

# KANSAS FISH & GAME



January-February, 1977

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## KANSAS

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# KANSAS FISH AND GAME

January-February, 1977

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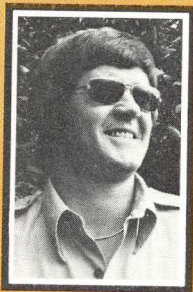
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### Cover Credits

Results of a pheasant hunt and winter scene by Ken Stiebben





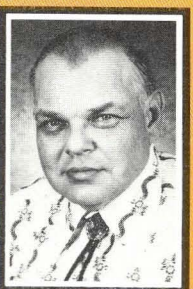
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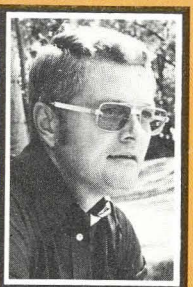
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It's late winter and you're getting that antsy, house-bound feeling. Sure, there's a few days left in the upland bird seasons, but January pheasants are bad about running ahead of your dog, and the quail, well they're getting a little hard to find. Granted, there's still a few rabbits around, but you're looking for a little more excitement in your hunt.

Try coyotes.

If you've never called a coyote and set there with adrenalin working you over as this little prairie predator trotted within range, you haven't lived.

If you're interested in learning to call coyotes, you'll want to read "One Coyote Hunter To Another" by Bob Henderson. As wildlife damage control specialist for Kansas State University Extension, Henderson is one of the most competent predator callers I've seen. Bob served as a game biologist with the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department for seven years, working with black-footed ferrets, sharp-tailed grouse and coyotes. In his current capacity he travels the state helping Kansas farmers and ranchers with livestock damage problems. In this position, he instructs interested livestock producers in trapping and predator calling. You'll find his article extremely informative.

If anyone around your house got a bird dog pup for Christmas, you'll want to think about training the dog. Neil Johnson, research project leader for the Game Division, has a piece on basic training for the gun dog. A native of New Jersey, Johnson received his M.S. from the University of Massachusetts. Prior to joining the Commission, Neil taught at North Dakota State University. He's been raising German shorthairs since the sixties and has worked and hunted them over ruffed grouse and woodcock in the East as well as prairie grouse in Kansas and the Dakotas. He currently maintains a kennel of nine shorthairs for hunting and breeding. Neil's article concentrates on some of the basic commands you'll want your dog to know.

Now that most of the hunting seasons are over, it's a good time to take your boy afield for some target practice with that new .22 or .410. George Valyer, staff writer, has done an article about these called, "Powerful Plinkers." It contains some good information for the beginning shooter and we'd call it recommended reading for a boy with his first gun.

Valyer also has a feature on our Hunter Safety Program and its Hunter Ethics Award. It's called "Operation Respect" and it pays tribute to the more than 4,000 volunteer instructors in the Kansas Hunter Safety Program.

Last September saw the Commission open its first archery antelope season. "Antelope with a bow?" Yeah, I know it's hard to believe, but there were 50 dedicated bowhunters out there on the sprawling high plains of northwest Kansas this year and seven of them were successful. There's an article in this issue called "Antelope the Hard Way" which is about the efforts of one of the successful seven. If bowhunting is your thing and you'd like to try for antelope next fall, the article should give you some idea of what it's like to hunt pronghorns with a bow.

There's a piece on the red fox—one of our craftiest, most beautiful predators. Written by George Anderson, the article reveals some interesting natural history on this shy little cousin to the coyote.

**Vic McLeran,**  
*Public Relations Director*



# Antelope

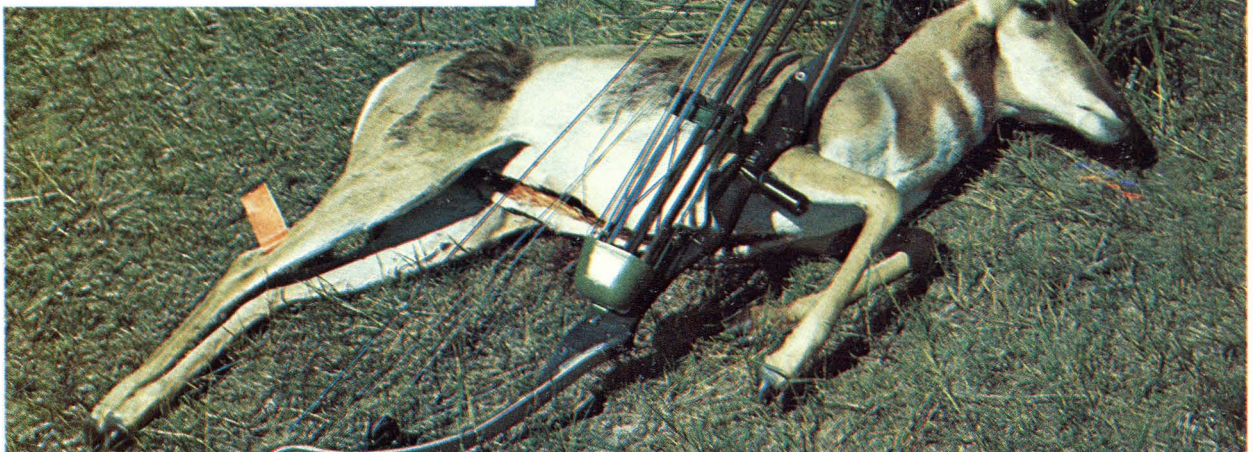
## THE HARD WAY

**D**UANE SMITH is not your average bowhunter. In fact, he's far from it. As one of only seven successful bowhunters during the Fish and Game Commission's first archery season, Smith proved he knows how the game is played.

Let's take a look at his credentials:

A veteran of 11 years with the bow, Smith got into archery back in 1965. That was Kansas' first deer season and Duane started things off right by bagging one of the first bucks taken in North-Central Kansas. That particular buck was the first of five he's taken with the bow in Kansas—both whitetails and mulies. Last fall, he packed up his bow and made the trip to Colorado where he scored on a bull elk. In addition to big game, Smith also is an avid small game bowhunter.

A Smith Center auto parts salesman, Duane is enthusiastic about bowhunting. He helped form, and is now president, of the U. S. Center Archery Club—so named because of Smith Center's proximity to the geographic center of the 48 contiguous states. He's also a member of the Kansas and Colorado Bowhunters Association as well as the Fred Bear Sports Club. During his off hours, when he isn't practicing with the bow, Duane runs a little archery shop in Smith Center.



Duane Smith, Smith Center archer, was one of only seven successful bow hunters during the 1976 archery antelope season.



Duane's enthusiasm for bowhunting has rubbed off on his 17-year old son Kent, who's taken two deer with the bow. A senior wide receiver for the Smith Center Redmen, Kent has been bowhunting since he was 11.

Smith started getting psyched for the antelope season as soon as he heard about it. He sent in his check and application blank but he didn't stop there. Contacting landowners for permission to hunt was a priority item. Talking with ranchers in the Goodland area, Duane obtained permission to hunt a ranch, south of Goodland.

Then Smith made several scouting trips to the area, in order to familiarize himself with the terrain. "A bowhunter, more than a gun hunter, must be extremely familiar with the terrain he's going to hunt," Smith explained. "He should know where the cover, food plots and water are found. Then too, it's best if the hunter can spend enough time in the area to learn the various movements, routes and travel patterns of the game."

In addition to scouting trips, Smith had been busy with daily practice sessions of 15 minutes to an hour since July.

"Several of us would get together with our bows and walk through a field of baled hay," he told me. "We'd take shots at different bales with unknown yardages, then check to see how close we were in our distance judgment."

The Smith Center archer didn't know it then, but the wide open spaces of northwestern Kansas would cause him and other bowhunters a great deal of trouble before the season was over.

Smith and his bowhunting friends also rigged up a deer silhouette on long wires with pulleys. One man works the pulley, racing the silhouette across the wires at various speeds while another archer takes practice shots at the elusive targets.

Equipment checks are another part of Smith's preparations for the antelope season. Like a lot of archers today, Duane shoots a compound bow, specifically a Bear 55-pound "Alaskan." His arrows are Bear aluminum shaft and he uses the Bear broadheads with the Convert-Points that enable him to change points easily and quickly. Sharp broadheads are a must so these are kept honed to a razor edge.

If you're afield in antelope country, good binoculars or a spotting scope are a must. Smith has his field glasses rigged up with some elastic straps which keep them taut against his chest. Rigged in this manner, they're never in the way but always at hand.

Bowhunters going after antelope often utilize some pretty strange equipment.

Take kneepads for instance. Yeah, kneepads.

"Don't laugh," Duane said. "Cactus spines and sand-burs can make life miserable when you're trying a stalk through this country out here."

I don't know if you're ready for this next little item, but here goes.

An antelope decoy.

It's true. I even got pictures of the thing. And I touched it. It's real.

Smith fashioned his out of heavy cardboard but says it wasn't sturdy enough. "I should have used ¼-inch plywood or Masonite because the cardboard goes to pieces when it gets wet and a strong wind will have it flopping around unnaturally."

Smith did some research on antelopes and cut his decoy to actual proportions and painted it natural colors. It did look like an antelope.

The theory behind antelope decoys is this:

In late August and September the dominant bucks begin gathering does into a harem of sorts, sometimes as many as 25. Jealous devils by nature, the herd bucks resent the presence of any other bucks in the area. If they spot an intruder, they'll charge. Usually the outsider retreats but occasionally there are some pretty spectacular fights. A rural mail carrier in Sharon Springs told Kenny Knitig, game protector from Goodland, of driving right up on two antelope bucks which were locked in combat right next to the road.

"They didn't pay much attention to me or the car," he said. "Just went right on fighting."

Theoretically the herd buck is supposed to spot the decoy, mistake it for a strange buck and rush in to do battle. So the hunter using this theory tries to position the decoy in a prominent spot where it can be easily seen. At the same time, he tries to select an area which contains cover where he can remain concealed while

Proper equipment preparation is part of a successful hunt. Here, Smith sharpens broadheads.





waiting for the buck. Others have tried stalking a herd, keeping the decoy between the antelopes and themselves. It's worked often enough to have gained some credibility among antelope hunters.

A number of bowhunters showing up for the antelope season had rangefinders rigged to their bows. These little devices came in handy since northwestern Kansas' wide open spaces caused problems for the archers.

**"The main problem I had was judging** distances accurately in the wide open spaces up here," said Doug Sonntag, Penokee archer. Sonntag found the range pretty fast though, since he scored on the second day of the season. "Targets appear closer than they actually are; especially uphill and downhill shots," Sonntag added.

Camouflage outfits too, are a must item when you're stalking these binocular-eyed speedsters. Some hunters apply the camo paint to their face and hands as well. I also saw some of the camo covers on bows.

**In hunting antelope there are** several basic techniques. The most common is probably stalking. The hunter glasses the hills and valleys until he spots a herd. Keeping the wind direction in mind and taking advantage of all available cover, the hunter then stalks as close as possible to the antelope. Often this isn't too close—at least for bowhunters. When the distance is too great for a shot, the hunter can start the old flag waving trick. The flag is usually a handkerchief or rag attached to an

arrow or stick. This is raised and waved back and forth while the hunter remains concealed. The fluttering movement of the cloth is supposed to attract the antelope's attention. Extremely curious by nature, antelopes occasionally move into range while trying to figure out the fluttering cloth. In addition to stalking and flag waving, Smith was prepared to try his decoy.

I met Duane opening day around noon in Goodland. From there, we drove south to the ranch where he was going to hunt. Garbed in camouflage clothing, Smith was rearing to go. Here's a day-by-day account of his activities:

**Saturday, September 25:** It had rained all morning and Smith didn't get into the field until around 1:30. He hadn't been out more than a half hour when he watched a mature herd buck chase a younger buck nearly a mile. "I thought right then that the decoy might have possibilities," he said. Later in the afternoon, he tried the decoy but the herd was moving away from him in their grazing activities. Moving as close as possible and concealing himself, Smith started waving the flag. "It caught the attention of the whole bunch and they started heading my way," he recalled. "But I was in short cover and when I raised up to shoot, they turned and were gone." Smith saw 23 antelope that day.

**Sunday, September 26:** It was raining at 5:30 when Duane's alarm went off so he went back to sleep and

Field glasses or a spotting scope are essential items when glassing distant hills for antelope.

Photos by Vic McLeran





got up at 6:20. At around 7:30 he spotted a lone buck and followed him a couple of miles where this antelope ran into another buck. Starting the flag-waving process, Smith drew one of the bucks into within 75 yards. But again, when he raised to shoot, he spooked the antelope. He fired but the arrow was short. Moving to another area, Smith glassed a herd of six does and one buck. Trying the decoy, Duane got within 125 yards of the herd when the wind changed to his back. "I felt the wind hit the back of my neck and I knew it was all over," he said. Catching his scent, the antelope left. Trying another area he spotted two antelope and tried stalking the pair but couldn't get within 300 yards. Late in the afternoon he saw two more pronghorn feeding in an alfalfa field. But it started raining and he was forced to quit at 6:00. He saw 13 antelope that day.

**Monday, September 27:** It rained all night and into the morning. Smith didn't get into the field until 9:00. He saw two antelope in a small creekbottom and started flagging them. They came within 75 yards and he got off two shots—both misses. He stalked another pronghorn that afternoon but couldn't get any closer than 100 yards. Duane saw 3 antelope that day.

**Tuesday, September 28:** Duane saw 22 antelope feeding immediately after he got into the field. Crawling through the short buffalo grass and the cactus, Smith got within 100 yards. "Then, for no apparent reason, the buck got up and started moving away from me." By 12:30 Duane had stalked to within 80 yards of three more antelope but didn't get a shot. Using the flag and stalking, he worked his way to within 65 yards of another pair. "Just as I released the arrow, the buck jumped and I missed him," Smith told me. Around sundown that evening he saw 22 more in a draw for a total of 48 antelope that day.

**Wednesday, September 29:** About 8:00 that morning Smith had worked his way in close to a pair of pronghorns that was feeding in some milo. "It was the distance thing," he told me. "I thought it was a 65 yard shot when actually it was 75. The buck had his head down feeding and didn't jump until the arrow hit about 10 yards short of him. He looked back to where the arrow hit and I got off another shot. But it too, was about 10 yards short. Picking up his arrows, Smith returned to his van. By 11:15, he was driving along the ridge tops to check the valleys and draws below. "Suddenly I saw the head and neck of a buck lying beside a yucca bush," Duane said. "I eased the VW to a stop and slipped out on the opposite side. Grabbing my bow, I started walking slowly toward the antelope. When I was within 35 or 40 yards, he jumped up. As he turned to run, I shot. He went down within several yards."

Duane's persistence had paid off. He had his antelope, a buck. It's a trophy Smith will remember for a long time, because he got it the hard way.

The 1976 antelope archery season was a first for bowhunters. It ran from Sept. 25 through Sept. 29 and 50 permits were issued. The area opened for antelope

hunting, was bordered by U.S. Highway 40 on the south, K-25 on the east, I-70 on the north and the Colorado line on the west.

Archers who are interested in the 1977 antelope season should watch their local newspapers this spring for details. The 1976 season was a learning session for most of the bowhunters involved. Even those who didn't get their antelope said it had been a worthwhile event because of the experience and knowledge they'd picked up.

**I asked Duane if he had any advice for the bowhunter who wants to try for antelope.**

"The ability to judge distance accurately is probably the most important factor," he said. "There's just something about the wide open spaces of antelope country that messes up your perception of distances. Those rangefinders mounted on a bow would probably help."

**"The bowhunter should also learn to take advantage of the terrain with all its draws, cuts, vegetation—just anything that will help him get closer to the antelope."**

It's good advice—something to keep in mind if you're going after antelope the hard way.

Antelope decoys may be hard to believe, but they're occasionally effective.





# One COYOTE HUNTER TO ANOTHER

By F. Robert Henderson

**C**OYOTE HUNTERS disturb me. In fact, all hunters disturb me. Yet, I am a hunter. In fact, I really enjoy hunting. But, I'm worried about the attitudes of people in the future and whether or not they will allow our children to enjoy the out-of-doors the way you and I do today.

I'm going to write about coyotes and a neat way you can harvest some of them. First, though, I want to offer you some suggestions of how you can help prevent the future demise of coyote hunting altogether.

**If there is good hunting in the future**, it will be because the average hunter has shown a greatly increased willingness to increase his knowledge in his act of hunting.

The greatest benefit of good hunting is freedom. Coyote hunters in Kansas enjoy almost unlimited freedom. But in this lies the germ of hunting's own destruction, for too many hunters demand freedom without responsibility.

**The ethical hunter imposes special restrictions** on himself when he goes afield, and a sure definition of the slob hunter is one who refuses to observe any restrictions in the course of his hunting, or accept any responsibility for his actions.

I hope you will join with me in seeing to it that unauthorized trespass by hunters should not be just listed





in the game and fish code, or in the civil code, but should be an offense included in the criminal code and enforceable by all peace officers. It should entail maximum penalties. You, the hunter, should see to it that such laws are enacted. If there is good hunting in the future, it will be caused and practiced by men willing to pay their dues in terms of time, money, and effort, and who proudly accept the restrictions that ethical field conduct imposes.

**Trespassing on private property** in Kansas for any purpose, especially coyote hunting is the commonest offense of the slob hunter and the commonest form of anti-hunter is the outraged landowner whose property rights have been violated.

Coyote hunters, so far, have not had much effect on the year-to-year, overall, statewide, coyote numbers. But, I am not too sure that in the near future, that will hold true. Pelt prices are high and predicted to be at an all time high in the winter of 1976-77. Hunting pressure on the coyote is heavy. Much of the land is being cleared and provides less cover for coyotes.

The coyote density survey conducted in Kansas shows the coyote population has decreased steadily from 1972. Research shows the coyote population experienced poor reproductive success in 1975 and some scientists believe the same will hold true for 1976.

**Even with all these questions,** the number of coyotes will exceed 150,000 individuals in the autumn of 1976. Man is the only serious predator the coyote faces. If man can control the numbers of coyotes through selective methods offered by sport hunting and still retain the privilege of hunting, then in my opinion, that will be great. But coyote hunters should not risk losing that privilege. It would be like cutting off your nose to spite your face.

There are many ways employed to harvest coyotes in Kansas. Greyhounds are used to run the coyote down and kill it. Trucks equipped with CB's are typical of coyote hunters who use either greyhounds or trail hounds or both. In many places coyote hunting is a community effort. Coyote hunters use rifles to shoot coyotes. The hunters spot while driving pastures and country roads. A few ambitious hunters track coyotes in fresh snow, repeatedly spotting them until getting close enough for a good shot. Other hunters drive coyotes to companion hunters hiding in wait to ambush the coyotes.

**There are a few coyote trappers in Kansas.** These people use No. 3 and/or No. 4 steel, leg-hold traps. Generally these traps have off-set jaws that reduce the injury to the trapped animal. A new development of research that may prove to further increase the humanness of trapping, is the use of tranquilizer tabs.

Because of the terrain in Kansas and the habit of coyotes, Kansas trappers can be more selective in their coyote trapping than can trappers in some other states. It is estimated that of the 50 to 75,000 coyotes harvested annually in Kansas, a good two-thirds of them are harvested by hound and rifle hunters.



Coyotes have decreased steadily in Kansas since 1972.

**Yet another method used in sport hunting** for coyotes is the use of calls to decoy coyotes to the hunter. A wide variety of devices are used. These include open and closed reed mouth calls that mimic a wounded rabbit or mouse. Other mouth calls, the homemade type, mimic wounded coyote pups or barking coyotes. Then there are the electronic callers that mimic or replay actual sounds of a wide variety of sounds of prey that attract coyotes. Sirens are used also to locate coyotes that howl after hearing a siren.

As stated before, there are fewer restrictions on coyote hunters-trappers, than on other types of hunting and trapping. Coyotes cannot be taken at night with the use of artificial lights. Nor can they be taken with aircraft, either by shooting them directly from a low-flying aircraft or helicopter or by using an aircraft from which to spot coyotes or harass any wild animal. No license is required to hunt, kill or sell coyotes by Kansas residents. There is not a limit on coyotes taken or to the number of traps a coyote trapper can use. However, Conibear type traps cannot be set above the water line in Kansas. These types of traps are not normally used successfully for taking coyotes. Poisons are outlawed altogether for the taking of coyotes.





When snow covers the ground, white parkas and adhesive taped rifles can help conceal the hunter.

**Non-residents, unless the guest of the landowner** where coyote hunting is done, need a non-resident hunting license to hunt or take coyotes. Fur buyers do not need a license to buy or sell coyote pelts nor do they have to keep records on coyote purchases or sales. So, you see, coyote harvesters have plenty of freedom at the present time.

Are the slob hunters all city folks? Not by a long shot. The opinions about coyotes vary a great deal among rural people. Over 60 percent of the coyote hunters are people from either small towns or farms. The increase in the use of CB radios and four-wheel drive vehicles has caused an increase in people who tag along with coyote hunters. This has actually caused traffic jams on normally isolated, little-used country roads.

**One way to enjoy hunting coyotes** after obtaining the landowner's permission is to use a coyote call. Coyote calling is a loner's sport. No need for company nor traffic jams.

Calling coyotes isn't hard to learn. The basics of coyote calling are patience and persistence. These lead to confidence and faith in your ability—and that's all-important on those days when you can't stir a coyote. It's something like fishing. There are times when fish will strike as fast as you can cast, and there are times when there doesn't seem to be a fish in the lake. Same with coyote calling. But the real hunter or fisherman expects such times. He just toughs them out, keeps working, and is on hand when things pick up again.

**The best way to learn the coyote calling technique**

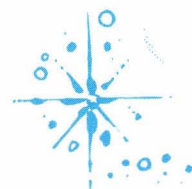
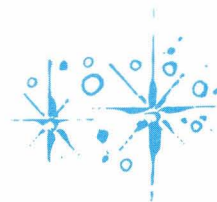
is to work and study with a master of the art, and then get plenty of practice. If you can't find a master coyote caller, the next best thing is to buy a record or tape of coyote calling and a mouth call from one of the many commercial outlets.

About 95 percent of the people who buy predator calls will try them a few times, with or without reading the instructions, draw a blank, and then toss the predator call into the drawerful of other game calls that they've never learned to use. So give yourself a chance to learn.

**There are two kinds of coyote calls:** (1) The "open-reed" call and; (2) the "closed-reed" call. There are different kinds of mouth calls, mostly homemade, that reproduce sounds other than injured rabbits and attract coyotes. One is a Ki-Yi call, usually made out of a cow horn and a brass shim. This call mimics a coyote pup that is hurt. A howling coyote sound can be mimicked also with this call. Some commercial outlets sell calls that mimic a mouse. These are usually called "mouse squeakers."

This age of electronics has produced transistorized callers that are useful, but expensive. They are also subject to mechanical breakdowns. One advantage of such a device lies in the fact that there are smart coyotes and dumb coyotes and as a rule, a coyote may be tricked only once with a given sequence of calls and will seldom be called in twice in the same way, and then only after a lapse of several months. A good tape or record call offers a variety of animal voices in distress and you can use these to trick call-shy coyotes.





Leonard Lee Rue



Why does a coyote respond to a call that stimulates the agonized bleats of a dying rabbit? Hunger is the logical reason, but may not always be the real one. Coyotes may just want to know what's going on in their hunting territory even when they're not hungry. Curiosity is part of the coyote's professional hunting equipment, and it can be his undoing.

The best time to call coyotes is when you have time—although the first couple of hours after dawn and the last few hours before darkness are usually the best. However, coyotes can be called any time.

At night, many of the coyotes responding to a call are never seen by the hunter, and you're never able to savor the thrilling approach of a distant coyote over open



ground. Nor can you always be sure of the impact area of a rifle bullet, or what kind of eyes are being picked up by your spotlight. Besides, in Kansas, it is simply illegal to hunt at night with an artificial light.

The best months to call coyotes are September and October when their numbers are highest. The toughest time of the year to call is during February and March when the coyotes numbers are low.

**To find good areas for coyote calling**, begin by obtaining permission to hunt on private land—and that's rarely a problem. It's a different deal than seeking permission to hunt other animals. Most landowners want their coyote population trimmed down; some are downright anxious about it. While you're at it, learn everything you can from the landowner regarding the coyotes in that area.

Look for coyote sign. A coyote track is usually egg-shaped with the two front toes pointing inward, and a set of coyote tracks in sand or snow is normally in a straight line. The best way to check for the presence of coyotes is to look for droppings and tracks along roads and trails the morning after a rain or fresh snowfall.

**Camouflage clothing is well worth** the investment. Camouflage your face and hands, too. Your face is like a mirror in the sun to a coyote. On snow, you'll need white coveralls, white gloves and a white stocking cap. You may want to apply some blocks and strips of white adhesive tape to your rifle and scope.

An important and critical step is your approach to the calling site. It's important to keep the wind in your favor. Always call into the wind. A coyote's sense of smell is keen and calling with the wind is a waste of time. Just accept the fact that the coyote's faculties are slightly supernatural, and operate accordingly.

**All talking must cease before you get out of your vehicle** and begin your approach. Ease the door closed; never slam it. Don't try to drive as close as possible to your hunting set-up. Leave your vehicle out of sight of the area in which you plan to do your calling. Park downwind from where you plan to hunt, and walk there into the wind. From now until you finish your final calling sequence, there must be no talking. Communicate with your buddies by hand signals. The hunter does well to set among bushes or other cover tall enough to break his outline. In short cover, lie prone. On rocky hillsides sit in front of, not behind, a big boulder. Do the same with a thick clump of brush. From that position the hunter can watch in all directions without moving.

The actual calling is not as important as is your approach to the calling site. However, you should call in a realistic manner. Start off with a series of high-pitched screams that imitate a rabbit in mortal agony, blowing the call for about one minute or less. Then, after a short pause of less than a minute, go through the sequence of calls again with less volume. This may fade into a series of weakening bleats with the hand

cupping and uncupping over the call. Don't let a false note on the call bother you—just keep calling with the occasional pause. A rabbit fighting for his life doesn't always emit perfect screams and bleats.

**Hold the end of the call between the base of your thumb and your forefinger.** Practice opening and closing your four fingers over the end of the call. Bring the air through the call by huffing the air up from your diaphragm. Keeping your hand closed over the end of the call, force a moderate amount of air through the call in a steady stream in a single breath. Near the end of the single breath, open your four fingers up and abruptly stop the sound. Quickly close your fingers over the end of the call and start another cry of the rabbit.

The more pain, fright, and urgency you put into your calling, the more likely you are to bring in coyotes. Keep in mind the squalls of a rabbit struck by an owl. At the attack, the rabbit lets out a long, loud scream of terror and hurt, waaaaaa waaaaaa waaaaaa, then breaks off into a series of short, gasping cries, waaa-waaa-waaa-waaa, and finally the cries fade to whimpers, waaa-waaa-waa-wa-wa-wa, and the calling dies away. The owl is likely to sink its talons in a new place in a minute or so, and then the rabbit squalls again.

**Start with a long wailing series**, let it die away, wait half a minute, and repeat, omitting the first prolonged scream and shortening the series. The shortened calls should be repeated at intervals of half a minute to a minute for the remainder of the stand.

It is important to remember that each breath of the dying rabbit is a separate breath and you should mimic the squalls in separate breaths, waaa-waaa-waaa-waaa. You should *not* play a tune on the call by running the squalls together like waaawaaaawaaa. But each squall or breath should be distinct. This is the most important part of actually calling.

**In closing, be sure you remember** the crucial importance of *patience* and *persistence* until you've built up some confidence. There'll be days with no action and it's essential that the novice coyote caller realizes this, and accepts it as part of the game. Have faith, and don't give up. The longer you hunt without seeing a coyote, the closer you are to some thrilling action.

Also remember that every hunter should really give some serious thought to his own attitudes and actions. You should develop an attitude of fair chase to your quarry, the coyote. If there ever was an underdog, the coyote is it. The non-hunting public is in favor of the underdog. That is human nature. People have been warring against the coyote for over one hundred years, yet the coyote remains abundant. Many people admire the coyote for this accomplishment. I predict that, if *each one* of us does not set a good example in the field, as well as in our understanding of our hunting and our quarry, then the freedoms the coyote hunter enjoys today will be lost forever.





# Gun dog PRIMER



The author with one of his German shorthairs and a limit of ruffed grouse.

**T**HIS ARTICLE is not to be taken as "the way" to train a gun dog. What I'll try and do is get you to define what you want from your dog, then suggest some of the effective methods of training.

First, there's some groundwork that needs to be laid down. My use of the term "gun dog" refers to a pointing dog a hunter uses to hunt upland birds. Now that says quite a bit. It says we're talking about a person and dog who generally hunt by walking usually, in Kansas and is hunting in a small area on private land. Therefore, that is what this article is directed toward. So if you are trying to pick up facts about training a field trial dog, you will probably be disappointed.

**A dog does an act because he thinks you want him to.** In other words, he does it to please you. Now don't take that wrong, I'm not trying to say you have to train your dog with love and kindness. A dog reacts to a command with a trained response so he can be rewarded. The reward can be anything from a heap of praise and affection to not being hit. The point is, the dog is rewarded and somewhere in the spread of different rewards will be one which suits your temperament and the dog's. Some of my dogs react best to a tap on the head and a rub of the ears, others need to jump up into my arms. If your dog shows the need for a type of reward that does not suit your temperament, my best advise is to get another dog.

Now let us look at what makes a good hunting dog. Again, I'm referring to one you are going to hunt over. What are the major criteria? One, it must find game. Two, it must point the game. Third, it must retrieve the shot game. Basically, you say that's what you want in your dog. Well, can we train the dog for these jobs? First, there is no training that you, I, or a professional can do to teach a dog to find game. His ability to scent and cover ground are traits which he has inherited. This is why you should get dogs from the finest stock you can find. Then you need to let them get the experience necessary to know where to find and look for game. This is probably the easiest part of developing a gun dog, for all you have to do is let the dog run in good cover similar to that which you hunt. Second, to get a dog to point. In this case, half is inherited, the rest is training. A dog's point is really part of the dog's stalk-



ing the game to make it a meal. This tendency to point is an inherited quality. The hard part is training the dog to hold the point and be staunch to wing and shot. One can extend this type training and actually train a dog to point mechanically. This is how you train a dog to honor or stop to flush. Retrieving is training, some dogs naturally retrieve but it is best to force train your dogs.

**If your dog did these things**, you would feel that you had a well trained dog. I disagree and I think you will also. Think about the last time you hunted with a dog. Was it enjoyable? Why? More than likely the major reason was because the dog or dogs were under control. They did not kill the farmer's chickens or chase his stock. He came quickly when called and obeyed. The point is that what makes a good dog is one, native ability and two, training so the dog is constantly under control.

The majority of the training of a gun dog is what I call yard training. Over the years I have solidified my ideas on commands that my dog must know. The most important is WHOA. This might not be the first command taught, but it is the most important. Second in importance are HERE and the dogs name. Then comes NO and HEEL. To round the dog out, he needs to know KENNEL, SIT, LIE and FETCH OR BACK. These will not generally be taught in this order but it is how I rank them. In my opinion to be a complete hunting dog, these are the minimum commands that he will have to have mastered.

**As you can see, most of these commands** come under the term yard training. So let's start there and look at methods to accomplish our objective. It is easiest to work with a young puppy before any real habits are formed. But the same procedure can be used for an older dog only more repetition is needed to break old behavior patterns and form new ones. The key to any training, though, is repetition of the desired action until it becomes automatic. With a puppy, your training sessions will be shorter than with older dogs. Also, his physical capabilities are not fully developed and will not be until he turns at least one year old. Mentally, I try and break my work with a dog into two parts, one, a play and run period and two, a formal, no nonsense training period. I'll discuss what goes on in the formal training sessions first, although if you are like me you will not have these actually separated but mixed together. It's the mental approach that makes the difference.

The first step is to get the dog to come when you call. The dog's name and the command HERE are used for this purpose. With a puppy, bending over calling his name, clapping your hands, will get his attention and get him to come to you. You can also get his attention and start running away while calling his name and HERE. These are all half play, half training and quickly you will want to advance to more serious training. There are many ways to do this from using simple equipment and sequences to very complex systems.

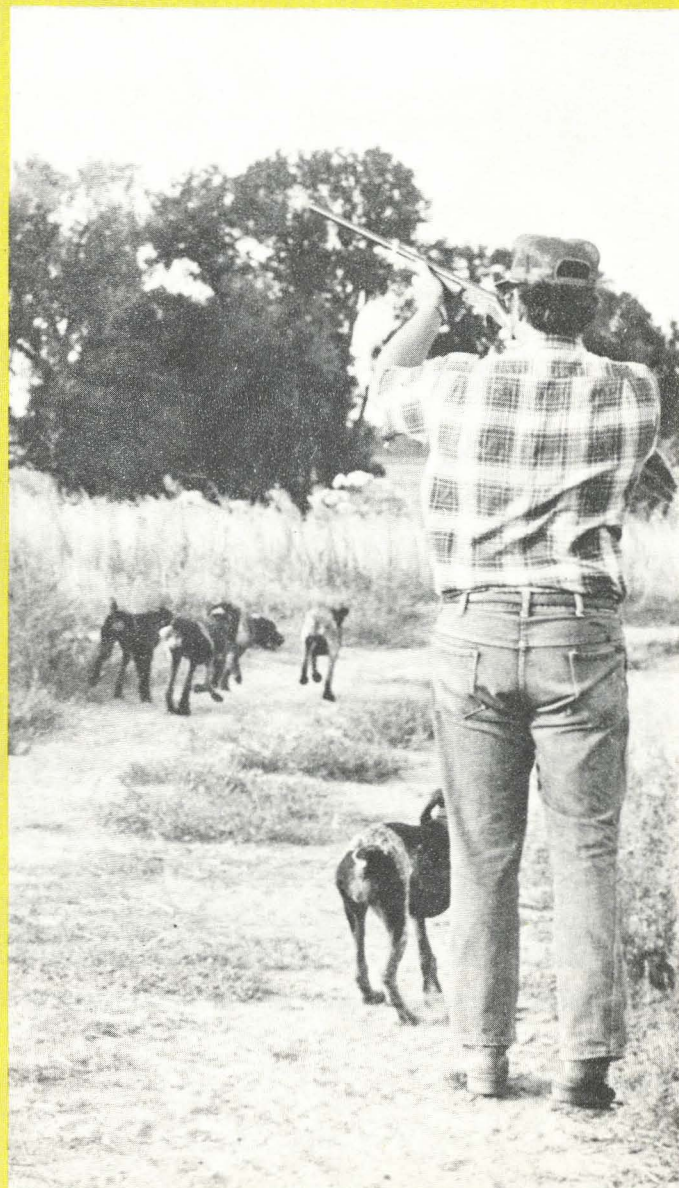
**The easiest and one that I feel** is most effective com-

bines several commands in repetition. To do this you need to have the dog on a lead. If you have an adult dog, he probably is accustomed to a lead and being led. With a new puppy, you have to introduce him to the collar and lead. This tends to be traumatic for a puppy since it is the first time he has been kept from doing as he pleases.

Put a collar which fits on the puppy and let him get use to it. I have found that a cheap leather collar serves very well during this period. I recommend that as soon as possible, you get one of the 10-inch wide nylon collars with an "O" ring. I've found these to be virtually indestructible and have had one which outlived the dog.

**With your dog or puppy now accustomed** to a collar, you can start working him on a lead. A puppy will also need to get used to a lead, so snap one on his collar and let him drag it around till he is accustomed to it and not fighting it. This sequence will use three commands, HEEL, WHOA and HERE. It goes like this, command the dog to HEEL (your dog walking at your left side), walk with him a distance, command WHOA (dog stops and stands still), then you walk out in front and then command HERE, (dog comes to you and HEELS).

**It's important to introduce the pups** to the sound of a gun when they're happily distracted.







This is the way the final sequence will go, but first the dog or puppy must learn what the commands mean.

To teach the dog to heel, attach the lead to the dog's collar, put the other end in your right hand, then take the middle of the lead in your left hand. The intent is to have the dog walk on your left side so the collar of the dog stays even with your left leg. Pull the slack in the lead up between your left hand and the dog. This puts slight tension on the dog. Now you can start walking. It is always best to introduce a new command to a dog in an area where there are few distractions.

**With a puppy, usually we reach** a crisis situation. The puppy is now being forced to do something which he had not decided to do. You might go along for a

length of time before the showdown occurs, but sooner or later the puppy will say no. This is when you have to come out on top or you will never train the dog. When you give the dog a command, you must make him do it. Every time you don't, it reinforces the idea that he does not have to obey. This might take all kinds of coaxing, dragging, and such, but when you say **HEEL**, that dog is going forward on your left side. After a while, the dog will get over his resistance and start going along with you. This is when praise should be given.

With the dog heeling in some fashion, it's time to tighten up on him. You don't want him lunging forward nor lagging behind. There are several methods, I use



all of them and combinations of them to get the wanted results.

**For lunging forward I have gone** from swinging the loose end of the lead so it will hit the dog's nose as he goes too far forward, to use of a choke collar for restraint, to use of leather choke collar with spikes through it. I always work from the least to the most severe method stopping with the first one that works. I never use more force than is necessary.

Now that your dog is walking at heel to some degree, you want to polish his performance. This comes through practice. Go at different rates of speed and change directions often. The idea is to make the dog conscious of your leg and keep himself glued to it. Don't get yourself into a predictable pattern where the dog can anticipate what you are going to do. Walk around objects and through gates keeping him at heel.

During this period you also should be starting the dog's education on the term WHOA. To do this when you're working the dog on heel, simply say WHOA and stop. This is a tedious process because of the amount of repetition needed. As the dog gets familiar with the command and what it means, you can advance from a plain, to a choke, to a spiked collar as necessary.

**Now the dog should be stopping** on the command WHOA. The next step is to keep the dog from moving as you move out in front and finally all around the animal. This takes lots of time and repetition. As you advance, WHOA the dog, walk in front facing him, now with the lead still in your hand, back away several steps, command HERE and make sure he comes to you. Usually this is not hard, the hang-up is to make the dog stay stopped on WHOA. Now you have the three step sequence of HEEL, WHOA and HERE established.

Sooner or later you will feel the dog is doing this perfectly and you can try it without the lead. If the dog messes up go back several steps and reinforce the commands. Now you have to stop the dog as it is moving. One way to do this is to command HERE and as the dog comes quickly raise your arm in a stop signal and command WHOA. If this works, fine, but some dogs don't respond and you need the help of a second person. This person will run with the dog on the lead toward you and when WHOA is commanded he stops the dog. Again, practice and repetition, is what in the end makes the dog's work dependable.

**You must increase the variety** of circumstances under which you do this training. As you become sure of the dog, start testing and reinforcing the lessons. Finally, you should be able to whoa the dog and throw a live pigeon in front of him and expect him to stay until you release him. Your dog has the basic commands mastered, but you must extend them to field conditions. Do this step-wise, slowly removing your control over the dog. Every time he makes a mistake, go back a step and reinforce the lesson.

By now you should be able to command WHOA anytime and have the dog stop and stand. Obviously, if you only did what has been described so far with your

dog, you will not have spent much time with him. You and I both realize that you will be letting the dog out and playing with him a lot more than just for formal training. Even though this is not formal training periods, don't waste this valuable time.

**With the shorthaired pointers** that I'm most familiar with, this is the time you build rapport with your dog. This is most important with this breed, they need to be your buddy. Many of the less important commands are introduced and taught easily during this period. NO, for example, will be used whenever the dog is doing something you don't want him to do. This term is quickly learned because of the high amount of repetition. Similarly, the use of the dog's name will be taught without any formal training.

Most people will take their dogs for runs out in the fields. This is excellent as long as you don't use commands you can't enforce. I believe that the only way to transport a dog in a vehicle is in a box or crate designed for the dog. This gives the dog the protection he needs and a chance to rest. I also carry water and food for the dog when I'm working or hunting. Since I use a box, I need to teach the dog to KENNEL. This is relatively easy, the hardest part is the beginning. To accomplish this task, I have the box in the vehicle, bring the dog to the box and command KENNEL and put him in. This is easier said than done. I then take him to the area I'm going to run him in and let him out. The idea is to have him anticipating a run in the field with being put in the box. I never take the dog anyplace without him being put in the box nor do I take him for a run without him first going into the box. In very short order, your dog will be running to get into his box.

**A critical experience for the dog** must be covered in this period. This is exposing the dog to the gun and birds. As a breeder of shorthairs, I always try to have fired a gun over my pups before I sell them. Similarly, I generally try to have introduced them to birds also. I feel this is easiest to do at a young age and when they are running as a group of puppies. Usually I start with a blank pistol and shoot over them when they are at a distance and engrossed in playing. I then gradually increase the loudness of the gun and decrease the distance. With a single dog the same procedure can be followed, except more care must be taken to make sure of the reaction of the dog. In Kansas one of the largest causes to gun shy dogs is taking a new dog dove hunting before he has been introduced properly to the gun. You have the dog to the point that he is not scared by the shot going off, but I like to take it at least one step further at this point. I generally start him play retrieving. With a puppy you can throw an object out and he will run out and pick it up. Therefore, I use this and take the blank pistol and fire it over the pup and toss the object out for him to fetch. At this point I don't give any command to the dog. The only thing I want to accomplish is to have the shot signal to the dog that something good is coming.

Not many people realize you should introduce a puppy to birds. This is very necessary with a young puppy so





Three truckloads of used tires? Depends on how you look at it. The local chapter of the Smith Center FFA and the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission prefer to think of them as future housing for the fish population at Lovewell Reservoir.

The project was started in September when 1,300 tires were gathered by students from local tire firms in Smith Center. Assisted by the KAY's and high school art club the FFA students banded the tires in groups of three, drilled holes in each stack for water drainage and transported them to the reservoir for placement in pre-selected areas.



Working with fisheries biologists the students placed the tires in small coves to provide shelter and habitat for the lakes fish population.

The Kansas Fish and Game Commission and Kansas anglers owe the Smith Center students a vote of thanks for their time and work on this very important project.



FISH AND GAME COMMISSION  
WILLING TO PAY TAXES

PRATT--The Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission has recently received a number of questions regarding the paying of real estate taxes on certain Commission properties. In an attempt to clarify the situation, Dr. Jerome Sayler of Great Bend, commissioner for the third district, said today that the Commission would willingly pay taxes on fee title land in 29 Kansas counties. Until recently, the Commission has been paying these taxes but the question has been raised as to whether such payments are in conflict with state laws.

The ruling on whether or not the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission will pay real estate taxes is now being sought from the State Board of Tax Appeals.

###

HEATED FISHING DOCKS  
PROVIDE WINTER FISHING

PRATT--Several requests have been received recently at the Kansas Fish and Game Commission headquarters regarding heated fishing docks. The Commission staff has now completed a listing of those docks which are open to the public and we are happy to pass along the information to you.

Four Kansas reservoirs and two county lakes currently have operating heated fishing docks. At Tuttle Creek Reservoir, the dock is located at the Spillway Marina at the east end of the dam and Melvern Reservoir's dock is at Coeur-d-alene Point near the south end of the dam. Big K Marina operates a heated dock near the north end of the dam at Milford Reservoir and the one at Toronto Reservoir is located on the east side of the lake just south of the city of Toronto.

Other heated fishing docks are found at Lake Shawnee near Topeka and Marion County Lake at the concession on the west end of the lake. All of the docks have bait and tackle available and most have food service.

Crappie are the main species caught but some other fish are occasionally taken. The best baits for crappie include minnows and various colors of jigs.

###



SEASONS OPEN:PHEASANT FAIR: QUAIL GOOD:

PRATT--Opening weekend is now history.

Kansas sportsmen reported fair success for pheasants and good to excellent hunting for quail, according to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Western Kansas did not have the large number of hunters as in past years. Those making the trip found fewer pheasants in most of the range. Loss of habitat and severe winter weather the past several years has taken its toll.

Southwest Kansas was slightly better than northwest with more birds showing up in hunters' bags. Commission personnel working the area said the larger groups of hunters working out the big fields were doing much better than small groups hunting fencerows and ditches.

The cold weather that greeted hunters on opening morning played a roll in hunter success in much of the west. Many areas recorded seven to ten degrees on Saturday morning and the birds held tight.

Quail hunting is another story.

Hunters staying in the eastern portion of Kansas report excellent numbers of quail and this was reflected in the hunters' bag.

Game protectors working the eastern areas of Kansas report checking a large number of limits. Most hunters reported seeing numerous coveys in the first several hours of hunting. Dogs were having problems working quail as the weather has been dry in most areas of quail range.

Pheasant and quail hunting season will close January 31, 1977 however persons hunting after January 1 will be required to have a 1977 hunting license.

###

DRY COLD WEATHER AFFECTSFIREARMS DEER HUNTING OPENER

PRATT--Dry, cold weather marked the opening weekend of the 1976 firearms deer season in Kansas and the Fish and Game Commission reports average success for most deer hunters.

Despite these adverse conditions, hunters took about normal numbers of deer during the opening weekend of the season. Check stations in some of the management units reported checking nearly normal numbers compared to last year but decreases were noted in two of the units. Fewer antlerless deer permits were issued in some management units and a decrease in these areas was expected.

Peabody said an estimated 1,950 deer were killed on opening weekend this year compared to last year's total of 2,237. The 12 per cent decrease so far this year is understandable in light of the dry conditions statewide.

The Commission has received a number of inquiries as to why other game seasons are not closed during the firearms deer season. It is felt that such an action would discriminate against the quail and pheasant hunter. Most of the complaints have been a result of the activities of coyote hunters and the Commission has no authority to regulate coyote hunting.

###



1977 WILD TURKEY  
SEASON ADOPTED

(released Nov. 3, 1976)

PRATT--Recommendations for the 1977 wild turkey season in Kansas were adopted by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission at their November 4 meeting in Pratt.

An increase of permits and a change in the management units highlighted the setting of the fourth turkey season in Kansas.

The turkey season was set for April 23 through May 1, 1977. The nine-day season will provide two weekends of hunting opportunity. Commissioners approved an increase of 100 permits over last years season which will raise the total of permits available to 500. As in past years, the permits will be issued by drawing.

The same hunting area will again be in effect with the following modifications: Commissioners approved a recommendation that the hunting area be divided into three management units. This will provide an east, central and west unit. Highway U.S. 281 will divide the east from the central unit, and highway U.S. 283 will divide the west and central units. This will establish one additional management unit compared to the previous seasons, but does not increase the area open to hunting.

There will be 100 permits available for the eastern unit, 200 permits for the central unit and 200 for the western unit. One-half of the permits will be reserved for landowner-tenants and the other half for general residents.

The hunting area is bounded by highway U.S. 50 on the north from the Colorado state line to Newton, then south on I-35 to Wichita, then east on highway U.S. 54 to Augusta, and south on U.S. 77 to the Oklahoma state line. It is bounded on the west by Colorado and on the south by Oklahoma. The legal limit will be one bearded turkey.

During the 1976 season, sportsmen harvested 123 turkeys, including 121 toms and 2 bearded hens. This compares to 139 turkeys taken in 1975 and 123 in 1974.

The application period for applying for turkey permits is January 15 through February 5, 1977 at 5 p.m. As the period draws near more information will be made available explaining the applicaton procedure.

###



COMMISSION SETS LENGTH  
LIMITS ON BLACK BASS

PRATT--The five-member Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission at its Nov. 4 meeting, set length limits on black bass in seven state fishing lakes and two federal reservoirs. This is a pilot project consisting of a 3-year study to evaluate size limits on black bass, including largemouth, spotted (Kentucky) and smallmouth, as a management tool to improve sport fishing.

"In six state fishing lakes: Brown, Cowley, Jewell, McPherson, Montgomery and Nemaha, anglers may keep only those bass less than 12 inches in length or greater than 15 inches," said Don Gabelhouse, fisheries biologist from Seneca.

"This is what we call the slot-length limit," Gablehouse explained. "It's designed to protect the important predator-sized bass of 12 to 15 inches while allowing a harvest of small bass which exist in surplus numbers." Hopefully this limit will result in larger numbers of bigger bass. It's important that an impoundment have an adequate number of bass in the 12 to 15 inch class to control the large number of 4 to 5 inch bluegill.

In Wilson State Fishing Lake, a 14 inch minimum length was established on black bass since the lake was recently rehabilitated and there aren't surplus numbers of small bass available.

In Milford and Melvern Lakes, the Commission set 15 inch minimum length limits on black bass. Again, there simply aren't surplus numbers of small bass available which could be harvested and still maintain quality fishing for larger bass.

These regulations become effective January 1, 1977 and the designated impoundments will be posted with signs listing the appropriate length limits.

## ATTENTION FISHERMEN

A LENGTH LIMIT HAS BEEN IMPOSED ON  
BLACK BASS AT  
NEMAHA STATE FISHING LAKE  
TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF FISH AND FISHING.

POSSESSION OF BLACK BASS FROM  
12 TO 15 INCHES LONG IS UNLAWFUL;  
ALL BLACK BASS CAUGHT OF SUCH SIZE MUST BE  
RETURNED TO THE WATER IMMEDIATELY,  
AS PER REGULATION 23-3-2

YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED!

KANSAS FORESTRY, FISH AND GAME COMMISSION



GAME PROTECTORS BUSY  
WITH 1976 SEASON

PRATT--With the current hunting seasons in full swing, Kansas game protectors have been busy attempting to curtail violations of Kansas game laws.

"Game protectors have been extremely busy since the start of the hunting seasons in September," said Harold Lusk, Pratt, chief of law enforcement for the commission. "We've been running slightly ahead of last year as far as violations are concerned and the high fur market has produced a large number of hunters that normally aren't there."

From September through November, officers have issued 1,272 citations for violations of fish and game laws. Total fines and court costs for these violations has amounted to \$33,471.68.

"The actual fine money for this period was \$24,350.85 which is contributed to the state school fund," Lusk noted. The remained \$9,120.83 is maintained by the various courts for processing costs.

Violations of big game hunting laws and illegal night hunting have drawn the larger fines during the period.

A recent case in Pawnee county involving the taking of wild animals with aid of an artificial light, after legal shooting hours and hunting without the landowner's permission. This resulted in two men being assessed fines and court costs totaling \$822.30.

Three men in Marion county were also charged recently with hunting wild animals with aid of an artificial light. The trio appeared before County Judge Henry Loveless and were assessed fines and court costs totaling \$321.45.

The animal involved in night hunting doesn't always have to be big to be expensive. A recent case in Butler proved this. The man was charged with hunting with the aid of an artificial light and by use and aid of a motor vehicle. Fines and court costs totaled \$137.95. When stopped by the game protector he had one rabbit in possession. Night hunting just isn't a paying proposition.

The Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission urges all citizens, landowners and sportsmen to join in the fight to stop illegal hunting and trespassing. If you see a game law violation--report it.

All Kansas Game Protectors and other law enforcement officers want information on illegal hunting activity. They will take whatever time is necessary to develop the information into a court case if warranted.

The commission also reminds sportsmen of three very important words, "May I Hunt". Those three words can go a long way in promoting good hunter-landowner relations. It only takes a few thoughtless persons to ruin an entire hunting season for hundreds of people.



## CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE

KANSAS FISH & GAME has a new computerized magazine subscription process which starts with the July-August 1976 issue.

If you move or have a change of address, but want to continue receiving KANSAS FISH & GAME, it is imperative that we have the address label from your July-August 1976 issue or from later issues.

Address labels from issues prior to the July-August, 1976 can not be processed. Simply cut the address label from your July-August issue, attach it to the form below and send it too:

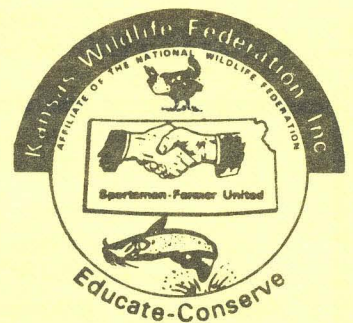
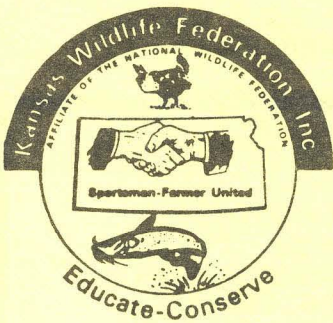
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Thanks.

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## BACKYARD BIRD BUNDLE

For the past two years, the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, in cooperation with the Kansas State Forester, State Extension Service and Kansas Wildlife Federation, participated in offering a bundle of plants for urban wildlife habitat development. Called the "Backyard Bird Bundle", the bundle of woody plants was sold at a nominal cost as an effort to encourage homeowners to improve songbird habitat in their backyards. The bundle has proven to be a very popular item.

For 1977, the Kansas Wildlife Federation has assumed the role of principal sponsor of the Backyard Bird Bundle. The bundle again contains a selection of woody plants which are suitable for use in backyard landscapes and are attractive to song birds. When grown, the trees and shrubs will provide year-round shelter for small birds plus supplemental food during late summer, fall and winter.

The Federation has called upon the knowledge of personnel with the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission and State Extension Service for professional help in selecting plants. In addition to being attractive to songbirds, the selection of plants has been made keeping in mind the varied climatic conditions that occur across Kansas. With proper preparation of the planting site and reasonable care after planting, the plants should do well over most of the state. Each bundle will contain 3 eastern redcedar, 2 each fragrant sumac, red-osier dogwood and golden elder, 1 Tatarian honeysuckle and 5 coralberry. The bundles are priced at \$7.00 each and will be shipped postage paid at the proper planting time.

Since the orders are to be processed by a commercial outlet, a standard order form has been prepared. For persons interested in purchasing bundles, the order form below may be used or persons may contact the Executive Secretary, Kansas Wildlife Federation, Wamego, KS 66547; the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Box 1028, Pratt, KS 67124 or any Commission field office; or through the local county extension office. Orders for spring, 1977 planting must be placed by no later than March 1.

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## BACKYARD BIRD BUNDLE ORDER

TO: Kansas Wildlife Federation  
Route 1  
Wamego, KS 66547

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ Backyard Bird Bundle(s) at \$7.00 each.

Enclosed is my payment in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
(Full payment must accompany order. Orders must be received by no later than March 1).

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



that the bird does not scare him. I use a pigeon by plucking his flight feathers and then releasing him in front of the litter of puppies. It is amazing how cautiously the young pups will approach the bird. I'll continue doing this once a week until some or one of the pups actually runs in and grabs the bird and the others follow. Once this has happened, I do not repeat it.

If you have followed what I've said so far, you will see that there are two paths of training that have been going on at the same time. Sooner than one would think, you have a dog that obeys you completely. But, how does this get you to the point of having a good gun dog? What you have done so far is laid the foundation that the gun dog is built on. From here on, you will be working the dog on birds. Up to now everything you have done you could do by yourself but now it really helps to have another person.

During your runs with your dog probably you've come across some wild birds. This has given you a good opportunity to observe your dog's response. What is most desirable is to have him slam into a solid point. This is not a high percentage occurrence on first contact with wild birds. The reaction will be closer to a soft point, creep and flush to just plain flush. This can give you the first clue as to how hard it will be to break the dog.

I've found the surest way is to mechanically break the dog, but it requires a lot of patient and the ability to not lose your temper. The method I use is to plant a pigeon and then work the dog up cross wind to the pigeon. When you see the dog react to the pigeon scent, command WHOA. I keep repeating WHOA, smoothing down the dog, pushing his tail up and forward slightly. This puts a forward pressure on the dog which he will resist by pushing back, strengthening his point. I then have my helper come in from a right angle to the dog (so the dog sees him), flush the pigeon and shoot it dead. Meanwhile, I'm holding the dog at WHOA and stroking him till the excitement subsides. Then I let the dog go find the bird. This is then repeated over and over again until I don't need to restrain the dog except with one verbal command. The dog should now freeze on point when he scents game, and you have a broke dog.

There are a few points of interest to be warned of. One, use pigeons so if you do get upset and use too much force on the dog and he starts to blink, he will not do so on quail. Pigeons are cheaper and are not covered by Fish and Game regulations while quail are. Pigeons, though, have their problems. When flushed, they go away low, this means there is a real safety consideration so be sure your gunner is competent. It is better to let a pigeon go than have an accident. Also, pigeons seem to get away faster than they do and look further away than they are. Therefore, use an open choked gun or you will either blow the bird up or miss. I use a releasing device to hold the pigeons because I've never had good luck with just planting them. This I built myself, but they can also be purchased for about twenty dollars.

**You now have a dog which is yard trained, hunts and steady to wing and shot. What more can you want?** Well, there are a few extras, frosting on the cake which you can't really do until the above is accomplished. These are honoring another dog's point, stopping to flush, STAY, SIT and LIE.

Honoring another dog's point requires you to have another steady dog. All it takes is a repetition of bringing the young dog in on the point dog, once your dog see the other WHOA him. This is repeated until the dog does it automatically without the command.

**Stopping to flush is taught** by walking along and when your dog runs by close to you, toss out a pigeon and WHOA the dog.

STAY has really been taught already by WHOA but you want a special separate command for this. This requires you to stop the dog, tell him to STAY and make sure he does until you release him.

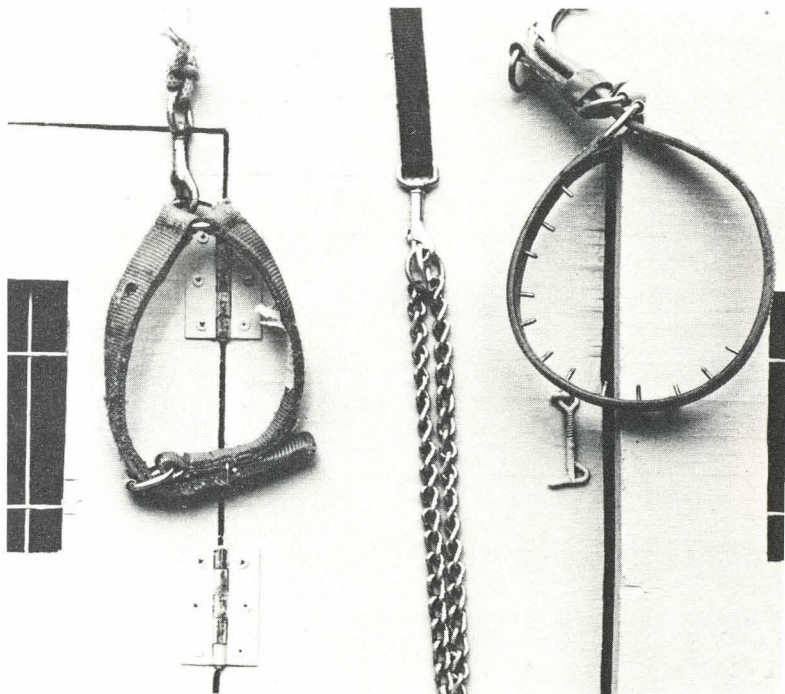
SIT—to teach this, heel your dog on a lead, WHOA him, then gently pull up on the collar while pushing down on his rump and saying SIT. Don't try this, or LIE, until you have finished breaking the dog so he does not get confused.

LIE is taught about the same as SIT except you now gently lower him from sitting position by pulling his front legs forward out from under him.

I hope this has given you some insight and enough courage to try training a dog of your own because there is nothing more satisfying than watching your dog perform well.

**Just remember that:** (1) give the command, don't ask, never give a command you can't enforce; (2) never fool a dog, (3) give praise or reward your dog when he does something right, and (4) never lose your temper, the first lick is for your dog, the rest is for you.

Various collars used in training: from left, nylon collar with O ring, choke collar and leather spiked collar.





# Powerful linkers

By George Valyer

**IF** YOU'RE LIKE the vast majority of hunters, the first real gun you ever fired was a .22 caliber rifle. I don't recall the occasion when my father first consented to let me try my first shot but I certainly remember the gun. At the time, I thought it was the best rifle in the neighborhood because it was Dad's gun and I was big enough to shoot it.

In my mind's eye, I can see it now. It was a pump action repeater, a Remington model 12, and it had an octagon barrel with a u-shaped rear sight and a small

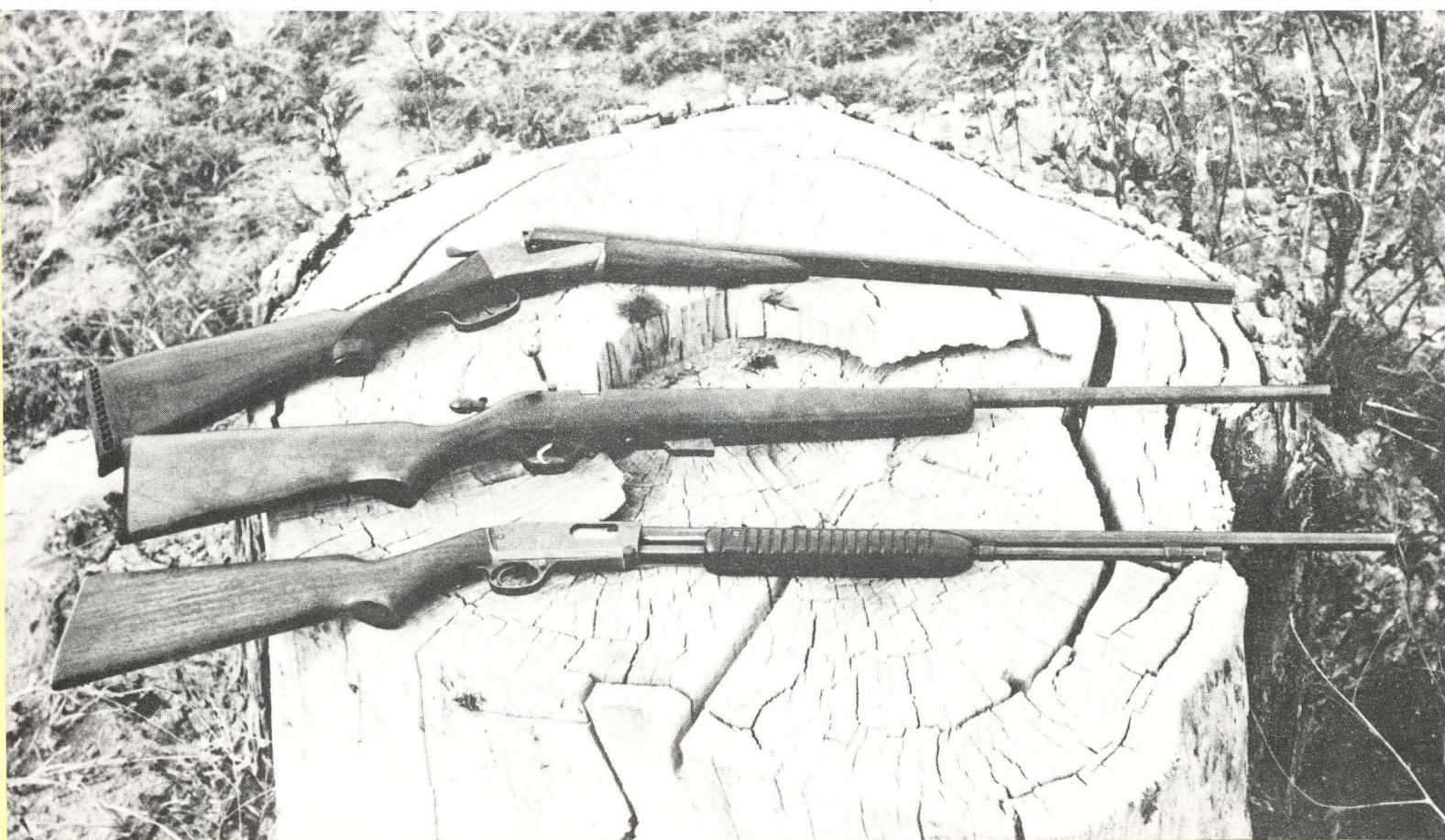
beaded front sight. To a youngster, it seemed very heavy (although it wasn't) and the sights seemed very hard to line up. As I remember it, I missed the target on my first try.

Dad had bought the gun just before he departed for France during World War I and had left it with his parents while overseas. While he was gone, someone had used the gun and failed to clean it and, in the days of corrosive primers, that was a mistake. The inside of the barrel had a few pits in the riflings and Dad didn't think it was very accurate any more. It probably wasn't, but it suited me fine.

As soon as I was old enough to handle it and had received enough instruction from Dad, I started hunting rabbits and squirrels. Back in the 30's, no one had ever heard of a hunter safety course but my father didn't turn me loose with that gun until we had several sessions on safety and marksmanship. I'll never forget Dad pointing out to me what it said on the end flap of the cartridge box—DANGER, RANGE ONE MILE.

By the time I was 17, I had acquired a single shot bolt action rifle and, man, it was accurate. It was a Winchester model 67 and had to be cocked before each shot by pulling back a knurled knob on the rear of the bolt. It was then I learned to make only head shots on rabbits and squirrels. Less meat was spoiled that way. Using long rifle cartridges, I soon found out that 70 or 80 yard shots were possible if a fellow had enough practice to know how to hold on game at that distance. One of the longest shots I ever made with a .22 was on a jackrabbit; the distance was paced off at 140 yards. I aimed about a foot over the critter and am sure that it was pure luck that the jack fell dead. Although the no-

Small, but surprisingly powerful, these .22 rifles and 410 shotguns are excellent for teaching youngsters firearms safety.





tation on the cartridge box, RANGE—ONE MILE, means just what it says, the maximum *effective* range for the .22 is about 75 or 80 yards.

The long rifle cartridge today packs a lot of zip. Loaded with a 36-grain bullet, one brand of ammo hits a velocity of 1,300 feet per second and packs enough punch to take care of 90 percent of the small game and varmint hunting needs. Even with the 40-grain bullet, the long rifle kicks out at 1,255 feet per second; that's faster than the speed of sound. The 38-grain hollow point in long rifle falls between the two and leaves the barrel at 1,280 feet per second. Any of the .22 long rifle cartridges exceed most of the well-known pistol cartridges in velocity. Only the high velocity .38 Special, .357 Magnum and the .44 Remington Magnum have a greater muzzle velocity.

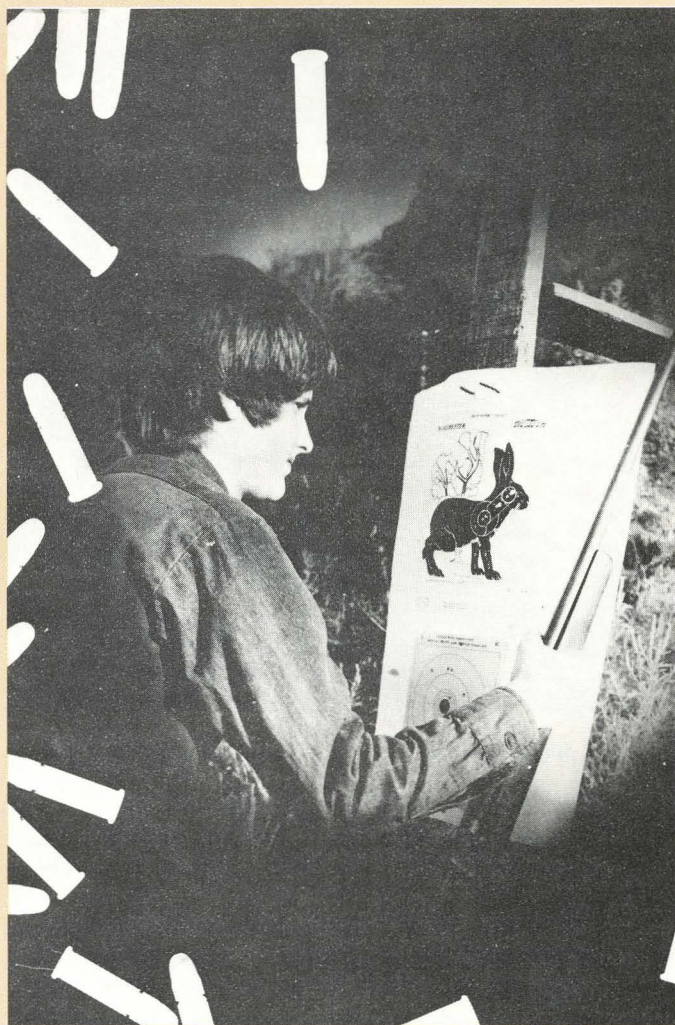
Yes, it is easy to understand how the .22 blank cartridge which is used in some of the nail driving machines can punch a stiff nail into solid concrete or even steel beams. These small blank cartridges do not have the wallop of a long rifle cartridge which develops up to 140 foot/pounds of energy, enough to knock down a full grown bobcat if placed in the right spot.

Of course a person wouldn't think of using a .22 rifle to hunt big game (besides, the law forbids it) but, properly used on varmints and small game, the little plinker is a mighty potent cartridge and should be respected. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, the .22 was a standard arm of the line trapper and, doubtless, had to be used in dangerous encounters with large wildlife. I recall reading a magazine of a trapper who encountered a large brown bear which had been wounded. His only firearm was a .22 revolver and, when the bear charged, he was able to down it with a shot to the head. Lucky? Probably, but I'd rather face the bear with a .22 than a hickory stick.

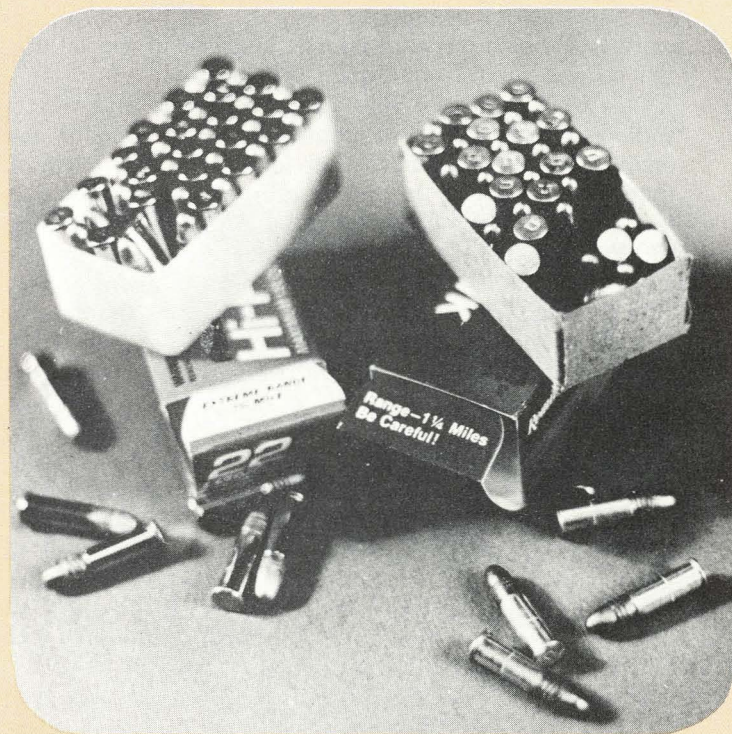
How about firearms chambered for the .22? Well, the price range runs from about \$35 for a single shot bolt action to about \$500 for a deluxe heavy barrel target rifle suitable for match competition. In between are a host of rifles and handguns with various actions and prices, in fact enough models to make your head swim when you are faced with the problem of selecting the proper one for your purpose.

It is generally thought that the bolt action is the most accurate and most target .22's are designed this way. A single-shot bolt action rifle is also the safest and most fool proof and is the ideal gun for a youngster's first rifle. Disassembly for cleaning is easy and many are light in weight and easy for a youngster to carry safely.

When selecting any rifle, regardless of action or price, it is very important to check the trigger for proper crispness and smoothness of pull. Almost any of today's modern .22 rifles have remarkable accuracy when used with good quality match ammunition but not all of them have triggers and sears which allow firing without flinching or movement at the time of firing. Naturally, the



Photos by Ken Stiebhen







Powerful plinkers like .22 rifles and 410 shotguns are used extensively on game like this fox squirrel and the cottontail on the opposite page.

set trigger used on heavy target rifles has the best and smoothest pull but who wants to carry around a nine to eleven pound rifle when he is hunting squirrels or rabbits?

If you already have a good .22 capable of shooting small groups at 50 yards when it is well supported on a steady rest but still can't seem to hit consistently on small game, may be the fault lies in the trigger mechanism. A qualified gunsmith can often dress the sear so that you will have the smoothness of trigger action you need to prevent a jump in the gun. Of course a gunsmith can not improve a poorly designed action or trigger so one should not expect miracles.

One of my favorite rifles has a relatively stiff trigger pull of a little over two pounds but it is smooth and crisp. Other guns I have shot have had "hair triggers" that were mushy or burred resulting in movement during firing. It isn't the pounds of pressure required to pull the trigger that is the critical factor—it is the smoothness of the pull. Besides, light triggers or hair triggers can be dangerous, especially when the shooter is young or inexperienced.

Shooting a .22 is a lot of fun in Kansas as long as you are away from cities, towns or congested rural areas. (Remember that "Range—One Mile" warning?) In the eastern part of the state there are cottontail rabbits, squirrels, woodchucks and rodents. Rats are a favorite target in some locations where they are prone to congregate. If you have the patience, a pasture full of gopher mounds can provide a lot of practice and sport. When Mr. Gopher pops his head up to have a look around or to shove some more dirt out of his den, then you pop him with 38 or 40 grains of lead.

If you live in western Kansas, you have a choice of cottontails or jackrabbits, squirrels along timbered creeks

and the usual assortment of rodents plus prairie dogs. Hunting prairie dogs is another waiting game where a good deal of patience is required. A good telescopic sight is quite helpful on shots of over 40 yards. Generally, a three to four power scope is ideal for use on the .22.

There are a few things you need to keep in mind if you don't live on the land you hunt. Kansas law requires you to have permission from the landowner or tenant before you hunt and, if you are over 16 years of age, you must have a hunting license to take any wildlife. Also, if you were born on or after July 1, 1957, you must have successfully completed an approved hunter safety course before you go afield.

Most farmers are glad to give permission to hunters to take prairie dogs and other rodents provided that they are sure you will respect their livestock and other property. Rabbit and squirrel hunters are also usually welcomed if a hunter takes the time to contact the landowner ahead of time and convince him of his dependability.

Rabbits and squirrels are both classified as game animals and are subject to laws and regulations. Rodents such as rats, prairie dogs, gophers and groundhogs receive no protection under Kansas laws and may be hunted or killed at any time.

Since the .22 rifle destroys less meat than a shotgun, it is preferred by many hunters of small game animals. Besides, a lot more skill is necessary to be able to consistently bag a squirrel or rabbit with a head shot from a single bullet rather than a multitude of pellets. After taking a few squirrels with a shotgun, a hunter gets the attitude of "so what." Not so with a rifle. Every successful shot is a new thrill and the game tastes just that much better when it's on the table. Running shots on



rabbits are even more difficult and are a sure test of a rifleman's skill.

Many fathers like to start a youngster out with a .410 gauge shotgun so that he can feel the pride of success without so much training. This is a good idea as long as the game is limited to sitting or running targets. But, handing a young boy or girl a .410 and expecting him or her to be able to hit game birds is like handing a two-year-old a flyswatter and expecting him to kill the flies around his crib. A .410 has its place when it comes to bird hunting, but its place is in the hands of an expert. There just isn't enough shot in a .410 shell to make a wide or dense enough pattern for the beginning birder. It's better to use a 20 gauge.

**True, a .410 shotgun has considerably less recoil than the larger gauges and from this aspect it is desirable for the beginner.** The .410 has as great an effective range as a 12 gauge and is fine for rabbits, squirrels and slow moving targets. If you or your youngster find it difficult to master a .22 rifle, then by all means try a .410. Let's face it, not all hunters are equipped to master the rifle.

Shotguns in .410 gauge come in all the basic actions—single shot, bolt, side-by-side and over-under doubles and pump. Prices begin at about \$40 for the single shot break action and range upward to nearly \$500 for a fine quality side-by-side double. To my knowledge, there are no autoloading .410's available at this time from either domestic or foreign manufacturers.

**Although I started shooting a .410 shotgun** when I was about 13 years old, the rifle remained my favorite until I got into serious bird shooting when I was in my early twenties. Even today, although I have a near-sighted visual condition, corrective lenses allow me to see the sights as well as I ever could. Although my steadiness has gone down hill the past few years, I can still outshoot my 17-year old son when it comes to punching a target. He is a better wing shot than I am and has the makings of a good hunter. Still, when it comes to the .22 rifle, he has a lot more practice to do to put old dad in the shade.

The .22 has a lot going for it. Ammunition is cheap—it will provide a rabbit stew or fried young squirrel for the table—it will provide good, economical practice for those using a centerfire rifle for big game—in general it will provide tight groups for competitive shooting. Most of all it's a fun gun to shoot for plinking, small game hunting and target shooting.

**The .22 rimfire rifle has been kicking around for better than a century and is still going strong.** Back in 1845 a Frenchman by the name of Flobert patented what he called a "bulleted breech cap" which shot a round ball at a low velocity. From this invention came the .22 caliber rimfire cartridge as we know it today. The 1898 Sears and Roebuck catalog listed more than a dozen models in the .22 caliber and today 21 manufacturers are turning out no less than 75 models in this caliber. Many other calibers of cartridges have come and gone in the past 100 years but the lowly .22 becomes more popular each year.

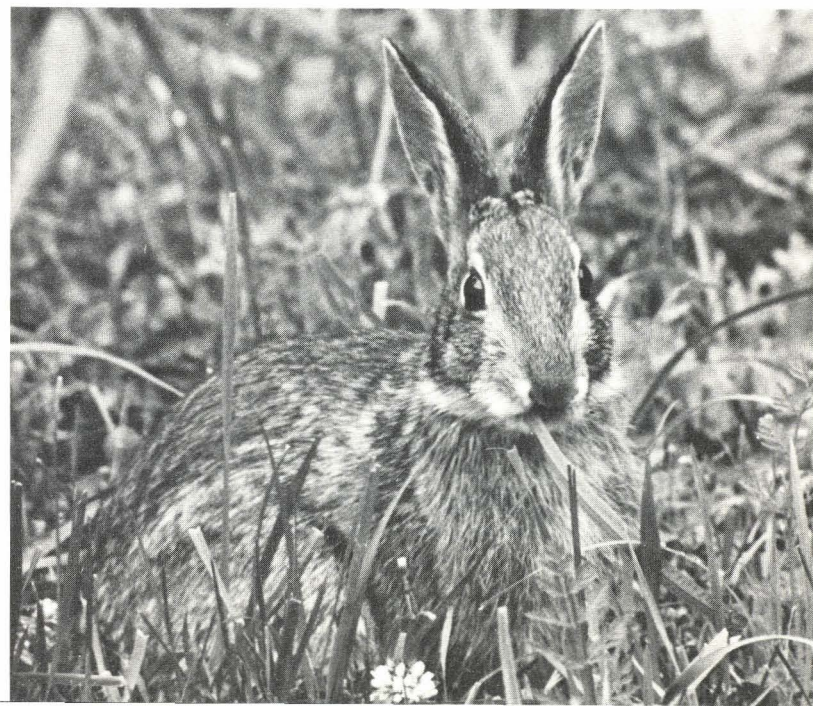
Forty years ago, many young farm lads picked up their spending money by shooting rabbits in the hedge rows and fence rows in rural areas. The rabbits were abundant in the 30's and there was a ready market for them in January and February when the fur was prime. The rabbits were hung outdoors overnight to freeze and then burlap bags of them were taken to the depot the next morning for shipment on the early morning train to markets in Kansas City and Salina.

**The rabbit fur was used to trim garments and the meat was ground up for tannage.** Head shot rabbits brought from 10 to 15 cents each but pelts which were shot up too much were either docked in price or rejected completely. That was why the .22 was the most popular cartridge for taking rabbits for the market. A .22 cartridge cost about one-half cent per each while a shotgun shell cost 4 or 5 cents and you could be pretty sure you would be docked if you used a shotgun.

I recall that one January evening when the snow was on, my father and I collected 19 cottontails from the mile of hedge which bordered the north side of our farm. All total that evening we collected 31 rabbits within two miles of our house. Our check for that shipment amounted to about \$3.60 and that wasn't to be sneezed at when candy bars cost a nickel a-piece and you could buy a pair of overalls for a dollar.

**Of course the .22 was also used to dispatch any livestock which was ready to be butchered.** A long rifle cartridge always proved to be plenty powerful enough to down a 1,000 pound steer with a well placed head shot. Sometimes a hog proved to be more difficult and two or three shots were occasionally needed to accomplish the desired results. Yes, the .22 was quite a rifle and it still is.

To some ill-advised shooters, the rimfire .22 cartridge is more of a toy than a real rifle cartridge and the .410 shotgun is for plinking at tin cans or driftwood floating down the river. Such shooters do not know the real story as far as ballistics is concerned. True, both can be used for plinking—but they are mighty powerful plinkers.





# OPERATION RESPECT



By George Valyer

**H**UNTERS HAVE been taking it on the chin for the past few years. Pressures have been mounting from various sources for some time now to do away with sport hunting as we know it today. Anti-gun forces have been chipping away at the time-honored institution of hunting in an ever increasing blast fueled by TV shows such as *The Guns of Autumn* and a vocal minority of radicals who place the blame for crime on firearms rather than the criminal.

Some of us who hunt must also share some of the responsibility for anti-gun sentiment because we fail to act like sportsmen. We neglect to obtain permission before hunting on private land. We don't always obey game laws. We litter the land with our beverage cans and our lunch wrappers. We do not make the effort to learn about conservation so that we can avoid abusing the resources we enjoy. Let's face it. We may not personally be guilty of any or all of these offenses but we condone such actions by ignoring them when we see them occurring.

Fortunately, there are at least 4,000 Kansans who are not willing to see hunting go down the drain. They have agreed to put their time and effort into an activity designed to place hunting into the category of a respected sport. By now you may have guessed that we

are talking about the more than 4,000 volunteer instructors in the statewide Kansas Hunter Safety Program. These dedicated men and women from all walks of life are concerned for the future of wildlife in the Sunflower State and the perpetuation of hunting as a recreation for its citizens.

The Kansas Hunter Safety Program had its beginnings in 1962 when the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission began training some of its personnel to become instructors in a fledgling program of the National Rifle Association. Money was scarce and available time was limited because of the nature of the jobs of agency personnel. Never-the-less, during the first few years, game protectors, game and fisheries biologists, state lake caretakers and information-education people found time in their busy schedules to teach hunter safety courses at every Boy Scout camp in the state. It wasn't long before 4-H clubs, and some schools heard of the program and began requesting the services of instructors. By the late 1960's, it became obvious that Fish and Game personnel could not spread themselves thinly enough to take care of all the requests and the word went out to many communities that volunteer instructors were needed. Recruiting was no problem! Under the sponsorship of sportsman's clubs, police associations, civic clubs and schools, nearly 500 instructors were trained in the N. R. A. course.



In 1970 and '71, certain members of the Kansas Legislature became interested in promoting a state-wide course of instruction in safe hunting and hunting ethics. A bill to this effect was introduced and, backed by concerned sportsmen from all over Kansas, it was passed in 1972. Under provisions of this law, the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission was charged with setting up the course of instruction. All persons who were born on or after July 1, 1957 were required to successfully complete a hunter safety course before obtaining a hunting license or hunting on other than their own land. The law became effective on July 1, 1973.

Immediately, the Fish and Game Commission began laying plans to set up a state-wide program. Royal Elder, a career Game Protector for the Commission was named Hunter Safety Coordinator, manuals of instruction were developed, instructor training sessions were scheduled and the call went out all over the state for good sportsmen to volunteer to conduct classes in their own communities. Men and women responded in droves and attended sessions designed to prepare them to teach the rudiments of firearms safety, conservation, game laws hunting ethics, survival and first aid. The commission acquired films and other training aids and made them available to instructors. The program was off and rolling.

Coordinator Royal Elder set out the key word—RESPECT. This involves respect for the firearms you are using, respect for the landowner and his property, respect for the game you hunt and respect for your fellow hunter. Thus "operation respect" was under way and over 75,000 young Kansas hunters have been given the word.

In order to stress good sportsmanship and respect, the Commission developed what is called a "Hunter Ethics Award." In order to earn such an award, the young hunter must assist the landowner in some way which will gain his gratitude and improve the image of hunters in general. The young hunter is issued a Hunter Ethics card upon completion of the Kansas Hunter Safety course and, when he has performed some outstanding service to the farmer, he presents the card to the landowner and tells him about the award. Most farmers and landowners are quite happy to recommend that the hunter be given the award.

In north-central Kansas, a young lady hunter was driving by a farm when she noticed two cows on the highway. She promptly informed the farmer's wife and helped her get the cattle back in the corral. The farmer was away from home at the time and was quite grateful for the assistance.

When flood waters struck a southeast Kansas farm, a young hunter who had previously hunted there helped the landowner in his cleanup efforts and assisted in repairing washed-out fences.

Two northwest area residents were hunting on a ranch when they discovered that two cows had broken through the ice on a pond. When they discovered the owner



Roger and Rodney Weinman, shown here with Royal Elder, hunter safety administrator. The boys received the Hunter Ethics Award for pulling two mired cows out of the mud.

Leonard Merrifield, Bunker Hill, the state's oldest active instructor, was 81 years old when the 1975 Hunter Safety Convention.



Photos by Ken Stiebhen



was not home, they got assistance from a nearby farmer and pulled the cattle to safety. Although one of the cows later died, the landowner was grateful for the assistance the boys had given and recommended them for the Hunters Ethics certificate.

A young hunter from south-central Kansas showed up at a farm at 4:30 in the morning so that he could help the farmer with his chores on opening day of the season. Without help, the farmer would not have been able to participate in the hunt since he had a large amount of livestock to feed.

Six central Kansas members of a high school gun club earned their Hunter Ethics awards by assisting Fish and Game employees by building brush shelters for wildlife on Marion Game Management Area. A total of ten shelters were constructed on two different tracts, most of them from thorny locust brush. Following the construction, the youngsters assisted in a controlled burn on another tract to help clear the area of vegetation too thick for wildlife use.

Two young graduates of the Hunter Safety Program were hunting in a pasture when they discovered that the windmill had been broken. They had obtained permission a week or so earlier but they couldn't find the owner at home on that occasion. Since the cattle appeared very thirsty, the pair decided to repair the windmill themselves. With a couple of bolts borrowed from a nearby farm, the left rod was reconnected and water was once again flowing. When the owner got back home two days later, the well was still pumping and his cattle in good condition.

Many of the Hunter Ethics Certificates of Award have gone to hunters who have discovered livestock on the roads or highways. Usually the farmer or rancher is notified and the hunter assists him in rounding up the critters and repairing the fence. Other awards have gone for assistance to landowners with their chores such as cutting wood, mowing weeds around the farmstead, feeding and caring for livestock. One elderly lady received help from a young hunter she had allowed to hunt on her land; he did odd jobs around her house and even weeded her garden. Needless to say, this young man is welcome to hunt on her land at any time.

The Hunter Ethics Certificate of Award was unique at the time of its inception. However, since it became operational in 1973, several other states have copied it and incorporated it into their hunter safety programs. The ethics awards were one of the many parts of the Kansas Hunter Safety Program which earned for it the International award in 1975.

Each year, the International Association of Fish and Game Commissioners selects a Hunter Safety Program from among the various states and Canadian provinces to be honored as the best on the North American Continent. After being in existence only three years on a statewide basis, the Kansas program was judged the best. In September of 1975, a beautiful bronze plaque was awarded to the Fish and Game Commission and may be seen by visitors at the Commission headquarters near

Pratt. Kansas will not be eligible for competition for the award until 1979 since first place winners must wait three years before being considered again.

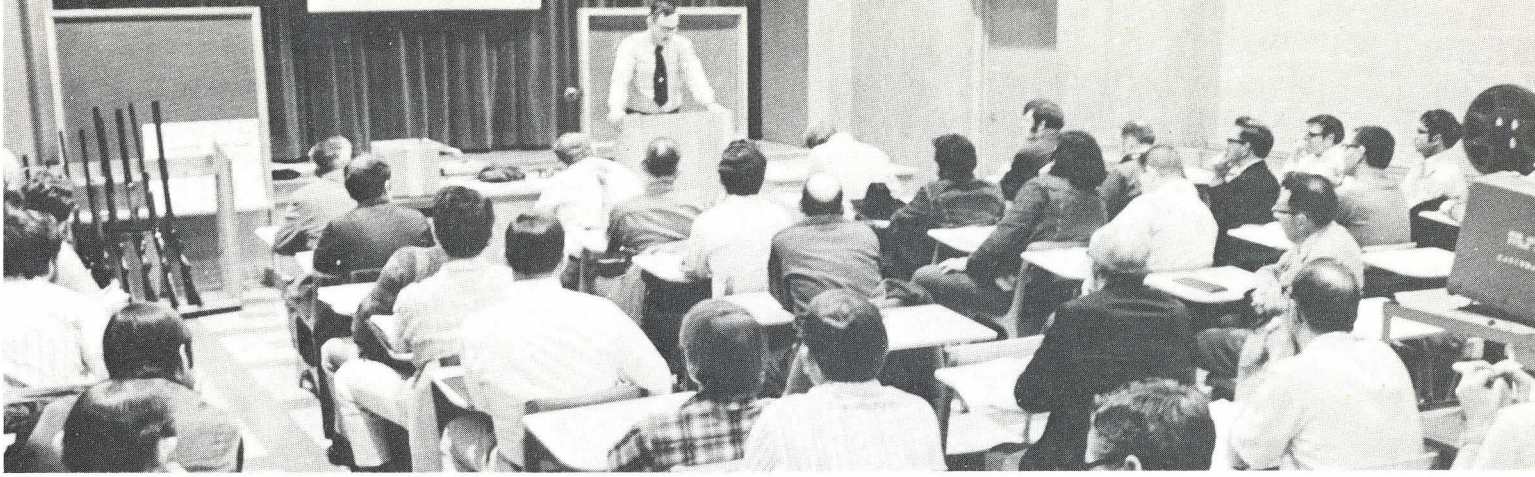
OK. So Kansas won the International Award in 1975 for its hunter safety program. But just how good is the course? The answer to this question is to be found in its excellent volunteer instructors and the support they get from the Fish and Game Commission. Certainly the men and women conducting courses are among the best in the nation and the materials and encouragement they receive are the best available.

If you have never seen the student manual provided free to each student in the course, then you should get ahold of a copy and read it carefully. Even old hunters like you and me can learn a lot about hunting and sportsmanship by spending an hour or two in its informative pages. The book was written by experts and edited specifically for Kansas residents. It covers a host of topics ranging from firearms and how to handle them safely to survival in primitive areas. Its pictures and diagrams are a storehouse of information on outdoor lore, game bird identification and conservation. Through its text and pictures you can learn how to field-dress a deer, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and survive a winter blizzard if it catches you in the open.

The best way to get a copy of the manual is to borrow one from a young hunter who has recently completed a Kansas Hunter Safety Course in your neighborhood. Better yet, enroll in the next course held near you. There is no age limit for students and older, more experienced hunters are always welcome, even though the law does not require them to have a valid hunter safety card. Besides, a card might come in handy if you hunt in some state which has different age requirements. Colorado, for instance, requires that all hunters, born on or after January 1, 1949, shall have a hunter safety card before purchasing a hunting license. In California, New York and Rhode Island, all first-time license buyers must have passed an approved course. If you wish to hunt in Wyoming in the Tetons or the Jackson Hole National Elk Area, a hunter safety certificate is required.

The conservation section of the course is probably its most outstanding feature. The basic principles of game management are set forth in a style designed to increase the interest of each student. For instance, do you know how to tell the difference between the male and female dove? Do you know whether the quail you have shot is an adult or hatched only the past summer? A youngster who has been through the Hunter Safety Course can tell you. By whetting his appetite for outdoor facts, he is encouraged to learn more about the natural world around him and attempt to learn what it takes to have rabbits on the back forty and a covey of quail along the creek. Through this knowledge comes respect of the living things around him and a feeling of stewardship over the land and the creatures which inhabit it. With knowledge and respect comes appreciation.





The conservation section of the manual goes into the life cycle of our common upland game birds, quail, pheasant and prairie chicken. It tells about the habitat requirements for each species, nesting times, incubation periods and winter requirements. As most sportsmen know, winter is the time of greatest stress on all resident game. That is when cover and food are at a minimum and the greatest losses occur. It is pointed out that hunting seasons are set in the fall to utilize the surplus of game birds which would be lost to winter's cold and snow.

**Another important part of the Kansas Hunter Safety Manual** is the section on survival and first aid. The Sunflower State is well enough settled in most areas so that it is nearly impossible to become lost for any length of time. However, in western Kansas during the winter, there is always the chance that a sudden blizzard might strike, isolating a hunter who is unaware of its approach. Such a situation calls for a clear mind and adequate preparation to prevent undue hardship. The book tells you what items you need to carry in your vehicle to survive a situation which might pose a threat to life in case you are trapped in a severe winter storm. Motorists as well as hunters should take a cue from this section when traveling the plains during the months of December through March.

Survival in the high altitudes of mountain states is something else. In the western United States, there are millions of acres of forests and deserts where human habitation is sparse. Being lost or stranded in such areas pose an entirely different set of problems to the hunter. For this reason, the Kansas course covers the actions a person should take if he finds himself in a difficult situation in these areas. Let's face it—in today's mobile society, we may not spend the remainder of our lives in Kansas. At some time we will probably travel elsewhere to hunt or fish and we may move to an area where we are in a completely different set of circumstances than we are used to. That is why the manual

gives the basic principles of survival in wilderness areas, whether they be deserts or forests.

**The human being can survive in** almost any situation he encounters if he is prepared with adequate knowledge. A certain amount of equipment will make things easier and the wise sportsman will equip himself with those items which may become necessary in an emergency. But, the most important thing is knowledge. All the equipment in the world won't help you if you don't know how to use it.

The Kansas Hunter Safety Manual has many more features which set it apart as a fine reference resource. Within its brown and yellow covers are a history of firearms, suggested shot sizes for use on game birds, and a table of wind chill index. One of the finest bits to be included is located on the inside of the back cover—a gun owners creed.

"I accept the responsibilities that go with owning a gun and pledge myself to know and obey the laws governing the ownership and use of firearms.

I recognize that my gun manners reflect on all gun owners and I pledge to handle my firearms safely and courteously.

I respect the rights of others to enjoy the outdoors in their own way and I will be considerate of private and public property.

I will work for the future of wildlife and other natural resources and for their wise use and enjoyment by all Americans.

I will walk with pride in the path of those who created our great outdoor heritage, always working to improve the welfare of our people through an appreciation and enjoyment of nature."

**If all hunters, fishermen and users of the great outdoors** would follow and faithfully live up to this creed, what a wonderful place Kansas and the nation would be. "Operation Respect" would have achieved its goal.







# The Red FOX

**T**HE COLD January day was rapidly fading as I drove toward Ellis. Five inches of powdery snow had fallen the night before and temperatures were in the low teens. A rare windless day allowed the snow to drift on anything that would stand still.

The force of my pickup sent clouds of billowing white snow skyward on old highway 40. Traffic had apparently been light on this stretch of road that borders Big Creek west of Ellis for several miles as the snow was not disturbed.

This area of Big Creek was reported to have a population of red fox. A number of people in Ellis had told me of seeing them just west of town but I was still to see my first "red."

The red fox, was not new to the area. They had probably been there for a number of years. I normally looked the area over good for any sign of a fox but today I couldn't have cared less. There were better places to be than out in this weather and I was headed for the barn.

About a mile from town I glanced across a snow covered alfalfa field and the long drought of fox watching was broken. Angling across the field towards the blacktop came a red fox. Not wanting to spook the red predator I killed the engine and coasted to a stop. It worked. The fox was more concerned with the deep snow and appeared unaware of my presence.

Pulling my binoculars from the case I slid across the seat for a better position to observe the fox. If there was ever a perfect example of a red fox in the wild, I was watching it.

To describe the scene seems almost like an injustice to the animal. I have since read the book *The World of the Red Fox*, by Leonard Lee Rue, and certainly agree with his statement describing the red fox. "To be fortunate enough to see the sun shining on a red fox as it stands against a pristine snowscape is to see the beau ideal of the animal world.

"Its coat, captured by the sun, takes on the tints and highlights of burnished gold and copper. The wind



playing in its fur, as if passing through a summer wheat-field, causes a constant change in its shadings and hues. These are subtleties that the eye can capture but the pen cannot."

**As I watched, the fox moved slowly** across the belly-deep snow, an impressive sight in its prime winter coat. The fur from the head trailing down the back was a dark rust color. Along the animals side the color faded to a flame-yellow before joining the belly fur, which like the surrounding snow, was white.

The fox approached a deadfall of old cottonwoods and searched among the branches for an early evening meal. Finding the cupboard bare, he lightly jumped atop an exposed stump and shook snow from his silky jet-black legs. The black color of the legs extended up to the hind legs—a perfect match for the dark pointed ear. The tail, which was the same dark rust color as the back and very bushy, was tipped at the end with white.

**Day had nearly given way to night** when the fox resumed his slow deliberate hunt. A short time later he crossed the old highway using a culvert to his advantage and disappeared from view.

The next several years I had several encounters with red foxes in the Ellis area. Watching these animals during most of the seasons you learn what remarkable critters they are.

**In addition to reds, northwest Kansas** affords you the opportunity of observing another member of the Kansas fox family—the swift.

The latin name for the north American red fox is *Vulpes fulva*. *Vulpes* meaning fox and *fulva* meaning yellow or brownish-yellow. So in the true sense of the word the red fox isn't red.

**With the reddish-yellow coloration** being the normal this fox also has several distinct color phases. Black, silver and the cross fox. A single litter of red foxes has been known to contain all phases.

The black phase of the red fox is black. The silver phase is black with frosted tips on the guard hairs. The phase known as the cross fox has a dark streak of hair that forms an X on the back of the animal.

**In Kansas, information available** and studies conducted on red fox, indicate that only the true red color inhabits our state. No specimens of any of the melanistic color phases have been collected.

According to Victor H. Cahalane in his book, *Mammals of North America*, one or more of these phases may be common or rare in various sections of the country. For example, in the eastern United States, practically all red foxes are really "red." In the Sierra Nevada, "cross" foxes are very common. In Alaska it seems that nearly half the animals are black, silver or cross.

**Cahalane also mentions another** variation of the red fox called a "samson" fox. This is simply a fox without guard-hairs. The pelt is wooly and almost worthless on the market.

The breeding season for the red fox is late winter when the shrill squall of the vixen (female fox) echos through the cold night air. Interested males will answer with a series of short barks.

**After mating the paired foxes** become almost inseparable. The remainder of the winter is spent hunting together and selecting a den site.

Foxes are not well equipped for digging and an area of loose dirt or sandy soil is generally selected. Many times the same den is used year after year and foxes are not above converting an old badger hole to suit their

Photos by Leonard Lee Rue





needs. Most dens and tunnels are simple but some have numerous chambers and a main tunnel up to fifty feet long.

I knew of one vixen that utilized an old car body just outside the city limits of Ellis for her den.

The gestation period of the red fox is 51 days and most litters are born in March and April. There have been cases of a litter being born in February but they are uncommon.

**Litters vary in size from four to fifteen** but a good average would place a normal litter around five. At birth the pups are a lead-brownish color and blind. Their eyes open in about 10 days but the young foxes remain in the den for the next 4 to 6 weeks.

Foxes form a close family unit. The vixen stays with the new-born pups the first few days, and the male brings her food. After this short period, and being nocturnal, she will resume her night hunting activities, nursing the pups during the day.

**During this time the male fox** continues to assist with the raising of the family. He is on constant guard for any approaching danger and either barks a warning or lures the intruder away from the den.

The pups start receiving food from the parents at the mouth of the den at about 10 weeks of age. A short time later trips are taken from the safety of their cave-type home. Not long jaunts, but it allows the young fox to explore their new world and play with their brothers and sisters.

**Like playful domestic kittens** the pups roll, wrestle and chase each other until exhausted they sprawl out in restful sleep. A natural defensive mechanism of the foxes is to play quiet. Only when one gets a little rough can you hear a growl or squeal of protest.

I received a call from Bud Keller who was a city policeman early one morning telling me that a litter of red pups were playing on the railroad tracks west of Ellis. I watched the area for several mornings and it was a comical sight when small red puff-balls appeared for their daily romps on the tracks.

**The tracks were located above the area** where the female had her den in the old car body. She had a dandy litter. When recess was in full swing a total of seven small reds would join the fun. They would chase each other, roll down the incline, return to the top and start all over again.

Only once did the adult make an appearance and it was brief. She spotted me about the same time I noticed her and a silent signal sent her young pups for the safety of the den.

**As the green leaves of summer** turn to gold the close family ties begin to weaken. It's time for the young foxes to find their own territories. They have spent the past four months being trained by the adults on the art of survival. Hunting skills have been tested on insects, frogs and small birds and are ready to go it alone.

Once the young fox leaves the den for good it is faced with the serious business of finding its own territory.





A given area will generally support only a limited number of any species so somebody has to go. During this time of movement the mortality among the foxes is high. They become more visible to hunters and many become victims of automobiles while crossing roadways.

If a fox overcomes all the pitfalls of our modern environment, and is able to establish a home range of its own, it has indeed shown a skill for staying alive.

**The fox, being a predator,** is kept on the move in search of food. The sharp-pointed ears are always alert for the slightest noise that can indicate the squeak of a mouse or movement of a rabbit. According to Leonard Lee Rue in his book *World of the Red Fox*, hearing is highly developed in the fox. It can hear a mouse squeal at about 150 feet if conditions are favorable. "I have on several occasions seen a hunting fox stop, cock its head, turn aside from the direction it was traveling, and locate a vole a hundred feet away," Rue said.

During normal conditions the fox will hunt in a slow, graceful trot into the wind. Every area is suspect and he stops frequently to inspect thickets, brush piles or old piles of discarded lumber. Once a game is heard or spotted the fox will freeze in an alert position. The attack will come with a short stiff-legged approach to the prey victim, ending with pounce. On other occasions the fox may approach the victim with the low profile of a hunting cat.

**Hunting in high brush or tall grass,** foxes have been observed standing on their hind legs in an attempt to locate the source of a noise.

Foxes, like other wild dogs, have a habit of catching much of their food. Carefully burying a portion of a recent kill, they will return later for a nibble or just to check the buried treasure. During a normal meal, about a pound of meat will be consumed by a fox.

A study conducted in Missouri and recorded in Charles and Elizabeth Schwartz's book, *The Wild Mammals of Missouri*, indicated the bulk of the red fox's diet is animal matter. The study was conducted on 886 red foxes; rabbits and mice comprised almost 59 percent of their diet. The remaining 42 percent was made up of other wild mammals, livestock, poultry, wild birds, carrion, insects and miscellaneous.

**One of the more infamous associations** the red foxes must live with is their reported raids on a "chicken coop." Being an opportunist, the fox will take advantage of any source of food. Poultry are no exception.

Like our Kansas coyotes, the red foxes probably get credit for many things they haven't done. Sure they'll kill a chicken but don't condemn the whole race for the deeds of a few. A human that is five-foot tall with red hair might rob a bank. But remember—all five-foot redheads aren't bankrobbers.

In *Mammals of North America*, Cahalane says of fox raids on poultry yards, "single fox families have been known to kill as many as one hundred and sixty chickens from a flock in two days. These exceptional instances

of guerilla warfare have given the fox a bad name. Many of the poultry remains, leg bones of partly-grown lamb and calves and young pigs found at dens are carrion salvaged from farmer's fields or dumps. Chickens can usually be protected by fencing, by a good watch dog, and by cutting down rank weeds or other growth through which the foxes might approach under cover. Under ordinary circumstances the red fox is a useful friend of the farmer."

**Sportsmen are often quick** to blame the fox for a scarcity of game birds. This is another myth that can be laid to rest. Like most predators they remove only the sick or weak birds from the wild which the hunters would never see anyway. Biological data gathered over the years has shown that red fox predation on game birds is not the limiting factor on populations.

George Whitaker, northwest law enforcement supervisor for the commission, observed an unusual encounter between red foxes and pheasants in the Colby area.

**"We had just dug out from a early blizzard** in November and I was looking out the back window of the regional office," George told me. "Standing in the snow behind the office were six rooster pheasants. The snow was deep and the birds were just milling around when I noticed two red foxes trotting towards them from the north. As the foxes approached, the birds split but never did fly," Whitaker recalled.

"One of the foxes made several runs at the pheasants but would break through the snow and was unable to catch them. The other red never showed any interest in the birds at all. For the next half-hour the pheasants and foxes played their cat and mouse game and finally both gave up. The birds walked off to the north and the foxes continued south. Must have been too weak from the storm and decided to heck with it."

**Natural enemies of the red fox** are few. As pups they are subject to some predation by horned owls, eagles, bobcats and coyotes. After reaching adulthood the foxes' ability to run and their intelligence protect them from all but the most aggressive predator.

With few enemies after the adult stage is reached the problem of overpopulation becomes a factor. Nature has a built-in force to handle the problem when wildlife numbers become very high.

**Diseases!**

A cruel method of control but effective. In *Mammals of North America*, Victor Cahalane, writes on the subject of diseases affecting fox populations.

**"Probably three-quarters of the** red fox population carries parasitic round worms and a smaller number harbor tapeworms," Cahalane noted. At times epidemic of rabies occur. A rabid fox loses all sense of fear, and in the last stages of the disease the unfortunate animal may race about the country, half-blind, drooling saliva, and snapping at dogs, cattle, persons, or inanimate objects. This is one of nature's most violent and spectacular means of correcting overpopulations of foxes, for when the animals become scarce the disease apparently disappears."



This is another good point for leaving wildlife where it belongs. In the wild.

During May of 1976 several cases of rabid red foxes were confirmed in the Newton, Kansas area. The illegal keeping of some of the animals caused ten people who handled the foxes to undergo a series of 21 rabies injections.

State game protector John Lingg who investigated the case for the commission was one of those receiving the rabies injections. According to Lingg, the first fox picked up and confirmed rabid by the diagnostic laboratory at Kansas State University, was wild. All others were red foxes taken from the wild and kept illegally as pets.

Only two of the people receiving the rabies shots were bitten by the animals. The remainder received the shots as a precautionary measure against the disease.

Lingg was concerned that a movement to eradicate all the red fox might develop when rabies were confirmed. "The problem was with the people, not the foxes," Lingg stated. "If people would just leave them alone they wouldn't have to undergo the painful series of shots."

Young foxes are cute, like most newborn wildlife. When taken from the wild and raised in captivity they normally can't be released back to the wild. They would be unable to take care of themselves. Once returned, they are usually easy prey for larger predators, or they starve without someone to feed them.

In Kansas, it is against the law to keep or confine wild animals.

The range of the red fox in the Sunflower State is now almost statewide. From its preferred habitat of the east they have expanded their range far to the west.

Several years ago when staff photographer Ken Stieben and I were traveling in northwest Kansas on an assignment to photograph the swift fox, our first encounter was with a red. As we pulled into Goodland on I-70 we were greeted by an adult red fox at the interchange. He was sitting on the side of the road content to watch the traffic go by.

Today an unfortunate phrase often heard when talking about wildlife species is—"What good is it?" or "Why do we need it?"

I am of the opinion that Leonard Lee Rue said it best in closing his book, *The World of the Red Fox*.

"The predator does naturally what all human wildlife and stock breeders try to do: it gets rid of inferior stock. Nature's law, 'survival of the fittest,' has produced the beautiful wild creatures that we know today, and among the most beautiful is the red fox. The aesthetic value to the average person who gets a glimpse of a red fox daintily going about its foxy business is beyond calculation. The red fox is neither good nor bad; it is merely a red fox, admirably fulfilling the niche for which it was created."





# OBSERVATIONS

## on the shooting sports

### HOW TO MAKE A SPORTSMAN OF YOUR SON

by

PETER BARRETT

Senior Editor, *Mechanix Illustrated*



PLAIN OLD WOODCHUCKS played a big part in my son Steve's becoming a sportsman. He was 9 when I took him on his first 'chuck hunt. Previously he'd learned to shoot various air guns at targets, then a .22 rifle and quite recently, a .222. Steve wanted to become a hunter in the worst way.

After he'd shot his first woodchuck and had admired and examined it thoroughly, I toted the animal to a nearby brook and skinned it, then dressed the carcass. Steve wanted the hide, but I had other plans for the meat.

"We're going to have woodchuck stew," I told him. "If you shoot a creature, you ought to eat it if you possibly can."

This was the beginning of a cam-

paign to instill in Steve a regard for wildlife.

The next logical step was to teach him not to take *too much*, and woodchuck stews helped—no one would want to make a career of eating these. And there was an aspect he hadn't thought of: "If we take every 'chuck in this field, there'll be none next year, or the year after."

It was the same with trout one day. We'd got into a terrific spot on a secluded stream and for once filled out our limits.

"May I catch just one more?"

"Sure, if you turn it loose."

Presently he caught the best fish of the day, and I knew that, if I let him keep it, my plans for him were done. "Put him back for next time," I said. Act the renegade, and so will your son.

Manners were something I worked on hard. I explained that, if someone was fishing a pool or hunting a cover when you got there, you shouldn't go charging in and spoil it for all. A perfect example occurred on a public stream we like in lower New York—someone was fishing our favorite meadow pool (just big enough for one person) when we arrived.

We stood watching, well back from the bank so as not to spook nearby fish. Soon Steve nudged me. He'd seen a trout rise behind a bush at the lower end of the pool. "Couldn't I try for that one?" Steve asked in a low voice.

It was tempting. But where does a little encroachment stop. I persuaded Steve to bypass the pool and try later. "Twenty minutes after that guy quits, they'll all be hitting again," I heard myself saying. This happens in remote areas, but I wasn't so sure about hard-fished Titicus Outlet.

An hour later we were back, empty-handed. But we had the pool to ourselves now. While I enjoyed a fresh pipe on the bank, Steve caught the trout by the bush and another, so I was a prophet with honor that day.

Steve is 24 now and an accomplished rifleman, considerate of

game animals (he won't fire unless he can make a sure shot) and people as well. I've noticed that, when we take one of his friends fishing, Steve makes an effort to put our guest in the best spots.

We don't eat woodchuck stew at our house any more, though we still hunt the critters occasionally. Steve proposed another way to show regard for our quarry—we'd keep the tails and use their long hairs on fishing lures, dressing up the treble hooks of certain spinners.

I've kept for the last the toughest part of becoming a sportsman: losing gracefully. And believe me, this is a difficult achievement to put across to kids when grownups are so much more experienced and composed than they. You can set a good example yourself, and preach a little, but is it catching?

Anyhow, what gave me hope that Steve was learning to lose occurred on the last day of our vacation on Florida's west coast. Steve had wanted to shoot a crow on the beach with his .22 rifle, but I'd not let him because of the danger to others from ricochets.

This morning we were there early, and the beach empty. Steve was going on 10 and, since he'd become obsessed with swearing, we were trying to break him of the habit by fining him 10¢ a swearword. I drove the car slowly. Then Steve yelled for me to stop—there was a crow on a dead fish about 100 yards away.

He got out, slipping his arm into the sling as he scuttled ahead bent over, then sat on the sand and steadied the rifle. At this precise moment, a sports car hurtled from behind us and flashed down the beach. The crow flew off.

Steve came back. When he reached my door, I could see he was fighting back tears, and fighting mad besides. "The damned bastard!" he said, "Here's twenty cents!"

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