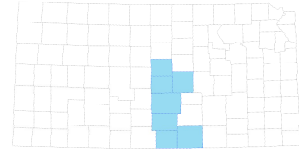


CHENEY DISTRICT FISHERIES

KANSAS DEPT. OF WIDLIFE, PARKS, AND TOURISM-FISHERES SECTION



Cheney District Update



Although walleye numbers will be down at Cheney Lake in 2012, there will still be plenty of good fish to go around.

The hot and dry summer has given way to a mostly warm and dry winter. Hopefully, some much needed precipitation will fall between now and spring, as most area lakes are still feeling the squeeze of the drought of 2011. Cheney Lake is currently about 3.5 feet low, and although some smaller lakes in the district have recovered, most are still below normal level.

Fall netting results indicated mixed results for the 2012 fishing forecast in the Cheney District. At Cheney Lake, the heat and drought appeared to take a toll on the walleye population, as catch rates in fall nets were about half of those seen in 2010. Heat-related mortality likely decreased adult walleye density, while little to no rise in lake level during the spring probably contributed to limited recruitment of the 2011 walleye stocking. Regardless of the decrease in abundance, there are still plenty of 15-22" walleye in the lake and walleye fishing should still be fair to good at Cheney in 2012. The wiper sample at Cheney was very consistent when compared to previous years. Great numbers of 12-18" wipers were sampled, and fewer large fish were seen; however, these fast-growing predators should test the drags of many anglers this year. There is good news in regard to the invasive white perch population at Cheney Lake, as gill net catches were nearly half of what they were in 2010, and the white perch are continuing to get larger. Most white perch sampled were in the 8 to 12" range, which will provide some good fillets for a fish fry when anglers get into them this year. Crappie fishing should be fair this year, although many popular areas for shore angling are shallow or dry due to the drought. Hopefully we get some rain and the lake elevation raises a few feet by the time the crappie spawn arrives.

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Other highlights from fall sampling included excellent wiper and saugeye populations at Wellington City Lake. Wellington ranks third in the state in wiper density and fourth in saugeye density. Wipers up to six pounds and saugeye to five pounds were sampled at Wellington in 2011. Over one-third of saugeye sampled at Wellington City Lake were over 18 inches, which indicates anglers should be able to take home plenty of keepers this year. The crappie population at Wellington has improved during the last year as well, and should provide some good fishing this spring. Things also look great at Wellington Hargis Creek Lake. Hargis Creek will be one of the top white crappie lakes in the state again this year. Additionally, Hargis Creek has had a tremendous couple years of saugeye recruitment and actually has the seventh-highest density of saugeye in the state. Hopefully anglers can hone in on these fish as many chunky, keeper-sized saugeye were sampled.

Finally, in the Cheney District State Fishing Lakes, McPherson SFL will be one of the best lakes for trophy largemouth bass is the state this year, and the channel catfish population looks great at both McPherson SFL and Kingman SLF. Quality opportunities are abundant in all corners of the Cheney District in 2012 and great fishing likely isn't that far away from your front porch! Good luck this year!



Spotlight on Kanopolis Reservoir

Kanopolis Reservoir has traditionally been managed out of the Wilson District, but with the recent retirement of KDWPT fisheries biologist Tommie Berger, Kanopolis has been temporarily placed into the Cheney District. Kanopolis brings a variety of angling options, some of which are generally not available in the Cheney District. First of all, an exciting trout angling opportunity is available year-round in the seep stream below the dam. Water seeping through the dam as well as Sand Creek feed the stream, which generally stays cool enough to hold over some trout through the summer. Monthly stockings from November through March provide 1,400 trout per month to anglers seeking a more traditional trout stream environment.

Currently, Kanopolis Reservoir is the home to the highest density saugeye population in the state and the liberal 15-inch minimum length limit and 5/day creel limit allows for harvest of smaller fish that wouldn't be keepers at many other lakes in south-central Kansas. Kanopolis also has a terrific white bass population that keeps anglers busy year round. Spring runs of white bass in the Smoky Hill River above the lake can be tremendous.

Additionally, wipers have been stocked in Kanopolis for the last few years which provides an emerging trophy fishery. Good crappie and catfish (channel, flathead, and blue) fishing also add to the allure of the lake. There are many good fishing locations at Kanopolis, from main lake points near the dam to the "L", which is where the river channel takes a 90 degree turn in the main lake. Popular crappie hot spots include brush piles which are marked with fish attractor buoys near Marina Cove, Loder's point, and in the Boldt Bluff area on the west side of the lake.

Kanopolis is a good combination of a big reservoir and small lake, and has some unique habitats that will keep anglers busy year-round. Other popular activities at Kanopolis include camping and trail riding. The extensive wildlife area also offers diverse hunting opportunities for big game, turkeys, waterfowl, and upland birds. For more information on Kanopolis Reservoir, State Park, and Wildlife Area, click [HERE](#).



White bass and wipers will run up the Smoky Hill River above Kanopolis Reservoir, especially when the river rises during late-April through May.



Scenic Kanopolis Reservoir lies within the Smoky Hill valley. The reservoir has 3,550 surface acres as well as a unique stream environment below the dam.

New regulations aim to stop spread of aquatic nuisance species

Anglers and boaters need to be aware of a few new regulations in 2012 that KDWPT has enacted to help stop the spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) like zebra mussels and white perch. First, livewells and bilges must be drained and drain plugs removed from all vessels prior to transport from ANY Kansas water onto a public highway. As always, boaters and anglers are urged to remember the slogan CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY! The second major change is that no person may possess ANY live fish upon departure from any ANS-designated water, which are defined as any water having zebra mussels, white perch, or Asian carp (see 2012 fishing regulation for a list of ANS-designated waters). This regulation mandates that whatever fish anglers harvest must be cleaned at the lake or dead and out of any water when you leave the lake. Finally, wild-caught bait fish may only be used on the body of water where they were taken. DO NOT MOVE BAIT from waterbody to waterbody. Although these regulations may a slight inconvenience to some, the greater good of Kansas aquatic resources are behind these laws. Please abide by them and help spread the word about ANS!



2012 Fishing Forecast now available

The 2012 Fishing Forecast can be a valuable tool for anglers when deciding where to focus their fishing efforts. The forecast contains data gathered from annual sampling efforts as well as a subjective biologist rating that best describes the quality of a fish population in given water body. A detailed explanation of how the forecast is developed as well as the comprehensive fishing forecast for all of Kansas is available [HERE](#), but some of the best bets in the Cheney District are listed below.

Crappie: Wellington Hargis Creek Lake, Wellington City Lake, Kanopolis Reservoir

Walleye and saugeye: Kanopolis Reservoir, Wellington City Lake, Cheney Reservoir, Wellington Hargis Creek Lake

Channel Catfish: McPherson SFL, Cheney Reservoir, Kingman SFL, Wellington City Lake

Flathead catfish: Wellington City Lake, Cheney Reservoir, Kanopolis Reservoir

Wiper: Cheney Reservoir, Wellington City Lake, Kanopolis Reservoir

Largemouth bass: McPherson SFL, Kingman SFL

White bass: Kanopolis Reservoir

Wellington Hargis Creek Lake will be one of the top lakes in the state for big, slab crappies this spring.



F.I.S.H. program upgrade still available to landowners

A new grant received by KDWPT has increased lease payments for the Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitat (FISH) program, which pays landowners to allow public fishing on private ponds, streams, and rivers. Although many new fishing opportunities on private land have been added to the program in recent months, there is still time to take advantage of the opportunity if you are a landowner with a high-quality fishing opportunity.

To increase incentive for landowners to lease their land for public fishing, KDWPT is now offering annual leases of up to \$1,500 per stream mile for high-quality stream segments, along with additional bonuses for reaches that allow paddlesports access. For impounded waters, leases are available for up to \$125 per acre in Rice, Reno, and McPherson counties and \$100 per acre in Kingman, Harper, and Sumner counties. Additional bonus rates are also available for leases allowing boating access on impoundments. Arkansas River access is also a priority in the Cheney District. Any landowner allowing access to the Ark River can receive yearly payments of up to \$2,000 per year.

In addition to lease payments, additional landowner incentives available for long-term lease enrollments include: fish stocking, fence crossers, and parking areas. KDWPT law enforcement officers also regularly patrol F.I.S.H. areas to keep litter, trespassing, and regulation violations to a minimum.

If you are a landowner who is interested in the voluntary public access program or would like more information, click this [link](#), contact Jeff at 620-459-6922, or contact your nearest KDWPT office.



Early spring can be a great time to fish for big northern pike at Kingman SFL. Get out and try it!

Kansas Crappie Bonanza video release

KDWPT will be releasing the recently completed "Kansas Crappie Bonanza" video on February 17, 2012. This 25-minute video covers Kansas crappie fishing during spring, summer, fall, and winter with tips and tactics to make you a better crappie angler. Visit the [KDWPT homepage](#) on February 17th and click on the Kansas Crappie Bonanza link to view the video!

Closing comments

As cabin fever is likely setting in for most Kansas anglers, I'm feeling it as well. I am itching to get out and do some northern pike sampling at Kingman SFL, as the pike spawn will be starting in just a few weeks! After that, district biologists from across the state will be headed to Cedar Bluff, Milford, and Hillsdale Reservoirs to take walleye eggs for the 2012 stockings. The egg quota for this year will be over 70 million eggs, so we'll be busy from late March until that egg quota is hopefully filled in early April. As soon as those little walleye and saugeye have hatched, we'll be either stocking lakes immediately with fry, or waiting until late-May when the fry have reached fingerling size. Cheney and Kanopolis alone will receive 237,000 walleye and 88,000 saugeye fingerlings, respectively.

I hope the weather cooperates this spring so that your angling opportunities are numerous and successful. If you see us out and about this spring, stop and say hello and feel free to fill us in on a good fishing report!

If you know someone who would like to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so [HERE](#). If you would like to unsubscribe, please send your info to [Contact Us](#) with "unsubscribe to Cheney 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.

Good fishing,

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