

# El Dorado Wildlife Area News

## Area News – Spring 2012

### New Regulations For 2012, To Protect Waters From Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS).

Recreational boaters and anglers should be aware of new regulations concerning boats, bait and fish that went into effect Jan. 1. These new regulations were approved by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) Commission in their December 2011 meeting.

They were designed to protect the natural resources of Kansas from further spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS).

The KDWPT began looking at the movement of bait fish and water as the main vector in spreading ANS to non-infested waters in 2006. A survey of anglers was undertaken in 2007 and the results showed that the majority of anglers use live bait and get it from a commercial bait dealer. When anglers chose to collect their own bait from the wild, a majority of anglers transported bait fish to their fishing destination and were apt to release remaining bait at the end of the trip.

Furthermore, many anglers could not correctly identify species commonly caught and used as bait in Kansas. In addition, the water was a vector for transport for ANS not seen with the naked eye.

Sixty-three percent of respondents said they thought that the collection of wild-caught bait would increase the likelihood for the spread of ANS species. Seventy percent thought the draining of water from boats and other equipment after use in zebra mussel-infested waters would prevent their spread. Respondents indicated a restriction on the use of wild-caught bait to the water where collected was the most acceptable option to prevent the spread of ANS.

However, despite efforts to inform and instruct Kansas anglers and boaters on the proper techniques to prevent the spread of ANS, species like zebra mussels, white perch and others have been spread to more waters of the state. The decision for more regulations was difficult, but KDWPT officials believed it to be in the best interest of all Kansans to protect and conserve these fish and wildlife resources and recreational opportunities.

The specific regulation changes for 2012 are:

#### USE IT WHERE YOU CATCH IT

Wild-caught bait fish may be used on the body of water where taken. If taken on a flowing stream or river, the wild-caught bait fish shall not be transported upstream across any dam or natural barrier.

#### NO LIVE FISH FROM ANS WATERS

No person may possess any live fish upon departure from any designated ANS waters.

#### DON'T DUMP BAIT

Wildlife may not be stocked or released on department lands or waters, navigable publicly-owned rivers, and federal reservoirs, unless authorized.

#### DRAIN WATER

The livewells and bilges shall be drained and the drain plugs removed from ALL vessels being removed from the waters of the state before transport on any public highway of the state.

## SCENARIOS

Here are a few scenarios to determine the interpretation of the new regulations.

Scenario: Can you collect bait at a reservoir/lake and then transport in a car to the other side of the lake to use?

Yes. However, if it is ANS designated water the rule is different. No live fish may be possessed upon departure of that water. If you have to leave the property owned by that entity, the fish must be dead. If you can get from one side of the lake to the other without leaving the property, the transport is legal.

Scenario: Can you collect bait in a lake or reservoir and use it in the spillway?

No. Wild-caught bait may only be used within the impoundment where caught.

Scenario: Can you collect bait in the stream/river above a reservoir and use as live bait in the downstream impoundment?

No. Not as currently worded and the KDWPPT intends to amend this in 2013.

Scenario: Where can you use live bait caught in a river or stream?

Bait fish taken from flowing water can be used on any portion of that water, provided you don't cross an upstream dam or natural barrier.

Scenario: Can you collect bait from a pond and take it to the lake or stream?

No. Wild-caught bait must be used where caught.

Scenario: Can you purchase bait and transport to any location?

Yes. New rules have been passed to make sure bait sold from a Kansas commercial bait dealer has been inspected for disease and ANS. It is recommended you keep your receipt. However, if these fish are taken to an ANS designated water, they must be dead before you leave the property (even bait fish).

Scenario: Do you have to drain all water when leaving an area?

Yes. Water must be drained and the drain plug removed from all boat bilges and livewells prior to transport on a public road. (Typical boats leaving a reservoir could contain 468-975 zebra mussel veligers — barely visible to the naked eye — if not drained).

Scenario: What is considered dead when fish are removed from any ANS waters?

Fish cannot be alive. Fish must look and act dead. It's recommended to cut the fish, pack the fish on ice or haul away in a dry container.

Scenario: What do you do with unused bait?

Do not release it into the water. Dispose of bait on dry ground or in an approved bait receptacle.

These new regulations are intended to protect Kansas' natural resources. The principles behind the regulatory changes follow the longstanding CLEAN, DRAIN and DRY recommendations when using Kansas waters. The goal is to prevent the spread of ANS, while still allowing the use of these aquatic resources.

**Area Angling and Boating Access Enhanced with Completion of Area Projects:**

Two recently completed projects have enhanced angling and boating access at El Dorado Wildlife Area. At the first project, located south of the NE 70th Street bridge, parking and shoreline angling opportunities have been enhanced by shaping and applying rock to the entrance road and parking surface. In addition, shoreline trees have been removed or trimmed to provide improved angling access to the Walnut River as it enters the lake. The second project; a newly developed parking area, concrete sidewalk, and courtesy dock, enhances boating and angling access adjacent to the "Chelsea" boat ramp. This new facility can be accessed by traveling approximately 1 mile north of the junction of NE 50th Street and NE Cole Creek Road.



Enhanced access south of the NE 70th Street bridge.

New handicap accessible courtesy dock.

**Area Habitats Enhanced with Tree Cutting Project:**

Many portions of the El Dorado Wildlife Area have recently undergone tree cutting treatments. Although the goals of tree cutting have varied at each site, the primary goal of this project has been to enhance area habitats for grassland dependent wildlife species, including area small game species. Tree invasion is known to decrease area habitat values for game species such as quail, pheasant, and prairie chicken. Tree removal is therefore designed to enhance the ability of these lands to support these species and others. Project goals included the following: protecting the integrity and diversity of native grass and forb stands; enhancing nesting and brood rearing cover for game bird species and other wildlife; enhancing capabilities of grass filter strips to filter run-off from adjacent agricultural fields; enhancing vegetation management capabilities in an area wetland; enhancing vegetation management capabilities in smooth brome stands; reducing competition to benefit desirable shrubs such as plum, sumac, and dogwood; reducing competition in woodland habitats to benefit desirable trees such as oak, walnut, and pecan; protecting existing infrastructure such as fences, power supply lines, and levees; and enhancing management vehicle access to area lands. These efforts should enhance grassland habitats for many area wildlife species. Financial assistance for some completed work has been provided from grant funds managed by the Kansas Forest Service.



One of many area grassland habitats enhanced by tree cutting project.

Would you like more information about the El Dorado Wildlife Area?

Please contact:

Brent Konen – Area Manager  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
1130 Lake Road  
Council Grove, KS 66846  
#620/767-5900  
brent.konen@ksoutdoors.com  
[www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)

