

# Council Grove 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 Council Grove 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/COUN.lakepage.html>



## **2018 Fishing Forecast Available!**

Want to know how your favorite fish species is doing in Council Grove 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](http://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.



## **Council Grove Lake – 2018 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.

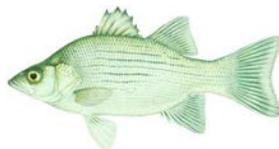
**Crappie - Good.** Fish sampling efforts during October 2017 produced the second most crappie since 2002! Density is 58% higher than the 5-year average, but lower than last year's. Crappie production was good, which bodes well for the future. 2017 young of the year had fair growth, and should provide a good year class to come. While the numbers of crappie decreased in 2017, the fish that are available will be small, with a few over 10".



**Saugeye - Good.** Saugeye density increased to the most available since 2012. There was a 3-fold increase in the number of saugeye over 15", so 81% now exceed the 15" minimum length limit. Walleye are also present in similar density and sizes as saugeye. When lumped together, these species will provide good angling opportunities in 2018, and provide for some excellent table fare.



**White Bass – Fair/Good.** The 2017 fall test netting sample resulted in a 100% increase in catch rate for white bass. The existing population, however, is still below the 5-year average. Size of fish did decrease overall, and none were sampled over 12". The 2017-year class of white bass looks excellent, the most in the last 8 years. Anglers should expect to catch many more white bass in 2018, but overall sizes will be smaller than last year.



**Wiper - Fair.** 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 was low, well below the 5-year average. Sampled wipers were big though, up to 24 inches. 100% of the gill net sampled wipers exceeded the 18-inch minimum length limit. Anglers should expect fair wiper fishing during 2018 with the chance at fish of trophy proportions.



**Channel Catfish - Good.** Channel catfish density increased to its highest level since 2010. It is now 52% above the 5-year average for the lake. Roughly 87% of the channel catfish sampled during October 2017 were in the 16 to 28-inch size range. Anglers should expect good fishing for channel catfish during 2018. 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.



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](mailto:John.Reinke@KS.GOV).

## **Woodland Habitat Enhancement Work Reaches Milestone**

In early January of this year, area staff completed our 8<sup>th</sup> year of woodland habitat enhancement projects at Council Grove Wildlife Area. This year's work was directed to enhance woodland characteristics within existing stands near Gilmore Creek and the southwest corner of the lake. Approximately 65 acres were treated this year. With this latest project complete, staff have evaluated all area woodlands encompassing approximately 1,100 acres, and completed treatments within nearly 750 acres! This project marked the end of an initial plan to work with forestry professionals from the Kansas Forest Service and National Wild Turkey Federation to conduct annual efforts to encourage desirable tree species such as burr oak (primarily), hickory, and walnut.

To enhance tree stature and nut production of these species, more common and less desirable tree species such as locust, hackberry, elm, maple, ash, and boxelder were removed from the stand when they were found to be competing for sunlight. By reducing competition, those trees that remain are more likely to flourish and enhance food and cover characteristics for many woodland wildlife species including white-tailed deer, wild turkey, squirrel, and raccoon. Since 2010, nearly 650 hours of work has been completed to enhance habitat characteristics and the recreation experience of our visitors! With this initial project complete, similar efforts are now being planned at El Dorado Wildlife Area where significant opportunities for enhancement also exist. At Council Grove Wildlife Area, staff will continue to work with forestry professionals to evaluate woodland habitats and consider enhancement options.



Woodland habitat enhancement is a simple process. Competing trees are identified and marked for removal. Trees are removed by encircling them with a cut from a chainsaw. Herbicide is then sprayed into the cut, ultimately killing the tree and reducing competition for sunlight, water, and nutrients for those trees that remain.



Trees in the foreground of this photo have been removed during a previous woodland enhancement project. The burr oak that remains in the background is now thriving as competition has been reduced. Tree stature and nut production are enhanced, enhancing food and cover characteristics for area wildlife species.

## **Fifteen Years of Turkey Hunting Success!**

It is time to celebrate **15** years of special spring turkey hunts! Annually, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism works with other conservation minded organizations and individuals to conduct special spring turkey hunts in the Council Grove area. These hunts are designed to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for novice turkey hunters and bring together individuals with an interest in spring turkey hunting. The event pairs novice 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.

Since 2003 we've provided a quality Kansas outdoor experience to 20 disabled sportsmen, 31 women, and 145 youth! It has been an enjoyable and rewarding journey! We have been blessed with outstanding support from many individuals and organizations and together we've made many memories. After fifteen years, I thought it was appropriate to share some of those memories with you. I hope you enjoy some of my favorite images from our hunts!











Area Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism staff would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance with 15 years of Council Grove Spring Turkey Hunts!

**Organizations:** The National Wild Turkey Federation, The Neosho Valley Chapter of Quail Unlimited, The Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation, The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, The U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers, The Morris County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, The Morris County Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Council Grove Chamber of Commerce, The Saddlerock Café, The Kansas Wildlife Officers Association, Cabela's, American Eagle Outfitters, and JD Taxidermy.

**Individuals:** Faron Adams, Kaleb Baird, Tom Baugher, Garen Belt, Randy Benteman, Dan Biehler, Ed Bowen, Mark Brooks, Dale Burnett, Phillip Buttrey, Clifford Carroll, Tiffany Carroll, Allan Cashman, Steve Crichton, Colby Crippen, Korby Effland, Josh Ehrlich, Kevin Ehrlich, Jim Evans, Josh Fields, Dara Fillmore, Jason Fillmore, John French, Dave Gentry, Martin Godlove, Kris Hall, Melinda Harder, Jason Harris, Mark Hawkins, Jason Heath, Shane Hesting, Brandon Houck, Jamie Houck, John Hower, Derek Jackson, Gary Kepley, Dave Kirk, Tim Lindskog, Dara Lowry, Mike Lowry, Nadia Marji, Gary Massey, James Masters, Sheyanne Masters, Dean McDaniel, Jared McJunkin, Lance McNew, Manny Medina, Mike Miller, Marc Murrell, Alden Neff, Josh Patry, Marvin Peterson, Jim Pitman, Dryden Powell, Tony Powell, Tyson Powell, Vance Ralstin, Brad Richardson, Dana Richardson, Chris Robidou, Kurt Ronnekamp, Ed Scofield, Troy Shade, Mark Shoup, Frank Siegle, Trent Siegle, Nanci Sigle, Steve Skerce, Nick Smith, Matt Spencer, Virgil Swisher, Phil Taunton, Spencer Tomb, Don True, Charles Walker, Mike Wells, Neal Whitaker, Mike Williams, Matt Winters, Jon Zuercher

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

Would you like to help? Please contact Brent Konen, Area Manager, #620/767-5900, for more information.





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

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

Please contact:

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