

Upland bird outlook looks good

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Region 3 — Southwest Kansas

Overall, Region 3 will provide a good to excellent upland bird season this year. More than 407,000 acres of WIHA are available in the region this year. Last season was good in most areas of the southwest, and there were good numbers of adult birds carried over this spring for breeding. Production has been very good in most counties with the best reports for pheasant and quail being from Garden City east. Some hail in counties along the Kansas — Colorado line may have hurt local bird numbers. Much of the southwest has heavy cover going into the fall hunting season.

Reports for the Cimarron National Grassland indicate pheasant and quail numbers may be down some from last year but still fair to good for pheasants and good for quail. Lesser prairie chicken hunters should be able to find good numbers of birds on the Grassland.

Region 4 — Southcentral Kansas

Region 4 will have 25,255 acres signed up in WIHA this fall. Cover conditions for all of Region 4 are excellent because of abundant summer rainfall. Excellent cover may be preventing observations of late broods. Late June rains delayed a portion of the wheat harvest which may have been beneficial to brood survival. July storms brought some locally heavy hail in portions of southern Reno and Kingman counties. Hail also hit in parts of Rice, McPherson and Marion counties. Heavy August rains in much of the region flooded low-lying fields and may have reduced success of late nesting efforts.

QUAIL — In the Flint Hills counties, quail numbers appear to be similar to last year (somewhat improved over several years ago). In the north part of the Flint Hills, populations are still somewhat depressed when compared to the 10-year average. In the southern Flint Hills, ranchers are reporting more quail than seen in several years. Quail in the southern and western portions of Region 4 range from fair to good. Overall, populations seem to be very similar to last year.

PHEASANT — Pheasant carryover in the primary Region 4 pheasant range was excellent. Production this year appears to be about

average in much of the region, which will mean a higher percentage of adult birds in the population when the season opens. Good reports have come from areas in Marion, McPherson, Rice and Reno counties. Overall, populations will be similar to last year with some increases locally.

PRAIRIE CHICKENS — Very few reports have been received. Range conditions have improved significantly in the northern Flint Hills over the droughts of 2001-2003. Hunting success should be similar to last year.

Region 5 — Southeast Kansas

QUAIL — Overall, quail numbers in the Region 5 continue to be below the long-term average. However, the eastern portion of the re-

gion anticipates improved conditions compared to last year; this improvement is based on contacts with landowners and increases in whistle counts and brood surveys. Severe weather through the summer probably impacted quail populations locally. More than 44,000 acres of WIHA are available in Region 5 this fall.

PRAIRIE CHICKEN — Prairie chicken production was poor this spring and summer, as is the fall outlook. A combination of extensive spring burning and severe weather are the primary reasons for the poor production year with an overall population that is struggling. Most landowners are reporting seeing few small broods.

FISHING REPORT:

Sebelius Reservoir — Temperature: 73°
Lake Elevation: 17.70' below Conservation Pool

Channel Catfish — Good (wide range) Are picking up a few in Leota Cove, the mouth of Schoen's Cove and the North side (below the office) using shad, minnows and worms on the bottom. Set lines have been productive at the mouth of Schoen's Cove and around Leota Cove.

Crappie — Poor (10 to 14 inches) Catching an occasional crappie off the Public Fishing Dock and Marina Dock using jigs with minnows under a bobber.

Wipers — Fair (3 to 8 pounds) Have been catching some Wipers outside of Concrete Cove, off South side of the dam and also the mouth of Leota and Schoens Cove using night crawlers, minnows and bluegill. Most of the fish are running in the 18 to 22 inch size range. A recent sample revealed good numbers of young wipers.

Black Bass — Fair (10 to 16 inches) Some Bass being caught off the Dam and in Leota Cove using spinner baits and crank baits.

Saugeye/Walleye — Poor (18 to 22 inches) Have been catching a few Saugeye near the South shore road bed and East of Schoens Cove using a jig with minnow or worm. A recent sample revealed good numbers of young saugeye and good numbers of keeper fish were observed. Remember the 18 inch length limit.

General Comments — Currently, the water level is 0.37' higher than it was one year ago at this time. The 15 inch Length Limit on Largemouth Bass that was temporarily removed in 2003, has been reinstated. Therefore, there is a 15 inch Length Limit in effect for Largemouth and Spotted Bass. We are currently running a creel census at Sebelius this year so if approached by our creel clerk Larry Johnson please take a few minutes to answer a few questions. The fish feeder is now in operation and feeds on 3 hour intervals, starting at 6 a.m. and ending at 9 p.m.

SEBELIUS RESERVOIR RESOURCES:

The Park office is now open Monday thru Friday 8am-4:15pm. Please call (785) 877-2953 before making a special trip to the park, due to our annual training requirements the office is sometimes closed during normal business hours. We enjoyed having Governor Sebelius visit the park for our 4th of July Celebration, and hope she plans to visit again soon! (for more images see our gallery) Don't forget that sites #31-40 are now "Prime sites" and a \$2 fee will be charged in addition to your regular camping fees for those sites. The cabin is available for rent this fall during the hunting seasons. It is equipped with heat and air conditioning, a refrigerator, and microwave. Please remember to always wear your life jacket when you're on the water, it could save your life. Wildlife observation, including pheasant, quail, whitetailed deer, waterfowl, and of course, the prairie dogs is excellent this time of year. Catfishing has been very good, but most other species are sporadic this time of year. The current water elevation is 2286.8, or 17.5 feet below conservation pool. Construction is underway on a new boat ramp, parking area, and vault restroom facility on the east side of Leota Cove. We have had many requests for these facilities at that location. We were very fortunate to acquire Federal Motor Boat Access funds for this project. The total project should be completed by fall.

Please join us for the following special events at Prairie Dog State Park:

- 10/8 - Colorado Bass Anglers Association Tournament

If you have questions pertaining to the park, call the park office at (785) 877-2953.

Questions pertaining to the Norton Wildlife Area or hunting should be directed to Cris Mulder, Public Lands Manager at (785) 877-2953.

Questions pertaining to fishing should be directed to Mark Shaw, Fisheries Biologist at (785) 425-6775.

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