

Dodge City District Fisheries Newsletter

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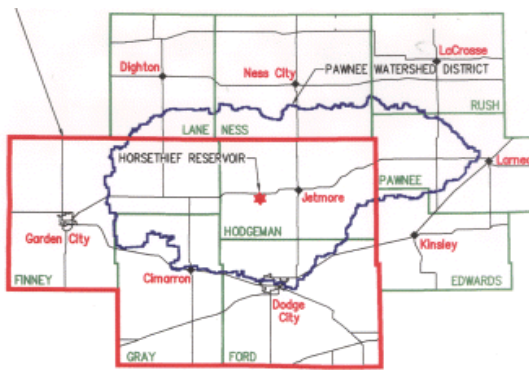
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HorseThief Reservoir Habitat

*Newest Reservoir in Kansas is filling
ahead of schedule*

On April 5, 2005, the voters in the four-county Benefit District (Hodgeman, Finney, Ford and Gray counties) approved a 15/100th of 1 percent sales tax to pay for construction of a new dam within the Pawnee Watershed. A lake at HorseThief's location has been in discussion since at least the early 1970s. The project was funded by a 0.15-cent sales tax approved in April 2005 by voters in Finney, Ford, Gray and Hodgeman counties.



April 19, 2008 was the official ground breaking and the project was off and running. When construction began, our job as fisheries managers was to begin a habitat project that would benefit the fish and fisherman when the lake filled. Typically, fisheries biologist use lots of trees and brush to create and enhance fish friendly habitat in waters in their district. If you have ever been in Hodgeman County Kansas, you know that these basic ingredients are in pretty short supply! Shortly after the ground breaking in April, we were spending lots of time on the road doing our annual spring electrofishing samples. In the course of all this windshield time, we kept seeing lots of railroad construction going on. One day near Fowler, it came to us, let's use railroad ties to create large blocks of long-lasting habitat in Horsethief Reservoir. To see a video of this project go to the following link: [Habitat work on HorseThief](#). Under "ordinary" conditions, hydrologists expected the lake to reach normal elevation in four to five years. However, on September 8, 2009, a single large rain of about 5 inches brought the lake level to nearly half virtually over night. Coincidentally, the morning of the Sept. 8 was when the final inspection of the dam was completed and the gate was shut and the lake began to fill.

Fish populations have begun to be established with stocking of channel catfish, largemouth bass, bluegill and walleye.

For a full list of all rules and regulations that apply HorseThief Reservoir, go to the website at

<http://www.horsethiefres.com/index.html>

Aquatic Nuisance Species

Another reminder of the danger of our aquatic invasives

Boaters and anglers must be aware of some of the biggest threats to the future of our waters: aquatic nuisance species (ANS). Zebra mussels are probably the best-known ANS in the state right now, followed closely by [white perch](#). Zebra mussels are tiny mollusks that alter aquatic food webs and water chemistry, decimate native mussel populations, and clog industrial infrastructure such as water intake pipes. Many water bodies in Kansas currently have zebra mussels, and recently veligers were confirmed in samples taken in the Arkansas River at Syracuse. I have also had an unconfirmed report of two individuals who have taken white perch, which are present in several waters throughout the state, and stocked them in a private pond located in Clark or Kiowa counties.

All ANS are illegal to possess alive. White perch look very similar to white bass, so please take a look at the [Temperate Bass ID Poster](#) for identification tips. KDWP strongly encourages anglers and boaters to understand and practice techniques used to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and all ANS. Please visit KDWP's [aquatic nuisance species webpage](#) for more information.

A white perch sampled from Cheney Reservoir. White perch are characterized by connected spiny and soft dorsal fins (not connected in white bass). Also, the 2nd and 3rd anal fin spines of white perch are the same length; whereas, all three anal spines on white bass are all different lengths.



Why should You care about preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species?

A newly introduced species can disrupt the natural ecosystems by altering food webs, nutrient dynamics, and biodiversity, change the ecology of lakes and rivers, degrade habitat value in infested waters, and stunt fish populations.

ANS not only represent a threat to the environment, they threaten industry and the economy. These negative impacts include: decreased property values, decreased recreational opportunities, decreased water quality, fouled water intakes, frequently burned out irrigation and water pumps, impacts on power generation, impeded water flow and decreased efficiency of water delivery systems, and increased risk of flooding due to increased biomass in water or clogging lake outlets.

What can You do to stop the spread of ANS?

There are several major pathways through which ANS are introduced, but most are the result of human activities both intentional and unintentional. To prevent the spread of nuisance species:

Empty bait buckets on dry land, not into the lake.

Never move fish caught from one body of water to another.

Inspect equipment and remove any visible organisms and vegetation.

Wash equipment with 140-degree water (typically found at a carwash), a 10-percent chlorine and water solution, or a hot saltwater solution.

Contact the Emporia Research Office at (620) 342-0658 or [email the Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Coordinator](#) if you find any nuisance species.

Do not release aquarium pets. If your family gets tired of its aquarium or aquatic pets, do not release anything from the aquarium (water, plants, fish or animals) into or near a body of water or storm drain. You could be hurting all of the streams and lakes around the country and killing other fish and animals that already live in the water. If you cannot find a home for the critters in you aquarium, bury them. Dump the water into the toilet or yard, far away from storm drains.

Remember: It is illegal to release exotic species into the waters of the state.

Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (F.I.S.H.) program. Private Waters Leased for Public Fishing



The F.I.S.H. Program, which stands for Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats, was patterned after the very successful Walk-In Hunting Access Program with a goal of increasing public fishing opportunities in Kansas.

The F.I.S.H. Program was first introduced to Kansas anglers and landowners in 1998. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks leases private waters from landowners for public fishing. Landowners participating in F.I.S.H. receive payments, which vary according to the number of water acres enrolled in impoundments or the length and quality of the streams. Annual payments are based on \$42 per acre for impoundments and from \$500 - \$1000 per stream mile. Waters will need to be available for public access from March 1 to October 31. Private waters in metropolitan counties will receive a 50percent urban bonus for signing up in the FISH program. These counties include Sedgwick, Butler, Cowley, Sumner, Kingman, Reno, Riley, Geary, Harvey, Saline, Ottawa, Jackson, Jefferson, Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Wabaunsee, Shawnee, Douglas, Johnson, Lyon, Osage, Coffey, Franklin, and Miami. Participants in these counties will receive \$63/acre for impoundments and \$750-\$1,500/per stream mile.

F.I.S.H. provides anglers with a place to fish while leaving the land in private ownership. By providing a place to fish, the tradition of fishing can be preserved.

KDWP officials periodically patrol F.I.S.H. areas. Violators will be ticketed or arrested for vandalism, littering or failing to comply with fishing regulations.

Access is limited to foot traffic, except on roads designated by the landowner in the case of very large tracts of land.

Each year, KDWP publishes a fishing atlas outlining each body of water enrolled in the program. The atlas also contains information about the species of fish present for each water type.

This program is made possible by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act. A Federal Aid Project funded by your purchase of fishing equipment.

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



Kansas Ponds

We get many inquiries each spring and summer about management issues in ponds. This fall would be a great time to start thinking about making improvements or adjustments in managing your private pond for success next year.

Under good conditions, ponds are capable of producing high-quality fishing because the kinds of fish stocked in ponds interact and complement each other. The size of a pond also makes fish readily available to anglers of all ages.

Poor fishing occurs in Kansas ponds for two major reasons. First, most ponds are not built expressly for fishing. Potential fishery benefits are often unrealized because some uses such as direct watering of livestock destroy fish habitat and decrease water quality. The pond owner may be interested in fishing but unwilling to manage the pond to produce good fishing, especially if a primary use must be altered.

Poor fishing also occurs because most pond owners and anglers lack understanding of appropriate fish management practices. Fish and wildlife can be accommodated in a multi-purpose pond with minimal adverse effects on other uses.

Pond owners can encounter numerous problems when attempting to manage their ponds for fish production. These problems may include, muddy water, excess vegetation, fish kills or leaking ponds.

Many of these problems can be prevented or at least lessened by proper planning prior to pond construction and in the initial stages of area development and fish stocking.

While it is usually easier to prevent potential causes earlier than it is to treat symptoms later, the information found here in the publication **Producing Fish and Wildlife from Kansas Ponds**, may help pond owners deal with established problems

While it may be infeasible to put all of these ideas into practice, pond owners and anglers should be aware of the potential that exists for a pond that is built, developed, and managed as outlined in this booklet. This information will help pond owners and anglers manage fish and wildlife resources associated with ponds.

Note from Editor

I hope you found the first edition of the Region 3 District Fisheries Newsletter informative and you are able to get out and get in on some good fall fishing. Soon, fall sampling will be keeping us fish biologists busy. This is the time of the year when we look at the majority of the fish populations in each of our lakes. Not only do we look at sportfish like channel catfish, crappie and bluegill, we also look at forage species like gizzard shad and rough fish such as carp and drum.

If you know someone who would like to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so at <http://kdwp.state.ks.us/news/KDWP-Info/News/Newsletter-Request-Forms/Request-a-Newsletter-for-the-Dodge-City-Fishing-District> If you would like to unsubscribe, please send your info to [Contact Us](#) with “unsubscribe to Dodge City District Fisheries newsletter” and we’ll get you taken off of the list. If you have any questions or comments feel free to send them in.

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