

Early fall is best for turkey hunting

PRATT — This has been a good year for wild turkey production in Kansas. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks staff are reporting increased turkey sightings in many areas as birds gather for winter roosting. All of Kansas except Unit 4 (westcentral and southwestern Kansas) allows fall hunting. Long seasons this year run Oct. 1-Nov. 29, Dec. 12-31, and Jan. 9-31, 2006. Unit 1 (northwestern Kansas) and Unit 3 (southcentral Kansas) allow one permit per hunter. In Unit 2 (the eastern one-half of the state), hunters may purchase one turkey permit and as many as three additional turkey game tags. One turkey of either sex may be taken with each permit or tag.

Early fall offers some of the best hunting. Turkeys are in small groups, with many young birds that have never been hunted. Often, a hunter can stalk the birds or break up a group, then hide and call them back. Public wildlife

areas and Walk-In Hunting Area lands often hold large numbers of turkeys in October before hunting pressure moves them to private land.

The combination of good turkey populations, uncrowded hunting, and mild fall

weather make October an excellent time to go turkey hunting. It's also a good time to prepare for Thanksgiving dinner.

For more information on turkey hunting in Kansas go to www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

Permits, licenses available

PRATT — By now, most hunters have heard much about the Kansas Outdoors Automated Licensing System (KOALS). The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) has announced that almost all license vendors are now using this system to sell hunting and fishing licenses and permits. Park permits will be available soon.

The new system will streamline the license and permitting process, but this doesn't mean that hunters have the luxury of waiting until the

last minute to obtain deer permits. KDWP urges all hunters to purchase their permits well ahead of season or go online, and purchase from the convenience of their homes. This will alleviate long waiting lines at license vendors and save hunters time they may need for important preparation such as scouting.

Purchasing Kansas hunting licenses and deer permits is easier than ever with online sales and the Automated Licensing System, so make it easier yet. Buy early or online.

FISHING REPORT:

Sebelius Reservoir Fishing Report — Temperature: 52°
Lake Elevation: 17.97' below Conservation Pool

Channel Catfish — Fair (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.

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

Wipers — Fair (3 to 8 pounds) Have been catching some Wipers in Leota cove using night crawlers, rattle traps and jigs. Most of the fish are running in the 18" to 22" inch size range. A recent sample revealed good numbers of wipers in the 4 to 6 pound range.

Black Bass — Fair (10 to 16 inches) Bass are being caught off the Dam and in Leota Cove using spinner baits, artifi-

cial 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 also.

General Comments — Currently, the water level is 0.03' 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 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 shut down the water in the campgrounds for the year on Oct. 17.

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 during the prime season (April-September). 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 2286.4, or 17.9 feet below conservation pool. Construction is complete 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.

Avoid long lines come in and purchase your deer permits early this year. Call ahead if you wait until the last minute, the park office may be open reduced hours in mid to late November.

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.

WATERFOWL REPORT:

Norton Wildlife Area
Waterfowl numbers — 400 ducks.
Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Shovelers, Pintail, and a few Mallards.
250 Canada Geese
Water level — Reservoir is 17.9 ft below conservation pool.
Hunting conditions — Hunting conditions are similar to last year.
Few shallow areas for ducks. Flats are planted to crops.
Expected hunting success — Fair.
Comments — High Plains Regular Duck Season is Oct. 8-Jan. 3 and Jan. 21-29. Pintail and Canvasback seasons are Oct. 8-Nov. 15. Refuge is in effect Nov. 1 - March 1.

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