

January 2012

Lawrence District Newsletter

Special points of interest:

- * KDWP is now KDWPT
- * Stockings, habitat plans, assistance with fisheries management, installation of fence crossers are all available under terms of FISH agreements.
- * Crappie sampling at Melvern Reservoir indicates a good crappie fishing year



Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism
Richard Sanders, Fisheries Biologist
(785) 832-8413

New Agency Name

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks officially changed its name to Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) July 1, 2011 as Tourism personnel from Commerce Department were added. Even though the name has changed, our mission in the Fisheries Section remains the same – maintain or enhance fishing opportunities and success for anglers.



New District

In September, long-time fisheries biologist Leonard Jirak retired. Since the department does not know if it will be able to fill this position anytime soon, district realignment occurred. I no longer have part of Miami County (Andy Jansen, Kansas City biologist has it) nor Leavenworth County (Kirk Tjelmeland, Perry biologist has it). I still have Douglas and Shawnee counties, along with Osage. So if you wish to receive newsletters that cover lakes in Miami or Leavenworth counties you will need to sign up for them again.

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The Sport Fish Restoration Act

The Sport Fish Restoration Act was passed on August 9, 1950. Revenues from excise taxes on sport fishing equipment, import duties on fishing tackle, boats, and a portion of the gasoline fuel tax attributable to small engines and motorboats are deposited into the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. These monies are transferred to each state based on a number of factors including number of fishing license holders and acres of public waters. Some of the projects in the Lawrence District that have been funded by this program include: Douglas SFL renovation, Central Park Lake renovation; floating docks at Lake Shawnee; fishing docks at West Lake, Clarion Park, Central Park and Freedom Valley; courtesy docks at Carbondale City Lake; trout fishing programs at Auburndale, Lake Henry, and Lake Shawnee; kids fishing clinic program; habitat construction at Lonestar, Douglas SFL, Clinton Reservoir and Lake Shawnee; district-wide fish stockings; fish feeders at Carbondale City Lake; pier extensions at Carbondale City Lake; fish feeding programs at Clinton Reservoir, Melvern Reservoir, and Osage SFL; and lease agreements with community lakes and private pond owners that allow anglers to fish these waters with just a Kansas fishing license.



Trout

Trout fishing is going full bore with opportunities at Auburndale Park (I-70 and MacVicar in Topeka), Lake Henry (Clinton State Park) and Lake Shawnee. Auburndale and Lake Henry receive seven stockings (215 trout/stocking – Auburndale, 725 trout/stocking – Henry) through the October 15 through April 15 season. Lake Shawnee is stocked twice a year (7,000 pounds of trout/stocking), once in late October and again in late February. Anglers found a bonanza of large trout (this state record was broken twice!) at Lake Shawnee last year, and expectations are high for this spring. Many fish are caught using power bait, worms, corn, small spinners, spoons and flies. All trout anglers need a trout permit in addition to a Kansas fishing license. The daily limit is five trout unless otherwise posted. Anglers 15 or younger may fish without a permit but are limited to two trout per day **OR** they may purchase a permit and take five trout per day. The allure of trout fishing is that they are active when many native warm-water fish are not. They can be caught with simple equipment and without a boat. So if you are getting a severe case of cabin fever get out and give trout fishing a try.

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Melvern Walleye Rearing Pond Operation And Harvest

The Melvern Walleye Rearing Pond project is collaboration among the Corps of Engineers, Kansas Walleye Association and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. The Corps plants wheat in the fall on the exposed pond bottom when the pond is dry. Wheat is a cover crop that reduces erosion and provides a small influx of nutrients to stimulate the food chain as the wheat decomposes when flooded. After wheat begins growing later in the fall, the gate is closed to allow the pond to begin filling through runoff. Around the first of March, fathead minnows are purchased by the three partners and stocked into the pond. These small minnows will spawn throughout the growing season providing abundant forage. Adult bluegill are stocked in April, so that their spawns will provide additional forage. During May, 3,500-5,000 fingerling walleye are stocked. Throughout the summer fish food is dispensed from two floating feeders to provide additional feed for minnows. If all goes according to plan, walleye survive and grow well. This past year, the rearing pond was harvested October 1. A total of 1,863 walleye were harvested and stocked into Melvern Reservoir. Walleye ranged from 6-11 inches. Stocked walleye of this size should have higher survival rate than smaller fish and should enhance the walleye fishery in the future. Thanks to all who came out and assisted with the harvest. Special thanks goes to recently retired fisheries biologist, Leonard Jirak, who came out to coordinate the harvest. Plans are in the works to harvest another crop of walleye this year around the end of September or first part of October. See you then!



Jim Franz, Corps of Engineers, presents Leonard Jirak with a plaque for his many years of work on the Melvern Walleye Rearing Pond Project

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Voluntary Public Access Program

The Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats Program (FISH) has successfully garnered public access to private waters for 13 years. Recently, KDWPT received additional funding to increase base lease payments to private pond and stream access owners. Pond owners are paid according to county location, size and privileges. Pond owners in counties with more people and less public water receive higher payments than those in less populated counties with more public waters. Pond owners in Shawnee County receive \$125/acre, in Douglas County the rate is \$100/acre and in Osage County the rate is \$75/acre. Sites allowing boating opportunities will receive increased payments of \$25/acre for allowing all boat access (launch facilities must be present) or \$10/acre for only allowing carry-in boat access. Another focus of the FISH program is to increase access to streams for fishing and paddlesports. Streams are enrolled at annual rates of \$1,500/mile (highest quality), \$1,000/mile (high priority), or \$500/mile (moderate quality). Access to the Kansas River is worth \$1,500 to \$2,000/year depending on location. FISH contracts allow public access to leased areas from March 1 through October 31. Stockings, habitat plans, assistance with fisheries management, installation of fence crossers are all available under terms of FISH agreements. If you are interested in enrolling your pond(s) or stream access into the FISH Program or if you know of a potential pond or stream site contact: Richard Sanders, at 785-832-8413, or email - richard.sanders@ksoutdoors.com. Additional information is available at <http://fish.ksoutdoors.com/> or call the Topeka Regional Office at 785-273-6740.



2012 Lake Forecasts

Clinton Reservoir

The final smallmouth bass stocking (fourth year) was completed in 2011. Thus far, reintroducing smallmouth into Clinton has gone well. Fingerling stockings have survived in abundance and fish have grown rapidly. Many smallmouth stocked three years ago exceed 15 inches in length. The key to long-term viability of smallmouth at Clinton will depend on reproductive success, survival of young and recruitment into the adult population. Number of adult crappie sampled in 2011 was very similar to that observed in 2010, so crappie fishing in 2012 should be fair. White bass fishing should be phenomenal in 2012, unless overwinter mortality decimates large fish. Many 14- to 16-inch white bass are present in the population, which should provide fast action. Wiper numbers continue to be good as individuals slowly get larger. There is an abundance of 18- to 22-inch fish in the population, which should have reels singing in 2012! Good numbers of channel catfish are still in Clinton. Not very many fish exceed 24 inches long, but 18- to 22-inch fish are plentiful and should supply a good fishery for those looking for eating-size fish. Few walleye were sampled in 2011, but anglers at times caught decent numbers of fish last year. So angling hopefully will at least be fair for walleye. Sauger catch rates were up, and individuals in all length categories were observed. A number of young-of-the-year sauger were collected, indicating some level of stocking success in 2011. Good shad production helped all of the sportfish survive and grow during 2011. Hopefully good shad production will occur next year to allow continued improvement of these sportfish populations.

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2012 Lake Forecasts (cont'd)

Melvorn Reservoir

Crappie sample catch was up in 2011 and 2012 is shaping up to be a good crappie fishing year. There will be fewer fish greater than 12 inches long, but numbers of fish less than 12 inches look good. Channel catfish gill-net catch was up in 2011 and 2012 should be a good year. Most fish are going to be good size for the skillet at 16-20 inches. Not many walleye were collected with gill nets, but anglers had a good year in 2011 and 2012 should be similar. A large percentage of walleye are 15-20 inches in length. Sauger numbers were low in gill nets, but anglers catch them, so I think sauger fishing will be fair. Moderate numbers of white bass were observed in 2011 samples. Fish were in very good condition. Many 14- to 16-inch fish will be available in 2012. Smallmouth bass numbers and size distribution looked good in the 2011 electrofishing sample. Anglers should have fun catching these brown mis-siles!



Douglas SFL

High numbers of small largemouth bass continue to characterize this fishery. Fishing for bass is rated fair due to lack of size, even though number of bass present is great. This lake is a great place to take a novice bass angler to introduce he or she to bass fishing because they are almost guaranteed to catch bass. New for 2012, the bass length limit will be a 13- to 18-inch slot limit with a five-fish daily creel limit. A 13- to 18-inch slot limit protects bass from 13-18 inches long, but fish less than 13 inches or greater than 18 inches can be harvested. This limit will allow thinning of small fish which should improve growth and overall size in the future. Bluegill and redear sunfish should supply fair fishing in 2012 for 6- to 8-inch individuals. Evidence of crappie production was observed again in 2011, which should bode well for increasing density of catchable-size crappie in the future. Crappie fishing will be fair at best in 2012, but it should continue to improve for a few more years as the population builds. Channel catfish angling should be good again in 2012, as good numbers and sizes of fish were sampled during the fall of 2011.

2012 Lake Forecasts (cont'd)

Osage SFL

The largemouth bass fishery is pretty good with fairly high catch rate and decent-sized fish. Numbers of crappie sampled in 2011 was good. However, few crappie exceeded 10 inches, but plenty of 8- 10-inch fish are present. Low numbers of bluegill of average size were sampled and should supply a fair fishery. Low numbers of channel catfish were sampled, but some were of large size. Good numbers of juvenile and moderate numbers of adult wiper were sampled in 2011. As juvenile wipers grow into adulthood, angling should improve for this species. Few walleye were sampled in 2011 and fishing prospects look poor for 2012.

Lonestar Lake

Good numbers of 8- to 10-inch crappie were sampled in 2011, with low to moderate numbers greater than 10 inches. Overall crappie fishing should be fair in 2012. Moderate numbers of moderately sized bluegill should supply fair angling. High numbers of largemouth bass were observed in 2011. However, fewer bass greater than 15 inches were present. Channel catfish should continue to provide quality fishing



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2012 Lake Forecasts (cont'd)

Lake Shawnee

Low numbers of crappie were sampled in 2011. Most of the larger crappie measured 8-10 inches. Crappie fishing should be fair in 2012. Lots of juvenile smallmouth bass were sampled in 2011, but the larger fish were missed. This fishery has been developing for a numbers of years, and angling should be fair for this species. Catch rate of largemouth bass was low in 2011 and anglers reported difficulty in catching largemouth, so this fishery can only be rated fair. Channel catfish catch rate was a little lower in 2011, but decent numbers of 16- to 20-inch fish were present and should supply a fair fishery. Lots of 6- to 8-inch bluegill were sampled, which should supply a fair fishery. Good numbers of wiper were observed. All fish captured exceeded 16 inches with the largest measuring 27 inches. High numbers of white bass are present, with many 12- to 14-inch fish. White bass fishing should be good. Few walleye were collected, so the rating for this species is poor. Will the Kansas trout record be broken again at Lake Shawnee, like it was twice in 2011? Time will tell, but big trout are stocked two times during the trout season, giving anglers opportunities to have memorable trout fishing experiences.

Melvern River Pond

This lake has a very good population of channel catfish. Good numbers of big fish characterize this body of water. Some decent sized crappie exist here that should supply fair angling. Good numbers of big, fat, bluegill (some over 8 inches) should provide a good fishery. Low numbers of large wiper and walleye are present as well, which may supply the lucky angler with a story to tell!

Take a Kid Fishing