

El Dorado Wildlife Area News



Area News – Spring 2018

Want Current Lake Condition Information? It's Just a Click Away!

It can be argued that technology is not always a good thing. But for outdoor recreationists wanting to know current information about El Dorado Lake, technology can be good because the information is available and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by visiting the internet on your computer or smart phone.

For those interested in learning more about current or historic lake levels, precipitation amounts, lake inflow, or lake releases, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates a convenient web site providing this information. Whether you are an angler interested in lake conditions to determine if it might be right for pursuing your favorite species of fish, or are a boater or camper wondering how lake conditions have been impacted by recent drought or rains, the website can be a valuable trip planning tool. To access this information simply visit:

<http://www.swt-wc.usace.army.mil/ELDR.lakepage.html>



2018 Fishing Forecast Available!

Want to know how your favorite fish species is doing in El Dorado Lake? Then take a look at the 2018 Fishing Forecast. This interesting and annually released information is designed to help improve your fishing success. The forecast is produced using data collected by fisheries biologists during their annual lake monitoring activities (which include test netting and electroshocking). Forecast charts provide anglers with data by fish species and water body type (reservoirs, lakes, ponds). Anglers can see how their favorite lake compares with others by reviewing ratings of the number of fish sampled within different size classes. The forecast also provides anglers with the biologists rating of the lake for the upcoming year and shares the size of the biggest fish sampled each year. This helpful information can be found on the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism (KDWP) website at www.ksoutdoors.com. Simply click on Fishing, then Reports & Forecasts for more information. Of course, your ability to catch fish depends on many factors such as water temperature, water clarity, weather, angling skills, fishing pressure, and density of fish in the lake (i.e. number of fish/acre). You may not have much control over many of these factors, but you can use the forecast charts to select a high-density population of your favorite species and improve your chances for success.



El Dorado Lake – 2018 Fishing Outlook

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

White crappie- Good. Crappie numbers are looking very good for 2018 and are at the highest levels since 2011. Very productive spawns during 2015 and 2017 are providing the recent increased numbers of crappie within the reservoir. Size distribution shows improvement over last year with higher numbers of larger fish available to anglers in 2018. Anglers should expect quality crappie fishing in 2018 with larger fish in the 13 to 15+-inch range available. A 20/day crappie creel limit became effective January 1, 2018.



Walleye- Good. Walleye numbers will be up in 2018 and are at the highest level since 2010. Percentage of 20 to 25-inch walleye is down from last year while percentage of 25 to 30-inch walleye is up. Numbers of walleye in the 10 to 15-inch range are the lowest seen in many years which may cause some problems in walleye availability in coming years. Walleye sampled during test netting in November 2017 had excellent body conditions showing they are getting plenty to eat. Walleye harvest regulations include a 21-inch minimum length limit and a 2/day creel limit.



White bass- Fair. After several years of depressed numbers, the white bass population has finally seen a slight increase in overall numbers. Fall test netting in 2017 yielded the highest white bass catch rate since 2012. Lack of timely spring inflows during the white bass spawn have negatively impacted production resulting in lower densities. Anglers should be pleased with the sizes of white bass available this year. Eighty percent (80%) of the white bass are longer than 12 inches and 18% are longer than 15 inches.



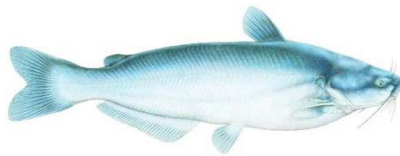
Wiper- Good. 2018 may prove to be the best big fish year since wiper were introduced in 2003. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the wiper sampled during fall test netting exceeded the 21-inch minimum length limit and 31% were between 19 and 21 inches. Fish displayed the best body condition since 2010 equating to good, thick wiper. While wiper density is down from the last several years, the greatly increased quality of the available fish should make up for the decreased catch rate. Wiper harvest regulations include a 21-inch minimum length limit and a 2/day creel limit.



Channel catfish- Fair. Channel catfish numbers obtained through fall test netting continue to be low and relatively stable at El Dorado. Catch rate has deviated only 0.5 fish per net over the last five years. Most (80%) of the sampled channel catfish were less than 17 inches with the remaining 20% being less than 24 inches. Despite the absence of large fish in the sampling nets anglers do report catches of larger channel catfish at El Dorado especially from the creeks during times of inflow.



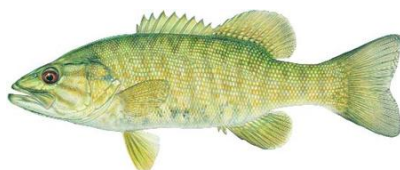
Blue catfish- Good. The blue catfish population continues to improve. The fall test netting effort produced the best catch of blues since the introductory stocking in 2004. Fish are getting bigger each year. The population is currently being managed with a 25 to 35-inch protective slot length limit and a 5/day creel limit with no more than two fish over 35 inches. Blue catfish between 25 and 35 inches must be immediately released. Blues larger than 35 inches are already being caught by anglers in 2018 and harvestable fish under 25 inches are common.



Black bass- Fair. The lake contains three species of black bass: largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and spotted bass. Skilled bass anglers continue to catch nice bass at El Dorado, but the casual angler may be disappointed in bass action at the lake. Smallmouth prefer the rockier areas of the reservoir while the largemouth prefer the vegetated coves, shallow timbered areas, and feeder creeks. The density of all three populations remains fairly stable from year to year.



Largemouth Bass



Smallmouth Bass



Spotted Bass

For more information about fishery management at El Dorado Lake, contact District Fisheries Biologist, Craig Johnson, at #316/322-7513 or craig.johnson@ks.gov.

Productive Prescribed Burning Season Completed

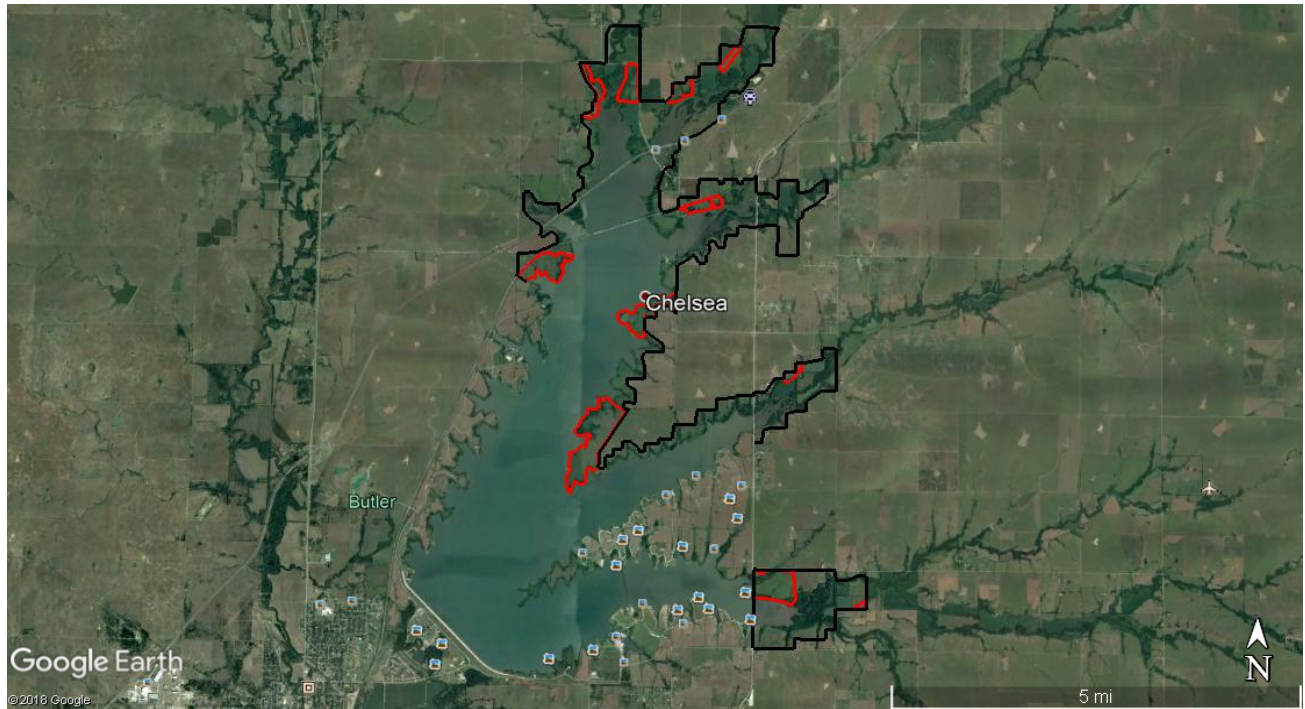
The smoke has now cleared from a busy and productive spring prescribed burning season at El Dorado Wildlife Area. Staff completed burns within 11 tracts this year, totaling approximately 736 acres! Prescribed burns such as those completed this spring serve to enhance area grassland habitats for numerous wildlife species, including those often sought by area hunters such as quail, turkey, and deer. Such burns help to control invading trees and brush and can reduce the prevalence of less desirable grass species such as smooth brome. Burns can also help to stimulate desirable broad-leaved plants (forbs) to enhance food and cover characteristics for many species of wildlife. Ultimately, fire is used as a tool to refresh habitats and to encourage plant diversity within the habitat landscape. Diverse plant communities better meet the ever-changing needs of wildlife by providing diverse food and cover options throughout the year. Improved habitat often equates to an enhanced recreation experience for our visitors!



Managers utilize prescribed fire to meet specifically defined habitat management objectives. Burn prescriptions or plans are developed to ensure that fire can be utilized in a safe and productive manner. Before fire is placed on the landscape, managers must follow the prescription or plan and carefully consider whether necessary environmental conditions, manpower and equipment, and natural or man-made firebreaks are in place. Only when such factors are considered and in place is fire utilized.



Within weeks of conducting this prescribed burn, a diverse plant community has become established. Objectives to control invasive brush and to encourage desirable broad-leaved plants have been met. Habitat values have been enhanced by providing diverse food and cover options for area wildlife.



This aerial image depicts the locations of prescribed burns (outlined in red) completed this spring at El Dorado Wildlife Area. Eleven prescriptions were completed totaling more than 700 acres. Hunters should take note of these locations as post-burn plant communities and structure are often enhanced, contributing to improved hunting opportunities later this fall.

Lake Clean-up Day Organized by Outdoor Groups

A Kansas public land clean-up day was held at El Dorado State Park and Wildlife Area earlier this spring. Two area outdoor groups organized the event and worked with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism (KDWPT), Assistant Wildlife Area Manager, Tyler Burt, to remove litter from public land areas surrounding El Dorado Lake. The KDWPT wish to extend a big THANK YOU to volunteers from Pass It On Outdoor Mentors and the Kansas Hunting and Fishing Facebook Group for their efforts to help keep OUR public lands clean. The group picked up enough trash to fill several large dumpsters! A special THANKS also goes to Blake Rapp for helping to organize this productive and helpful event! Lake visitors are reminded to please help the KDWPT provide clean, quality outdoor experiences by removing trash from areas where you recreate. Help us to help you, by doing your part to keep OUR public lands and waters clean!



Volunteers from Pass It On Outdoor Mentors and Kansas Hunting and Fishing Facebook Group recently organized a successful clean-up day at El Dorado Lake.



Isn't it time for you to visit the lake!

Would you like more information about the El Dorado Wildlife Area?

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