

El Dorado District Fisheries

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KDWPT Fisheries Division Newsletter

Summer 2019

Walleye Regulation Change Being Considered at Marion Reservoir

Marion is unique for a Kansas reservoir. This 6,160-acre reservoir is one of the few Kansas lakes that contains a walleye population capable of natural recruitment. Natural recruiting populations do not require regular supplemental fish stockings to maintain population density. This is a very valuable characteristic of a Kansas walleye population.

For the past 27 years walleye within Marion have been managed with an 18-inch minimum length limit (MLL) and a 5/day creel limit. The 1992 implementation date of the 18-inch MLL corresponded with walleye stockings that occurred the same year. Stockings did not occur after 1993 until stocking efforts resumed in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The walleye have been successful at maintaining a population density attractive to anglers through natural recruitment. Recent stockings addressed a gradual downward trend in walleye numbers to bolster broodfish availability and increase numbers of walleye produced through natural recruitment equating to more walleye available to anglers.

Kansas walleye exploitation is high as the fish are highly desirable. Legal length fish are more often harvested than released when caught. Most walleye fishing pressure occurs from the spawn through early summer as walleye are more easily caught in numbers. During this high pressure period anglers often see a cropping off of legal fish leaving high percentages of sublegal fish making up a day's catch. Many angler comments and questions regarding this cropping off effect have been received in recent years. Anglers often ask if this issue can be fixed to provide an improved walleye angling experience and walleye harvesting opportunities.

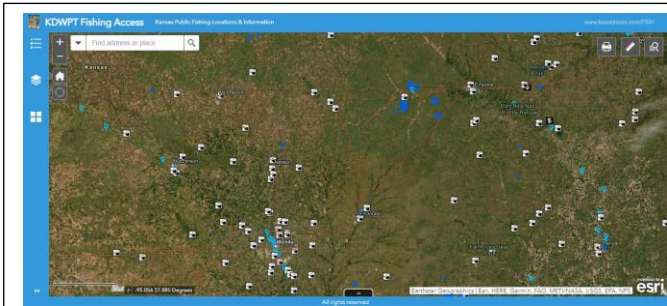
To address angler requests, consideration is being given to a walleye harvest regulation proposal for Marion with a January 1, 2020 implementation. The proposal contains a

four-year pilot study composed of a two year Grow Phase and a two year Harvest Phase. During Year 1 and Year 2 a 21-inch MLL would be enacted to allow the higher percentages of walleye less than 18 inches to grow in to larger length groups. Daily creel limit would remain at 5/day. During Year 3 and Year 4 the length limit would be relaxed to again allow the harvest of 18-inch walleye. Relaxed length and creel limits during the Harvest Phases have not been finalized and options are still being examined. The first Harvest Phase would begin January 1, 2022.

In addition to providing larger fish available for harvest during the Harvest Phase anglers would also see larger fish after the first Grow Phase. Year 1 would be the least favorable phase for Marion walleye anglers. The lake currently has a good population of fish over 21 inches, but these numbers are lower than the much more abundant 15 to 19-inch fish. While harvest would be lower during the first year of the 21-inch MLL, anglers would begin to experience increased catch rates as more walleye will remain in the lake. The Grow Phase would also provide increased broodfish numbers resulting in increased natural recruitment rates and a larger walleye population overall.

The 18-inch MLL has performed well for Marion Reservoir for over 27 years. However, anglers are asking for a change which includes more and bigger walleye. The proposed regulation change would help in providing higher catch rates, improved harvest, and increase broodfish density to increase overall walleye production occurring in the lake.

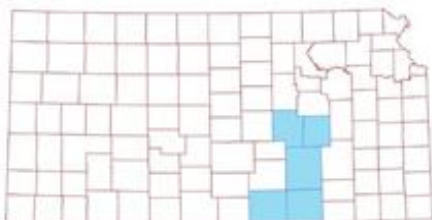




Looking for a new place to fish or want to find brush piles or habitat cubes on your favorite lake? Click on the map above for the KDWPT Fishing Access online map.



Walleye fingerlings prior to stocking into high quality flooded habitat during June 2019



Last Cast!

Reservoirs within the El Dorado District are now back to normal pools. All boat ramps are accessible at El Dorado. Open boat ramps at Marion Reservoir include Marion Cove, French Creek, Hillsboro Cove, Durham, and Broken Bridge. Cottonwood Point boat ramps are not accessible as the campgrounds sustained heavy damage and remain closed. A construction project also has the Marion stilling basin closed to all access including anglers.

Butler, Chase, and Cowley SFLs have been providing good fishing during the 2019 floods. Fish feeders are running at all three lakes.

Wiper and white bass activity is picking up as young of the year gizzard shad grow in to larger sizes. Watch for surface feeding activity at dawn and dusk for some super-fast fishing!

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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