

MOUND CITY

District Fisheries Report

2013 Spring Issue

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, Fisheries Division

Trout fishing at Ft. Scott's Gunn Park

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This year's cold, snowy spring slowed some of the trout anglers at Ft. Scott's Gunn Park, Fern Lake, better known as THE TROUT POND. Several times the entire park was closed to vehicle traffic as the roads were impassable. Determined trout anglers can always park at the entrance and walk the short distance to the trout pond. The trout pond has a pump-driven aerator that circulates water and slows down the formation of surface ice. Another positive feature of the trout pond is the wooden fishing platform. This fishing platform is perfect for anglers who prefer a flat even surface to walk on and even supports a bench to sit on. The fishing platform is located right at the edge of the trout pond and many fish have been caught from this nice fishing platform. Anglers can park right next to the platform, so carrying fishing tackle or trout to the car is easy. Anglers have caught lots of trout this year and many of the fish were larger than normal. Excellent growing conditions at the trout farm allowed many trout to grow faster and larger than normal.



Trout stocking at Ft. Scott's Gunn Park. During the trout season, 400 trout are stocked every two weeks. This 2-acre pond has excellent shoreline angling access.

Paddlefish/Spoonbill Snagging Area in Linn County

Paddlefish snagging season is open March 15 through May 15. Anglers are encouraged to try their luck at catching this huge trophy fish.

For the third year, the Marais des Cygnes River, from the upstream end of Unit G of the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area downstream through the Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge to the state line river bridge, is open to paddlefish snagging. This area of the Marais des Cygnes River is 15.4 miles long, currently the longest area ever opened to paddlefish snagging in Kansas. Thanks to the cooperative effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and KDWPT, the Marais des Cygnes River now supports another new paddlefish snagging area. Signs indicating the designated areas have been posted to assist anglers with boundary recognition. Because paddlefish consume plankton, it is hard to catch them in the mouth with a hook, therefore snagging is the most productive way to catch one of these giant fish. Although paddlefish exceeding 100 pounds are rare, paddlefish in the 30- to 50-pound range are fairly common, but even fish in this size range can generate a lot of excitement and will draw crowds where they are caught. Warm water temperatures and high flows excite spawning paddlefish as they concentrate below river dams, riffles, or constrictions. These conditions increase the chances for diligent paddlefish snaggers to be successful. Nonsport fish such as carp, drum and buffalo may be snagged and harvested in waters posted open to snagging during the paddlefish season. There are no limits on nonsport fish. A paddlefish permit is required and includes six carcass tags; the daily limit is two paddlefish. Paddlefish caught must be released or tagged immediately.

FISHING FORECAST for MOUND CITY DISTRICT

The information is formulated from data collected by fisheries management biologists through their annual lake monitoring activities (which include test netting and electroshocking). Not every lake is sampled each year, so a three-year average has been included. Some lesser-rated waters are not included in the tables. Interested anglers can pick up the printed 2013 Fishing Forecast at most stores that sell fishing licenses or go online to the KDWPT web site at www.ksoutdoors.com under Fishing and then click on Fishing Forecast. This forecast lists most desirable fish species and ranks the lakes according to the sampling results with a Biologist Rating column to compensate for poor samples.

The data is separated into three categories – reservoirs (those larger than 1,200 acres), lakes (waters from 10 to 1,200 acres), and ponds (waters smaller than 10 acres) – because sampling on small water bodies may not be comparable with that on larger areas. Tables have been created for popular species and include a Density Rating, Preferred Rating, Lunker Rating, Biggest Fish, Biologist's Rating, and 3-year Average. Species reports are [bluegill](#), [channel catfish](#), [largemouth bass](#), [spotted bass](#), [walleye](#), [white bass](#), [white crappie](#), [black crappie](#), [wiper](#), [sauger](#), [saugeye](#), [smallmouth bass](#), [striped bass](#), [redeer sunfish](#), [blue catfish](#), [northern pike](#), and [flathead catfish](#).

The **Density Rating** is the number of fish that were high-quality size or larger sampled per unit of sampling effort. High-quality size, listed in parentheses at the top of the Density Rating column, is the length of fish considered acceptable to most anglers and is different for each species. The higher the Density Rating, the more high-quality-sized or larger fish per surface acre in the lake. Theoretically, a lake with a Density Rating of 30 has twice as many high-quality-sized fish per acre as a lake with a Density Rating of 15.

The **Preferred Rating** identifies how many above-average-sized fish a water contains. For example, a lake may have a good density of crappie, but few fish over 10 inches. The Preferred Rating tells which lake to go to for a chance to catch bigger fish.

The **Lunker Rating** is similar to the Density Rating, but it tells you the relative density of lunker-sized fish in the lake. A lunker is a certain length of fish considered a trophy by most anglers. It also differs with each species and is listed in parentheses at the top of the Lunker Rating column. For example, most anglers consider a channel catfish longer than 28 inches a lunker. Many lakes may have a lunker rating of 0, but this does not mean there are no big fish in that lake. It just means that no lunker fish were caught during sampling, and they may be less abundant than in lakes with positive Lunker Ratings.

You can use the Density Rating and Lunker Rating together. If you want numbers, go with the highest Density Rating. If you want only big fish, go with the Lunker Rating. Somewhere in the middle might be a better choice. A lake with a respectable rating in all three categories will provide the best overall fishing opportunities.

The **Biggest Fish** column lists the weight of the largest fish caught during sampling. A heavy fish listed here can give the lunker fishermen confidence that truly big fish are present.

The **Biologist's Rating** adds a human touch to the forecast. Each district fisheries biologist reviews the data from annual sampling of their assigned lakes. This review considers environmental conditions that may have affected the sampling. They also consider previous years' data. A rating of **P**(poor), **F**(fair), **G**(good), or **E**(excellent) will be in the last column. Sometimes the Density Rating may not agree with the Biologist's Rating. This will happen occasionally and means the Density Rating may not accurately reflect the biologist's opinion of the fishery.

The **3-Year Average** rating refers to the averaging of the Density Rating over the previous three years of sampling to help show a trend for a particular lake.

Below, I have prepared a summary list that answers the questions that I most often receive about the best local places to catch fish. I want anglers to use this as a guide on where to fish but please don't "not go fishing" because the best crappie lake in the state is 150 miles away. Not all lakes are sampled each year and there are times when my anglers have caught great fish like crappie at Mound City Lake and our sampling data lists that lake as number 53 in the state. At lakes like Mound City, Critzer, Cedar Creek, if the fish are in the trees when I sample then I will not catch a lot, but the fish are still there as evidenced by high angler catches.

Catching Up on the NEW Critzer Lake in Linn County – anglers are preparing for their second full year of fishing at the state’s **newest** fishing lake. With 220 acres of tree-filled, clear water, anglers have had bonanza fishing for channel catfish, largemouth bass and smallmouth bass. Many good fishing reports were filed last year with the most unusual coming from anglers in kayaks and canoes. A growing group of anglers have found these delightful small boats to be very maneuverable on small lakes. Especially small lakes like Critzer where trees are very abundant. These small crafts can easily be propelled in between trees and brush while anglers fish their favorite lure for crappie and bass.

The Department will be conducting a creel census of anglers at Critzer Reservoir this year. The census begins in March and terminates in October. Anglers who fish at Critzer may speak with a creel clerk who will ask questions about the angler’s fishing experience at the lake. At the end of the season, all of this information is summarized and a summary report is produced that indicates important information such as: how many anglers fished this lake, how far they drove, how many fish were caught and released, how many fish were harvested, species most sought after, and how anglers evaluated their fishing experience that day at Critzer lake; all great information that will be used by the management biologist to make anglers’ fishing experiences better. I will probably release some of this information in the next newsletter.

[Critzler Fishing YouTube](#)

[You can read or print a copy of the Critzer Lake Brochure here.](#)

CEDAR CREEL LAKE IN Bourbon receives additional parking areas at east side boat ramp.



Working with Bourbon County Roads Department and Bourbon County Rural Water C-2 it was agreed to make the east parking lot about twice as big. Area to the south of the current parking lot will be improved. This will accommodate the needed parking for the Tuesday night bass tournament group.

Tight Line

Anglers as the snow melts and the grass starts to green up many fishing opportunities start to bloom. Trout fishing at Ft. Scott’s Gunn Park, or for some real big game fishing try the other end of the spectrum – paddlefish snagging at the 15 miles of river along the Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Areas.

For those largemouth bass enthusiasts, bass fishing at La Cygne Reservoir really starts to pick up as this warm-water lake’s bass move into shallower water to spawn. Some of the largest bass are caught this time of year. For anglers wanting to catch large bass, this is the time and place to go. Smaller lakes warm up quick and crappie anglers already have small lakes like Mound City, Pleasanton East Lake and Elm Creek Lake on their list. Soon the fish feeders will be filled and turned on and the channel catfish feeding frenzy will once again have many anglers excited. This is a great time of year and every day presents new fishing opportunities.

Have fun and take a friend.
Your Fisheries Biologist

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