

Council Grove Wildlife Area News



Area News – Spring 2017

Creel Survey Underway to Monitor Angler Success

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism (KDWPT) monitors the success and satisfaction of anglers by conducting creel surveys on many of its public waters. Council Grove Reservoir is being surveyed in 2017. These surveys are designed to estimate angler use, demographics, harvest and release, and preference and satisfaction. Detailed findings include total number of anglers, hours of shore and boat fishing, number and pounds of fish harvested and released by species and angler, age and sex of anglers, species sought, and angler satisfaction.



Creel surveys provide managers with important insight to better meet the needs of the fishery and anglers at Council Grove Reservoir. Results have been used to evaluate the success of management actions and will be used as comparison following the completion of future surveys. Results from the most recent survey that collected data at Council Grove Reservoir from March through October 1999 are presented:

- More than 52,000 hours of fishing were computed to have taken place.
- An average of 2 fish were caught per angler. About 75% of the fish caught were harvested, the other 25% were released.
- White crappie were the most sought species by anglers (74%), and more crappie were harvested than any other fish (88% of total harvested). Channel catfish were the 2nd most harvested species.
- Channel catfish and walleye were tied for the 2nd most sought species by anglers, followed by white bass.
- More pounds of white crappie were harvested than any other species.
- Crappie were also the most released species followed by white bass and channel catfish.

Department clerks conduct surveys on waters throughout the state. If you are approached by a clerk while fishing your favorite spot at the lake this year, please help KDWPT to better manage our public waters by providing them with the requested information. Help us to make the fishing better for you!

For more information about fishery management at Council Grove Reservoir contact District Fisheries Biologist John Reinke at 785-461-5095 or John.Reinke@KS.GOV.



Council Grove Lake – 2017 Fishing Outlook

District Fisheries Biologist, John Reinke, has provided the following information to assist anglers when planning upcoming fishing trips. Information is provided based upon his annual population sampling.

Crappie - Good. Fish sampling efforts during October 2016 produced the most crappie since 2002! Density is 10 fold higher than the 5 year average, and 20 fold higher than 2015. Crappie production did increase dramatically with the high water of 2015 and 2016, which bodes well for the future. 2016 young of the year fish grew well and should provide a very strong year class. While the numbers of crappie increased greatly in 2016, the fish that are available will be small, with a few over 10”.



Saugeye - Fair. Anglers should expect similar saugeye fishing during 2017 that they experienced in 2016. The 2016 fall sample showed the same overall density and numbers of larger fish as 2015. 60% of the sampled saugeye exceeded the 15-inch minimum length limit so anglers will have to sort through a few fish to find keepers.



White Bass - Fair. The 2016 fall test netting sample resulted in a decreased catch rate for white bass. The existing population is now at a 5 year low. Size of fish did increase overall, but none were sampled over 15”. Anglers should expect to catch fewer but bigger white bass than last year.



Wiper - Good. Wiper were first stocked into Council Grove Reservoir in 2008. Fish exceeded the 18 inch minimum length limit by the fall of 2010. The last stocking of wiper occurred in 2012. Wiper catch rate obtained during fall test netting samples were the same as 2015, however, and right at the 5 year average. Sampled wipers were larger, and ranged in length from 20 inches to 24 inches. 20 inch fish were the most abundant. 100% of the gill net sampled wipers exceeded the 18-inch minimum length limit. Anglers should expect good wiper fishing during 2017 with the chance at fish of trophy proportions.



Channel Catfish - Fair/Good. Channel catfish density remained the same during 2016, and remains at the 5 year average for the lake. Roughly 80% of the channel catfish sampled during October 2016 were again in the 16 to 24 inch size range. Anglers should continue to expect fair fishing for channel catfish during 2017. Very Good to Excellent catfish action can develop during times of inflow as the fish concentrate to feed in the creeks and other areas near current.



Morel Mushroom Hunting Tips

Spring is morel mushroom time! Increasingly more visitors to public lands surrounding Council Grove Lake are seeking this delicious member of our Kansas flora. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) remind hunters of a few tips for a legal, safe and fun mushroom hunt:

Hunters should do their research prior to consuming any mushrooms as some forms found in Kansas can be toxic.



Stick to parks and wildlife areas surrounding the lake. Nearby Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) areas are not open for mushroom hunting. These lands are private property and accessing them for anything other than hunting game during the identified access period is trespass unless hunters have the appropriate landowner permission.

Be prepared to walk. The use of motorized vehicles on public lands is restricted to maintained roads only, so if your mushroom honey-hole is off the beaten-path, strap on those hiking boots.

Be aware of your surroundings. Public lands are open for many types of hunting and fishing activities. This time of year, mushroom hunters can expect to encounter turkey hunters and anglers looking to lure in white bass and crappie. There's plenty of space for everyone, so when in doubt, move to another spot.

Enjoy your harvest. Mushrooms found on public lands may only be harvested for personal consumption and selling mushrooms harvested from USACE or KDWPT-managed lands is against federal and state regulations (see Title 36, Section 327.18 and K.A.R. 15-8-20). You've worked hard for your harvest, so enjoy the fruits of your labor and heat up a frying pan.

Visitors interested in learning more about recreational opportunities at Council Grove Lake can contact the USACE at #620/767-5195 or KDWPT at #620/767-5900.

Welcome New Natural Resource Officer

Area staff are pleased to announce that a new Natural Resource Officer (NRO) has begun work in the area. Officer Jacob Spear has recently accepted natural resource law enforcement responsibilities within Chase and Morris Counties. Spear replaces long-time area NRO Randy Benteman following his transfer to another county. Officer Spear looks forward to working with area outdoor enthusiasts to protect and conserve our natural resources and preserve our hunting and angling heritage. Persons with law enforcement related questions or concerns can contact their Kansas NRO by utilizing a county listing of Natural Resource Officers found within each annual hunting or fishing regulation summary. Spear may be contacted directly by calling #620/340-5968. Welcome Officer Spear!



Are You and Your Boat Safety Ready?

It won't be long before temperatures warm enough to encourage lake visitors to slip the boat in to enjoy a favorite pastime on the water. Whether fishing, swimming, cruising, paddling, skiing, tubing, or just relaxing, every vessel utilizing Kansas waters must have certain safety equipment on board. Do you have what you need to insure a safe and lawful visit to the lake this summer? Vessel owners should be familiar with regulations pertaining to equipment and education requirements. Does your vessel require a registration and decals, life jackets, fire extinguishers, sound producing device, navigation lights, skier down flag, wide angle mirror, muffler, or capacity plate? Do you have to have boater education? If you aren't sure, the KDWPT wants to help insure that your next trip is a safe and enjoyable one by providing boaters with access to a handy web page tool that can provide them with a list of requirements after they answer a series of questions about the vessel and the operator. Even veteran boaters may find the tool to be informative. The tool can be found at: <http://ksoutdoors.com/Boating/Required-Equipment-Checklist>. Additional boating information can also be found on the KDWPT website by visiting www.ksoutdoors.com and clicking on "Boating." Have a safe and enjoyable time on the water this summer!



KDWPT lake patrols help to insure safe vessel operation on our public waters.

Anglers and Boaters Reminded to Take Precautions to Control Aquatic Nuisance Species!

Last summer, more Kansas waters were added to the growing list of those threatened by aquatic nuisance species (ANS). ANS waters are defined as those containing Asian carp, white perch, or zebra mussels.



Asian Carp



White Perch



Zebra Mussel

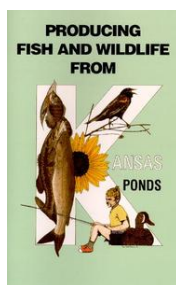
Regulations have been enacted to prevent the spread of ANS. Boaters and anglers are reminded to follow these regulations while visiting Kansas waters.

1. Livewells and bilges must be drained and drain plugs removed from all vessels being removed from waters of the state before transport on a public highway.
2. No person may possess ANY live fish upon departure from any designated ANS body of water.
3. Live baitfish may be caught and used as live bait only within the common drainage where caught. However, bluegill and green sunfish collected from non-designated ANS waters may be possessed or used as live bait anywhere in the state. Live baitfish shall not be transported and used above any upstream dam or barrier that prohibits the normal passage of fish.

Always remember to **CLEAN, DRAIN, & DRY** boats and equipment. Visit www.ksoutdoors.com for more information.

Pond Management Assistance Available:

Want some advice to better manage your pond and improve the fishing? An excellent reference is available on the KDWPT web site to help with many common pond management questions. "Producing Fish and Wildlife From Kansas Ponds" can provide readers with an array of information to assist with everything from pond site selection and construction to pond ecology, stocking, and fish population management. This handy booklet can answer questions about how water quality impacts fish populations, the value of shelter to fish and the angler, when spawning habitat should or should not be added, species to stock, how many to stock, and when and how stockings should take place. Want bigger bass, bluegills, or channel catfish? Several fish population management options are also outlined providing pond enthusiasts with recommendations about when, what, and how many fish should be harvested to produce desired population characteristics. Other topics address common pond problems such as muddy water, aquatic vegetation, leaky ponds, old filled-in ponds, and fish kills. Some productive pond fishing techniques are also discussed to improve the likelihood of success for the angler. This reference is of value to anyone with an interest in ponds and fishing! "Producing Fish and Wildlife From Kansas Ponds" can be found on the KDWPT web site at: <http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Special-Fishing-Programs-for-You/Pond-Management-Program/Producing-Fish-and-Wildlife-in-Kansas-Ponds>. Additional fisheries related assistance can be provided by contacting the District Fisheries Biologist assigned to your county. In Morris County, contact John Reinke at #785/461-5095. In Butler and Chase Counties, contact Craig Johnson at #316/322-7513.



How Does Your Gobbler Measure Up?

Ever wonder how the wild turkey that you tagged this spring compares to the one that a family member or friend was fortunate to harvest? Was it big enough to be recognized as a "trophy?" Want a neat keepsake from that memorable hunt? For those with an interest in placing a number on their harvest, information about scoring your Kansas wild turkey can be found on the KDWPT website. Birds that meet minimum scoring requirements of 65 points are eligible to receive a "Trophy Turkey Award" from KDWPT. Scoring your Kansas bird is a simple process. Simply visit the KDWPT web site at: <http://ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/What-to-Hunt/Turkey> to download an application and instruction form. A bird's score is reached by adding measurements of weight, beard, and spur lengths. Instructions from the form indicate that weight must be determined from an accurate scale and verified by two witnesses. Beard and spur lengths must be measured to the nearest eighth of an inch. Each beard is measured at the point of protrusion from the skin to the end of the longest bristle. Each spur is measured to its longest straight or curved length from a point where the hard spur protrudes from the scaled leg skin. The total score is arrived at by adding the weight to the sum of the beard lengths multiplied by two and the sum of the spur lengths multiplied by ten. Separate records are kept for typical and non-typical gobblers. A gobbler is considered non-typical if it has multiple beards or spurs. For those interested in viewing scores from some of the biggest gobblers taken in Kansas, the website also maintains a listing of the Top 20 reported to the program. If you haven't harvested yet, there's still plenty of spring season remaining!



Annual Youth Spring Turkey Hunt a Success (AGAIN)!

The Council Grove 17th Annual Spring Turkey Hunt was conducted on Saturday, April 1. This year's hunt sought to accommodate area youth ages 11-16. A cool spring morning did not hamper 14 eager area youngsters the morning of the hunt. By day's end, all of the participants were fortunate to see or hear wild turkeys. Three of the participants harvested a turkey while others enjoyed encounters with their quarry but were unable to harvest. For those fortunate to harvest, the event was memorable, because two of them harvested their first wild turkey.

The primary goal of this hunt was to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for area youngsters, and to bring together individuals with an interest in spring turkey hunting. This event was designed to pair young hunters with knowledgeable and experienced adult volunteers, in an effort to initiate or further entrench participants into the enjoyable spring pastime of wild turkey hunting.



All participants enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to receive hands-on hunting instruction, turkey hunting gear, and meals. The hunters truly appreciated the efforts of all involved and volunteers were rewarded with many thanks.

Since 2007, this event has hosted nearly 145 Kansas kids and their families. Nearly 45% of hunt participants have harvested a turkey, while all have enjoyed a memorable outdoor Kansas experience!

Area Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism staff would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance with another successful event:

Organizations: The National Wild Turkey Federation, The Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation, The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, and The U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers.

Individuals: Spencer Tomb, Allan Cashman, Mike Wells, Jim Evans, Tyson Powell, Jason Harris, Mark Hawkins, James Masters, Trent Siegle, Josh Ehrlich, Steve Skerce, Shane Hesting, Manny Medina, Matt Spencer, Sheyanne Masters, Phil Taunton, and Don True.

Special thanks must also be extended to numerous landowners for their generosity in allowing youth to hunt turkeys on their property.

Volunteers interested in helping with next years' hunts can contact: Brent Konen – Council Grove Wildlife Area Manager, #620/767-5900.



2017 Youth Turkey Hunt Participants



Successful youth turkey hunt participant!

Youth Aquatic Education Day Planned:

Area youth and their families are invited to attend a first ever, Youth Aquatic Education Day on Saturday, May 6, from noon to 5:00 pm at Council Grove Lake. A number of area outdoor organizations promise to provide an enjoyable afternoon filled with plenty of opportunity to learn more about our aquatic resources and aquatic recreation. Fishing will be a focus with opportunities to experience some hands-on activities including casting stations and a fishing derby. Experts will be on hand to share their knowledge of fish identification, fishing rules and regulations, water safety, and electronics. Prizes will be awarded throughout the day including an Old Town canoe. A fish frying contest is also being planned.

Event organizers and sponsors have come together to conduct the event to provide families with opportunities to reconnect to nature and experience the joy of family fishing. These groups include Fishings Future, KDWPT's "Fish Kansas", Council Grove Marina, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Flint Hills Chapter of Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, Bass Pro Shops, "What's In Outdoors with Phil Taunton", and the Kansas Crappie Club. Persons interested in learning more about the event can contact Ginger Cansler at the Council Grove Marina at #620/767-5924 or #785/499-3610 or Phil Taunton at #620/794-5373.



Youth days like those planned for May 6 at Council Grove Lake provide families with excellent opportunities to experience outdoor Kansas, while also learning more about pastimes, like fishing, that can be enjoyed for a lifetime!



Get some kids outside and explore the natural wonders of spring in outdoor Kansas!

Would you like more information about the Council Grove Wildlife Area?

Please contact:

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