

Fall River Fisheries District Newsletter

Sport Fish Restoration

A wide spread misconception in the public is that their federal and state income tax dollars pay for and support public lakes and reservoirs in Kansas. Another misconception is that when KDWPT Conservation Officers write a citation such as not having a fishing license or taking more fish than the creel limit, the fines go back to the Fisheries Section of KDWPT or somehow benefit the fisheries resource. Fines are paid into the state general fund of which the Fisheries Section of KDWPT receives no money. The truth is that anglers and boaters pay for and support public waters in Kansas through the purchase of fishing licenses and the Sport Fish Restoration Act.



The Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act in recognition of the two congressmen who proposed the legislation, was created to restore and manage America's declining fishery resources. It has been amended 11 times to include a federal excise tax of 10 percent on the manufacture of fishing equipment, motor boats, boat fuels, and three percent on fish finders and trolling motors. Ten percent of the tax collected must be spent for boat access facilities. Funds are distributed to the states based on fishing license sales. The states must match 25 percent of the funds with state money. In Kansas, all matching funds come from the sale of fishing licenses. In 2011, there were only 241,218 resident and nonresident fishing licenses sold in Kansas.

From these funds, KDWPT employs 16 fisheries biologists to manage 24 federal reservoirs, 40 state fishing lakes, and over 200 community lakes in Kansas. KDWPT also operates four fish hatcheries, Milford, Pratt,

Meade, and Farlington. There are four hatchery managers and nine fish culture biologists between them. The hatcheries stocked nearly 80 million sport fish in Kansas in 2011.

Species	Number Stocked
hybrid sunfish	172,376
blue catfish	75,939
bluegill sunfish	514,100
channel catfish	4,371,136
largemouth bass	1,100,903
wiper	9,528,135
redeer sunfish	268,010
sauger	2,975,555
saugeye	4,691,228
smallmouth bass	51,415
striped bass	1,850,080
walleye	54,306,217
TOTAL	79,905,094



Milford Fish Hatchery raceways.

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Pratt Fish Hatchery ponds.

There is just one fisheries biologist managing all 25 bodies of water totaling 21,225 acres. The number of lakes and reservoirs in the Fall River Fisheries District represent 18 percent of the state managed water. However, the one fisheries biologist represents just six percent of the 16 fisheries biologists. Kansas doesn't employ technicians to assist the fisheries biologist. Every year, an attempt is made to electrofish for bass,



Electrofishing largemouth bass at Fall River Reservoir.

In addition to funding hatcheries, Kansas fishing license sales and Sport Fish Restoration funds paid for operating the Fall River Fisheries District. Following is a list of reservoirs, lakes, and ponds within the district:

Lake Name	Acres	County
John Redmond Reservoir	9,400	Coffee
Coffee County Lake	5,090	Coffee
Toronto Reservoir	2,800	Woodson
Fall River Reservoir	2,500	Greenwood
Carbondale City Lake	265	Osage
Eureka City Lake	259	Greenwood
Moline New City Lake	185	Elk
Lyon State Lake	135	Lyon
Madison City Lake	114	Greenwood
Olpe City Lake	90	Lyon
Sedan New City Lake	70	Chautauqua
Lebo City Lake	70	Coffee
Howard City Lake	69	Elk
Moline Old City Lake	68	Elk
Sedan Old City Lake	55	Chautauqua
Gridley City Lake	33	Coffee
Severy City Lake	10	Greenwood
Emporia Jones Park Ponds (3)	3	Lyon
Emporia Peter Pan Pond	3	Lyon
New Strawn City Lake	3	Coffee
Olpe Jones Park Pond	1	Lyon
Lebo Kid's Pond	1	Coffee
Fall River Kid's Pond	1	Greenwood
TOTAL	21,225	

trap net for crappie and sunfish, and gill net for walleye, saugeye, channel catfish, white bass, wiper, and gizzard shad on all impoundments. Frequently, but not every year, scales are pulled from sampled fish for age and growth analysis. An annual progress and management report is written for every impoundment sampled.

In addition to annual sampling, there are many special projects funded by Sport Fish Restoration and fishing license sales within the Fall River Fisheries District. KDWPT leases the fishing rights from most city lakes so anglers don't have to pay to fish there anymore (CFAP). We also lease segments of private rivers and some ponds for the public to fish (FISH). We provide fish feeders and fish food at most lakes to increase growth of channel catfish and sunfish. We built lunger structures to enhance bass habitat at Fall River. We built channel catfish spawning structures at Fall River Reservoir and Lyon State Fishing Lake (SFL). We built habitat islands at Lyon SFL and Gridley City Lake (CL).

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We built fishing piers at Lyon SFL, Olpe CL, Madison CL, Eureka CL, Howard CL, Gridley CL, and Lebo CL. We built half-log bass spawning structures at Lyon SFL.



Installing luncker structure for bass at Fall River.

We constructed brush piles to concentrate sport fish in areas accessible to anglers at most lakes. We built boat ramps, docks, and toilets at nearly every lake. We built all weather roads, parking lots, and information signs. We renovated Lyon SFL, Lebo CL, Gridley CL, Emporia Jones Park Ponds, Emporia Peter Pan Park Pond, and Olpe Jones Park Pond.



Fish feeder at Fall River State Park Kid's Pond.

We also provide equipment for and conduct fishing clinics. This is an extensive list of projects funded by Sport Fish Restoration and fishing license sales, but by no means complete. Your continued participation in boating and angling will ensure funding and enhancement of Kansas' fisheries.

Money making opportunity

KDWPT would like to pay you to allow the public to fish on your property. Fishing participation is on the decline as indicated by fishing license sales. We at the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism want to provide every opportunity to fish. As a lake or river owner, there are some questions you should ask:

- ✓ Do you have a fishable pond, lake, or river access on property you own?
- ✓ Would you let people fish there?
- ✓ Do you need help managing those waters?
- ✓ Would you like to be free of the liability of people fishing your waters?
- ✓ Would you like to get paid for allowing people to fish your waters?
- ✓ Do you like to see young people doing something other than playing video games?

If you answered "Yes" to these questions, you are the landowner we are looking for. The FISH (Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats) program is set up with many incentives including financial. The program pays you \$125/acre, \$100/acre, or \$75/acre for tier one, tier two, or tier three counties, respectively, to allow angler access to your lake between March 1st and October 31st. If you also allow carry-in boats, the payment increases \$10/acre, or if you allow all boats, the payment increases \$25/acre.

Another objective of the FISH program is to increase fishing and canoeing access to high quality, long stretches of rivers. Rates for river fishing and paddle sport access are based on the Stream and River Evaluation Map developed by the KDWPT Stream



Carson Cox, Fisheries Biologist
 Emporia Research & Survey Office
 1830 Merchant St., P.O. Box 1525
 Emporia, KS 66801

Phone: (620) 342-0658
 Fax: (620) 342-6248
 www.kdwpt.state.ks.us
 carson.cox@ksoutdoors.com

Robin Jennison, Secretary

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Survey Biologists. The lease rate for rivers with the highest priority fishery resources is \$1,500/mile, \$1,000/mile for high quality fishery resources, and \$500/mile for good quality fishery resources. Rivers designated with limited fisheries resources will not be leased. Additionally, you may receive a paddle sports bonus if your river is longer than one mile, has put-in and take-out spots, and is signed up for a five-year lease. If you own less than one mile of river, you can include your section of the river with your neighbors leased section so the total length is at least one mile. The paddle sports bonus for highest quality fisheries is \$750/mile, and \$500/mile for high quality fisheries.

Kansas has three rivers that are classified as "navigable", the Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri. They are already publicly owned and therefore open to fishing and paddle sports. However, private landowners control access to these rivers across their land. Therefore, any land-owner allowing public access to these rivers will receive a payment of \$1,500/year. If your access site is within ten river miles of any other public access site, you will receive \$2,000/year.

You may also qualify for financial bonuses. If you sign up for five years we would pay you for all five years up front. This option makes sense because funding for the FISH program is approved by the Governor annually. Therefore, continued funding of this program is not guaranteed. If you are the first property owner to enroll in FISH in your county, you will receive a one-time bonus of 50 percent of your annual payment. If there are no public fishing opportunities in your county at all, you will receive a one-time bonus of 100 percent of your annual payment. Additional lease incentives for five year leases include: fisheries sampling, habitat management, fish stocking, fence crossers, cattle guards, and parking areas.

Resource stewardship is the business of KDWPT so state statutes will be used to ensure your property is treated appropriately. Fishermen must stay within 50 feet of the water and respect the land as well as the landowner. The following regulations are in effect on FISH waters: the discharge of firearms is prohibited; seining, trotlines and set lines are prohibited on impounded waters; no swimming; camping by posted notice only; no pets except on a leash; no horseback

riding; no stocking or release of wildlife, including the dumping of live bait; vehicles shall be operated only as authorized; no fireworks; no unauthorized fires; no littering; no cereal malt beverages or alcoholic liquor; destructive acts such as digging or destroying signs or vegetation is prohibited; all Kansas boating laws are in effect; all Kansas fishing regulations are in effect; impounded FISH waters have a reduced creel limit of two channel catfish and largemouth bass per day and bass have a minimum length limit of 18 inches. These regulations will be enforced by KDWPT law enforcement officers.

If you are interested in enrolling in the F.I.S.H. program, please contact me.

Fall River Fisheries District Fishing Forecast

The 2011 sampling results are in. You can read the results of the 2012 Fishing Forecast on the KDWPT web site. Here's how the fish populations in the Fall River Fisheries District lakes ranked among waters in the rest of the state:

Species: Largemouth bass/hr. electrofishing

Lake	# >12"	# >15"	# >20"	Biggest Fish
Eureka	3 rd		12 th	3 rd 7.28 lbs.
Howard	5 th	13 th	7 th	5 th 7.05 lbs.
Sedan Old		14 th		
Madison		19 th		
Moline New		20 th	18 th	
Reservoir				
Fall River	4 th	4 th	1 st	3 rd 5.95 lbs
Toronto	5 th	3 rd	3 rd	4 th 4.85 lbs

There were 100 lakes and 15 reservoirs electrofished in Kansas in 2011. The main body of Fall River and Toronto Reservoir don't have the necessary largemouth bass habitat to support a high density bass population. However, the flooded timber and clearer water in the

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backwater section of the rivers and creeks produce a fair density bass population. Fall River had 31 bass per hour of electrofishing around the Ladd Bridge section of the river. Toronto Reservoir had 29 bass per hour of electrofishing in Walnut Creek. The ideal catch rate would be 100 bass per hour.

Species: white crappie/trap net night

Lake	# >8"	# >10"	# >12"	Biggest Fish
Carbondale	4 th	3 rd	tie 4 th	
Howard	5 th	4 th	tie 7 th	1 st 2.43 lbs.
Eureka	9 th	12 th	tie 3 rd	4 th 1.72 lbs.
Moline New	14 th		tie 7 th	
Lyon SFL		11 th		
Madison			tie 5 th	2 nd 2.20 lbs.
Sedan New			tie 5 th	
Reservoir				
Fall River		10 th	3 rd	2 nd 2.43 lbs.
Toronto	10 th	14 th	4 th	6 th 1.75 lbs.

There were 78 lakes and 24 reservoirs trap netted in Kansas in 2011. Although the crappie populations in Toronto and Fall River Reservoirs were on a low cycle due to drought conditions, they were still two of the top lakes in the state for big fish. The second biggest crappies sampled in the state were the 2.43 pound lunkers caught at both Fall River Reservoir and Howard City Lake. Only the 2.67 pound crappie sampled at Elk City Reservoir was larger.



Species: channel catfish

Lake	# >16"	# >24"	# >28"	Biggest Fish
Carbondale	5 th	tie 7 th		17 th 9.26 lbs.
Eureka	13 th	2 nd		11 th 11.46 lbs.
Madison		tie 5 th	tie 2 nd	5 th 14.99 lbs.
Sedan Old		tie 5 th	tie 4 th	16 th 9.26 lbs.
Sedan New			tie 4 th	6 th 14.14 lbs.
Lyon SFL		tie 10 th	tie 5 th	3 rd 16.53 lbs.

There were 91 lakes gill netted in Kansas in 2011. Madison, Sedan Lakes, and Lyon had the highest densities of lunker channel catfish in the state. If you're more interested in table fare, Eureka, Carbondale, Madison, and Sedan Old Lakes provide the highest density populations in the state. But, who's to say that 16-27 inch catfish are better to eat than lunkers (>28")?

Drought conditions through the summer influenced fish populations in the Fall River Fisheries District, some for the better and some for the worse. Most lake levels were about three feet low by fall test netting time. One lake, Moline Old City Lake, was more than four feet low, which prevented it from being sampled because the boat couldn't be launched.

Carson Cox, Fisheries Biologist
Emporia Research & Survey Office
1830 Merchant St., P.O. Box 1525
Emporia, KS 66801



Phone: (620) 342-0658
Fax: (620) 342-6248
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carson.cox@ksoutdoors.com

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Moline Old City Lake low water.

You can see the population dynamic shift if you compare previous years' fishing forecast to this years'. You'll notice that most drought affected lakes had lower density ratings resulting from reduced reproduction and recruitment. However, the up side is that you'll notice fish are in better condition (fatter), and a number of big fish increase. The bottom line is, get out there and catch those big fish before they either die of old age or get flushed out of the lakes.

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Get your friends, get your family
... and FISH KANSAS!



Most fish populations benefited from low water levels. In the Fall River Fisheries District, most lake levels declined between three and four feet because there was no inflow from rainfall. About 25 percent of the shoreline was exposed and grew up to vegetation, especially water willow and smart weed. Increased fish population growth characteristics resulted from drawing small fish out of the flooded shoreline aquatic vegetation where they had excellent escape cover and concentrating them during the low water. Furthermore, next spring reflooding of the dense stand of smartweed and water willow that developed along the shoreline while the water level was low will increase nutrients, resulting in enhanced growth.

Low water levels will have a two-fold effect. First, spring rains will flood shoreline vegetation which will result in enhanced spawning habitat and escape cover for small fry. Secondly, the low water levels will concentrated the predators and high density of prey produced in the flooded vegetation, making them vulnerable to predation. This will keep prey species density in check while enhancing growth of remaining parental brood stock due to reduced competition for food.