The 248-acre Atchison State Fishing Lake and Wildlife Area is 3 1/2 miles north and 2 miles west of Atchison. The lake and adjoining wildlife area are part of the Missouri River Breaks region of northeast Kansas. The area is dominated by oak-hickory forested hills and native grass. The lake was constructed in 1956, stocked with fish in 1957, and first opened to fishing in 1959. The lake covers 66 acres and has extensive shallow water in the west end and deep water toward the dam, with a maximum depth of approximately 30 feet. There are 182 acres of land adjoining the lake. Of this, approximately 136 acres, plus the lake itself, are open to hunting. The east side of the lake is closed to hunting.

The lake was renovated and opened to fishing in the spring of 1994. Common fish caught out of the lake include bluegill, largemouth bass, channel catfish, black crappie, and redear sunfish with flathead catfish and walleye producing some good fish stories. Extensive habitat in the lake provides plenty of angling opportunities. Largemouth bass and crappie can be found in brush piles, bluegill in weed edges and monster size channel catfish can be found at the fish feeders. Supplemental stockings of channel catfish, walleye, and redear sunfish are used to maintain the lakes high predator base to enhance angling opportunities. A good boat ramp and parking lot are located on the southeast corner of the lake next to the new restroom. Boating is allowed on the lake for fishing only.

Fishing

The wildlife area at Atchison State Fishing Lake has about 136 land-acres open to hunting. The open area runs west of a line from the gate (northwest of the south shop) to the outlet and follows the creek behind the dam. The area has approximately 46 acres of grass and 90 acres of timber, offering excellent opportunities to observe a variety of wildlife and plant species. Three one-acre food plots are also maintained to provide winter wildlife food. The hunting area offers deer, upland game, waterfowl, rabbits, and squirrels.

The hunting area is also open to furbearer hunting and trapping. Furbearers found in the area are primarily beaver, muskrat, and raccoon, although opportunities exist for skunk, opossum, mink, fox, bobcat, and weasel.

Camping and Picnicking

Camping and picnicking are allowed in designated areas. Vehicle traffic may not be allowed in some areas. Selective mowing provides a good balance between wildlife habitat and recreational needs. Drinking water is available at the southeast entrance of the lake. Picnic tables and some grills are provided, as well as three pit toilets.