

News at AEP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AEP Helps Get Redfish into South Texas Lake

FANNIN, Texas, June 28, 2001 – In a couple of years anglers should be able to catch redfish along with bass, crappie and catfish from the Coletto Creek reservoir in South Texas thanks to an effort initiated by American Electric Power (NYSE: AEP). On June 26 around 25,000 Redfish fingerlings about two inches long were released by Texas Parks and Wildlife officials into carefully selected areas of the freshwater lake.

Redfish, normally a saltwater species, will thrive in freshwater lakes if conditions are right.

The redfish effort started with a simple “what if” conversation among power company employees. AEP hosts a Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) Marine Development Center on the grounds of one of its power plants in the Corpus Christi area. The center includes a redfish hatchery, so AEP passed its idea along to TPW officials that work nearby.

“We got the process rolling by getting an analysis of water samples over to Texas Parks and Wildlife. The samples fit what they were looking for and they took it from there,” said Mike Fields, AEP Coletto Creek Plant manager. “Many employees are avid fishermen and they would love to catch a big redfish from this lake. This was the perfect kind of project for us.”

Redfish, *Sciaenops ocellatus*, also called red drum, rat red, bull red or just “red,” grow large and fast in freshwater, but they won’t reproduce. Reds typically reach about 11 inches and one pound in the first year, 17 to 22 inches and 3 1/2 pounds in two years, and 22 to 24 inches and 6 to 8 pounds in three years. The current Texas record for the fish is just over 51 pounds.

Redfish must be at least 20 inches long before anglers can legally bag them. Many of the young fish won't make it to maturity, but they will serve as a food source for other native species. Their introduction into the Coletto Creek reservoir will help insure the overall health of the natural aquatic environment.

The very popular Coletto Creek reservoir draws over 300,000 visitors each year, most of whom are fishermen who recognize it as one of the best sportfishing lakes around. It has 3,100 surface acres of water and 61 miles of shoreline. Most of the trees were left in the reservoir after the dam was completed to provide good fish habitat.

It was completed in 1979 as a power plant cooling lake for AEP's Coletto Creek power station, a 632-megawatt single unit coal plant. The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), a state river authority created by the Texas Legislature in 1935, manages the reservoir as contract operator for AEP, including boat launches, docks, campgrounds and related facilities. ~~manages the lake.~~

(New pgh) Wilfred Korth, GBRA chief ranger, says the fact that Coletto Creek is a power plant lake is a plus for anglers -- particularly in the winter. "Because the reservoir is a power plant cooling pond, some of the best fishing action occurs in January and February ~~February and March~~ because the water is already warm enough for the fish to be active and preparing to spawn," said Korth. ~~the GBRA. The public organization maintains the lake, including boat launches, docks, campgrounds and related facilities~~

American Electric Power is a multinational energy company based in Columbus, Ohio. AEP owns and operates more than 38,000 megawatts of generating capacity, making it America's largest generator of electricity. The company is also a leading wholesale energy marketer and trader, ranking second in the U.S. in electricity volume with a growing presence in natural gas. AEP provides retail electricity to more than 7 million customers worldwide and has holdings in the U.S. and select international markets. Wholly owned subsidiaries are involved in power engineering and construction services, energy management and telecommunications.

News releases and other information about AEP can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.aep.com>.

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Want More Information?

- American Electric Power (<http://www.aep.com>)
- GBRA's Coletto Creek Park and Reservoir web site
(<http://www.colettocreekpark.com/>)
- Texas Parks and Wildlife -- Fishing web site
(<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/fish.htm>)