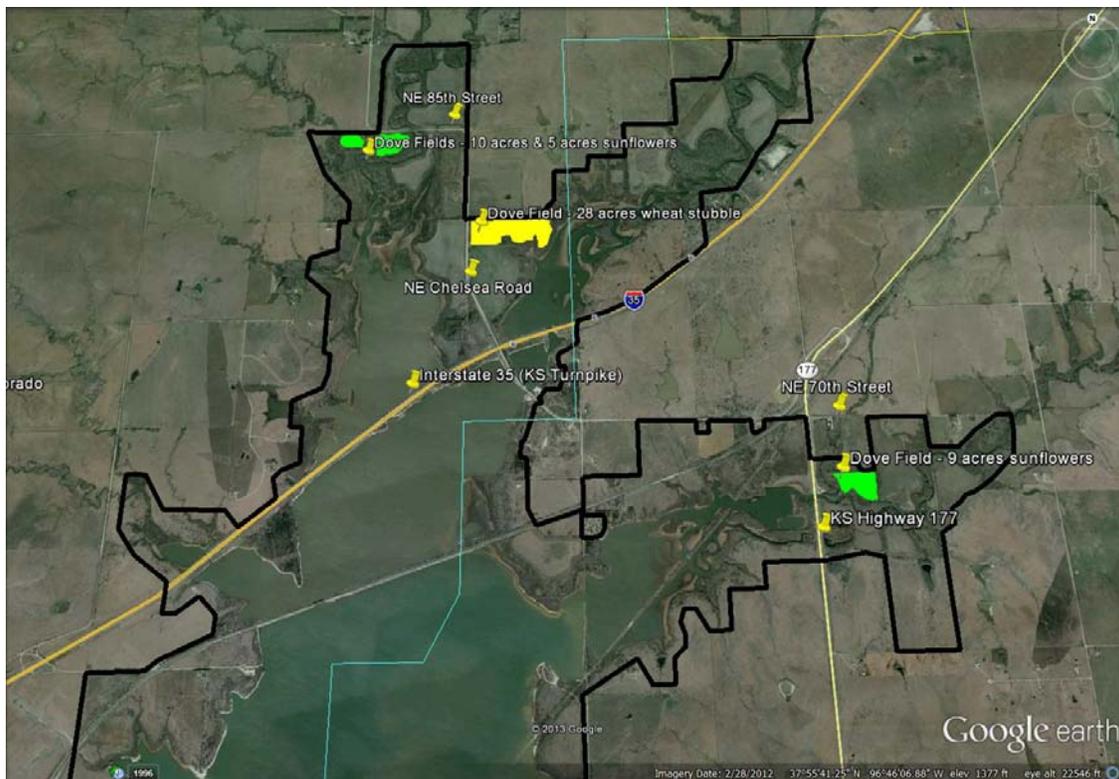


El Dorado Wildlife Area News

Area News – Summer 2013

2013 Dove Hunting Outlook:

Three sunflower tracts (9, 10, 5 acres) and one nearby wheat stubble field (28 acres) should provide fair to good dove hunting opportunities at El Dorado Wildlife Area. Portions of each of the sunflower fields will be mowed (if conditions allow) to enhance dove use and hunter access. The 9 acre sunflower field can be found about 0.25 miles southwest of the parking area east of Highway 177 on NE 70th Street. The 10 acre sunflower field is adjacent to NE 85th Street and along the south side of the road. The 5 acre sunflower field is just west of this field. **New for 2013 – Dove hunters using these managed fields must use non-toxic shot (see related article below).** The 28 acre wheat stubble field may also be attractive habitat to area doves and provide hunting opportunities. It can be found on the east side of the road about 0.5 miles south of the junction of NE Chelsea Road and NE 85th Street. Dove hunters may be asked to obtain a permit prior to hunting and to report harvest at the conclusion of their hunt. Please assist area staff with evaluating these opportunities by following instructions located at permit stations posted at each field. Hunters are also reminded to please be courteous and aware of other hunting parties while using these fields! For a brochure and map of the entire wildlife area please visit the El Dorado Wildlife Area web page (ksoutdoors.com) and click on the brochure tab at the top of the page. For more information please call #620/767-5900.



El Dorado Wildlife Area – 2013 Managed Dove Hunting Locations

Dove Field Hunters Required to Use Non-Toxic Shot:

Beginning in 2013 many managed dove fields on KDWPT public wildlife areas will require the use of non-toxic shot. Designated fields at El Dorado Wildlife Area have been included in this requirement and will include all sunflower fields. Signs designating this requirement will be posted at each field.

Lead exposure has long been recognized as a significant threat to waterfowl populations. Concerns arose when large concentrations of lead from spent shotgun shells began to accumulate in traditional waterfowl hunting locations. It was discovered that waterfowl could ingest the lead shot while feeding, and that the lead was toxic and could lead to illness or death. It was also found that some animals that scavenged lead poisoned carcasses could also ingest remaining lead and become afflicted, thus impacting an entire food chain. Losses from lead poisoning were estimated to be significant, and as such a nation-wide ban on the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting was implemented decades ago.

Concerns of lead exposure to other wildlife species, including doves has become more common. Managed dove hunting fields can provide fast-paced gunning opportunities leading to the deposition of significant quantities of lead within some fields. This lead can potentially be ingested by species foraging in these fields such as doves, ducks, geese, prairie chickens, and non-game species such as songbirds. Concerns may be elevated in fields where no-till planting has been employed (increasingly common) for its soil building and erosion control benefits. As the name implies, no-till planted fields do not incorporate ground tillage into planting preparations. Lead deposited in these fields may be more likely to remain available to wildlife at the ground surface as compared to conventionally planted fields where tillage is incorporated into plans and where lead could be mixed beneath the soil surface.

Non-toxic shot availability and price has improved and its use should help to insure the responsible conservation of our wildlife resources and preservation of our treasured hunting heritage.



Early Teal Season Looks Promising:

Recent changes in regulations and habitat conditions should enhance opportunities for waterfowl hunters early this year with the beginning of the teal season on September 7. Above average populations, liberalized limits, and improved habitat conditions following recent rains, leave room for hunters to be optimistic about the upcoming season. The early teal season in the Low Plains Zone has been set from September 7 through September 22.



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has reported that blue-winged and green-winged teal populations remain strong and are significantly above long term averages. Although teal populations are estimated to be below those seen throughout the flyway in 2012, fall teal flights are still predicted to be good. Kansas should be able to provide much improved habitat conditions as compared to last year when exceptional drought significantly reduced waterfowl habitat, including that available to early migrating teal.

Following allowed changes to federal season frameworks, the KDWPT Commission recently approved increases to teal bag and possession limits. Bag limits were increased from 4 to 6 teal per day, while possession limits were increased from twice the daily bag (8) to three times the daily bag (18).

Perhaps most importantly, habitat conditions have improved with recent rains. During most years, lake habitats lack significant food resources. This year however may be different as many plants became established within dewatered zones at the upper ends of the lake following the drought. Now that the rains have returned and lake levels have risen within these zones, many of those plants will provide food and cover for wetland wildlife species including waterfowl. In most years, lake habitats provide water only, but this year the lake has the potential to provide water, food, and cover and therefore should be more attractive to migrating waterfowl and have greater ability to hold waterfowl once they arrive. Weather will undoubtedly play a part (as it always does) in determining the extent of waterfowl use this year as well. Hunters are encouraged to visit the area website to view weekly waterfowl population and habitat condition updates.

10th Annual Fall Outdoor Youth Event at Council Grove Planned:

Area youth are invited to attend a FREE shotgun, pellet rifle, and archery shooting and safety clinic on Saturday, October 5 at Council Grove Lake. Sponsored by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism (KDWPT), The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the Flint Hills Chapter of Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation (QUWF), and Morris County Hunter Education instructors, this special event will provide participants with an opportunity to enhance firearm and archery shooting and safety skills. Controlled live fire instruction will teach safe, responsible, and fun shooting techniques.



Archery & shotgun stations at annual outdoor youth event.

Participants will be provided safety and shooting instruction by certified firearm and archery skills instructors. All gear and supplies, including shotguns, pellet rifles, shells, bows, arrows, targets, and eye and ear protection will be provided by KDWPT's "Pass It On" and Hunter Education Programs. Participants need only a desire to learn some valuable techniques and have fun! Teaching methods almost guarantee that students will be breaking shotgun targets by the end of the session.

Anyone, age 11 through 16 may participate. Participants are required to pre-register for the event. Students are not required to have completed a hunter education course, but prior completion is preferred. The event will begin at 12:00 p.m. at the COE managed area between Marina Cove and Neosho Park, approximately 0.25 miles west of the COE office at the west end of the dam. Check-in and a free lunch provided by QUWF, will be between 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. Instruction will then begin at 12:30 p.m. and will end at approximately 4:00 p.m.



Air rifle station at annual outdoor youth event.

The event is part of KDWPT's "Pass It On" Program. This program is designed to increase the percentage of Kansans who hunt. Those interested are reminded to pre-register before September 27. Persons interested in registering or learning more about this special event can contact: Brent Konen, Council Grove Wildlife Area Manager, #620/767-5900.

New Regulations Create Greater Flexibility for Hunters:

In March of this year the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission approved new changes designed to simplify hunting regulations, allow more flexibility in legal equipment, and most importantly, provide additional opportunities for individuals interested in outdoor recreation.



These changes simplify equipment regulations for big game and turkey hunting. Big game hunters can now select any caliber centerfire rifle or handgun, any gauge shotgun with slugs, and any muzzleloader rifle and pistol .40 caliber or larger. Crossbows are now legal equipment during archery seasons for anyone with a valid archery permit. Turkey hunters are no longer restricted to 20-gauge shotguns or larger. All gauges will be allowed, using shot size No. 2 through No. 9.

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

Please contact:

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