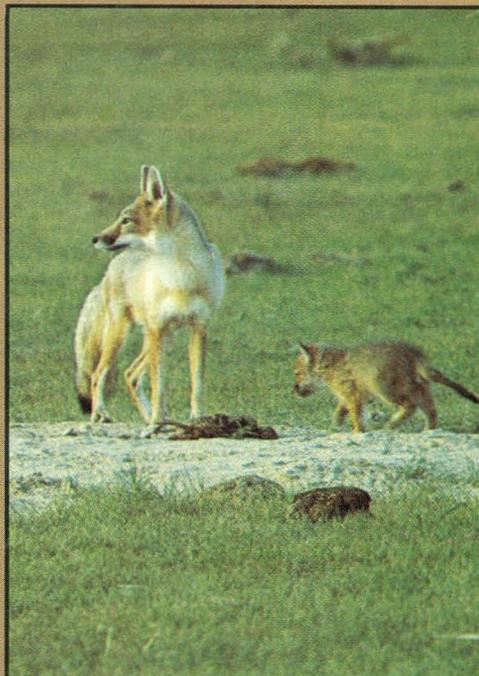


KANSAS FISH & GAME



TABOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
Hillsboro, Kansas 67063



S. L. LOEMEN
TABOR COLLEGE
HILLSBORO

July-August 1975

KANSAS FISH & GAME



July-August, 1975

Vol. 32, No. 4

CONTENTS

Passin' by Vic McLeran	1
Prairie Dogs and Predators by Vic McLeran	2
Prairie Swift by George Anderson	6
Improve Your Shooting by Farrell Brewer	10
The Kansas Wildlife Federation by Bill Scott	13
FISH & GAME FORUM	16
OUTDOOR BOOKS	17

COVER PHOTOS

Front cover—Young Great Horned Owl, Cottontail Rabbit and Gray Fox by Vic McLeran. Prairie Swift Fox and Prairie Chicken by Ken Stiebben.

Back cover—Sunset, Killdeer and Prairie Rattlesnake by Ken Stiebben. Coyote and Rough-legged Hawk by Vic McLeran.

COMMISSIONERS

JOHN LUFT, *Chairman* Bison
R. W. (BILL) FOWLER Weir
LEWIS MOON Independence
ART HANSON Bonner Springs
FRED SEARS Colby

DIVISION CHIEFS

ROY SCHOONOVER Fisheries
LEROY E. LYON Information—Education
ROBERT WARD Fiscal
WALTER HARRISON Field Services
HAROLD LUSK Law Enforcement
LEE QUEAL Game

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

RICHARD WETTERSTEN Director
FRED WARDERS Assistant Director

MAGAZINE STAFF

VIC McLERAN Editor
FARRELL BREWER Staff Writer
GEORGE ANDERSON Staff Writer
BILL SCOTT Staff Writer
GEORGE VALYER Staff Writer
PAUL BOCQUIN Staff Writer
BOB WELLBORN Staff Writer
KEN STIEBBEN Photographer
BEV ALDRICH Editorial Assistant

KANSAS FISH & GAME is an official bi-monthly publication of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Box 1028, Pratt, Kansas 67124. Subscription is free upon written request to adult Kansas residents. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted without permission provided proper credit is given. Second class postage paid at Topeka, Kansas, and at additional mailing offices.

PRINTED BY
ROBERT R. (BOB) SANDERS, STATE PRINTER
TOPEKA, KANSAS
1975



35-9047

KANSAS

Forestry, Fish & Game Commission

P. O. Box 1028
Pratt, Kansas 67124
316-672-6473

REGIONAL OFFICES

Southeast

Chanute, 66720
222 W. Main Bldg.
316-431-0380
Jim Bryan—Law Enforcement
John Ray—Fisheries
Dick Hager—Game
Vic McLeran—Information-Education
Gus Vaughn—Field Services

Northeast

Manhattan, 66502
215 S. Seth Childs Road
913-539-6731
Glen Hurst—Law Enforcement
Leo Dowlin—Fisheries
Bob McWhorter—Game
Bill Scott—Information-Education
Raymond Kokenge—Field Services

North Central

Concordia, 66901
P. O. Box 710, 135 W. 8th
913-243-3857
Jack McNally—Law Enforcement
Verlyn Ebert—Fisheries
Darrel Montei—Game
Eugene "Shep" Shepherd—Field Services
Bob Wellborn—Information-Education

South Central

Newton, 67114
P. O. Box 764, 204 W. 6th
316-283-2482
Tom Crispino—Law Enforcement
Lanny Jones—Fisheries
Steve Capel—Game
Farrell Brewer—Information-Education

Northwest

Colby, 67701
P. O. Box 366, 890 S. Range
913-462-3367
George Whitaker—Law Enforcement
Gail Griffin—Game

Southwest

Dodge City, 67801
808 Highway 56
316-227-8600
Jerry Hazlett—Fisheries
Bill Hanzlick—Game
Larry Kerr—Field Services
Marvin "Butch" Hamilton—
Law Enforcement

Passin'

The old man was dying.

He didn't have much time left an' from the sadness in his eyes, I guess he probably knew it. Cancer'd been eatin' on him for nearly a year and it was beginning to show in the leathery old face. But that wasn't the only reason for his sadness. Leaning up against a rusty old John Deere, he gazed out across the shortgrass prairie and started talkin' low.

"They're all gone," he said softly, "the real things I mean, the things that're right. The prairie's changin'; most of the 'dog towns are gone—poisoned out; the ferrets are gone and the bluestems 'goin' fast what with center pivots and stubble mulchin'; Interstates an' fellas with Hondas cuttin' up the prairie—can't see a chicken anymore. Yep, the real things are passin'; Hell, it's even gettin' hard to find a prairie rattler."

The old man was born on the western Kansas shortgrass prairie nearly 90 winters ago. Ninety years is a long time and the old man had seen a bunch of change. Like a lot of old timers, he was remembering only the best of it and comparing it to what he saw now. And the best of it in his day was a far cry from the best of it today.

"Passin' maybe," I said, "but not gone, not yet."

The old man's eyes weren't as good as they used to be and he was overlooking some things. 'Course maybe he was just tired of lookin'. The real things are still here though—if you look for 'em. You just have to look a little harder nowadays.

But if you kick around these old Kansas prairies long enough, you're gonna' see and hear some things that'll carry you back to the way it was when things were wild and natural and real; things that still personify wildness.

Like that old bison skull, half-buried in the prairie loam, nearly hidden by a small patch of bluestem—a bleached reminder of the days when vast brown tides of buffalo covered the prairie: or the angry buzzing of a prairie rattlesnake coiled in the shade of some sage, his flat wedge of a head pulled back in the S-shaped striking loop, rattling out a warning his ancestors developed centuries ago to keep away the heavy-stepping bison. And later in the evening, there's the lonesome chorus of coyotes as they pack up to hunt a distant yucca-studded ridge: and around midnight as the full moon clears a cloud bank to the east, you might hear the wind-muffled hooting of a great horned owl as he checks out a prairie canyon from high in an ancient cottonwood. And two or three hours before dawn, you'll feel the breezes switch around to the southwest, carryin' in a hint of sage and mesquite from the West Texas flats.

Talkin' about these, I said, "Hell old man, these things are real and they're still with us."

"Yeah," he muttered skeptically, "but not for long."

I hope he was wrong.

Lord knows I've never been what folks'd call a religious man. But in this plastic, throw-away world of computers, Hondas, Interstates and phonies, I thank God I live where I can still see and hear some of the "real" things in life.

The old man's gone now but I think about him from time to time. And his values—and the things he considered real and right. They're not gone yet, not all of 'em. But the old man was right about one thing—they're passin'. And 20 years from now . . . well, who knows?

Nostalgic? Sure.

True? You bet.

Tragic? That depends on your values.

Viv Uclerson

From Morton County Kansas
along the Colorado line.

June, 1975

Prairie Dogs and Predators

By Vic McLeran, Editor

The little prairie dog serves as food for a host of predators. Here are a few incidents in the predator-prey relationship.

TOPPING A SMALL grass-covered prairie knoll, I spotted the 'dog town several hundred yards to the north. A short-grass-bare ground area of several acres, the town was dotted evenly with small crater-like mounds which marked the entrance to burrows. It was April and the community was alive with activity. Prairie dogs were everywhere: on the mounds, in the short-cropped grass and scurrying around from burrow to burrow. Several of the more vigilant animals had spotted me and were sitting high on their haunches, barking the distress cry and jerking their tails sharply.

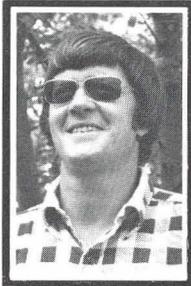
Moving through windswept grasses, I reached the lower end of the 'dog town. With snake hook and camera, I started checking the burrow entrances for prairie rattlesnakes. The reptiles sometimes use abandoned prairie dog burrows as hibernating dens. Early in the spring, they're occasionally found dozing or resting at the entrances and I needed some pictures.

As I walked slowly through the town, the 'dogs scurried to their mounds and with a final flickering of their tails, disappeared into burrows. Those to the right and left continued barking from the tops of their mounds. After I'd passed, the rodents behind me would cautiously poke their heads above the surface, still barking sharply. Overhead I noticed a rough-legged hawk wheeling in a broad circle above the northern end of the

'dog town. The alarm cries picked up in volume. As I watched, the hawk went into a power dive and disappeared behind a slight rise to the north. At that moment, the angry buzzing of a prairie rattler took my attention from the bird. Coiled loosely about two feet from a burrow, the reptile's head and neck were drawn back in the characteristic S-shaped striking loop. The snake's rattle blurred as it sounded out the castanet-like staccato. Reaching out with a

snake hook, I pulled the reptile away from the burrow and into the shade of a nearby yucca.

Several rolls of film later, I released the reptile and started toward the knoll where I'd last seen the roughleg. Clearing the small rise, I watched the hawk flush, screaming as he flew. Several yards in front of me was the still-warm body of a prairie dog which the hawk had killed moments earlier. Angry at the interruption, the hawk circled above, screaming furiously.



McLeran

Prairie dogs, among the most social of rodents, live together in large family units, each with a well-defined territory in the town.

Ken Stiebben



Leaving the prairie dogs to their business and the hawk to its meal, I returned to the car thinking about how hazardous life is for the prairie dog. Bull snakes, prairie and diamond-back rattlers, rough-legged Swainson's and red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, great horned and burrowing owls, badgers, coyotes, bobcats, swift foxes and where they still exist, black-footed ferrets—all prey on the prairie dog or its young.

Bull snakes are common inhabitants of many prairie dog towns and while adult 'dogs are usually too large and aggressive for bull snakes to tackle, the pups are just right for a bull snake's meal. Occasionally though, a large bull snake will attempt to take an adult prairie dog. The results are sometimes disastrous. Several observers have reported finding dead and mutilated bull snakes at the entrances to prairie dog burrows. E. C. Cates, U. S. Field and Wildlife Service employee, found an unusual situation in a New Mexico 'dog town which he recorded in the *Journal of Mammalogy*. Cates' attention was drawn to a curious looking mass at the foot of a mound near a burrow. Looking

Rough-legged hawks are effective avian predators which often dine on prairie dogs.

Vic McLeran



Fish and Game



The coyote is probably the most clever predator the prairie dog has to contend with.

closely, he saw that it was the entwined but motionless forms of a male prairie dog and a large bull snake—both dead.

"The snake had apparently tried to enter the prairie dog's burrow in search of food," Cates wrote, "but had been met by the protecting male dog. The soft dirt for several feet around the mound was marked in various patterns indicating that the battle had lasted for some time. The snake had been severely bitten in a number of places and the prairie dog looked as if it had been squeezed or choked to death. The battle had been fairly close as both had died in fighting position."

Rattlesnakes, both the prairie and the western diamondback, are other reptilian predators which feed on prairie dogs. An employee of the old U. S. Biological Survey was fortunate enough to witness a battle between a prairie dog and a prairie rattler in Montana. The rattlesnake was coiled at the entrance to a rather high prairie dog mound. The 'dog would approach the snake cautiously,



Vic McLeran

Bull snakes, like the one above, as well as prairie rattlesnakes, occasionally prey upon prairie dogs.

advancing up the side of the mound. As the reptile struck, the prairie dog would leap up and backwards. Apparently the snake's fangs made contact on several occasions because the mammal's breast and entire front were covered with blood. The prairie dog eventually ran down another burrow a short distance away, obviously quite ill.

In the past, there have been references made to prairie dogs entombing rattlesnakes if they found them in their burrows. David Costello mentioned this trait in his book, *The World of the Prairie Dog*.

"Years ago Robert Blight referred to an article by Charles U. Becker in *Field & Stream* which told how the author saw a rattlesnake disappearing into a burrow. An excited prairie dog bobbed up and raced around the entrance, barking incessantly. Within minutes twenty prairie dogs assembled around the burrow, barked for awhile, and then as if started by a signal, scratched dirt into the hole, filled it quickly and pressed the soil level with the surface with their noses. Whatever may be the merit of this

account, it makes a good story."

Raptors of all sorts, from the tiny burrowing owl to the regal golden eagle, prey on the prairie dog from time to time. The prairie dog's eyes are situated high on their head, a factor that makes it easy for them to spot aerial enemies. This evolutionary characteristic is testimony to the effectiveness of hawks and eagles as prairie dog predators.

Burrowing owls frequently inhabit 'dog towns. The little owls use abandoned burrows for nesting and raising their young. Normally they feed on mice and insects but occasionally they'll make a meal of young prairie dogs. The 'dogs in turn may eat the owls' eggs. I once watched the interactions of burrowing owls and prairie dogs at a small 'dog town in Kiowa County. As the owls skimmed across the ground in flight after insects, the 'dogs usually showed alarm. But when the owls were perched on the ground or on the mounds, the prairie dogs grazed unconcernedly within a few feet of the owls.

Larger owls, like the great horned, probably don't have much of an effect

on the 'dogs since they're hunting at night when the prairie dogs are asleep in their burrows. But one great horned owl in Montana was seen feeding a prairie dog to its youngsters, so evidently the big owls occasionally score on the little mammals. The short-eared owl, which often hunts on cloudy days, probably takes an occasional prairie dog.

Golden eagles are probably the most successful avian predators the prairie dogs have to contend with. Numerous biological studies on eagles have repeatedly shown that the prairie dog constitutes an important part of the eagles' diets where both species occur. The transient golden eagles that migrate through western Kansas during the winter probably take their just toll of prairie dogs.

Hawks in western Kansas, like the ferruginous, rough-legged, red-tailed, Swainson's and marsh, aren't as adept at taking prairie dogs as the eagles. But prairie dogs have shown up in food studies of all these birds, especially the immature animals.

Years ago, when there were an estimated five billion prairie dogs scattered across the Great Plains, the 'dog's most lethal enemy was the black-footed ferret. About the size of a mink, the small weasel-like ferret was able to enter the burrows at will. Being an expert digger, even plugged burrows gave the ferret no problems. Prairie dogs were evidently unaware of this though, because they frequently plugged burrows containing a ferret. Later, the ferret simply dug out. Bob Henderson, a wildlife damage control specialist for the KSU extension service, once watched a grizzled old prairie dog back two ferrets down a burrow in South Dakota. "After the ferrets had disappeared down the burrow, the 'dog proceeded to plug and pack the hole with dirt," Henderson said.

The presence of black-footed ferrets in Kansas is still questionable. Reports filter in periodically from farmers and ranchers, but one of the most vivid records of a ferret in the state occurred in 1957 when one was captured on a road in Sheridan County near Studley.

Today though, with the ferret approaching extinction, badgers and coyotes are more of a concern to the prairie dog. Badgers, with their strong digging claws and powerful legs, are able to dig out several burrows a night. They seem to determine by a sense of smell whether or not the burrow is occupied.

In the study of a prairie dog town in Barber County, Ronald E. Smith, former University of Kansas student, found a family of three badgers preying on the town's inhabitants. This badger family, a female and two youngsters, killed and ate nine prairie dogs from a single burrow in one night. In another instance, a single badger killed and ate four prairie dogs. Three times prairie dogs which were left live in traps until late in the evening were killed and eaten by badgers that pulled all but the 'dogs' heads through the trap mesh. Smith said fresh diggings into prairie dog burrows showed up regularly throughout the year and he felt that badgers probably destroyed a large number of 'dogs' annually. He concluded that badgers were the most significant predators in the Barber County dog-town.

But the prairie dog's cleverest enemy is the coyote. This ingenious little canine has been observed using the slow-moving badger to flush ground squirrels and prairie dogs from their underground retreats. As the badger digs into one entrance, the rodents leave by the back door and are grabbed by the waiting coyote.

Texas historian J. Frank Dobie, author of *Voice of the Coyote*, writes of two coyotes in New Mexico that joined forces in their prairie dog hunting. "They tracked leisurely along, one right behind the other, toward the edge of a prairie dog town. The prairie dog they were headed for could see only the lead coyote, the one behind keeping his head down and his body hidden by that of the first. When near a mound on which this prairie dog stood, the lead coyote made a rush, and of course the prairie dog ducked. The sun was shining and the coyote's leap over the hole darkened it. The coyote went on, other prairie dogs chattering and ducking,

the noise growing dimmer as he passed.

"But the second coyote had stopped when the first one leaped, flattening himself out behind the dog mound. There he waited until the prairie dog should come up. After a considerable while it reappeared, looking intently toward the enemy that had passed but was still in sight. At the same time, the coyote accomplice made a leap and caught the prairie dog."

Another coyote was observed early one morning stopping up prairie dog burrows with soil. After plugging several holes, the coyote trotted a few yards away and lay down. A few moments later, as the sun rose higher, prairie dogs began coming out of their burrows for breakfast. The coyote didn't move. But he intently watched one particular prairie dog that was feeding out toward the plugged burrows. Suddenly the coyote made a dash for the rodent. Cut off from his own burrow, the 'dog scurried for a neighbor's—which was

plugged. The confused prairie dog hesitated briefly and was grabbed by the predator.

Clever? Sure, but top honors for ingenuity have to go to the Texas coyote that took advantage of a "gully-washer" and some loose dirt to flush out his meal. Again from Dobie: "He was pulling down the craterlike mounds around two or three holes and using the dirt to throw up a rough V-shaped dam. The flanges pointed uphill, enclosing one of the holes near the apex. Presently the heavens turned loose. Water flowed down the mountainside in sheets. Water caught by the coyote's dam poured into the hole. Meanwhile, the coyote had placed himself in a waiting position just downward from the apex. Later, as the rain slackened, the prairie dog emerged for air, only to be grabbed by the ingenious coyote."

Even though all the prairie dog's enemies aren't as clever as the coyote, the little rodent has served as a staple food item in the diets of many prairie predators down through the centuries.

The prairie dog's high-set eyes enable it to see out of its burrow without exposing much of its head or body.

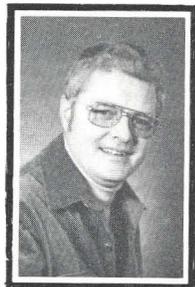
Ken Stiebben



MENTION THE word fox and it conjurs visions of well-groomed riders in red coats and black boots perched lightly atop graceful steeds. Bugles blow, hounds bawl and Reynard, the crafty red fox leads the whole gang across streams and woodlands on a merry chase.

The image of the fabled red fox is universal. The gray fox, while not as well known, is generally recognized by most observers of wildlife. Kansas is the home of both the red and gray fox and in addition, provides living quarters for the third and rarest member of the sunflower fox family, the Swift fox.

Now it's an accepted fact that all



Anderson

Prairie Swift

By George Anderson,
Staff Writer

foxes are swift. The Swift fox, however, in a short distance race with its cousins, would win most every race. This sub-compact form of the fox

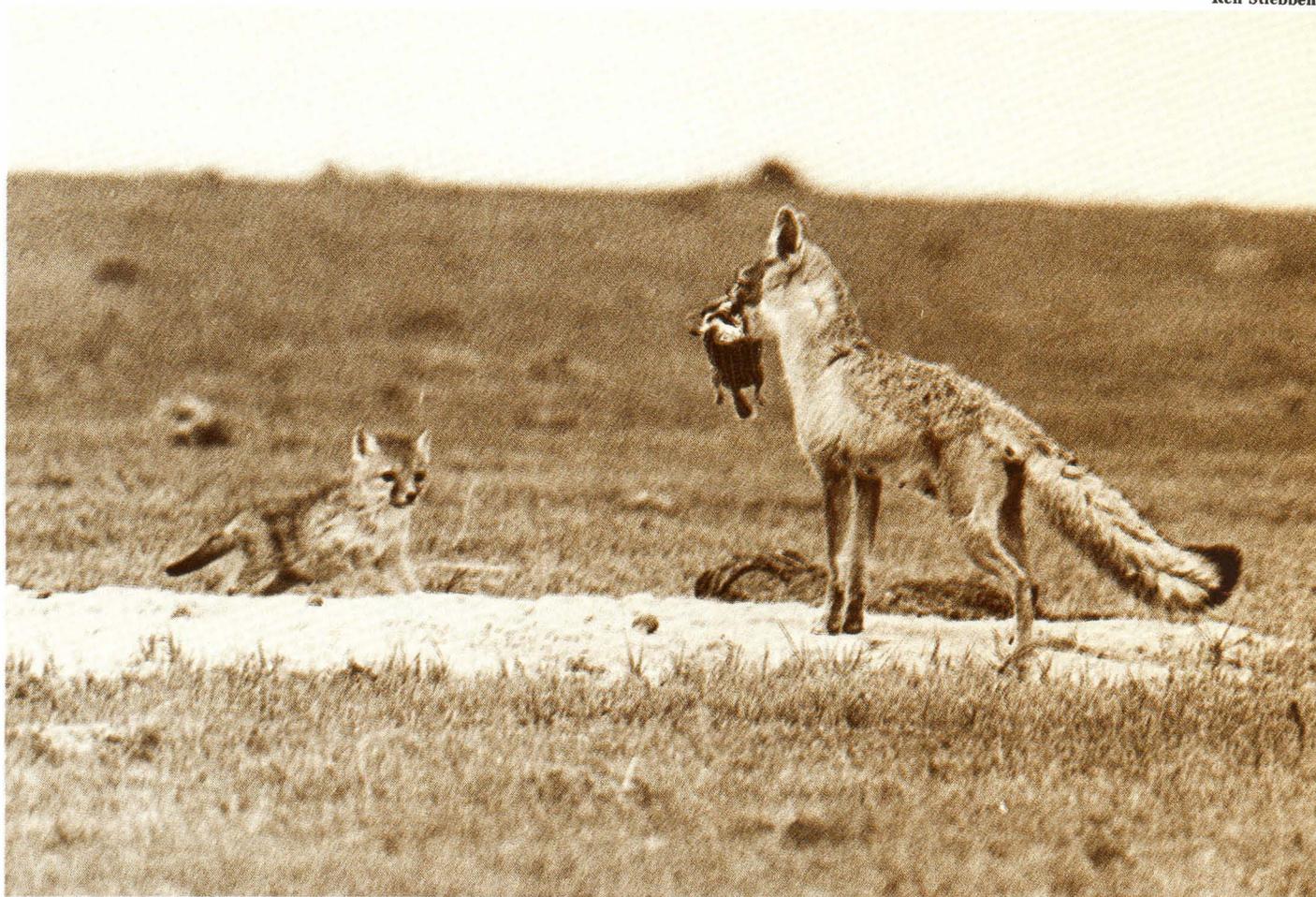
family is a buff-yellow color and very small in size. A full grown specimen would weigh between four and six pounds and measure only thirty inches, of which twelve inches is tail. A black tip on its tail and black spot on each side of its snout distinguish it from young coyotes which some observers sometimes confuse it with. The ears, in proportion to its small body size, are very large.

In Kansas, the swift fox is often referred to as the Kit fox. The name 'kit' is applied to the young of various fur-bearing mammals. It is applied to this species of fox because it is sometimes mistaken for an immature specimen of another fox or young coyote. Another alias of the swift is prairie fox. The Latin name is *Vulpes velox*.

Biologists have varied opinions as to whether the kit and swift fox are the same animal or if they are two different species entirely. E. Raymond

This female swift fox returns to the den with a ground squirrel for her young.

Ken Stiebben



Hall, in his *Handbook of the Mammals of Kansas*, says "The Kit fox, *Vulpes macrotis*, which occurs to the west of the Rocky mountains, is the closest relative of our swift fox. The two foxes may be only subspecifically different."

The Swift fox was almost extirpated in Kansas. Prior to 1955 this fast running carnivore had not been seen or at least reported for fifty years. Cockrum, in his book, *Mammals of Kansas*, written in 1952, said definitely that the swift fox was extinct in Kansas. You'll note the two big words just laid on you. Extirpated and extinct. Both describe the same sad situation that confronted this tiny fox. Webster's Elementary Dictionary defines the word extirpate as, To pluck up by the stem or root: hence, to destroy wholly.

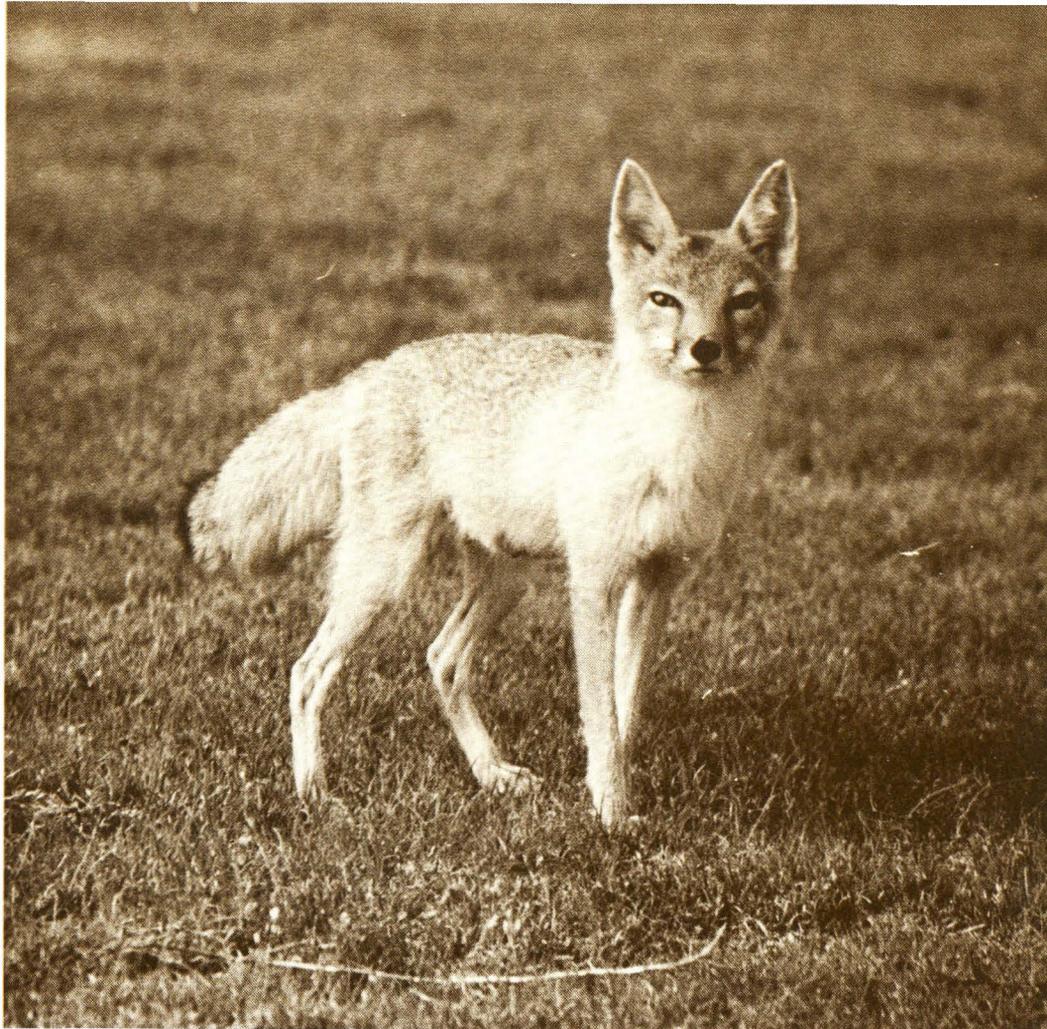
The refusal of the Kansas swift fox to join the ranks of extinct wildlife such as the passenger pigeon, Labrador duck, Dodo bird and Carolina parakeet to name a few, became apparent in 1955.

Martin and Sternberg, Fort Hays Kansas State College, in their article, "Return of the Native," recount the first swift fox to be confirmed in Kansas in this century. This swift was shot in Gove county by a hunter in January 1955. The specimen was taken to the college at Hays where it was identified and is still on display in their museum.

Following the Gove county specimen another swift fox was confirmed by George Atwood, Superintendent of Soil Conservation Service in Elkhart on April 7, 1955. Atwood pointed out the fox among twenty coyotes that had been killed by local hunters.

On December 4, 1955, another swift fox was caught in a mink trap in Stafford county. This record extended the known range of the swift fox in Kansas some seventy miles to the east.

Kansas law prior to this time did not protect the swift fox. If you don't have them, laws are not necessary to protect them. It would have been like granting protection to an elephant in Kansas. The three sightings of the swift fox within the state in twelve months prompted some changes in these laws. Protection for



Ken Stiebben

The swift fox, now fully protected by law, was once believed extinct in Kansas.

this pint-sized mammal came almost as swift as the fox itself. In the "Chronology of Kansas Hunting and Trapping Laws and Regulations," compiled by Robert D. Wood, the swift fox was granted protection for the first time in Kansas history in 1956.

For the past nineteen years *Vulpes velox* has lived in western Kansas under full protection of state law. They are still protected and will be for some time to come and this protection has helped. Ranchers, game protectors and biologists report their populations seem to be increasing within their limited range.

Detailed research relating to the swift fox in the Midwest is apparently a void that has yet to be filled. David Hawley, in his article, "Strange Saga of the Swift Fox," for the *Minnesota Volunteer* magazine, says, "From a naturalist's viewpoint, the northern swift fox is a mysterious little animal. Few—if any—studies have been made

on the predator, and the amount of space devoted to it in reference books on North American mammals has been generally short and sketchy." This writer can only echo this statement in regards to the swift fox in Kansas.

Not abundant throughout any of its historic range, it is no wonder that Kansas sightings of the swift fox come as infrequently as they do, the major range being in extreme west and northwest Kansas. This sparsely populated area of the state provides all the needs of this small, shy and retiring fox.

Like all animals the swift fox is adapted for the climate that it inhabits. *World Book's* comments in relation to animals' adaptation for climate sums it up this way. Long-eared and long-tailed foxes, mice and jack rabbits live on deserts and hot, dry plains. At times of great heat, they stay underground where the air is cooler. Their bodies lose heat, partly through their long ears and tails.

The large ears of the swift fox would help it lose body heat. By contrast the Artic fox has small ears which conserve body heat.

Home for the swift fox is a den or burrow located on loose, sandy soil. Like other wild dogs it is poorly equipped for digging in hard ground. The den location is usually found on flat ground or near the crest of a small hill. Several exit holes are generally close by to be used for refuge or escape. Abandoned badger dens are also utilized by the swift fox.

After mating, the young are born in early spring. Normally, four to seven pups make up the litter. By late April the pups can be seen playing outside the den. The young foxes are very similar in their mannerisms to a litter of kittens. Attempts have been made in the past to domesticate the swift fox. Like most wildlife they do not completely become tame, and it would be a violation of state law to possess a swift fox either living or dead. Leave wildlife where it belongs. In the wild.

Feeding duties for the new family of swift fox are shared by both parents throughout the summer. H. E. Anthony, in *Mammals of America*, says "From mating time the male and female remain together the summer through; and from the fact that the former is active in the care of the cubs it has been thought that the pairing is permanent. Comparatively little, however, can be stated with certainty concerning this part of the kit fox life."

First hand observations of the parents' feeding of the litter are uncommon. Ken Stibben, staff photographer for the Commission, decided to photograph a swift fox several years ago at a den site in western Kansas. After building a blind and baiting the outside of the den with a rabbit carcass, he recalled what happened. "I sat there quite awhile before the female appeared. She was very slow coming out of the den and at first only those big ears were visible. Then ears and eyes. Once outside, she grabbed the rabbit, but I had tied it down so it couldn't be drug off. She tore the rabbit open very fast and removed the entrails, carrying them back inside the den. I never did see the pups,



Ken Stiebben

Ken Knitig, Goodland game rotection, located the den of swift foxes from which these pictures were obtained.

but they must have been inside with all the growling and commotion made when the female returned with the entrails."

This little nocturnal prowler of the plains is hardly equipped to be a big game hunter. Just the opposite. They might be the fastest five-pound mouse trap in the west.

Victor H. Cahalane, in his book, *Mammals of North America*, writes the following on food habits of the kit fox. "This fox chooses the sandy plains for a home, not only because they make easy digging, but because they are attractive to rodents. These little mammals are a favorite food of the kit fox and their shallow burrows are everywhere. The kangaroo rat is the most frequent victim. The kit fox is rarely or never outside the range of this grotesque, long-legged creature."

Jackrabbits, cottontails, ground squirrels, small birds, grasshoppers, snakes and lizards are a few tasty

meat morsels that the western swift fox might favor. In addition the fox is omnivorous—they eat both plant and animal matter.

"Fox in a hen house," is a well-known phrase, and probably fits the swift fox on occasion. I am sure the swift would not turn down a chicken dinner. The hordes of rodents consumed annually by this midget predator should however, outweigh their occasional raid on the poultry roost.

The hunting tactics employed by the swift fox is not so much different than other foxes or coyotes. A combination of stealth and speed is relied on to capture the intended victim. Hunting mostly during the nighttime hours would not require the speed for which this fox is noted.

Unless very hungry, the swift fox returns to the den to devour its catch. Bones, fur and other discards are brought up and scattered around the den site. Dens apparently are the

KANSAS FISH & GAME



NEWS

P.O. BOX 1028

PRATT, KANSAS 67124

Phone— 316/672-6473

KANSAS FISH & GAME Magazine Ranks High In National Contest

PRATT--The staff of KANSAS FISH & GAME magazine received special credit from the director of the Kansas Fish and Game Commission and the magazine editor after the publication was judged as the third best wildlife conservation magazine in North America.

At the June Commission meeting, Director Richard Wettersten read the announcement of the third place award for 1974, which was presented June 18 in Portland, Ore. at the 34th annual conference of the American Association of Conservation Information (AACI).

The director then congratulated Vic McLeran, editor, and the staff for their many hours of dedicated efforts.

When notified of the high rating at his office in Chanute, McLeran said the contest had given the staff "a little something to shoot for." He expressed satisfaction over the high points scored for the Kansas publication, noting that staff teamwork helped to achieve this honor.

A total of 22 other states or provinces competed in the magazine category of the AACI's award program. SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE won the top award with 352 points, while second place was awarded to the TENNESSEE CONSERVATIONIST which accumulated 340 points. Total point accumulation for KANSAS FISH & GAME was 336.

Judges for magazine entries were Prof. George S. Hage, specialist and instructor in magazine journalism, and Prof. Harold W. Wilson specialist and instructor in advertising, typography and graphics. Both are on the College of Journalism staff, University of Minnesota.

KANSAS FISH & GAME is the official bi-monthly publication of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, published by the Information-Education Division.

LEWIS B. MOON
APPOINTED TO
FISH & GAME COMMISSION



Governor Robert Bennett has appointed Lewis B. Moon, Independence, to a four-year term on the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission. Moon succeeds Jack Haley, Minneapolis, as commissioner at large for the state.

Moon retired in 1971 as vice-president and director of Arco Pipeline Co., a subsidiary of Sinclair Oil Corporation.

Moon is a great lover of sports, particularly hunting and fishing. In 1959 he participated in the one-shot antelope hunt at Lander, Wyoming as a member of the Western Sportsmen Team. He scored for his team with a one-shot "kill" and in so doing also earned the much sought after 'Silver Bullet Award.'

In addition, Moon is a charter member and past president of the One Box Pheasant hunt in Nebraska, Grand National Quail hunt in Oklahoma and is a charter member of the One Box Sharptail Grouse hunt, Ashern, Manitoba. He has also been active in the Chamber of Commerce, Masonic Blue Lodge, Elks lodge and numerous other civic and fraternal organizations.

Moon's appointment became effective in March 1975.

-GA-

SQUIRREL SEASON
OPENED JUNE 1

(released May 5, 1975)

PRATT--The 1975 squirrel hunting season in Kansas opened on June 1, according to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

The season will continue through December 31 with a daily bag limit of five and a possession limit of ten squirrels after opening day. Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

-GA-

NEW STRIPER
RECORD ESTABLISHED

(released May 5, 1975)

CHENEY--For the second time this year, a new striped bass record has been established in Kansas. The Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission announced this week that a 33-pound, 12 ounce striper has been taken at Cheney Reservoir, topping the previous record by 15 and 1/4 pounds.

According to commissioner R.W. "Bill" Fowler of Weir, the big striped bass was taken on June 1 on a yellow and black hellbender by Carl G. Hooker of Wichita while trolling for walleye near the refuge area. The fish measured 37½ inches in length and had a girth of 27 inches.

The previous record striper was caught by Lennart L. Olson from Wilson Reservoir.

-FB-

TURKEY HUNTERS HAVE
SUCCESSFUL SEASON

(released May 5, 1975)

PRATT--Kansas turkey hunters for the second year have experienced a highly successful season according to figures released by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

A total of 400 permits were authorized to hunt the wild turkey in a limited area in southwest Kansas. Questionnaires returned by hunters indicate that a total of 139 birds were harvested during the 1975 season.

During the 1974 season, which was the first turkey season in Kansas history, a total of 123 birds were harvested.

-GA-

COMMISSION ELECTS
NEW CHAIRMAN

(released May 21, 1975)

PRATT--Art Hanson, Bonner Springs, was elected chairman of the five-man board of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission at their April 30 meeting at Hays.

Hanson was appointed to the commission in 1973 and served this past year as commission secretary. He replaces John Luft, Bison, who has served as chairman the past year. Fred Sears, Colby, was elected secretary. Sears has served on the commission since 1969.

-GA-

COMMISSION DIRECTOR RECEIVES
CONSERVATION AWARD

PRATT--Richard D. Wettersten, director of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, has been named to receive one of the American Motors Conservation Awards for 1975.

The awards have been presented annually since 1954 to professional and non-professional conservationists for dedicated efforts in the field of renewable natural resources, with 10 awards in each category. In addition, awards are presented each year to national and local groups for outstanding achievements in conservation.

Individual and group awards include bronze sculptured medallions and honorariums of \$500, according to Roy D. Chapin Jr., chairman of American Motors Corporation.

Since becoming director in 1971, Wettersten has distinguished himself as one of the leading administrators in professional wildlife conservation work. In 1972, he announced to Kansas citizens that the Commission was embarking on a five-point, five-year program to elevate the state's natural and recreational resources to a level of which all sportsmen could be proud.

He tagged the venture Project SASNAK or Surging Ahead for Skippers, Nimrods and Anglers in Kansas. Wettersten requested and got a budget double that of the previous year in order to launch the effort, and in 1973 it became a reality.

SASNAK is aimed, among other things, at establishing a new working relationship with private landowners to develop wildlife habitat, implementing a firearms safety training course for Kansas youth, and developing courtesy water patrol teams to implement the state Water Safety Act.

Within one year, the Kansas hunter safety training program (a SASNAK goal) received special honors by the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners.

In addition to making Project SASNAK a reality, Wettersten has strengthened the internal operations of the agency, improved the working relationships with other governmental agencies and strengthened legislative ties with the Commission.

Beyond his job as administrator, he is active in a number of leading conservation and professional organizations. He received the Governor's Award in October, 1974 as conservationist of the year from the Kansas Wildlife Federation for his innovations and new programs, including SASNAK, WHIP and formation of regional field offices.

###

GOVERNOR DEDICATES NEW
FISH AND GAME ADDITION

(June 13 release updated)

PRATT--Governor Robert F. Bennett accepted an invitation to dedicate the recently completed addition to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission headquarters, east of Pratt, on June 25. The dedication was held in conjunction with a day long open house of the commission's facilities according to Commission Director Richard Wettersten.

The public was invited to attend the open house and guided tours of the headquarters, exhibit hall and fish hatchery operations were conducted during the day long event.

-GA-

WHITETAIL DEER CERTIFIED
AS NEW KANSAS RECORD

(released June 13, 1975)

PRATT--Records are made to be broken and such was the case of a Kansas whitetail deer shot during the 1974 firearm season, according to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Dennis Finger, Netawaka, shot the record whitetail on December 10, 1974 while hunting in Nemaha county. Following the prescribed 60 day drying period the antlers were measured and scored a total of 200 7/8 points.

The new record was classed as a typical whitetail and replaces the whitetail collected during the 1973 season by Michael Young of Cedarvale. Young's deer had scored 194 points.

"According to the latest Boone and Crockett records this new Kansas record should rank as the fourth largest typical whitetail in the world," said Bill Peabody, game biologist, Emporia, who scored the deer for the commission.

-GA-

MULE DEER SETS NEW
ARCHERY RECORD

(released June 13, 1975)

PRATT--A non-typical mule deer taken during the 1974 archery season has set a new Kansas record, according to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Robert Brock, Goodland, collected the new record deer while archery hunting in Sherman county on November 23, 1974. The deer was classed as a non-typical mule deer and scored a total of 224 6/8 points according to Kent Montei, game biologist, who measured the antlers.

Brock's deer breaks the long standing record set in 1966 by Ralph Stum of Ness City. Stum's deer was scored at 211 6/8.

-GA-

ANGLERS ADVISED TO
THROW BACK SMALL NORTHERNS

(released June 20, 1975)

PRATT--If a fisherman catches a northern pike less than 32 inches in length, he is advised to throw it back.

"Releasing northerns less than 32 inches is about the only way to provide good, trophy northern fishing in Kansas," said Roy Schoonover, fisheries division chief of the Kansas Fish and Game Commission.

Schoonover said small northern should be returned to the water as soon as possible to insure survival.

"Don't pick up small northerns by gripping their eye sockets," he cautioned. "Hold the fish firmly behind the gill covers to take it off the hook. If the hook is deep in the mouth, just cut the line." Otherwise, Schoonover said, the fish may not survive the well-intentioned release.

"Most northerns are being fished out prematurely," said Schoonover. "Those less than 32 inches have little meat, they are bony and are not trophy size. It takes a northern about two or three years to reach this length.

Because there is a lack of northern pike spawning habitat in Kansas, continual stocking by the Fish and Game Commission usually is necessary to sustain populations.

Popular northern pike impoundments where the population loss has become severe include Council Grove, Norton and Melvern reservoirs, Clark, Shawnee, Nebo and Atchison State Fishing Lakes.

-PB-

WALLEYE DELIVERED TO
EIGHT FISHING AREAS

(released June 20, 1975)

PRATT--More than 68,000 walleye fingerlings have been distributed to eight public fishing impoundments in the state by the Kansas Fish and Game Commission.

The fingerlings measure about three inches in length and were hatched earlier this spring at the Pratt Fish Hatchery.

Verl Stevens, supervisor of fish culture, said this is the fourth year the agency has stocked walleye fingerlings in Kansas public waters. Most of the deliveries this year were supplemental stocking to boost existing populations.

State fishing lakes receiving the fingerlings were Lyon, Pottawatomie No. 2, Leavenworth, Woodson, Neosho and Montgomery. Elk City Reservoir and public fishing areas at the Strip Pits also were stocked with walleye.

-PB-

1974 KANSAS FISHERMEN

A TELEPHONE SURVEY OF ABOUT 5,000 LICENSED KANSAS ANGLERS HAS JUST BEEN COMPLETED. INFORMATION FROM THESE ANGLERS WILL BE USED TO BETTER MANAGE FISHING FOR ALL ANGLERS IN YEARS TO COME. STATEWIDE AVERAGES OF THE SURVEY RESULTS PROVIDES AN IDEA OF HOW YOUR ANGLING COMPARES WITH OTHERS.

ABOUT 20.5% OF KANSAS FISHING LICENSE BUYERS ARE WOMEN

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALL LICENSE BUYERS:

<u>11.6%</u>	<u>22.5%</u>	<u>31%</u>	<u>34.7%</u>
16-24	25-34	35-49	50+

EACH LICENSED ANGLER FISHED ABOUT 24.5 DAYS DURING 1974

ANGLERS FAVORITE:

<u>FISH TO CATCH</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>WATERS TO FISH</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
CATFISHES	42.5	STREAMS AND RIVERS	28.3
LARGEMOUTH BASS	17.7	FEDERAL RESERVOIRS	26.5
CRAPPIE	9.0	SMALL LAKES	22.5
WALLEYE	7.7	FARM & RANCH PONDS	17.5
WHITE BASS	3.2	QUARRIES & PITS	2.3
BLUEGILL	1.0	FEE LAKES	.9
CARP	.9		
NORTHERN PIKE	.6		
DRUM	.1		

61 PERCENT OF KANSAS ANGLERS DRIVE LESS THAN 25 MILES TO FISH
93 PERCENT DRIVE LESS THAN 100 MILES

THERE ARE ABOUT 320,000 LICENSED FISHERMEN IN KANSAS. ADDING ABOUT 30% EXTRA FROM THOSE TOO YOUNG TO NEED A LICENSE OR THOSE OVER 65, THERE ARE ABOUT 416,000 FISHERMEN. IF THEY AVERAGED 24.5 DAYS APIECE FISHING EACH YEAR, THAT COMES TO A TOTAL OF 10,192,000 DAYS OF FISHING. BASED ON A 1970 FEDERAL STUDY, ANGLERS SPEND ABOUT \$7.90 ON EACH TRIP. THAT WOULD MAKE KANSAS FISHING WORTH ABOUT \$80.5 MILLION ANNUALLY.

FURBEARER SEASON
REGULATIONS SET

(released June 30, 1975)

PRATT--Furbearer season regulations for the 1975-76 hunting and trapping season were approved June 26 by Kansas Fish and Game commissioners at their monthly business meeting in the Pratt headquarters.

The following furbearer hunting season were approved:

Raccoon, opossum, badger, spotted skunk, red fox, gray fox and bobcat -- Nov. 1 through Feb. 15.

Running season (hunting, but no taking or killing) on raccoon, opossum, red fox and gray fox -- Aug. 1 through Oct. 31.

Striped skunk and coyote -- no closed season.

Otter, swift fox, black-footed ferret, weasel, mink, muskrat and beaver -- no open season.

Trapping seasons were approved as follows:

Raccoon, striped skunk, spotted skunk, muskrat, mink, weasel, red fox, gray fox, badger, bobcat and opossum -- Nov. 20 through Feb. 15.

Beaver -- Jan. 1 through Feb. 15.

Coyote -- no closed season.

Otter, black-footed ferret and swift fox -- no open season.

-PB-

BULLFROG SEASON
TO OPEN JULY 1

(released June 30, 1975)

PRATT--Bullfrog season opens July 1 in Kansas, according to a reminder from the Kansas Fish and Game Commission.

The season runs through September 30 with a daily bag limit of eight. State law provides for three legal methods of taking bullfrogs: by hand, with hook and line, or with a hand dip net. Shooting and other methods are illegal.

Unless exempt by law, a valid Kansas fishing license is required to pursue the bullfrog.

###

center of activity in the life of the swift fox. So much time is spent in the den area that fleas become a problem and frequently the den site is relocated because of this.

A tongue-in-cheek story is sometime told in regard to the cunning ability of the fox to rid itself of fleas. The story tells of the fox grasping a stick in its mouth, submerging slowly in a pool of water until only the stick remains above the water. The fleas, looking for drier quarters, gather on the stick and the fox then releases its hold, putting to drift the stick full of fleas.

That would be a neat trick, but I doubt if it has ever been documented.

Ken Knitig, game protector at Goodland, when told the story of the floating fleas, said, "The swift fox in this country would be hard-pressed to find water deep enough for that trick. Maybe that's why they're swift. Trying to outrun the fleas or looking for a water hole to jump in."

Descriptive terms, such as cunning, sly and crafty have been used for centuries in describing the exploits of the red fox. If everything written about the shrewd red fox is true he must be the '007' of the fox family.

The swift fox, in contrast, is a trusting little carnivore. In fact this trust-

ing characteristic has been a major factor in the decline of the swift fox throughout its former range. Victor Cahalane, in his book, *Mammals of North America*, writes about the non-suspicious nature of the swift fox. "Avoiding the haunts of men, it knows little about their wiles. Without guile itself, and without suspicion, it walks into the simplest traps. It gulps down poisoned bait that the canny coyote wouldn't dream of touching. Due to trapping for its inexpensive fur, and poisoning to destroy predators, the kit fox has been extirpated from large sections of the natural range."

Game protectors in western Kansas frequently have the opportunity to observe the habits of the swift fox. George Whitaker, regional law enforcement supervisor, while patrolling back roads in Wallace county during the antelope season, came upon a swift fox sitting calmly in the middle of the road. "The little guy was just sitting there in the road. I honked my horn and he just looked at me. Had to get out of my car and persuade him to move," he recalled.

Whitaker also remembers another incident involving the trusting nature of the swift fox. "A friend and I were calling coyotes from a pickup in Rawlins county. After blowing the call for

awhile I looked down beside the pickup and there sat a swift fox. Looking up at us."

Ken Knitig, game protector, says the swift fox seems to regard humans as something that will go away if they ignore them. "I was driving a back road one day and saw a swift lying on a den mound about one hundred yards from the road. I kinda' wanted to see what he would do if I blew a predator call so I stopped the truck and let go with a blast from the call. He just lay there and looked disgusted."

Natural enemies of the Kansas swift fox are limited. The coyote might find the smaller predator to his liking for a meal. The larger winged predator, such as the golden eagle have on occasion taken on the swift fox. Man, however, would have to rank as the number one problem faced by the swift.

The indiscriminate use of poison and man's warfare against other carnivores has been a disheartening story. The swift fox found these complications and changes in habitat almost insurmountable. Only in regions of few people has this tiny fox found a place to live. But maybe in Kansas they have been swift enough to outrun extinction. Let's hope so.

The mother swift fox has just spotted the photographer and barked a warning to her five cubs, seen scrambling for the safety of the den.

Ken Stiebben



Improve Your Shooting

By Farrell Brewer, Staff Writer

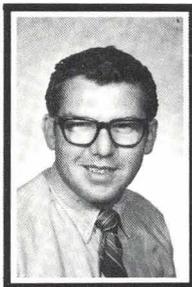


Farrell Brewer

ALTHOUGH hunters in the Sunflower state have been fortunate in having generous upland game seasons there are many months of the year when the seasons are closed.

What's a person to do to keep their shooting eye in shape during these months? They might try their hand at trapshooting.

Trapshooting is fast becoming one of the most popular sports for shooters. Many hunters are finding that trapshooting instead of being seasonal can be enjoyed all year long and can improve their field shooting when the seasons are open.



Brewer

A common mistake many field shooters make when trying their hand at trapshooting is to use a field gun on trap targets.

I will never forget the first time I tried my hand at trap. I walked up to the line with my Browning autoloader designed for field use. The results were disastrous. I managed to break five targets of twenty-five. I was very disappointed and embarrassed. I vowed never to shoot trap again.

A friend noticed my plight and offered some sound advice. He said my gun was not designed for trapshooting and offered to let me use his trap gun for the next round. He had a fine trap gun and stated he was sure I could break more targets with it.

Still embarrassed from my first try I decided I couldn't do any worse. I stepped up with the squad, using an unfamiliar gun and broke 17 out

of 25. Not bad for a beginner, I thought.

I didn't go out the next day and buy a new trap gun, but I am a firm believer in a trap gun for trapshooting.

Most field guns have a 26- or 28-inch barrel with improved cylinder or modified choke. In trap you need 30-inch barrels with a full choke. One basic reason is that in field shooting the target is usually closer and you don't need a tight pattern.

Keep in mind that a good trapshooter is not necessarily born with all that ability. Trapshooting is a sport that anyone can participate in and can develop the needed skills.

Four essentials for trapshooting are a good trap gun, ear protectors, shooting glasses and practice.

Let's discuss the gun in a little more detail. As stated before, the field

gun is not a good choice for trap-shooting. The trap gun, as the name implies, is built primarily for shooting trap. You can however use it in the field for other chores, but it is first and foremost a gun designed to hit claybirds.

Trap guns come in barrel lengths of 30, 32 and 34 inches. The length for you is a matter of personal choice; bear in mind that the longer the barrel, the smoother you are usually able to swing.

Weight is another important aspect and barrel length plays a role in total weight. The longer the barrel, the heavier the gun and the more weight distributed toward the front of the gun. Most trap guns weigh between 8 and 8½ pounds with 8¼ as a good compromise. Weight determines recoil to a great extent, because a heavier gun will absorb more of the "kick." As you advance in the art of trapshooting you will find a light gun recoils too much and it might throw you off when shooting doubles.

How a gun fits the shooter is also an important facet. You can spend a lot of money on a gun and if it doesn't fit you it could be money down the old tube. If you are in the market for a trap gun, make your selection carefully. A good place to start would be a reputable dealer who has gunsmithing facilities available and can help fit the gun to your personal requirements. Try to find one who knows as much as possible about trapshooting. Another source of information is a local trapshooter. Valuable pointers can be obtained from such a source. Experience is one of the best teachers and one who has been trapshooting for some time is sure to have experience.

You might wonder what ear protectors have to do with shooting. You are not the first to raise this question. Many old time trapshooters believed that ear protectors of any type would distract their shooting concentration and therefore lower their score. Even if this were the case, it would be better to have a lower score than to become deaf. That's right, deaf.

It's not only your shooting that bothers your ears, but the shots other shooters fire near you. Hearing ex-

perts explain the loud boom of a shotgun vibrates the eardrum severely. This is like beating something soft with a hammer. Eventually, the soft substance is going to be damaged. So by all means if you are going to be trapshooting wear ear protectors. They come in many styles; some are made to fit your ear precisely. An impression of your inside ear is taken and the plug molded to fit. There are others that have a valve mechanism that permits you to hear normal sounds but closes when the sound is sharp and loud. There are also the muff type. With these choices, you should be able to find one to suit your needs.

While shooting you are not only putting your ears on the line but also your eyes. These two critical and delicate organs are vital. Shooting without the proper safeguards is as foolish as careless gun handling. There's no excuse for it.

There is always the danger of getting an overloaded shell, a bad factory shell or encounter a malfunction in the gun. It doesn't happen often, but don't take a chance. For eye protection you should use a good pair of shooting glasses with hardened lenses. These glasses cost a bit more, but the hardened lenses won't break if hit by a flying particle.

It's important that a trap gun should fit the individual shooter's arm length.



Farrell Brewer



Farrell Brewer

Trapshooter Phil Scott of Newton displays a pair of ear protectors. These not only protect the shooter's ears, some gunners claim they can improve concentration by blocking distracting noises on the firing line.

For those who are not required to wear glasses in their every day living there are many commercial pairs of shooting glasses on the market. Most good sporting goods stores carry them.

For those of you like myself who have to wear prescription glasses, I suggest you tell your doctor your needs, he will know what type of glasses will be suitable.

There are many theories on how to shoot trap. You'll hear many of them from other shooters before you progress too far along the line. The thing to remember is that you are an individual and what works for one per-

son will not necessarily work for another. Be flexible and try various methods, eventually you will find the right combination that works best for you.

The best teacher is experience and I am not about to try to tell you what method is the best for trapshooting. There have been volumes written on methods. I suggest if you are interested in trapshooting, going to the library, check out a book on trapshooting and reading it thoroughly. There may be more than one book and I am sure that even within one book there will be several different

ideas presented. Read them, try them, find a method that works for you and practice, practice, practice. Maybe, someday you will be one of the best and you can pass on your knowledge to someone.

Although there are several methods for trapshooting there are some constants. One very important constant is gun safety. Trapshooting has to rank as the safest sport in America. In the history of the game including practice sessions, local shoots and even the Grand with 5,000 shooters plus spectators on the grounds, no one has ever been shot and killed. The reason is simple. Safety procedures are not only stressed, but followed to the letter.

When you arrive at the trap field the proper procedure is to uncase your gun, open the action and leave it in that position until you are ready to action is closed is when it's your turn shoot.

When you and your squad are on the firing line it is permissible to load a shell into the gun but leave the action open until it's your turn. When the person to your left has fired at his bird you may close the action of your gun, call for your bird, shoot and then open the action again.

You won't have to worry about remembering these rules. If you forget, someone will remind you immediately. If you are the type that constantly forgets the safety rules you might even be requested to leave the trap field. This may sound like harsh treatment, but this is how the safety record is maintained.

One last tip and then I'll send you to the trap range. Remember you aim a rifle, but you point a shotgun. Keep both eyes open and you will be able to hit the clay target better.

You may not want to become a full fledged trap shooter, but remember the more you practice anything the better skills you will develop. So if, on a once in awhile basis, you want to try your hand at the trap range do so. It will help you improve your shooting skills and when you trek to the field hunting your favorite game you will be a better shot.

The Kansas Wildlife Federation

By Bill Scott, Staff Writer

THE KANSAS Wildlife Federation is moving.

In fact, it's jumping.

Here's a sketchy look at the scorecard over the past four years at the state's largest voluntary sportsmen's group:

Introduced 14 resolutions passing the Kansas legislature. Included were such pieces as the Hunter Safety Training bill, "Spotlight bill," Marijuana

Control bill, protection of hawks and owls, protection of the black-footed ferret, "foul hook bill," and revival of the Hartland Dam project.

Involved in the Governor's Advisory Council on the Prairie National Park, Kansas Safe Boating Advisory Council, Kansas Water Quality Advisory Council, Advisory Commission on Health and Environment, National Energy Convention and two National clean Air Conferences.

Introduced two national resolutions, including opposing nuclear waste storage until safeguards were examined, and controls on feedlots. Both passed. Once the nuclear waste resolution passed in our federal government, it was carried to Mexico, introduced and passed there.

Received IRS federal tax exemption for non-profit organization.



Scott

Two KWF officers recognized as Outstanding Conservationists in the United States by the National Wildlife Federation.

Secured agreement from Fish & Game Commission for removal of 30-lb. crappie limit and State Highway Department to restrict its highway rights-of-way mowing to two mower widths.

Almost tripled affiliate and sustaining membership.

KWF State Fishing Contest contestants doubled and sponsorship secured.

Saved Kansas Boating Act from executive veto.

Introduced Annual KWF State Trapshoot.

The monthly newspaper, *The Kansas Sportsman*, made virtually self-sustaining.

That's an impressive pedigree. But, every story has a beginning. According to Bob Bailey, Salina, one of KWF's former executive directors, the story began with a one-inch ad in an early 1950 issue of the Kansas City Star. Ed Herron, a contractor, was interested in contacting sportsmen's club's to form a federation. Bailey re-

sponded and agreed to meet Herron at an upcoming weekend bowling tournament being held in Kansas City.

Herron and Bailey announced a formative meeting to be held February 11, 1950, at the Lamer Hotel in Salina. John Crane of Wichita was elected temporary chairman, with Elmer Wilhelm of Kansas City, and Larry Wagner of Overland Park also assuming offices. The newly-formed group was named the "Kansas Association for Wildlife."

A. B. (Bud) Jackson, then field director for the National Wildlife Federation, was interested in the new group. Under his leadership, the Kansas Association for Wildlife affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation within weeks.

Bailey talked about some of the old-timers in the KAW. "Mr. Charles Boyle, an attorney at Russell, was a true naturalist. He knew far more about wildlife habitat and fish culture than the average person," Bailey said. "We still have people who believe all you need is a pond and put fish in it and they should propagate," he told me.





Ted Cunningham, executive director of the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

"During Charlie's two years as president, he initiated many new programs with the assistance of Drs. E. Raymond Hall and Frank Cross," Bailey said. "I was born and raised on a farm, and that's the poorest place in the world to learn—really learn—about wildlife. It's all around you and you take it all for granted. But under Hall and Cross, I began to see you had to get down and study to learn it," Bailey remembered.

Bailey's real insight came when he posed this question during one of Dr. Hall's KWF classes. "Dr Hall, you've told us all about how man has upset the balance of nature. If man were not present, then, would not nature remain in balance?"

"Now you're getting to the place where you're learning," Hall replied. "No, that's not a true statement. Nature has a way of creating an upheaval within itself. Storms and diseases are examples of this."

In the early 1960's, the organiza-

tion's name was changed to the Kansas Wildlife Federation to emphasize its direct link with the national organization.

The accomplishments ticked off at the opening of this piece, you may recall, all occurred within the past three years. Much of the credit has to go to the current KWF Executive Director, 45-year-old Ted Cunningham of Wamego.

"Terrible Ted," some call him. "This job takes a forceful personality, aggressive and obnoxious," Cunningham said. "I don't please my kids all the time! You can't try to win a personality contest here."

Cunningham's eyes sparkle when he talks of the present KWF. "What makes me proud is that it's recognized as a credible organization. We've taken some pretty strong stands, but we've had some good data to back up those stands. Without facts to back up its reasoning, an agency's credibility is destroyed," Cunningham continued.

"For example, when an issue arises and an organization says 'We're against it,' people ask 'Why?' The agency answers 'We don't like it.' That's a bad situation. Because of our data, basically our attitude has moved from aginners to compromisers."

As the man continues talking about the KWF, you begin to see the honesty and deep commitment there. It's hard not to respect that. Whether you happen to like Ted Cunningham must take a back seat to the KWF's achievements. This organization has more activities than Kansas has bulldozed hedgerows.

The Kansas Sportsman makes Cunningham glow. "The Board of Directors said I'd be editor." He grinned. "At that time I couldn't spell editor." The grin got wider. "Some people say I still can't. We're proud of it, though."

There's quite a bit in the monthly publication to recommend it. *The Sportsman* is free to KWF members and sells for \$2 a year to non-KWF members. Coming events, Fish and Game Commission and Park Resources, Authority news, and other items are covered in *The Sportsman*.

KWF's beat goes on through its annual events. The chicken barbeque and campout—held at Wilson Reservoir this year—is moved each year. "It used to be a freebie," Cunningham said. "Now, we have to charge what it costs KWF—but we never charge more for a meal than it costs us to buy it. We don't intend to ever make a profit on meals."

This is the 14th year for the popular fishing contest. Held at selected reservoirs the weekend after Labor Day, the contest is open to any licensed fisherman. Four divisions attract upward of 100 contestants.

Six televisions are given away each year at the KWF Trapshoot. Also open to any Kansas resident, it's customarily held at the Kansas Trap Association Park in Wichita.

The field trial, held at Maiké's Game Farm near Alma, has met with indifferent success thus far. Cunningham points out, "This thing is not for the field champion. It's for the average guy with the average 'meat dog.'"

And the Federation presents its Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards annually. The Governor's Award, Organization of the Year, Conservationist of the Year, and other laurels are bestowed on Kansas agencies and residents.

The Soil Conservation Service, interestingly enough, received 1972's Organization of the Year Award not for what it did, but for what it didn't do.

"If you're sick about stream channelization chewing through priceless wildlife and fish habitat in Kansas, you'd be a whole lot sicker if the SCS did all the channelizing it could have done in this state," Cunningham told me. "They deserved this pat on the back."

Walt Snell, in his third term as KWF president, is well satisfied with the KWF's trends over the past several years. "We've seen tremendous changes in the KWF. We're on a reasonably sound financial basis now. We have a fulltime executive director; time was that the president had to do all the correspondence. Biggest change, though, is that we're much more effective legislatively."

KWF, while boasting 6,000 members, is on the prowl for more. Like Uncle Sam, KWF wants you. Charles Olmstead of Beloit, president of the Solomon Valley Sportsmen's Club, is serving his first year as a Director-at-Large.

When asked why the club affiliated with KWF, Olmstead replied: "We felt that being a small and new organization we needed the state agency we could go to for help."

"Has belonging to KWF done what you hoped it would?"

"It has in this respect: People who know the KWF are more willing to help you and cooperate with you on your problems. The name KWF means something—when I go out hunting wearing my KWF jacket, I find the farmers more willing to talk about hunters and their behavior."

"How about getting permission to hunt?"

"They're more willing to grant permission!"

That's enough benefit right there to interest sportsmen. So how does one become a member of KWF?

There are two types of membership: sustaining and affiliate. Sustaining members, donating a minimum of \$10 annually, are the bread and butter folks. Through their tax-deductible contributions, they pay the bills. Sustainers don't have a vote in KWF's business affairs, however.

Any organized group having 10 members or more, meeting at least twice a year, and willing to subscribe to the Federation's rules is eligible for affiliate membership. Dues are \$1 per member. "Affiliate" membership, by the way, is full membership. To affiliate with KWF is to become a member in full standing.

"Don't ask me about the past—I don't remember very well. I'm looking for tomorrow," Hank Bonawitz of Manhattan told me. Bonawitz, a member of the Board of Directors for 14 years, takes his KWF membership dead serious.

When asked about the pressing issues facing Kansas sportsmen, he stated: "We should be watching the ecology—the land, water, and air. The CAP awards do much to sponsor responsibility here. We also need more boat docks around ramps; we

leave something to be desired when a man unloads his boat and has to go park his vehicle. What does he do with his boat while he goes to park his vehicle?"

Bonawitz' eyes glinted when he got to the third issue. "For the sake of farmer-sportsman relationships, we must do something about the vandals who aren't sportsmen! Posting of the \$500 reward for the guys shooting CK Ranch cattle near Brookville was a good move. I think our law enforcement people have one heckuva job trying to be everywhere at once—and certainly there aren't enough of them."

KWF is certainly doing something right. Recipient of the National Wildlife Federation's Big One in 1974—the Outstanding Affiliate in the Nation Award—means the Kansas group is not dogging it.

President Snell, pride oozing from every pore, gave his views on KWF's future: "I see nothing but good to come from it in every way. We're going to make progress. Recognition by committees and legislative bodies improve every year—they're looking to us for advice."

Cunningham presents a plaque to Jack Haley, former commissioner from Minneapolis, acknowledging the Commission's work in wildlife conservation. Other commissioners from left are John Luft, Fred Sears, Art Hanson, and Director, Dick Wettersten.

Ken Stiebner





Fish and Game Forum



Q. Why doesn't the Commission salvage fish, during lake drawdowns, drainage of reservoir stilling basins, small lakes, ponds and river potholes following isolation by drainage or drought?

A. First of all many State impoundments are drained and rehabilitated because studies indicate the fish population is dominated by small panfish and rough fish. Numbers of desirable sport fish are generally low. To seine and remove these fish requires considerable manpower and equipment. In terms of a cost input-benefit relationship, salvage is very expensive and often exceeds \$5.00 per pound of fish. Those sportfish remaining upon drainage of an impoundment, are most often in relatively poor condition and quite old. Many have already attained most of their lifespan and if stocked into another body of water would provide little long term benefits to the angler.

The introduction of additional fish merely provides more mouths to feed and space to compete for, thereby stressing the existing fish population. If fish are to be stocked in any impoundment, it should be done only where such stockings are warranted within the carrying capacity of that system. In short, it is unwise to stock more calves upon an overgrazed pasture.

Regardless of the care taken during salvage, most fish generally receive considerable stress through poor water conditions, netting and handling. The poor condition of the fish makes them highly susceptible to disease and parasites, which can be transmitted to a recipient impoundment upon salvage and transfer.

Fish should never be stocked in any impoundment unless one is sure of the type of fish being stocked. Often carp are introduced as bait minnows and the highly prolific bullhead, as channel catfish. Such stockings spell

future trouble for the impoundment owner and can dispoil an excellent existing sport fishery.

Q. How can I obtain aquatic vegetation control recommendations for my pond?

A. Fisheries biologists of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission can provide technical assistance to an impoundment owner for aquatic vegetation control. But work commitments often do not permit the performance of field inspection and actual application of the herbicide. This must be accomplished by the pond owner. Prior to consulting a fisheries biologist and in order to expedite recommendations, the pond owner should provide the following information to the fisheries biologist:

A drawing of the impoundment or aerial photo, indicating the length-width dimensions or actual surface acreage. Some herbicides are applied based upon total water volume and the biologist should know the maximum average depth of the pond. In order to estimate the average depth, depth readings should be taken along with a minimum of eight transects depending upon the size of the impoundment.

A *fresh sample* of each type of vegetation should be provided to the

biologist for his examination and identification. Almost all types of aquatic vegetation have a different treatment and a chemical effective upon one, may not be effective upon another.

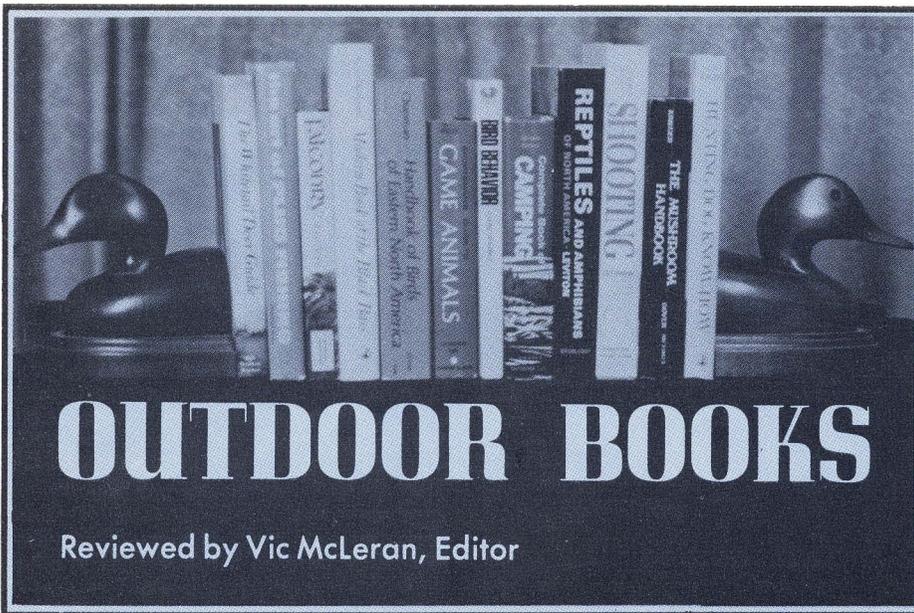
Q. Is it legal and advisable to stock the grass carp or white amur in my pond for vegetation control?

A. At the present time there is no authority granted to any agency in Kansas to regulate importation of exotic species and this includes the white amur. However, certain dangers are inherent with the importation of any exotic animal or fish in that it could disrupt existing habitat.

It is the opinion of many fisheries experts including those in the fisheries division of the Kansas, Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, that the impact of introducing the white amur to any waters, has not been adequately assessed. Studies in Missouri and other states indicate that young white amur, feed upon the same feeds as young sport fish and would compete for food and space. Other studies indicate that white amur ate vegetation as a major item of food only when other types of food were unavailable. Proponents of the grass carp argue that the fish will not reproduce naturally in U. S. waters. Is this a fact? What will happen if such fish gain access to waterfowl areas where aquatic vegetation is very important to the survival of migratory bird populations? If this fish is the large consumer of aquatic vegetation as reported and does gain access to such areas, we may be scratching duck management and hunting.

Therefore Kansas Pond owners are urged to keep in mind the story of the common carp and use restraint upon stocking white amur. The species is still being researched and until positive benefits can be assured, let's keep the white amur out of Kansas waters.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Each month, hundreds of letters reach Fish & Game Commission headquarters with questions regarding various phases of the department's activities, policies, projects and plans. In addition, we receive numerous queries about hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife. As space permits in future issues, we'll publish some of these questions and their answers to provide Sunflower sportsmen with a greater appreciation and understanding of their Fish & Game Commission and the Kansas outdoors. If you have a question, mail it to FISH & GAME FORUM, Box 1028, Pratt 67124.



MUSHROOM POCKET FIELD GUIDE by Howard E. Bigelow; MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 866 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10022; 117 pages, \$3.50.

Although May is gone and with it the morels, veteran mushroom hunters are still picking some tasty varieties in July, August and September. If you limit your fungi hunting to morels, you're missing out on a lot of good eating. A concise and reliable little publication, the *Mushroom Pocket Field Guide* covers sixty-one different kinds of fleshy fungi—some that are delicious to eat and others that are just beautiful to look at as well as being deadly poisonous. A full-color picture accompanies the text on each species. Identification of all types of mushrooms is made possible even for those who have never hunted before. All aspects of collecting are discussed including: where, when and how to hunt; equipment; how to obtain a spore print for a mycological collection; myths about determining poisonous fungi; the parts of a mushroom; identification of the thirteen basic groups and a list of books for further reading.

Bigelow is a Ph. D., a member of eight scientific societies and an instructor at the University of Massachusetts. He specifically points out that there are no general rules for determining an edible from a poisonous mushroom: "The saying that a silver coin will turn black if placed in with a poisonous fungus that is cooking or remain silver if the species is edible is not true and anyone who swears by this test has been extremely lucky. Another old wives' tale with no basis in fact is that if the specimen shows signs of having been eaten by insects or animals, it is therefore safe for humans—you do not know if the insect or animal actually swallowed pieces or if they did whether they survived! Still another false tale is that if the top layer of the cap can be peeled off easily it is a harmless type that

can be eaten—several very poisonous species of Amanita will peel nicely, and if this test has been 'proven' by any survivors, it was—again—just dumb luck! Soaking the fruiting bodies in salt water to remove poisons is another erroneous bit of folklore—it will not work when most needed. Never try eating any fungus you cannot positively identify."

The book's small size makes it a handy carry-along reference for either the veteran or novice mushroom hunter.

FIFTY BIRDS OF TOWN AND CITY by Bob Hines and Peter A. Anastasi of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; available from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402; 50 pages, \$4 cloth or \$1.20 paperback.

The authors have taken 50 of the most common birds you're likely to see in and around towns and cities and provided a brief word profile of each. Bob Hines, artist, includes a full color portrait of each species, often showing the differences in male and female plumage. Only the barest details are provided on the birds but the book would certainly help a child or a beginning bird watcher learn some of the more common species. A book of this sort should be quite an aid to elementary school science teachers.

TIMBERDOODLE! by Frank Woolner; Crown Publishers Inc., 419 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016; 168 pages, \$7.95.

In *Timberdoodle*, author Woolner presents everything you need to know about woodcock and woodcock hunting. Woodcock hunting in Kansas? You bet. Granted, most of the birds are taken incidentally by hunters looking for quail, but at the same

time there seems to be growing fraternity of woodcock hunters in the state. For the most part, the birds are limited to the eastern quarter of Kansas. Spotty breeding occurs within the state but in late October and early November, some rather heavy woodcock concentrations are seen as the birds migrate southward. At any rate, for those of you who hunt the little longbills Woolner's book provides a wealth of information and hunting lore. There is a thorough treatment of the birds' natural history, the unique hunting strategies, and the dogs, guns, ammunition, gear, and techniques of hunting this bird. The book radiates Woolner's enthusiasm for hunting the woodcock, from the preparation, to the moment a timberdoodle bursts from cover. Even if you're not a woodcock hunter, you'll admire Woolner's writing, his research and his sensitive approach to nature.

COTTONTAIL by Leonard Lee Rue III; Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 201 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10003; 112 pages. \$6.95.

The author, Leonard Lee Rue III, has contributed literally thousands of photos and articles to magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Look*, *Life*, *True*, *Natural History*, *Audubon*, *Field & Stream* and many others both here and abroad.

In this illustrated introduction to the world of the cottontail, which the author photographed himself, Rue blends scientific and historical fact with a rich measure of legend and anecdote. The result is an intimate look at the backyard cottontail, the nation's number one game animal.

The author begins his study with an account of the animal's struggle for existence and ends with a concise statement on its relationship to man. In fascinating detail, he talks about the cottontail's appearance and life cycle, its mating and breeding habits, its sensory perception and its personality. The cottontail rarely strays outside his native territory. Females usually remain within a two-acre area; males may occupy an area as wide as eight acres, overlapping the plots of several females. The males often engage in "love battles" since cottontails observe a strict social hierarchy. The female will defend her young against any number of predators. The list ranges from hogs and great horned owls to foxes and snakes. The cottontail is a prime source of food for crows and endangered by any snake large enough to swallow it. Their numbers are further thinned by hunters who take 25 million cottontails per year. This is in addition to tens of millions killed annually on roads and highways.

Filled with facts for the hunter, nature lover and conservationist, *Cottontail* will delight every lover of animals and the great outdoors. For a personally autographed copy of *Cottontail*, send a check or money order to Leonard Lee Rue Enterprises, Blairstown, N. J. 07825

