

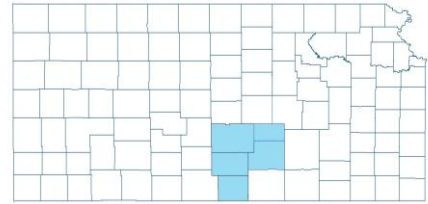
Cheney District Fisheries

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District News: Cheney, Hutchinson and Wichita Fishing



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Hello everyone, even though the cold winter weather may have slowed the fishing, it doesn't mean that things get slow around the KDWPT fisheries division! Biologists around the state stay busy through the winter analyzing data, writing reports and attending professional improvement seminars. Additionally, winter is a great time for biologists to clear equipment maintenance backlogs and sink brushpiles. With the weather beginning to warm I think everyone is looking forward to the excellent spring fishing ahead!

Cheney Reservoir

2018 Outlook: Fewer Walleye and Wiper, More Keepers

The results from 2017 fall test netting at Cheney Reservoir showed that numbers are down for both Walleye and Wiper, but the size structure of both populations had increased over the previous year. Walleye averaged 1.7 fish per net, which is a 60% decrease from 2016 and the lowest average since standardized sampling began in 2012. Fortunately for anglers, most of the Walleye sampled in 2017 measured 17-21 inches, and should provide improved opportunities to harvest a Walleye as these fish continue to grow over the course of 2018. Wiper averaged 7.4 fish per net in 2017, which is a 44% decrease from 2016, but near the 5-year average. Most of the Wipers sampled were in the 17-23 inch range. Anglers can expect good to excellent Wiper fishing again in 2018. Although Wiper numbers will be lower than 2017, the average size should be higher.

New Brushpiles

KDWPT staff sank over 80 cedar trees in Cheney Reservoir in February. Some trees were placed at prominent shore fishing areas including Christmas Tree Cove, Red Bluffs, Fish Cove, Yoder Cove, and Weinzell Cove; these trees will attract Crappie during the prespawn and spawning periods. The remaining trees were sunk at offshore locations.

The offshore brushpiles should attract Crappie throughout the year outside of the spawning season, and will provide boat anglers with increased Crappie fishing opportunities outside of the traditional spring fishery. Brushpiles are also an overlooked

At Right: KDWPT staff loading cedar trees onto a habitat barge at Cheney Reservoir.



opportunity for catfish anglers, although you may need to adjust your tackle and tactics to reduce snags. The GPS coordinates for the new brushpiles are listed below. To get the coordinates for all brushpiles placed by KDWPT statewide, visit <http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Fishing-Reports>.

Cedars 1: 37° 45.863' N, 97° 48.096' W

Cedars 2: 37° 46.056' N, 97° 48.288' W

Wichita Area

Trout Season Wrapping Up

The final trout stocking of the season for the Wichita area took place on March 1st. Some trout will persist until water temperatures become too warm for the trout to survive. Anglers are reminded that KDOT East Lake, Vic's Lake, and Slough Creek are Type 1 trout waters, and a trout permit is required to fish at those locations during trout season (November 1 – April 15); additionally, only artificial lures are allowed at Slough Creek. Dillon Nature Center Pond is a Type 2 trout water; only anglers fishing for trout or possessing trout are required to have a trout permit during trout season. To learn more about the KDWPT Trout Program, or to view a statewide list of trout stocking locations, visit <http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Trout-Fishing-Program>.

Urban Catfish Stocking Getting Started

Does the end of trout stocking season have you down? Fear not! The first urban Channel Catfish stockings of the year have already taken place! Each year, KDWPT stocks keeper-size Channel Catfish in 32 urban fisheries in the Wichita and Hutchinson area March through October. The catfish average about 1 lb., but some fish up to 3 lbs. are included for extra rod bending action. East and West KDOT Lakes, Cruiser Lake, Chisholm North Lake, Watson Park Lake and Lake Afton are all good bets. To view a full list of lakes in the urban catfish program, visit <http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Urban-Fishing-Program>.

Over 50,000 pounds of keeper-size Channel Catfish will be stocked in the Wichita and Hutchinson area this year!

Elsewhere in the District

Spring Crappie Outlook

2017 fall test netting showed strong Crappie populations at a couple district waterbodies. The netting survey at Anthony City Lake averaged 9.8 Crappie of quality size (greater than 8") per net, with many fish in the 11-13 inch range. Crappie fishing should be excellent at Anthony City Lake this spring. Numbers of 5-8 inch fish were strong as well, which bodes well for future fishing seasons. The netting survey at Harvey County East Lake averaged 8.4 quality sized crappie per net, with the majority of those fish being in the 8-10 inch range. Crappie fishing should be good at East Lake this spring. Fall test nets at Kingman State Fishing Lake averaged 2.2 quality sized Crappie per net. Although numbers of quality sized fish are low, there are some Crappie up to 12 inches present in the lake. Anglers can expect Crappie fishing to be fair at Kingman State Fishing Lake in 2018. Some sorting may be required to find quality sized fish.

Fishing Q&A

Q: I was cleaning some fish that I caught in the summertime and some of the females still had eggs. How is that possible?

A: This is a common occurrence and there are a few different things that could be going on. The first is that sometimes female fish will forego spawning in a given year when conditions are unfavorable during the normal spawning season. For example, a series of strong cold fronts that causes a large decrease in water temperature for an extended time during the peak period for spawning may cause some females to skip spawning that year. I've seen this phenomenon most often with White Bass and Crappie. It's important to note that usually only a portion of females in the population will do this. The eggs of females that forego spawning will be resorbed by their body over the course of summer.

Another explanation for fish containing eggs during the summer is that some species of fish spawn during the summer. For example, Channel Catfish usually spawn in June in Kansas. Although the bulk of Bluegill and Redear Sunfish spawning activity takes place in late May, smaller intervals of spawning activity take place throughout the summer, particularly in southern latitudes. Fish that spawn multiple times throughout the year are called "batch spawners" by scientists.

Finally, if you notice eggs in a fish during late summer or early fall, there is a strong possibility that the individual may already be developing eggs for the next year. Eggs are a major investment in energy and nutrients for the individual, and they take a long time to develop. Walleye in Kansas spawn in late March and early April, but females can be observed with large ovaries developing already in September.

Hook, Line and Sinker

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There's no place like home, so *Fish Kansas!* - Andrew