

El Dorado District Fisheries

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KDWPT Fisheries Section

Late Winter 2014

Spring Is On Its Way!

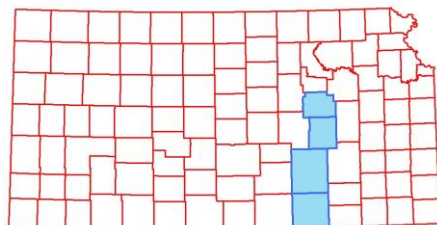
It won't be long now, and the longer, warmer days of spring will be here. The ice has come off most of the lakes in the El Dorado District, and anglers are already heading out in their boats to feel that long awaited thump on the end of the line.

Trout season continues at the El Dorado State Park Walnut River trout stream, and since the ice has thawed anglers are finding great cold-water action on the regularly stocked rainbow trout. A stockpiling of fish occurred this year when multiple loads of fish were stocked under the ice as the cold weather created long-term ice cover on the trout stream. This ice cover did allow for some ice fishing for the trout, but pressure was light compared to the open water periods. Once the ice comes off and anglers again have full access to the stream, the success rate is very high as trout densities are the highest of the year. Two more stockings remain for the spring trout season, and these will occur during early and mid-March. Trout permits purchased now will also be good when the trout stockings resume next November.

Fishing opportunities are abundant throughout the El Dorado District. Two federal reservoirs, three state fishing lakes, numerous city lakes, F.I.S.H. impoundments, and river access sites offer anglers a wide variety of year-round fishing action.

Continue reading in this newsletter for information on waters within the El Dorado District to get a jump on planning your 2014 fishing trips!

Get your friends, get your family
... and FISH KANSAS!



Where To Fish in 2014

Finding a place to fish is never a problem within the El Dorado District. Anglers can choose from water bodies ranging from small ponds to an 8,000-acre reservoir and everything in between. The [F.I.S.H. Program](#) offers Kansas anglers access to private waters enrolled in the program. If you prefer to fish smaller waters in uncrowded settings, check into the F.I.S.H. program, not only for the El Dorado District but also across the entire state.

If you prefer waters with a bit more access and possibly closer to home, check out some of the city lakes, which are enrolled in the department's Community Fisheries Assistance Program ([CFAP](#)). One of the newer CFAP waters in the El Dorado District is the Rose Hill School Street Pond owned by the City of Rose Hill. This nine-acre pond has been stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. The City operates a fish feeder during the summer months to increase catch rates of channel catfish. A fishing dock was added last summer and a walking trail circles the pond. The School Street Pond is a great place to take the kids or for a quick after work fishing trip.

The City of Arkansas City also participates in the CFAP program. Arkansas City has three enrolled

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ponds in the program. The Knebbler Ponds are located on the east side of the city and the Veterans Pond is located on Sixth Street. Veterans Pond offers a walking trail and boat ramp for the launching of small boats and is more developed than the other two newer ponds. Regular fish stockings by KDWPT keep fish populations at productive levels.

If you are looking for larger waters with boat fishing access you should check out Winfield City Lake and Council Grove City Lake.

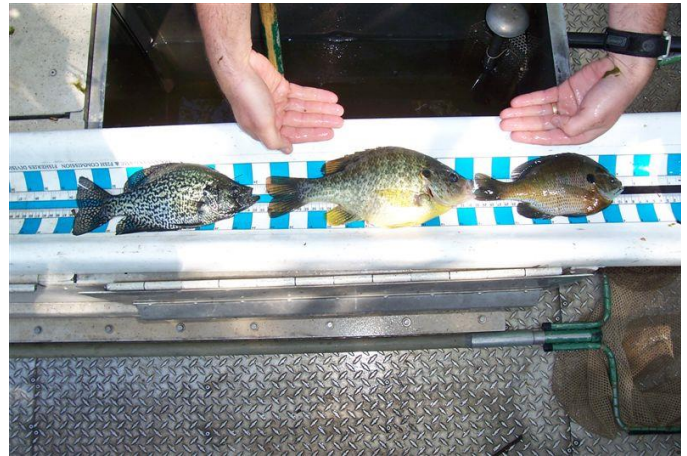
[Winfield City Lake](#) is owned by the City of Winfield. The City of Winfield requires the purchase of additional permits for lake users, which must be purchased before using the lake. Winfield City Lake is 1,250 acres in size and is managed for white crappie, walleye, white bass, wiper, largemouth bass, spotted bass, channel catfish, and flathead catfish. Multiple boat ramps with courtesy docks are available.

[Council Grove City Lake](#) is a 434-acre lake owned by the City of Council Grove. Two boat ramps with courtesy docks are located at the lake. The City of Council Grove requires Aquatic Nuisance Species certification of anglers and boaters at Council Grove City Lake. Go to [ANS Certification](#) to obtain the certificate. You must have this certificate in your possession while fishing and/or boating. Council Grove City Lake is managed for white crappie, walleye, white bass, spotted bass, largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish.

The El Dorado District has three state fishing lakes (SFL) that are owned and managed by KDWPT. The lakes and fisheries are managed by the Fisheries Division and the public hunting and camping areas are managed by the Public Lands Division.

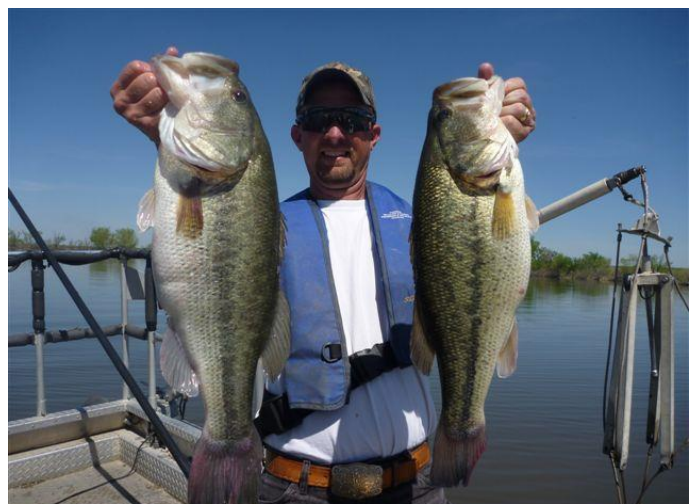
[Cowley State Fishing Lake](#) is located 13 miles east of Arkansas City. This 84-acre lake offers scenic views of rocky oak covered bluffs. Due to the topography of the area, only the north side of the lake is accessible by car. Boat anglers enjoy fishing the rocky drop-offs or the weedy upper ends of the lake. The lake contains largemouth bass, white crappie, black crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish.

Three fish feeders operate from May through September each year. Fishing piers along the north shoreline give anglers access to deeper water. Cowley contains very good populations of bluegill and redear and anglers find good fishing for these two species when the fish spawn during May. Nests are often visible between the piers making sight fishing a productive method.



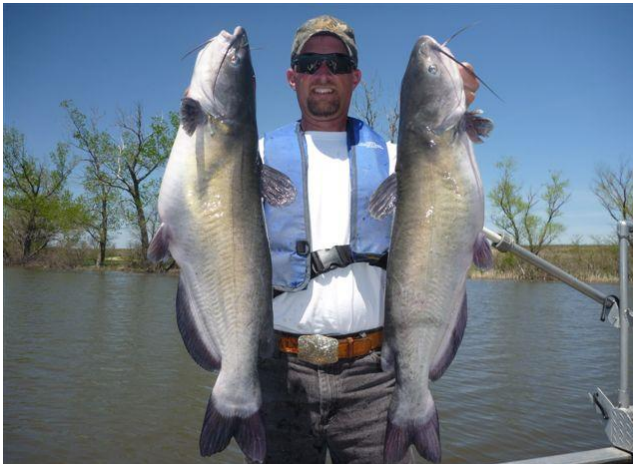
Cowley SFL produces good catches of panfish such as black crappie (left), redear sunfish (middle), and bluegill (right).

Located three miles west and one mile north of Latham, [Butler SFL](#) provides anglers with quality largemouth bass and channel catfish. Butler has very good shoreline access for shore anglers with roads that encompass the entire lake. The upper end contains shallow, weedy flats that slop fisherman crave. A creek section is also present on the east side, which provides fishing to both small boats and shore anglers. Butler SFL consistently ranks near the top of the [Fishing Forecast for largemouth bass](#) in the lakes category.



Butler SFL consistently produces quality largemouth bass.

Anglers also find quality channel catfish at Butler SFL. The lake is stocked annually with channel catfish raised at the Milford Fish Hatchery. Two fish feeders operate from May through September on the 124-acre lake. Fish weighing in the upper teens are caught each year. Channel catfish are protected with 15-inch minimum length limit and 2/day creel. Butler also contains white crappie, black crappie, bluegill, and redear sunfish but quality is poor.



A nice limit of Butler SFL channel catfish

[Chase SFL](#) is located three miles west of Cottonwood Falls. This 109-acre lake has wide-open views of rolling Kansas Flinthills, clear water, and good fishing. Anglers will find good shoreline access along the north shoreline but due to topography, the south shoreline is unreachable by car. An improved boat ramp and courtesy dock allow for the launching of larger fishing boats. The upper end of the lake is shallow with abundant shoreline vegetation, especially on the southern shore. During inflow events, catfishing can be hot in the creek as channel catfish swim upstream to feed. Both largemouth and spotted bass are common at the lake and offer good fishing. Although smallmouth bass were once present in the lake, their numbers have declined and none have been sampled over the past several years. Saugeye are stocked to control the white crappie population density. Two feeders are located off of the fishing piers on the north shoreline. Chase produces channel catfish in the 10- to 20-pound range each year.

For anglers looking for the big-water experience, the El Dorado District also includes [Council Grove](#) and [El Dorado](#) reservoirs. Abundant opportunities are available to both shoreline and

boat anglers.

[Council Grove reservoir](#) is 3,280 acres and located just to the north of Council Grove. Numerous boat ramps in the Corps of Engineers areas provide boat access. Some ramps have courtesy docks while others do not. All campgrounds are operated by the Corps of Engineers. There is not a state park located at Council Grove reservoir. The Neosho River and Munkers Creek arms offer very good river fishing opportunities. Two boat ramps, one in each river arm, operated by the KDWPT Public Lands Division, provide boat-launching areas. Boating anglers use these areas during windy weather when the reservoir is unfishable as the timbered shorelines protect the rivers from the effects of high winds. The rivers are also productive during spring spawning runs of white bass and the abundant in-water cover makes for great crappie fishing. Catfish anglers do well in the creeks during times of runoff. Popular species in the reservoir include white crappie, white bass, saugeye, channel catfish, flathead catfish, spotted bass, and largemouth bass.

The largest of the lakes in the El Dorado District is [El Dorado reservoir](#). This 8,000-acre lake is located just to the northeast of the city of El Dorado. Access to the reservoir is excellent. The state park and wildlife area provide abundant shoreline access and numerous boat launching facilities. The wildlife area provides creek fishing in the Cole Creek, Walnut River, Durechen Creek, Satchel Creek, and Shady/Bemis Creek areas for year-round fishing opportunities. Popular species at the lake include largemouth bass, spotted bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, wiper, white bass, white crappie, channel catfish, blue catfish, and flathead catfish. A winter trout fishery can be found in the Walnut River Area below the dam. Blue catfish are a relatively new species at the lake. First introduced in 2004, this slow growing species continues to improve each year. Numerous fish exceeding the 35-inch minimum length limit were confirmed by KDWPT staff during 2013. Crappie anglers do well all year at El Dorado. The crappie spawn during May provides very good fishing to shore anglers. Boat anglers can find good crappie action all year long. The lake offers quality walleye fishing throughout most of the year. Recently walleye anglers have had great success on larger walleye with regular catches of fish over 25 inches. White bass and

wiper are both present. While recent drought years have resulted in decreased white bass densities, the wiper densities have increased. Anglers experienced very good wiper fishing during 2013 with fish exceeding 26 inches. Although black bass densities aren't near what they used to be, skilled bass anglers are successful at the lake. Recent efforts to restore the largemouth bass population have met with limited success.



Although El Dorado doesn't have high numbers of white crappie like some of the northeast Kansas lakes, anglers are usually satisfied with the quality of the crappie available.

No matter what your favorite fish is or what your favorite type of fishing is, you can find it at a lake near you! You can view fishing areas across Kansas at this [LINK](#). With a wide variety of locations and lake sizes it is easy to make a quick trip or plan a whole weekend depending on your preferences. Fish populations are in good shape for 2014 so get out there and enjoy the fisheries resources that Kansas has to offer!

The 2014 statewide Fishing Forecast is now available! Click [HERE](#) to view the Fishing Forecast on the KDWPT website. This useful tool will help you locate lakes with the best fishing for your favorite species during the 2014 fishing season.

If you have missed a copy of any of the fisheries newsletters, archived newsletters from fisheries districts across the state can be found [HERE](#).

Fish on Facebook???

Kirk Tjelmeland, KDWPT Perry District Fisheries Biologist, recently created his new Facebook page. This Facebook, [Kansas Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism – Northeast Kansas Fisheries](#) is the first of its kind in the Fisheries Division. You can read about Kirk's plan in his most recent newsletter available [HERE](#).

Getting timely information into the hands of anglers has always been a difficult task. While the internet has made the task much easier, finding the "best" method to reach the most anglers remains difficult. Your fisheries biologists have spent increasing amounts of time to provide timely, useful, and desired information using district fisheries newsletters, online weekly fishing reports, radio shows, YouTube videos, magazine articles and so on. Obviously, choosing the most effective method is always the goal as there isn't time for all biologists to conduct all methods.

If you have a method that you would prefer to receive your information from the El Dorado Fisheries District, send me an [email](#) and let me know. Take a look at Kirk's new Facebook and send in your comments if this is something you would be interested in seeing more of.



Click the picture above to view the KDWPT video *Kansas Crappie Bonanza*, a 25 minute video covering Kansas crappie fishing during all four seasons



All types of fish are seen during fish sampling efforts. This longnose gar was collected at El Dorado Reservoir during October 2013.



Wintertime crappie fishing is popular at several lakes within the El Dorado District. Brush piles and channel edges are very good locations to find crappie during the cold water season.



People of all ages can enjoy fishing. This young angler boated this 25-inch walleye during a late October 2013 trip on El Dorado.

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Last Cast!

Thanks for reading the Late Winter 2014 edition of the El Dorado District Fisheries newsletter.

The crazy February weather continues with single digit lows one day and mid-60s the next. I was able to hit the water at El Dorado Reservoir Monday of this week after warmer temps and high winds finally cleared the lake of ice. It was a quick, after-work trip lasting less than an hour and half. Two of us boated right at 30 crappie and an even dozen was kept for my fishing partner's skillet. The water was a cool 39 degrees, but the crappie were thumping jigs aggressively. As the weather begins to warm, fishing will also be warming up. In less than a month, the walleye be spawning and we will be well on our way in to the 2014 fishing season. There are fish biting now if you don't want to wait. Don't forget about the trout. Crappie will stay in their winter patterns for a couple more weeks providing fast action when you can find them.

Biologists across the state are gearing up for the percid egg collection program. This annual effort provides walleye and sauger eggs and milt for the production of walleye, sauger, and saugeye to fulfill stocking requests for Kansas waters. Efforts this year will be occurring at Perry, Hillsdale, Cedar Bluff and Milford Reservoirs. You can watch the video [Walleye For Tomorrow](#) to see the details of the walleye project. This video is several years old now and a few things have changed, but it continues to be informative.

The 2014 Fishing Regulations Summary is now available in print and [online](#). Grab a copy and hit the water soon!

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 of the list. If you have any questions or comments or story ideas feel free to send them in!

Fish On!

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... and FISH KANSAS!

