



Salato quail aviary construction is underway

Construction of the first phase of a new Salato Wildlife Education Center exhibit – The Quail Aviary – is underway thanks to the generous donation of time and labor by Jackson Construction and General Contracting of Frankfort.

Until weather prevented further work, a team from this company worked hard every day to complete the main structure of the aviary. The company plans to continue its donation of equipment, and employees are volunteering efforts on weekends until the project is completed.

There will be four sections of the exhibit, designed to personalize a quail's life. Visitors may enter the exhibit from two directions. In one direction, the visitor becomes a mother quail in search of her chick. In the opposite direction, the chick must find its mother. Along the way, it must choose between good and bad habitat options in order to survive.

The aviary is large enough to support 50 quail, but we plan to start with 30. The structure will be surrounded by a vanishing coil mesh, which will contain the quail and discourage predation.



As visitors enter and exit via a raised boardwalk, the typical bobwhite quail call will play. Signs inside the aviary will address biological information, habitat loss and quail as an umbrella species, and work being done by our agency to restore prairie habitat.

As visitors exit, they will be greeted by a 2-D, larger than life female quail with a sign reading, "I typically lay a clutch of 10 to 12 eggs. All of my eggs have hatched, but I am missing one of my chicks. Can you make it down the trail and help me

find him?"

The next exhibit element is the Food and Water Trail. An overhead sign will read, "You need food and water to survive. Which path will you take?" On one side of the path will be mowed, groomed fescue and a lawnmower, which children can climb on and pretend to drive (all dangerous parts removed). On the opposite side will be quality habitat at a WMA, including a giant cup plant for water and native grasses. Flip signs on both sides will be lifted to search for food. On the fescue side the message under each will be "Nothing here! Keep looking."

The 3rd exhibit element is the Shelter Trail. A huge sculpture of a red-tailed hawk will loom over the visitors and a sign will read, "You need to hide from a red-tailed hawk. Which way will you go?" On the fescue side of the trail, obstacles will be placed, making walking difficult. On the WMA side a tunnel will be created through the prairie grasses which visitors

See "Aviary," page 11

“Forecast,” continued

“The smallmouth bass population at Laurel River Lake is doing exceptionally well due to the fact that we have multiple, good year-classes of fish currently present in the lake,” explains **John Williams**, fisheries program coordinator who manages the fish population at Laurel River Lake.

“Several years ago, we modified the regulations for smallmouth bass to an 18-inch minimum size limit and two fish daily creel,” said Williams. “That regulation, coupled with high catch-and-release rates by the majority of anglers has allowed the smallmouth bass fishery to improve substantially.”

He explains that the variety of forage in the lake, which includes crayfish, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, alewives, and various minnow species also helps sup-

port fast growth rates for smallmouth bass. “Growth of smallmouth bass in Laurel River Lake is good and we see that on average it takes three years to get the fish to 13.5 inches. Fish typically reach the legal size limit of 18-inches by age six.

So when is the best time to target Laurel River Lake for smallmouth bass? “By reputation, Laurel is a great winter fishery,” explains Williams. “From October –December, you can find a good deal of fish relatively shallow (less than 15 feet). Once winter really sets in, the fish move deep (30-50 feet) and tend to congregate in the lower third of the lake. Then in March, smallmouth bass move shallow again.” Anglers should target main lake points and secondary points in major creeks. Many anglers target these areas with jig and grub combinations, shad imitating crankbaits, and swimbaits. “My fa-

vorite is a ¼ oz jig with a three-inch curly tail (pearl or chartreuse). Fish it slowly next to long, tapering points that drop off into deep water,” explains Williams.

Anglers can view the 2012 Fishing Forecast by going online to web address fw.ky.gov/pdf/2012fishingforecast.pdf.

For those without access to the internet, please contact the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources at (800) 858-1549 and ask that a copy be mailed to you.

On behalf of the Fisheries Division, we wish you good luck during the 2012 fishing season and we hope to see you on the water. Please remember to purchase your 2012 fishing license prior to March 1, 2012.

For more information about the 2012 Fishing Forecast, please contact your local fisheries biologist office or call 1-800-858-1549.

“Aviary,” continued

can crawl through to escape predation. The hawk sculpture is the work of Louisville artist Patrick White.

Last is exhibit element #4, the Lost Chick. A sign overhead will read, “You found your chick!” On one side will be three larger than life, fiberglass quail eggs, cracked in half as though the chicks had

just hatched. These will be large enough for a 12-year-old to crawl into for a photo. On the other side will be a larger than life quail chick, sturdy enough for children to climb. The chick and eggs will be manufactured by Bree’s Studio, the same company that created the giant striped bass for the Fisheries Exhibit.

As visitors exit the exhibit from either direction, a sign will read, “Help

the KDFWR restore prairie habitat by purchasing your hunting license.” Likewise, an oversized hunting license made of dry-erase material or chalk-board at each side will allow visitors to add their name to the license.

Aside from the work donated by Jackson Construction, this exhibit is being funded through donations to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

