

Fishing Opportunities on the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers WMAs

With more than a hundred miles of creeks and rivers and another 150 small ponds, there are plenty of fishing opportunities available for anglers of all ages on the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). Largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, flathead catfish, green sunfish, and even chain pickerel- the WMAs have them all.

Fishing opportunities abound throughout the WMAs, but knowing where to go based on the preferred species of interest can help in making the most of a day of fishing on the WMAs. Some fishermen enjoy finding those hard to find small ponds and walk-in only type fishing areas that produce quality fish, while others prefer floating a canoe or kayak and fishing large stretches of creeks or rivers. Without question, the many small ponds on the WMAs rarely, if ever, get fished except those that are easily accessible. For anglers willing to do a little research and drive a few extra miles the rewards can be sweet.

Most ponds on the WMAs are a half-acre in size or less, primarily constructed to be used for firefighting purposes. While some of the ponds have been stocked with fish over the years, pond surveys completed by area biologists show that nearly every pond offers fishing for green sunfish and/or largemouth bass. Because many of the ponds are a short hike from the nearest road, they just don't get fished despite the fact that they offer good fishing. Studying a good color aerial photograph of the WMAs like those available on the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's website, will show the location of those little hidden gems, as well as give an indication of how big they are and roughly how far the pond is from the nearest road. In addition to the enjoyment of fishing the pond is the great satisfaction of doing a little map work, perhaps using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, and then navigating to and finding the pond. Oh yes, and there are quality fish to be caught from these ponds as well with some of the ponds producing largemouth bass that weighed up to 4.9 pounds according to 2009 fish survey data.

An added bonus to pond fishing on the WMAs is the chance to river fish as well. Both the Little River and Glover River meander their way through the WMAs offering more than 40 miles of great river fishing. If flathead catfish are the species of choice, than the Little River is a good place to start. Flathead catfish in excess of 35 pounds have been caught from the Little River using trotlines and limblines. When it comes to smallmouth bass the Glover River is the place to go. Although several walk-in only fishing access projects are available for anglers to take advantage of along the Glover, some of the best fishing is best accessible by canoe or kayak. While smallmouth bass are caught from the Little River, quality smallmouth two pounds in size and up are more frequently caught from the Glover River. Other species of fish frequently caught out of both the Little River and Glover River include green sunfish, largemouth bass, spotted bass, bluegill sunfish, and longnose gar.

It's been said that an angler can throw a beetle spin, sassy shad, or rattle trap all day in both the Little River and Glover River and catch all the green sunfish he or she can handle. This is definitely true, and the best thing is the many creeks on the WMA offer this action as well. While the creeks on the WMAs don't offer as much water to fish, large holes of water along each creek produce great rewards to any angler willing to try them out. In addition to

green sunfish, populations of largemouth bass and smallmouth bass are present. The largest smallmouth bass caught during the 2009 fish surveys on the WMAs was not captured from a river but from a creek- a 3.2-lb smallmouth bass. Largemouth and smallmouth bass are quite common in the creeks on the WMAs with eleven of 15 creeks surveyed during 2009 having harvestable size black bass populations. Several of the creeks also offer the opportunity for anglers to catch a species of fish that very closely resembles a musky in appearance but is actually called a chain pickerel. Bird watchers often travel great distances to see a bird they have never seen before and the chain pickerel is one of those fish species that every angler should experience at least one time and a visit to the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers WMAs is the perfect place to accomplish just that.

While the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers WMAs do not offer electric or water hookups for camping, many established camp sites are available throughout the WMAs with many located along the creeks and rivers providing quick fishing access. Both WMAs are privately owned by timber companies, but open to the public through cooperative agreements between the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and each timber company. Accessing the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers WMAs for any type of recreation does require each person to purchase a Land Access Fee permit. The permit, \$40 for Oklahoma residents between the ages of 18 and 64 and \$85 for nonresidents (no age exemptions for nonresidents), is good for one calendar year and is sold at all locations in Oklahoma that sell hunting and fishing licenses. All revenue from each Land Access Fee permit sold goes not only toward the management of the WMAs, but also to pay the timber investment companies an annual lease fee to help keep the WMAs open for the public to enjoy.

When visiting the WMAs, please remember to leave only footprints. Picking up any trash or litter is a great way for everyone to help keep the WMAs open for all to enjoy. Feel free to contact the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers Wildlife Management Area biologist at 918-527-5308 before planning your next hunting trip to the Honobia Creek and Three Rivers WMAs.



The Glover River offers great angling opportunities,

especially for smallmouth bass.



A sample of what some of the many creeks on the WMAs have to offer.



Green sunfish are plentiful on the WMAs offering nearly nonstop action for any angler willing to give them a try.



More than 150 small ponds occur throughout the WMAs offering good fishing opportunities.