



# El Dorado Wildlife Area News

Area News – Fall 2018

## 2018/2019 Hunting Outlook:

Upland Birds: The fall hunting outlook for quail on the area is fair. Hunters will likely see quail numbers that are decreased as compared to last fall. Quail production during the years 2007-2010 was believed to have been hampered by heavy rains, cool temperatures, and significant flooding during the critical reproductive months of May, June, and July. The 2011 and 2012 reproductive seasons however were notably different. Rather than too much moisture and associated cool temperatures, both years were marked with record breaking excessive heat and drought. Quail production during those years is believed to have suffered as well. More moderate weather conditions in recent years (2013 – 2018) are believed to have resulted in improved production, as several coveys were observed or reported early this fall, often in areas where habitat work has recently been completed. Within most habitat areas, natural vegetation and area crops should provide good food and cover conditions for wildlife, including quail, and should help to sustain breeding populations into next spring. Timely precipitation throughout much of the summer has produced robust habitat conditions. Hunters should expect to find many area habitats to contain tall and dense vegetation. The wildlife area lies outside the primary range of ring-necked pheasant. Hunters occasionally encounter pheasants on the area, but numbers are low.



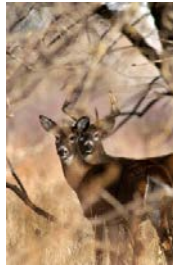
Northern Bobwhite.

Waterfowl: The fall hunting outlook for waterfowl on the area is good. Waterfowl populations are reported to remain strong following another good production year within breeding habitats to the north. Area habitat conditions are improved as compared to most years and are the best seen since 2013. During most years, lake habitats lack significant food resources. This year however is different as many plants became established within dewatered zones at the upper ends of the lake, following a drawdown completed in 2017 to facilitate maintenance work on the dam, and a lack of inflow into the lake until late this summer. Rains in early September filled the lake. Now that lake levels have risen within these zones, many of those plants will provide food and cover for wetland wildlife species including waterfowl. Although a rare fall flood event in October has diminished the quantity and quality of much of this vegetation, food and cover resources remain, and are much more plentiful as compared to most years. Of interest to area hunters also is that similar habitat conditions have been reported throughout much of central and eastern Kansas and may serve to distribute waterfowl throughout the region rather than concentrate them for much of the upcoming season. 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. Hunters are reminded that El Dorado Lake lies within the Southeast Duck Zone



Drake wigeon.

Deer: The fall hunting outlook for deer on the area is good. Although area deer numbers were believed to be negatively influenced by the 2012 EHD outbreak and habitat degradation following the 2015 flood, habitat conditions have largely been favorable in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Like the previous two years, improved woodland habitat conditions and robust native grass and cropland habitats that benefited from timely precipitation during much of the summer, will provide attractive habitat for deer, particularly as weather conditions deteriorate later this winter. Deer sightings and deer sign appeared more frequently this year, antlerless deer and fawns were a common sight again this summer, and reports of a few nice bucks have been received.



White-tailed deer.

Turkey: The fall hunting outlook for turkey on the area is good. Area populations remain strong following good production dating back to at least 2012. Several broods were again observed this summer indicating a moderate level of production on the wildlife area. Hunters should find good turkey numbers early this season with numbers declining later in the year as some harvest occurs and remaining birds spend more time on nearby private property as a result of hunting pressure.



Wild Turkeys.

Small Game: Opportunities to hunt fox squirrel and cottontail exist. Of the two, fox squirrel, typically provide greater opportunity. With much of the area wooded and with hunting interest in squirrels often low, the area can provide some attractive hunting. Cottontail populations are often not strong but can provide some opportunity during most years.



Successful squirrel hunt.

Furbearers & Coyotes: The area is open to the hunting and trapping of furbearers. In most years, good opportunity to harvest beaver and raccoon exists. Coyote and bobcat populations are generally fair, providing some opportunity.



Kansas coyote.

New Shooting Range Completed at El Dorado State Park:

El Dorado State Park staff are pleased to announce the grand opening of the recently completed shooting range at El Dorado Lake. Located adjacent to the park office, near the east end of the lake dam, the range is scheduled to open on December 8, 2018 at 1pm. The range will provide shooters with several different distance options including 30 lanes within a 15-yard pistol range, 14 lanes within a 25-yard rifle/pistol range, and 12 lanes within a 100-yard rifle range. Range safety is paramount at the facility. The range will be staffed and supervised by trained Range Safety Officers. The facility is fully baffled and bermed, with concrete side and end walls to enhance bullet and sound retention. To view details on hours and pricing, please visit [www.eldoradostateparkrange.com](http://www.eldoradostateparkrange.com) or contact El Dorado State Park at #316/321-7180.

Please remember that target practice is not allowed on the El Dorado Wildlife Area. Agency regulation (115-8-1), allows target practice only in areas designated as open for target practice. The El Dorado Lake Shooting Range is the only area designated for firearm target practice on public lands at El Dorado Lake. An existing archery range, also within El Dorado State Park, is the designated area for archery target practice. Both facilities will soon provide quality shooting opportunities for area hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts.



New range facilities at El Dorado State Park will soon provide area hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts with quality recreation opportunities.





Waterfowl hunters should take note! Waterfowl habitats are the best seen on the lake since 2013. Desirable plant species became established on lake mud flats throughout the summer. September rains filled the lake, shallowly flooding these stands of plants. As a result, waterfowl food and cover conditions are significantly improved!

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

Please contact:

Brent Konen – Area Manager  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
1130 Lake Road  
Council Grove, KS 66846  
#620/767-5900  
[brent.konen@ks.gov](mailto:brent.konen@ks.gov)  
[www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)

or

Tyler Burt – Assistant Area Manager  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
5095 NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
El Dorado, KS 67042  
#316/322-7513  
[tyler.burt@ks.gov](mailto:tyler.burt@ks.gov)  
[www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com)

