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By the time the dust from last year's income tax season had settled, it was July, and the Chickadee Check-off for nongame wildlife had accumulated a \$127,000 endowment courtesy of 24,000 Kansas taxpayers. In the six months since the funds have been available, nongame has seen a lot of effort in its behalf. Consider the projects already under way:

- A survey of wintering eagle populations in Kansas;
- Installation of bird feeders and permanent wildlife habitat at nursing homes across the state;
- Funding for a nature trail and natural area at the Sedgwick County Zoo;
- Arrangements for a wildlife observation tower at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, one of the finest wetlands in the Midwest;
- Expansion of the raptor rehabilitation program in Salina;
- Partial support of the cooperative backyard bird

bundle program, a project designed to encourage homeowners to develop wildlife habitat;

- Research on the population status and distribution of a host of nongame species.

In addition to these efforts, the Fish and Game Commis-

sion and Nongame Wildlife Advisory Board are discussing possible nongame habitat projects at Ernie Miller Park in Johnson County, Chaplin Nature Center in Cowley County, and at sites in Lawrence and Topeka. At least three rare nongame species, the peregrine falcon, mountain plover, and swallow-tailed kit, may be reintroduced to Kansas with Chickadee Check-off funds. Another vital part of the Chickadee Check-off effort is education. Seventy-six films and film strips have been purchased and are available for use in schools, and check-off support has helped produce the Kansas Museum of Natural History's new book, *Mammals of Kansas*.

The program is just beginning, and its potential is almost unlimited—provided support from Kansans remains high. It's a pioneering effort that needs your help, and in this year of the tax cut, there's no better time to pitch in. Do something wild again this year. □



***Nongame Still
Needs Your Help***

*Criticism
of our premier
waterfowl conser-
vation group has
grown with the success
of its fund raising campaigns.
Is the criticism justified?*

Ducks Unlimited

Bob Mathews

It may seem a poor pun to describe the 1930s as a “watershed” in the waterfowl conservation movement in North America. But it’s true. It was the lack of water during the interminable droughts of that decade that resulted in meaningful action aimed at assuring the future of waterfowl. Like many reforms borne of hard times, the continental affliction remembered as the “Dirty Thirties” bestowed wisdom and a will to make adjustments before it was too late.

Already victims of a collapsing economy, duck hunters venturing into the marshes in the fall of 1929 were met with a worrisome lack of ducks. The following hunting seasons were even worse. The Dust Bowl was a disaster for most of the North American continent. Wildlife, of course, was no exception and ducks were among the hardest hit. Much of the worst drought occurred on the most productive duck breeding territory on the continent—Canada’s prairie provinces, western Minnesota, the Dakotas, Iowa, Nebraska, and eastern Montana.

Waterfowlers gained much through the sobering effects of the 1930s. In 1929, the Migratory Bird Conservation Act became law, authorizing a national system of waterfowl refuges. The first nationwide effort to census wintering waterfowl came in 1934. The same year produced the Duck Stamp Act—an effective means of raising money to acquire waterfowl habitat in the U.S.—and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. The Pittman-Robertson Act, enacted in 1937, provided a new source of funds for wildlife work from a tax on firearms and ammunition.

The private sector was becoming more involved during the same period. The year 1937 also brought the first appearance of one of the best-known private conservation organizations ever devised—Ducks Unlimited. The businessmen and conservationists who launched the group were concerned that a void existed in waterfowl restoration plans. They urgently felt something had to be done to preserve habitat in Canada, especially since Canada had no legislation that

provided revenues for waterfowl habitat improvement in the provinces. U.S. law forbade spending public funds in a foreign country. So, the private organization established its goal as the preservation and improvement of that neglected Canadian resource. To put the fledging organization’s contributions to work, Ducks Unlimited of Canada was organized a year later, providing the means to undertake the first field work in that country.

Today, forty-five years later, DU is still pursuing its objective with a single-minded dedication that continues to be the hallmark of the organization’s efforts. The stakes are much higher now, though. After a slow, steady climb the organization’s membership and annual net revenues have made huge leaps in the past few years. Consider this: DU has raised as much money in the last three years as in all previous years combined. Its 1980 earnings alone equalled its entire earnings from 1937 to 1971. Its earnings have grown by an average annual rate of twenty-five percent since 1965.

Much of that dramatic increase is the result of a change in tactics. For the first thirty years of its existence, DU relied mainly on membership fees and contributions from individuals for the bulk of its revenues. Those sources still are important but the dominant





money-maker now is the annual banquet conducted by nearly 2,000 local DU chapters across the land. More than half of the annual earnings are the result of those fund-raising dinners, which have evolved into festive occasions where members pay good money . . . and lots of it . . . for sporting goods items auctioned or raffled off. Donated guns, artwork, outdoor gear and other valuables are converted by an auctioneer into cash for the cause. Membership dues and fund-raising dinners together account for three-fourths of annual revenues.

The growth of DU in Kansas is evidence of the tremendous gains achieved nationwide, notes Lee Queal, regional director for DU and the only salaried employee the organization has in the state. In 1979, Queal explains, Kansas DU raised total net revenues of \$270,000. In 1980, the figure swelled to \$324,000. In 1981, the total reached \$464,000.

"There's a lot of groundwork behind that growth," says state Chairman Russ Brown, a Wichita insurance executive. He credits the state affiliate's success to the behind-the-scenes labors of hundreds of active DU volunteers who help organize banquets and membership drives and new chapters throughout the state. Local chapters range in size from several hundred

members to a handful. One county, whose entire population doesn't exceed 12,000 souls, has two active chapters. Smaller towns like St. Francis and Atwood, which recently organized local chapters, represent the growing constituency that forms the foundation of the national organization.

"There doesn't appear to be any real limit on where a chapter can be successful," says Queal.

Part of DU's growth also must be attributed to the camaraderie its members share, says Brown. When he joined back in 1960, Brown perceived a slightly cliquish attitude among DU members. But the appeal of the organization's cause has welcomed a diverse collection of Americans, especially in the last twenty years, Brown notes. The friendship and sense of purpose, he says, is especially evident at the international convention every year. The 1981 convention was in Kansas City. Brown expects the same sense of kinship to prevail when the company presidents and small businessmen, ministers and blue-collar workers now comprising the membership convene this May in Reno, Nevada.

In the wide view, the DU setup is simple. The U.S. organization raises money. Its Canadian counterpart spends it. Lately, they've been especially good at rais-



ing money. To the critics who contend they should spend some of that money here in the U.S., DU officials respond that there already is significant provision in this country through means such as the Duck Stamp Act for funds committed to waterfowl habitat development inside our boundaries. And Canada, they continue, still is without any similar means at the federal level for funding wetlands work.

A relatively small part of DU's revenues—about five percent—come from the sale of state duck stamps. Some sixteen states have implemented their own state duck stamp programs. Many of those have dedicated a portion of their stamp revenues to DU for use in

Canada. Those stamps have been a source of controversy in some states. The arguments that preceded passage of Oklahoma's state duck stamp program two years ago provide an example. When the Department of Wildlife Conservation advanced a plan to commit all state stamp revenues to waterfowl projects within the state, Oklahoma DU officials objected. One declared publicly that they would oppose such a bill. Department officials responded that Oklahoma sportsmen already were contributing significantly to DU and that it was time to spend some money on ducks inside the state. That was the version finally implemented.

But the argument and rebuttal in that case sounds



Ron Spomer



Ron Spomer



Ducks Unlimited



strangely familiar to claims by some that DU should spend some of its money in this country. DU spokesmen respond that their members already support wildlife work in this country through purchase of federal duck stamps, payment of excise taxes dedicated to wildlife conservation, and membership in other private conservation organizations functioning in the U.S.

The principal Canadian breeding ground for North American waterfowl is in the fertile prairies of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It is there that DU has focused its investments. Although northern Canada is a seemingly limitless expanse of lakes, the real duck

factory is in the 160,000-square-mile region in south-central Canada. And there is more than enough left to do in that region alone to commit their money to, DU officials contend.

The organization's investments haven't been in real estate; DU buys no land, constructing its projects on land under long-term easement agreements with private landowners. Federal and provincial governments of Canada also have agreed to long-term leases of their lands to DU. Once permission is granted to develop a marsh, engineers design water level controls necessary for maximum waterfowl production. Simple earth dams at the outlet of some marshes help store water to

outlast drought. Diverting water into natural depressions assures a steadier supply of water. Channeling surplus water from outlying potholes into one main pond helps assure at least some water even in dry years. Gates that control flow of water between pools allow maximum benefit during nesting and brood-rearing season.

Through 1980, DU has raised more than \$133 million, which has funded wetland conservation projects in three million acres of Canadian prairie. But even that impressive figure seems pale and bloodless compared to the bold plans DU has devised for its near future. Last year, national DU officers announced their intentions to pour \$230 million into habitat restoration in the next five years.

"In our first forty-three years we have reserved three million acres," said DU President Robert Marcotte, in announcing the plan last fall. "At least six million acres of breeding wetlands will have to be conserved to ensure the future of waterfowl. As society expands its demand for land, the remaining three million acres must be set aside more quickly."

As in the U.S. however, Canadian-born waterfowl face a challenge created by the growing demand for agricultural crops. Ducks aren't the only creatures who prefer the rich prairies of the central provinces; Canadian grain producers are eager to reap commodities for an expanding world market. The Canadian Wheat Board has urged farmers in Canada to gear up for expanded wheat export opportunities, including bringing an additional five million acres into production.

In addition to that challenge, DU is implicitly involved in the bad press waterfowl have created for themselves among some farmers. It's an unusually long suffering wheatgrower whose opinion of waterfowl isn't diminished by the sight of them feasting on his crops. The Canadian climate doesn't help; a short growing season and damp environment in the prairie pothole region forces farmers to swath their crops, leaving the grain in the field to dry properly. The interval between crop swathing and removal of those crops from the field makes Canadian farmers especially vulnerable to crop depredations by waterfowl.

Losses of grain in Canada have become so serious that a variety of major efforts have been made to alleviate them. Scare devices aimed at dispersing birds from the fields, or spreading grain near marshes to lure birds from unharvested fields are techniques generally considered too expensive and cumbersome to do much good. Provincial governments in Saskatchewan and Alberta undertook crop depredation insurance programs, partially funded by hunting license surcharges but still the farmers' complaints that Canadian and U.S. governments are not doing enough persist.

The waterfowl-agriculture conflict gained immediacy in 1980, when the Saskatchewan government

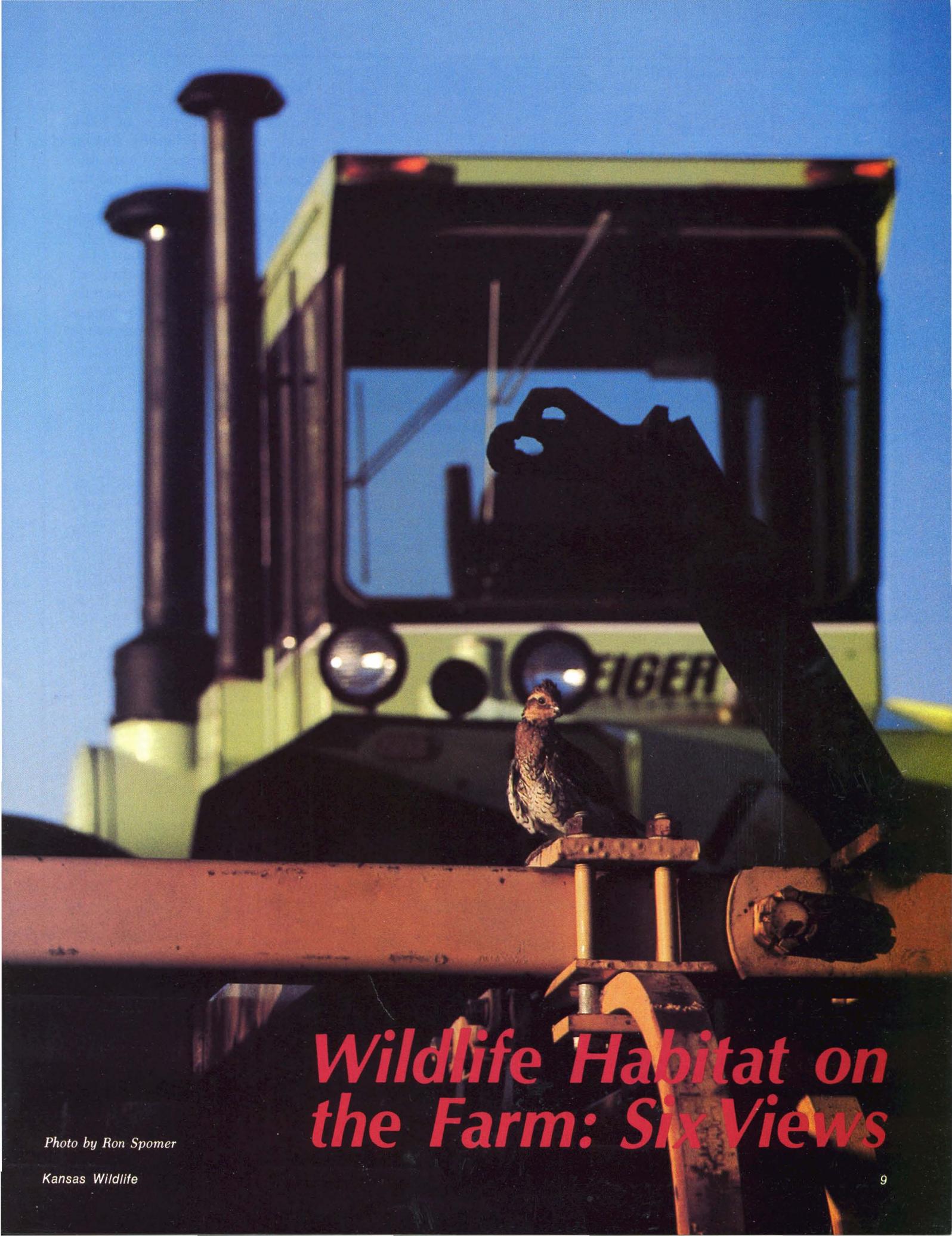
placed a temporary moratorium on DU development the government considered potentially aggravating to the crop depredation problem. After much head-scratching, DU Canada drew up a plan to include crop depredation prevention in its plans for marsh development. By obtaining uplands around marshes, then planting strips of grain there for the specific purpose of luring birds away from adjacent farmer-owned crop-fields, DU hopes to design a way out of that problem.

The success of that approach will be told by depredation mitigating success of the "Heritage Marshes"—a handful of prime marshes being developed in Saskatchewan. DU will get some help in the project from other conservation groups. The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Saskatchewan Natural History Society, and Nature Conservancy of Canada will help secure control of marsh bottom lands and purchase uplands near the marshes for the planting of lure crops. The Saskatchewan government also will be involved, contributing Crown land in the marshes and administering the crop damage prevention program under a federal/provincial agreement.

DU officials point to such projects when asked why they don't become more actively involved in lobbying the various governments on the North American continent for a continent-wide waterfowl management program. Why not, ask some DU critics, spend some of that money to staff a legislative lobbying arm? DU officials are steadfast in their objections to that notion, preferring to confine their expenditures to a more traditional endeavor—specific marsh development projects. DU spokesmen also contend that the day-to-day work they undertake in the U.S. and Canada does involve them with governments in a way that allows them to get their point across without lobbying.

Indeed, continues the rebuttal, projects such as the Heritage Marshes may provide the impetus for a continent-wide approach to waterfowl management if they succeed. *Proving* it can be done may do as much as trying to convince skeptical lawmakers that it can be done, DU staffers say.

There are any number of righteous causes to support these days. For sportsmen and wildlifers of all kinds, the list of worthy struggles is seemingly endless. Ducks Unlimited's growing appeal may be primarily due to the organization's strong tradition and the fact that contributors like to see their money put to work on the ground. DU's achievements in its first forty-five years, along with its plans for the future, are measured in concrete terms: acres of wetlands preserved, miles of shoreline created, number of individual marsh projects developed, and the like. For prospective DU supporters, being able to actually see the results of their contributions is all the incentive that is required. And DU's success in doing the job it set out to do is assurance enough that its primary purpose will remain unchanged. □



*Wildlife Habitat on
the Farm: Six Views*

Photo by Ron Spomer

Kansas Wildlife

Land works hard in the Midwest. Probably no other piece of real estate on the globe is more productive. In 1980, U.S. farms, mainly in the Midwest, produced twenty-eight percent of all the feed grain grown in the world and eighteen percent of all the wheat. Some of this incredible production is due to the efficiency of American agricultural technology; much of it is the result of the hard work of generations of American farmers. But sophisticated machinery and sweat alone can't account for the abundance of our farm output. What sets us apart is the fertility of our prairie sod, perhaps the most unique, most valuable resource on the continent.

As the world has gotten hungrier and farming has drifted away from the hand-to-mouth family operation, the immense value of American farmland has been increasingly reflected in its price tag. The best tracts in the Corn Belt have sold for more than \$4000 an acre in the last few years, and, even at that price, willing sellers were hard to find. As chilly as the economic climate is at the moment, such land may still bring as much as \$3500 an acre.

When an acre of corn ground gets that expensive, it *has* to produce. There's no such thing as a "waste corner" where a little benign neglect can support a few pheasants and songbirds. While economics don't exert quite the same pressure on more marginal land, the dollar pinch leads to roughly the same result.

The conflict between farm economics and wildlife has been around for a long time. Aldo Leopold, founder of modern wildlife management, recognized it in the late 1920s and proposed what may be the only workable solu-

tion in his book, *GAME SURVEY OF THE NORTHCENTRAL STATES*. In his view, it was vital to "recognize the landowner as the custodian of public game . . . and compensate him for putting his land in productive condition. Compensate him either publicly or privately, with either cash, service, or protection, for the use of his land and for his labor, on condition that he preserves the game seed and otherwise safeguards the public interest. In short, make game management a partnership enterprise in which the landholder, the sportsman, and the public each derive appropriate rewards."

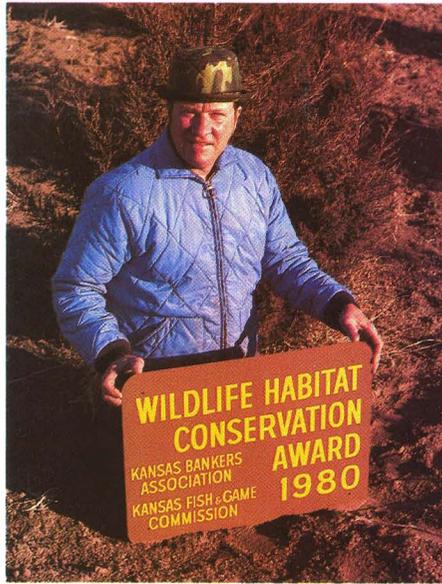
Since the 1930 appearance of *GAME SURVEY*, some progress has been made toward Leopold's solution. The Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service have been established and directed to help the farmer with his conservation efforts. The federal government has undertaken sweeping programs like the C.C.C. in the Thirties and Soil Bank and Cropland Adjustment Program (C.A.P.) in the late Fifties and early Sixties. On the state level, trespass laws have been tightened and more state game protectors hired to help enforce them. Some states have reduced taxes on land that is left in wildlife habitat. A few have even paid farmers to set land aside. And there isn't a state conservation agency in the country that won't go out of its way to advise a farmer who wants to do something for wildlife on his land. The Kansas Fish and Game Commission's Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) is typical of programs that have been set up to help the farmer help wildlife.

If all these programs and agen-

cies had been in place in 1925, much of the Midwest's topsoil would still be growing corn and wheat instead of settling into the bayous of the Mississippi delta. Farmland would be more productive, and wildlife would be more varied and abundant. Unfortunately, the conservation effort on private land has generally failed to keep up with the intensifying economic demands made on the modern American farmer. In the short run at least, he sees wildlife as a losing proposition. Until more help and more money become available to support habitat development on private land, most farmers will leave wildlife to fend for itself. They feel they have no other choice.

The landowners who appear on the following pages take a different view of the situation. They have all made major commitments to wildlife on their property, each in a different way and for different reasons. What they seem to share is a way of looking at the land that parallels Aldo Leopold's classic statement of the land ethic:

"It of course goes without saying that economic feasibility limits the tether of what can and cannot be done for land. It always has and it always will. The fallacy the economic determinists have tied around our collective neck, and which we now need to cast off, is the belief that economics determines *all* land use. This is simply not true. The bulk of all land relations hinges on investments of time, forethought, skill, and faith rather than on investments of cash. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." □



Northwest

Ron Little

The Critser Farm

Bob L. Critser of WaKeeney, Kansas operates a wheat farm of 640 acres.

Critser's enjoyment of the outdoors and his desire to learn farming led him to hire on with the previous landowner. After the owner's death, Bob inherited the land and moved to the farm.

Before Bob began working with the landowner, the farm had little wildlife habitat. When he started with the WHIP program, he added a number of tree and shrub plots on his land. He has planted over 500 cedar, plum, and autumn olive trees in six plots strategically located on south-facing slopes to gather heat during the cold winter months. He has set aside seventy acres of ungrazed rangeland and planted clover for nesting and fawning of wildlife in the area, and he has limited grazing on fifty more acres. These acres had been grazed moderately and offered few benefits to wildlife in general.

On his cropland, Bob has left weedy fence rows and practiced a summer fallow program. Around most of his farm field borders, he has developed excellent cover, discing a thirty-yard strip around the edge of his wheat stubble to allow forbs such as fireweed to grow. In addition, he has planted milo along the grass and tree plots for food, built brush piles in the rangeland, and

broadcast grain after severe winter storms. He is also interested in trying new techniques such as burning his rangeland to encourage native grasses and forbs and he is planning to convert twenty additional acres to wildlife habitat.

Bob's main goal in these efforts has been "to manage my land in a way to conserve natural resources rather than to accumulate wealth for myself," and he has done just that. He has seen an increase in wildlife such as deer, rabbit, quail, pheasant, and many species of nongame birds.

Because of the techniques Bob uses in his farming operation, he has managed to develop the habitat on his farm with little loss of income. He has built a small pond on his rangeland at his own expense to provide a water source for wildlife. Even though WHIP has not put any black ink in his ledger, Critser feels the program will benefit him in long-range conservation of soil, water, and wildlife.

An avid hunter and fisherman himself, Bob is happy to open his land to any sportsmen asking permission to use it for hunting and fishing. An old farm house on his farm is available to hunters during hunting seasons. Groups from Boy Scouts and school classes to the elderly visit his farm and are often taken hunting, fishing, or sight-seeing.

Why this commitment to wildlife? Bob explains it this way:

"I was born in eastern Kansas, where there was a lot of cover—trees, brush, water, and everything wild game needed to survive the bad winter. They had protection from the hazards of predators.

"I started hunting with my father when I was very young. At age five, I received my first rifle. At age nine, I received my first shotgun, a .410.

"My father told me about wildlife—the things they needed to survive, the places they needed to live. We moved to Great Bend when I was seventeen. It was an entirely different kind of cover for wildlife than I was used to—extremely flat land. I asked my Dad, 'where do the birds and animals live out here?' He laughed and said, 'It's not easy for them. They stay along rivers and in the wheat fields.' It was quite a shock to me to think anything could survive that way. I thought right then that something needed to be done.

"But the war was on, so I joined the U.S. Navy. After my stay in the service, I got married and later moved to WaKeeney with my family.

"Out there, I found even less cover for wild game. I worked in the oil fields and saw a lot of different styles of farming. I saw the start of land terracing—fence rows cleaned and milo fields cut to the ground. There wasn't anything left to protect the birds and animals. This has always bothered me. Still, there was nothing I could do about it. I was glad to see the reservoirs that were built through the fifties and sixties. I have seen game flock to those areas after the Fish and Game Commission of Kansas started their wildlife conservation programs. I liked this! I tried to help do what I could. I read books, talked with our biologists and game commissioners. I helped build fish plots at the lake with cedar trees, discarded Christmas trees, and tires.

"I've worked on this farm since 1954. I had two jobs for twenty years

as I was raising six children and needed more money than one job would bring in. Being on the farm was the greatest, as I could see a future here, my dreams. My children are all married now. We have ten grandchildren. I am trying to build this farm into a place where, in the future years, not only my children, grandchildren, but others also will have a place to hunt and fish.

"I'm proud to be a part of our conservation and wildlife habitat

improvement program. I will continue the rest of my life to help in what I can. I have taught and still teach youth in the Kansas Hunter Safety programs. I work with other youth groups showing them what has been done here on the farm. I have retired from the other jobs that I held, and live on the farm. We also travel to other states and enjoy hunting and fishing. I am presently fifty-four, and still going strong."

Bob's commitment to wildlife and

hunting has not gone unrecognized. He has been a recipient of the following awards: 1980 Kansas Bowhunter of the Year and 1980 Kansas Farmer of the Year through Kansas Bowhunter Association. He was a member of the Kansas 1978 team competing in the tenth Annual National Bowhunt in Douglas, Wyoming. The Critsers are also recipients of the first Wildlife Habitat Award in Trego County "which is our pride and joy for years to come." □

Mule deer

Ron Spomer



The Kimmell Ranch

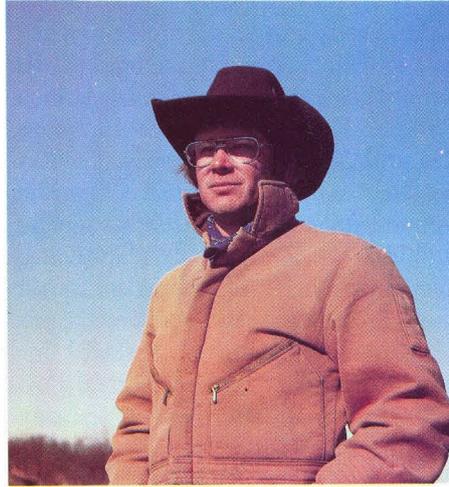
Located along the scenic Medicine Lodge River in southeastern Barber County, the Medicine River Ranch is a prime example of a working ranch. Owned by A.T. and C.E. Kimmell, the ranch is managed by A.T.'s son, Bill, who is thirty years old. The ranch covers 2,100 acres along both sides of the Medicine River. There are about 1,730 acres in prime grassland, eighty acres in forage, 100 acres in alfalfa, 100 acres in wheat, and ninety acres that are managed strictly for wildlife.

A.T. Kimmell is a state veterinarian and has had a clinic for a number of years, serving the ranchers in this area. Bill grew up in the outdoors, following his father on his visits to local ranchers and helping with the veterinary work. Hunting and fishing were an important part of his early life, and it shows in his attitudes about wildlife. The Kimmell brothers bought the property in 1972. At that time the ranch was billed as a "wildlife refuge," which it was, to some degree.

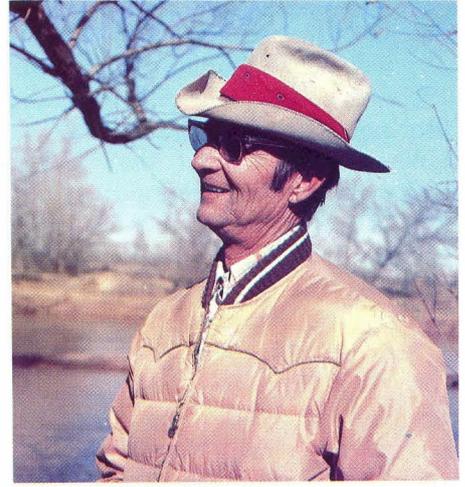
Bill Kimmell has managed the ranch since 1973, and, when asked how he likes his work, he admits that, "I enjoy it and can't think of anything I would rather be doing." A little background check on Bill turned up the fact that he has done his share of bull riding in the past. I imagine managing a 2,000-acre ranch is somewhat less nerve wracking.

When Bill took over managerial

Bill Kimmell



A. T. Kimmell



duties he found that, unlike most agricultural land, the ranch was overendowed with cover. Grasslands, trees, and shrubs were not managed properly and, in the case of the grass, old growth and duff were actually choking the stand out. Bill arranged with the local range technician with the Soil Conservation Service to set up a rotation grazing system. He has used this system since then, and the range improvement is very noticeable. Half the ranch operation is cow-calf, half is yearling or bred heifers. Cross fencing was installed and a rotation grazing period of twenty-one days established. Along with this, Bill is using controlled burning as a tool to keep his grass in good to excellent condition and composition.

When asked about the twenty-one day rotation, Bill said, "From my observation, wildlife tends to move in right after I take the cows off. They follow the same pattern." He went on to say that, "We have thirty-six miles of fence now so you ride fence often, but it's worth it when you see the grass and wildlife respond as it has."

When asked what farming practices he used that also help wildlife, Bill's response was typical. "On our forage operation, we always leave a strip for wildlife along the edge as well as in some of the corners. Rotation grazing also provides excellent nesting and brood-rearing cover for both quail and pheasants. From my

viewpoint, it looks like good grass management is also good wildlife management."

Are there any other management practices that he is planning for wildlife?

"I'm looking at a food plot or two down along the river when I get the time to put them in. I guess the main thing I want to do is just maintain the area in good condition. I'm pretty well satisfied with the situation now and will try to keep it that way." When asked if his ranching and farming for wildlife have caused him to lose money, Bill thought for a while before responding.

"You know, I haven't thought about that, but no, I can't say it has. Oh, we could get a few more bales of forage or graze another cow or two on that ninety acres but as far as losing money, no." A.T. chimed in with, "We have always felt that wildlife, livestock, and farming go hand in hand and we have operated with that in mind." Bill went on, "This sandy land here—you have to be careful with it. Done right, it will produce for you. I look at wildlife as being one-third of our operation—it all goes together."

My next question was economic in nature also: Have your wildlife efforts made you any money? Bill laughed while responding, "You bet. We lease our ground for pheasant and quail hunting, and we made more on this lease than we did on

260 head of steers. You have to consider that the cow market is not all that good, but leasing helps in other ways not related to money.”

Both A.T. and Bill mentioned trespass problems, but they point out that the lease holders do a good job of patrolling the place. Says Bill, “This relieves us of some of the bother of dealing with trespassers.”

During the course of the conversation it became apparent that both A.T. and Bill share a love for the outdoors in general and wildlife in particular. They both apply for firearms deer permits every year. When they draw permits, they both harvest nice bucks off their ranch. When questioned about their deer hunting experiences, Bill began laughing and gave the following account of deer hunting with his father, A.T.

“Dad is the kind of person who has a hard time sitting still. Opening morning we have our deer stands picked out, usually in a large tree near a deer trail. About mid-morn-

ing, if we haven’t gotten our deer, I will drive around and pick up whoever is hunting with me and Dad. Almost always, he’s not on his stand. We spend a lot of time looking for him and usually find him out walking around through the timber hunting deer. We feel that a stand is the most productive way of hunting deer if we could just keep Dad in his stand. Consequently, we fixed up a permanent blind on a windmill for him to use. It’s attached high up on the windmill braces and comes equipped with a floor, walls, and a space heater. He can let down a portion of one side to shoot from. The thing that keeps him in one place is the latch I put on the outside of the door.” Not wanting to get involved in a family discussion on this matter, I didn’t mention that “upstairs” deer hunting shack when A.T. joined us a little later in the day.

Has Bill considered leasing the turkey and deer hunting also? Bill responded by saying, “We have thought about that for some time

since the turkey flock has developed to some 200 birds and the deer seem to be everywhere. My feeling is that we could, but it will take a lot more planning than we do for the bird lease. Every deer hunter wants to shoot a big old buck, and we know you have to take some does, too. I don’t know, maybe we will. Time will tell.”

Bill, Charlie Swank (district game biologist), and I drove down to the ninety-acre wildlife area, and on the way, passed through a heavy catalpa grove.

“This grove is really a fine place to see turkeys in the spring,” said Bill. “I often have friends and neighbors in to watch them gobble and strut. They even get some good pictures when they sit still long enough.”

The wildlife area we visited was all fenced and had a lot of heavy cover. Bill indicated that, “It looks like it’s about time for another fire. This year’s growth has been real heavy and there’ll be a lot of duff come spring.” Charlie, too, thought

Antelope



a fire might be warranted given the right set of circumstances.

"Running a fire on sandy land, you have to be a little more critical in your timing than you do on harder ground."

From the wildlife area, we took a tour down along the Medicine River and picked up A.T. On the way, A.T. was somewhat concerned about the lack of beaver signs.

"I know that oil rig that went over and spilled all that salt water in the river got some beaver. I haven't seen any since that happened last spring. We've got plenty of new-growth cottonwood and willow, and I'd like to see a few around. Is there any way to pick some up?"

Charlie fielded the question by answering that, "Beaver will come back into the area over a period of time. If we have a damage complaint, though, we'll live trap a few and try to get them down here."

The river bank was marked by deer sign. Turkey tracks as well as the tracks of raccoon and opossum

were very much in evidence. Bill was feeling a little philosophical and we got to talking about the outdoors, ranching, and wildlife in general.

"You know," Bill said, "sometimes my mind gets so full of beef prices or the lack of them, wheat prices, whether to buy steers this year or plan on bred heifers that I just have to get away. I'll saddle up and take a ride down here along the river and maybe put up a covey of quail or bust a buck out of one of the plum thickets. Awhile back, I came up on a couple of bucks fighting it out down in a little hollow. These times seem to get my mind off the everyday work load, and I find I'm a little more relaxed and can think better when I get back."

After a day on the ranch, I could understand what Bill was saying. Just being there was soothing.

On our way out of the area, Bill said, "I feel we can afford to leave some ground and cover idle for wildlife. You more than make up

anything lost by the improved range condition."

After dropping Bill and A.T. off at the cattle pens, we stopped and took a few pictures of the longhorn bulls he uses to breed his first-time heifers. One big, red longhorn steer was sharing the pasture with the bulls and posed for us. A nostalgic ending for what had been a fine morning visiting with people who share a deep feeling for the land and all that goes with it.

Before leaving we made one more stop just outside the main entrance. There, on the gate, side by side, were two signs, one indicating that this ranch had won the Soil Conservation Service's Soil and Water Conservation Award, and the other the 1980 Wildlife Habitat Conservation Award. One got the feeling that, at least in this place, the land is in good hands. □

Ron Spomer

Jackrabbit

Ron Spomer



Northcentral Steve Sorenson

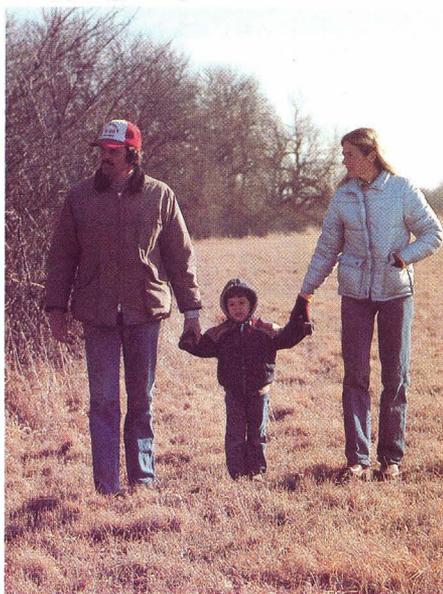
The Burr Farm

I was to have met Steve Burr at his home northwest of Salina, but I found him with his four-year-old son Jed trimming trees on his farm two miles farther south. These four acres of trees had been planted in the spring of 1980 under the WHIP program as a combination firewood plantation-wildlife area. Steve feels periodic trimming of the thornless honeylocust and walnuts helps the young trees get a good start. His black lab, Sadie, was trying to locate some pheasants that were using the weeds growing in the tree rows and was occasionally kicking out a hen.

Steve was also marking some "thornless" honeylocust trees that had turned out to be not so thornless. A losing battle with a honeylocust several years ago left him with scars enough to convince him to eliminate the trees before they present the same potential problem. His comment about the high percentage of thorny renegades was not favorable.

Steve started farming in 1973 when he and his wife, Ginny, purchased 160 acres of wheat ground adjacent to Mulberry Creek. Approximately three-quarters of a mile of riparian timber and five-eighths of a mile of hedge provided the only habitat on the farm. In 1976, they acquired an additional eighty acres of native prairie, where they subsequently built their home, then added another cultivated eighty acres in

Steve, Jinny, and Jed Burr



1977. Steve began farming his father's ground in 1981. This 700-acre operation produces wheat, milo, alfalfa, and prairie hay.

Steve isn't your typical landowner. He received a degree in wildlife biology from Colorado State University in 1970 and has worked in the national wildlife refuge system with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He has a strong interest in nongame wildlife and currently works nine months of the year as a regional representative for the National Parks and Conservation Association, a private organization based in Washington. The three months "off" each year are reserved strictly for farming. As a representative of the Kansas Audubon Council, Steve currently serves as chairman of the Kansas Nongame Wildlife Advisory Council, a nine-member organization that advises the Kansas Fish and Game Commission on expending funds generated through the nongame income tax check-off system.

He is also concerned about the increasing permanent loss of agriculture land to non-agriculture purposes, such as urban sprawl, highways, and reservoir construction.

"We don't see it as much in Kansas," he says, "because of the vast amount of agriculture land in the state. But the problem is here and we can see some of the effects especially around urban centers in Kansas."

Steve's farming operation reflects his concern for all wildlife. While much of his interest resulted from early hunting experiences with his father, his personal commitment has gone beyond that point.

"I was a real estate broker when I started farming, and with an adequate outside income, I wanted to try out some different farming practices that allowed production to stay high and also benefitted wildlife."

One of his ideas involves reducing the drying effect of the hot Kansas winds. Steve has divided one field with three-row shelterbelts planted 400 feet center to center. Each shelterbelt consists of a tree row with a row of shrubs on each side.

"The tree species planted were selected because they grow to forty feet when they mature. A shelterbelt will protect plants for a distance of ten times the height of the tree downwind. Each shelterbelt should protect the soil for 400 feet, where I've planted another shelterbelt. When these trees mature, they should drastically reduce wind desiccation on row crops and thus increase my yield."

Many people would say that what Steve expects to gain from eliminating wind desiccation will be lost to the tree roots sapping the moisture. At one time this was probably true, but recent work by the Fish and Game Commission has demonstrated you can have your shelterbelt and produce grain adjacent to it by using a root plow. The root plow is nothing more than a twenty-four-inch single shank ripper that severs the lateral roots which spread to the adjacent crop field and sap moisture from summer crops. By using a root plow once every four to five years, average yields of row crops can be produced right up to the shelterbelt. This permits the shelterbelts to break the wind without causing any unwanted side effects.

To date, Steve has reseeded thirty acres back to native grass and forbs and planted 20,000 woody trees and shrubs.

"When we first reseeded the grass," he says, "all we had were

the YELLOW Pages



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LETTERS to the editor

THANKS FROM OHIO

I'd like to say how much a group of fellows from Ohio appreciates Kansas hospitality. We have been making the 900-mile trip for the past seven years and we hope to make many more trips to hunt pheasant in Kansas.

We have made so many friends out there, and have been treated so great, we would not dare miss a year. The farmers here in Ohio certainly would not treat us the way Kansas people do. We thank your citizens for their great hospitality and hope to see all of our friends again next year.

Jerry Herbert
Sidney, OH

ON RIVERS

I picked up the July/August 1981 issue of your magazine in my dentist's reception room. I was really impressed with the article, "The Neosho." The photography was excellent and the article was very well written.

The article, "Goodbye to the Ark," caused a great sadness. I have known for quite some time this was happening. It has happened also to the Pawnee and the Rattlesnake. Recently, a relative who lives on the Pawnee in Hodgeman County told me that irrigation in the Pawnee Valley had lowered the water table to nine

feet below the river bed and the river no longer flows.

I formerly lived at St. John in Stafford County and spent many happy hours fishing this beautiful meandering stream (the Rattlesnake). This was in the 1940's. A friend recently told me that the same thing is happening to the Rattlesnake. I sincerely hope the state's Water Resources Board does something soon to alleviate this. However, it's a political hot potato and I assume that greed will overcome in the end.

J. M. Johnson
El Dorado

WANTS HIS OWN

I've been reading my dad's copy long enough. Better enter my own subscription because he lost the November/December issue. I thought the September/October issue on pheasants and prairie was outstanding.

Randy Rodgers did his homework well and summarized the pheasant situation in southeast Kansas better than anyone I have ever read or met. Why pheasants won't survive in southeast Kansas or southern Missouri is probably the most common question asked of wildlife department employees and very few know what to answer. This article should help. Well done, Randy.

Carroll Lange's article on vanishing prairie deserves praise, too. Each trip I make back to my home state I see less and less of prairie or rangeland. Most local residents can't see the change because they are too close to it and won't recognize the problem until

most of the prairies are gone. It can and will happen to Kansas as it has in other states unless the people become concerned.

The improvement this magazine has made from when I was on the wildlife division staff in 1973-77 is tremendous. Congratulations on a fine job.

Steve Clubine
Windsor, MO

Clubine, a former employee of Kansas Fish & Game, is private land prairie biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation.

LIKES KANSAS

I just wanted you to know how much I enjoy your magazine. I am sending in my subscription renewal now so I won't miss a single issue. I hope the people of Kansas enjoy their beautiful state as much as I do each time I get a chance to visit.

Jimmie Don Forguson
Mannsville, OK

IN MY OPINION

We enjoy your magazine very much. Very interesting and well illustrated.

As for controversy: I do not feel the bass tournaments are harmful to bass populations, if properly supervised. I was somewhat surprised when the limit was reduced to five per day. In this area it is more common to catch a largemouth than it is a perch.

As for small game in this area, our protected birds, such as hawks and owls, are out of balance. I have watched one hawk harvest an entire group of baby quail in one-half day. They seldom leave a young rabbit in an entire quarter section of new plowed ground.

**Harold Cochran
Harper**

RE: LANGUAGE

In the article, "The Tree Where the West Begins," by John Madson, and "The Arctic Comes to Kansas," by Ron Spomer, I feel the references "honest-to-god" and "by god" are not only unnecessary but very degrading to your magazine. Please don't let a fine magazine fall to this level.

**Randy Behrends
Sedgwick**

MEN AND TREES

John Madson's article, "The Tree Where the West Begins," was excellent. So much so, in fact, that I'm now suffering from a double dose of homesickness.

Though I now reside in the barren Texas Panhandle, I was born and raised in the fertile Cottonwood River Valley southeast of Emporia. Much of my childhood and many of my later years were spent on the banks of the aptly-named Cottonwood, where I hunted, fished, and explored. The towering cottonwoods there were like friendly giants to me.

It was while sitting under a cottonwood that I hooked the biggest flathead of my life, that peeled all the line off my reel before snapping it. Another cottonwood marked the place where my dad and I used to set trotlines, which provided many a scrappy fat channel cat for the frying pan.

My favorite cottonwood, however, was a truly gargantuan specimen that stood along the edge of

a field by the river. It silently guarded the dirt road where it entered the timber and marked the entrance to another world. It was a quiet and serene world treasured by the select few who still go there to dig worms, fish, and escape the havoc of society. That tree was sold to log buyers and there is now a gaping hole in the timber where it once stood.

I felt a great sadness at the loss of the huge sentinel, as great a loss as I felt when my granddad passed on, which was about the same time. He, too, had been a giant the way he loomed over us kids. He had cowboied in the Flint Hills at the turn of the century and his features were as weathered as the bark of that old tree.

Those two had a lot in common the way they'd both seen the old West, weathered the elements and suffered the ravages of time. They'd watched the plow break the prairie sod and had seen death come too soon to their own offspring. They were giants, those two, each towering over others of their kind, dominating in a quiet way that belied their great strength. And, for all their great size, their voices were gentle, almost whispers.

I think of the man and the tree often — thinking of one in terms of the other — and I desperately wish they were still here to tell me about the old days.

Thank you, John Madson, for a great article.

**Steve Fowler
Amarillo, TX**

SINCERELY, ANONYMOUS

I know that you do not normally publish unsigned letters, but I think your publishing this one could possibly prevent a sad situation from getting worse. This letter is unsigned for obvious reasons, but please know that the following words are true and come deep from within a man who refuses to be intimidated and has been pushed too far.

I run an over-the-road commercial business and am the owner and operator of a family farm in the Topeka vicinity. Even with rising production costs and rising taxes I have resisted the "greedy farmer" trend and have refused to bulldoze my wooded draws and hedgerows. I work hard building brush piles and developing the wildlife habitat on the farm, and I share the bountiful wildlife harvest with hunting friends and relatives. I therefore feel fully justified in posting my land to prevent unwelcome people from using or abusing it. Unfortunately, there are just too many others who blatantly disagree.

Slob hunters, road hunters, and poachers have hounded me for years. I have "NO TRESPASSING" signs up about every 100 yards or so around my entire place (at front, side, and back). But I still continue to have my fences run through, my fields rutted by 4-wheel drives, my livestock wounded or let out, and my best wildlife cover areas hunted out. In years past I have caught some of these so-called sportsmen hunting my best draws and when I approached them (without using threats) I have been cussed at, ignored as a hick, and even threatened at gunpoint. (A farming neighbor in a similar situation with hunters a few years ago was severely beaten.) So, discouraged and frustrated I turned to the law for help.

It's not always easy to get fast police help out in the country, especially on weekends, but I tried. The sheriff's deputies came out many times, but were able to catch the slob hunters only maybe a fourth of the time. The worst thing is that none of the violators were ever prosecuted. You see, Kansas has a phrase added to the hunting trespass law which gives all these slob hunters and poachers a free ticket. The loophole comes from the statement that a hunter may lawfully pursue wounded game across posted land without committing a trespass violation. The end result is that every bunch of creeps I tried to

have arrested told the sheriff's men that they were only looking for a wounded pheasant or rabbit. The deputies declined to arrest any of them since, as they told me, it would be my word against the violators in court, and in this one instance there were eight voices against me. Well, I hung in there and I finally got fed up with the deputies' feeble excuse and finally insisted that they arrest a bunch of trespassers. This case ended with me suffering a lot of personal anxiety while the judge accepted the slob's excuses and let them go scott-free.

I am not an unreasonable man and I can accept a trespassing exclusion for deer hunters trailing wounded prey. However, it is criminal to allow a lot of illegal small game hunters such a big loophole to let them trespass at will. I regret that I don't have the power to change the law, and I am not going to sit back and let the slob rape my land and run over me. So, not being able to rely on the law to help, I came up with my own solution.

I've found that nothing makes the slob hunters take off and out like a few well placed .30-06 rounds. I don't shoot directly at them, or even real close, but I do shoot in their general direction so that they will get the point of my displeasure. So far this year I've had to use .30-06 persuasion five times. As a result, I haven't been cussed at, nor have I been threatened, nor have the offenders ever come back. But, I don't like to do this and I think it is a pitiful system which will maintain a trespass law so weak that it forces me into such a desperate situation.

Technically, shooting at someone to scare them is an assault. However, there is no law against a man shooting at a coyote on his own land, especially when this land is posted and there is not supposed to be any other people there. I would feel badly if I accidentally hit someone, but my lawyer has assured me that no jury would find me guilty as long as I was shooting at an animal and an

uninvited trespasser was hit instead. To help things I carry \$1 million of liability insurance, so any victim's survivors would be well cared for. Regardless of the risk involved, I don't intend to stop.

Farmers have fought dry weather, insects, hail, windstorms, floods, and government intervention for many years. To me, slob hunters are just another jot on the long list of farm pests. And I know a whole lot of other farmers who have come to the same conclusion. We farmers are going to control our own land, and unwanted hunters are not going to bother us forever. The problem is, without proper shelter from the law, to what ends will we have to go to ensure our privacy and survival from rampaging illegal hunters?

—Pushed Into a Corner and Fighting Back

You're right. We don't normally publish unsigned letters. Because of the important subject discussed and reasonable tone, we kept this account of one man's complaint.

IN HARM'S WAY

Congratulations on the article, "An End for Endrin?" in the November/December issue. I would like very much to see it published in more agriculture magazines. Some farmers need more education on the dangerous chemicals, and to learn other methods of control or ways of farming. They may have an abundance of grain and other crops but what is it worth if their water is polluted and not fit to drink.

It is through articles like yours that they can learn and realize how much harm is being done to the land and made to realize the harm it can do to people.

Mrs. I. R. Atkinson
Caldwell

SHORT THANKS

Thanks for the article, "An End for Endrin?" Hope to see more articles on the danger of pesticides.

Zeda Miller
Clyde Miller
Wellington

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

I was recently sent a copy of your article, "An End for Endrin?" You have done an excellent job of reporting the events concerning the contamination of wildlife with endrin last summer. You also raised many points that apply to pesticide use in general.

You pointed out the difficulties of assessing the impacts of using a pesticide — on the one hand, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that is difficult to assess, and on the other, nature itself may work against attempts to judge the impact scientifically.

You also point out the difficulty of deciding what "safe" use is — when birds and other wildlife fail to recognize manmade boundaries — and difficulties in enforcing the law — when farmers are unaware of label restrictions and residues turn up in unexpected places.

Although endrin is especially toxic and persistent, all the problems will not be solved by taking endrin off the market. Many of the problems caused by endrin would not have occurred if it had not been sprayed by airplanes in high winds. Since very little chemical reaches the target under those conditions, this is especially senseless. Unfortunately, other chemicals are also used this way. We need to go beyond pointing out the dangers to seeking safe, effective solutions to pest problems and ways to implement them.

Kansas for Safe Pest Control will be meeting March 13 at 1 p.m. in the Community Building in

Caldwell, Kansas. Our discussion will focus on dealing with pesticide problems at the local level. We invite everyone who is interested to attend.

I hope you will continue to discuss these problems in future issues of *Kansas Wildlife* with a particular emphasis on what Kansans can do to prevent damage to health, property, wildlife, and the environment from pesticides.

Terry Shafer
Lawrence

MORE ON ENDRIN

I would like to congratulate you on your article, "An End for Endrin?" It was a very eye-opening piece. At one time the threat of "the Bomb" dropping was a big nightmare. Today, I feel the biggest threat to mankind and our world is the havoc brought about by pesticides and chemicals.

Every year as the spraying starts my children start complaining they "... just don't feel good." A couple months after the spraying stops they start feeling better. Coincidence? I don't think so. What worries me is one of these times they may not start feeling better. I really don't want my family and friends to be a part of this giant laboratory for the testing of these chemicals.

I realize that these chemicals and pesticides are big money-makers. However, who will be around to spend the money when everyone is dead? I feel sure that when the rabbits, birds, fish and such die, we all are getting closer to our own graves.

I wish everyone would read your article and try to do something to get the use of these chemicals stopped. Thank you for trying to get information to the public so that maybe something can be done to stop the coming of our "Silent Spring."

Cheryl J. Warner
Caldwell

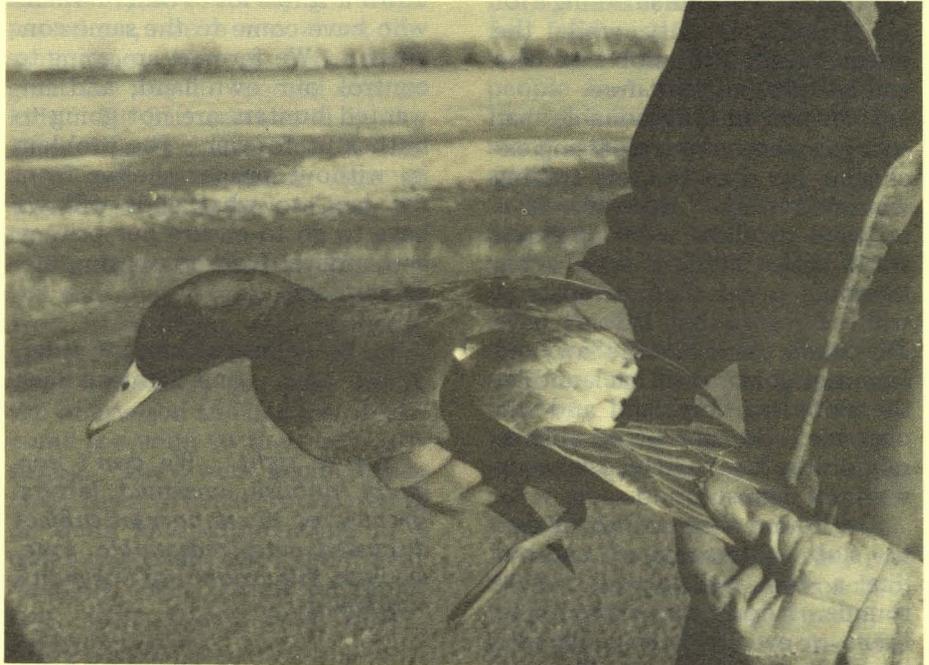
CORRECTION

A statement in "An End for Endrin" in our last issue indicated that no endrin applicators had ever been fined for failing to follow guidelines for endrin spraying. In fact, one company — Thrall Aviation Service, Inc. — paid a \$2,500 fine in 1978.

that of a pintail and the feet were gadwall.

Most hunters are looking for a trophy of some kind to have mounted and hung on the wall. This duck would certainly be a trophy if some hunter were lucky enough to bag it. It now is carrying band 1377-02048. I thought this might be of interest to your readers and fellow sportsmen.

I want you to know that I enjoy



NO. 1377-02048

On January 25, 1982, Ralph Bryant and I shot the net for banding purposes at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Out of the net came this duck (pictured) along with about 200 other mallards, pintails, and wigeons. In checking ducks during the hunting seasons, we occasionally run across ducks that are crossed between two different species. The most common is the mallard-pintail. There are sometimes crosses between mallards and wigeons.

As near as we could tell, this duck was crossed between four different species. The head was green like the mallard drake. The bill was blue. The white greater and middle coverts of the wing were like a wigeon. The tail was

your magazine. Your pictures are among the very best and your articles are always of interest to me.

Carl Marks
Sylvia

No doubt about it, a discussion of the potential lineage of No. 1377-02048 could take some time. The same goes for a related question: What is the point value of this bird?

PRESERVE SHOOTING

I couldn't resist replying to Mr. Moege's letter on shooting preserves in your November/December issue. I doubt if Mr. Moege will find any hunting preserve in Kansas that will let him hunt on a "birds bagged" basis. I have hunted both on a "birds

bagged" and "birds released" basis and much prefer the latter method for the following reasons:

Unless all hunters are guided on their hunts, on occasion, they become very "tricky" and will shoot and stash away some birds for later pickup and bring in only what they want to pay for. They will shoot to miss or shoot not at all at hen pheasants. (Hunting preserves are allowed to release and harvest hen pheasants.) They also won't spend more than two minutes looking for a dead or crippled bird. Every bird not brought in is a loss to the operator. The cost per bird has to be doubled and then it is sometimes not enough.

To hunt on a birds released basis, which I prefer, all of the birds released have to be paid for. I don't guide the hunters except on request. They may use my hunting dogs if they don't have a dog. I have found that hunters who hunt together much prefer this method, to be without guide service and thus eliminating the house man. They are much more relaxed. I don't care if they want to just sit and visit or smoke. The birds are paid for and the fields are reserved for that party.

The success of the hunt should never be judged by the size of the game bag. Hunting is more than just bagging birds. The fellowship that goes with your hunting companions plus just being out in the great outdoors should be part of it. Most hunting preserves are selling recreation, not meat. Mr. Moege should take his birds right from the holding pens where he knows he will get 100 percent of what he will be paying for, or perhaps go to a supermarket and buy a turkey.

Bernie Janssen
Solomon

FEEDING TIPS

Enjoyed the bird feeding articles in last issue's "Nature's Notebook." I make a mixture of

one-pound suet (cooked), one cup crunchy peanut butter and six cups of corn meal. I sprinkle this on the redwood deck and in flower planter boxes. Also have a large tree limb wired to the deck, and my husband drilled several 3/4-inch holes in it. I keep the holes, cracks and crevices filled with the mixture. Also have suet wired to the limb, and a 2"x2"x10" wire suet feeder.

Last summer, I saved all my squash, pumpkin and cantaloupe seeds, and also grow sunflowers. My husband saves me several bushels of wheat, milo and cracked corn, and I buy millet. The birds will eat the pumpkin seeds first, then the squash, then the sunflower seeds, and cantaloupe seeds last.

I really enjoyed the article, "Guide to a Winter Windowsill," in last year's January/February issue. Also, the story on "Woodhammers" by Marvin Schwilling, as I have a pair of pileated woodpeckers at my suet feeders. Is this unusual? This is the first year I've had pileated woodpeckers. They sure eat a lot of suet.

I also had a lot of tree and house sparrows until 15 to 20 pairs of cardinals drove them away. Other species at my feeding stations are: black-capped chickadee, mourning dove, flicker, goldfinch, blue jay, junco, meadowlark, nuthatch, robin, pine siskin, tufted titmouse, downy woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker and Harris' sparrow.

Mrs. Jim M. Rinck
Havana

The pileated woodpecker visits are something of a rarity. As recently as ten years ago, they were extremely rare visitors, occurring only occasionally along the Marais des Cygnes River, and later spreading further into the south-central part of the state.

QUAIL SEASON

I've been a quail hunter for over 50 years, subscribe to your magazine, and can normally under-

stand decisions made by your commission. But why the quail season was extended into February is a mystery.

This year I have hunted and visited with farm owners near Parker, Baldwin, Holton, and Horton. The results very poor and reports very bad as to quail population. My hunting friends here killed very few. These are actual facts and your figures can only be from non-hunter estimates.

You might be interested in knowing most of the farmers where I have hunted posted their land to prohibit hunting in January and February. This should be encouraged; even though the state owns the birds, the farmer has control by owning the land.

Small coveys in January and February suffer in bad winters. I understand some areas were getting petitions to not allow hunting and I'll bet many farmers support it.

I'm sure considerable criticism has been received about extended seasons. I've supported your programs for years but don't understand why, when last year was only fair, you would approve an extended season. Please let me hear from you because I support the farmers in posting all their areas unless you can explain the unknown.

R. J. Ritter
Prairie Village

We appreciate your concern. The Rural Mail Carriers Surveys, conducted throughout the state every year, have established themselves as accurate methods of reporting trends in game populations. In the northeast region of Kansas, the reports filed by 93 rural mail carriers in October last year indicated an improvement region-wide of 27 percent over the previous year's October survey. The quail populations in local areas of the region, of course, vary. Some townships recorded bigger gains than the region-wide average. Others didn't do so well.

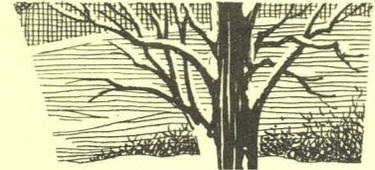
Compared with the rest of the state, the northeast did not show as much improvement in quail numbers as other regions. The statewide quail population index in the fall of 1981 was up more than 50 percent over the previous year.

At the Commission's August meeting, when closing dates of upland bird seasons were set, a sportsmen's club from northeast Kansas reported that they had done some homework of their own. Club members had con-

tacted more than 120 landowners in the northeast, and reported that more than 75 percent of those landowners would not be opposed to bird hunting into February. Other sportsmen and landowners attending the public meeting agreed.

Hunting pressure in January and February is miniscule, compared with the heavy pressure of the first few weeks of the season. Hunter reports show that only about 12 percent of the entire season's hunting occurs in all of

January. Although figures on February hunting pressure had not been compiled at presstime, staff biologists estimate that from three to five percent of the entire season's hunting occurred in February.

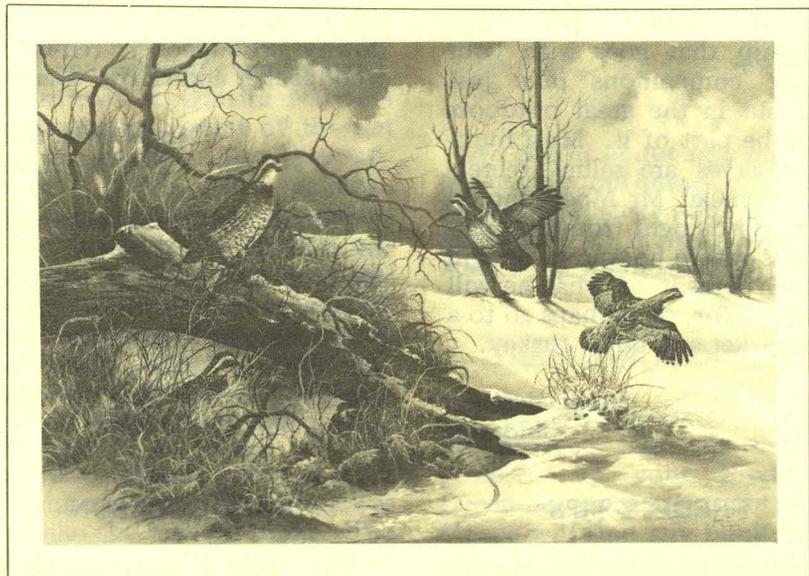


ART ON LOAN

Midwestern wildlife artists and Fish & Game's WILDTRUST program are cooperating on a new effort to put more wildlife art on public display. The "Wildlife Art On Loan" program focuses public awareness on wildlife art by featuring a new artist every two months. WILDTRUST provides a way for interested persons and groups to help preserve Kansas' wildlife heritage through tax deductible contributions of land, personal property, and cash. Since wildlife artists and WILDTRUST have similar goals in mind — the wise use of our wildlife resources — their collaboration in the art loan program seemed a natural alliance.

Loaned artwork is displayed at Fish & Game Headquarters in Pratt, several Pratt businesses, and in state government offices in Topeka. Original paintings and prints produced by featured artists are for sale and can be purchased by contacting: Jan Royston, Kansas Fish & Game, Route 2, Box 54A, Pratt, Kansas 67124.

Jerri Speer, the first artist featured in the program, resides in the Kansas City area. A self-taught artist, Jerri worked primarily in landscapes until she began to incorporate wildlife into her paintings several years ago. She is a member of the Greater Kansas City Art Association and Tri-County Art Association and will exhibit her work again this year at the Ducks Unlimited National Wildlife Art Show in Kansas City. Although she has more ideas than she has time to put those ideas on canvas, Jerri says, she does accept commissioned work. Prints of most of her work are available, including the quail painting (right) featured in the last issue.

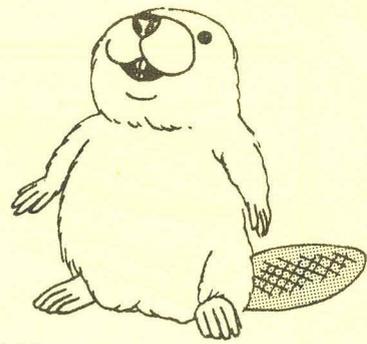


(Continued on page 11)

Nature's Notebook

by Joyce Harmon

Wildlife Education Coordinator
Kansas Fish & Game Commission



The winter season brings about changes for many animal species. Several will *migrate* to a warmer climate, some *hibernate* or rest during the cold weather and others stay active but add a thicker fur to survive the season.

Reptiles are among the animals that hibernate during a typical Kansas winter. There is, however, one imaginary reptile that is found moving about only in winter. It is quite a unique creature and of interest to scientists and students alike. Capture the attention of scientists of all ages with the following activity.

SNOW SNAKES

Here's a fun way to spend time outside during winter, appreciate snakes — an animal that's often avoided, and allow a time for further winter observations. The "facts" about snow snakes are as follows. Be creative and add to these:

- Very little is known about these snakes. Their range is expanding southward and thought to be influenced by human and climatic factors. They travel along frozen ground or along cross-country ski tracks but leave little sign of their presence.
- The most common genus is *Glidurus*. The species within this genus vary in color and morphology. Some of the species within the genus *Glidurus* are: *G. mopandelus*, *G. sliperound*, *G. borealis*, *G. carvedbyus*, and *G. cottonwoodii*.
- The snow snake moves rapidly on icy terrain but only for short distances. This movement is similar to that of the otter.
- Habitat requirements are very flexible and the carrying capacity of an area is almost limitless.
- Reptiles generally are active during warmer temperatures and hibernate during winter. Contrary to that pattern, the snow snake is in an extremely rigid state during warm weather and observable only during icy and snowy times of the year.
- The only predators that have been observed at this time are porcupines, beavers and rabbits; although domestic dogs have been known to be curious.
- The low reproductive rate has been investigated by researchers and is reported to be gradually increasing in recent years.

There remains a great deal of research to be done before this fascinating and curious creature is fully understood. Your participation in this activity will add to the advancement of such research.

HOW TO ACQUIRE SNOW SNAKES IN A SAFE AND EASY MANNER

With limited skill in the areas of industrial arts and design, a fashionable snow snake can be acquired. Mop, broom, or any type of wooden handle can be used and decorated for a snow snake. Carving a spiral groove in the snake will add to its movement on icy terrain. The Indians originated the idea and carved the end to be curved upward slightly, giving a toboggan effect on snow and ice.

A simple cage can be made to stimulate interest in participants before they discover that the animal is imaginary. A long box with air holes, rope handles and lettering on the box saying, "DO NOT FEED THE SNOW SNAKES" will add to the ruse.

Once your introduction is given and initial snakes are made, take your group outside and practice. Races can be organized along with follow-up activities done from this foundation. The potential for extended activities are endless. Some possibilities are studies of: Indian culture and history, scientific nomenclature, animal locomotion, animal coloration and camouflage, herpetology, winter adaptations, habitat, range and life requirements, population dynamics and densities, hibernation and estivation, and winter recreation.

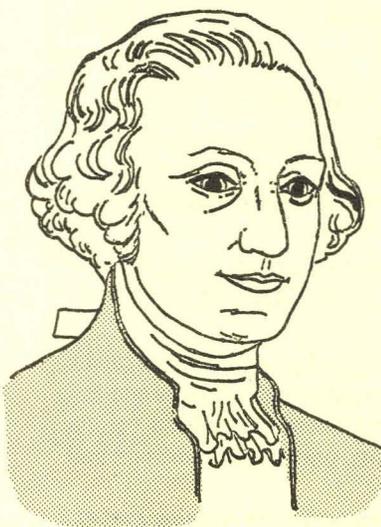
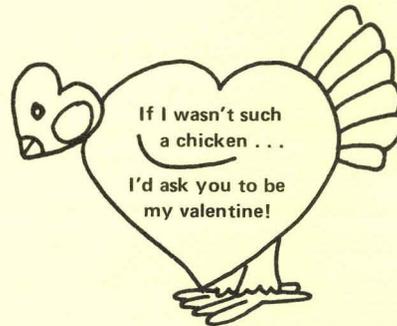
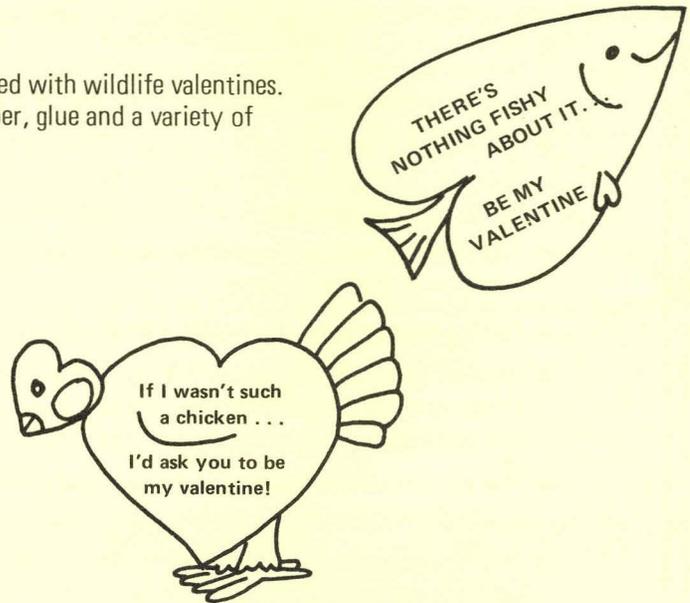
(Thanks to Jim Heintzman, naturalist for Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, for introducing me to snow snakes.)

February is the month to celebrate Ground Hog's Day, Valentine's Day, and Presidents' birthdays.



FEB. 2nd . . . marks the date when ground hogs supposedly determine how much longer winter will last. As the legend goes, on February 2nd the ground hog awakens from hibernation to investigate the weather. If the sun is shining and the ground hog sees his shadow, he is frightened into hibernating another six weeks. If the day happens to be cloudy, preventing the ground hog from seeing his shadow, he stays out, looking for an early spring.

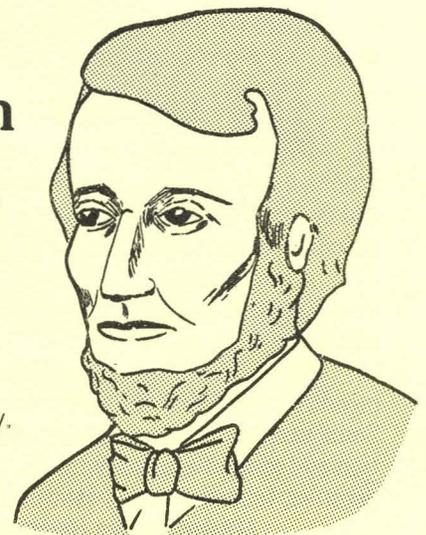
FEB. 14th . . . can be celebrated with wildlife valentines. Valentines can be made easily out of construction paper, glue and a variety of art supplies.



FEB. 12th & 15th

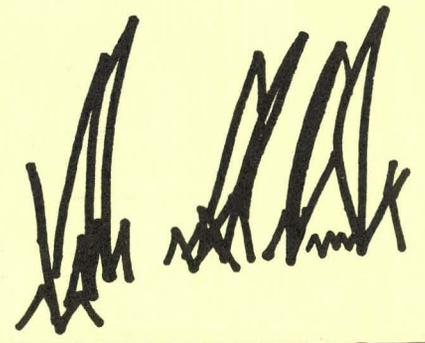
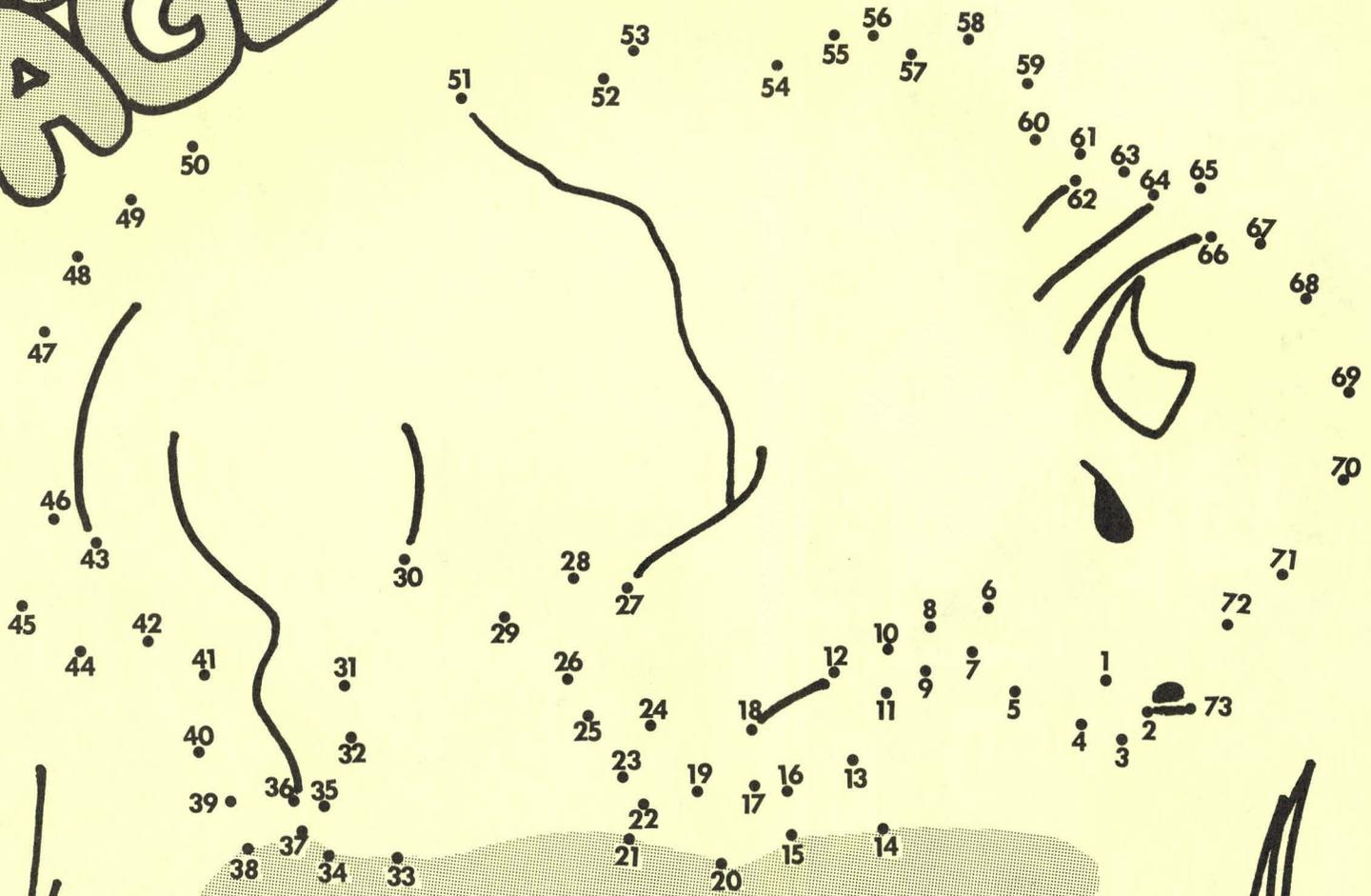
When you celebrate the Presidents' birthdays, add an investigation of what Kansas was like during the days of Washington and Lincoln.

What wildlife species and quantities were present at that time?
Your local library or historical society may have sources of information for your study.

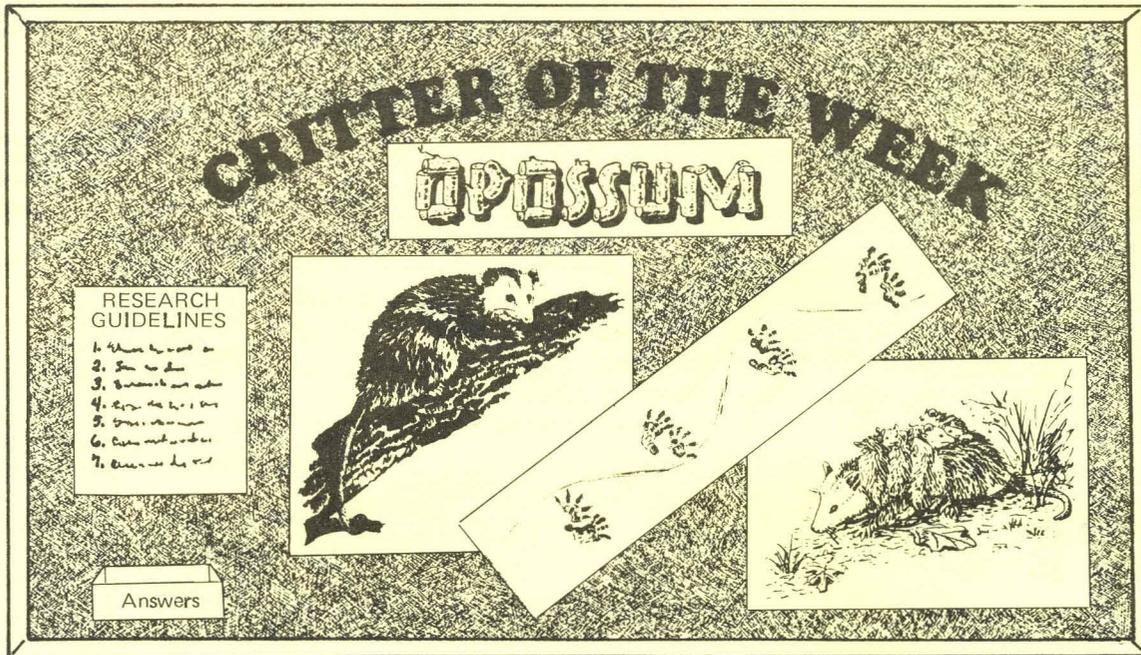


KIDS PAGE

Prairie dot to dot
Connect the dots to form this prairie animal.



We are at the time of year when spring seems a long way off and a fresh idea or change of pace is more than welcome. For those of you with "cabin fever," whether at home or in your classroom, here's an idea to see you through to spring.



Use a bulletin board, study center or one designated area. Select one wildlife species and allow the children to investigate more information about this animal.

Here are some questions that will help guide their study:

- What does the animal eat?
- Is the animal a mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, etc.?
- Is the animal nocturnal (active at night) or diurnal (active in daylight)?
- Is the animal a predator or prey species?
- How many young does the animal usually have?
- Where would you find this animal?
- If in Kansas, how many do we have?
- How long does this animal live?
- Do they migrate, hibernate or stay here for the winter?
- What other interesting information can you find out?

You may want to give the animal's name on difficult species or make the name a part of the research.

Use pictures from magazines, photos, or poster pictures, ideally showing the animal in several poses. The local public library or school library will have materials that will help you guide the children and will also have reference material for the children.

Make the investigation an adventure – challenging, but not impossible. Begin with a familiar animal and advance to the less well known. Vocabulary is bound to come up that both child and adult may learn from. At the end of the week (or whatever predetermined time) read the research done by the children and discuss the discovered information with facts. To enhance your study, you might be able to find a study skin or skull of the animal you're studying. An art, math, or other curricula area project may be done on the animal as a follow-up activity.

Change pictures and begin again with a new species. You might allow a particularly interested student to pick out an animal of his or her choice.

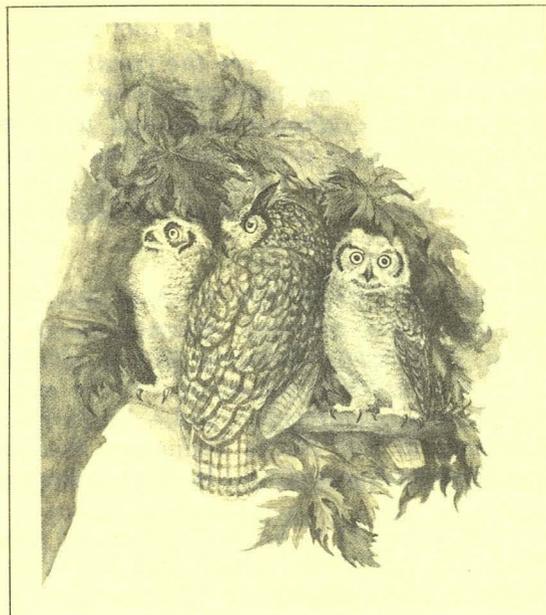


ART ON LOAN

(Continued from page 6)

Maleta Forsberg, the latest artist featured in the "Wildlife Art on Loan" program, is a rural Lindsborg resident who has long been involved in art. Her paintings have appeared in numerous juried national and regional exhibits. Her work is currently represented by galleries in Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Ohio, Iowa, Nevada, Wisconsin, Texas, and Missouri. Travelers passing through the Lindsborg area can often find Maleta at Olive Springs School House Gallery, which she and her husband restored in 1977. The gallery is located adjacent to the artist's home and studio.

Many prints of her work are available. A brochure has been published with more information on Maleta and a list of prints that are available.



CONTRIBUTORS

Many of the compliments our magazine received during the past year were the result of work by folks who aren't officially members of our staff. The drawings, paintings, photographs, and writings of these contributors have done much to maintain the quality of our book. We'd like to thank them again, and give our readers a glimpse at the people behind those bylines and credit lines.

BRUCE COCHRAN — Many readers have seen Cochran cartoons and illustrations in *Audubon*, *Field & Stream*, *Changing Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and other magazines. Bruce has done work for Hallmark Cards, Inc. and exhibits his watercolor paintings in the Ducks Unlimited National Wildlife Art Show in Kansas City. He lives in Prairie Village.

MAX GOOD — An avid birder and staunch member of the Audubon Society, Max has extensive experience in photography. He spends much of his spare time developing his small farm near Parsons into a model wildlife area.



RAY BROCKUS — Ray is a freelance writer-photographer who resides in Alva, Oklahoma. His photo series on the thread-waisted wasp appeared in our May-June issue. Ray is a self-taught naturalist, and an avid hunter and fisherman with a soft spot in his heart for waterfowling.

GENE BREHM — Gene has taught in public schools in Macksville and Pratt and is currently operating a farm in the St. John area. His turkey gobbler and beaver photos illustrated "Red Hills Spring" in the March-April issue. Whenever he gets the chance, Gene heads for the Rockies to expose film on mountain wildlife. His work often appears in outdoor magazines.



MARK JOHNSON — Mark owns and operates Johnson Advertising in Independence, Kansas. His drawings appeared in our May-June and November-December issues. Mark has combined a lifelong interest in hunting and fishing with a strong art background. He is active in Ducks Unlimited. His work also has appeared in *Field & Stream* and other publications.

KARL MASLOWSKI — Vastly experienced as photographer, writer, cinematographer, and public speaker, Karl's work is widely respected. He has written a nature column in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* for 40 years, is a member of the board of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, and vice-president of the Cincinnati Nature Center.



BOB GRESS — Bob is employed by the Wichita Park Board as City Naturalist. Thousands of people have viewed nature programs in Wichita utilizing many of his photographs. During the warmer months, Bob leads guided nature hikes along the trails of Pawnee Prairie Park in Wichita.

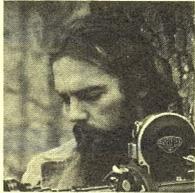
DAISY BAUGHMAN — Daisy is a Pratt resident and native of Massachusetts. Her ink and pencil drawings illustrated the technical aspects of bird flight in our September-October issue. A self-taught artist, she also has produced logos, posters, and pointillistic art.

KEN HIGHFILL — Ken provided the story and photographs for "Bald Eagle Crossing" in our January-February issue. A teacher in the Lawrence school system, Ken has spearheaded development of a field study area for science students and is active in numerous conservation organizations.

DYCIE MADSON — Dycie is comfortable in both two- and three-dimensional media. She currently is producing a series of limited edition bronzes of selected wildlife species, and has worked in clay sculpture and ceramics for years. She also works in acrylics, watercolors, and oils. Subject matter ranges from wildlife and scenics to portraits.

DOUG SCHERMER — Doug established a national reputation by producing some of the most incisive sport fish illustrations anywhere. His paintings and pen-and-inks appeared in our January-February and March-April issues. His work has appeared in numerous other magazines and he regularly displays at the National Wildlife Art Show in Kansas City.

STEVE MASLOWSKI — Steve’s striking photos of owls illustrated “Flight” in our September-October issue. Steve developed his skills working with his father, Karl, and is established as a superlative wildlife photographer and filmmaker. He recently produced a film for Winchester.



BARBARA PRATT — Barbara is a reporter and photographer for the *Hoxie Sentinel*. Her bird photos helped illustrate a winter birdwatching piece in our January-February issue. Barbara and her family live on a farm located along the South Fork of the Solomon River — a perfect setting for the many outdoor pursuits they love.

LEONARD LEE RUE III — One of America’s most widely known outdoor communicators, Leonard has authored sixteen books and hundreds of wildlife articles. You’ll see his credit line in many books and magazines. For the complete story on deer, consult his book, *THE DEER OF NORTH AMERICA*.



ED AND JEAN SCHULENBERG — Widely-traveled and prolific, this husband and wife team has appeared many times in *Kansas Wildlife*. Jean is a past president of the Kansas Ornithological Society. Their photos illustrated a story (written by Jean) on “The Least Tern” in our May-June issue. Check the January-February and July-August issues for more examples of their work.

KENT STUCKY — Kent has been contributing to our magazine for several years. A McPherson County farmer, his photographs illustrated a special section on furbearers in our January-February issue. Kent has contributed photographs to numerous other publications and has made several photographic trips to Alaska.



KANSAS PLACES

- Bald Eagle Crossing Jan-Feb
- Red Hills Spring Mar-Apr
- The Neosho July-Aug
- Goodbye to the Ark July-Aug

MANAGEMENT

- Good, Bad, Ugly . . . and Irresistible Jan-Feb
- The Furbearers Jan-Feb
- Feeding the Fish July-Aug
- Kansas Pheasants: Going Up, Going Down, Going Nowhere . . . Sep-Oct

MISCELLANEOUS

- The Hook Mar-Apr
- Wildlife in Metal July-Aug
- Passing of the Prairie Sep-Oct
- Violators: A Closer Look . . . Sep-Oct
- Tree Where the West Begins . . . Nov-Dec
- An End For Endrin? Nov-Dec

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- Kansas Sport Fish Mar-Apr
- A Fish For All Seasons Mar-Apr
- Fishing Guide to Kansas May-June
- The Fishing Machine May-June
- Urban Fishing July-Aug

GENERAL WILDLIFE

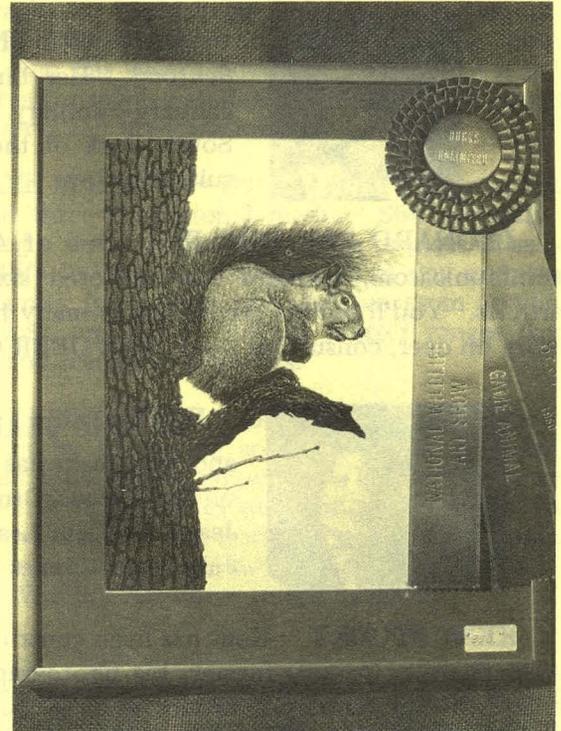
- Guide to a Winter Windowsill . . Jan-Feb
- Whoopers Mar-Apr

- The Least Tern May-June
- The Sting May-June
- Flight Sep-Oct
- New Frontiers, Last Stands . . . Nov-Dec
- The Arctic Comes to Kansas . . . Nov-Dec

HUNTING

- The Shooting Preserve Alternative Sep-Oct
- Hunting Without a Dog Nov-Dec

ACROSS KANSAS



WILDLIFE ART SHOW SET IN KANSAS CITY

Kansas City's Hilton Plaza Inn (Main and 45th Street) will be the site of the Tenth Annual National Wildlife Art Show March 12 and 13. About 100 artists from across the country will participate. Hours for the exhibit are 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. March 12 and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 13. A public art auction will be conducted at 3 p.m. March 13. The show is open to the public and there is no admission charge. Besides offering a unique opportunity to see and purchase quality art, the show offers admirers a chance to meet and talk with their favorite artists.



ACROSS KANSAS

1981: YEAR OF THE DEAD FISH

The number of fish kills reported

in Kansas last year was at least double the normal amount for previous years, reports stream biologist Ken Brunson. The total number of fish kill incidents in 1981, by waterbody type, were: streams, 26; ponds, 23; lakes, 8; federal reservoirs, 2.

Natural environmental factors contributed to more fish kill incidents than any other cause, Brunson said, but more total fish were killed due to feedlot wastes than any other source.

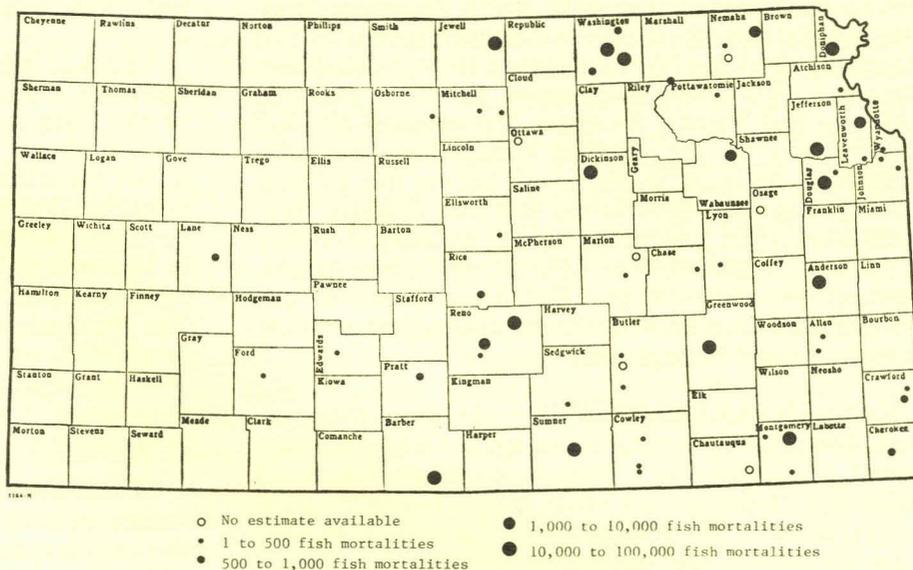
The largest kill of the year occurred June 9 on White Rock Creek in Jewell County, when an estimated 57,400 fish succumbed after swine manure and wastes were dumped into the stream. Feedlot discharges also accounted

for a loss of 15,600 fish in a nine-mile stretch of Independence Creek (north branch) in Doniphan and Atchison counties last May, and 7,900 fish in a six-mile stretch of Mill Creek in Washington County last August.

Natural causes — low water levels, winterkills, disease, and low oxygen levels — were to blame in numerous smaller kills. Pesticides were also cited as the cause of several others. In many other cases, the cause or causes could not be ascertained. One unusual phenomenon was the number of kills occurring in northcentral Kansas. Although this area of the state normally experiences some kills, there was a significant increase in number and intensity for 1981, Brunson noted.

The outlook for this year is better. Brunson doesn't expect the number of fish kills in 1982 to reach the abnormally high levels of 1981. One major difference is that quantities of water in the state's ponds, lakes, and streams are much improved in early 1982 compared with the same period in 1981.

1981 FISH KILLS



BUNDLES FOR BIRDS

Nothing invites wildlife to your backyard like living habitat. The Nongame Wildlife Bundle--15 plants selected for their value to wildlife--is tailor-made for habitat development in your neighborhood. Cost is \$8 per bundle. All plants are one- or two-year-old seedlings or rooted cuttings. Supplies are limited, so order now. Submit completed order blank to: Nongame Habitat Bundles, Kansas Fish & Game, RR 2 Box 54A, Pratt, KS 67124.

Please send me ___ Nongame Habitat Bundle(s). Payment (\$8 per bundle) is enclosed. Deliver to:

NAME

ADDRESS

SHORT STUFF

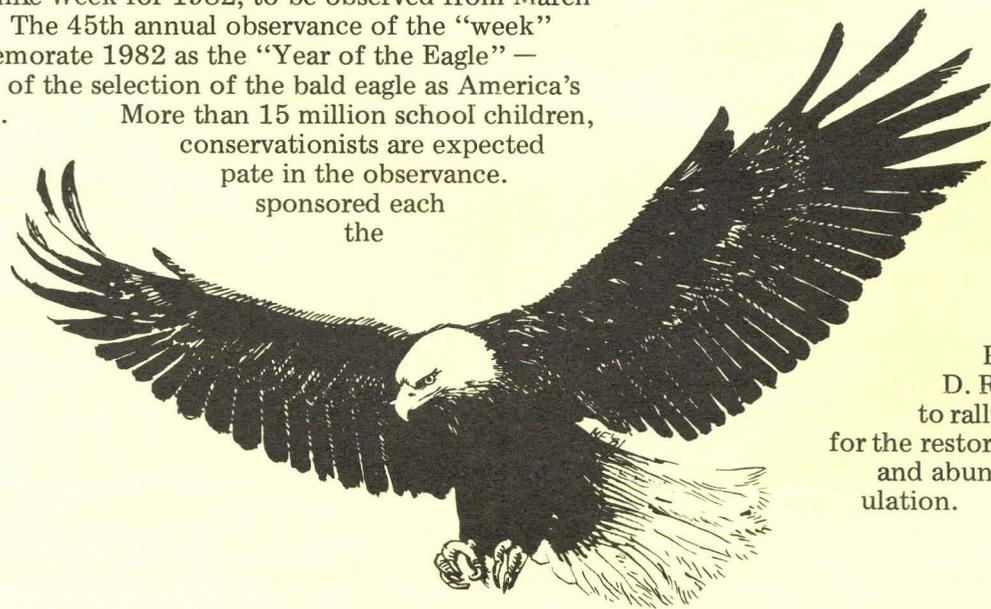
EYES ON PORTLAND — The anxiety of many Americans who fear that natural resource conservation may be giving way to excessive exploitation poses a serious backdrop for the 47th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference scheduled for March 26-31 at the Portland Hilton Hotel in Portland, Oregon. This year's conference, titled "Population Pressures and Natural Resource Management Needs," is sponsored by the Wildlife Management Institute. Numerous national leaders will be on the agenda. Among them are: Sen. James McClure (Idaho); Rep. John Breau (La.); John B. Crowell, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; G. Ray Arnett, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior; and Robert F. Burford, director of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

KANSAN CLAIMS RECORD — Arkansas City resident Joseph Reisch established a new Oklahoma state record for paddlefish. Reisch caught an 83-pound paddlefish December 26 while fishing below the Kaw Reservoir dam. The Kansas angler did it the hard way; most paddlefish are caught by snagging but Reisch took his record catch on conventional hook and line. Using a baitcasting reel and 30-pound monofilament line, the Ark City resident enticed the big spoonbill with a plastic grub.

ECO-MATRICULATION — Even though the prairie ecosystem in Kansas offers a wide variety of plant and animal life for study, biology students at Tabor College will soon have a chance to study in an entire-

YEAR OF THE EAGLE — "We Care About Eagles" is the theme of National Wildlife Week for 1982, to be observed from March 14 through 20. The 45th annual observance of the "week" will help commemorate 1982 as the "Year of the Eagle" — the bicentennial of the selection of the bald eagle as America's national symbol.

More than 15 million school children, teachers, and conservationists are expected to participate in the observance. Each year by National Wildlife Federation. The "week" was first



More than 15 million school children, conservationists are expected to participate in the observance. Each year by National Wildlife Federation. The "week" was first

proclaimed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 to rally public support for the restoration of a healthy and abundant wildlife population.

ly different environment. Through courses offered at Tabor, a four-year Christian liberal arts college in Hillsboro, students can complete a major in Biology with a concentration in Environmental Biology. It's made possible by Tabor's cooperation with the AuSable Trails Institute of Environmental Studies, near Kalkasa, Michigan. The Institute is located in a forest and wetland area teeming with plant and animal life, providing a rich opportunity for research and study. Tabor is the only college in the western U.S. invited to participate in the AuSable program.

CREATURE FEATURES — The University of Montana chapter of The Wildlife Society is sponsor of the Fifth Annual International Wildlife Film Festival. Amateur and professional filmmakers who produced films about wildlife in 1981 can enter the competition. Judging is based on artistic quality, art form, biological accuracy, and message. Deadline for entry is March 19, 1982. The festival itself will be held April 16-18 at the University of Montana in Missoula. The Festival was established in 1977 to encourage production of high quality wildlife films, to improve their biological and educational content, and to further relate the natural sciences to human cultural development.

SUCCESS STORIES — Eight cost-effective success stories in recycling and litter reduction throughout the country are documented in a case study report — "The Cleaning of America" — by Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation. The report's authors published their work to spread the word about workable programs which already exist, in hopes that interested and concerned people can adapt the success of others to their own communities. Individual copies of "The Cleaning of America" are available by writing Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation, Room 1127, 300 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, CA 94643.

native grass species. We've started to incorporate native forbs by planting any seed we can get. I think landowners could use some more advice on plant materials," Steve adds. "Having a desire to plant native forb species isn't enough if you don't have a good seed source. We enjoy the various native wildflowers and have made an effort to incorporate them in our plantings as much as possible. But it's almost impossible to locate a good source for many of the species, other than hand harvesting a few seeds here and there and starting your own seed source."

The scarcity of commercial seed sources has led Steve to believe that he may find more profitable ways to use his restored prairie than cutting it for hay.

"I'm planning to plant about five acres of lowland to pure stands of native water-tolerant grasses like Kanlow switchgrass. I hope to harvest these areas for seed and market it. If it looks profitable, my father has several acres on his land that he would be interested in sowing to native grass."

While he's happy with his decision to re-establish prairie on some of his property, Steve feels he may have made one mistake with the re-seeding. He planted in large blocks which reduced the amount of prairie edge to a minimum. The edge between two kinds of cover always provides a greater variety of food and cover and is more attractive to wildlife as a result.

"I should have planted it in strips," he says. "With that kind of pattern, I could have farmed through the grass and increased the amount of edge on the acreage I converted." He does what he can to create edge by cutting his native hay in strips and leaving some grass. He also leaves a few weeds along his fencerows and field edges. "The farm isn't as 'pretty' as some in the neighborhood," he says, "but the birds really like it."

The habitat development has encouraged more deer to use the farm, a development Steve's father sees as a possible threat to his young or-

chard stock. Steve does his best to keep the deer on their toes by harvesting one when he gets a permit, and he occasionally allows a bowhunter to try his luck. Besides the whitetails, he hasn't noticed any new wildlife species so far. "At least, nothing spectacular. We haven't had a peregrine falcon set up housekeeping yet."

The Burr family is looking forward to the new animals they expect to see as cover on the farm becomes more varied. They already spend many hours watching wildlife around the two ponds next to the house and the bird feeding station in the front yard. Ginny likes to jog along the road by the home eighty with Sadie, and seeing different critters adds to the overall enjoyment of the daily outing. "The quail are my favorite," she says. "A covey finally moved in down by the pond, and I get to see them quite regularly now."

Converting good cropland, especially bottomland, to permanent wildlife habitat is expensive. Although the native grass does provide some income as hay, it doesn't match the cash that small grains can yield. On the other hand, the prairie doesn't cause nearly as many headaches.

"Money wasn't the short-term reason for developing this habitat," Steve points out, "but I think there's room for these kinds of plantings on a working farm. Gross income isn't any kind of measure of the success of a farm or a farmer. I believe in net profit, which is why I still farm with a 1964 Case tractor and small equipment. It would be nice to own a new four-wheel-drive tractor, but the annual interest alone would ruin my entire operation. If I can make money from a hay crop or a harvest of prairie seed, why should I till my ground every year and add to my overhead?"

Steve also points out that the conversion to prairie has saved him some tax money. "My county taxes went from \$5 to \$1.50 an acre when I made the native grass plantings. Landowners could use more tax

breaks of this sort.

"And speaking of government assistance," he goes on to say, "I wish Fish and Game would give me more help with my plantings when they're just getting started. I realize that the Commission lost its CETA and YACC federal help, but taking care of 10,000 young trees can really be time consuming."

The Burrs are by no means finished with their habitat establishment. Steve plans to divide his farm into smaller fields and add to his crops. He hopes to raise beans, clover, alfalfa, sunflowers, and millet as well as milo, wheat, and native hay. He's committed to building variety into his operation.

"I feel a healthy farm has to be diversified. A variety of land uses insulates the farmer from drastic fluctuations in specific markets and protects the natural fertility of his land. Wildlife is an indicator of the health of a farm. The more diversified the wildlife, the healthier the land." □

Hen turkey on nest

Chris Madson



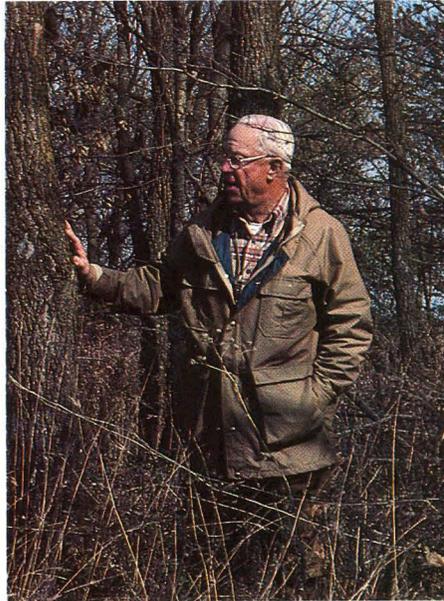
The Roberts Farm

O. E. “Jack” Roberts is 71 years of age and can still build fence with the best of them. Fences have consumed a lot of his time since he purchased his 480 acres of Chase County land in 1966. Even though he was employed at the time, Jack wanted some property for part-time employment and a hobby for his later retirement years. His farm is a diversified operation with grazing on 257 acres and a crop rotation on 157 acres. There are forty acres of hay and twenty-six acres managed intensively for wildlife. The farm had about forty acres of creek bottom land which was in fair wildlife cover when Roberts took title. The creek is spring fed and flows year round providing water for the local wildlife residents.

Soon after his purchase, Jack recognized the need for some conservation work on his land. He entered into a cooperative agreement with the Chase County Conservation District to seed native grass on erodible sites, put in grassed waterways, and build terraces, and also called in an extension forester to do some timber stand improvement work.

When asked how he got into the WHIP program, Jack responded, “I looked into the program after the bad winter of 1978-79. I lost most of my quail and I wanted to do something about it.” Jack contacted the

O. E. Roberts



Fish and Game Commission, and the local biologist, Rick Tush, began working with him to develop wildlife habitat. Rick says of Jack, “His attitude towards wildlife and habitat made my job pretty easy. Jack already had some good ideas in mind, like fencing out a seven-acre tract and leaving odd areas and fence lines undisturbed. All I did was offer my assistance and encouragement.” The fenced-out plot now has a good stand of native grass, brush, and a half-acre milo food plot. In severe weather, this food source will help get quail by. Jack has fenced a number of odd areas and planted them with a variety of native forbs (flowering native weeds) to provide a valuable source of native food. He has also seeded a two-and-a-half acre area along the creek to native grass to provide a nesting area for quail and has built brushpiles in and on the edge of the timbered areas.

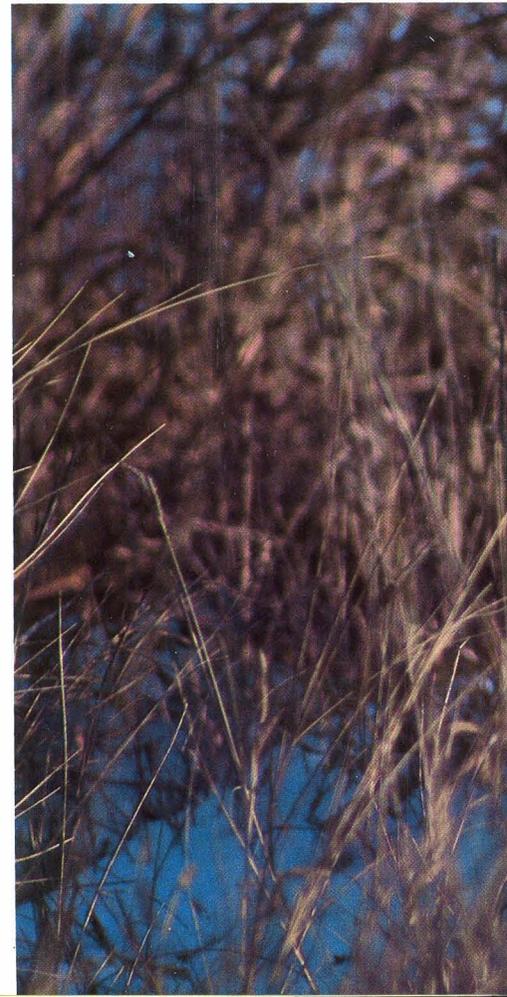
Asked if there is anything else he plans on doing, Jack responded “Perhaps some shrubs and forbs along the two waterways. Also, I’ve got some low ground in one of the crop fields that has poor drainage and floods often. I’m thinking about developing this area into a three- to four-acre marsh. It’s going to take some work and money, building a dike and control structures. But this is in the future. I’m also repositioning some of my fences between the

crop and rangeland to provide a little more nesting cover.”

Asked if he could see any improvements in his wildlife populations, Jack said, “Yes, there seem to be quite a few more quail on the area and some pheasants and rabbits are showing up, too. The deer numbers are definitely on the increase also.” Raccoon and beaver sign wasn’t very noticeable and Jack suspects that, “The beaver lost out during the 1980 drought. I only have one colony left.”

Increasing wildlife numbers have not brought any new problems from hunters. “I don’t have a lot of unwanted trespass,” Jack said. “My neighbors have been very helpful in controlling this sort of thing since no one lives on the property. I don’t lease the hunting or fishing privileges. I want to provide my friends with a place where they can enjoy these activities. I like to hunt too, although there is more to it than just bagging game.”

The changes Jack has made on his property haven’t been without cost, but he isn’t too concerned about that



at the moment.

"My only capital outlay has been fence material and grass seed. The labor I provided myself with my tenant providing the necessary equipment to get the job done. I can't say that my WHIP efforts have made me any money, but the program wasn't intended for that purpose. I got into the program to do something for wildlife on my property. Of course, some of the things I've done will be useful in the future, like reseeding the erosion prone land. That will save soil and, consequently, dollars. But I don't think WHIP should be thought of as a program for profit."

This last comment led to another question, this time somewhat philosophical, about Jack's feeling for wildlife.

"The esthetic value of wildlife is the most important part of the WHIP program. To me, there is nothing more exciting than seeing a good pointer go down hard on a covey and a little Brittany backing the point. I've looked into an old hollow log and seen a nest of baby coons and

watched a big buck loping across my wheat. I remember these things and they bring me enjoyment. You know the first blank I filled out on my last year's income tax form was the donation to the Kansas non-game wildlife improvement program."

Jack was raised on a farm, so getting back to the land came naturally. He remembers trapping fur for a few extra dollars and with the first money he received he bought a .22 rifle.

"Wildlife has always fascinated me. My father taught me the value of it," he says, "and, many times, wildlife was actually a source of meat for our table."

Jack realizes that all conservation programs are an ongoing process; terraces have to be plowed up, grass burned periodically, brushpiles renovated occasionally, timber stand improvement work done from time to time, food plots maintained, and specific plantings of trees, shrubs and grass made where appropriate. He also knows first-hand that this kind of upkeep can be a lot of work.

"I believe Fish and Game could

improve WHIP by increasing their assistance on habitat development. A stronger cooperations with 4-H clubs and offering of scholarships to KSU in wildlife might be helpful. Encouraging local sportsmen clubs to help with the program would help, too. We also need to develop a better relationship between farmers, ranchers, and sportsmen."

Jack's efforts have won him the Soil Conservation Service's Soil and Water Conservation Award as well as the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Award. He takes great pride in these awards and one gets the impression that he will keep moving ahead on habitat and conservation improvements on his land.

To Jack, the esthetics of the countryside is soothing and enjoyable. "I have always enjoyed the bluestem and wild flowers of the Flint Hills. The timber along the creek is very colorful each fall and the big white-barked sycamore trees are beautiful in the winter. I like it out here. Hopefully, I'll be able to do even more for the land in the future." □

Photo by Ron Spomer



The Corbet Farm

Combine the solitude of a rural home with the privilege of participating in daily wildlife activities and you have found a perfect setting for a growing family. The Ken Corbets in western Shawnee County are lucky to have just that combination.

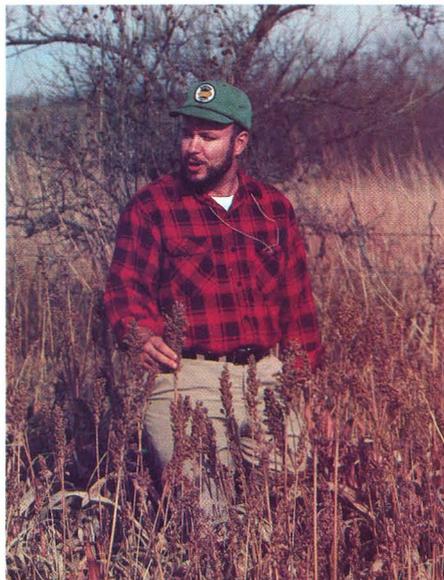
WHIP cooperators Kenneth and Beverly Corbet live on a 100-acre farm with their two-year-old son, Justin. The Corbet property has been in family ownership since the early 1930's, although Ken's parents didn't acquire the farm until 1954. Ken moved from the property in 1974, but it wasn't long before he returned. Beverly and Ken built their present home on the farm in 1978.

The Corbet farm is made up of about thirty acres of timber, thirty acres of native pasture, seven acres of native hay meadow and over thirty acres of brome hayland. During the Thirties and Forties, the farm was a registered shorthorn operation. The property is now used to keep a few head of livestock while the hay ground is rented out.

Ken and Beverly enrolled in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) in 1980, mainly through the encouragement of one of Ken's boyhood friends. This friend happened to be a wildlife biologist for the Kansas Fish and Game Commission.

Habitat evaluations of the Corbet

Ken Corbet



property revealed several limiting factors to the wildlife populations on and near the farm. Overgrazing and brush invasion of the native pasture had nearly eliminated its value to wildlife. The pasture had such low forage value that livestock production was very limited as well.

The riparian woodlands along the intermittent stream had become very dense, as had most of the other small scattered woodlots found on the farm. This condition limited wildlife benefits in the timber as well as decreasing the potential for commercial timber harvest.

Since the former cropland areas of the Corbet property had been converted to brome hayfields, there was an obvious need for dependable winter food supplies. The lack of high-energy winter food was compounded by the fact that all row crop areas in the rest of the section are generally not available for wildlife to use as winter food.

Because the stream running through the farm is intermittent, water is unavailable for wildlife and livestock use during extended periods of drought and during some winter months when the creek freezes solid. These are the periods when water is the most critical for livestock and wildlife.

After the problems were pinpointed, it was time to try to solve them. First, Ken embarked on a

three-year pasture improvement plan. During this period, no livestock grazing will be permitted while other improvements are being implemented. Even though this means no livestock income for three years, Ken is confident he will more than recover this loss once the self-imposed grazing restriction is lifted.

Besides the banning of livestock from the pasture, a prescribed burning program was initiated in the spring of 1981. Even after only one burn, the results were very encouraging. The native grasses such as big bluestem, Indiangrass, and switchgrass which had been almost invisible for years produced excellent growth following last spring's burn. This will mean more and better grazing conditions for livestock in the future. This will also mean that there will be more and better places for deer, quail, and other wildlife to live and raise their young.

The burning program is also doing its part in reducing the amount of brush that had invaded the pasture. Between the second and third years of the grazing ban, Ken is planning to cut out any remaining undesirable trees by hand.

Both Beverly and Ken feel that they have experienced immediate results with one particular wildlife management technique. This is the establishment of food plots. Five milo food plots ranging in size from one-fourth acre up to one acre were planted in the spring of 1981. The Corbets have seen a dramatic increase in deer visits to their property. In most cases, the deer seem to be associated with food plot sites. Many other species of animals use the feeding areas as well.

The food plots did not take any land out of production that was providing income. All the food plots were located in out-of-the-way areas that were not used for pasture or hay. Therefore, the only cost of the food plots was for materials and tillage.

Although the Corbets had too much woody cover in some areas, others didn't have enough. To rem-

edy this, Ken planted three thicket areas with shrubs provided by the Kansas Fish and Game Commission. The thickets mainly consist of American plum, Nanking cherry, autumn olive and several other kinds of shrubs that provide wildlife food and cover.

These thickets are part of Ken's plan to manage his interior fencerows, providing brushy cover for winter use by quail, rabbits and other ground dwelling species of wildlife. Ken is also building brush-piles and half-cutting trees along the interior fencelines to provide additional short-term ground cover while the shrub thickets are maturing. By concentrating on interior fencelines, Ken can control the activities that might decrease the value of the fencelines for wildlife. Any fence-line grazing or chemical application on boundary fences by neighbors wipes out many wildlife benefits.

Ken has more ideas that he is considering for future implementation. These plans include establishing more food plot areas, fencing out existing food plots from livestock, and fencing of selected thicket and wooded areas. Plans also include providing a year-round water system for wildlife. The watering system will probably involve the building of several small ponds. Livestock watering may also be part of the ponds' duty. Fencing of the ponds will be a high priority.

Corbet is an avid hunter and invites friends and relatives to his property to hunt. However, his main interest in wildlife on the farm is not improving hunting. Ken feels that ninety percent of the wildlife use on his property comes from non-game animals. The Corbets agree that if their goal were only to improve hunting, they wouldn't make the wildlife habitat improvements. Ken has plenty of hunting places available to him besides his own.

The real benefit that Ken and Beverly enjoy from their wildlife work is the opportunity to observe many kinds of wildlife on the farm and to somehow participate in the

animals' daily activities. Through their wildlife work, the Corbets are helping to provide for the well-being of many different species of wildlife.

Ken attributes most of his interest in fish and wildlife to his father. Corbet's fondest childhood memories are times that he spent hunting, fishing, or just being outdoors with his dad. Because of this, Ken wishes all kids could participate in similar outdoor activities. He believes that much of life and living is directly related to the way things go on in nature and that a person's character can be greatly benefited through outdoor experiences.

Beverly, like Ken, was raised on a farm. Beverly's mother still lives on her farm which is near the Corbet farm. Beverly's interest in wildlife is mainly non-hunting. She does, however, participate in some hunting trips by being a vehicle driver, cook, and girl Friday because she likes the outdoor exposure. Even though Justin is only two, he will join the family on some hunting excursions this year.

Beverly and Ken both work at jobs away from their home. They must
Chickadee

each drive about forty miles round trip to get to their individual jobs. Since they work different hours, they have little opportunity to car-pool with each other. They both concede that this driving consumes much time and money, but they wouldn't have it any other way. Even when given the chance to live somewhere besides on a farm, they decided that the solitude of rural living was well worth the sacrifices they have to make.

The Corbets believe the WHIP program has fit well into their farm operation. It has not caused them any added problems, though they have a few people trespassing. They had this problem before becoming WHIP cooperators. Being involved in wildlife management just as much or as little as they wanted is the aspect of WHIP the Corbets like best. They feel the program is not narrow-minded and can be designed to fit into the way they want to use their farm. For the Corbets, the WHIP program has provided benefits that far outweigh the small amounts of effort and dollars they invest in wildlife. □

Ron Spomer

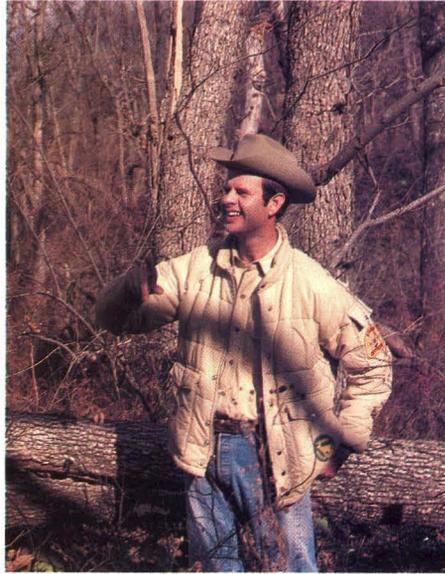


Southeast

Bob Culbertson

The Sayers Farm

Loren Sayers



Wildlife habitat on private land and the continuing loss of it have deeply concerned professional wildlife managers for years. Fortunately, there are many landowners who share this concern. Loren Sayers is one such man. His philosophy and concern for wildlife is not only apparent when discussing the topic but extends to the management of his land.

Loren manages 480 acres of family-owned land in Anderson County near Bush City. The 270 acres of native grass, 126 acres of cropland, forty acres of cool-season pasture, and forty-four acres of timber and brush, are the basis for his diversi-

Cottontail in cover



Ron Spomer



fied farm operation. The varied land use also sustains plentiful wildlife populations.

Loren moved with his family to the present "homeplace" from Kansas City, Kansas in 1952, when he was eleven years old. The eighty-acre farm offered Loren and his brothers an opportunity to sharpen their hunting and fishing skills. Before moving to the farm, these outdoor sports were limited to special weekends. However, through the remainder of his youth, hunting and wildlife watching became a fundamental part of Loren's life, along with chores and other farm activities.

In 1970, Loren took over the farming duties and also began expanding the land holding. There are not big eye-catching differences in the property since he has run it, but subtle changes have occurred.

"It takes time to develop good wildlife habitat," states Loren. "It doesn't happen overnight.

"I use a combination of practices which help produce good crops, conserve soil and water, make quality grass available for grazing and benefit wildlife as much as possible. Crop residues are left standing in cropfields each winter. I rotate crops of milo, beans and wheat each year or so to help prevent weed problems.

I've added sweetclover to my rotation plan in the last couple of years to improve soil conditions, water retention, and nitrogen levels. Rabbits and quail will also use the clover for nesting and winter cover. I also use minimum tillage to some degree. All of the cropfields are now terraced to minimize loss of precious soil."

Sayers' soil conservation efforts are beginning to show. Recent soil tests indicate improvement in organic levels and soil fertility. As a result, he was awarded a soil conservation award in 1980.

All of these practices have an effect on wildlife, but one of Loren's greatest contributions to wildlife

Ron Spomer



habitat has been the establishment of weedy borders along cropfields. This additional permanent cover is already helping to support more quail, according to Loren. He was also quick to point out the reduced wind erosion on fields that already have hedgerows or timber nearby.

Two years ago, Loren, his wife Catherine, and their two sons, Erich and Kurt, planted over 600 shrubs and trees around their new pond and along the edge of an open cropfield. The pond is completely fenced and will be an attractive recreational and wildlife area. The cattle water below the pond.

Loren also discussed the things he does not do which greatly affect wildlife. "Bulldozing hedgerows, cleaning up woody draws, and pushing timber in the creek are not part of my plans." There is enough marginal land being farmed, according to Loren, and the deer and quail which rely on these areas are very valuable to him. Even a large brushpile pushed up by a bulldozer when the area was under other ownership remains unburned. Loren felt this last remnant of the hedgerow was better than nothing.

Another effective and economical management practice Loren has introduced is related to his native grass. Much of the rangeland he purchased in past years was not in top condition for livestock or wildlife. Overgrazing and lack of fire were both problems. He began by adding forty acres of fescue and brome pasture to the homeplace for fall and winter grazing. In itself, brome or fescue are not sufficient habitat for wildlife, but as a tool to relieve the pressure on native grasses during the late fall and winter, they do serve a purpose. This moderate summer grazing program has played an important role in improving the range condition. Equally important, Loren began a prescribed burning program two years ago. He saw first-hand the effectiveness of fire in helping improve the prairie.

"We will be trying to burn our

native grass pastures every three years on the average," says Loren. "The fire was on the verge of being scary the first time, but it did tons more good than spraying had done in the past."

This spring, he plans to burn a 160-acre tract of native grass which has not seen fire for several years. It is becoming choked with cedar trees, buckbrush, and other woody plants.

"I don't want to kill all the cedar trees and brush," explains Sayers, "but we do need to get them under control and give the native grasses a chance to grow." A controlled burn is the best tool for the job.

Not only will the 160-acre range produce more grass for summer grazing, but upland game such as quail and cottontails will get a shot in the arm from the improved nesting habitat. And there will still be brush left in the draws for winter cover and timber on one hillside for the deer after the burning program is initiated.

Controlled burning is not confined to the native grass pasture on Loren's farm. He is using fire to improve wildlife habitat conditions along the edges of his timber where small trees and brush were becoming very dense. The first burn opened up a few areas and native grasses and forbs are more evident. The diversity of vegetation created by this type of management is what wildlife thrives upon.

"This is where I harvest my deer each fall," Sayers explains. "I want to provide them some open areas along with the heavy brush and timber along the creek."

It is evident that Sayers already is doing a commendable job of maintaining and creating wildlife habitat in addition to his crop and livestock production. However, he also has future plans for improvements. Native prairie grass will be seeded on pond dams and in odd areas which are no longer producing good fescue. A new pond will be fenced to control cattle access and oak trees are being planted for future genera-

tions (and wildlife) to use.

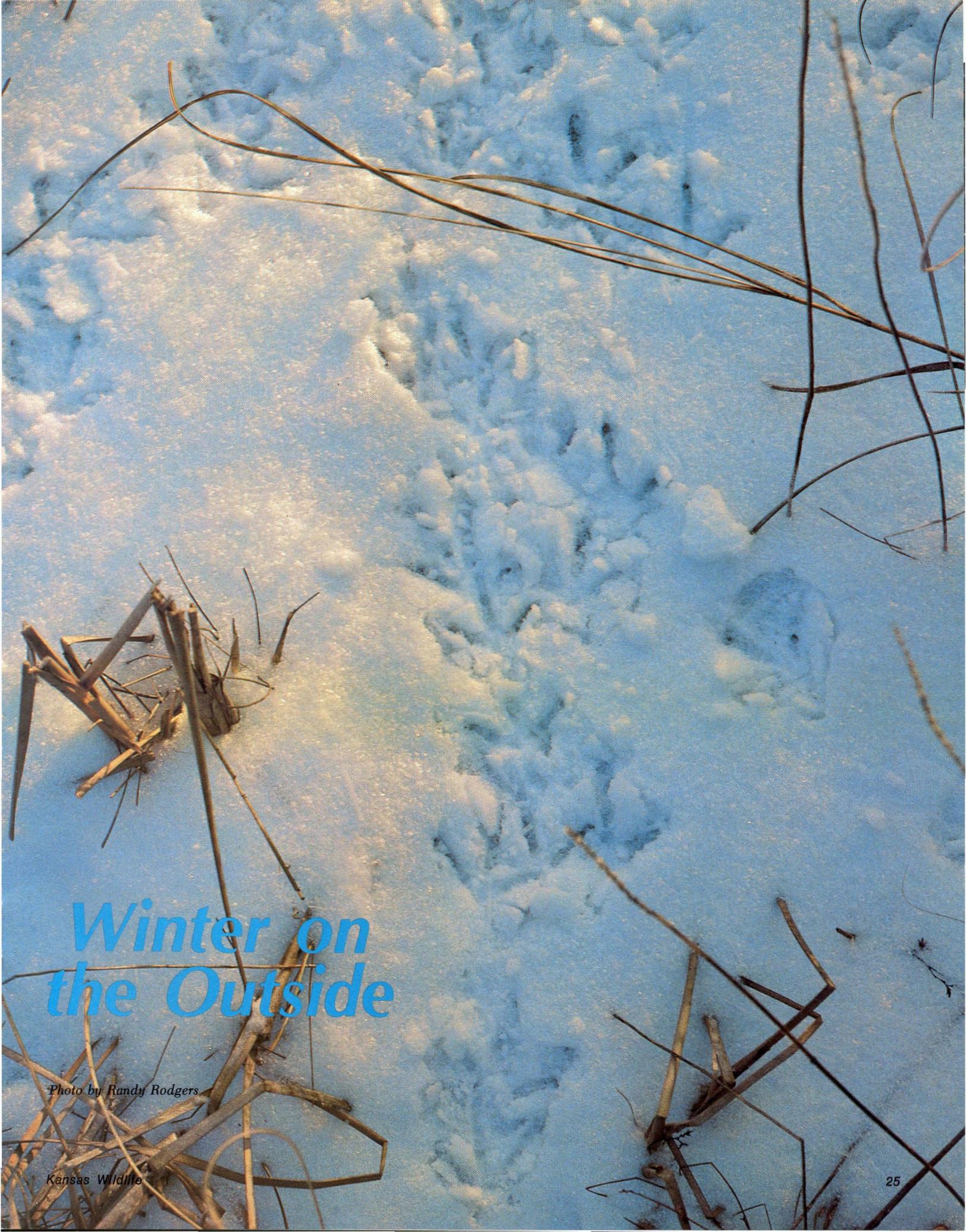
When I asked Loren how WHIP had helped him the most, he indicated, "the advice and recommendations were most helpful." For other landowners, he feels manpower and money, either through tax breaks or direct assistance might provide more motivation to improve wildlife habitat.

Sayers has also been involved in and concerned about habitat development on a statewide basis. He assisted in getting the Kansas Banker's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Award Program under way. This is an award available in each county to recognize a landowner who has maintained or developed wildlife habitat on the farm.

As far as Loren is concerned, the arguments in favor of wildlife management on his land are fairly straightforward. "Wildlife, hunting and fishing were all very important sports while I was growing up. They were a source of food, good exercise, and always interesting. There is no end to what can be learned while in the field. You learn very quickly about the interdependence of the whole natural system. I want my boys to have the same opportunity to learn and experience. There are also esthetic values to having wildlife on the property. We have an interest in all the wildlife and wild foods found here. Mushrooms are a delicacy and we make use of them whenever time allows."

However, hunting, fishing, and wildlife esthetics only partly explain his efforts.

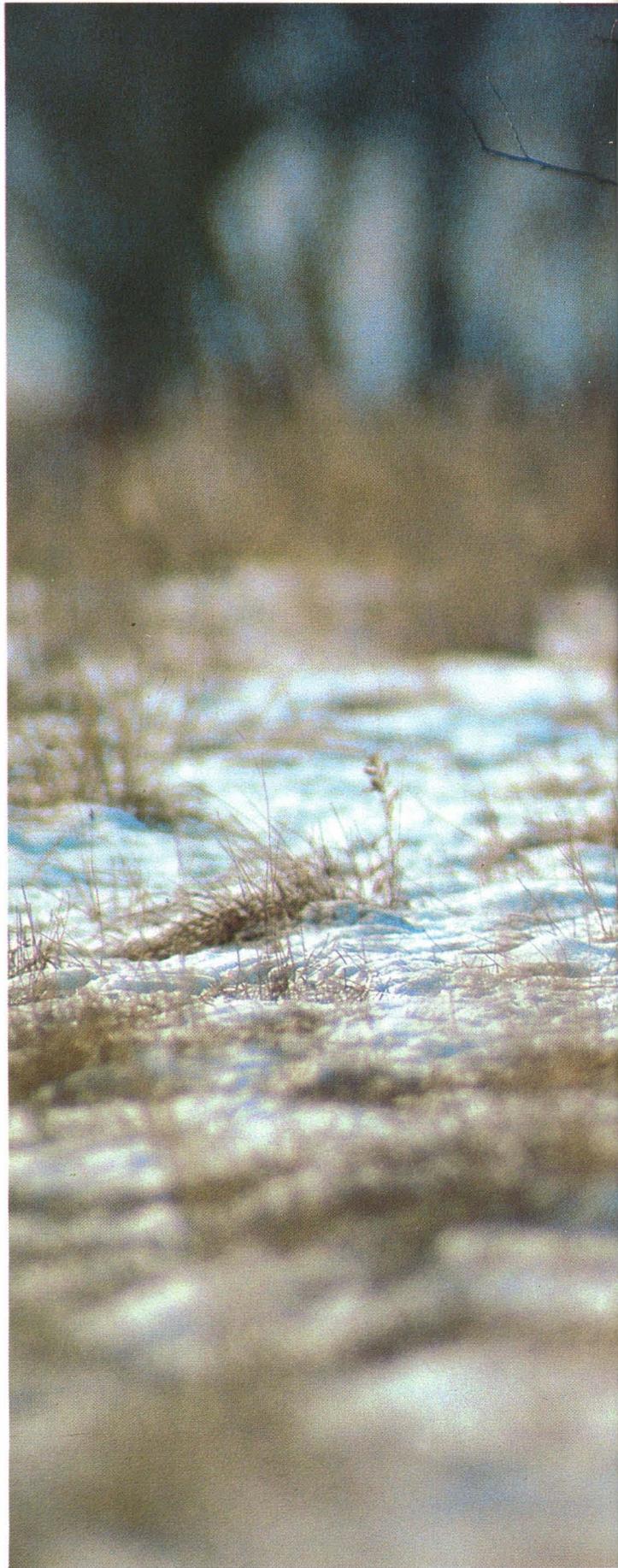
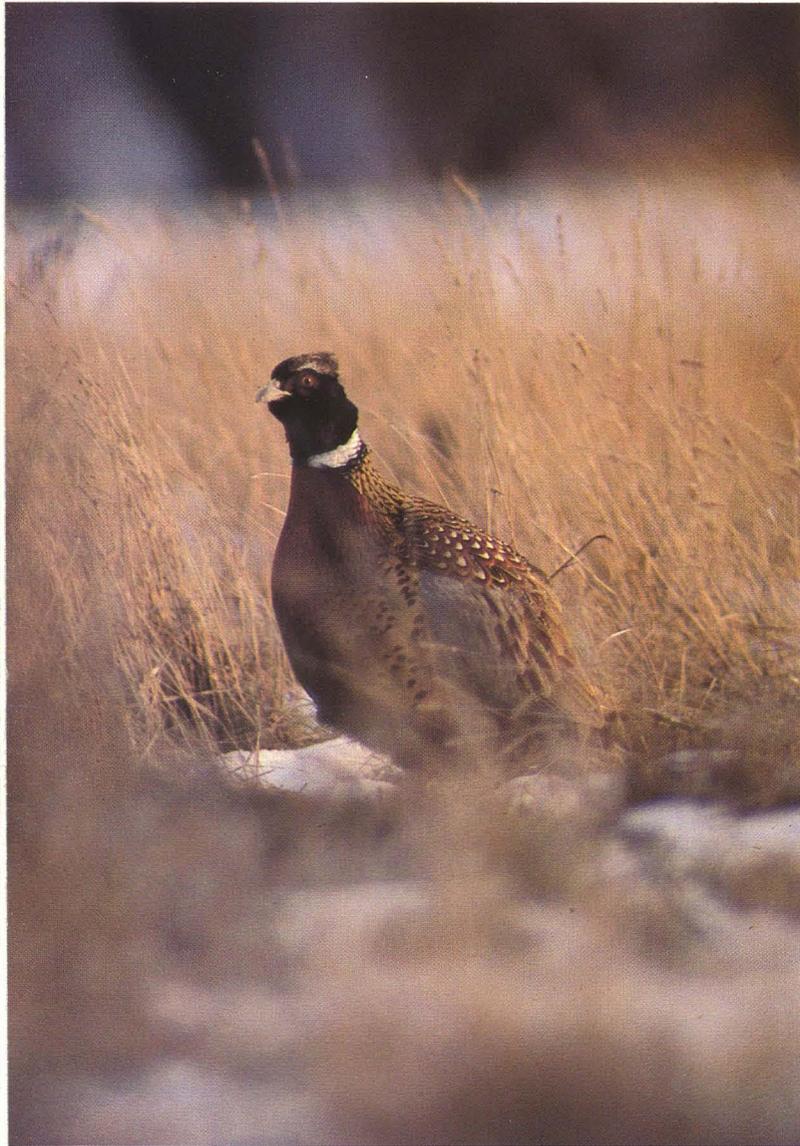
"My management is part of being a good steward of the land," says Sayers. When the "good stewardship of the land" translates into good native grass management, permanent cover on critical areas, hedgerows and timber to help control wind erosion, terracing cropfields, maintaining cover on these fields through the winter and rotating crops, our natural resources including wildlife are beneficiaries. □



Winter on the Outside

Photo by Randy Rodgers

There is a simplicity to winter that comes as a welcome change after the warm seasons. To begin with, the countryside is free of the Central American crowd. Fair weather folk, human and otherwise, have headed south. The creatures that remain behind have put aside the summer's courting and family ties and gotten down to the business of staying warm and well-fed. The countryside is stripped clean; the leaves underfoot have lost their crunch, and most wild things are too preoccupied with survival to be very jumpy about a two-legged wanderer. Ask a question of a winter landscape, and you run a good chance of getting an answer. (Photos by Ron Spomer.)



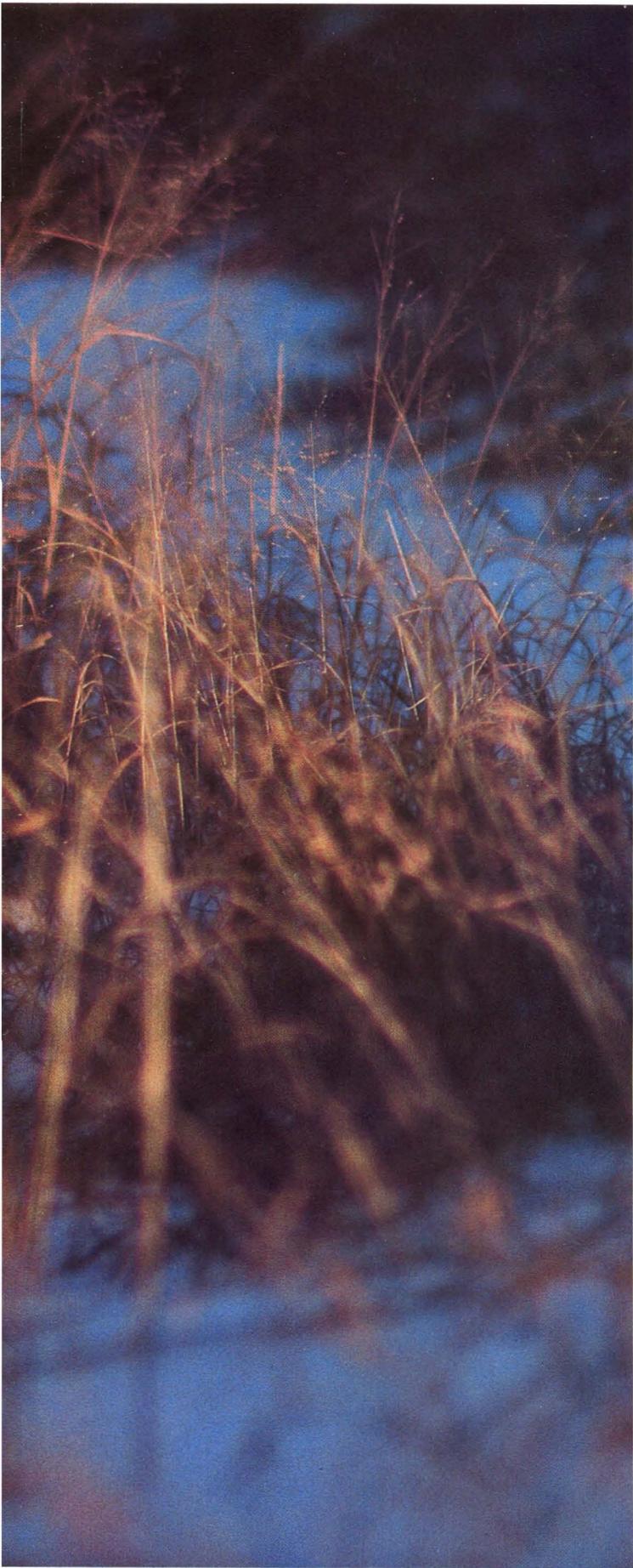


To a goose, home is on the tundra. Anywhere else is exile. Raised above treeline west of Hudson's Bay, the geese of the tallgrass prairie flock are driven south by November blizzards, but they give ground grudgingly, retreating only as far as they must to find a little green wheat for feed. They wait on the cutting edge of winter until they read something in the noon sun that can't be felt in the weather; then, they're gone. The V's drive north just ahead of the thaw, pressing their advantage through the Dakotas and beyond. By May, they are back on the barrens, necks still bent against the wind they have fought all the way from Kansas, waiting for spring to find them. Home again. (Photos by Ron Spomer.)









In late winter, the game between fox and rabbit is a chess match—one opponent waiting for the mistake that will give him an opening, the other straining not to make that mistake. The foolishness has been killed out of the rabbit clan; the impatience among the foxes has died with it. The survivors hone each other to finer and finer expressions of predator and prey, each responsible for the perfection of the other. (Photos by Ron Spomer.)



