

# KANSAS WILDLIFE

NOVEMBER DECEMBER 1987

\$1.75



# KANSAS WILDLIFE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1987

Vol. 44, No. 6

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KANSAS WILDLIFE (ISSN 0279-9030) is published bimonthly by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Rt. 2, Box 54A, Pratt, KS 67124 (316) 672-5911. Subscription rates: one year \$6; two years \$11; and three years \$15.

Articles in the magazine may be reprinted with permission. Second-class postage paid at Wichita, Kan., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Rural Route 2, Box 54A, Pratt, KS. 67124. Postal I.D. Number: ISSN 0279-9030.



29



36



38



**About The Covers**

**Front:** In the instant this rutting white-tailed buck detected danger, Mike Blair snapped this photograph in a sunlit clearing. Blair used a 400mm lens, set his aperture at f/3.5 and his shutter speed at 1/250th of a second.

**Back:** A doe checks her backtrail in a snowfall. Mike Blair used a 400mm lens to make the photo. Aperture was f/3.5 and shutter speed was 1/60th of a second.

**THE BUCK STOPS HERE**

New Stuff

1

**A Calling Of Autumn**

The white-tailed deer's mating season — called the rut — is the subject of this KANSAS WILDLIFE photo essay. text and photos by Mike Blair

2

**The Prairie Bird**

Kansas is home to more prairie chickens than any other state in the union. A look at the history and whereabouts of this bird. by Gerald J. Horak

8

**Of Beagles And Bunnies**

Kansas rarely have rabbits in mind when planning a hunt. But if those sportsmen owned beagles, that wouldn't be the case. by Randy Clark

13

**the center section**

edited by Mike Miller

17

**Mr. Secretary**

Meet Bob Meinen, the new Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

29

**For The Birds**

Thinking about saving a bird for the taxidermist? Then you must handle your special prize with extra care in the field. by Tim Schaid

30

**Why I Trap**

My love of the outdoors and the challenge of outsmarting a critter on its own turf are two of the reasons I run a trapline. by Randy Nelson

32

**KANSAS WILDLIFE Gallery**

photos by Mike Blair

36

**Top Dogs**

The cocker spaniel may be America's favorite dog but hunters have their own favorites — Britts and Labs. by Terry Wayne Cloutier

38

**How To Cape A Deer**

by Steve Capel

43

**Kansas Deer Records**

44

**HIGH GROUND**

First Chickens by Mike Cox

45

**Editorial Creed:** To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

# THE BUCK STOPS HERE



## New Stuff

**T**ime for a few announcements . . . Beginning with the March/April 1988 issue of this magazine, KANSAS WILDLIFE will be known as KANSAS WILDLIFE & PARKS, to reflect the merger of the Kansas Fish and Game Commission and the Kansas State Park and Resources Authority. Our new name will better identify our new charge — to continue to keep you abreast of pertinent conservation, wildlife and outdoor happenings in our state as well as incorporate state parks into our coverage. As I write this, however, we've yet to decide on a new cover logo for the magazine. We'll surprise you with it in the March/April issue.

The reason we're waiting till then to introduce our new name is that we wanted to splash it with a special 16-page section on Kansas' 23 state parks. Those 16 pages will contain striking four-color photographs, maps and descriptions of what the Kansas state park system has to offer. This special parks section will probably be available as a brochure later in 1988 and may be picked up on request at all state park offices.

More current than what you'll be seeing two issues from now, however, are a few improvements in this issue over the previous ones.

You may have already noticed that we're now using a higher grade of paper on the Center Section. The paper, 70-pound Javelin, is the same quality we've been using for the white pages for many years.

You may have also noticed that this issue has four more pages than previous issues. This will allow us to run more color photos, one facet of KANSAS WILDLIFE that regularly draws your praise.

Yet a third addition to KANSAS WILDLIFE is the column we'll call FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, which kicks off on Page 21. The column will float within the Center Section and will appear under the subheading most suited to the message that issue.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH will feature a variety of authors tackling, frankly, whatever's on their minds — current environmental issues, hunting and fishing topics, anecdotal material, thought-provoking ideas and humor, to name a few of several areas considered fair game. Rob Manes, Wildlife and Parks education coordinator, leads off the series with a few words on hunter orange.

Still another possible change concerns the new department logo. Would a new logo reflect symbols from both the old Fish and Game and State Park patches? Bob Meinen, who began his new position as Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks in mid-September, says he wants to study the logo situation before automatically proposing a new one.

"I'd want to be looking at a combination of what has been there and what will be recognizable to the people of the state," Meinen says. "At this time I need a chance to see what the people's receptivity is to the current logos (Fish and Game and State Park). We're dealing with a (single) department now and that department should reflect a uni-



Kansas Wildlife & Parks



*Kansas Wildlife & Parks*

Patti Murphy illustration

form image . . . one image that says something about the natural resources of the state."

Speaking of the new boss, please turn to Page 29 of this issue. There Bob provides us with some of his thoughts as he begins his new position. Page 25 also provides more background on Meinen as well as Alan Wentz, the department's new assistant secretary for operations. Wentz began his new position on Sept. 8.

In closing, I'd like to remind you of a standing offer — our Letters (to the Editor) pages in each issue. Want to make a comment? Got a gripe? Maybe a question for a Wildlife and Parks official? If so, write: Letters to the Editor, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Rt. 2, Box 54A, Pratt, KS 67124. We'll print as many letters as space allows. We may have to edit your letter because of that space limitation, but your comment, complaint or question will remain intact.

Meanwhile, enjoy the November/December issue.

**Paul G. Koenig**  
Editor

# A Calling of Autumn

The white-tailed deer's mating season – called the rut – is the subject of this KANSAS WILDLIFE photo essay.

text and photos  
by Mike Blair  
Staff Photographer



A lone fawn against the sunset (above) quietly speaks of the mating season. Unless orphaned, young deer remain close to their mother throughout the winter except for several days when the doe seeks a mate. The fawns are insecure at this time and often wander about as if lost.

In a Christmas-card scene, this peaceful pairing of whitetails (below) brings wonder to a winter dusk. The rut follows a rhythmic pattern during the fall. Although peak breeding occurs in Kansas in November, unbred does recycle every 28 days and matings may occur into February. At right, an 8-point buck sets a course in search of does.



I would speak to you of the rut.

If words could distill the sun's gold from autumn grasslands and pour it across an empty page, and sing the song of a north wind bearing honkers, then could the mating time of whitetails be reflected.

If the grandeur of fall colors could envelop thoughts like a fog settling on a river at dusk, then could the story of the age-old ritual among deer be told with inspiration.

I would speak to you of the rut.

If the faint callings of October could be heard by men – callings that draw deer out from timbered depths to roam the sunlit openings – then could November mysteries be explained and answers provided.

The old bucks – like vapors of imagination materializing in full regalia to fight the autumn battles and heed the rutting moon – their secrets could be told with confidence.

The curious moods of the does could be divulged and the loneliness of castaway fawns revealed. What prompts the long and breathless chases of rutting deer, and why the fawns of spring must wander aimlessly during the temporary preoccupations of their mothers – these feelings would shape the story.

I would speak to you of the rut.

When trees are slashed and earth is pawed and raw winds bring the season's first snowflakes, then would double sets of tracks black in a wintry blanket have meaning.

When hock glands turn tarry and feeding is forgotten by heavy-necked bucks searching the coverts for does, the foretelling of a new generation of spring deer would be sure.

I would speak to you of the rut.

When a young doe bewildered by strange instincts nervously bolts as a massive 10-pointer, head low and trotting, turns his attention on her; when the sound of the grunt and antlers clashing somewhere in timber reveal the rites of dominance have come again; and when all of the beauty of deer is focused as the year ebbs away, I would offer these impressions of a magical time.

I would speak to you of the rut . . .

KW

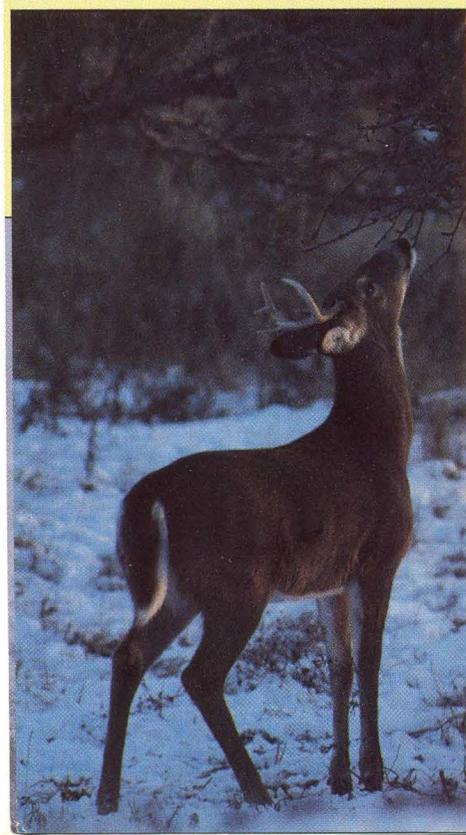


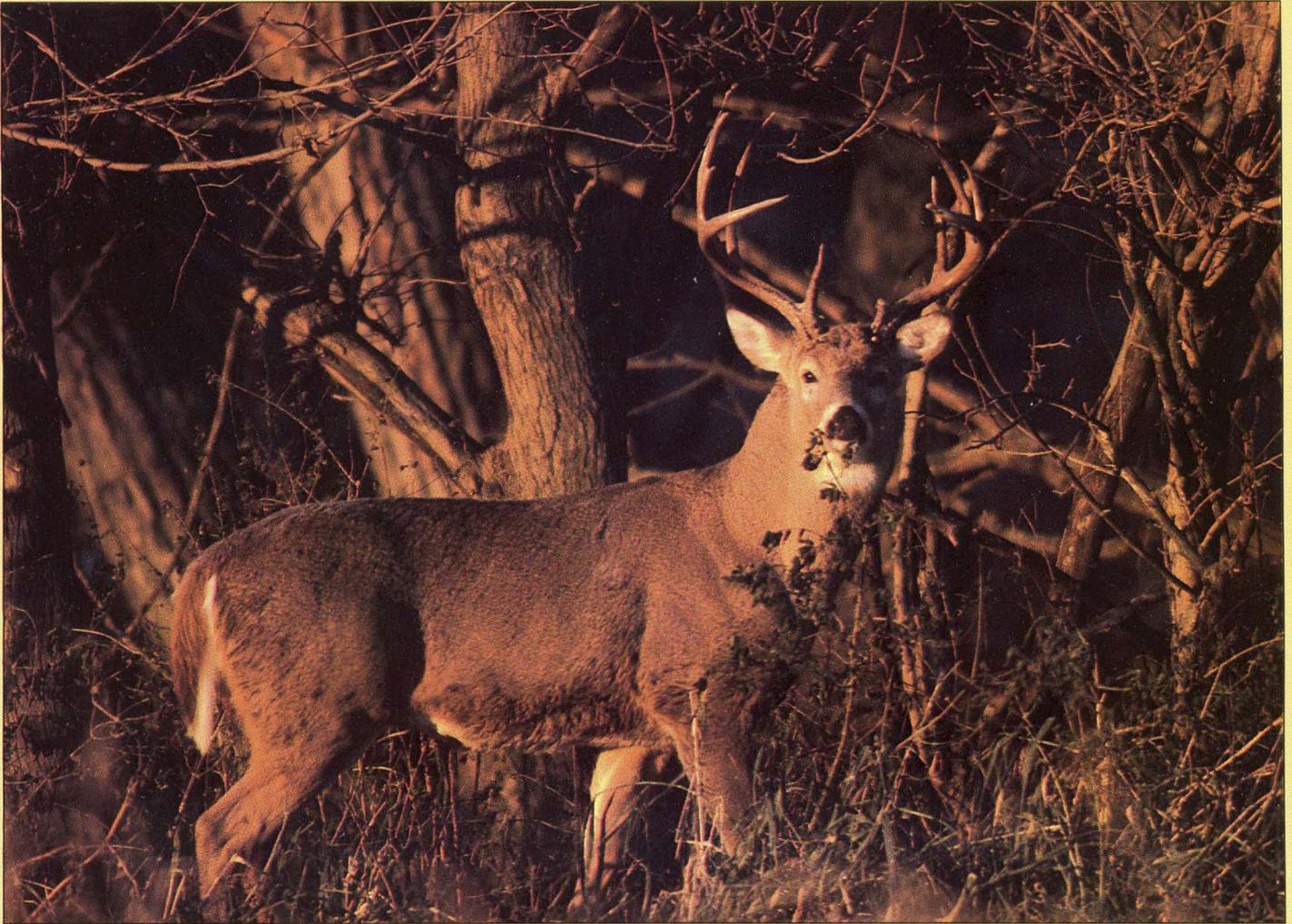


During the rut, whitetail bucks paw bare spots into the earth under low-hanging tree limbs. These "scrapes" (above) are scent stations for both bucks and does. Visits are recorded by urination into the scrapes and by chewing and rubbing facial scent glands across overhead twigs (below). Receptive does may loiter near scrapes or scent-mark them and travel on. Bucks periodically checking the scrapes may then track the does.



A buck's keen nose helps it identify receptive does. The odor of an estrous female prompts a characteristic behavior known as the Flehmen response (shown above) when the male raises his head with curled lip. As does approach estrus, visible changes occur. Hock glands on the inside of the hind legs turn black, and urination and hormonal secretions become frequent. Bucks sensing this onset press the doe into exhausting chases, which may continue for several days before mating occurs. The rutting pair winds back and forth through the timber in a fluid, slinking trot that may last for hours. Searching bucks sometimes use the same gait to scatter a group of does, making it easier to check their individual scents.





The rut puts big bucks on the move during daylight hours, making this the best time to observe them.

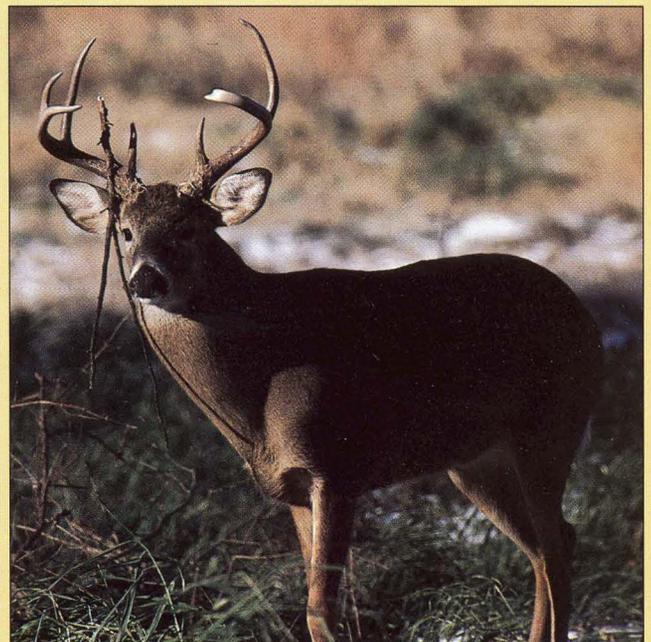


As mating draws near, the does become less coy. When checking a doe, the buck (above, right) often circles with head held low. Usually the female bolts away, and the chase is on.

Mock fights are frequent during the rut and consist primarily of shoving matches among young males. Rank is well-established in local herds, and lesser bucks routinely yield to dominant animals. True rutting battles occur only when strange bucks of equal size meet or when a local subordinate tries to increase rank (at right). Then, ears lowered and hair erect, combatants clash with ringing antlers. Fights may continue for several hours before one gives up. Occasionally serious injury or death occurs when one buck breaks through the other's guard. Antlers rarely lock in combat, resulting in the eventual death of both animals unless they can free themselves. Usually an antler will break off (lower left) before this happens.

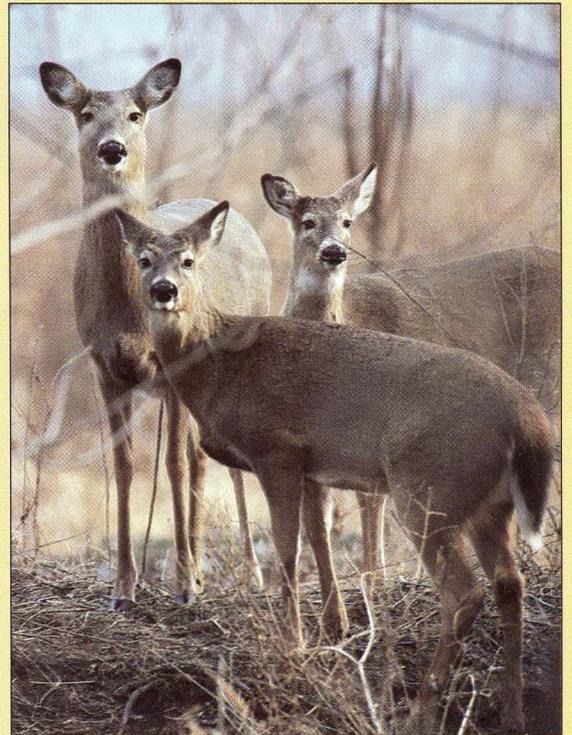


Large antlers are a visual clue of rank, and some bucks intimidate others by carrying branches or weeds in their racks. The buck in the lower right photo was observed every day for a week during the rut and commonly used this ploy.





A doe is receptive to breeding for about 24 hours during her heat cycle. Dominant bucks normally earn breeding rights although for various reasons lesser bucks may also breed. Multiple matings usually occur, and partners may change should a superior buck find the doe and drive away the competitor. Breeding occurs most often at night. After mating occurs, does rejoin their offspring for the winter (right). These family groups are seldom seen with big bucks after the rut, except in random feeding situations. About 200 days after conception spring fawns are born, and the new life cycle of the white-tailed deer begins.





# The Prairie Bird

Kansas is home to more prairie chickens than any other state in the union. A look at the history and whereabouts of this bird.

by **Gerald J. Horak**  
*Wildlife Research Biologist  
Emporia*

**T**he prairie chicken's population and distribution has shown great fluctuation from extremely high numbers in the 19th century to near extinction in the 1930s. These population measurements are directly related to agriculture and land use.

Historical records of prairie chickens in Kansas are rare. The early explorers' accounts mention little of the bird, which may indicate that the birds were not abundant. The elimination of the buffalo, a nomadic grazer, changed the structure and composition of grassland vegetation and probably further reduced prairie chicken populations. During the mid-19th century,



painting courtesy of M. Wayne Willis, 3731 E. Kellogg, Wichita, KS 67218.

European agriculture began to influence Kansas land use. This influence was good for prairie chicken populations. Chicken numbers jumped dramatically as a direct result of small-grain plants and the re-establishment of grazing on the grasslands.

Our forefathers knew the birds for their noisy courtship booming, large flocks and fine-flavored meat. Some homesteaders who survived on prairie chicken actually tired of eating the

bird but nearly everybody ate them rather than kill their own domestic chickens.

The expanding prairie chicken population drew the attention of both market and sport hunters. The commercial hunting of prairie chickens was a profitable venture during the 1860s and 1870s, but by the late 19th century, prairie chicken were no longer plentiful in the Atlantic states. There the bird was a novelty, consid-

ered a great delicacy and commanded a good price. In the early 1870s, the average price on the East Coast for prairie chickens was about \$3.50 a dozen. The number of prairie chickens killed and sold during the peak population period is beyond comprehension. There are numerous accounts of prairie grouse barreled and shipped to meat markets across the United States. In 1871, 70 Chicago meat markets handled and sold 513,000 of these prairie birds. In 1873 more than 600,000 were sold and one large establishment in New York City sold 2,400 grouse each day during the 1878 holiday season. The prairie chicken was also considered a choice food in foreign countries as well. Paris received a shipment of 14,200 birds in 1875.

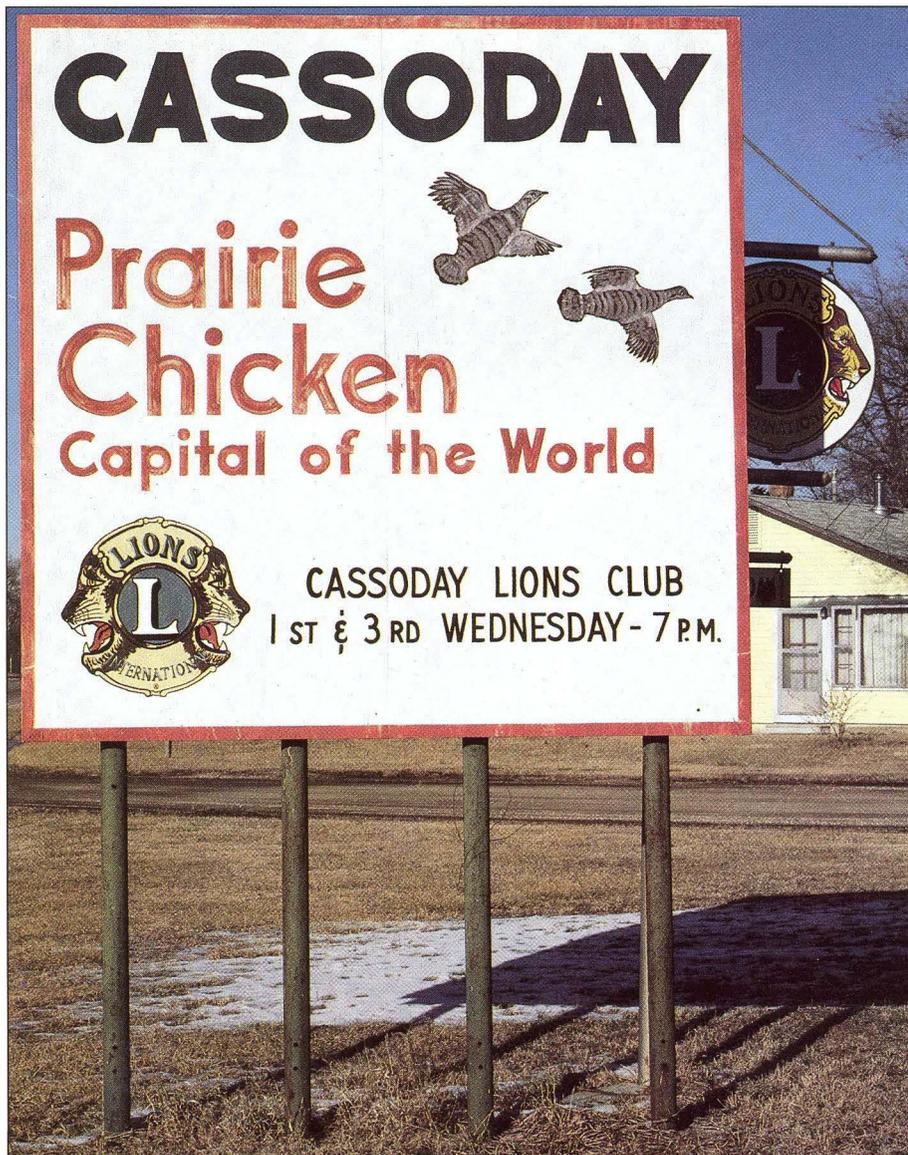
Yet there was some concern about the unlimited taking of prairie chickens in Kansas. The first state Legislature in 1862 gave county governments the option to open and close the chicken season. As a result, the season ran from Sept. 2 to March 31. The law provided that the season could be closed in any county if a minimum of 20 citizens of that county petitioned for closure, but there's no evidence that any county exercised this option. Kansas laws were liberalized in the 1870s, suggesting increased prairie chicken numbers.

Nets and traps were illegal in 1868, but by 1876 landowners could use them to catch the birds on their own property. In 1877 prairie chickens could be taken by anyone, any place, by any means. Commercial interstate shipment of any game animal, however, was illegal.

The prairie chicken population in Kansas reached peak numbers during the late 1800s because the agricultural movement provided an optimum balance of food and cover. But by the early 1900s the balance was no more, and the prairie chicken population started to decline. Concerns for this decline were indicated by establishing bag limits (11 birds per day in 1911), and during certain years the hunting season was closed. These laws were imposed but not enforced until the establishment of the old Fish and Game Commission in 1926.

Prairie chicken populations fluctuated dramatically during the first half of the 20th century. The drought years of the 1930s and 1950s drastically reduced the numbers and range of Kansas prairie chickens. Since the 1950s, however, Kansas prairie chickens have gradually increased their range and populations.

With increased knowledge that

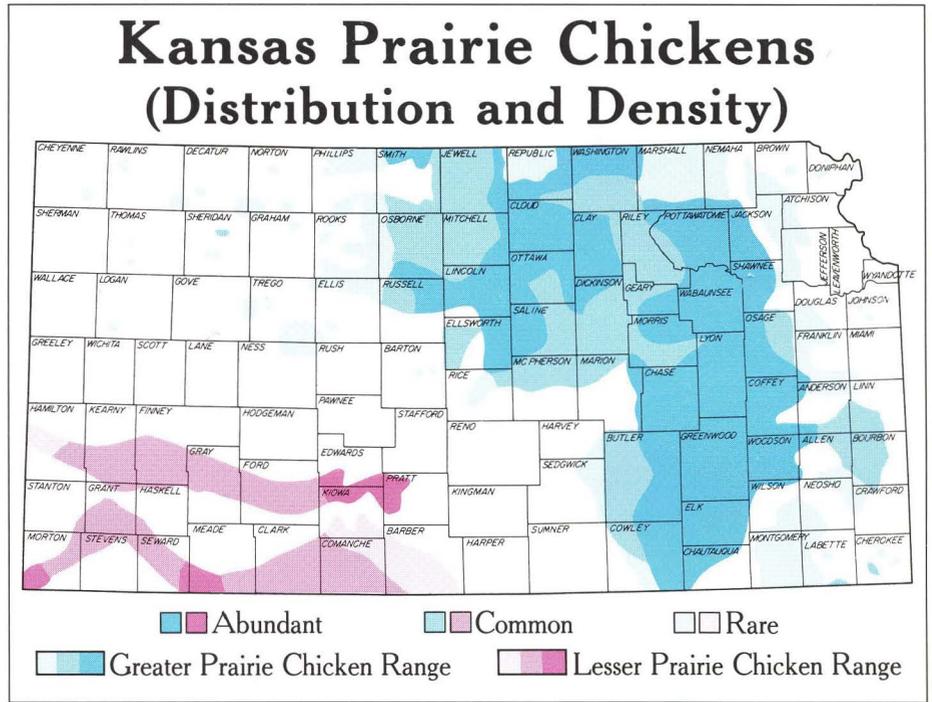


Mike Blair photo

Cassoday, Kan., (pop. 122) proclaims itself the *Prairie Chicken Capital of the World* although hunters no longer flock to the Butler County town as they once did. Credit the Cassoday Lions Club with giving the town its unique name. According to *The El Dorado Times*, the distinctive title was first mentioned in 1959 as part of a fund-raising campaign for the local Lions Club. The idea — and the name — soon caught on. Club members secured hunting permission from local landowners, sold one-day hunting permits for \$1, even sold hot breakfasts. In 1959 a hunter could get a slice of ham, an egg and two pancakes for \$1.50. The two signs that were erected that first year (proclaiming the *Prairie Chicken Capital of the World*) still stand — one facing north and one facing south on Highway 177. But the tradition that began in 1959 waned in the early 1970s when the chicken opener was held concurrently with the pheasant and quail openers. A few years later the chicken season was again given its own opening weekend. But the opening-day shindig never rekindled. Residents are still proud of their town, however. Both signs on Highway 177 were repainted recently.

prairie chicken populations fluctuate, we realize that a limited and enforced prairie chicken hunting season will not affect the bird's numbers. Because of this knowledge, a hunting season was re-established in 1957 and has been held every year since.

Before 1900 the hunting regulations did not distinguish between lesser and greater prairie chickens. The lesser prairie chicken inhabits the southwest quarter of Kansas and the greater prairie chicken inhabits the remainder of the state (see the accompanying range map). The southwest counties (the lesser's range) were not open to prairie chicken hunting since before the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s. In 1970, however, separate lesser and greater prairie chicken hunting seasons were established with different areas and season lengths. In 1979 the prairie chicken season was open state-wide and didn't distinguish between the two species.



Patti Murphy map

**K**ansas can be proud of the fact that it has the largest population of prairie chickens in the nation. Only five other states have a

prairie chicken hunting season and only one state, Oklahoma, has both a lesser and greater hunting season.

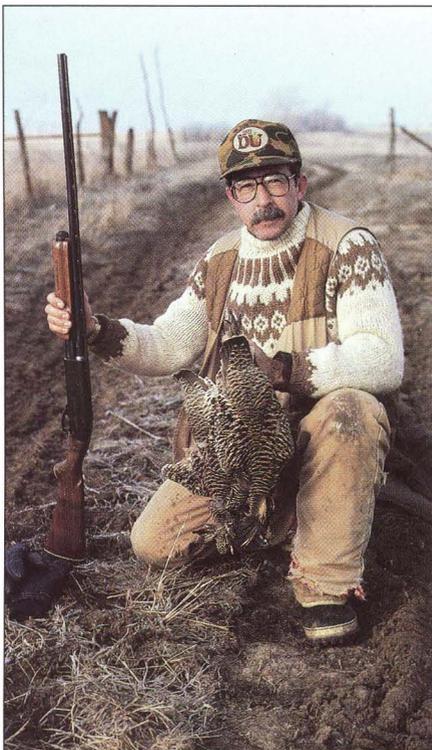
During a recent five-year period, 2,300 Kansas hunters annually harvested 3,000 lesser prairie chickens while 41,300 hunters annually harvested 68,000 greater prairie chickens. For all five years, the hunting season started the first Saturday of November and extended through Jan. 31.

Hunting prairie chickens usually takes more preparation than most other types of upland game hunting. The general areas to start looking are noted on the accompanying range map. The lesser prairie chickens are more nu-

merous in the sand-sage prairie south of the Cimarron and Arkansas Rivers in southwest Kansas. Greater prairie chickens are most numerous in the tallgrass prairie of the Flint Hills and north-central Kansas.

Most chicken hunting is done on private lands, but several public hunting areas are available. If you're interested in the lesser prairie chicken, the Cimarron National Grasslands and Pratt Sandhills will provide some hunting. The greater chicken can be hunted on El Dorado, Fall River, Woodson and Melvern public hunting areas.

Generally both species are hunted



Mike Blair photo

A satisfied hunter poses with a limit of greater prairie chickens. The 1987-1988 Kansas season on both species runs Nov. 7 through Jan. 31.

## FREE PRAIRIE CHICKEN BOOK

**F**or a free copy of "Kansas Prairie Chickens," a 65-page technical bulletin that gives detailed information on population and harvest surveys, booming grounds, flock movements, hunter success, habitat requirements and management techniques, to name a few topics, write: Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Wildlife Division, Rt. 2, Box 54A, Pratt, KS 67124.

**KANSAS**  
**PRAIRIE CHICKENS**  
KANSAS FISH AND GAME COMMISSION



painting courtesy of M. Wayne Willis

in similar ways, although it's usually much easier to walk up lessers than it is greater. There are two methods of hunting prairie chickens in Kansas — feed-field hunting and pasture shooting. Most hunters (70 percent) use only the feed fields, while 20 percent venture into both feed fields and pastures. Ten percent hunt only in pastures.

In feed-field shooting, hunters station themselves in and around the harvested grain fields that are attracting feeding birds. Preseason scouting is necessary to determine whether the birds are flocked up. This occurs by mid-October. Search in open country for large, harvested grain fields, preferably bean, corn or milo. Weather conditions before the hunting season might then become the most important factor. During October and November some birds will come into feed fields regardless of weather conditions, but they'll concentrate into larger flocks after a hard freeze. A frost that kills insects and vegetation in pastures make waste grains in fields a more desirable food source.

Prairie chickens will generally feed just before sunrise and again in late afternoon. It's best to find a feeding area about a week before the season begins because the birds' habits won't change much before opening morning. When you find a flock, ask the landowner for permission to hunt. If permission is granted, watch the flock for several feeding periods and learn how the birds use the field.

Make sure there's some type of cover you can use near the birds' flight path. By the time the season rolls around, your anticipation and expectations will be greater because you have permission to hunt where you know the chickens are feeding. On the morning of the hunt, get to the field at least one-half hour before shooting time. This allows you time to set up in the most favorable location. At this point, half the battle is won.

Shooting and hitting the birds is a problem in itself. Unfortunately, when prairie chicken season opens most hunters haven't used their shotguns for several weeks. The disadvantages in-

crease as hunters, deceived by the bird's speed, fail to lead the targets as much as they should. The birds appear to be coasting along at a rather slow clip when they pump their wings briefly and sail without wing motion. But their speeds often exceed 30 mph.

Sportsmen who hunt pastures will find a dog helpful in finding birds. The most likely place to find prairie chickens during mid-day is on hill tops or along ridges within a mile of a feed field. This type of hunting is sometimes discouraging because the birds flush wild and usually out of gun range, especially when they're in flocks. Single birds seem to hold much better.

When the weather is warm, field-dress your birds as quickly as possible to prevent meat spoilage. The prairie chicken's dark meat is excellent table fare when given proper field care and preparation. KW

*For the humble confessions of a seasoned prairie chicken hunter, see HIGH GROUND on Page 45.*



This small pack of beagles appears ready to get on the trail of a cottontail rabbit. Just ask the guy on the other end of the leash.

# Of Beagles And Bunnies

Kansas hunters rarely have rabbits in mind when planning a trip. But if those sportsmen owned beagles, that wouldn't be the case.

by Randy Clark  
*District Wildlife Biologist  
Buhler*

photos by Mike Blair

**T**he sounds of several baying hounds carries from the brushy draw. Music from the pack travels well on this cold, windless day. Yes, day. This is not a coon hunt. The hounds baying in the brush are beagles, and the quarry is cottontail rabbit. Three hunters have stationed themselves at breaks in the habitat hoping to get a shot as the hounds drive the rabbit through the opening. The hunters are carrying small-gauge shotguns, and the number



Running beagles and bunnies is a sport for all generations.

of shots heard rarely equals the number of rabbits in the bag.

This hunting scene would be common in any state east or south of Kansas. After all, cottontail rabbits are the principal game animal in the United States. Yet in Kansas, sportsmen rarely have rabbits in mind when planning a hunt. Most rabbits here are taken with .22-caliber rifles after the first snow or as a second choice on an upland gamebird hunt. During bag checks on public hunting areas, the following conversation is quite common:

“What are you hunting for?”

“Pheasant or quail.”

“What have you got?”

“Three rabbits.”

Why would hunters from a state with a good rabbit population, a liberal bag limit and a year-round season have such an attitude? Probably several reasons. The major one is that Kansas usually has good populations of quail, pheasant and prairie chicken. These species, along with waterfowl, big-game animals and furbearers, compete for the hunter's leisure time. In short, Kansas hunters are blessed with an abundance of huntable species.

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Beagles are small hounds and are divided into two size classes: those smaller than 13 inches at the shoulder and those taller than 13 inches but less than 15 inches. They may be any hound color, but the tri-colored black-, white- and tans are the most common.

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I believe there are two other reasons as well. One, most Kansans grew up plinking sitting rabbits and don't consider them a challenging target. Secondly, dogs are rarely used to hunt rabbits in Kansas. Both of these objections can be overcome by using beagles. Hunting with a pack of beagles means the rabbit is more likely to be moving, making it a more difficult target. And, you get the pleasure of watching a dog do the task for which it was bred.

Beagles are small hounds and are divided into two size classes: those smaller than 13 inches at the shoulder and those taller than 13 inches but less than 15 inches. They may be any hound color, but the tri-colored black-, white- and tans are the most common. Beagles have been bred to pursue rabbits and hares but are also used on pheasants. Beagles were mentioned in English literature as early as 1475. American records of imported European-strain beagles date to just after the Civil War. Packs of pure-bred beagles were hunted by the late 1870s or early 1880s. Today beagles are among the top 10 most popular breeds in America.

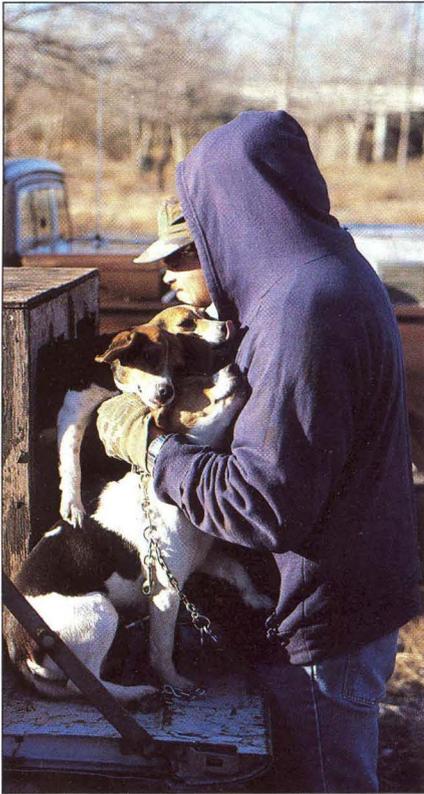
The beagle may be hunted singly, in braces or in packs. There is a big debate among beaglers as to how fast beagles should pursue their game, not unlike the difference of opinion among bird-dog field trialers and walk-and-shoot bird-dog men. In general, beaglers want a dog that follows the line of scent left by the rabbit without a lot of time wasted "off the line." Field trialers like a dog that follows the line closely. If a rabbit were unrolling a ball of string as it ran, field trial beaglers would want their dog to pursue the rabbit while keeping the string between its front legs at all times. In order to do this, the dog has to trail the rabbit slowly. Most gundog beaglers would give up some of this accuracy to gain speed. They wouldn't mind if the dog were a few feet from the imaginary string if it meant circling the rabbit faster.

**B**oth types of dogs can be used for hunting, and the methods are the same. The dogs are worked through cover until they open on a rabbit track. The hunters then position themselves where they think they can get a shot. The rabbit usually runs in a circle, not wanting to venture out of its home range. Often hunters using the slower dogs will use .22-caliber rifles. Since their dogs are not pushing the rabbit, hunters often get shots at slow-hopping or still rabbits. Knowing the positions of other gunners is especially important when .22s are used. When more than one person is shooting, shotguns are the safer choice.

While some coondog men may scoff at beaglers as "houndmen whose



Competition is one thing, but much of the fun in running beagles lies in using them on an actual hunt. This hunter and beagle admire Kansas rabbits on a hunt earlier this year.



wives won't let them out at night," there are advantages to owning and hunting beagles. Hounds usually can be watched as well as heard, something coondog men can't do since they hunt at night. Beaglers have little, if any, competition for rabbits. Landowners will often let you rabbit hunt when they wouldn't allow upland bird hunting. Orchard owners and tree farmers will often invite you to rabbit hunt once they learn you own beagles. The reason: rabbits cause considerable crop damage. Public hunting areas usually have good rabbit populations. If you hunt in January or February, you'll likely have the entire area to yourself. So if you enjoy watching and hearing hounds work, and your wife wants you home at night, try rabbit hunting with beagles. I'm sure you'll find the hunt enjoyable and the shooting challenging.

Since Kansas is on the edge of beagledom, you'll do a lot of traveling if you want to attend many trials. Currently there is one American Kennel Club (AKC) licensed trial held in Kansas. Nebraska has one, Missouri has 14, Oklahoma four and Texas eight. Na-

tionwide a total of 427 AKC-licensed trials were held in 1986. The AKC licensed four types of field trials for beagles: large pack, small pack, brace and small-pack option.

The large pack is exclusively for hare, mostly in the Northeast. The other three types are usually run on cottontail rabbits. In small pack, the dogs are drawn out in packs of four or five and placed on the line of a wild rabbit that's been jumped by the gallery. The judges observe each pack and pick the hounds that do the best. These top hounds are placed in a winner's pack, where the hounds are eliminated one by one, based on job performance, until only one dog remains. This dog is declared the winner. Small-pack option is run like small-pack except the dogs are turned loose. Searching ability is an important factor. In addition, the dogs are tested for gun-shyness.

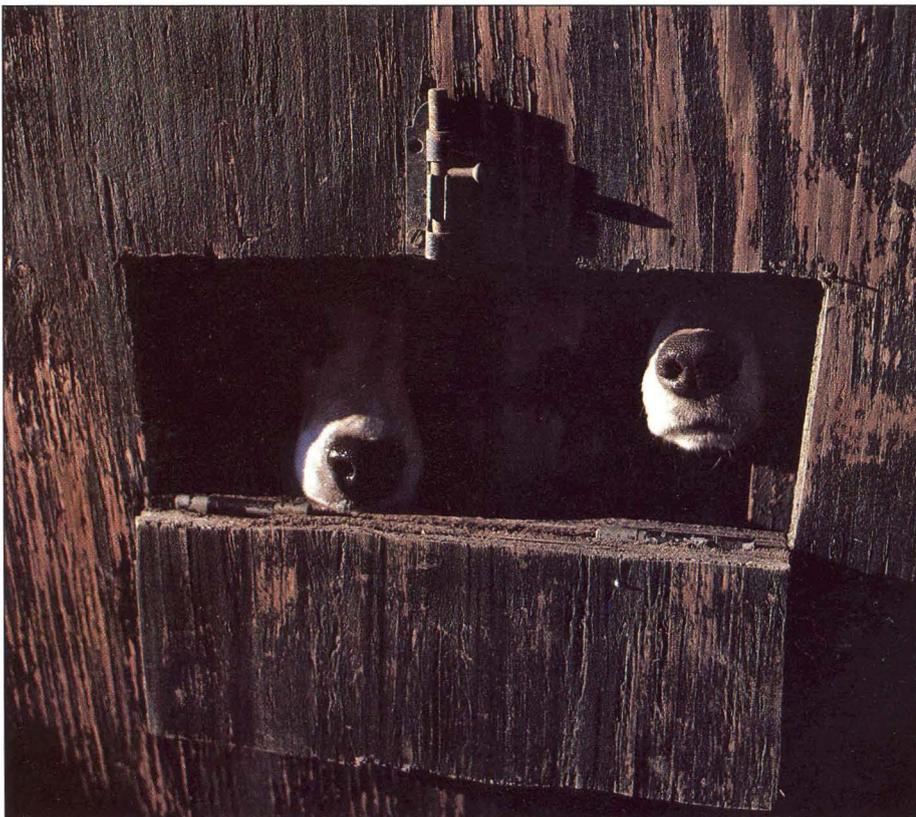
In a brace trial, the dogs are drawn and run in pairs. The best performers are chosen for a second series. In the second series each dog has the opportunity to defeat the hound placed directly above. This type of trial is like a one-on-one basketball tournament. Brace trials are the most common type of trial. Of the trials held closest to Kansas, the numbers of brace and small-pack events are evenly split. But small-pack option is gaining in popularity and number.

For more information, consult one of the several publications devoted to beagles, hunting and field trials. *Hounds and Hunting* (Box 372, Bradford, PA 16701), *Midwest Beagling News* (Box 842, Jefferson City, MO 65102) and *Better Beagling* (P.O. Box 142, Essex, VT 05451) are three examples.

There are three established beagle clubs in Kansas. Sunflower Beagle Club holds an annual AKC-licensed small-pack trial at Cheney Wildlife Area. This club also sponsors fun runs for both "fast" and "slow" hounds throughout the year. Bob Hoopes (14600 W. Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67234) is the secretary.

Mo-Kan Beagle Club, with both Kansas and Missouri members, holds beagle gundog trials near Kansas City. Rose Pollard (326 Moss, Liberty, MO 64068) is the club secretary.

Tim McKay (Box 549, Douglass, KS 67039) and Carl Peppers (615 Quail Dr., Newton, KS 67114) are the contacts for the newly formed Mid-Kansas Beagle Club. The organization runs small-pack option trials. KW



Beagles want to be where the action is (top photo) or at least where they can get a whiff of it (below).

# the center section

Edited by Mike Miller

## LETTERS

### LIFETIME REQUEST

Editor:

KANSAS WILDLIFE is the most enjoyable publication I receive, and I subscribe to most of the outdoor periodicals. I eagerly anticipate each issue with its informative articles, wonderful photography and skillful illustrations.

I was a resident of Kansas for the first 26 years of my life and was transferred to Illinois in the fall of 1986. Prior to moving, I was advised by a close friend to purchase a lifetime hunting permit. This seemed like a good idea since I still had several relatives and friends living in Kansas and I would surely be back once or twice a year to visit and hunt. However, I decided against this for the simple reason that I would not be eligible for an archery deer permit. As you know, non-residents are not eligible for an archery deer permit in Kansas. As I have become obsessed with the sport, it has taken priority over all other outdoor activities, including upland game and waterfowl hunting, which I have always loved.

Recently, however, I learned that new legislation has changed this policy and will allow for lifetime hunting license holders to be eligible for an archery deer permit even if they live out-of-state. Undoubtedly, if I'd been aware of this change in policy, I'd have purchased a lifetime hunting permit. So here is my question: Would it be possible to change this legislation to make it retroactive for people such as myself? I think that if a time limit or date were set for such a transaction and requests were only acknowledged up to that date, there would be minimal paperwork due to the low number of people involved. This program would only be available to individuals who have moved from Kansas prior to the policy change and who have an interest in purchasing a lifetime hunting permit prior to the time limit imposed.

In closing, I would love to hunt deer in my

native state once again. If this is possible, I would like to be involved.

Kurt M. Keller  
Galva, Ill.

Dear Mr. Keller:

We are sorry that you did not take the advice of your friend and buy a lifetime hunting license before you left the state. As you mentioned, legislation was passed during the past session that allows non-resident holders of lifetime hunting or fishing licenses to apply for big-game permits under the same conditions as a Kansas resident.

Your request would require additional legislation. But anything is possible and if we hear from enough former residents, we might pursue this matter further. *George Axline, chief of Administrative Services Division*

### WHY NO WOODCOCK?

Editor:

I'm a 21-year-old college student from West Mineral. I would like to congratulate KANSAS WILDLIFE magazine on an outstanding and accurate article, "Wildlife In The Pits." West Mineral is located in the middle of the Mined Land Wildlife areas in southeastern Kansas. The people who live in the area are fortunate to have an abundance, as well as a variety, of wildlife.

I love to hunt and fish. I hunt everything from waterfowl to whitetails, but there are few things that I don't get to hunt — pheasant and woodcock. I hunt pheasant every year in western Kansas, but I would like to see pheasants down here. I know the ring-necked pheasant can't survive here, but isn't there some type of pheasant that could?

The woodcock is a bird that has me puzzled. Why isn't this bird in abundance here? On oc-

casion, I will spot one while quail hunting, but there are not enough here to hunt. Could we please try to stock woodcock in southeastern Kansas? I would contribute to the cause, along with many friends.

Jeff Jones  
West Mineral

Dear Mr. Jones:

You pose a couple of interesting questions regarding southeast Kansas pheasants and woodcock. The environmental conditions in southeast Kansas do not seem to be agreeable with ring-necked pheasant survival needs. Probably a combination of high humidity, high ground temperatures at nesting time, lack of sufficient available calcium (and perhaps other such minerals) and some undetermined causes are responsible for the lack of pheasants in this area.

Woodcock are somewhat different. The major range of this migratory species, both breeding and wintering, excludes Kansas even though we do have a low level and variable population in the fall and winter. On occasion, a hunter can put together a good woodcock hunt in your area by locating ideal woodcock habitat. Such areas may include low-lying wet areas with locust, persimmon groves, honeysuckle and other such heavy cover. *Bill Hlavachick, supervisor, species management section*

### SHOULD WIN AWARD

Editor:

Your text and photos on "Magic Bones" by Mike Blair should win an award. All doctors should read this article and keep in touch with nature, for their patients' sake.

Thank you for your research and interest in making KANSAS WILDLIFE educational and interesting. I use your pictures and articles to teach my 4-year-old granddaughter.

June Peacock  
Sylvia

## NAME POACHERS

Editor:

Why don't you publish the names of convicted poachers in KANSAS WILDLIFE? I think you should. Why should these thugs remain anonymous?

Arthur H. Dugan  
Garland

Dear Mr. Dugan:

The decision to not print the names of poachers was not an easy one. We feel the same way you do — that these people don't deserve protection. But after several lawsuit threats, it was decided to omit names to protect the Department and the magazine. *Miller*

## TEACHING MAGAZINE

Editor:

I was very interested in the analysis of your vast subscription range in the May/June issue. It makes me wonder how many people, like me, use the magazine not only for pleasurable reading, but also as a teaching resource.

As a volunteer instructor at Missouri Botanical Garden, I am always interested in new approaches to conservation (my favorite subject).

Many thanks for a delightful publication with beautiful photography.

Mrs. Bea Perrin  
St. Louis, Mo.

## NATURE LOVER

Editor:

This is in regard to Mary Headrick's letter in your September/October issue. I'm sure she must realize that for her to live, many plants and animals must die. Be it cattle or hogs killed in Kansas slaughterhouses or tomatoes and lettuce killed at Arizona truck farms.

To a nature lover like myself, God gave all forms of life beauty — be it a buck deer, a Hereford steer or a row of green beans.

Just because it is not necessary to live off the land and be self-sufficient as our forefathers were, doesn't mean that those of us who choose to hunt and fish today are wrong.

I personally don't enjoy killing, but if I don't, someone else will have to kill if I'm to have food.

Dave Leiber  
Augusta

Mrs. Robert E. Scott  
Garden City

## MISSED THE POINT

Editor:

We missed the point we should have made in the response to Mary Headrick's letter in the September/October issue. While we're not going to change everyone, we need to tell people the facts.

Hunting and fishing are valuable wildlife management tools. Also the sale of licenses brings in thousands of dollars that help restore wildlife habitat, which, in turn, benefits hunters and non-hunters alike. I realize that most of these things have been preached before, but we still need to be reminded of the good things that are happening.

Terry Keihle  
Kanopolis

## SUPPORTS OPINION

Editor:

I just wanted to give support to Mary Headrick's letter in the September/October issue. She expressed the feelings I have better than I could.

Most people who feel this way are gentle and non-aggressive. We would not write an angry letter. We would simply not subscribe at all — or not renew.

Suzy Conrady  
Anthony

## BACKYARD BIRDERS

Editor:

I just renewed my subscription to KANSAS WILDLIFE magazine for three years. We enjoy the magazine very much.

Three years ago we joined a club called Backyard Bird Watchers in Garden City. The club has no dues or officers, just folks who have an interest in birdwatching.

We keep feed and water out for birds all

year. I would like to see more articles on birds in Kansas in the upcoming issues of KANSAS WILDLIFE.

## BEAT THE DRUM

Editor:

Enclosed is my check for a three-year renewal for KANSAS WILDLIFE magazine. It is one of the best publications I get. I would enjoy it even if I didn't have deep Kansas roots. The photography is beautiful and the articles interesting and well-written. My compliments to your entire staff. Your magazine helps me "beat the drum" for my home state.

Carmen Miller  
Tulsa, Okla.

## ILLINOIS READER

Editor:

I just wanted to write and let you know how much I enjoy your magazine. I am one of the .3 percent of your readers who live in Illinois. One of these years in the near future, I hope to be able to get out to Kansas to do some hunting.

Richard Manka  
Rosemont, Ill.

## PUBLIC ACCESS

Editor:

I have just moved to Kansas. It looks like we need more places for public hunting and more access to the rivers. I know it takes money to buy or lease land, but with the price of fishing licenses there should be more access. We should try to get a one-fourth of 1 percent sales tax to help support Wildlife and Parks. Better access would mean selling more licenses.

John M. Dake  
Kansas City

# THE LAW

## SPOTLIGHT POACHERS

On July 5, regional law enforcement supervisor Jim Kellenberger received a phone call from the Hodgeman County Sheriff's Office. A local landowner had reported seeing someone shining a spotlight and shooting in western Hodgeman County. Kellenberger called for assistance from the sheriff's office and went to the area. During a sweep of the area, Kellenberger also called the Ford County Sheriff's Office and the Kansas Highway Patrol for additional assistance.

The officers finally found a vehicle with seven individuals in it. Also in the vehicle were a mule deer doe, two jackrabbits, three rifles and a spotlight. Five of the suspects were from Dodge City, one was from Long Beach, Calif., and the other from San Bernadino, Calif. Kellenberger charged six of the men for hunting with no license, seven with hunting with an artificial light, two with taking of game animals after dark, three with hunting with a motor vehicle, two with taking deer during closed season and one with possession of illegal ammunition. The men pleaded guilty to 21 charges. Judge Phillip Kyle fined the men a total of \$2,678 plus \$203 in court costs, and revoked their hunting privileges for one year. The three firearms were forfeited to the Hodgeman County Hunter Safety Program and the spotlight to the Civil Defense Unit in Jetmore.

These violators would not have been caught without the landowner's cooperation. And Kellenberger praised the assistance he received from the other law enforcement agencies. *Miller*

## ELK CASE RULING

A Geary County judge ruled that a Junction City woman will pay \$810 per head for acquiring, transporting and transplanting five elk on the Ft. Riley Military Reservation, according to an article in the *Junction City Daily Union*. The woman pleaded guilty to killing three elk late last fall during the firearms deer season.

In a plea agreement, the state amended the original complaint of three counts of taking elk without a license to one count of taking three elk without a license. The woman faced a maximum sentence of six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. The jail sentence was suspended

and the woman was placed on probation for 18 months. Terms of her probation included payment of \$153.39 for processing costs of the three elk; \$88 court costs; 100 hours of public service work with fish and game organizations "providing information to people younger than you on the fallacy of not being able to identify game;" completion of a hunter safety course; not owning a hunting or fishing license for two years and paying restitution for the replacement of five elk.

The woman's defense contended that she owed only \$510 for the transportation of five elk from the Maxwell Game Refuge to Ft. Riley. The defense lawyer asked to withdraw the guilty plea because at the time the sentence was handed down, the restitution costs were not known. The judge ruled that the woman cannot withdraw her guilty plea.

The woman was hunting deer near Milford Reservoir on Dec. 9, 1986, when she shot at what she thought was a deer. She thought she missed, so she shot at another animal. When the woman thought she missed it she fired at a third animal. The last animal went down and when she found it, she discovered that it was a cow elk. She reported her mistake to wildlife conservation officer Steve Stackhouse. After more searching, the other two elk she fired at were found dead. *Junction City Daily Union*

## CLEAN DEER

Well, she probably just wanted it to be clean for the agent to inspect. Why else would she put the deer roast in the washing machine?

Don Ruzicka, conservation agent for Dallas County, Mo., recently did some detective work that Sherlock Holmes would envy. He spotted a single turkey feather in the bed of a pickup truck.

The truck owner said he had hauled the bird for a neighbor. OK, would he mind if Ruzicka inspected the man's home freezer?

No problem. He and the man went to the man's house trailer where the man called in to his wife to, "get dressed, the conservation agent is here to check our freezer."

Little warning bells went off in Ruzicka's head. "I guessed the freezer was on the back porch and went around just in time to see the woman turning away with something in her arms.

The woman put the package in the washing machine. Ruzicka rescued it and found it was a deer roast. "And I found a frozen wild turkey in the freezer," he says. *Missouri Department of Conservation*

## NEW MEXICO OGT

The New Mexico Operation Game Thief (OGT) program resulted in \$6,000 in fines, court costs and civil assessments against four Oklahoma men. The OGT programs will pay \$600 to the caller who's information led to the convictions.

The case involved two professional baseball players, a professional bass fisherman and another Oklahoma man, who were involved in the illegal killing of a Barbary sheep. The charges brought against the men were the result of an eight-month investigation.

One Oklahoma man was charged with the illegal killing and possession of a Barbary sheep. He was fined \$1,000 on each charge and paid \$100 court costs. In addition, he was assessed \$300 in civil damages by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for the state's loss of the game animal. The man pleaded guilty to killing the sheep, which he had mounted. The mounted sheep head was confiscated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents along with a Remington rifle and scope valued at \$650.

A second Oklahoma man pleaded no contest to three charges — fraud to secure a resident hunting license, hunting without a license and illegal possession of a Barbary sheep. He was fined \$1,500 — \$1,000 for illegal possession; \$400 (with \$300 suspended) on the residency violation and \$100 for hunting without a license. He also paid \$100 in court costs.

The other two Oklahoma men pleaded guilty to illegal possession of Barbary sheep. Each man was fined \$1,000 and paid an additional \$100 in court costs. *New Mexico Department of Game and Fish*

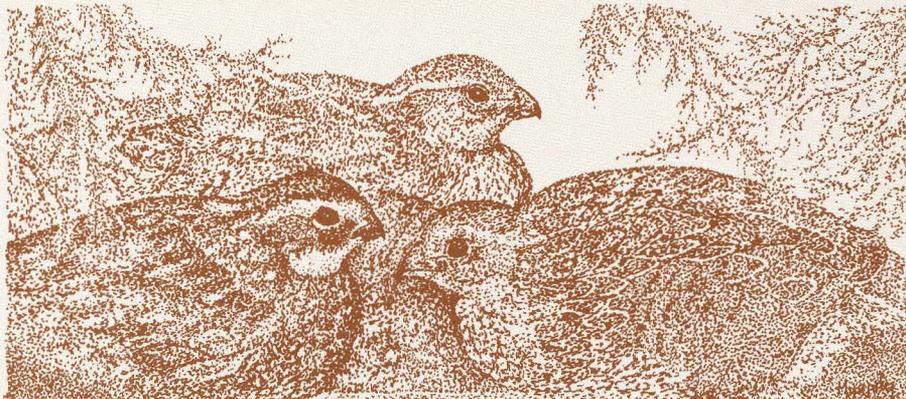
## ALL BAD LUCK

Jack Stowe, a Missouri conservation agent, knows where the saying, "If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all," comes from.

"I followed two roadhunters on a cold Sunday and thought for sure they'd spot me before they found anything to shoot at, but finally they spotted a rabbit and the passenger shot out of the window.

"I drove up and gave them tickets. It was the only rabbit they had seen and they missed it." *Missouri Department of Conservation*

# HUNTING



## UPLAND BIRD SEASONS

Kansas should be one of the top states in the nation for upland bird hunting this fall. Hunters wanting to hunt several species of birds will have better than average opportunities throughout most of the state.

The prairie chicken season will open Nov. 7. According to wildlife biologist Kevin Church, the greater prairie chicken population looks very good. Last year, hunters had a better-than-average season, and this year looks even better. Church said spring nesting and brood-rearing conditions have been very good this year. That delicate balance of factors results from a sufficiently moist spring and dry summer. The right weather conditions provide cover as well as insects for the young birds to feed on.

Lesser prairie chickens are much less abundant than their cousins, the greater, but lesser populations are in good shape locally. Where the right habitat is available in southwest Kansas, the lesser chickens have benefited from the spring weather conditions also.

On Nov. 14, pheasant and quail season will open, except for an area west of Highway 281, north of Highway 156 to its junction with Highway 23 and west of Highway 23, where the quail season will open the following weekend. Quail have rebounded from the harsh winter of 1983-1984 extremely well. In fact, in some areas of south-central and southeast Kansas, quail numbers appear as high as they were in 1982, one of the best years ever. Best areas for quail will be the southeast, south-central (the Flint Hills) and the north-central. Quail in the north-central part of the state are still recovering from the harsh winters but are much improved from the last two years.

Kansas pheasant hunting generally should be good but not as good as biologists were expect-

ing. After a second consecutive mild winter in 1986-1987, pheasant numbers looked promising, but two late-March snowstorms put a damper on the outlook. The area affected is restricted to the northwest and west-central parts of the state. In this area, (roughly west of a line from Smith Center to Dodge City and north of a line from Dodge City to Garden City and east of a line from Garden City to Atwood) pheasant numbers will be similar or lower than last year's. Before these storms hit, pheasant biologist Randy Rodgers was expecting this area to offer excellent pheasant hunting.

The good news is that southwest and north-central Kansas will offer very good hunting. These areas were not hit by the storms, and nesting and brood rearing conditions have been excellent. Pheasant hunting should also be good in the south-central part of the state.

All upland bird seasons will end Jan. 31. The limit on prairie chickens is two, with a possession limit of four. The bag limit for pheasants is four and possession limit is 16 after four days. Quail hunters will be able to take eight birds per day and possess 24 after the third day. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. *Miller*

## STEEL SHOT UPDATE

Waterfowl hunters should make themselves familiar with the steel shot regulations before ever going afield. The implementation of steel shot zones is fairly new and will continue to change as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service exercises its plan. By 1991, all waterfowl hunters will be required to use steel shot.

In Kansas, waterfowl hunters must use steel shot on all Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks lands, Corps of Engineers and Bureau

of Reclamation administered lands as well as on the Flint Hills and Kirwin national refuges. All property, both public and private, will require steel shot for waterfowl hunting in the following counties: Barton, Ellsworth, Cowley, Stafford, Doniphan, Jefferson, Coffey, Mitchell and new for 1987, Neosho and Montgomery. Steel shot is required for ALL shotgun hunting on the Cheyenne Bottoms, Jamestown, Texas Lake, Neosho and Marais des Cygnes wildlife areas and on Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

It is illegal to have lead shotshells in possession in any of the above-mentioned situations. Copper-plated lead shot is not a legal substitute for steel shot. Muzzleloading shotguns are exempt from steel-shot regulations. *Miller*

## DUCK NUMBERS

The number of U.S. and Canadian breeding ducks counted in 1987 spring surveys showed no significant change from last year. Frank Dunkle, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director, stated duck numbers didn't rebound as quickly as everyone had hoped.

While mallard and wigeon numbers were slightly up, numbers of blue-winged teal dropped 22 percent and pintails continued to decline. Six of the 10 major duck species — mallard, wigeon, blue-winged teal, pintail, canvasback and scaup — were below their 30-year population averages.

Breeding numbers of mallards increased 6 percent but are still 19 percent below the long-term average. Pintail numbers are at their second-lowest level in history, 44 percent below average. Redheads dropped 20 percent from last year's population but are still 6 percent above their long-term average. Northern shovelers dropped 7 percent but are still 12 percent above their long-term average.

Green-winged teal increased 18 percent from last year, and wigeon increased 12 percent. Canvasback numbers increased 8 percent but are still below desired levels in the Central, Mississippi and Atlantic flyways. Scaup numbers were unchanged from last year.

In 1985, after several years of severe drought in prime duck nesting areas of Canada and the United States, the number of breeding ducks counted was the lowest ever recorded. As a result, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued restrictive duck hunting regulations that reduced the duck harvest in the U.S. by 27 percent. With improved habitat conditions in the spring of 1986, last year's breeding duck population increased. Restrictive regulations were continued last fall. The 1986-1987

harvest was 2 percent below 1985-1986.

Wetland conditions deteriorated in the Canadian prairies in 1987 as a result of a mild winter and an early, dry spring. May pond numbers decreased significantly from last year, especially in southern Manitoba and southern Saskatchewan. Southern Alberta showed little change from last year, but grassland areas are very dry. Habitat in the Dakotas and Montana were generally good, as were conditions in much of Alaska and northern Canada. *Department of the Interior*

## SMALL-GAME SURVEY

Each year, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks polls hunters to find out how well they did in the field. The small-game survey is mailed to 2,333 randomly selected hunters throughout the state. The survey asks hunters about game hunted, hunting frequency and game bagged. This information is then put into a formula to give biologists an estimate on the year's total harvest.

According to the survey, Kansas dove hunters harvested nearly 1.7 million doves in 1986. Hunters in the south-central part of the state were most successful taking 460,000 birds, and southeast Kansas hunters followed closely with 329,000.

Quail hunters enjoyed good success with a statewide bag of 1.9 million quail. The average hunter spent 6.6 days hunting during the season and brought home 2.3 quail per day.

Pheasant hunters didn't have a record-breaking year but still harvested 720,000 birds. Hunters averaged five days in the field during the season and took one bird per day. The north-central region took top honors; those hunters bagged almost 200,000 birds.

Greater prairie chicken hunters took 64,000 chickens in 1986. They hunted an average of 3.6 days. Only 17 percent of the hunters (or 34,000) in Kansas hunted greater chickens.

Even fewer hunters (less than 1 percent, or 1,400) pursued lesser prairie chickens. Those hunters spent about three days hunting lessers and took just more than one bird per season.

More than 32 percent of the state's hunters hunted cottontails. And those hunters were successful. The estimated bag was 470,000 cottontails. The average cottontail hunter spent 4.5 days in the field and brought home 2 rabbits per day.

Kansas squirrel hunters took 180,000 squirrels last year, even though only 13 percent of the state's hunters hunted them. Squirrel hunters spent about five days chasing bushytails and took seven squirrels through the season. As ex-

pected, squirrel hunting was best in southeastern Kansas, where hunters bagged 70,000 squirrels. *Miller*

## HUNTERS DECLINE

For the fourth straight year, the number of licensed hunters in the U.S. dropped. Figures from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service show that 15,773,190 hunters bought licenses in 1986, down from 15,879,572 in 1985. State

license receipts, however, were up more than 7 percent in 1986.

Since tabulation of hunting license revenues began in 1923, hunters have paid more than \$4.8 million to state wildlife agencies for the privilege to hunt. Aside from license fees, sportsmen pay special excise taxes on guns, ammunition and archery equipment. In 1986 hunters paid \$109.7 million into the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. Since the program began in 1937, hunter taxes have provided more than \$1.7 billion. *Wildlife Management Institute*

## FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH



by Rob Manes, education coordinator

### Does Blaze Orange Save Lives?

mistaken for a game animal. Traditional hunting attire, however, is often brown or beige, resembling the coloration of several big-game animals.

It's difficult to argue that wearing blaze orange hats and vests would prevent all common bird-hunting accidents. Anyone who thinks clearly about the matter, however, surely concludes that the bright clothing would usually enable shooters to see, identify and avoid shooting another hunter.

Nay-sayers to blaze orange requirements for upland bird hunters cite the current overabundance of laws that restrict sportsmen. They point to such legislation as diminishing the enjoyment of their outdoors. Many of these wildlife enthusiasts find wearing blaze orange aesthetically disturbing — its overt unnaturalness seems to clash with these hunters' desires to experience the outdoors. Perhaps most justifiably, those who oppose additional blaze orange laws point out that hunting is a safe sport — one of the safest. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," they say.

These opposing views have merit and shouldn't be ignored. Certainly it's hard for a glowing orange outdoorsman to feel he's in harmony with his natural surroundings. And anyone who's followed the evolution of state and federal hunting regulations knows the rules grow increasingly stifling. Hunting is, indeed, a safe pastime. But people continue to receive injuries from accidents afield — especially bird hunters. Those who seek an end to the hunting tradition find a foothold in that fact. And what value can be placed on an injured body or lost life?

So it seems only wise to do whatever's needed to clear this precious tradition of every potential blemish.

Does blaze orange prevent hunting accidents and should upland bird hunters be required to wear it? More than 20 states and Canadian provinces have laws that say so, at least in some hunting situations. Most of the other jurisdictions require blaze orange (daylight fluorescent orange) for big-game hunters only, and a few merely recommend wearing it.

Logic and statistics are on the side of those who favor mandatory wearing of blaze orange for upland bird hunters and especially those who hunt during firearms deer season. Of the 31 people injured in 1986 Kansas hunting accidents, 23 (or 74 percent) were pheasant, quail or dove hunters. Only three were wearing bright-colored clothing. Yet those who oppose hunter orange are swayed by tradition and emotion.

Recent history has proven beyond doubt that wearing daylight fluorescent orange reduces hunting accidents. Where this most unnatural color is mandatory hunting attire, its effect in preventing hunting accidents has been undeniable.

In Kansas, the most common error contributing to hunting accidents involves the shooter swinging at a moving target and firing just as the muzzle is pointed at another hunter. A second common shooting accident occurs when the victim is out of the shooter's sight. And national statistics list "victim mistaken for game" as a third common cause of hunting accidents. Blaze orange clothing obviously reduces the likelihood of a wearer being

# FISHING



## RECORDS FALL

On Aug. 17 Swen Nordling of Hays was bass fishing at El Dorado Reservoir. Nordling and his cousin Mike Arnett of El Dorado were casting crankbaits at likely-looking smallmouth bass water when Nordling tangled with a big fish.

When the big bronze fish first rolled to the surface, Nordling thought he'd snagged a big carp. But when the fish surfaced a second time, Nordling's cousin told him it was a smallmouth bass worth mounting.

"It was only the second smallmouth bass I'd ever caught," Nordling said. The two didn't know it was a state-record fish until they had it weighed at the marina.

The big fish registered 4.9 pounds on certified scales, breaking the old mark by .2 of a pound. Nordling was casting a crawdad-colored crankbait in 2-3 feet of water.

Two other records were broken last summer. Both came from the Kansas River in northeast Kansas. On May 8 Arthur Wolford of Lecompton and Denzil Hackathorn of Perry caught a 58.5-pound blue catfish. The two caught the 47-inch fish on a bank line. The big blue broke the old record by 2½ pounds.

On June 23 Ralph Westerman of Manhattan reeled in another Kansas River record when he caught an American eel that weighed 4.43 pounds. The eel was caught on green worms.

*Miller*

## RODS DONATED

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has been teaching youngsters to fish for many years. Recently, an Aquatic Education Program was developed so that kids could learn about fishing as well as aquatic life, conservation and ethics. But one problem had plagued fisheries biologists when they held fishing clinics: there never seemed to be enough rods and reels to go around. And hands-on fishing experience is the primary goal of fishing clinics. That problem has been solved now, thanks to Berkley, Inc., Zebco and the Sports Fishing Institute (SFI).

SFI is an organization committed to promoting fishing. Through some of the organization's promotions, fishing equipment was offered to wildlife agencies to assist in aquatic education programs. Wildlife and Parks wildlife education coordinator Joyce Harmon Depenbusch applied to SFI for the free fishing equipment. What the Aquatic Education Program received was beyond expectations. At no cost to the agency, 1,000 Berkley graphite rods, 1,000 Zebco spincast reels, 4,000 bottles of Berkley Strike fish attractant, monofilament line and an assortment of lures were obtained. The value of the equipment is estimated at more than \$70,000.

The fishing equipment will be distributed to fisheries biologists around the state for future fishing clinics. The rod and reel outfits are also available to teachers through the Wildlife Reference Center at the Pratt Wildlife and Parks office.

The donated equipment will give the Aquatic Education Program a big boost. The donation will give kids who would have otherwise never experienced the joy of fishing, a chance to learn how to fish with quality equipment. *Miller*

## WILSON CENSUS

Wilson Reservoir fisheries biologist Bruce Zamrza conducted an extensive creel census from mid-May through October in 1986. Wilson anglers were asked about the number and size of fish caught, fish released and number of hours they fished. This information was used to determine the total number of fish caught, number of pounds caught and the number of fishermen using the lake in 1986.

According to the census, more than 44,000

anglers caught 66,000 fish weighing 114,000 pounds. A 1976 census determined that 17,000 anglers caught 42,000 fish weighing 88,000 pounds.

In 1986 white bass were the top fish with 45,000 of them weighing 70,000 pounds. In 1976, 29,500 whites weighing 29,000 pounds were taken. The 1986 anglers also caught 15,600 walleye weighing 24,000 pounds compared with 4,000 weighing 9,700 pounds in 1976. And in 1976 only 106 stripers were caught while in 1986 anglers caught 3,000 weighing 15,300 pounds. Crappie were the only fish that anglers caught more of in 1976.

The census also shows that modern-day anglers are better equipped than they were 10 years ago. In 1976, 50 percent of the anglers surveyed fished from shore. The other half fished from boats. In 1986 only 11 percent of the fishermen surveyed fished from the shore. Boat anglers catch more fish and have the benefit of advanced fishing equipment such as graph-recorders, downriggers and trolling motors.

But none of these factors could overcome a poor fish population. Wilson fishermen had an excellent fish population in 1986. A promising finding of the survey was that anglers are releasing more fish than before. In 1986 anglers released more than 60,000 small white bass.

In 1986 the average angler caught and kept 1.5 fish, or 2.6 pounds of fish per trip to the lake. This doesn't include March, April and the first half of May, commonly productive fishing months. And no data was gathered at night, when, during May and June, large numbers of white bass, walleye and stripers were caught. *Fisheries Update*

## KINGMAN SUCCESS

According to fisheries biologist Gordon Schneider's spring electrofishing results, Kingman State Fishing Lake's rehabilitation is showing dividends. All fish were killed in the lake in 1984, in preparation for restocking. Brushpiles were added, floating piers were rebuilt, riprap was added along the dam and east shore and boat ramps were lengthened. Largemouth bass were stocked in the fall of 1984, and the fish have done well.

Schneider averaged 92 bass per hour of electrofishing, and the fish averaged 12.6 inches long. Only 7 percent were over the minimum legal size of 15 inches, but the fish are growing fast. The lake now offers fine catch-and-release fishing and, if anglers heed the minimum length limit, the fishery has the potential to produce outstanding bass fishing. *Fisheries Update*

# ISSUES

## GRIZZLIES WIN

U.S. Forest Service chief Dale Robertson overturned a regional forester's decision that would have opened forest land to trail bikes and off-road vehicles. The land is part of the Flathead National Forest in Montana and is used by grizzly bears after spring break-up.

Robertson's ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in federal court. The suit sought to overturn an opinion by Northern Region Forester James Overbay. Overbay had stopped an interim road closure, issued by Flathead National Forest Supervisor Edgar Brannon, from taking effect pending completion of an appeal filed by the Montana Trail Bike Riders Association.

That group has used the Krause Creek-Peters Ridge area of the forest, west of Glacier National Park, for off-road races over the past several years.

NWF charged that opening the area to trail bikes would not only violate the forest's management plan, but also the Endangered Species Act. According to the Forest Service's plan, the threatened grizzly bears are to have top priority during spring and early summer.

The Krause Creek-Peters Ridge area is one of three principal areas in the lower 48 states for grizzly bears. The area provides unique habitat to the bears, which forage on early-greening grasses and forbs. *National Wildlife Federation*

## WETLAND THREAT?

The swampbuster provision of the 1985 Farm Act apparently is being disassembled by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and remade to suit the tastes of that agency's officials, according to the Wildlife Management Institute. Informed sources in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report that the wetland protective measure, which has additional benefits of reducing soil erosion, commodity surpluses and federal subsidy costs, is being gutted by SCS regulators.

The swampbuster language requires that any landowner who converts wetland into cropland will become ineligible for subsidies offered by the USDA. But when SCS officials began

writing regulations for implementing the provision, they created one loophole after another to allow farmers to drain wetlands and continue receiving subsidies. Those regulations were implemented on an interim basis last year. After giving the public a chance to comment on the proposed rules, USDA officials began to rewrite the regulations. But observers say the regulations may be getting worse rather than better.

Much of the SCS's efforts is tied to the definition of the word "commenced." That definition is key as it pretains to exemptions in the pending regulations. By law, the swampbuster language does not apply to wetlands where drainage was "commenced" prior to signing the Farm Act on Dec. 23, 1985. Legislative history of the swampbuster shows that Congress intended "commenced" to mean that money had been "obligated" or actual modification of the wetland (earth-moving) had begun.

The SCS has developed regulations that would allow wetlands to be drained without penalty, if a landowner merely says that drainage was planned before Dec. 23, 1985. Such limp requirements obviously would not protect wetland resources.

To make matters worse, SCS is not sticking to the definition of wetlands already in the pending regulations. The definition states that wetlands are areas with hydric (wet or saturated) soils that support hydrophytic vegetation (plants that live in water or saturated soil), or under normal circumstances, would support hydrophytic vegetation. But SCS field personnel reportedly received orders saying that an area that has been cropped three out of the past five years is not a wetland. The absurd rule has SCS district conservationists standing in fields knee-deep in water, watching ducks swim through cattails, while they try to convince wildlife officials that the cleared bottomland is not a wetland. It completely overlooks the definition of wetlands, the fact that most crops planted on such land are flooded out and that the farmers are going broke because they cannot produce enough on wetlands to survive economically. Conservationists argue that wetlands are not conducive to agriculture, and attempts to farm them are costing American taxpayers billions of dollars every year in crop disaster payments and subsidies.

Another of the SCS's tactics, according to sources on Capitol Hill, is an attempt to get

the regulations interpreted so that existing ditches and other drainage systems can be expanded to destroy more wetlands without losing subsidies. If, for example, a one-foot-deep ditch was dug 10 years ago to lower the water in a wetland, the landowner could dig the ditch deeper and lower the wetland further, without penalty.

The SCS isn't doing agriculture any favors with its tricky approach to swampbuster regulations. Their interpretation would worsen an already untenable situation where USDA spends taxpayer money to bring marginal farmland into production and simultaneously spends more to take it out of production under land set-aside programs. Such fiascos will cost taxpayers a reported \$26 billion for commodity support payments this fiscal year, as well as several hundred thousand acres of wetlands.

*Wildlife Management Institute*

## ANTI CAMPAIGN

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is campaigning to eliminate hunting from the National Wildlife Refuge system. Having been rebuffed by the courts earlier in their quest, HSUS now has turned to Congress.

Congressman Bill Green of New York is carrying the HSUS banner this time. He has introduced a bill that would prohibit hunting on all national wildlife refuges. Green erroneously claims that the refuge system was meant to be made up of inviolate sanctuaries where no hunting is allowed. The fact is that refuges were meant to be refuges, where wildlife habitat is preserved and managed. Inside of these refuges, there may be and are sanctuaries where hunting is not allowed. *Wildlife Management Institute*

## EAGLES KILLED

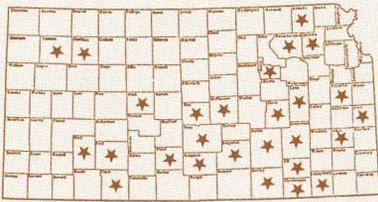
Thirty bald eagles reportedly have been killed at an Alaskan logging camp. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is investigating.

According to reports, several fishermen discovered the dead eagles at the Labouchere Bay logging camp garbage dump. It appeared that most of the birds had been shot, although their remains were decomposed. A Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman said that the killings comprised the worst onslaught against eagles that he could remember.

The logging camp, according to the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, is operated by Louisiana Pacific/Ketchikan.

*Wildlife Management Institute*

# NATURE



## ARMADILLO UPDATE

Yes! Kansas has armadillos — quite a few, it seems. In the July/August issue of *KANSAS WILDLIFE*, an article on armadillos requested readers to let us know of dillo sightings in Kansas. Many of you wrote in to report encounters and adventures you've had with this unusual creature — thanks! This isn't a scientific survey because not all armadillos in the state were reported, but the results (see map above) give a general idea of where dillos are found in the Sunflower State.

Not surprisingly, most (75) were seen in the south-central and southeastern parts of Kansas, with the most sightings in Butler County. There were quite a few spotted up north, too. One was found near Nemaha Lake in Nemaha County, which borders the Nebraska state line. One armadillo even ventured into Thomas County in northwestern Kansas. The easternmost dillo in this informal survey was located in Linn County.

A number of the reported armadillos unfortunately were seen dead along the roadside. But some of these armored invaders found their way into your front yards, carports, wood piles, irrigation pipes and other unusual places. *Mary Kay Spanbauer, wildlife information representative*

## HOPE FOR FERRETS

When the last wild black-footed ferret was captured last fall, researchers knew that a captive breeding program was the species' only hope for survival. Although several pairs of ferrets had been kept at the Sybille Wildlife Research Center in Wheatland, Wyo., none had successfully mated until this past spring. On June 6, a female ferret gave birth to six healthy baby ferrets. And on June 29 another female had two young. One of the latest litter died, but after receiving antibiotics, the other baby ferret appears to be healthy.

The seven baby ferrets were doing well and beginning to eat food by mid-summer. With

the experience gained, researchers are optimistic about the breeding program.

Wyoming Game and Fish biologists also devised a ferret management plan that calls for establishing another captive breeding center. Separating the ferrets is necessary in case of disease of other natural disaster, and allowing two centers to operate simultaneously will maximize genetic diversity.

The goal is to have two breeding centers with 20 breeding ferrets each, at which point a third captive breeding center will be established. When 500 ferrets have been produced, reintroduction will begin. *The Black-footed Ferret Newsletter*

## BOBWHITE STUDY

During periods of prolonged cold and deep snows, as much as 90 percent of the quail population in certain localities has been lost, according to Robert Robel, a Kansas State University wildlife biologist.

A local sports group sought Robel's help in formulating a kind of insurance policy against the "one year out of four to six" that is a killer. Robel and three undergraduate wildlife students are working with the Flint Hills chapter of Quail Unlimited to provide a three-county area with food and shelter "survival" patches.

If the five-year-long pilot program is successful in Riley, Geary and Pottawatomie counties, other QU chapters may adopt similar programs, Robel said. The quail population will benefit directly, and other resident birds including cardinals, chickadees, other songbirds, pheasants and prairie chickens, will benefit indirectly from the improved habitat.

The proposed habitat preservation program ensures that in a bad winter enough quail will survive to quickly re-establish healthy populations. Without food and adequate shelter, even quail in top physical condition can only live about three days in severe winter weather, according to Robel. And if populations are decimated, it takes several years for the birds to recover.

Recent winters that took a toll on quail include 1959-1960, 1978-1979 and 1983-1984. "The winter of 1983 took out lots of birds including starlings, meadowlarks, sparrows and robins. Because the heaviest losses occur in late January and early February, not many people witness the severity of the

damage," Robel said.

QU has provided funding to K-State for the research project. Robel and his students are determining appropriate habitat sites and designing a crop mixture that can be planted and easily maintained by area farmers. Once likely sites are selected, QU members will solicit landowner participation and pay a small annual fee to plant and maintain the plots. Robel pointed out that securing permission to hunt quail near the sites is not one of the group's objectives.

The plan calls for establishing survival plots every four to five square miles in each of three counties. If one covey (per patch) makes it through a hard winter, the birds could breed, disperse and stabilize quail numbers.

During the first year of the study, Robel and his students studied aerial photos of Riley County and chose locations with windbreaks, hedgerows or shrubs near water. The students chose milo, sunflower, ragweed and millet as the most suitable winter diet for quail. Milo is good because the birds can get to it even with a foot of snow on the ground. The ragweed, sunflower and millet provide food as well as attract insects in the spring. These insects are an additional food source for bobwhite chicks. *K-State News, Kansas State University*

## BOTTOMS FUND

On July 1, 1987, a Cheyenne Bottoms Restoration Fund was established through the WILDTRUST Program of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. The fund was established as an interest-bearing account to accept contributions for actual work at the Bottoms — dike construction, riprapping and other work necessary to restore the wetland.

The account recently became \$1,500 richer thanks to several generous donations. Contributors include: Salina Central High School Biology Club, Daniel Dancer, Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, (\$250-\$500); John M. Simpson, Grover B. Simpson, (\$100-\$249); The Pathfinder, Theodore Sperry, (\$50-\$99); Kathy Massoth, Robert and Joy Lominska, Chet and Phyllis Garton, \$25-\$49; Ann Carter, Don Yockey, Harold Stark, Marie B. Grover, Charlotte Boxberger, Sherry and John Kriss, Robert Kozicki, (\$5-\$24).

Additional contributions can be sent to: WILDTRUST, c/o Bill Hanzlick, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 900 Jackson, 5th Floor, Topeka, KS 66612.

Final plans for the restoration of Cheyenne Bottoms are still being developed through a cooperative effort of Wildlife and Parks, Ducks Unlimited and the Cheyenne Bottoms Task Force. *Jan Garton, Manhattan*

# NOTES

## SECRETARIES NAMED

On Aug. 14, Gov. Mike Hayden named Robert L. Meinen to be the first secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Hayden also announced that W. Alan Wentz will serve as the department's assistant secretary for operations.



Meinen, based in Topeka, reported for duty on Sept. 14. His starting salary is \$63,108. Wentz, who directs the agency's operations division in Pratt, began work on Sept. 8. His starting salary is \$53,000.

"In Bob Meinen and Alan Wentz, we have a team that is knowledgeable and experienced in parks and wildlife resource management. Working with the newly appointed seven member Wildlife and Parks commission, this team will be able to implement a successful merger of the two agencies in a manner that strengthens and enhances the Wildlife and Parks programs for the people of Kansas," Hayden said at the press conference.

Meinen, 38, will oversee the new agency with a budget of \$18 million and 378 employees throughout the state. Before coming to Kansas, Meinen spent 10 years with the Idaho State Parks, holding the director's position since 1984. Prior to joining the Idaho agency, Meinen served as the program coordinator for the Division of Nevada State Parks and as the rural development research and extension agent for the University of Delaware. He has a bachelor's degree in natural resources and recreation management from the University of Nevada and a master's degree in agricultural economics with an emphasis in natural resource economics from the University of Delaware.

He received the President's Award for Public Service Conservation in 1986 from the Nature Conservancy.

"I'm looking forward to working in Kansas. I see a great deal of potential in the new Department and its resources," Meinen said. He also said his first priorities were going to be getting familiar with the agency, understanding the budget and preparing for the upcoming legislative session.



Wentz, 40, served as senior director for the Natural Resource Center's Division of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in Washington, D.C. Prior to that he served as the director of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the NWF. He also worked extensively in wildlife management at South Dakota State University.

Wentz has a bachelor's degree in biological conservation from Ohio State University, a master's degree in wildlife science from Oregon State University and a Ph.D. in wildlife management from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources.

"I'm delighted to be coming to Kansas," Wentz said at the August press conference. "I'm looking forward to working with what I understand are high quality professionals in the Department of Wildlife and Parks. I think we have the opportunity to do really significant things in Kansas." *Miller*

## WILDLIFE ART SHOW

The 16th annual National Wildlife Art Show, benefiting Ducks Unlimited, will take place March 17-20, 1988, at the Overland Park Kansas Convention Center. Approximately 70 artists will display their work.

The Committee of the National Wildlife Art Show invites all interested wildlife and outdoor-themed artists to apply for showing.

The show features original artwork, both flat and three-dimensional, as well as limited-edition prints. The 1987 show had nearly 11,000 visitors, and sales of both originals and prints have been increasing. The Committee is expecting another good crowd in 1988.

Interested artists should apply before Dec. 4, 1987, by contacting the National Wildlife Art Show, P.O. Box 7728, Shawnee Mission, KS 66207, or by calling Trish Aarons, Executive Director, at (816) 363-4473. *National Wildlife Art Show*

## HUNTING FILMSTRIP

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) has produced three educational filmstrips showing how hunters benefit wildlife. By paying more than \$6 billion over the years, hunters have done more for our wildlife and wild places than any other group in the nation.

The NSSF has tested the attitudes of students both before and after viewing the programs and found that students are more than twice as likely to approve of hunting after viewing the programs.

The NSSF is offering the filmstrip set, "Un-endangered Species," "Wildlife for Tomorrow" and "What They Say About Hunting," for \$19. "Un-endangered Species" explains how hunters, through payment of license fees and excise taxes, have funded and supported the remarkable resurgence of wildlife in this century. "Wildlife for Tomorrow" is based on the highly successful "Un-endangered Species" but is specifically directed toward younger students in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. "What They Say About Hunters" takes a non-nonsense look at the entire hunting controversy, quoting representatives of 11 different conservation groups as well as individual wildlife experts. It is narrated by well-known sportscaster Pat Summerall.

If teachers are not 100 percent satisfied with the filmstrips, the NSSF will refund the \$19. For more information, write: NSSF, P.O. Box 1075, Riverside, CT 06878. *National Shooting Sports Foundation*

## ACTIVITY GUIDES

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' Wildlife Education Service is offering activity guides based on KANSAS WILDLIFE magazine articles. One activity guide will be provided free to teachers who

subscribe to the bimonthly magazine. The guides are based on one or more articles in an issue that are relevant to sixth through 12th grade classes.

Subscribing teachers must specify that they wish to receive an activity guide with their subscription. Questions about the activity guides should be directed to Joyce Harmon Depenbusch, (316) 672-5911. *Joyce Harmon Depenbusch, wildlife education coordinator*

## VALUE OF WILDLIFE

Conservationists often are asked about the purpose of saving endangered species such as the Houston toad or Tennessee snail darter. A scientist at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has provided another answer for that perennial query. Dr. Michael Zasloff discovered recently that frog skin may contain the makings for a powerful antibiotic for humans. While working on a research project at the National Institute, Zasloff noticed that specimens of the African clawed frog healed amazingly fast following surgery, even when they were kept in dirty water teeming with bacteria. After preliminary investigations, Zasloff reported that the frog's quick recovery appears to be due to a natural biological defense mechanism (antibody) found in its skin.

Harnessing that powerful antibody for human use has great possibilities.

Although the frog species used in the experiments is not endangered, many rare plants and animals have similar potential. Studies have been conducted on the threatened grizzly bear to learn of its unique cardiac features, which allow hibernation for long periods. The endangered desert pupfish, which lives in some of the saltiest water on earth, may offer clues to scientists studying kidney disease. Rare plant species already contributed to agricultural production and the development of new crop varieties.

Regardless of any medical or economic value that they may have for humans, wild species play important roles in maintaining healthy ecosystems on which all life depends. *Wildlife Management Institute*

## DISABLED SPORTSMEN

There are two publications available that are designed to help disabled sportsmen. One is a catalog with items from electronically controlled fishing reels to rod holders. The other is a quarterly magazine with articles and ads directed at disabled sportsmen. Both will give the disabled sportsmen ideas and equipment so they can better enjoy outdoor sports.

For more information on the quarterly magazine write: Disabled Outdoors, 5223 S. Lorel Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. For information about the catalog write: J.L. Pachner, LTD., P.O. Box 93, Lake Zurich, IL 60047. *Miller*

## POSTER CONTEST

The Kansas Wildlife Federation (KWF) is sponsoring a poster contest for students in grades first through sixth. The contest's theme is in conjunction with Kansas Wildlife Heritage Month: "Forests: More Than Just Trees." There are two divisions of competition: Junior — grades first through fourth and Intermediate — grades fifth and sixth.

Grade school teachers should organize school contests. Winning posters from school contests must be sent to regional KWF judges before Feb. 1. Regional winners will receive T-shirts and certificates and have their posters displayed at the Wichita Wildlife Art Show and the State Capitol. The state Intermediate winner will receive a full scholarship to the KATS Summer Science Camp and be invited to the KWF Awards Banquet.

For more information contact: Emily Kling, State 4-H Office, 201 Umberger Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506. *Miller*

## IT'S WILD IN KANSAS

Now you can promote Kansas' wild resources and help build the Milford Conservation Education Center at the same time. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is offering this attractive T-shirt with a strutting turkey backed by an orange sunrise on the front.

Profits from the sale of the shirts will go to the Milford Conservation Education Center to be built at the Milford Fish Hatchery near Junction City.

The light blue shirts come in adult sizes S, M, L, and X-L for \$7 each plus \$1 postage and handling. Youth sizes include 2-4, 6-8, 10-12 and 14-16 for \$6 each plus \$.50 postage and handling. Send orders to T-Shirts, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Rt. 2, Box 54A, Pratt, KS 67124.



# NATURE'S NOTEBOOK

by Joyce Harmon Depenbusch, Wildlife Education Coordinator

## THE RING-NECKED PHEASANT

Have you ever seen a rooster pheasant? With its red eye patch, blue and green head, white collar, blazing bronze breast, baby-blue wing patches, gold sides and long, burnished tail it doesn't sound like a bird that should live in Kansas, does it? Actually, even though they are common today, ring-necked pheasants were transplanted in our state many years ago.

Hunters were responsible for bringing pheasants to this country in the late 1800s. Farming practices had pushed out some of the native birds such as grouse, and Kansans hoped that the Asian pheasant could survive.

Well, survive they did. Today, millions of these ground-nesters patrol fencelines, shelterbelts and farm fields in all but the southeast corner of the state. The pheasant is very adaptable and hardy. It will eat almost anything, including wild berries, weed seeds, grasshoppers and agricultural grains. If they have good cover such as tall grass and weeds, pheasants can survive scorching summer heat and winter blizzards. Many predators, including man, coyotes, bobcats, hawks and owls, hunt the pheasant for food, but the smart and wary bird is no easy meal.

The hen, or female, pheasant is colored in drab brown and gray feathers and weighs about 2 pounds. Her color blends in well with the weeds and grasses she likes to nest in. The bigger rooster, or male, pheasant doesn't help with the nesting or brood-rearing chores so he doesn't need the camouflage feathers. The rooster will crow and strut, calling attention to his good looks, to attract hens during the spring breeding season.

In April or May, the hen pheasant will lay six to 12 eggs in a grass-lined nest hidden in thick weeds and grass. Chicks hatch after 24 days of incubation. Within a day the chicks are following the hen, catching and eating small insects. When they are seven days old the chicks can already fly several feet. By October, chicks hatched in May and June are fully grown and fending for themselves.

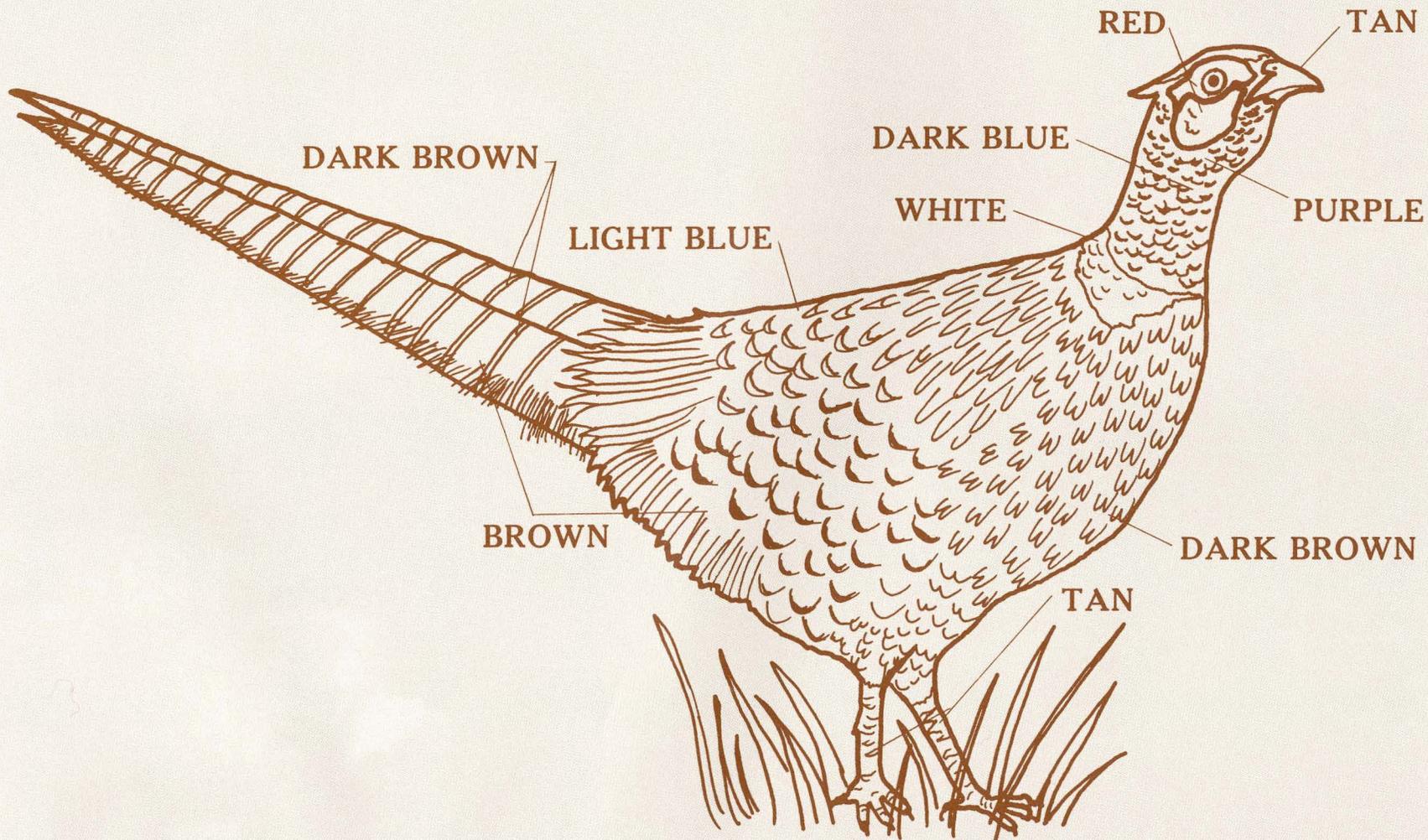
If a flood, hail storm or farm machine destroys a nest of eggs, the hen will nest again. She may make several attempts to nest, and you might see very young pheasants in the fall.

In November, many hunters pursue the rooster pheasant. Hunters come to Kansas from all over the United States to hunt pheasants. But after the opening day, pheasants become escape artists, often running out of one end of a field as hunters enter the other. Or in heavy cover, pheasants will sometimes sit tight and let unknowing hunters walk right past them. When they do flush, the big birds can fly at speeds up to 35 miles per hour.

The middle of winter is the hardest time for the pheasant. Deep snows make it hard to find food and if there isn't enough weed and grass cover, snow and sleet will kill pheasants. But the hardy pheasant will hunker down and survive winter storms if good habitat is available.

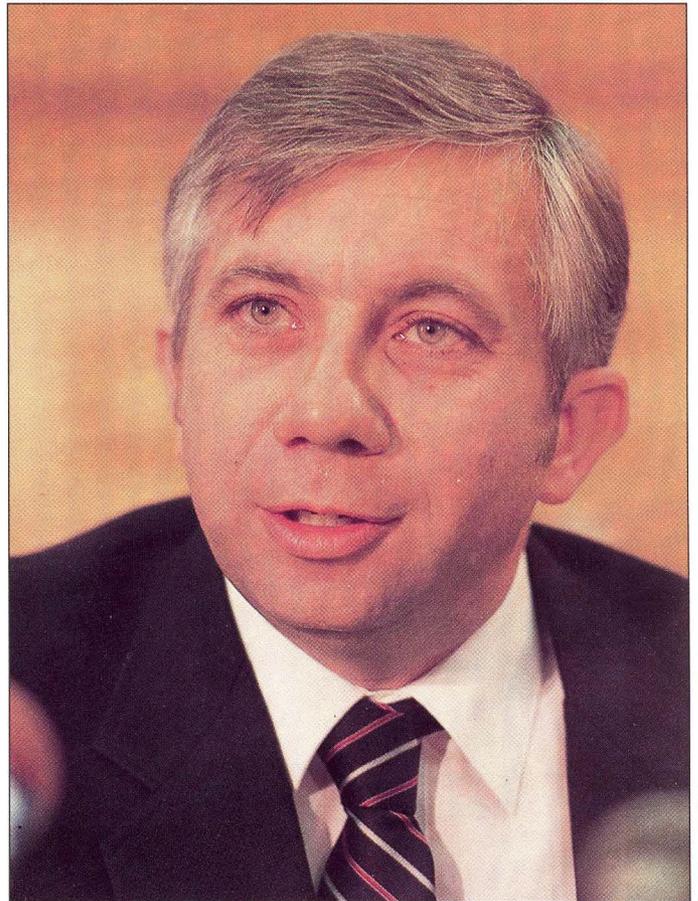


The brightly colored rooster pheasant is one of the most beautiful birds in Kansas. Use the colors listed to help you color in this Asian transplant.



# Mr. Secretary

Meet Bob Meinen, the new Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. He wrote this open letter to all Kansans in late August, shortly before moving to Topeka.



Paul Beaver photo

As I think about coming to Kansas, my mind races with thoughts of what lies ahead for both my family and the state. The challenge of implementing Governor Hayden's executive order to form a combined Department of Wildlife and Parks is exciting and full of promise for better management of Kansas' natural resources. There seems to be a new awareness and interest in wildlife and parks in Kansas. The new department can be the leader in promoting that interest. As Secretary, I look forward to the challenge of balancing agency administration duties with the reality of budgets, resources, and of course, politics.

You may wonder what would motivate me to leave Idaho to come to Kansas. A reporter asked that question at the Governor's press conference in August. My response was that Idaho is quite beautiful, but the natural resources and potential in Kansas should not be underestimated. Personal challenge and the opportunity to broaden my background are important to me. There is great potential in the natural resource field in Kansas, considering Governor Hayden's positive interest, the new department's heightened efficiency and the possibility of providing more outdoor opportunities to most residents and visitors alike.

There is deep personal satisfaction in being involved in natural resource management. Professional wildlife biologists, park managers and fisheries experts experience that. But I've also seen people who volunteer their time and talents (through organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy) have that sense of pride and satisfaction from knowing they've helped. Providing good resource management is important to me. There is satisfaction gained from working on large projects that lead to the protection of significant resources. But the letters from satisfied and appreciative hunters, fishermen and others with an

interest in natural resources are also important. Successful management of natural resources is a cooperative process among professionals, volunteers and private landowners.

My family and I feel our move to Kansas will be a good one. My wife, Theresa, and our 8- and 13-year-old sons, Scott and Mike, are excited about exploring a new state. They share my enthusiasm for the outdoors. My sons are anxious to learn to fish for bass and catfish. Their father has not proven himself to be a successful fisherman, so there is much room for self-improvement. A new hunting dog is also on the agenda for us. Ranger, our black Lab, has retired due to hip problems. In spite of his stubborn nature, he has become a much-loved pet.

The next year will be one of change for the Department of Wildlife and Parks, my family and me. Some of the changes will require us to do things we've never done before, and we're ready for the challenge. But Kansas' natural resources will be my priority. I'll spend the next few months becoming familiar with the resource, facilities and the people. Once I have a good start on this learning process, I'll be ready to carry out the executive order. I'm optimistic that much can be accomplished. The department has many good employees working for it, and Kansas has good natural resources in its lands and its people.

We can look forward to a bright future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Meinen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Robert L. Meinen**  
Secretary, Wildlife & Parks

# For The Birds

Thinking about saving a bird for the taxidermist?  
Then you must handle your special prize with extra care in the field.

By **Tim Schaid**  
*Wildlife Conservation Officer*  
*Olathe*

photos by **Mike Blair**

**A**t one time or another every bird hunter contemplates having a special prize for the taxidermist. Whether it's the hunter's first pheasant or a bird from an exceptional hunt, the mounted trophy represents a lot of effort and many memories. With all that at stake, what can the hunter do to help the taxidermist produce a beautiful and natural-looking bird mount — one that closely resembles what the hunter saw in the field?

I interviewed six professional taxidermists in the Kansas City, Kan., area to answer just that question. The consensus is that actual preservation of the mounted specimen begins in the field. Though qualified taxidermists can work wonders with what's brought to them, the hunter can ensure the best mount possible by knowing a few tips in advance.

Keeping the bird neat and clean is important, but it's not the taxidermist's primary concern. A more serious concern is pinfeathers. Pinfeathers are feathers not yet fully developed and are primarily a problem with birds taken during the fall. During the mounting process, pinfeathers tend to fall out and give the bird a rough, unnatural look. When selecting a bird for mounting, especially in the early season, always check the neck, sides and back for pinfeathers.

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The top pheasant is the one to save for mounting. The bird at bottom has broken tailfeathers. Once you decide on which bird to preserve, take the necessary field steps to keep that bird intact for the taxidermist.



A second major concern is spoilage. Leaving a bird lying on the warm car floorboards during the trip home contributes to spoilage, which, in turn causes feathers to slip. Instead, keep the bird as cool as possible. When freezing is impractical, keep the bird on ice. In either case — freezing or cooling — store the bird whole. Don't gut the bird or remove the meat. Taxidermists may offer to save the meat for you if the bird is kept fresh.

Preservation of the bird begins in the field, so taxidermists recommend the following tips:

After downing a bird that you may want mounted, inspect it for damage. But avoid choosing one that has pinfeathers or missing and damaged primary feathers. The best flying mounts will have all their wing feathers. Also make sure all the tailfeathers are in place. But if the bird is missing one or two, that doesn't necessarily mean the bird is a bad choice for mounting. Some taxidermists keep a few extra feathers on hand for just such emergencies. Shot damage to the face, eyelids or bill, however, requires extra effort to ensure the mounted bird has a natural expression.

If the downed bird is trophy material, plug the pellet holes, mouth and anus with cotton to prevent soiling the feathers. Put the bird in an ice cooler as soon as possible. Avoid carrying the bird for an extended period in the game bag or on your belt. Carrying the bird in a warm game bag initiates spoilage faster than if the bird were left in the open or quickly put on ice. Avoid putting the bird in a plastic bag unless it will be frozen immediately. Plastic bags initiate spoilage even faster than the gamebag if the bird is not properly cooled. Do not ring the bird's neck or carry the bird by the neck. This may damage head and neck feathers.

After inspecting the bird and plugging the necessary holes, insert your bird head-first into a woman's nylon stocking. This will protect the bird during freezing. If you carry the stockings with you in the field, birds can be inserted immediately for easy carrying back to the vehicle. If you need your hands free, tie the stocking to your belt. The next step is to roll the bird into several layers of newspapers. Then either freeze the bird or put it on ice. The newspapers wick moisture away. One taxidermist advises caution when using newsprint around light-colored birds because wet newsprint may bleed ink onto the bird.

If your cold storage space allows, insert the pheasant tail into a long cardboard cylinder for added protection. Deliver

the bird — stocking and all — to the taxidermist.

A little blood or body fluid on the feathers is of little concern since most birds are thoroughly cleaned just before mounting. But when feathers are badly matted with dried blood, taxidermists will take special care to give the finished mount a smooth, natural look. Hunters should take precautions in the field to keep light-colored feathers as blood-free as possible. Cold water and mild soap can be used to spot clean blood spills on feathers before the blood has time to set.

If you're thinking about saving a bird for the taxidermist, you'll need to carry along a few special items on your next hunt. In addition to a large ice chest, include a pair of women's nylon hose, several newspapers, cotton balls, a small bottle of mild liquid soap and a long cardboard cylinder.

Advance planning and careful field handling can contribute to an exceptional mounted trophy. You may want to speak to a taxidermist before the hunt. When it comes to remembering the outdoor pleasures of a hunt, a picture can be worth a thousand words. But a mounted trophy can be worth a thousand pictures. KW

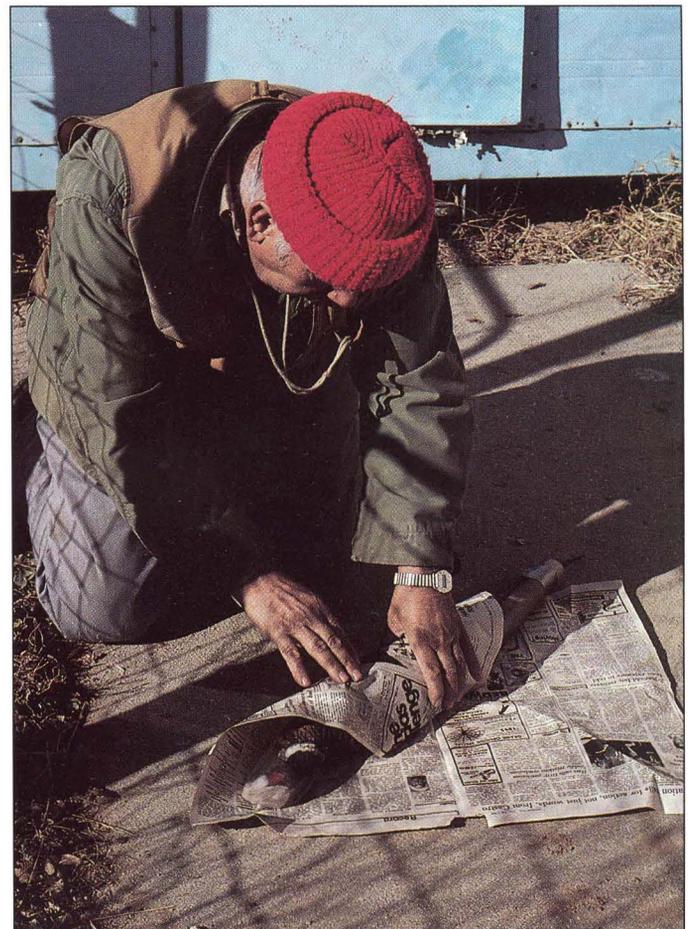
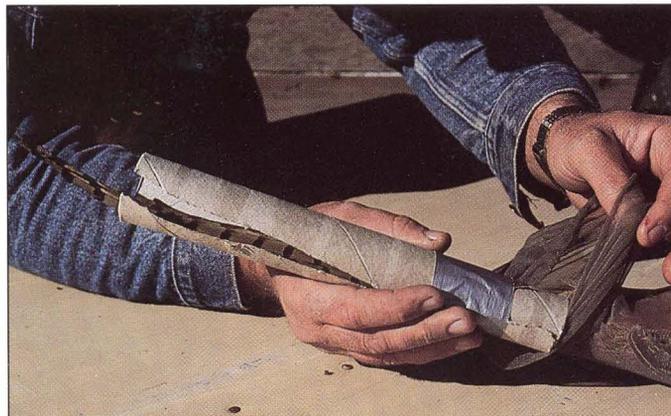


**Above:** If a downed bird is trophy material, plug the pellet holes, mouth and anus with cotton to prevent soiling the feathers.

**Below:** If your cold storage space allows, insert the pheasant tail into a long cardboard cylinder (from a roll of paper towels, for example). This will give extra protection to the tail.

**Upper right:** Then place the bird in a woman's nylon stocking. This will keep the feathers in place during transportation and storage.

**Lower right:** Finally, roll the bird in several layers of newspapers. Then either freeze the bird or put it on ice. One taxidermist advises caution when using newspaper around light-colored birds because wet newsprint may bleed ink onto the bird.





# WHY I TRAP

My love of the outdoors and the challenge of outsmarting a critter on its own turf are two of the reasons I run a trapline.

by **Randy Nelson**  
*Fish Hatchery Assistant  
Farlington*

photos by **Mike Blair**

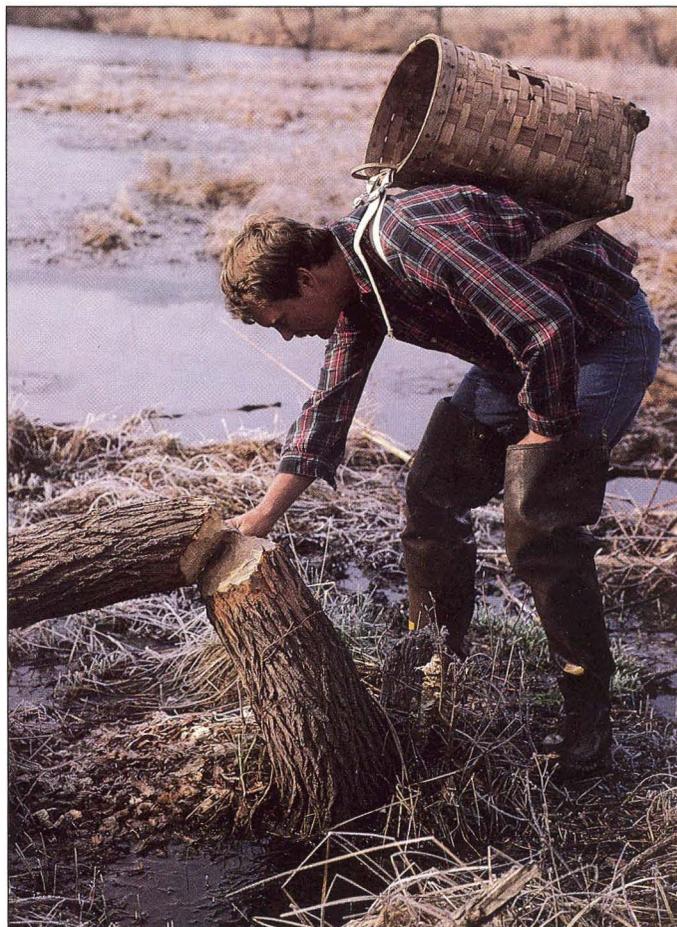
**W**hat does a trapper do? Oh, I know he catches animals in traps, you might say, but how does he do it? Where? And why?

Most Kansans probably wouldn't find these questions easy to answer. And that may be the biggest reason trapping and trappers have been saddled with an undeserved bad reputation here and across the country.

Trapping, in one form or another, has been practiced in Kansas ever since man set foot on the plains. Undoubtedly the Indians trapped animals for food and clothing by using crude snares and deadfalls. In this country's early days, trappers trekked across the frontier in search of beaver. Today's trapper, however, is probably someone with a steady job and who enjoys the outdoors and matching wits with furbearers. He's likely to be someone who's retired and enjoys the memories trapping brings of his youth. Or he may be a young farm boy learning the ways of the wild and earning a little spending money.

Today's trapper is a conservationist, for sure — harvesting surplus animals and often aiding farmers by removing animals that damage livestock or property. The Kansas trapper is governed by regulations developed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. These regulations protect the furbearers, insure a continued healthy population and protect

Trapper Keith Becker of Pratt admires about a dozen prime bobcat pelts before taking them to a fur auction. Bobcat pelts sold for \$77 on the average at the Dec. 20, 1986, fur auction in Kingman, Kan.



Keith Becker pauses on a south-central Kansas pond to inspect a beaver's dental work. Beavers are usually taken with Conibear traps.

the non-trapping public's rights and pets by restricting the use of certain traps and snares to specific locations.

To encourage ethical trapping practices, Wildlife and Parks introduced the Furharvester Education Program in 1982. Similar to the more familiar hunter safety classes, this course is taught by volunteer instructors who provide instruction on ethical, humane, safe and selective hunting, trapping and handling of the state's furbearing animals. All persons born on or after July 1, 1966, must successfully complete this course before buying a license to hunt, run or trap furbearers on lands other than their own. The Department's goal is to train individuals who will trap safely and humanely.

The best way I can describe what's involved in operating a trapline is to tell you about my own as well as the equipment I use.

My work begins in late summer when I scout for the upcoming season and ask landowners for permission to hunt. Late summer also is the time when I clean all my equipment and put it in working order. This includes removing mud and refuse from traps, sharpening trowels, hatchets and knives, making new name tags and adjusting and repairing each trap. Then I dye all traps black and wax them to prevent rust and metal smells that might spook a trap-wise critter. Summer also is time to collect the fish used for bait and buy new equipment, scents and lures.

This equipment consists of traps, stakes, drags, trap tags, wire, pliers, hatchet, trowel, dirt sifter and knife, to name several of the essential items. The equipment needed for a

50-set trapline adds up to quite a pile.

The traps, of course, are the most important pieces of equipment. Traps come in many shapes, sizes and styles, and the experienced trapper usually has a use for all of them. Most Kansas trappers do not pursue just one furbearer (though some do) but will trap several species. This requires a variety of traps.

**T**he first type is the foothold trap, which probably catches more furbearers than any other. There are three types of foothold traps: the coil spring, underspring and the longspring. Each is designed to clamp on the foot of an animal that steps into it, then hold the animal until the trapper arrives. Footholds are used for all types of furbearers.

Another type is the killer trap, which features two square metal frames connected by a spring. When an animal passes through the trap, a trigger releases the spring and the frames snap closed on the animal's neck or back, killing it. These traps are used for muskrat, mink, beaver and raccoon.

The snare is yet another style of trap. A snare is a simple device, made of metal cable with a sliding lock that forms a loop. The loop can be adjusted so smaller animals pass through without harm or so that larger animals can't pass through. As the animal passes through the snare, the loop tightens around the animal's neck or body. The lock prevents the loop from returning to a larger size and firmly holds. Furbearers caught around the neck die quickly, and those caught around the body are held until the trapper removes the animal from the trap.

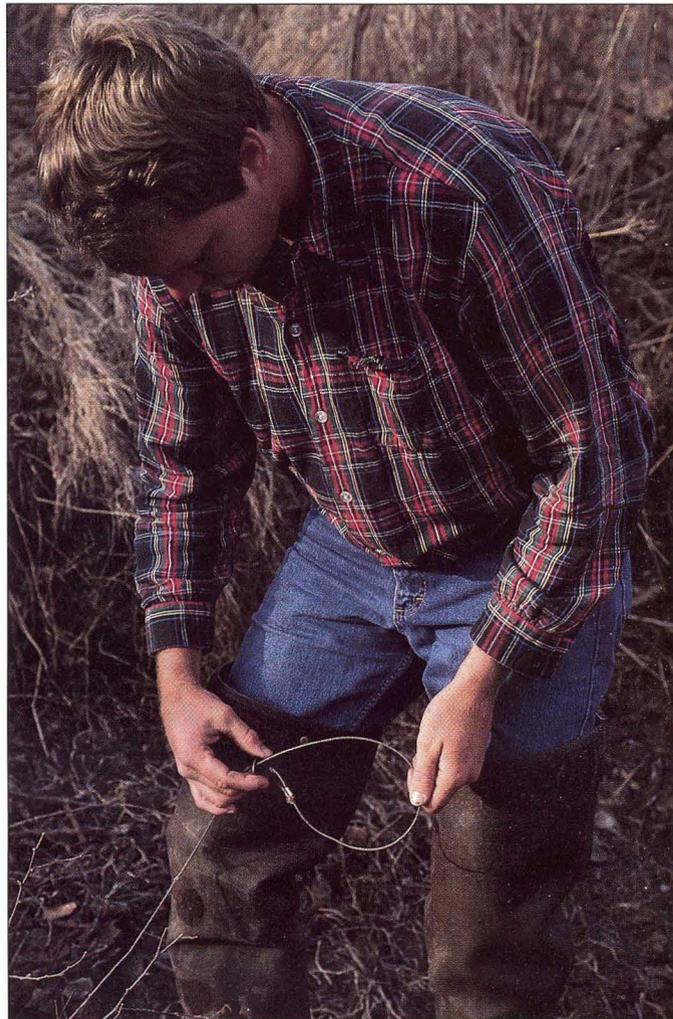
Box or live traps, a fourth type, are used primarily for raccoon, opossum and skunk. These are wire mesh boxes with a hinged door that closes behind the animal entering the trap. These traps are especially useful when working around domestic animals. Pets accidentally caught can be released unharmed.

The rest of the equipment is used to support, hide or identify the traps. Stakes are used to anchor traps so when an animal is caught it can't move from the site. Drags are used where stakes can't be driven into the ground. Drags are designed so that as an animal moves away from the capture site the device becomes entangled and the animal can't continue. Trap tags are required on every trap. Others are necessary for making sets, driving stakes, cutting wire, digging holes, cutting bait and hiding traps.

The trapper must learn the habits of the animals he pursues. Places I look for signs include creeks, waterways, ponds, abandoned buildings, farm roads, hedgerows, washouts, rocky outcrops and anything else that offers food, shelter or an easy travel lane. I always keep an eye out for furbearer sign anytime I'm in my trapping areas.

Some people trap for a living. Yes, even today some hardy individuals draw most of their income from trapping. But they have to cover a lot of territory; most trap two or more states. I may be a little luckier than some because I can take a couple of weeks of vacation around Thanksgiving and devote myself to some serious trapping.

My usual trapline is covered by about 30 miles of driving and four or five miles of walking every day. The trapline has to be attended every 24 hours, according to state regulations. I always get permission to trap in advance. Scouting has shown me where the most productive areas should be. I carry a small notebook to note locations and keep track of my sets. My target animals include raccoon, muskrat, mink, coyote, gray fox, beaver, opossum and bobcat.



A snare is a simple trap made of metal cable. As the animal passes through the snare, the loop tightens around the animal's neck or body.

The first couple of days are the hardest because the entire line must be put out. Later, only a few traps are shuffled around. My Jeep Cherokee is loaded up the night before we begin. Early the first morning I'm up and ready to hit the road.

My first task is to set a few traps around several ponds where muskrat and raccoon are the target species. Before entering the water, I don my chest waders and shoulder-length neoprene gloves, load my traps, stakes, wire, scents and other equipment into my bucket and set out. Next I head to a creek where I make sets for beaver, mink, raccoon and muskrat. Here again I wear the waders and gloves to stay dry. Then it's another half-mile of walking with 20 pounds of equipment in the bucket.

**A**fter finishing in the creek, I'm off to a nearby large pond to set beaver traps. On one occasion a landowner called me earlier in the year and asked if I could trap the beavers out of his pond before they cut down every tree and ruined the dam. After I finish setting up the pond traps, I may take a break. Looking at my notebook I see I've set 12 muskrat sets, 12 coon sets, four beaver and a mink set in the first four hours of the day.

The afternoon takes me to more upland areas where I set for



All traps must be checked daily (inset) by Kansas state law. After checking all his sets, this trapper heads back to the truck, then home.

coyotes on old farm roads, along hedgerows and on cattle paths in vacant pastures. I trap in quail country, and I set a lot of traps where hunters are likely to stroll so having permission is vital. I always let the landowner know where and when I set for coyotes so he can guide quail hunters away from these areas. The last thing I want to do is catch someone's dog. In addition to making coyote sets, I also make a few raccoon sets, including three live traps in a barn where coons have played havoc with cattle feed. With about 40 sets made, I call it a day.

The second morning is always the most exciting for me because it brings with it the year's first catch. I load any additional equipment, then head out to check the sets. It's about 11 a.m. after all the sets have been checked and reset (if necessary). Time for a bite of lunch, then off to set more ponds and another stretch of creek. I quit a little early because I have a lot of work to do at home. That work is to skin the six muskrats, three raccoons, seven opossums and one mink caught the night before. To some trappers this would be a short session, but I'm not fast and it always takes a few days for me to regain the knack of skinning. After skinning, all the pelts are cleaned, dried, brushed and put into the freezer.

This is where I differ from some trappers; I don't finish my fur. To finish the fur after skinning, one scrapes the pelts of all

excess fat and meat. Then the pelts are placed on stretchers and hung up to dry. Some day, when I have fewer family responsibilities and more time, I plan to finish my own fur. It's late evening by the time all the work is done.

This is the basic routine throughout trapping season. Traps are shuffled from place to place as areas prove unproductive or as the catch slows. I always leave an area before all the furbearers are caught to ensure animals will be left for next year. Most days seven to 10 hours are spent checking and resetting traps, setting new locations and skinning the day's catch.

When a trapper is ready to sell fur, he may take the pelts to one of the many furbuyers across the state, attend a fur auction or ship the finished product to a U.S. or Canadian buying house. Local furbuyers will buy whole animals, green pelts (skinned, but not finished) or finished goods. The other options require the pelts to be finished. The local buyer pays lower prices for the goods that aren't finished because he has to do the skinning, fleshing and stretching himself. In spite of this, most trappers use a local buyer for convenience.

Fur auctions are held around the state and offer the trapper a chance to have several buyers bid on his finished fur. This usually insures a good price for the work he's done. The furhouses will accept lots of fur through the mail and then send notice of what they'll pay for the lot. This is time-consuming, however, and doesn't give the trapper a chance to haggle with the buyer.

The trapper is out every day — rain, shine, ice or snow — and sometimes five miles of walking seems like 50 when the mud pulls at your boots with every step. So why do I do it? Money? Yes, some money can be made trapping. But for most trappers, including myself, the amount of money made doesn't add up to much, although a few hundred extra dollars just before Christmas sure comes in handy. What keeps me coming back year after year, even if I just break even, is a love of the outdoors and the challenge of outsmarting a critter on its own turf. Learning more about the wild animals I encounter along the trapline makes each year more rewarding than the last.

That's why I trap.

KW

**Kansas Fur Harvester Association  
Kingman Fur Auction  
Dec. 20, 1986**

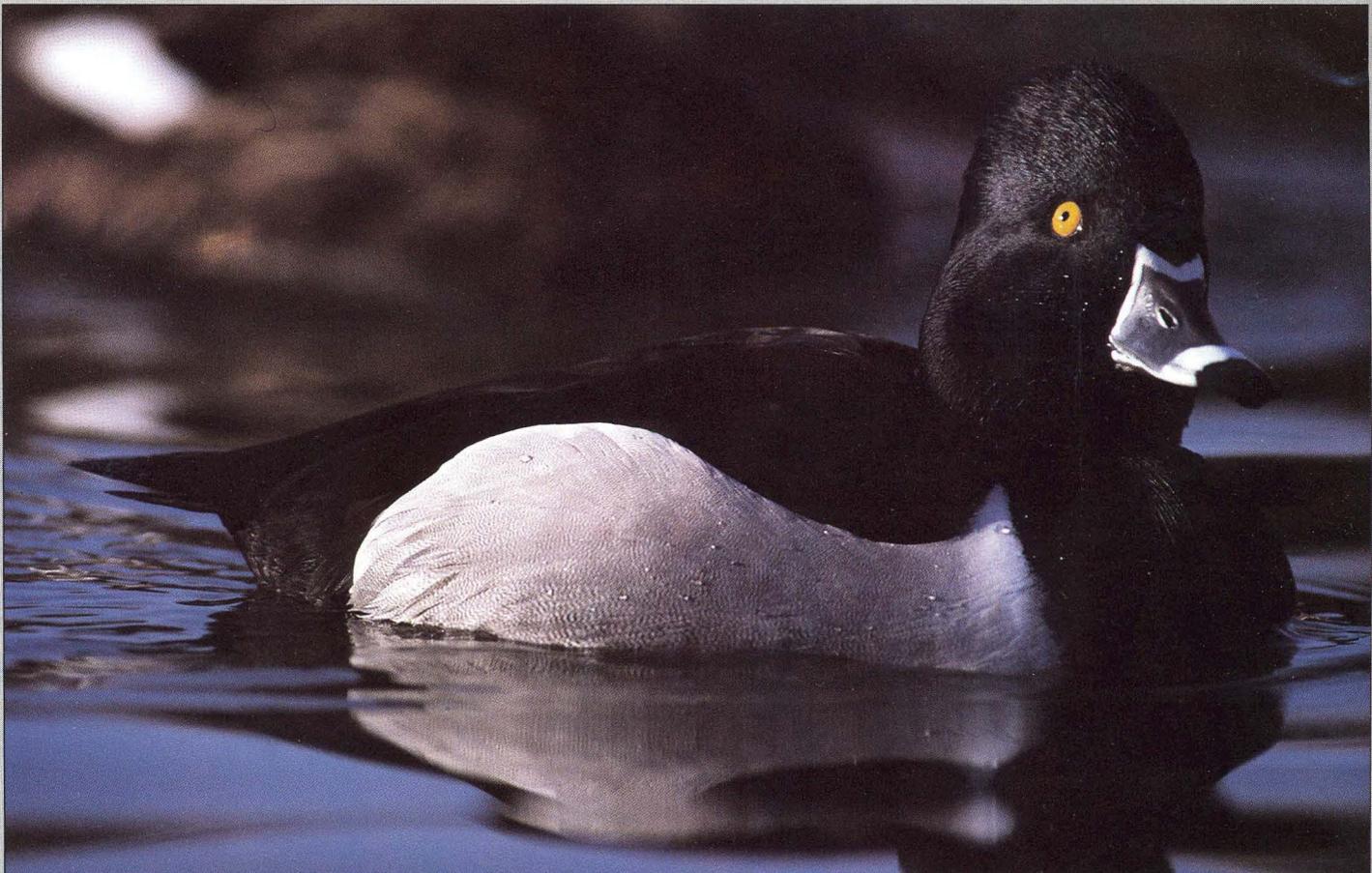
<u>Species</u>	<u>Average Price</u>	<u>High Price</u>	<u>No. Sold</u>
Mink	\$18.87	\$ 28.00	34
Muskrat	2.53	3.75	441
Beaver	10.22	29.50	85
Raccoon	20.71	34.00	1573
Opossum	1.03	2.50	628
Red Fox	25.19	28.75	8
Badger	9.55	20.00	24
Bobcat	77.00	151.00	28
Coyote	29.20	60.00	699

# KANSAS WILDLIFE

## Gallery

photos by Mike Blair

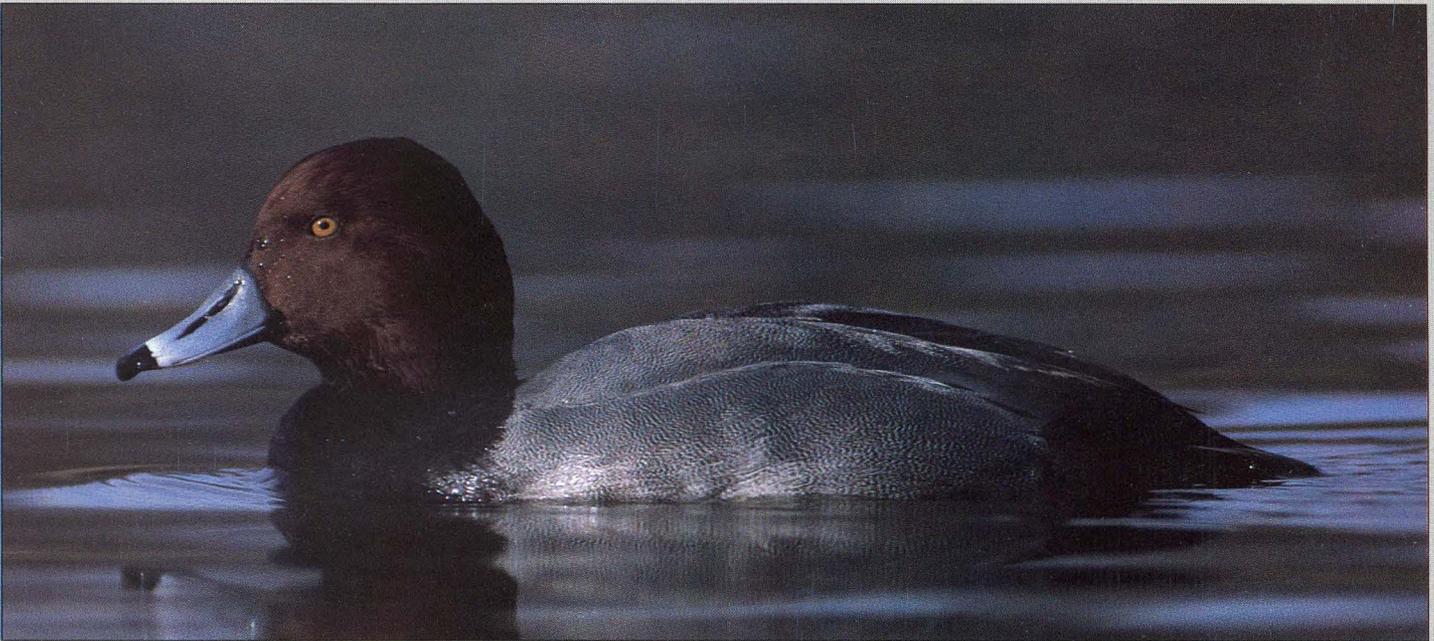
Ringneck drakes have an indistinct ring around their necks that give the species its name. A black back and patterned bill separates this duck from scaup. Shot with 400mm, f/5.6 at 1/250. About 80 percent of a ringneck's diet consists of vegetation; the remainder is mollusks and insects.





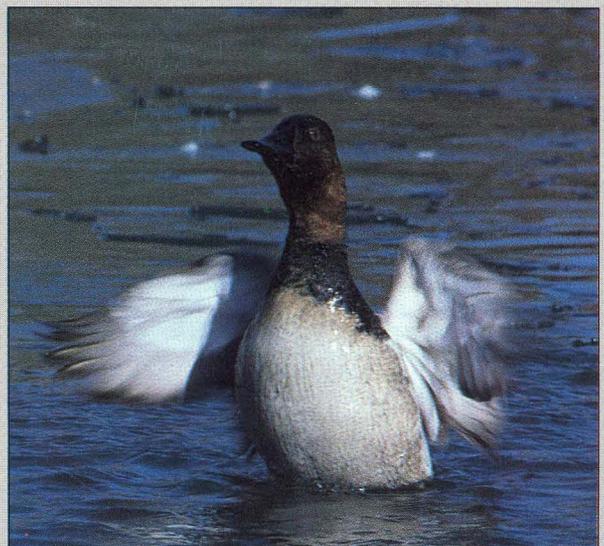
Buffleheads take flight from a springtime marsh. Like other divers, they must run along the water to gain speed for takeoff. Shot with 400mm, f/5.6 at 1/500.

Redheads are handsome ducks, differing from canvasbacks in shape and color of bill. Redheads are gullible, often circling back to land among decoys even after shots are fired in their direction. Shot with 400mm, f/4 at 1/125.



As the name implies, divers feed by swimming underwater and gobbling aquatic vegetation and small animals. Special transparent eyelids protect these ducks while underwater. A scaup (left) plunges beneath the surface. Shot with 400mm, f/5.6 at 1/500.

In an icy pond, a canvasback drake stretches after searching underwater for a midday meal. Shot with 400mm, f/8 at 1/250.



# TOP DOGS

The cocker spaniel may be America's favorite dog  
but hunters have their own favorites – Britts and Labs.

by Terry Wayne Cloutier

*Paola*

Most of us would like to have one shotgun for quail, one for ducks, one for pheasant and one for geese, but economic (and sometimes marital) restraints limit us to one all-around gun. So it is with our bird dogs. For the Kansas hunter who takes advantage of the various game-bird species, his dream might be for an equally varied kennel — English pointers for finding bobwhites backed up by golden retrievers to bring the meat back, Chesapeake Bay retrievers for breaking late-winter ice to get at downed greenheads and close-working springer spaniels paired with wide-ranging English setters for pheasants. The average Kansas hunter, however, can't afford this luxury. So he'll buy a bird dog that, like his shotgun, can get the job done under most conditions.

Bird dogs come in all shapes, sizes, colors, breeds, dispositions and pedigrees. I've seen some good farm dogs of mixed and sometimes unknown ancestry, but the serious bird hunter usually finds that a purebred dog — one specifically bred to find or retrieve birds — is the way to go.

German short-haired pointers, golden retrievers, English pointers and setters, and springer spaniels are commonly seen afield in fall and winter. But Kansas bird hunters prefer two breeds over the rest — the Brittany spaniel and the Labrador retriever.

The versatile Brittany is the only pointing spaniel. Others, such as the springer spaniel, are flushing dogs. Though the origin of Brittany spaniels is partly a mystery, most authorities agree they probably were developed on the Brittany Peninsula in northwest France. Natives of that region hunted with long-haired, short-tailed dogs resembling today's Britts.

A sketchy history indicates early Brittanies were crossed with English pointers, setters and Welsh springer spaniels, yielding orange-and-white or liver-and-white bird-hunting machines. Some accounts state that Brittany spaniels originated in Spain and were brought to France in the 1830s. The first Britts came to America from France only about 50 years ago. During its early years in the states, the breed was used mainly for hunting grouse and woodcock.

Modern breeders' standards call for Brittany spaniels measuring between 17½ and 20½ inches tall and weighing 35 to 45 pounds. The Britt's medium stature and sweet personality make the breed popular among sportsmen who also want family dogs.

Professional trainers generally recommend gentle, consistent discipline for Brittanies. The dog's mild temperament makes it a poor candidate for heavy-handed training. Desirable behavior is sufficiently rewarded with the handler's praise and affection.

With few exceptions, Britts are born with a strong pointing instinct, but this natural talent probably will require some honing in the field. Part of this practice usually includes channeling their interests away from rabbits and other wild-smelling distractions. These dogs will hunt (and point) nearly anything — from crayfish to deer — but they can truly delight upland bird hunters. Brittanies are

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Labs are often used as flushing dogs on upland bird hunts but are probably most at home retrieving ducks for their master (at right).





Mike Blair photo

The ancestors of the modern-day Lab (above) were Canadian dogs known as St. John's Newfoundland. Labs are the most popular dog in retriever field trials. Brittannies (opposite page) are determined upland bird hunters, eager to please and quick to learn.

perhaps at their best in heavy cover as they're determined hunters and tend to work closer than other pointing dogs.

One of my buddies pairs his Britt with an English pointer for quail hunting. The spaniel works close — seldom beyond 30 yards — finding singles, while the pointer works the horizon for coveys. My buddy also carries two extra pieces of equipment just for his Brittany — a comb and scissors. The Brittany's long hair collects cockleburs, so we take breaks now and then to remove tangled seeds from the dog's feathers.

Brittany spaniels have mastered all of Kansas' upland bird hunting. In ad-

dition to this specialty, most Britts take readily to retrieving from the water. Though not as sure as true retrievers, they will reliably fetch just about any game if properly trained. Brittannies are experts at sniffing out downed ducks and will work in all but icy mid-winter waters.

Brittany spaniels are generally eager to please and quick to learn. Their sensitive noses are outclassed only by their affection for people and undying desire to hunt.

Some good references on raising and training these all-around spaniels include David M. Duffey's *Hunting Dog Know-How*, Jerome and Alyson Knap's *Training The Versatile Gun Dog*,

Robert G. Wehle's *Wing and Shot* and Fred Z. White's *The Brittany in America*. According to American Kennel Club, Brittany spaniels rank 24th among all dogs registered in 1986, with 13,440 on the books.

**L**abrador retrievers, or Labs, are the most popular of all the sporting breeds registered with the AKC. In fact, so popular is the Lab that in 1986 the breed ranked third (77,371 entries) among all the dogs that AKC registered. Cocker spaniels and poodles ranked first and second among AKC-registered breeds.

The ancestors of the modern-day Lab were the Canadian dogs known as St. John's Newfoundland. Helen Warwick has an excellent history of the breed in her book *The Complete Labrador Retriever*. In 1835 these Canadian dogs were exported to England where English waterfowling bred them to their curly-coated and flat-coated retrievers. The United States didn't receive these English imports until the 1920s. Quickly bought and bred by American hunters, Labs soon replaced Chesapeake Bay retrievers as the most popular retriever afield and have kept that ranking since 1935. Professional trainers also picked up on Labs and made them the No. 1 dog in retriever field trials. Labs may be colored yellow, lemon or chocolate, but black is the predominant color. And a vicious Lab is truly an exception. Most are as much at home in a duck blind as they are playing with the neighborhood children.

Though their disposition is mild, they do and will respond to harsher discipline. And after harsh discipline they tend to have the attitude that "OK, I messed up, now let's get on with the training." Kenneth C. Roebuck's book *Gun Dog Training — Spaniels and Retrievers* praises the black dogs for their love of water, marking abilities (on downed birds) and kind disposition. Labs make excellent family dogs as well.

Labs are flushing dogs in the uplands, and if properly trained can work close and get the bird up for the gun. The breed doesn't have the classy style of the bird-finding pointers or setters but will get the job done. Yet when it comes to retrieving ducks in icy waters, pheasants in freezing snow or marking and retrieving doubles, the Lab is in its element. Southern plantation-style quail hunts commonly in-





Mike Blair photo

Brittanias possess an undying desire to hunt and tend to work more closely (below) than other pointing dogs.

volve English pointers and setters ranging to find quail coveys while Labs are at their handler's side marking, then retrieving the downed bobwhites.

If there's one dog that most hunters have probably hunted over, it would have to be the Lab. These black dogs have found a special place in the American waterfowling scene. Only one animal besides a duck or a goose has been pictured on a Federal duck stamp. That animal — a black Lab — was named King Buck.

While I was working as a trainer for Nilo Kennels near Brighton, Ill., I had the pleasure to work under the famous Lab trainer W. Cotton Pershall.

Cotton was the head trainer at the time King Buck was whelped. He told how King Buck was a sickly puppy who regained health slowly and more than once was on the verge of death. Cotton never gave up on Buck, and Buck never gave up on life. After a rough puppyhood, King Buck went on with Cotton to become the Double National Champion in 1952 and 1953 and later appeared with a greenhead mallard in its mouth on the 1959-1960 federal duck stamp. King Buck is buried in front of Nilo Kennels under a life-sized bronze of himself. The statue is a tribute to a great Lab and serves as a reminder to trainers to never lose faith in their dogs.

In addition to the Warwick and Roebuck books, Lab enthusiasts should read James L. Free's classic *Training Your Retriever*. If you're wanting a

highly polished black Lab, get a copy of *Training Retrievers* by D.L. and Ann Walters of LaCygne, Kan. D.L. and Ann train some of Kansas' finest retrievers. If field trialing is in your blood, read *The Working Retrievers* written by Tom Quinn.

No matter which breed you choose, remember that each has its specialties and that none can do it all when compared to the specialists. Don't expect your Brittany to make 500-yard blind, double retrieves nor your Lab to point.

Hunt without a dog and you will bag some game, but hunt with a good bird dog and you'll not only bag more birds and lose less cripples but you'll be able to enjoy your four-legged friend year-round. KW

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*A Kansas wildlife conservation officer for the last five years, the author recently accepted a position with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.*



Mike Blair photo

# How To Cape A Deer

by Steve Capel  
Regional Wildlife Supervisor  
Valley Center

**A**s you're standing there admiring that big buck, you need to decide whether you're going to have it mounted. Actually it's a good idea to give this some thought before you ever head to the woods. Many hunters ruin their potential trophy-size mounts almost before they start.

In saving the head for a good mount, you must supply the taxidermist with an unspoiled cape. If you bleed the buck too high up on the neck, the taxidermist has little to work with for a full head mount.

To properly save the cape, it's sometimes easier to not actually bleed the animal at all. Instead field dress him; bleed the animal through the chest cavity. Avoid any cuts forward of the front legs. Then take the buck directly to the taxidermist and let him skin out the cape.

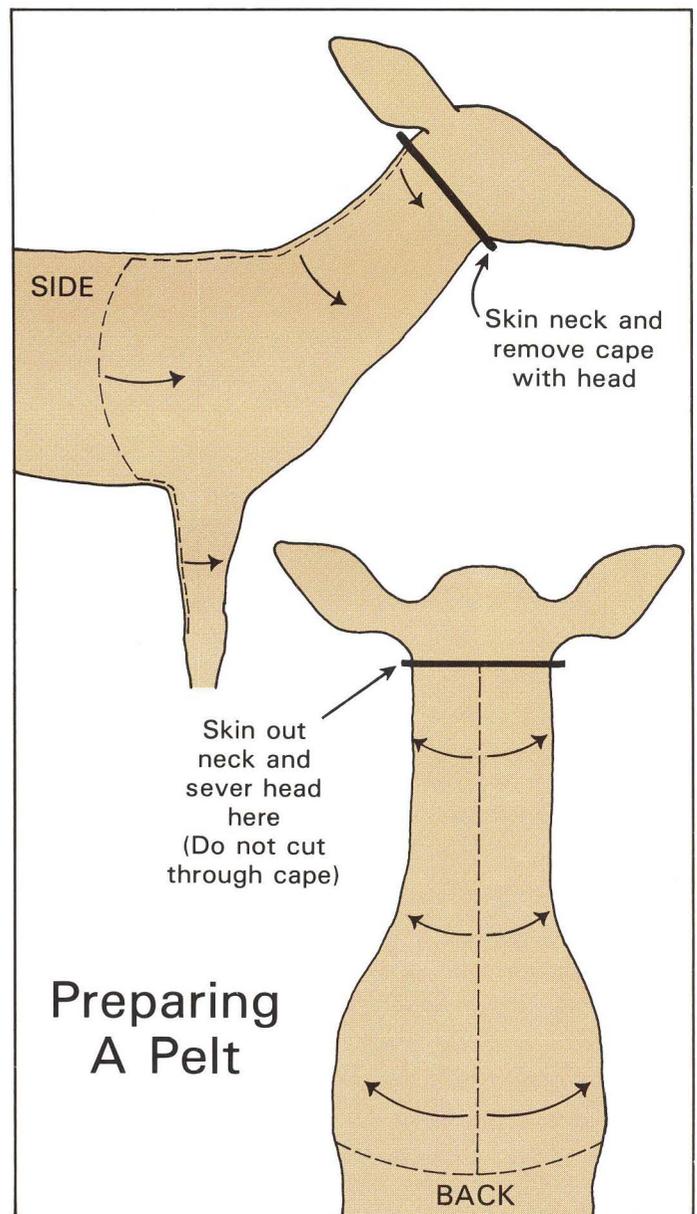
If you're undecided about the trophy mount but want to be safe (or if you are not near a taxidermist), then remove the cape yourself. But first you'll need to take a few measurements: 1) from the tip of the nose to the back of the skull, 2) from the tip of the nose to the front "corner" of the eye, and 3) around the neck at the base of the head.

To skin the animal, hang it by the antlers, and beginning about 12 inches in back of the shoulders, cut a ring completely around the animal's body. Then ring the skin at the knee joints of the front legs, and cut down the backsides of the legs, continuing to the first ring cut.

Next, cut a straight line from the main ring directly along the spine, to a point just behind the ears. This allows you to skin downward to the underside of the throat, until the entire cape hangs free just beneath the head. Then simply cut the head off, taking care not to puncture the skin in the throat area.

Finally, place the head and hide in cold storage until you can deliver your trophy to a taxidermist (within two or three days).

KW



Patti Murphy illustration

(\* = taken during 1986 season)

# Kansas Deer Records

## White-tailed Deer

## Mule Deer

Rank	Score	Name & Address	Year	County of Kill
<b>Top 20 Typical (Firearms)</b>				
1.	1982/s	Dennis P. Finger, Netawaka	1974	Nemaha
2.	1947/s	William Mikijanis, McLouth	1985	Leavenworth
3.	194	Michael A. Young, Cedarvale	1973	Chautauqua
4.	189	Robert Wellbrock, Victoria	1968	Russell
5.	1887/s	Robert E. Luke, Riley	1984	Ft. Riley
6.	1863/s	Garold D. Miller, Delavan	1969	Morris
7.	1844/s	Thomas D. Mosher, Emporia	1984	Chase
8.	184	James R. Bell, Derby	1985	Saline
9.	1823/s	Norman Anderson, Alma	1966	Wabaunsee
10.	1816/s	Kenneth C. Haynes, Emporia	1969	Lyon
11.	1805/s	Douglas Stensaa, Concordia	1983	Cloud
12.	180	David Cross, Lewis	1985	Edwards
13.	1794/s	Lowell Howell, Colwich	1973	Elk
14.	1785/s	Ronald F. Ware, Blue Mound	1977	Linn
15.	1776/s	Eddie Lotridge, St. Marys	1985	Pottawatomie
16.	1775/s *	William A. Simshauser, Lakin	1986	Kearny
17.	1773/s	Kelley D. Gulker, Milford	1983	Ft. Riley
18.	1767/s	Craig Waltman, Towanda	1982	Butler
19.	176 (tie)	Don Mai, Hoisington	1981	Russell
19.	176 (tie)	Joseph Schmelzle, Seneca	1985	Nemaha

<b>Top 20 Non-Typical (Firearms)</b>				
1.	2586/s	John O. Band, Courtland	1965	Republic
2.	2511/s	Theron E. Wilson, Asherville	1974	Mitchell
3.	2292/s	Merle Cleve Beckman, Mound City	1984	Linn
4.	229 *	Ron Wilt, Pratt	1986	Barber
5.	2266/s	Gary A. Smith, Paola	1970	Miami
6.	2216/s	Robert L. Rose, Kiowa	1972	Barber
7.	218	Dale Samuelson, Oakley	1967	Logan
8.	2096/s	Tim Schaller, Larned	1984	Edwards
9.	2065/s	Jay Talkington, Cottonwood Falls	1984	Chase
10.	2044/s	Thomas Jakopic, Woodston	1982	Rooks
11.	203	Dale Heston, Oskaloosa	1982	Jefferson
12.	2017/s	Leon Smith, Sedan	1973	Chautauqua
13.	2014/s	Joe Ash, Medicine Lodge	1975	Barber
14.	1994/s	Joe A. Rose Jr., Overbrook	1977	Osage
15.	1965/s	Charles D. Sergeant, Lebo	1985	Coffey
16.	1933/s	Howard Lilly, Melvern	1982	Osage
17.	1924/s	Morris Foster, Jennings	1965	Sheridan
18.	1923/s	Joyce Krause, Woodbine	1984	Geary
19.	1901/s	Douglas Bush, Melvern	1975	Osage
20.	1891/s	John Walker, El Dorado	1985	Marion

<b>Top 20 Typical (Archery)</b>				
1.	1833/s	Jim Willems, Windom	1985	Ellsworth
2.	1824/s	Boyd Schneider, Madison	1984	Greenwood
3.	1823/s	John Wellborn, Meriden	1982	Jefferson
4.	182	Michael J. Rose, Topeka	1982	Jefferson
5.	1797/s	Stan Christiansen, Hudson	1973	Riley
6.	1784/s	Tim Ross, Meade	1985	Meade
7.	1783/s	Larry Daniels, Wichita	1967	McPherson
8.	1766/s	Ray Mosher, Frankfort	1966	Marshall
9.	176	Rayford Willingham, Manhattan	1985	Clay
10.	1753/s	Gary L. Brehm, Pratt	1984	Pratt
11.	1753/s	Gary Gans, Bennington	1985	Ottawa
12.	1752/s	Gerald Stroot, Colwich	1981	Kingman
13.	175	Gary Stroda, Hope	1985	Dickinson
14.	1726/s *	Bruce Brown, Salina	1986	Saline
15.	1723/s	Ronald G. Box, Wichita	1974	Wilson
16.	172	Dan R. Moore, Olathe	1982	Miami
17.	1717/s	Stan Christiansen, Hudson	1981	Rice
18.	1713/s	Michael Snyder, Winfield	1985	Cowley
19.	1707/s *	Carroll Couture, Belleville	1986	Republic
20.	1701/s	Jay Schaller, Kinsley	1968	Edwards

<b>Top 20 Non-Typical (Archery)</b>				
1.	2496/s	Clifford G. Pickell, Wichita	1968	Greenwood
2.	2273/s *	Gilbert Boss, Cheryvale	1986	Wilson
3.	2092/s	Lonnies Ensminger, McPherson	1968	McPherson
4.	2064/s	Bruce Schroeder, Hillsboro	1985	Marion
5.	202	Dennis L. Rule, Wichita	1982	Clark
6.	2005/s	Kirby A. Clifton, Atchison	1973	Atchison
7.	1993/s	Phillip Kirkland, Hill City	1981	Comanche
8.	1974/s	John R. Clifton, Emporia	1984	Lyon
9.	1927/s *	Jim Snyder, Belleville	1986	Washington
10.	1915/s	Randall Koehn, Montezuma	1985	Gray
11.	1914/s	Wayne Herron, Cimarron	1983	Gray
12.	1907/s	Leon J. Bidinger, Perry	1983	Douglas
13.	1901/s *	Douglas D. Jenkins, Paola	1986	Miami
14.	190	Dan Norris, Berryton	1977	Douglas
15.	1884/s	Donald Berry, Penokee	1970	Graham
16.	1873/s	Galen Crabbs, Sterling	1984	Rice
17.	1852/s	Al Weaver, Wichita	1965	Sedgwick
18.	1847/s	Allen D. Bailey, Montezuma	1982	Gray
19.	1832/s (tie)	Larry Larson, Randolph	1985	Riley
19.	1832/s (tie)	Gary Blasi, Pratt	1983	Barber

Rank	Score	Name & Address	Year	County of Kill
<b>Top 20 Typical (Firearms)</b>				
1.	1885/s *	Marvin Dechant, Ness City	1986	Lane
2.	1874/s	Edward Karnes, Studley	1965	Sheridan
3.	1842/s	Fred Gilbert, Colby	1966	Rawlins
4.	1827/s	Glenn I. Meyers, Deerfield	1984	Kearny
5.	1813/s *	(tie) Michael Moses, Colby	1986	Rawlins
5.	1813/s	(tie) Stan Smith, Garden City	1981	Finney
7.	1804/s	Roland Dupree, Natoma	1966	Russell
8.	180	Deloris Miller, Garden City	1982	Logan
9.	179	Paul L. Wilson, Glasco	1967	Cloud
10.	1785/s *	Lawrence Schauvliege, Jetmore	1986	Finney
11.	1781/s	Rex Murray, Goodland	1982	Sherman
12.	1763/s	Terry Lee Murphy, Alton	1973	Osborne
13.	1741/s	Leroy Baalman, Goodland	1970	Sherman
14.	1737/s	Charles Barnett, Colby	1983	Rawlins
15.	1725/s	Evelyn Hoeting, Morland	1967	Graham
16.	1714/s	Floyd H. Truetken, Park	1966	Sheridan
17.	170	Raymond Dienst, Lakin	1983	Kearny
18.	1697/s	Raymond Dienst, Lakin	1985	Kearny
19.	1692/s	(tie) Kenneth Marshall, Norton	1967	Decatur
19.	1692/s *	(tie) Wade M. Porter, St. Francis	1986	Cheyenne

<b>Top 20 Non-Typical (Firearms)</b>				
1.	2606/s	Lee Odle, Stockton	1966	Rooks
2.	2397/s	Thad J. Douthit, St. Francis	1965	Cheyenne
3.	2297/s	Herman Lang, Garden City	1969	Finney
4.	2295/s	Kenton Ray, Medicine Lodge	1981	Barber
5.	2222/s	Terry L. Spresser, Hoxie	1984	Sheridan
6.	2145/s	Marlene M. Riley, Wichita	1974	Sheridan
7.	2122/s	Richard Kelly, Oberlin	1985	Decatur
8.	2104/s *	Jon S. Wheat, Lakin	1986	Kearney
9.	2091/s	Danny R. Fenton, Bucklin	1982	Clark
10.	2073/s *	Debbie Stormont, Scott City	1986	Lane
11.	2063/s	Randall Timm, Ludell	1977	Rawlins
12.	2061/s	Barton L. Crow, Medicine Lodge	1983	Barber
13.	2056/s	Charles Uhl, Wilmore	1977	Comanche
14.	2052/s	Dwayne Mays, Ogallah	1971	Cheyenne
15.	2024/s	Wayne Fredrick, Pratt	1982	Comanche
16.	197	Dennis J. Pianalton, Atwood	1965	Rawlins
17.	1964/s	Joseph R. Richardson, Garden City	1985	Finney
18.	1946/s	Pete Kinen, St. Francis	1985	Cheyenne
19.	1932/s	Lee Bollinger, Utica	1980	Gove
20.	1926/s	Ed Lenkner, Coats	1985	Barber

<b>Top 20 Typical (Archery)</b>				
1.	1783/s	Larry Ochs, Dodge City	1968	Ford
2.	1762/s *	Roger Davis, Meade	1986	Meade
3.	1755/s	Merle Schulte, Dodge City	1974	Ford
4.	1742/s	Thomas B. Standard, Winona	1967	Logan
5.	1736/s	Alfred L. Weaver, Wichita	1970	Butler
6.	1727/s	Bob Barnes, Dodge City	1966	Gray
7.	1723/s	Greg McCall, Greensburg	1985	Norton
8.	1717/s *	Mike Stoppel, Scott City	1986	Scott
9.	1715/s	Delmer Foster, Hoxie	1966	Sheridan
10.	1714/s	Dan Fenton, Bucklin	1980	Clark
11.	171 *	Keith Whitney, Fowler	1986	Meade
12.	1701/s	Dick Masters, Dodge City	1968	Gray
13.	1694/s	Harlan L. Gilbert, Topeka	1982	Hamilton
14.	1684/s	Dana Lupton, Montezuma	1984	Gray
15.	1671/s	William W. Manning, Hays	1973	Rawlins
16.	167	Stan Christiansen, Hudson	1985	Reno
17.	1657/s	Allen D. Bailey, Montezuma	1985	Gray
18.	1656/s	Steve Baird, Brewster	1984	Rawlins
19.	1655/s	Joe Schroeder, Wichita	1979	Norton
20.	1634/s	Kevin J. Rayn, Colby	1974	Sheridan

<b>Top 20 Non-Typical (Archery)</b>				
1.	2246/s	Robert W. Brock, Goodland	1974	Sherman
2.	2207/s *	Michal J. Shull, Dighton	1986	Gove
3.	2123/s *	Kent E. Davis, Meade	1986	Meade
4.	2116/s	Ralph Stum, Ness City	1966	Ness
5.	2094/s	Jerry Skellenger, Sterling	1978	Rice
6.	1977/s	John R. Coblentz, Topeka	1966	Franklin
7.	1965/s	Kevin White, Elkhart	1982	Morton
8.	1947/s	Jay Sloan, Garden City	1967	Finney
9.	1937/s	Robert J. Price, Deerfield	1985	Kearny
10.	1931/s	Linton Haresnape, Lebanon	1981	Smith
11.	1906/s	Dennis Schroeder, Dighton	1977	Lane
12.	1891/s	Greg Feist, Sharon Springs	1979	Wallace
13.	1884/s	Craig Knobbe, Jetmore	1984	Hodgeman
14.	1857/s	Terry L. Martin, WaKeeney	1974	Trego
15.	1812/s *	Stacy Hoeme, Scott City	1986	Wichita
16.	1765/s	Aaron Feist, Sharon Springs	1974	Wallace
17.	1713/s	Richard Nurdyke, Liberal	1971	Meade
18.	1705/s	Vernon McBee, Utica	1969	Ness
19.	170	Rodney Lies, Dodge City	1968	Gray
20.	1646/s	Kent Davis, Meade	1972	Meade



by Mike Cox

## First Chickens

**S**leep never came for me that Friday night because the excitement and anticipation of my first prairie chicken hunt would become reality tomorrow. The autumn air was crisp and the sky starlit as we left the farm to get breakfast.

The Coffey County restaurant was a beehive of activity; all the diners were chicken hunters. We'd met up with three of my uncles and a couple of their friends and sat down to order. The conversation centered on past chicken hunts and prospects of this year. A rookie at this game, I was getting a lot of attention as the veterans explained lead, shooting zone and follow-through. I was loving every minute of it.

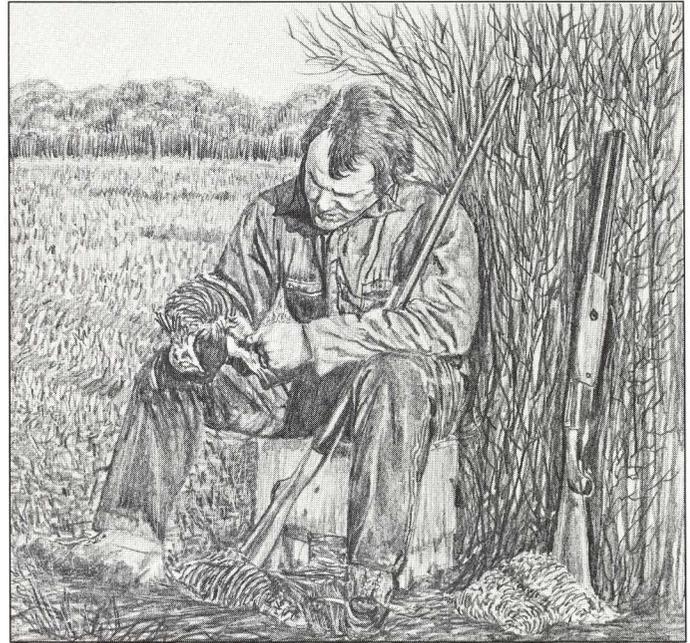
The eastern sky was turning orange as we crossed the milo stubblefield. Dad positioned me on a terrace and explained which direction the birds would most likely come from, and where I could and could not shoot. He watched as I loaded the bolt-action 20-gauge my Uncle Dale had loaned me, then disappeared in the darkness. I could hear the other hunters getting into position as the eastern sky became lighter and the landscape took form. I can still hear the landowner's dog barking his disapproval of our early-morning presence.

"Here they come! Get down!" someone said as I strained to see. At first they appeared as only dots, but prairie chickens they were and coming right at me at that. My heart was pounding as the birds got closer and closer. It was time to shoot, but I had grossly underestimated their flight speed. Directly above me when I shot, the birds didn't even break formation. I watched as they zipped over Dad and Uncle Bill. They shot twice, and a bird tumbled from the flock. I had numerous other opportunities that morning but never even drew a feather.

Back then, after the morning hunt was over, we'd walk the vast tallgrass prairies for chickens. Most of the time the birds flushed out of gun range, but sometimes you'd get into a tight-sitting bunch and have some excellent straightaway shooting. Then as now, season opened the first Saturday of November but only lasted two days. The limit was two and possession four, same as today.

By that afternoon I'd had a couple of walking shots but didn't connect on either one. I was getting encouragement from everyone, and by no means was I discouraged. I was loving every minute of this.

The group decided to walk one last pasture before going to the feed fields for the evening flight. The pasture was called the Gulf Ranch, and it was two miles in and two back out. We'd gone about a mile when two birds flushed behind me. I shouldered the 20 and shot. The trailing bird folded. I couldn't believe it. I looked around to see if someone else had shot. Dad and I arrived at the bird at the same time. He picked it up and handed it to me. The picture of that moment will never leave my mind. His grin had to be as large as mine. Walking the rest of that field was a breeze. It felt good to have the weight of the bird in my game bag. And I got my share of hand-shaking and back-slapping when we got back to the car. I really felt that I was sincerely part of the group



Patti Murphy illustration

now; as if I'd completed some rite of initiation. I was also given a quick lesson on how to tell a young bird from an adult (the one I shot was young), males from females, and which were pinate feathers.

My second opening day — the following year — dawned different than the first as a heavy fog had moved in. The restaurant was packed again, and we met with the same group. Lots of birds, was the report from Uncle Pete. "We should have some shooting this morning, if we can see them," he said.

The fog wasn't lifting as we got into position. I loaded the new 12-gauge pump gun I'd spent all summer mowing yards for. When the chickens came, they came in waves — large groups of 15 to 50 birds, one right after the other. I've never since seen anything like it. Many times I would reload and continue firing. I was getting frustrated now. I'd concentrate but couldn't bring one down. I had practiced by shooting hedgeballs that Dad threw for me, but chickens were much different. Dad came over after about an hour. He had his limit. I was standing on a mound of spent ammunition. He smiled. "Chicken's are kind of tough to hit sometimes," he said. "You'll get the hang of it."

I've hunted chickens for 23 years since that first season, and he was right. You can get the hang of it, but I'm sure the folks at Remington, Winchester and Federal made good on my early years. I'd give anything to see chickens again like that second season. Those birds came at me in waves. I kept shooting, they kept coming and I kept missing . . . **KW**

