

El Dorado District Fisheries

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El Dorado District Update

Winter continues to pass by slowly. Many anglers are getting cabin fever but others are getting out and catching fish!

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When the mercury drops, some anglers pass the time by sorting tackle, servicing reels, or ordering new tackle from the barrage of tackle catalogs arriving in the mail each day. Others continue to fish no matter how cold it gets! Winter 2009-10 has served up mixed fishing results in the El Dorado District. Extremely cold weather that showed up just before the arrival of the New Year created fishable ice on many lakes in Kansas. Fishable ice was available for roughly two weeks. Ice anglers at El Dorado caught fish, but their success was greatly overshadowed by the success of the anglers at Cheney Reservoir. Wipers in the 22- to 25-inch range were caught in numbers at Cheney. Kansas ice fishing reports like that are hard to compete with. There were never very many ice anglers on El Dorado, but those that went caught white crappie, white bass, and wipers.

Trout season continues below the dam at El Dorado State Park. Every two weeks, 635 trout are stocked in to the trout stream to provide wintertime fishing opportunities. Trout anglers have had to contend with off and on ice cover much of the season, but even the thickest ice hasn't lasted too long. As usual, fishing success varies from day to day. Some days it may take an angler three or four hours to get a limit, and there have been stellar days when a single angler could catch 40 to 50 trout in a couple of hours!

Even though spring is right around the corner, there are still many good days to be had during the winter fishing season in Kansas! Grab a rod and some warm clothes and give winter fishing a try!

Trout? In Kansas?

Trout are stocked below the El Dorado Dam from October 15 through March each year.

I've had anglers look at me like I'm crazy when I asked them if they have been trout fishing at El Dorado. "Trout? There aren't any trout around here," they say. But the trout are there and lots of 'em! Each fall when the water temperatures fall in to the 60s, trout are stocked in the El Dorado Trout Stream which is located in the Walnut River Area of El Dorado State Park.

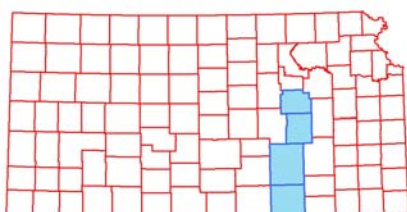


Rainbow trout provide great wintertime fishing at El Dorado

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Trout? In Kansas?—cont.' from page 1

Trout require cool water temperatures to thrive, which makes them an excellent choice for winter stocking. Anglers catch trout using many different baits and lures from simple bait rigs to more complex hand tied flies. Trout fishing can be as simple or as complicated as the angler desires. There is the occasional fly fisher at the El Dorado Trout Stream, but most anglers are using bait or various types of lures. Bait anglers will use offerings ranging from small live minnows to cheese to nightcrawlers. However, the prepared trout dough baits are the most popular. These dough baits can be purchased in a rainbow of colors, are easy to fish, and are effective. A common bait rig consists of a light bell sinker (approx. 1/8 oz) tied at the end of the line with a snelled hook tied on about a foot above the sinker. An additional snelled hook can be added above the first hook, which allows the angler to fish different colors, sizes, or types of bait at the same time. Light line in the 2- to 6-pound test range is preferred, and small hooks such as a size 10 are needed. Many of the trout dough baits will float and if the bait rig is fished on a tight line, the bait will be held off the bottom where the trout can find it. All types of baits can be fished on this rig, and most anglers will fish a variety of baits until they find the hot bait of the day. When bait doesn't produce, switching to artificials can turn up the action. Trout will hit a variety of lures such as small spoons, inline spinners, hair jigs, and plastics. It's critical to not use lures that are too big. Jigs 1/64-ounce and smaller are deadly on trout. These micro jigs are effectively fished under a float, which allows for increased casting distances and keeps the lure at the right depth. Many anglers at the El Dorado Trout Stream like to fish from the foot bridge. Vertical fishing either bait or jigs from the bridge produces many trout each year.

In addition to a Kansas fishing license, trout anglers will also need a trout permit (\$12.50). Kids 15 years and younger can fish without a trout permit, but their daily creel limit is reduced to 2 trout per day. The creel limit for trout permit holders is 5 trout per day. Click [HERE](#) to see detailed information on the trout stocking program, view the statewide stocking locations, and to view a video on the trout stocking program.

Trout stockings will continue through the first of April, so there's plenty of time to get out and enjoy this unique Kansas fishing opportunity. If you buy a trout permit now, it will also be good during the fall of 2010 when the trout stockings resume. Trout On!

New Fishing Regulations at El Dorado Reservoir

The discovery of white perch has prompted changes to fish harvest regulations effective 2010

New [fishing regulations](#) at El Dorado Reservoir were imposed January 1, 2010 in response to the July 2009 discovery of white perch in the reservoir. New harvest regulations were imposed on largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, walleye, and wiper. All three species of bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted) now have an 18-inch minimum length limit, and the daily creel limit remains at five per day. The minimum length limit for walleye has been increased to 21-inch, and the daily creel limit was reduced to two per day. The minimum length limit for wiper has been increased to 21-inch and the creel limit remains two per day.

The increase in length limits and decrease in the creel limit was needed to provide increased predatory sportfish densities in the lake. This will result in increased predation pressure upon the white perch population to limit expansion and peak densities of this aquatic nuisance species. Keeping white perch numbers at manageable levels will reduce negative impacts inflicted upon fish species that anglers find most desirable.

Fish harvest regulations will remain unchanged below the reservoir in the stilling basin (i.e. "the tubes"). The stilling basin will continue to have the following fish harvest restrictions: Walleye 15-inch minimum length limit and 5/day; wiper no length limit and 2/day; largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass 15-inch minimum length limit and 5/day. Just remember: don't take fish caught from the stilling basin with you to the lake side of the dam if those fish do not comply with the harvest regulations of the lake!

Anglers are asked to kill all [white perch](#) that are caught at El Dorado Reservoir. Check out the [Fish ID Poster](#) for identifying characteristics of white perch. All lake users need to practice [CLEAN DRAIN & DRY](#) when leaving El Dorado to prevent the spread of white perch, zebra mussels, and other aquatic nuisance species to Kansas waters.

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



Spring Walleye Fishing Approaching!

Walleye anglers will soon be hitting the water for early spring walleye

Each year during late February, walleye anglers pick up the pace in pursuit of their toothy quarry. Popular walleye destinations in the El Dorado District include El Dorado Reservoir, Winfield City Lake, and Council Grove City Lake. Prespawn walleye are generally found in deep water near rip-rapped dams or other spawning locations, and these fish can be caught with vertical presentations of plastics on jig heads or large live minnows fished on a jig head or other rig. Trolling can also be productive during the early season when the correct combination of lure speed, color, action, and size is found. If you are not catching fish then change your lure. Walleye can be quite finicky! Warmer days will often bring prespawn walleye out of the deep water and into the warmer shallow water. Don't get stuck in the rut that walleye are "always" in deep water. They aren't! Stickbaits, jerkbaits, and slashbaits fished in shallow water can be very productive during the late winter/early spring fishing season. Fan casting jigs tipped with grubs, swimbaits, or bucktail across shallow warm flats can entice walleye enjoying the warmer water. As mid-March approaches, the majority of Kansas walleye anglers will focus angling effort near the dam. Although still prespawn, many walleye begin to congregate along the face of the dam in preparation for the spawn. The smaller males will arrive along spawning sites earlier than the females, but this is your signal that "it" is getting close! As the sun begins to drop, the walleye will head to shallower water, sometimes as shallow as just one foot! Floating or neutrally buoyant stick or slash baits are great choices as these baits can be fished above the snaggy rip-rap, and you can keep your bait in the strike zone for a longer period. Long casts parallel to the shore will present your bait to more potential biters and don't ever worry about fishing too shallow.

Although the dam is the most popular location for spawning walleye, it is NOT the only productive place on the lake. Any area of the lake with a rocky substrate, a gradually sloping shoreline, with deep water nearby is attractive to spawning 'eyes. Hitting these areas at sundown, anglers suited up in waders get in to some serious nighttime action. Don't limit yourself to one small area of the lake. Experiment with locations, and you'll find numerous productive spots and different spots will be better during certain periods of the prespawn and spawn.

There's a light at the end of the tunnel of this long winter. Are you ready? The walleye will be waiting!!

Fish Bits and Pieces

There are many fishing related items produced by KDWP that are of interest to the angler

KDWP Fisheries Division staff have been working feverishly over the winter months to administer programs and produce information that will be beneficial to anglers.

Anglers eagerly await the publication of the Fishing Forecast and the [2010 version](#) is now available online. This forecast is a sneak peak in to the fish populations of many of the public fishing waters in the state. Fish sampling data collected and compiled by the fisheries biologists is used to formulate rankings for individual fish species for sampled waters. Check out the link above for more detailed information on the Fishing Forecast. Take a look at your favorite fish species and see what lakes are primed for good fishing opportunities during 2010. The forecast will tell you which lakes you should fish for the most action and will also tell you which lakes offer the best trophy fish potential.

Another eagerly awaited publication is the FISH Atlas. This Atlas shows anglers where they can fish in Kansas and waters range from small remote farm ponds to the large federal reservoirs. The [2010 FISH Atlas](#) is now available online and wherever licenses are sold. The maps in this atlas pinpoint a variety of public fishing areas, as well as public lands across Kansas. Fishing Impoundment and Stream Habitats (F.I.S.H.) areas are privately-owned ponds or streams KDWP has leased and opened to public fishing. F.I.S.H. sites are numbered in red on each map. Each map also shows all federal reservoirs, state fishing lakes, river access areas, and community lakes.

Fisheries staff from across the state have been preparing Fisheries Information Night (FIN) presentations. These public meetings are held to inform anglers of the status of fish populations and upcoming fishing prospects in their favorite waters. Statewide FIN dates, times, and locations can be found [here](#). If you can't attend any of the scheduled meetings, you can view biologist [presentations](#) online. The [Wichita FIN](#) will be held on March 3 at the Great Plains Nature Center Auditorium from 6:00 to 8:00PM. The GPNC is located at 6232 E. 29th Street North (near 29th & Woodlawn). Fishing guide "Crappie Chatt" Martin will provide information about crappie fishing techniques. Regional fisheries biologists will be on hand to answer question about area lakes in an informal session.

Doing a little homework now may pay off big time when the fishing season arrives. Take advantage of these KDWP programs to increase your success!



El Dorado Reservoir ice angler with wiper



Sunset over frozen El Dorado Reservoir January 2010



Winter time fishing at Coffey County Lake

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Last Cast!

There has been great interest in the El Dorado District Fisheries newsletter pilot program, and it has been deemed a success! Thanks to the interest of anglers like you, the pilot program has been expanded statewide, and you can now subscribe to other fisheries district newsletters that you may be interested in. Go to the [newsletter sign up page](#) to subscribe to other fisheries newsletters. More districts will be coming online soon so keep checking back for updates.

Although it doesn't seem like it, March is nearly here. Extended ice cover and lingering snow has many anglers on edge waiting for those first warming days. Now is a great time to get out those rods and reels and give them a good cleaning and a little TLC. Check those rod guides for any nicks or sharp edges that might cut your line. Clean those reels and refresh the oil and grease so they work like new. Check the fishing line on all of your reels. Is the reel filled to capacity? Replacing worn out line now will help land that lunker this spring. If you haven't already, go through your tackle and organize it so you can use your time more efficiently while on the water. Wasted time looking for that favorite shad rap could have been spent catching fish! Also check all your safety equipment such as life jackets, throwables, and fire extinguishers before hitting the water. Are those boat batteries still good? Did you check those trailer wheel bearings last fall? Checking all your equipment now will allow for a very smooth first trip out.

If you just can't wait for those warmer waters of spring, you can always take a short drive to fish [Coffey County Lake](#). Coffey County is the cooling lake for the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant. The warm water discharge from the plant provides good fishing throughout the winter months. Popular species throughout the winter include largemouth and smallmouth bass, white bass, wiper, and channel catfish. Even though the air temp may be hovering around freezing, the water will be much warmer and the fish are active!

As always, if you know someone who would 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 feel free to send them in.

Fish On!

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