawatomie SFL #1	138	9	81	10	
Pottawatomie SFL #2	133	40	23	35	2
Shawnee SFL	97	14	49	34	3
Jeffrey Make Up Lake	4		75	25	
Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake	5	50	33	17	
Centralia City Lake	17	29		71	
Lake Wabaunsee	53	44	31	22	3
Cross Creek Lake	109	46	46	6	1

Smallmouth Bass Waters	Fish/hour	Percentage in each length group			
		7 - 11"	11 - 14"	14 - 17"	17 - 20"
Pottawatomie SFL #2	10	21	50	14	14
Jeffrey Make-Up Lake	11	50	42	8	
Jeffrey Auxiliary Lake	29	28	50	22	
Lake Wabaunsee	10	18	73	9	



Bass from Pott. SFL #2

# Tuttle Creek Reservoir Water Level Management



By Gregory Wurst, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The normal pool level at Tuttle Creek is elevation 1075, that is one thousand seventy-five feet above sea level. All the campgrounds, boat ramps and recreation facilities were designed for the lake to be at that elevation. Many people think the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) tries to keep the lake at that elevation year round. However, the Corps and state of Kansas has an annual water level management plan and tries to keep the lake at different elevations for different reasons throughout the year.

Management of the water levels of the lake is a shared responsibility between the Corps and the State of Kansas. The State of Kansas, acting through the Kansas Water Office, manages the portion of the lake below elevation 1075, which is called the multi-purpose pool. The Corps manages the portion of the lake above elevation 1075, which is called the flood control pool.

During the summer the goal is to maintain the lake level around elevation 1075. This maximizes access to the lake's recreational areas, provides access to the lake by boats and provides the maximum benefit to the recreational users of the lake. This is a common goal of both the Corps and the state. With the varying elevations of the lake that occur during this peak water-based recreation period, those using the lake must be aware of standing timber in the lake, which can be just below the surface during fluctuating lake levels. If you are unsure while boating, go slow.

After the Labor Day holiday, the ceremonial end of summer, the lake is then allowed to rise up to an elevation 1079. The purpose of this rise is to flood mudflats that have been covered with vegetation during the summer growing season. This flooded vegetation provides habitat for the migratory waterfowl passing through on their way south in the fall. With this habitat attracting waterfowl, it also provides an excellent recreational opportunity for waterfowl hunters.

After the waterfowl have migrated south and before the lake begins to freeze, the lake level is drawn back down to elevation 1072 in mid to late December. This drawdown is completed to minimize ice damage to docks (stable water level over winter during ice cover) and minimize ice damage to the rip-rap on the dam. The lower lake level also minimizes wave erosion on the banks during the winter and provides a bit more flood water storage that routinely is required in the spring.

When the spring rains come the lake then rises back up to elevation 1075 in conjunction with the crappie spawn. If at all possible a slow rise for crappie to lay their eggs on the rocky banks is desirable. If the lake rises too fast the eggs will not hatch in deep water. If the lake falls the eggs will be left high and dry. This rise back to elevation 1075 brings the lake back to the starting point of the water level management plan and the annual water fluctuation cycle begins again.

However, there are other factors that affect the fluctuation plan's design that cannot be planned for or controlled. Flood control is one of the authorized purposes of Tuttle Creek Lake. In 2010 Tuttle Creek stored over 31 feet of water during the majority of the summer and it appears high water could occur again during the summer of 2011. That certainly was not in the water fluctuation plan but is an unavoidable result of the flood control purpose of the lake. Tuttle Creek is managed as part of an overall reservoir control system that takes into account water flows throughout the Midwest. Water from Tuttle Creek eventually empties into the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers. If they are above pre-determined levels, as they have been the past two years, Tuttle Creek cannot make large releases after rains so the lake must go up no matter what the plan calls for.

Another authorized purpose of the lake is support of navigation on the Missouri River. The lake can be called upon to make releases to raise the water levels on the Missouri River to allow the transportation of goods and services on the river. The demand for navigation water is normally later in the navigation season, between mid-summer and early December. Unfortunately, when water is called for to support navigation, the release of the water from the lake directly competes with the intent of raising the water level in the fall for waterfowl and recreation. In order to minimize impacts, the drawdown of the lake is normally limited to 3 feet prior to October 1, then an additional 3 feet can be drawn down after October 1. This check point of October 1 is intended to minimize impacts to boating and other water related recreation during the peak of the summer recreation season. However, the lake can be



## Tuttle Creek Reservoir Water Level Management

drawn down to elevation 1069 if needed during the navigation season by late fall.

Droughts are also impossible to plan for. When there is no rain, the lake does not rise. In addition, during drought periods, water is routinely released from the lake in excess of what is entering in order to meet downstream flow targets for minimum stream flows and to meet contractual requirements for industrial and municipal water supply uses.

As you can see, there are many competing uses of the lake and its water on an annual basis. The Corps and the State of Kansas work at balancing those uses and needs and occasionally, the goals of the water level management plan are implemented as designed. When the conditions allow this, fish, waterfowl, recreationalists, and downstream water users all benefit. Problems occur when there is either too much or too little of our precious resource, water, in Tuttle Creek Lake.

## How You Can Help

Fisheries biologists are responsible for updating online fishing reports, weekly radio reports, and routinely answering "where are the fish biting" questions. Of course, these duties can be difficult to accomplish without good data. So if you have a fishing report you would like to share, then please feel free to email it to [ely.sprenkle@ksoutdoors.com](mailto:ely.sprenkle@ksoutdoors.com) or call at (785) 539-7941. I am not looking for anyone's secret spot, just some general information about fishing successes or failures. You can also post your own fishing reports at our blog at <http://ksfishing.blogspot.com> Thank you for any help.



What can you do if you see a short walleye being put on a stringer or a big buck being shot out of season? Fish and wildlife violations can be reported anytime to Operation Game Thief at 1-877-426-3843. Please go ahead and store this number in your cell phone now. You do not have to leave your name or testify in court. For a more local contact, you can call the natural resource officer for your area. Their phone numbers are listed by county in the fishing and hunting regulation booklets. You can even call your local police or sheriff's departments to report wildlife violations. Report the violation as soon as you can, with whatever information that can be gathered, including time, place, license plate numbers, boat numbers, and general descriptions. Law enforcement cannot be everywhere all the time, so please help out and report any violations.



Good Luck Fishing!!!

## Wildlife Section Update by Wes Sowards

### New Youth/Mentor Special Hunts Opportunities in the Manhattan District

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has conducted special hunts on private lands for a number of years. These hunts can provide excellent hunting opportunities with a more controlled environment and less crowding. We have recently signed up two such hunts for this coming fall deer season and turkey season for youth and mentor hunters. The properties are primarily woodland, and cropland habitat that provide excellent numbers of deer and turkey. The new special hunt tracts are located about 2 miles south of Frankfort, KS. You must be either a youth or an inexperienced hunter accompanied by a mentor. Please take this opportunity to take your child, or someone who is inexperienced in the sport of hunting, to the great outdoors of Kansas. To apply, please log on to [www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us) after July 15 and click on the hunting tab at the top of the page. Then click on the Special Hunts Information tab. Look for Marshall County Tracts 1 and 2. Have fun and good luck!