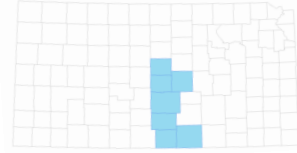


CHENEY DISTRICT FISHERIES

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



Cheney District Update



White bass at Kanopolis Reservoir and wiper fishing at Cheney should be excellent this summer.

Well, here we go again, trudging into another hot and dry summer in south-central Kansas. Although the spring weather was decent with a few timely rains, the last two weeks of 100-degree weather have most of us fearing what the next few months has in store.

Cheney Reservoir just dropped below three feet low and is currently losing about four inches of water per week due to evaporation and water demand from Wichita. During the week from June 25th to July 2, Cheney’s pool was decreased by about 2,621 acre-feet or 854 million gallons of water. Roughly half of that water was pumped for municipal use for the City of Wichita, while the other half was lost to evaporation during the dry, windy week. If we continue on this pace, the lake could be five to six feet low by the end of August. In the meantime, we will hope for rain and cooler weather. Being conscious about your own water use can help decrease water demand, leading to more water in local lakes for fish and recreation. Check out this [link](#) for some water conservation tips from the City of Wichita.

Kanopolis Reservoir is also showing the effects of the ongoing drought. The water level at Kanopolis just decreased to below conservation pool, which is unwelcome news for lake users, especially since the reservoir is traditionally held four feet above conservation pool during the summer. This elevated water level accommodates some lake amenities such as boat ramps and the marina, which are dependent on higher water levels for optimum use.

Inside this issue:

New license requirement	2
Farm pond management	3
Flathead sampling	4

Despite water issues around the district, the fishing during the spring and into early summer has been pretty good! Probably the best bet this spring was the hot saugeye and walleye bite at Kanopolis, where limits were common throughout April, May and June. Fishing’s “dog days” are ahead, but determined anglers should still be able to catch walleye and saugeye trolling and drifting along drop-offs at Kanopolis and Cheney. Perhaps no fishing experience says “summer in Kansas” like white bass and wiper action, especially when you can get into an aggressive school of fish busting shad on the surface. Lately, schools of wipers have been showing up near Refuge Point and Walleye Island at Cheney; however, these frantic schools of hungry fish can show up anywhere and anytime. Concentrate on windblown points, especially if there is a good drop-off nearby. Two other summer patterns that provide exciting fishing are night fishing for channel catfish and topwater largemouth bass fishing. Hit up Kingman or McPherson State Fishing Lakes at dusk and cast buzzbaits or topwater frogs during evening for a chance at a big bass and then settle in with some livers or cutbait for some catfishing.

Finally, if you are in the mood for something different, try anchoring over the springs on the north end on Kingman SFL for the chance at northern pike that congregate over the cool water coming up from the bottom. Cast rattletraps or Mepp’s spinners and be sure to use a steel leader. If your depth finder reads over five feet, you’ll know you’re in the right place!



New fishing and hunting license requirement

Recently, I have received many questions and comments regarding the new legislation that will remove the license exemption for anglers and hunters over the age of 65. To clear up any misunderstandings, starting January 1, 2013, anglers and hunters from 65 to 74 years of age will either have to buy half-price annual hunting and fishing licenses or a one-time combination permit for \$40. This will represent the first time since the early 1970s that those over 65 will have to purchase licenses. There are many reasons for the new law. Primarily, the demographics of hunters and anglers have changed dramatically since 1970. For example, the baby boomer generation is entering the 65+ age group, which represents a large component of the department's customer base. Currently, the agency is missing out on an estimated one-million dollars annually due to the current exemption. With the large baby boomer generation entering this age range, that number could grow in years to come.

Once anglers know where their permit dollars go and how KDWPT's programs are funded, many have accepted this new requirement. Fisheries and wildlife programs receive no general tax fund dollars and are solely funded by license dollars combined with federal funding, which is dependent on the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold by each respective state. As such, every fish that is stocked, all fish and wildlife law enforcement, every terrestrial or aquatic habitat project or survey that is conducted, and every hour worked by KDWPT fish and wildlife personnel is directly paid for by license dollars.

We realize many anglers are on a fixed income and every additional expense is a burden, but the four dollars per year for your new permit could provide the funding to stock that catfish that could get a kid hooked on fishing or perhaps pay for a few of the walleyes stocked in Cheney next year. Regardless, we appreciate all our licensed anglers and ask for your patience with the new requirement. Hopefully, this explanation has shed some light into our funding process and the reason for the new law.



All fish that are stocked in Kansas, including these Cheney Reservoir walleyes (left), are produced using funding from fishing license dollars. Without these funds, many KDWPT fish and wildlife programs, such as aquatic education (below) would be impossible.



Kansas farm pond management

The majority of my time at work is taken up by managing the public lakes in the district, but I do enjoy giving farm pond management advice to landowners. Since I get a lot of the same questions on a day-to-day basis, I figured I would include some of the most frequently asked farm pond management questions in this edition of my newsletter.

Q: I have a “moss” problem. What should I do?

A: First off, “moss” is a general term that many people use to describe anything green growing in their pond. The term may refer to filamentous algae (the floating green carpet stuff), rooted aquatic plants (e.g., coontail), or free-floating aquatic plants (e.g., duckweed). All of these organisms are different and require different control measures. Healthy fish populations require some aquatic vegetation for fish habitat, invertebrate colonization (fish food), and oxygen production. I only recommend control of vegetation when it completely hinders fishing or other aquatic recreation. Vegetation control can be tricky and if done wrong, can have drastic consequences. I usually recommend chemical control of vegetation opposed to mechanical control (i.e., physical removal) or biological control by herbivorous fish like grass carp. Mechanical control will only temporarily fix the problem and grass carp may eat ALL the vegetation or in some cases they will eat NONE of the vegetation. Grass carp also suspend nutrients into the water column that will lead to algae problems. Additionally, grass carp will only eat certain rooted plants and will not eat filamentous algae. Finally, grass carp live up to 25 years, so if you stock them, you may never get rid of them. As such, chemical control of most rooted plants is what I recommend, but be sure to follow label instructions and only treat a quarter to a third of the pond at a time. Killing large amounts of vegetation will cause decaying plant material to consume oxygen and lead to a fish kill.

Q: My fish are dying, what should I do?

A: Mortality is an unavoidable and necessary part of fish populations. When a kill happens, what species of fish, and what size the dead fish are dictate what the cause of the kill might be. The most common type of kill, especially this time of year, is summer kill. Summer kill occurs due to low levels of oxygen, coupled with high temperatures that stress fish. Several hot, sunny days in a row will produce large amounts of phytoplankton (the stuff that makes the water green). When a storm muddies the water or several cloudy days occur in a row, all this phytoplankton dies and decomposes, thus using up the oxygen in the water and killing your fish. If low oxygen is the cause of your kill, you may observe fish gulping for air on the surface, especially first thing in the morning when the sunlight has not yet started photosynthesis in your pond. If summer kill is a chronic problem in a pond, aeration systems are a good investment. Many good electric or wind-driven systems are available on the internet. Another cause of fish mortality is disease, which is usually suspected when just one species of fish is affected. Many diseases act on certain species and will only kill channel catfish, for example. “Fuzz” around the gills or bumps on the fish’s skin might alert you that you have a disease in the pond. Unfortunately, there isn’t much you can do to cure your fish of disease, but disease outbreaks in your pond may be a sign your population is too dense and some fish should be harvested once the kill passes.

Q: What should I stock ?

A: I always recommend a largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish combination. I think that this simple combination is the easiest to balance. Once you start adding other species, the predator-prey balance can get thrown out of whack pretty quickly. I rarely recommend stocking crappie in small impoundments since they can easily overpopulate and stunt, especially in turbid ponds that are common in south-central Kansas. ...continued

Farm pond management ...continued from page 3

Don't get me wrong, sometimes crappie work in farm ponds, but I believe that is the exception, not the rule. Extra "bonus" species like walleye, redear sunfish, or trout are usually expensive to stock and anglers will usually not see a good return on their investment in south-central Kansas. Do NOT stock gizzard shad as forage in small impoundments. Shad make things very difficult on bluegill. Only stock shad if a trophy bass population is what you are after; although, with that being said, gizzard shad may limit your natural bass recruitment. A good stocking program for a new pond would be to stock 500 fingerling bluegill per acre the first year, which will grow and spawn the next spring. This newly abundant forage will be great food for 100 fingerling bass per acre, which will be stocked in that summer (year two). At this time, 50-100 channel catfish fingerlings per acre can be stocked. If your bass population is decent, channel catfish will likely not naturally recruit, so you will need to stock additional catfish yearly, especially there is some harvest. The bluegill and bass will sustain themselves in 99 percent of situations, so your stocking program should be limited to catfish after the initial stocking. Be sure your subsequent catfish stockings are 8-10" as bass LOVE to eat little catfish.

Hopefully these tips will help in the management of your farm pond. For more detailed information about farm pond management, feel free to contact your local fisheries biologist or visit this [link](#) on KDWP's website.



A properly managed Kansas farm pond has the potential to produce 5+ lb bass.

Flathead catfish sampling

Recently, we took our annual flathead catfish sample at Wellington City Lake. The video crew from our Pratt office tagged along and produced an excellent video that describes how and why we sample flatheads at local lakes. Click on this [link](#) to watch the video.

Although we didn't catch any giants like in previous years, we did catch fish up to 30 pounds. We usually take the sample a little bit later, so the big fish may have been holed up in nests or other habitat we couldn't effectively sample. Either way, Wellington City Lake is an excellent lake for big flatheads, but remember set lines are not legal on waters smaller than 1,201 acres, so rod and reel is the only way to get at those fish in Wellington.



Fish with lively bait around rocks and brush for a chance at a trophy flathead. Flatheads are top predators and live fish compose most of their diet.

Closing comments

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,

Jeff Koch
District Fisheries Biologist
21514 S. Yoder Road
Pretty Prairie, KS 67570
620-459-6922