

# El Dorado District Fisheries

Volume 10, Issue 2

KDWPT Fisheries Division Newsletter

Fall 2018

## Recent District Happenings

KDWPT district fisheries biologists have been on the water for the past several weeks sampling fish populations in reservoirs, state fishing lakes, and community lakes. Sampling techniques include trap nets, gill nets, and nighttime electrofishing, depending on the targeted fish species. The fall sampling period runs from late September through mid-November.

After a very dry summer all waters within the El Dorado District, except for Marion Reservoir, have returned to normal water levels. Marion remains 1.5 feet low after coming up approximately 2 feet. The low water levels allowed for vegetation to grow on exposed shorelines, which provides valuable fish habitat. Refilling in the fall wasn't the best timing, but with Mother Nature you must take what you're given. We should still see increased nursery habitat in 2019 which will benefit young-of-the-year sportfish.

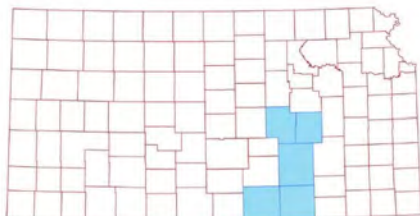
Over the past several weeks we've been stocking intermediate-sized walleye in El Dorado Reservoir. These fish are approximately 180 days old and 8 to 10 inches in length. El Dorado received fish from both the Meade and Milford fish hatcheries during 2018. This is the second year that El Dorado has been stocked with these larger walleye. Sampling efforts will monitor these stockings to determine their overall contribution to the adult population. The stockings and associated research have been made possible through the KDWPT's Walleye Initiative. Stay tuned!

## Kansas Walleye Initiative Produces Larger Walleye For El Dorado Reservoir Stocking

Click [here](#) to view a short video on the KDWPT Intermediate Walleye Stocking Program. Fisheries Division staff are working hard to provide more and bigger walleye to Kansas anglers.



Kansas Walleye Initiative Intermediate Walleye Stocking Program



## Marion Reservoir Receives Walleye Stocking Again in 2018

For the third year in a row Marion Reservoir received walleye stockings. After long-term gradual declines in walleye population density and increasing numbers of anglers requesting increased walleye fishing opportunities, walleye were stocked in 2016 for the first time since 1993. The 2016 stocking consisted of 4.5 million walleye fry and 5.5 million fry were stocked in 2017.

Fingerling walleye were stocked for the first time in the history of the reservoir on May 23, 2018 when Kevin Becker from the Pratt Fish Hatchery released 81,197 fish at multiple stocking locations. The fingerling walleye were in addition to the 4 million fry stocked on April 2, 6, and 27.

Fall test netting during 2017 showed an improved walleye population with increased density. Anglers have also reported better walleye fishing. The 2018 sample will be conducted within the next two weeks to continue to monitor the walleye population, as well as the other fish populations, in Marion Reservoir.



*Kevin Becker from the KDWPT Pratt Fish Hatchery releasing a portion of the 81,197 walleye fingerlings stocked at Marion on May 23, 2018.*

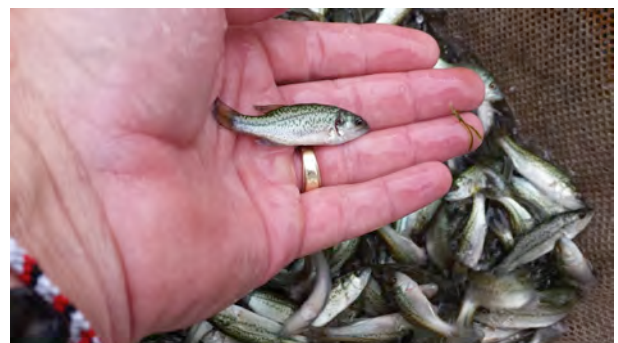


## Early Spawn Largemouth Bass Stocked in El Dorado

The Fisheries Division has been stocking early-spawn largemouth bass in to El Dorado Reservoir each year since 2016. "Early spawn" means these fingerling sized fish are produced through a process that results in a larger sized bass earlier in the growing season designed to give these stocked fish an advantage in recruiting to the adult population. Being "early spawn" allows the fish a longer growing season, which equates to more time to reach larger sizes before encountering their first winter. Larger fish have a greater chance of surviving winter due to increased body reserves.

The KDWPT Early-spawn Largemouth Bass Program has been operated out of the Meade Fish Hatchery for several years. Largemouth bass broodfish are kept at the hatchery year-round to produce fish for stocking each spring. The broodfish are moved to indoor tanks during late winter to begin the acclimation process. Water temperatures and lights simulating sunlight and day length are carefully manipulated to "trick" the bass in to thinking it's May when it is still March. When the photoperiod and water temperature match those of natural bass spawning conditions the bass begin spawning. The result is young of the year largemouth bass produced many weeks ahead of naturally spawning bass. KDWPT fish hatchery staff grow these young bass in to various sizes for stocking across the state.

El Dorado Reservoir has been receiving Phase II fingerlings during 2016, 2017, and 2018. These stockings are being monitored with the use of some pretty impressive technology! During the annual spring bass electrofishing sample at El Dorado Reservoir each sampled largemouth bass has a small piece of a fin removed for genetic analysis. All the broodfish at the Meade Hatchery have been genetically "mapped" and it is possible to determine if the captured bass from El Dorado are offspring of the parent broodfish at Meade, thus indicating success of historical stockings.



## A Little Teamwork Goes a Long Way!

KDWPT employs seventeen district fisheries biologists (DFB) to cover the management of all the public fishing waters in the 105 Kansas counties. Individual fisheries districts range in size from four to as many as 26 counties. Most of the projects that a DFB conducts require more manpower than a single full-time employee can provide. Some districts utilize seasonal employees during the busiest months of the year to complete larger projects. DFBs often get assistance from other KDWPT divisions such as Wildlife, Public Lands, and Law Enforcement to fill work crew schedules on projects such as walleye egg collection, spring electrofishing, fall test netting, and fish habitat construction.

During August 2018, the DFBs from El Dorado, Cheney, Tuttle Creek, Milford, Wilson, Perry and two fisheries research biologists from the Emporia Investigations Office formed sampling teams to conduct new experimental fish sampling techniques at a Kansas reservoir. Over the course of the three-day project a lot of valuable data was obtained, and fish collection techniques were refined for use in the future. This project would have taken the local DFB several weeks to complete with local staff only. The increase in manpower and equipment from neighboring districts allowed for a much more efficient project.

If you see multiple KDWPT trucks and trailers in the parking lots or multiple Department boats on the water, you can bet that your local DFB is working hard to best manage the fisheries resources!



*DFBs from various reservoirs prepping to begin the day's sampling activities*



## Last Cast!

Water temperatures are dropping in to the upper 50s and lake levels have returned to normal levels at most waters. The fall bite will be happening for several more weeks as fish feed up for the cold winter months ahead. Good fishing for wipers and white bass has been occurring at El Dorado and Marion as the stripy fish feed on this year's gizzard shad. Walleye can be caught trolling crank baits or jigging spoons. Crappie fishing will continue to get better and better as fall turns to winter. Don't put away those rods and reels yet as there's still plenty of great Kansas fishing left in 2018.

DFBs from across the state have been producing newsletters like this one. If you missed an issue you can find them all at <https://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/News/Past-Newsletters>

As always, if you know someone who might 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 El Dorado District Fisheries newsletter" and we'll get you taken off the list. If you have any questions or comments or story ideas feel free to send them in!

Fish On!

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