

Fall 2011



# New Strawn District Fisheries Newsletter

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## District Fall Fishing Update

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Gridley City Lake to get Makeover
- 2 State Assisted Fish Production at City lakes and rearing ponds
- 3 White Bass Fall Fishing
4. [ZEBRA MUSSEL ALERT](#)

### Gridley City Lake to be rehabilitated

The 33-acre Gridley City Lake, located just north of Gridley in Coffey County, has served as a great fishing destination for many Kansas anglers. The lake was constructed in the 1950s as a water supply lake for the City of Gridley. In 1994, the city joined a water supply district, and the lake was no longer needed for a water supply. With the help of Coffey County and Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, the lake was drained and rebuilt to become more sport fish friendly. Much of the bottom of the lake was pushed up into fishing piers and islands to increase shoreline habitat and deepen the lake. Many rock piles and large trees were placed in the bottom for fish habitat. The lake's water-control structure was rebuilt to allow for water level manipulation. The lake was refilled with runoff water and restocked with popular sport fish. The City also received several grants from KDWPT to cost-share three fish feeders, an aeration system, fishing dock, boat ramp and restrooms.



The lake was reopened to fishing in the spring of 1996. The lake produced very good fishing for largemouth bass, walleye and wipers, as well as crappie and bluegill and was widely known for the large channel catfish it produced. During the past several years, the water quality has deteriorated to the point that it has impacted sight feeding predator fish and allowed for an increase in the number of carp that invaded the lake several years earlier. The lake has now become a much poorer quality fishery.

With the help of Coffey County, Jones Trust (a private organization), KDWPT, the lake will get another makeover. The fishing regulations will be rescinded and anglers will be able to seine, snag, and fish without any length or creel regulations beginning in mid-August. The lake will be totally drained in September, and interested persons will be allowed to pick up the remaining fish as the lake is drained.

Continued from page 1

After the bottom dries out, much of the lake bottom in the upper end will be pushed into jetties and islands to deepen the shallow areas and to create more high quality shoreline fish habitat. This will also help prevent wind erosion that can increase the amount of soil in the water and cause poor visibility for sight feeding game fish such as bass and walleye. The newly built piers and islands will get a coating of rock rip-rap to break the wave action and protect the dirt work.

All the fish populations in the drainage into the lake will be eliminated to prevent contamination with unwanted species such as carp and bullheads. Once the dirt work in the lake is completed the lake will be allowed to refill from runoff. The lake will be restocked with fathead minnows, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, wipers, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish. The fish will also be fed from three automatic feeders. The lake will reopen under KDWPT's Community Fish Assistance Program, so that anglers will not have to buy a city permit. Only a state fishing license will be required. The lake should reopen with some great fishing in two years or less.



## Fish Production Takes Place at Other locations besides State Fish Hatcheries

Besides producing fish at state hatcheries, KDWPT has other ways to help Kansas communities produce fish for their lakes. The cities of Garnett, New Strawn and Yates Center have all cooperated to increase fish stocking by rearing fish for their lakes for many years. Garnett and New Strawn acquire fingerling fish from state hatcheries, then grow them larger in cages before stocking them in local lakes to increase survival rates. Species that can be fed fish pellets are raised in these cages. Species include channel catfish, bluegill, hybrid bluegill and wipers. At Yates Center, a small rearing pond is located below the dam of the city lake with a water supply pipe connecting it to the lake. This allows for draining and filling of the pond as needed. Another rearing project is one that includes the Corps of Engineers, Kansas Walleye Association and KDWPT. This is the 30-acre pond located below Melvern Lake. It is also the Corps swimming pond. Walleye are reared in this pond from small 1-inch fingerlings to 8- to 10-inch intermediates. All of the walleye raised in this facility are transferred to Melvern Lake each fall. The public is invited to view or even help with this harvest. The draining and harvest will take place this fall on October 1 and begin at about 8 am.

### *Fall is a great time to fish white bass in the New Strawn Fish Management District.*

There are three large reservoirs located in the New Strawn District. These include Melvern Lake, Coffey County Lake and John Redmond Reservoir. They range in size from 5,000 to 10,000 acres. After the water starts to cool in the fall, the white bass go on a feeding rampage at these lakes to fatten up for the long winter. They feed mainly on young gizzard shad at this time of year. Often, feeding fish can be located by watching them push the shad to the surface. They may be visible on the surface for only a few minutes at a time but will often resurface on another shad school nearby. Feeding white bass can also be located by watching for gulls picking up shad injured from the white bass attacks. Whites can be caught by throwing shallow-running shad imitation lures into the feeding frenzy. The action can be fast and furious. Another place to find them when the water cools is along rocky shallow shorelines with the waves blowing in. The shad will be pushed on shore, and the whites will be working them in shallow water.

Some of the best action for white bass can be in October when it can be very pleasant out and all the jet skiers and recreational boaters have packed it in for the year. Melvern Reservoir and Coffey County Lake have excellent populations of white bass and Coffey County also has wipers that can be caught along with the whites. John Redmond has a fair population of whites and some of the biggest ones in the state can be found here. At John Redmond look for them working just off the dam when a light wind is blowing from the north. White bass seldom push shad on the surface at this lake. With the pleasant Indian summer days, anglers can have some great white bass fishing in these three reservoirs.



### **Zebra Mussels have been found at Melvern Lake**

Zebra mussels now infest Melvern Lake, and all users that have any contact with the lake are strongly encouraged to drain, dry and clean their boats and jet skies to prevent movement of the invasive mussels to other lakes. Several of the tiny newly hatched zebra veligers can live and be transported in a single drop of water.