

Cheney District Fisheries

Volume 1, Issue 3

Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks Fisheries Division

Fall 2010

Cheney District Update

It may be hard to imagine, but cooler weather and hot fall fishing awaits anglers.

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The weather in the Cheney District has been extremely variable this summer, making it difficult to nail down a consistent fishing pattern. Despite weather events like the 6 inches of rain over the 4th of July or the several days of near 110-degree heat, dedicated anglers have managed to catch some nice fish this summer.

Although the walleye fishing at Cheney was hot in May and June, the heavy rainfall over the 4th of July raised the lake over 7 feet and shut off the fish. In fact, it was several weeks until most of the boat ramps were even useable. Since the high water has subsided, a few walleyes have been caught, but it has been very inconsistent. The wiper fishing has been better in the last few weeks, with good catches off of Wichita Point, the islands near Fish Cove, and in the deep water near the dam. Try one spot, and if you strike out, try another because wipers are continuously moving and are most always hungry! One species that remains fairly consistent at Cheney during the dog days of summer is channel catfish. Blood baits, cut bait, shrimp, and even hot dogs can entice a big cat to bite. Popular summer catfish locations at Cheney include the riverine area in the upper end of the lake and near the Red Bluffs feeder on the east end of the refuge. When cooler weather approaches, pack your waders and long-casting rods and wade out on the flats of the refuge as this is a great place to hook big wipers in the fall. I know it seem like an eternity away, but if we're "lucky" enough to get some

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Bullfrogs, the other, OTHER white meat

I contend that no one has ever NOT had fun bullfroggin' on a summer night.

Bullfrog season runs from July 1 through October 31, and Kansas is home to some of the biggest bullfrogs found anywhere. A popular tactic for capturing frogs includes shining a bright light into a lake or wetland at night and looking for the glowing eyes of a bullfrog on the surface. When one is spotted and temporarily blinded by the light, frogs can be netted, gilled, or grabbed by hand. Bowfishing equipment and hook and line can also be used to capture bullfrogs, and a valid fishing license is required to take bullfrogs in Kansas. It takes some practice and stealth to become a skilled frogger, but it is sure fun learning and a great activity to get kids active in the outdoors.



A satisfied bullfrog hunter with her first frog after an August hunt at Kingman SFL.

If you've never tried frog legs, don't be hesitant; when fried to a golden brown, there is no better table fare that can be harvested from Kansas waters. A common description of the taste of frog legs is a combination of chicken, fish, and shrimp. If you're looking to do some frogging this fall, look and listen anywhere that holds water and vegetation; there will likely be some bullfrogs!



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really cold weather this winter, look for the wiper fishing to be good through the ice near the upper end of the lake. Don't be in too big of a hurry though; be sure to wait for a consistent 4 inches of good, clear ice before venturing out.

At Kingman State Fishing Lake, the northern pike action has been good this summer despite the hot temperatures. Pike can be caught lakewide, but when the water is warm, concentrate your efforts at the north end of the lake where springs cool the water down a bit. When pike fishing in hot temperatures, remember pike are a cool-water fish, and a quick release will help avoid unnecessary mortalities if you don't plan on keeping the fish. While fishing Kingman, please be aware of the increasing numbers of invasive white perch that are threatening sportfish populations at Kingman and throughout Kansas. In spring and summer fish samples, many small white perch were captured, indicating they are reproducing in Kingman SFL. Anglers are reminded that it is **ILLEGAL** to possess live white perch and they should not be transported to another water for any reason. For white perch information, click [HERE](#).



A nice northern pike caught at Kingman SFL this August

It has also been business as usual at McPherson SFL this summer as lots of nice largemouth bass and channel catfish have been caught. Try for catfish near the feeders and for bass around rip rap piers and mats of aquatic vegetation. If you are taking kids fishing, try for bluegill at McPherson, as they are abundant and easy to catch with a small hook and piece of worm under a bobber.

Trout fishing fast approaching

Get geared up for this unique fishing opportunity!

Starting in mid-October, KDWP and the city of Hutchinson will begin biweekly stockings of rainbow trout at the Dillon Nature Center in Hutchinson, which is just east of K-61 on 30th street. Each stocking consists of about 450 rainbow trout that average approximately ½ to ¾ of a pound, with some fish over a pound mixed in. Popular tactics for catching trout include brightly-colored power bait, nightcrawlers, small spinners, and even marshmallows. Additionally, fly anglers also have good luck on a variety of fly patterns. Many trout anglers believe the best time to fish is right after the fish come off the stocking truck, but catches are usually good days and weeks after stockings, as fish often need time to acclimate to their new surroundings.



During the winter when other fishing in the area is slow, trout action can be fast and furious. Fresh caught trout can make a delicious meal when grilled, baked, or smoked.

Remember when trout fishing in Hutchinson, a trout permit is required for all trout anglers over 16 years of age. The daily creel limit is five trout per person and two trout per day for anglers 15 and younger who do not have a trout stamp. Good luck to all trout anglers this fall!

Asian carp watch!

These “jumping fish” have been getting a lot of attention in Kansas lately. Be sure to do your part in keeping them out of Kansas waters.

It seems like a story we hear far too frequently in Kansas, but more aquatic nuisance species (ANS) are again threatening our waters. Bighead and silver carp, which are collectively referred to as “Asian carp” are currently thriving in the Kansas and Missouri Rivers due to optimal spawning conditions this spring. Hundreds of thousands of young of the year Asian carp are currently stacked up below dams on the Kansas River, where unknowing anglers have been caught using them for bait. Young Asian carp somewhat resemble gizzard shad, which are a popular baitfish and important component to reservoir food webs. Asian carp; however, can have drastic affects on aquatic systems, as they can consume up to 20 percent of their body weight per day in plankton. That plankton is what juvenile baitfish and sportfish need to survive.

Not only do Asian carp represent a biological threat to our fisheries, silver carp also pose a danger to boater safety, as these fish can leap several feet out of the water when startled by vibrations from boat motors. Just imagine being hit with a 25-pound fish while boating along at 30 miles per hour! Luckily, no populations of Asian carp have been discovered in the Cheney District, and it is up to anglers to be on ANS lookout and to help spread the word about the threats these species pose. Please check out this [LINK](#) for more information on Asian carp.



If you catch or think you have seen an Asian carp somewhere other than the Kansas, Missouri, Big Blue, and Wakarusa Rivers, freeze it in a sealed plastic bag, note the date and location, and call the Emporia Research Office at (620) 342-0658. Do not release the fish back into the water. Keep in mind that small gizzard shad will sometimes jump similar to silver carp when startled by boat motor; however, gizzard shad rarely exceed 15 inches.

Cheney Blue Catfish

This summer, KDWP stocked approximately 500 adult blue catfish into Cheney Reservoir in an attempt to jumpstart natural reproduction in the lake. Since 2006, young-of-the-year blue cats have been stocked each fall; however, it appears that these stockings have not been successful. The adult blue catfish that were stocked varied in length from 10 to 33 inches, but the average fish weighed approximately 4 pounds. Each blue catfish was tagged behind the dorsal fin with a small, yellow tag with a number that is unique to that individual fish. If you catch one of these tagged blue catfish, please report the number to Jeff at 620-459-6922. Hopefully the blue catfish population flourishes at Cheney, as blue cats can grow to great sizes and will provide another predator for the invasive white perch. Blue catfish have also been shown to eat zebra mussels. Although they will likely not control zebra mussel populations, blue catfish will certainly fill a niche that is not being occupied by any existing sportfish at Cheney.



This fall, biologists will be busy finishing up fish stockings and conducting our fall test netting samples. If you see us out and about, feel free to ask us any questions about fishing in the Cheney District.

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