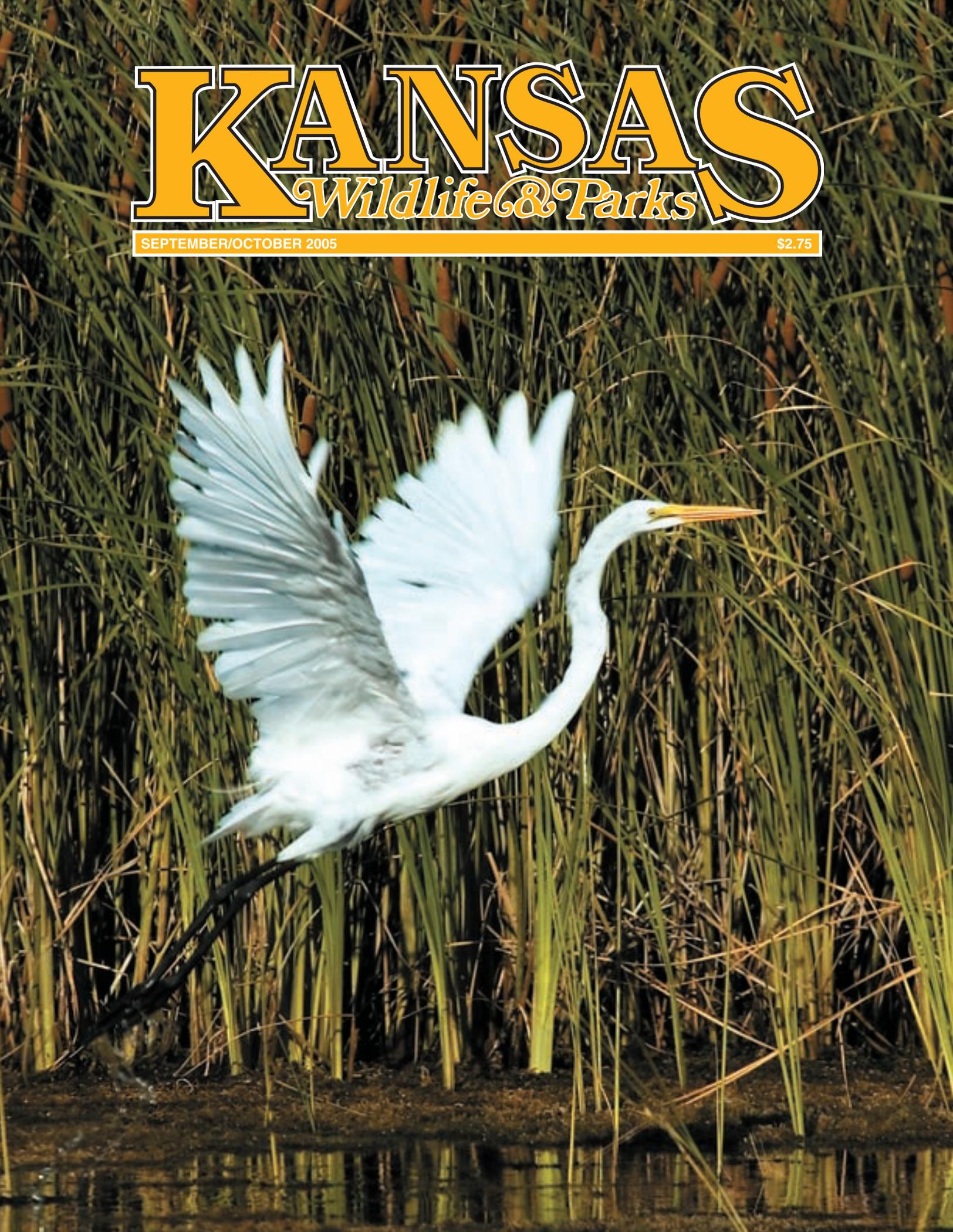


KANSAS

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On Point

by Mike Hayden



Why Public Land?

Kansas' borders contain 82,282 square miles, making it the 15th largest state. However, only 3 percent of Kansas land is in public ownership, and less than half of that is open to public recreation. The Sunflower State ranks 49th in the percent of land open to public recreation.

So why does Kansas rank so low in public land? Most land that isn't in state, federal, or municipal ownership is involved in agriculture. Throughout our state's history, land has been valued for its ability to raise crops or livestock and provide income for the owner. Other uses such as hunting or fishing have been secondary.

In Kansas, there is strong political sentiment that land should remain in private hands. There is a fear that land owned by the state will be removed from the tax docket. There is fear that more public land will hurt local economies. And there is fear of condemnation.

Those fears are largely unfounded. KDWP provides annual payment in lieu of taxes on nearly all of its land holdings, and it has not sought to acquire lands through eminent domain except in very rare and unique circumstances. There is far more land available from willing sellers, usually farmers, each year than the department has funds to buy. Much of the department's recent acquisitions were wetlands or land near or adjacent to existing wildlife areas. And public land does provide a boost to local economies, many of which are rural and in desperate need of new revenue sources.

While outdoor recreation has long benefited local economies, it has only recently been recognized for the substantial impact it has. Hunting in particular provides an enormous boost to many small communities throughout Kansas each fall. Hunters travel from all over the world to hunt deer, pheasants, quail, prairie chicken, waterfowl and turkeys in Kansas. These hunters stay in motels, buy gas and groceries and eat in local restaurants. An average Kansas hunter will spend \$67 per day on goods and

services when hunting. When you multiply that times the number of hunters (130,000-150,000) and the number of days they spend hunting (3.6 million), you can see how much hunting contributes to the Kansas economy. Kansas deer hunters spend \$80 million annually in support of their hunting activities. Kansas migratory bird hunters spend about \$30.5 million each year, while upland bird hunters spend about \$121.3 million annually. Nonresident hunters alone spend \$67.6 million each year in Kansas.

Hunting isn't the only recreation that helps the economy. Kansas State parks attract more than 7 million visitors annually. People who visit state parks travel through local communities and buy gas, food, and other services. Recent surveys have shown that Kansans spend \$35.50 per person per day while visiting a state park. Nonresidents spend \$40.50 per day. State park visitors pump more than \$300 million into the Kansas economy each year, including salaries and sales and income tax. Wildlife watchers also have an impact, spending more than \$175 million each year in Kansas.

Most of our state parks and wildlife areas are located near rural communities, most of which are based around agriculture. However, as agriculture has evolved, the number of family farms has decreased dramatically. Along with this drop in population, the volatile nature of agriculture economics has left many communities fighting for existence. It is imperative that we capitalize on the potential of public land and outdoor recreation.

In the coming issues of this magazine, the economics of public land and outdoor recreation will be closely examined. I think you'll be surprised at the number of businesses that flourish in Kansas because of outdoor recreation. I think you'll also be surprised at how far the economic impact reaches in our state. We'll try to answer your questions about public land and land acquisition. However, it is clear that the lack of public land in Kansas is a downward drag on our economy. That's something we'd like to change.

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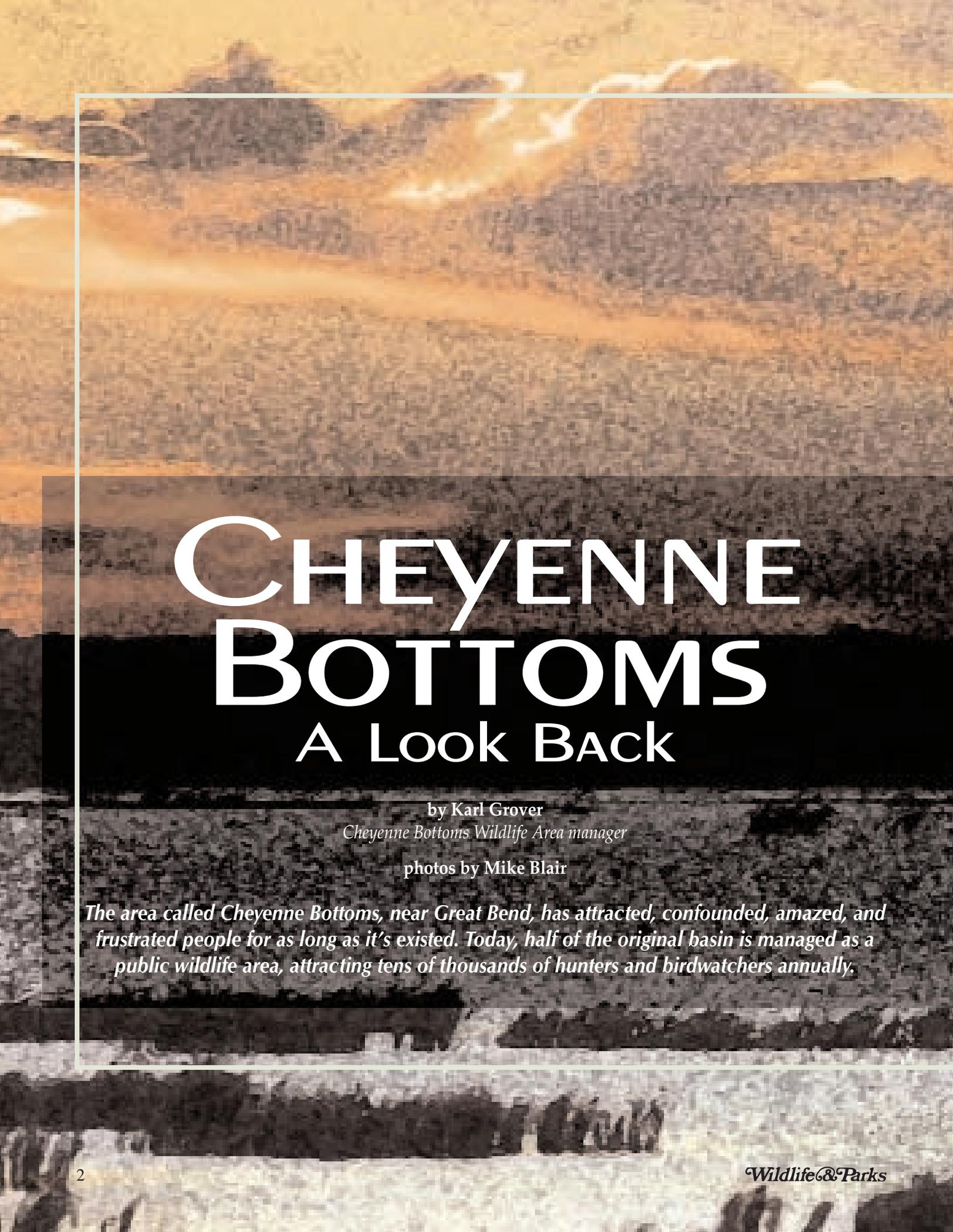
Front Cover: Common egrets are abundant at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area. Photographer Mike Blair filmed this bird with a 600mm lens, f/11 @ 1/500th sec. **Back cover:** Marc Murrell filmed 12-year-old Mike Kelly on a Harvey County sunflower field. Murrell used a 28-105mm lens @ 28mm, f/6.7 @ 1/200th sec.



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CHEYENNE BOTTOMS

A Look Back

by Karl Grover

Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area manager

photos by Mike Blair

The area called Cheyenne Bottoms, near Great Bend, has attracted, confounded, amazed, and frustrated people for as long as it's existed. Today, half of the original basin is managed as a public wildlife area, attracting tens of thousands of hunters and birdwatchers annually.



The history of an area in central Kansas known as Cheyenne Bottoms is rich and varied. The most accepted theory for the formation of this 40,000-acre lowland is a subsurface structural movement. Evidence suggests this movement occurred between late Cretaceous and late Pliocene times. While native Indians no doubt used the Bottoms as hunting grounds, no written accounts of this exist.

The first written accounts by Europeans occurred in 1806. President Thomas Jefferson sent Zebulon Pike to explore the southern half of the recently acquired Louisiana Purchase. Pike passed through what would become central Kansas in October. He made mention of Cheyenne Bottoms in his journal entries of October 14 and 15. His entry on the 14th reads: "It having drizzled rain all night, and the

atmosphere being entirely obscured, we did not march until a quarter past nine o'clock, and commenced crossing the dividing ridge between the Kans (Smoky Hill) and Arkansas rivers. Arrived on a branch of the latter at one o'clock; continued down it in search of water, until after dusk, when we found a pond on the prairie, which induced us to halt." Historians speculate that the branch of the Arkansas River they followed was Cow Creek and that they stopped for the night in the vicinity of Redwing.

Continuing on the 15th Pike wrote: "In the morning road (sic) in search of the south trace, and crossed the low prairie, which was nearly all covered with ponds, but could not discover it." From the Bottoms, his crew went to the Arkansas River, striking it near what is now Great Bend.

Commerce with Mexico on what would become the Santa Fe Trail began in 1821. In 1825, George C. Sibley was sent to survey this important road. His survey party followed the Arkansas River, and on August 23, Sibley left the crew and scouted north of the river. He wrote in his diary that day: "I rode a mile or two farther towards the north and then turned more westward and fell into a beautiful and very extensive rich valley or meadow, having two small streams running through it and numerous herds of buffalo grazing in every direction . . . I presume the valley may contain 10,000 acres. It is all beautifully level and thickly set with buffalo grass and looks like an immense field of blue grass."

The year 1839 was part of an apparently very wet period for the Bottoms. Dr. Frederick A. Wislizenus was returning from a trip through the Rocky Mountains when he came across the Bottoms. After crossing Walnut Creek, Fredrick became separated from his colleagues. In an effort to reunite, he headed east hoping to cross the Santa Fe Trail and find his friends. On the foggy morning of September 29 he "found" the Bottoms. "After I had gone some miles farther, I saw a great swamp lying before me. Toward north and south I could see no end to it, but it seemed to extend only a few miles toward the east. The water was not very deep and the ground pretty firm. So I resolved to try at every risk to get

through in an eastern direction. I rode my horse forward at the slowest pace, but it often slid down on grass and reeds. My pack animal I led after me with a rope. All sorts of water birds swarmed around from all sides. Never have I seen together such quantities of swans, cranes, pelicans, geese and ducks, as were here. The swamp was fairly covered with them, and they seemed to feel themselves so safe that I could have killed hundreds of them with the shot barrel of my double-barreled weapon. Just at that time however, I was less interested in hunting than in getting out of that confounded swamp, for my horse was visibly becoming exhausted, and I was making barely a mile an hour. With



This aerial photo shows a portion of the nearly 20,000-acre Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area. The basin actually includes more than 40,000 acres and prior to settlement, it would have been a spectacular wetland during wet weather cycles.

trouble and difficulty, I finally reached what I had thought from a distance to be trees; but it turned out to be only tall reeds, and the second half of the swamp still lay before me. My horse now would not budge for either whip or spur; so I dismounted and dragged it after me by the bridle. The water sometimes reached to my chest . . . the sun was sinking when I finally reached the other side of the swamp.”

A drought was in place in 1860. That is the year a portion of the First Cavalry with Lt. James Ewell Brown Stuart (J.E.B. Stuart of Civil War fame) passed by the Bottoms. On May 21, he recorded in his diary: “Passed several small creeks where water was expected, now all dry. Passed in afternoon to our left immense lake thought at first to be the Arkansas – but found to be lake of good water – in center of very large basin of parched soil passed through myriads of buffalo.”

Apparently the drought continued into 1862. While taking supplies and horses from Fort Riley to Fort Union, New Mexico Territory in September of that year, Percival Lowe crossed the Bottoms. He “arrived on the high ground overlooking Cheyenne Bottom and was surprised at its extent – an expanse of about 10 miles of bottom with a mere trail but little traveled and apparently wet. I could not plunge into that without examining it. I had an inkling that there was such a bottom, and had ridden some miles ahead of



Market hunters flocked to the Bottoms in the late 1800s, when canvasback ducks brought as much as \$8 per dozen.

the horse strings, and now wrote a few lines to the man in charge of the first string telling him and all to halt here until my return, put it on a stick and stuck it in the ground. I kept an assistant wagon master with me, and we rode across the bottom to a good camp on the west side and back in about three hours. I determined to take the horse strings across, but if I got the loaded wagons into that bottom and it should rain, which was threatening, I might wallow in the mud indefinitely, and so I instructed the trains to corral. If it rained, I would have to go south to the old Santa Fe Trail. The horse-string wagons were so light that I could risk them. The horse strings crossed all right, and were in a good camp on the

west side before dark. I was off in the morning early and reached the trains by starting time and led them over the bottom.”

By 1872, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad had reached Barton County. With the railroad came more and more settlers to the Great Plains. Settlement brought those who thought they had ways of “improving” the Bottoms. In the mid-1890s, Lutellus Baldwin gazed across Cheyenne Bottoms and conceived a plan for irrigation, beautification, and amusement. He planned to accomplish this by converting the basin into an inland sea. The water for the project would be obtained from the Arkansas River, 15 miles to the southwest. Baldwin, however, lacked

the money for such an undertaking. A few years later, H.W. Koen and his brother F.B. Koen became interested in the idea. They had extensive experience in constructing irrigation projects in Colorado, and in fact, owned ditches there. The two began planning the project, with H.W. Koen providing the funds and his brother supervising the construction. They began the project in 1897 and formed the Lake Koen Navigation, Reservoir, and Irrigating Company. The ditch began on the Arkansas River, about six miles southwest of Great Bend. It went north about 6 miles and then northeast for about 6 miles. Ditch-ploughs were used for the digging. These machines required 12 horses, eight in front

and four at the rear, as well as three men. By 1901 the ditch was complete and all water control structures were finished. Water flowed into the Bottoms for about 100 days. Financial troubles were catching up with the Koens, though. Many lawsuits were filed by landowners who felt they were not fairly compensated for their condemned land, and a court order halted work on the project. The last straw for the project came in 1904, when a flood on the Arkansas River resulted in the inundation of farm land with water from the Koen ditch. In addition, the structures associated with the ditch in the river were destroyed. The damage law suits and the infrastructure repair costs were too much for the project to continue.

Around the turn of the century, wildlife provided added reason to come to the Bottoms. The American Coursing Club held their annual jack rabbit chase on the western edge of the basin. This annual event continued for five years. Between 1880 and the early 1900s, market duck hunting was common at Cheyenne Bottoms. In 1880, canvasbacks sold for \$8 a dozen, redheads sold for \$6 a dozen, mallards \$3, and other mixed species went for \$1.50 per dozen. With concern rising over declining duck numbers, the Kansas Legislature passed laws to regulate the practice of commercial hunting. In 1897, an act was passed to establish hunting seasons and to prohibit the sale



While market hunting was outlawed in 1897, there was a strong waterfowl hunting tradition at the Bottoms maintained by sportsmen's associations through the early 1900s.

and shipment of birds. A 1905 amendment provided sweeping powers to game wardens, allowing them to inspect places where birds were being sold, and it also established bag limits. These legislative actions ended market hunting at the Bottoms. In 1905, a number of Barton County citizens organized the Barton County Sportsmen's Association. Their objective was to maintain hunting privileges in different parts of the county. By 1912, they controlled six sections of land in Cheyenne Bottoms.

In 1917, the first oil well was drilled in the southeastern corner of what is now Pool 1A. It was completed in 1923. The Sooy No. 1 well produced oil, but was never sensational.

For the most part, things were quiet at Cheyenne Bottoms from 1900 into the late 1920s. The basin went through its normal wet/dry cycle. Area farmers attempted to

raise crops and pasture the grass or put up hay. In dry years they were successful, and in wet years, they lost the crops of hay. Wildlife use of the area continued to provide excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities. In 1927, a two-day, 14-inch rain northwest of the Bottoms filled the basin to its highest level remembered. This started action by two opposing groups of people with respect to Cheyenne Bottoms. One group began looking for ways to drain the basin into Cow Creek (which was opposed by the residents of Hutchinson,) or else to dig a ditch to the Arkansas River. The suggested Ark River ditch was opposed by the farmers whose ground it would cross. The other group saw an opportunity to get Cheyenne Bottoms included in the federal wildlife refuge system. The vast amount of waterfowl using the area during the falls of 1927 and

1928 were described as astonishing. In late 1927, the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission (KFFG) requested that the federal Bureau of Biological Survey inspect the Bottoms. It was hoped that a favorable recommendation from the Survey to Congress would provide funding for the development of the basin into a federal refuge. In addition, the Commission requested help from the Izaak Walton League (IWL). Representatives from both the Survey and the IWL provided positive reports on the project's merits. A bill was introduced in the House of Representatives for the establishment of a federal refuge with an appropriation of \$350,000 to buy land and begin work. A companion bill was also introduced in the Senate. In 1930, Congress passed the bill for \$250,000, but only \$50,000 was made available. Most of that money was spent on engineering and title searches. At this point

the project died, and nothing more was done until 1937.

There is often a turning point in the life of anything. For wildlife enthusiasts of the United States, this point occurred on September 2, 1937, when the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act was passed by Congress and signed into law. This act, better known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, placed a federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service collects the monies generated by this tax. The cost of projects undertaken by state wildlife agencies for wildlife habitat restoration are reimbursed by the federal government up to 75 percent of the total cost of the project. Each state has a maximum amount of money it can receive, based upon the state's area and the number of hunting licenses sold. This piece of legislation did, and still does, provide the majority of money used by state wildlife agencies

for wildlife conservation. One of the first projects undertaken by KFFG with their new funding source was the acquisition and development of Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area.

The first land acquired for the Bottoms was purchased in 1942. During the war years, the area was leased to the U.S. Army Air Corp for a bombing range. Crews being trained for the B-29 heavy bomber flew out of the Great Bend Army Air Field. To this day, .50 caliber spent casings and projectiles can be found during dry periods. In addition, the training area for the .50 caliber machine guns used on bombers is still present. By 1949, the Air Corp was gone and the bulk of the 19,857 acres of the current wildlife area were purchased. Construction on the project started in 1949 with the digging of the 3.5-mile inlet canal from Wet Walnut Creek to the basin. The Wet Walnut dam was completed in 1952. Work on the 23 miles of dikes within the



Throughout history, Cheyenne Bottoms has endured attempts to either drain the wetland or create a huge lake. Ultimately, waterfowl hunting and hunters saved it. The Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission began purchasing land in 1942 to create a public hunting area. By 1949, more than 19,000 acres had been purchased and on October 13, 1957, the area was officially dedicated.

Bottoms was initiated in 1950. This included the construction of 11 water control structures and was finished in 1953. In 1955, the final phase of the project was begun. This included the construction of the Arkansas River and Wet Walnut Creek diversion dams and accompanying inlet canals. The work was completed in 1957, with the dedication held October 13, 1957. The total cost for the project was about \$2.8 million. The first waterfowl season for the “new” Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area was in 1953.

Since completion of the original construction, much has changed in the arid west. Demands for water have increased to the point where many rivers and streams no longer flow with historical regularity. In order to cope with these changes, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks embarked

on a 10-year, \$17 million renovation project of Cheyenne Bottoms in 1990. This renovation incorporates elements to conserve water, improve efficiency in water management, and re-furbish many of the original water control structures. KDWP has also added several new pieces of equipment over the past 20 years. These allow staff at the Bottoms to better deal with the management challenges that accompany any project of this size. Plans are underway to construct a modern visitor education center on the property. This will help educate the public on marsh management in general, Cheyenne Bottoms in particular, and the role hunting has played in wildlife conservation in Kansas and the United States.

Hunters have not been the only beneficiaries of Cheyenne Bottoms. Birdwatching, fishing, trapping, wetland research and

simple enjoyment of the natural world all can be found within the basin. The semi-annual Wings and Wetlands Bird Festival, numerous schools that tour the basin, and the other 50,000 annual visitors to Cheyenne Bottoms attest to the marsh’s value to the people of central Kansas. Cheyenne Bottoms has been recognized as a Wetland of International Importance, a Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve and an Important Bird Area, attesting to the marsh’s value to migratory birds.

Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area is a living biological system. Like all living things, it changes. With continued commitment by KDWP, and support from the people of Kansas, we will be able to manage these changes and keep the Bottoms one of the primary wetlands for wildlife and people alike in the Central Flyway. ♡



Mike Blair photo



The Eurasian collared dove, is larger than the mourning dove. Collared doves usually live within city limits.



Photo Tom Shane

Inca doves are non-migratory, but wander north during fall or spring. Since 1992, there have been 67 reported sightings.

Dove Populations On the Increase

by Helen Hands

wildlife biologist, Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area

photos by Mike Blair

While Kansas usually ranks as one of the top states for mourning dove nesting, dove populations are growing because of newcomers. Other native species such as the whitewing, and exotic species such as the Eurasian collared dove, are expanding their range to include Kansas.

It is common to hear about wildlife species with declining numbers and shrinking ranges. Some species that are increasing, such as double-crested cormorants, are considered a nuisance because their high population densities bring them into conflict with people. By contrast, several dove species are increasing in numbers and range, yet so far have not become a nuisance to people (the feral pigeon, also known as the rock dove, is an exception.) It is unknown if increases in incidental dove species will have a detrimental effects on native dove popu-

lations.

Fourteen members of the pigeon and dove family occur in North America. The most familiar are the feral pigeon and the mourning dove. The feral pigeon is an exotic species and is a native of Europe. Mourning doves are native to the U.S. and one of the most common birds throughout the nation. Due to their abundance and wide distribution, mourning doves are hunted in 40 of the 48 conterminous states. The total annual harvest of mourning doves exceeds the harvest of all other migratory game birds combined.

Other dove species were rarely seen in Kansas until the mid-1990s. Now, Eurasian collared doves, an introduced exotic, are common. White-winged doves, Inca doves, and common ground doves are also reported regularly. Ringed turtle doves, another introduced species, probably occur in Kansas as well, but they closely resemble and interbreed with Eurasian collared-doves, so few have been reported.

As reports of "new" doves started to increase in the 1990s, Lloyd Moore of the Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS), began posting sightings on their

website [www.ksbirds.org / KBRC / k s d o v e s . h t m .](http://www.ksbirds.org/KBRC/ksdoves.htm) Undoubtedly, posting these sightings increased birders' interest in doves and further contributed to the increase in sightings.

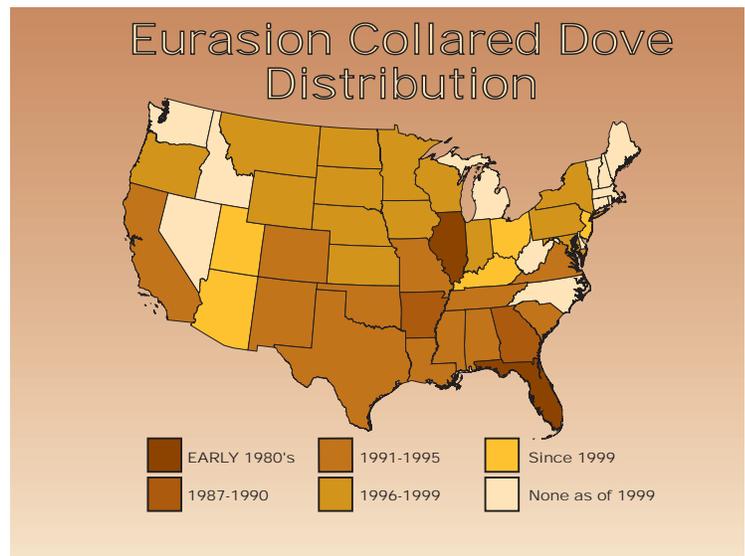
Kansas doves range in size from the small common ground-dove (6.5 inches, 1.1 oz.) to the

pigeon (12.5 inches long, 9 oz.) The mourning dove falls between these extremes, measuring 12 inches long and weighing just over 4 ounces. Mourning doves have pointed tails, while other dove species have rounded tails. The white-winged dove has a noticeable white strip visible along the

lower edge of the folded wing. It can be seen when the bird is sitting or in flight. Inca and common ground-doves have reddish-brown primary feathers, giving the outer half of the wing a reddish color that can be seen from below and above.



The Eurasian collared dove was imported to the Bahama Islands by the pet trade. Escapees established wild populations on the islands by the 1970s. By 1982, collared doves were reported nesting in Delray Beach Fla. They were reported in Kansas by 1999.



Eurasian collared dove

The Eurasian collared dove is a native of Europe and Asia. The collared dove's first apparent stop in the Americas was on the Bahamian island of New Providence in the early 1970s. The owner of a small pet store in Nassau requested some "ring-necked doves" (his term for ringed turtle doves, a different species,) but mistakenly received Eurasian collared doves from the Netherlands. In 1974, some of the collared doves escaped as result of a burglary, and the rest were released by the pet store owner. It is thought that less than 50 of these doves escaped or were released. During the 1970s and 1980s, collared doves spread throughout the Bahamas and by 1986, population estimates ranged to the tens of

thousands on the island.

By 1982, collared doves were nesting near Homestead and in Delray Beach, Fla. That same year, Eurasian collared doves, ringed turtle doves, and their hybrids were reported in Joliet, Ill. By the late 1980s, collared doves had also been reported in Georgia and Arkansas, and by 1995, collared doves reached as far west as Colorado and New Mexico, and as far up the Atlantic Coast as North Carolina. By 1999, these doves had been reported in Kansas, as far north as Saskatchewan, and as far west as Oregon. To date, collared doves have been reported in 36 of the conterminous 48 states. It is unknown if all of these reported birds dispersed naturally, or if some were released from captivity. Eurasian collared doves are kept in captivity, but are less desirable

as caged birds than the tamer ringed turtle doves. Nevertheless, collared doves in North America seem to be following the same pattern of rapid range expansion and population increase as in Europe.

The first Kansas report of a Eurasian collared dove was from Goodland in May 1996. From that time until May 2002, about 170 sightings were reported. Over the next two years, there were another 116 sightings. To date, collared doves have been reported in 97 of 105 Kansas counties. Nesting has been confirmed in 22 counties. Collared doves have become fairly common in some towns, with 280 counted in Leoti and 189 in Meade. More than 90 percent of collared dove sightings have been from towns. This dove has been reported in all months, but least commonly in October.

W

White-winged dove

Historically, the white-winged dove was a native of Mexico and the southwestern and extreme southcentral portion of the U.S. The first report in Kansas was a bird accidentally shot by a dove hunter in Hodgeman County in 1968 or 1969. The next dated report was from Linn County in 1983. Since 1995, whitewings have been reported about 65 times in 36 counties. Nesting has been confirmed in Atchison and Finney counties, although only the latter attempt produced young that left the nest. Most white-winged dove sightings have been of single birds, but 59 were seen in one tree in Garden City on November 7, 2004. About 80 percent of sightings were from towns and usually occurred April-June.

The whitewings sighted in Kansas are most likely from the Eastern populations, which formerly nested in central and southern Texas and north-eastern Mexico, and wintered in southern Mexico and Central America. The Eastern population is one of three breeding populations of white-winged doves. The Western population (in central Mexico, California, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico) is stable to increasing in most portions of its range. The breeding ranges of the Eastern and Florida populations have greatly expanded.

As late as 1980, most white-winged doves in the Texas portion of the Eastern population

nested in the Lower Rio Grande River Valley. During the 1980s, hard freezes and a 4-year drought devastated citrus orchards, where approximately 50 percent of the white-wings nested. As a consequence, biologists believe that many white-wings moved from the Valley to areas farther north in Texas, particularly within the city

The white-winged dove is native to southern Texas and Mexico, but it has proven very adaptable and has expanded its range in response to changes in traditional habitats. Sightings in Kansas have been increasing in recent years.

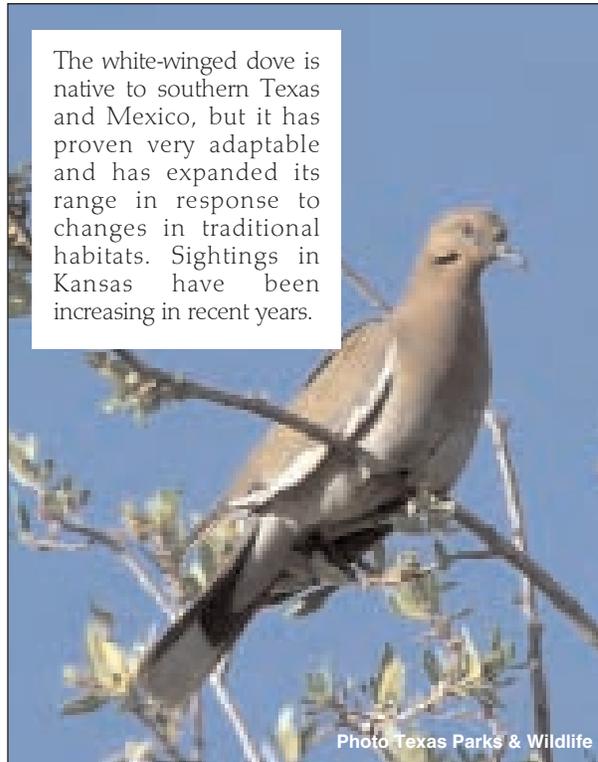


Photo Texas Parks & Wildlife

limits of San Antonio. More than 200,000 breeding whitewings were estimated in San Antonio in 1990 by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. By 2001, the breeding population in San Antonio had reached nearly 1.1 million with an additional 285,000 in Austin. During 1990-2001, the breeding population was higher in urban areas of southcentral Texas than in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Once the initial movement out of the Valley began, a fairly rapid northward expansion resulted. The expansion of whitewings northward and eastward from

Texas has led to sightings in most of the Great Plains and Midwest states, and as far north as Ontario. Nesting has been reported in Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri. Whitewings have also been sighted in Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota. Additionally, whitewings in the Florida population are believed to be expanding northward from Florida and have been seen along the eastern seaboard as far north as Newfoundland.

Breeding Bird Survey data corroborate other surveys and show that white-winged doves increased in Florida (23.6%), Texas (10.8%), New Mexico (22.0%), and California (9.1%), but declined in Arizona (-1.7%) during 1980-2003.

The wintering range of whitewings has expanded northward as shown by Christmas Bird Count data (<http://www.birdsource.org/features/doves/doves.html#map2>). Historically, these doves wintered in southern Mexico and other countries in Central America. By the 1990s, white-wings commonly wintered in central Texas and there was even a record as far north as Morton County, Kan.

White-winged doves are an interesting example of a bird species that can adapt to human-caused changes in habitat, as long as the changes are not too severe. In the Lower Rio Grande Valley, their populations increased when native brush habitats were first converted to irrigated grain farming in the early 1900s. However, as more native brush was converted to agriculture and urban areas expanded, whitewing populations declined. When citrus production was introduced

in the 1940s, whitewings started to utilize citrus trees for nesting. However, their populations then became susceptible to occasional freezes that killed citrus trees. In the past 15 years, white-winged doves have been successful nesting in urban areas in Texas, but urbanization in Arizona has been detrimental. The key for successful adaptation to habitat changes seems to require a good mix of woody vegetation for nesting and grain production for foraging. Urban areas with woody vegetation (as well as bird feeders, lawn sprinklers, and bird baths) apparently provide nesting areas with less nest predation where whitewings can produce more young than in rural areas. In addition, the warmer temperatures and bird feeders in urban areas allow these doves to remain during winter, rather than face the hazards of migration.

Inca dove

The core of the Inca dove's range is Mexico and southern portions of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana, where they occur year-round. Originally a bird of open country with scattered trees or along wooded riparian areas, Inca doves, like other doves, have successfully moved into towns, probably taking advantage of bird feeders and scattered trees and shrubs.

Although Inca doves are non-migratory, they tend to wander north of their breeding range in fall or spring and often breed in these new areas. Kansas is about as far north as they have wandered so far. The first known record in Kansas was in 1956-1957 in Meade County. The next record



The mourning dove is the most numerous of migratory birds. An average of 36,000 hunters harvest about 800,000 doves each fall in Kansas.

was not until 1987 in Sedgwick County. Since 1992, there have been 67 records in 22 counties. Nesting has been confirmed in Meade County and young were produced in Finney County. Fewer than 10 percent of sightings have been from rural areas. Inca doves have been reported in all months, but less frequently in February and during May-July. Although most sightings have been of single birds, groups of 17, 18, and 21 have been reported from Meade, Garden City, and Pratt County in recent years.

Inca doves have a unique adaptation for dealing with cool weather. On cool days, 5-12 individuals will roost together in a pyramid of 2-3 rows in a sunny place out of the wind.

Common ground dove

The common ground dove's distribution shows a marked east-west split. The western portion of the range includes Baja California, western Mexico, and southern portions of California and Arizona. The eastern portion

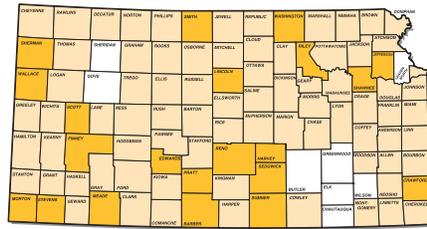
of the range includes eastern Mexico, southern portions of Texas to South Carolina, and all of Florida. Ground doves occur in these areas throughout the year. As their name implies, ground doves nest on the ground, as well as in shrubs.

Although ground doves are non-migratory or migrate very short distances, they, like Inca doves, often wander in spring and fall. They have been reported as far north as Wyoming, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

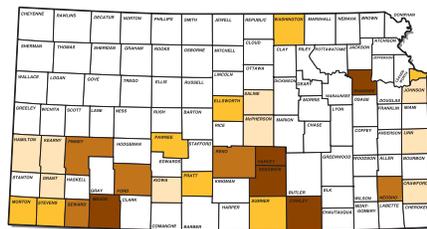
The common ground dove is the rarest of Kansas' doves. Max Thompson and Charles Ely in *Birds in Kansas* reported five specimens and five sightings of ground doves in 10 different Kansas counties through the 1980s. Lloyd Moore's compilation includes six additional sightings in six additional counties. All but one report were from October to early January. In winter 2002, a ground dove was seen at a feeder in Olathe from

Recorded Dove Sightings

Eurasian Collared, White-winged, Inca, & Common Ground



Eurasian Collared Dove



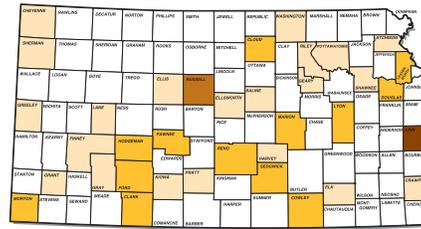
Inca Dove

BEFORE 1990

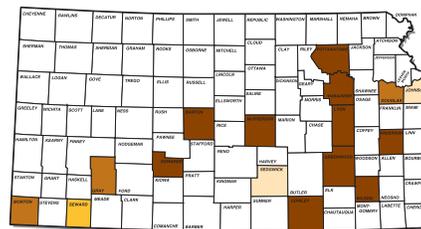
1990-1994

1995-1999

2000-2004



White-winged Dove



Common Ground Dove

January 2-March 2.

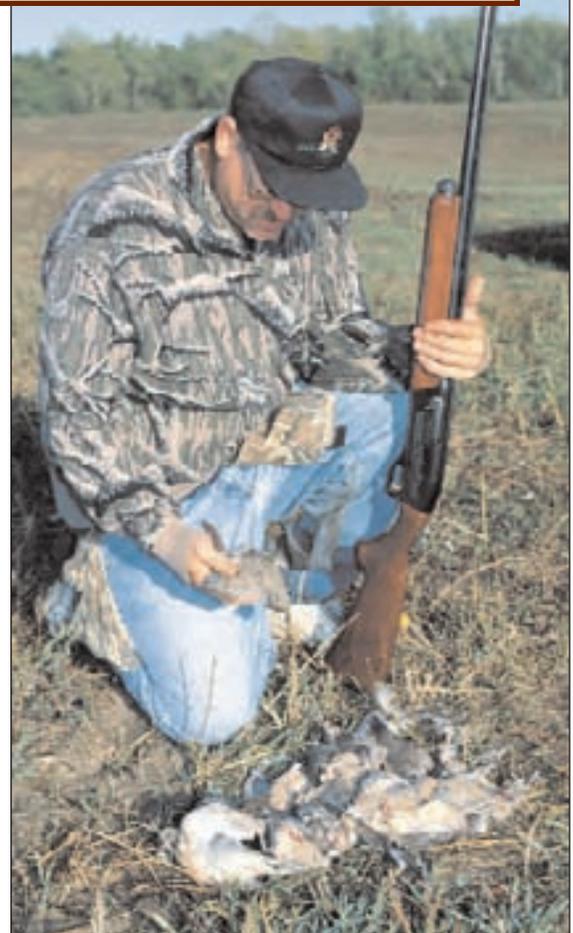
Dove hunting

White-winged and mourning doves are classified as game birds by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and hunting seasons have been authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) since 1918. Hunting of Inca and common ground-doves is not allowed because they are not classified as game birds. The Service has no jurisdiction over Eurasian collared doves and ringed turtle doves, because they are introduced exotics that are not native to North America. Therefore, states are permitted to authorize harvest regulations for these exotic species without consulting the Service.

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission approved the hunting of white-winged, Eurasian col-

lared and ringed turtle doves during the mourning dove hunting season in 2003. Both Eurasian collared doves and ringed turtle doves are exotic species, and the Eurasian collared-dove is becoming common throughout Kansas. There is some concern that these exotics may compete, to some degree, with native species.

KDWP does not anticipate that many of these three species will be harvested because: Eurasian collared-doves and ringed turtle doves occur primarily in towns where shooting is not permitted; densities of these three species are low in most areas compared to those of mourning doves; and most white-winged doves probably migrate from Kansas before the dove hunting season begins on September 1. ♡



Dove hunting is a popular tradition in Kansas, drawing about 36,000 hunters each fall. The 2005 dove season is Sept. 1-Oct. 14 AND Nov. 1-16.



Mourning Dove Banding Study

Mourning doves are among the most widely distributed and abundant birds in North America. The mourning dove is also a popular game bird, hunted in 40 of the lower 48 states. More mourning doves are harvested than all other migratory bird species combined. In Kansas, about 36,000 hunters harvest about 800,000 mourning doves per year.

Because of this dove's importance as a migratory game bird, wildlife managers require certain information to guide harvest management decisions. Information on dove survival and harvest rates is key to understanding the effects of annual hunting regulations on mourning dove populations. Banding is the primary tool used to obtain this information.

This summer, Kansas, along with 25 other states, participated in the third year of a 3-year mourning dove banding study. Study objectives are to determine mourning dove harvest rates, estimate annual survival, provide information on the geographical distribution of the harvest, and refine techniques for a future operational dove-banding program.

Numbered metal leg bands with a toll-free telephone number for hunters to report harvest will be attached to captured doves. Wildlife managers receive important information on the number, location and date of harvest of banded doves. More than 85,000 doves will be trapped and banded during the 3-year study in these 26 states.

Kansas mourning doves will be captured in wire ground traps baited with millet or sunflower. Doves enter the trap through the funnels to find the grain, but cannot get out because of the trap's design. Traps are checked regularly, and trapped doves are removed and carefully examined to determine age and sex. Doves are then banded with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands and immediately released.

Last summer, more than 1,400 mourning doves were banded in Kansas. During 2003 and 2004, 84 Kansas-banded doves were shot by hunters in the U.S. and Mexico and reported to the Bird Banding Lab. About 70 percent of these were shot in Kansas.

Hunters are a critical link in this mourning dove banding study. By reporting all banded doves they harvest, hunters help manage this important migratory game bird. Because dove bands are very small, hunters can easily overlook them. We are asking dove hunters to carefully check all doves harvested for leg bands. If you harvest a banded mourning dove, please call 1-800-327-BAND (2263) to report it. Banded birds may also be reported on the internet at www.pwrc.usgs.gov. Select "Bird Banding Lab." Hunters can keep the bands and will be provided a certificate identifying the age, sex, date, and location of banding.

A CENTURY OF WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT

by Dan Heskett

assistant director, Law Enforcement Division, Pratt

The history of Kansas fish and wildlife law enforcement is rich with unique and dedicated individuals who are responsible for the outstanding natural resources we enjoy today.



Questions sometimes arise concerning the value of wildlife law enforcement and its importance compared with other types of law enforcement. For the answer, one must ask: If men and women of the wildlife enforcement field were not present to protect our natural resources, could the resources survive?

History tells a story of massive habitat destruction, wanton hunting, poaching, and pollution of soil, water, and air when humans are given free rein. Without laws and the people who enforce them, greed and indifference would probably destroy the health and beauty of the land.

This article is dedicated to the men and women

of the brotherhood of wildlife law enforcement who have committed themselves to protect our natural resources in Kansas. Without their efforts, the resource would not exist as it does today in a healthy and viable state.

On January 29, 1861, President James Buchanan admitted Kansas into the Union as the 34th State. During May of the same year, Kansas' first legislative body enacted the first law for the protection of certain game in Kansas. It consisted of 38 words, stating that it was unlawful for any person or persons to shoot, kill, or trap within this state any prairie chicken, quail, partridge, wild turkey, and deer between the first days of April and September

of each year. The fine was not to exceed \$5. There were no wardens to enforce this law.

The first Kansas Conservation Act was passed in 1877 as D.B. Long became the first "Fish Commissioner" under Governor George T. Anthony. It was during this year that the first fish laws were established, and an act of 1883 prescribed penalties for killing or taking fish by the use of explosives. However, wardens still did not exist.

In 1886, an act was passed to prohibit the use of nets, seines, and traps at any time for the taking of fish except on one's own land, but game wardens would not enter the scene until the year of 1895.

Under the leadership of O.D. Sadler, the sixth Fish Commissioner for the department, unsalaried deputy wardens were appointed in all Kansas counties containing lakes or streams. They were empowered to make arrests for which they would receive \$5 for each conviction, along with the regular "constable" travel allowance. Wardens covered their territory by horse, buggy, or rail car.

In 1900, George W. Wiley became the first full time State Fish Warden. Under his leadership in 1901, the Kansas legislators appropriated \$2,800 for fish propagation and protection.

The department's legacy of wildlife conservation began 100 years ago in 1905 with the merger of fisheries and wildlife protection. The title of State Fish Warden was changed to State Fish

and Game Warden and this person would serve a four-year term for a salary of \$1,500 a year. It was also in 1905 when hunting licenses were required to hunt on land other than one's own. Bag limits on game birds were established, and protection was extended to the fox squirrel.

It was not until 1921 that the governor authorized the State Fish and Game Warden to appoint six "special state deputy wardens" as employees on a salaried basis. Those appointed were chief of field forces Michael Concannon of Lansing, John E. Martin of Eskridge, Merritt L. Beeson of Dodge City, Robert C. Carr of Topeka, J.F. Worley of Downs, and George T. Boone of Chetopa. U.G. Reed of Wichita was also appointed as a stream investigator.

In 1923, the Fish and Game Department purchased an 18-foot keel boat and motor, enabling wardens to patrol streams for the enforcement of commercial fishing laws. These wardens were to seize and

destroy illegal nets and traps. They also enforced the closed portion of streams where commercial fishing was conducted illegally. Wardens received little pay, spent long periods away from families due to the size of the territories, and public sentiment and attitudes of the courts were often against them.

In 1923 and 1924, State Fish and Game Warden J.B. Doze and his state deputy wardens held approximately 50 meetings in Kansas. These succeeded in organizing 30 county fish and game associations.

It was during this time that deputy wardens collected \$10 fines for violations and remitted them to the Fish and Game office where the money was entered into the Fish and Game Fee Fund. This fund was used in part to obtain the first patrol vehicles, consisting of four Ford Coupes and one Hudson Coach. An extra motor for these vehicles was kept at the Pratt Fish Hatchery for transfer to an automobile when needed. The



The first paid officers, called special deputy wardens, were hired in 1921. The photo on Page 15 shows the department's entire officer crew in 1928. By the 1960s, when the photo above was taken, there were approximately 45 officers.

mechanical work was done by the wardens themselves and was a part of the hiring requirements.

Tragedy struck on January 1925 when a part-time salaried deputy warden was shot and killed near Wilburton. He was receiving \$6 a day at the time of his death. His name was F.W. Tierney. That same year nonresidents were first required to obtain a fishing license.

In 1927, the Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission was organized and gained full control over the Department. The newly-formed Commission had a salaried staff of 10 state deputy game wardens and 375 unsalaried county deputy game wardens. Salaried wardens were paid \$100 to \$150 per month, depending on their experience and ability. Ten Kansas districts were established, with a salaried warden assigned to each district. At this time, it was recognized that wardens needed to acquire certain knowledge and skills



As reservoirs were built throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the officers' jobs changed. The officer above checks licenses at Lovewell Reservoir.



This photo from the 1960s shows the entire Law Enforcement Division. Throughout the history of the division, officers have done more than enforce laws, helping with wildlife and fishery work, and leading the way in the Hunter Education Program.

concerning the natural resources they were to protect. A legislative act of 1927 authorized the first requirement of resident fishing licenses for males only, between the ages of 18 and 70.

During the bleak period of the 1929 stock market crash and the dust bowl era of the 1930s, Alva Clapp served in his second term as the Forestry, Fish, and Game Warden. Gross receipts from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses boosted the biennium income to \$536,202, enabling the enlargement of the Pratt Fish Hatchery, establishment of small hatcheries at Meade and Marion, and the development of six state parks and fishing lakes. The department employed 43 employees at this time.

A turning point for conservation occurred on September 2, 1937, when the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act was passed by the federal government. Funding of this act was provided by a 10 percent excise tax on sporting arms and

ammunition to be appropriated to the states for wildlife conservation programs.

In a department article dated September 1939, it was recorded that 93 of Kansas' 105 counties had local sportsmen organizations formed and functioning. Nearly 3,000 game protectors were appointed on the recommendation of the license holders. Director Josserand advised the Commission in September of 1939 that reports by game protectors and other competent observers indicated heavy pheasant populations in the northwest portion of Kansas. The Commission set the first Kansas pheasant season for November 1-3 in the northwestern counties with a daily bag limit of 2 cocks and 1 hen. The Commission also went on record favoring the revocation of all licenses held by anyone convicted of violating the state fish and game laws.

In 1944, Dave Leahy became the Director of the Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Department. Leahy served in this capacity until 1960. During

this era, some young men who had served in combat tours during World War II were hired under Leahy as state game protectors.

These men worked relentless hours in the field, and when the job was done, they played equally hard. Director Leahy and his men slowly built a substantial surplus of fish and game funds through public support and strict enforcement of user-fee license requirements. Leahy, who was a controversial figure in his own right, relegated little authority to anyone as he dealt with his men on a one-to-one basis. He received immense loyalty from his field men, which continued long after his dismissal from the department in 1961.

A unique operation took place between the years of 1946 and 1948, which involved game protectors working with local landowners to eradicate flocks of crows numbering in the millions. It was feared that these large crow populations would spread hog cholera and other diseases to livestock populations. Game protectors working with local individuals, would locate large crow roosts and strategically place explosives consisting of TNT and shot. The charges were set off at night, killing crows by the thousands.

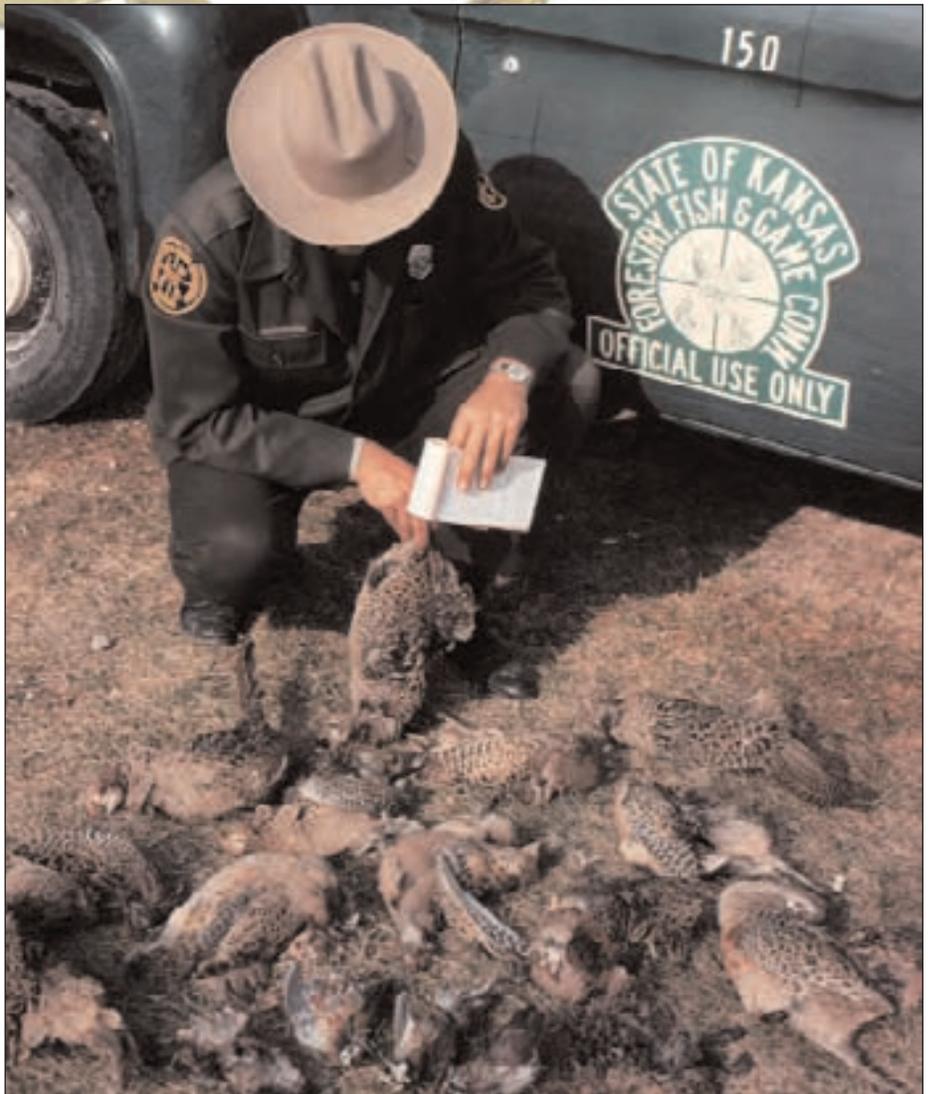
During 1949, the law enforcement division consisted of 34 district game protectors. Field supervisors did not exist during Leahy's administration as he often stated, "If a man needs a supervisor, he's no damned good in the first place."

Several state fishing lakes were constructed during the 1940s along with numerous farm

ponds. Federal reservoirs such as Kanopolis and Fall River brought a new challenge to the role of the wildlife law enforcement professional.

In 1958, the United States Coast Guard enacted the Federal Boating Safety Act, and the Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission was authorized by the Kansas Legislature as the regulating authority. This has since meant additional duties to law enforcement officers, particularly on the 24 federal reservoirs within the state.

Wildlife law enforcement officers of the department played a vital role in stocking fish and wildlife throughout the state. In 1961, under the direction of George Moore, Kansas began one of the most comprehensive census programs ever endeavored. Biologists with advanced technical knowledge were hired and placed under the supervision of Dave Coleman in the Game Division, and Roy Schoonover in the Fisheries Division. The game protector became an active part of the



Wildlife officers are often asked to investigate crimes long after they have been committed, using any available evidence at the scene. Officers today utilize many modern forensic tools and techniques.

census program, providing monthly data on various species to be tabulated and compiled for a more practical utilization by Kansas sportsmen.

A yearly school was established to acquaint all personnel with not only the wildlife management principles of Kansas, but those of surrounding states, as well. Experts on deer, turkeys, quail, and pheasants were invited to discuss their challenges, solutions, and views.

Changes in societal views and the foundation of equal opportunity also have their place in history. Jim Hale, the first and only African American officer for the department, was hired on October 5, 1970 and worked in the northeast part of the state until 1991. The first female officer, Val Jansen, was promoted to a Game Protector 1 on October 18, 1977 after serving as the secretary for the Law Enforcement Division. She is currently the Law Enforcement regional supervisor in Wichita.

Technology allowed the formation of Operation Game Thief, a phone line dedicated to natural resource violations reporting. This program is still active today and can be reached by calling toll-free (877) 426-3843.

In 1987, Governor Mike Hayden merged the Kansas Fish and Game Commission with the Kansas State Park and Resource Authority, to form the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. This merger has resulted in 166 certified law enforcement natural resource officers currently employed by the Department. These officers operate in the Law Enforcement and Parks divisions. Public land



Four KDWP officers and their dogs completed training in 2002. The dogs are trained to detect hidden game meat, hidden firearms or spent hulls, and track suspects.

managers also carry law enforcement certification.

Several new programs have been created under current Law Enforcement Division director, Kevin Jones. One of these includes the introduction of a canine program. Four officers, along with their canine partners, Rex, Scout, Allie, and Chase, graduated from an eight-week training course in Indiana in 2002. While this program is still in its infancy, it has been a huge success. The trained dogs have been used to find hidden game, evidence, and to track potential suspects.

While the main duties of the natural resource officer involve enforcing Kansas' hunting, fishing, boating, and park laws, these law officials often encounter other criminal activity. Under these circumstances, officers will assist other law enforcement agencies.

Whatever the Kansas wildlife enforcement officer has been called — deputy warden, game warden, game protector, or

wildlife conservation officer — it is clear that without the past 100 years of diligence by these dedicated individuals, Kansas resources would not exist today. The men and women who have served deserve thanks for a job that seems at times to go unnoticed and offers little reward.

~~To those of you who have helped me in my time of need, I dedicate this article to you. Thank you for your support and love.~~

I dedicate this article to those officers of Kansas who served before, during, and after I'm gone. THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE. 🐾

Note: The author of this article, Dan Heskett, is Kansas' first second-generation member of wildlife conservation law enforcement. His dad, Merl Heskett of Jewell County, served as an officer from 1961 to 1996.

A Hunter's Journal

AND THE CASE OF THE SHRINKING WALNUT TREES



by Lloyd Fox
big game wildlife biologist
Emporia

photos by Mike Blair

Bowhunter observations can provide valuable data for biologists making management decisions. But how hunters record and provide those observations affect accuracy.

Each fall many bowhunters are looking for that perfect tree to hang a stand, and they have an image in mind. As a child I knew by age four that I would spend the rest of my life in love with trees. In the yard of the family farm were two walnut trees. They were great to climb and spaced just right to be the anchors for my tarp tent, where I spent summer nights. I moved away and my parents sold the farm. It was 20 years later before I would see those trees again. On the drive to the old home site I recalled their size. But when we arrived, I was shocked that

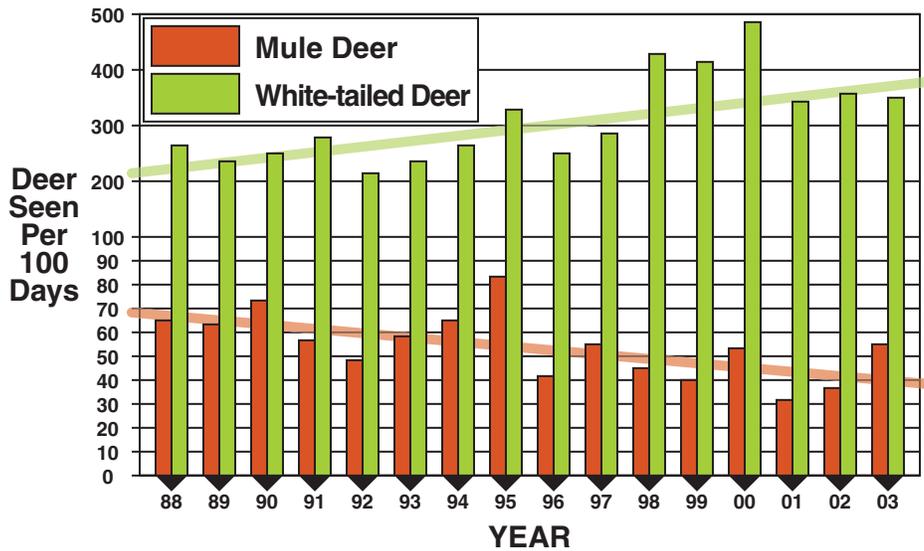
after 20 years of growth they were now smaller than I had remembered them. They weren't that big when I was that young. If only I had measured and recorded the heights and diameters of those trees years ago, I could have determined how much they had grown in the yard compared to their growth in my memory.

Fresh out of the Air Force in January 1970, I attended Cornell University and started with Wildlife Management 101. A legend in the wildlife profession was lecturing that day. His topics included: the importance of selecting the proper paper

for a field notebook, development of a near religious conviction to maintain a field journal, and the sins of using anything other than a No. 2 lead pencil or India ink. I wanted to know how to trap and band ducks or put a radio collar on a deer, and that old fuddy-duddy at the front of the lecture room was spending time talking about paper and pencils. Later courses in survey design would emphasize the issue of memory bias, which is why that pencil and paper are so important. As the old sage said, "better to rely on a dull pencil than to trust in your sharp mind." Data are the engines that drive wildlife management and marks on paper that won't wash away are the maintenance those engines need.

In the late 1970s, a significant question occurred in the wildlife

Kansas Bowhunter Deer Sighting Survey



management field of how to monitor populations of low density, highly evasive species such as bobcats. This issue was advanced to an international stage when the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, or CITES, was signed and for a time bobcat hunting and trapping were banned because state wildlife agencies lacked data. Bill Hlavachick, a wildlife biologist for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, reasoned that what was needed were many eyes hiding in seclusion, recording their observations during many days spent afield.

He was thinking in terms of many thousands of man-days of observation. The department had a limited budget, so hiring biologists to conduct that type of survey was out of the question. Looking around, it was clear that a couple thousand bowhunters fit the survey needs. Since 1977, Kansas bowhunters have assisted the department by completing observation forms of the wildlife they see while deer hunting.

Today the question is about deer population trends, not bobcats. Some people argue that there is a deer behind every tree and

around every bend in the road, while other people argue that deer populations have plummeted. Each person uses their observations and their memories to support their opinions. They also use what sociologists call "False Consensus Effects" when people talk among their group and conclude that their view is the view held by the majority of people. Periodically we need to re-evaluate these conclusions and see what has been put on paper through the years.

White-tailed deer and mule deer were not included on the observation form sent to bowhunters until the 1988 season. Many deer biologists will argue that surveys of deer by deer hunters have many flaws. However, we have tried it and now may be a good time to take another look at it.

The average Kansas bowhunter spends 18 days afield each year. An active bowhunter may spend from one day to 50 days hunting deer. You cannot treat the number of animals seen by one hunter the same as another hunter unless you adjust for the days of effort each hunter spent. I do that by standardizing

each bow-hunter's observations as if they spent 100 days afield. For example, if one hunter spent 20 days hunting and saw one bobcat, their observation would be five bobcats, whereas a hunter that spent 5 days and saw 30 turkeys would have an observation of 600 turkeys. The graph at left shows the average number of white-tailed deer seen per 100 days for Kansas bowhunters from 1988 through 2003.

The number of white-tailed deer reported by bowhunters is higher today than it was in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The situation with mule deer is substantially different from that of white-tailed deer. Only 19 percent of bowhunters see mule deer, whereas 98 percent of Kansas bowhunters see white-tailed deer during the season. There has also been a decline in the number of mule deer seen by bowhunters.

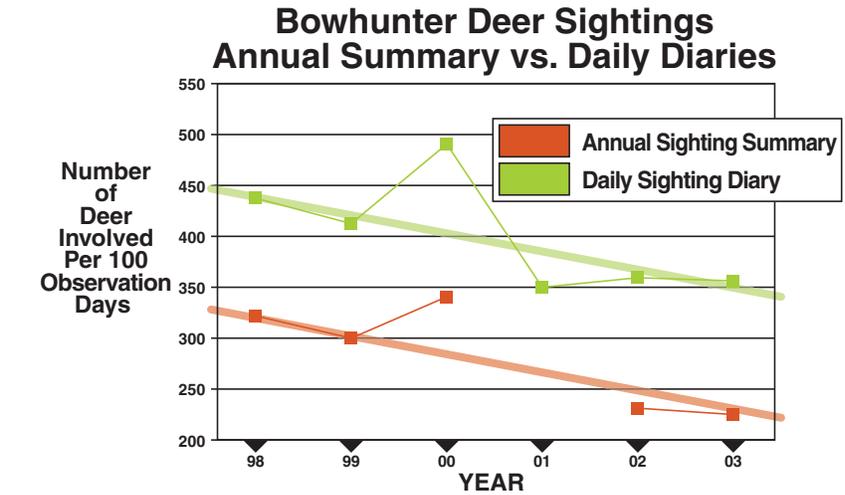
The trend in the observation index for mule deer, shown on the previous page, was used as part of the justification in 2004 to eliminate antlerless-only permits and to reduce the number of Any Deer and Muzzleloader Any Deer permits. Kansas has long used regulations that allowed hunters the

option to take either sex of deer. Since 1997 there has not been a permit that restricted hunters to take a buck. The department has relied upon antlerless-only permits and tags when greater herd control was desired. The number of those permits are reduced or they are eliminated when population stabilization is desired. The permit changes in 2004 resulted in a 21 percent reduction in the mule deer harvest compared to the average for the previous three years. The number of antlerless mule deer taken by hunters dropped from 1,068 per year for the years of 2001-2003 to 431 in 2004.

Diaries Instead of Yearly Summaries

In 1998, the department initiated a new procedure for bowhunters to record wildlife observations. With the advent of over-the-counter archery permits, it became difficult to provide wildlife observation cards. Vendors frequently forgot to provide them. The Missouri Department of Conservation had copied our bowhunter survey to monitor bobcats but had changed it to a diary system when small sample sizes caused them to question the value of the results. It is the old paper and pencil situation again. If you can get people to record their observations each day, you will have better data and therefore you can get by with fewer participants.

Since 1998, we have attempted to use both diaries and yearly summaries. We collected names of people who bought an archery permit in 1997 and have used those same people each year since that time. Having the same people conduct the survey each year is



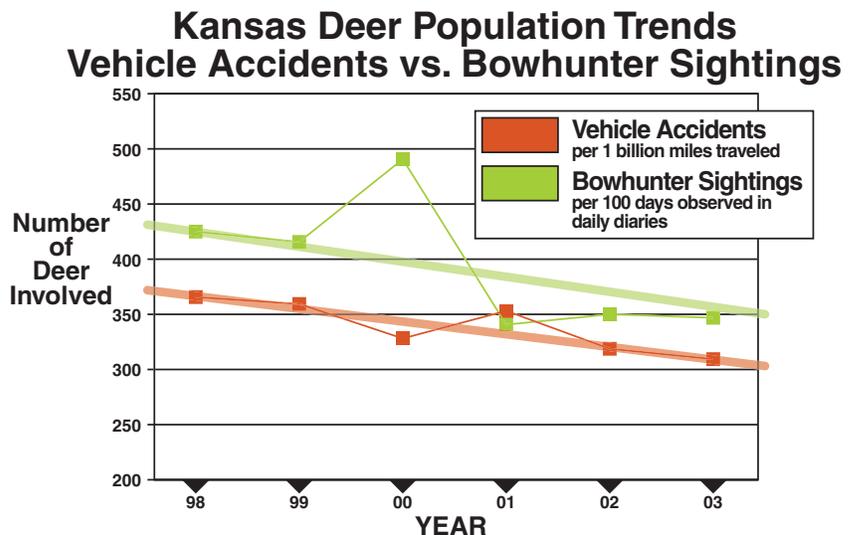
another method to reduce what is called observer variability and thus allow you to use fewer people. During the first three years, we sent half of the people a diary, and half received a yearly summary similar to the cards we had used for years. The fourth year we sent just diaries. The last two years we have sent everybody on the mailing list a diary and a deer hunter report card, then after the season we sent another deer hunter report card and a yearly observation form to those people that failed to return the original surveys.

So how do the two systems compare? For most species, the two systems provide similar trends but some are on different

scales. The graph on the previous page shows the comparison of the two systems for white-tailed deer. Observations recorded in diaries are in green while observations recorded in yearly summaries are in rust.

Bowhunters Verses Vehicles

Some hunters have questioned the department's use of deer-related vehicle accidents to monitor trends in deer populations. Data from deer-related vehicle accidents have many aspects that make them powerful as a source of information on wildlife population trends. The database is large. It contains observations from 70,000 accidents per year, about 10,000 of which are deer-related. The data



are collected consistently. It is a state law that anybody involved in a vehicle accident that causes injury to a person or \$500 in property damages must report that accident to a law enforcement officer. The observations are recorded by trained law enforcement officers: sheriff deputies, Kansas Highway Patrol, and police. The fact that the observations are not recorded by just deer hunters or KDWP personnel bridges some gaps with audiences that believe the information might be biased. Below is a comparison of the two systems.

The two systems show similar trends. However, the vehicle accident data shows a stronger decline in the deer populations during the last six years than the observation records of bowhunters.

Much of my mail last year dealt with hunters' perspectives of a declining deer herd. In many cases their observations about deer in the areas they hunt were correct, and those numbers were down. However, on a statewide basis and even within areas the size of a county, when we have many observers, the trends in the deer population have been only slightly downward.

In 1997, KDWP took steps to reduce the deer herd and ease pressure in the conflicts that occur when deer exceed public tolerance levels. We hoped we could accomplish the reduction quickly; however, realistically we knew the difficulties and told people the reduction would probably take five years or more to accomplish. We are now entering the next phase which is to relax that pressure and stabilize the population. That is occurring by means of reductions in the length of the January season and selecting certain units where game tags are not allowed. We will continue to adjust the mule deer to white-tailed deer permit ratio, and for a few years in western Kansas, there will be reduced numbers of antlerless-only permits that focus harvest on mule deer does. We do not have perfect tools to monitor and manage deer populations, but indices like the bowhunter observation survey and the deer-related vehicle accident data are useful.

This fall we will add about 1,500 new names to the bowhunter observation mailing list. If you are selected, you will receive a diary and a deer hunter report card. I hope that you will

find the record keeping fun and maybe even rewarding. The system has been useful to the department to monitor trends in creatures like bobcats, raccoons, and coyotes. We think that it works pretty well for turkey as long as surveys are not compared between different geographic regions of the state. You will each draw your own conclusion on its value as a survey for monitoring deer. It was not designed to be a deer survey but it has some interesting characteristics that bring us back to the point of keeping records.

Hunters contribute to wildlife management in many ways. Hunter journals (diaries or yearly summaries) show how thousands of hunters may be mobilized each year and their observations can be standardized into a useful wildlife survey. Bowhunters have provided 114,051 diaries and summary cards of their observations since 1977. Those data are an alternative source of information about wildlife populations. To the thousands of Kansas bowhunters that have maintained those records — thank you and please keep that pencil handy. 🦌





Celebration Of The Century

by J. Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

Throughout 2005, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has been commemorating its 100th anniversary. This year-long celebration will culminate at the KDWP Operations Office near Pratt on October 1. Make plans to join us.

With the creation of the Kansas Fish and Game Department 100 years ago, the state agency that would become the present-day Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) was born. Since then, Kansas has grown from a state with little water and game populations decimated by market hunting and habitat destruction to one with 24 major reservoirs, 40 state fishing lakes, and more than 200 community lakes. In addition, deer, turkey, quail, pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, and waterfowl thrive, and the Sunflower State boasts 24 state parks.

In 1905, Kansas had one state fish hatchery with a meager nine ponds. Today, that same hatchery, at Pratt, boasts 90 ponds, and three other hatcheries grow millions of fish annually for the state's anglers. In 1905, there were no pheasants in Kansas; today they flourish throughout most of the central and western portions of the state. In 1905, turkey and deer were virtually nonexistent in the Sunflower State; today they are abundant.

As noted in the July/August 2005 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* (Page 24), in 1910 newly-appointed fish and game warden L. L. Dyche observed that "Kansas can not any longer be counted as a game state." Today, Kansas is a favored destination for hunters from every corner of the country.

That's a great deal of progress in a century of conservation effort, and to celebrate this mile-

stone, the department will host the KDWP Centennial Celebration on Oct. 1 at the Pratt Operations Office, two miles east and one mile south of Pratt. The seven-hour event will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. and will offer a day filled with exciting outdoor activities geared to every outdoor interest. Events, contests, exhibits, displays, and demonstrations will be held throughout the day, and the Pratt employees groups will keep hungry visitors satisfied serving buffalo burgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings.

KDWP staff will be on hand all day to answer questions, hand out event maps, and assist with demonstrations and other events. The newly-developed Centennial Pond will be dedicated around lunch time with a number of state and local dignitaries on hand.

This promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of outdoor Kansas, so everyone interested in hunting, fishing, boating, camping, or nature in general is invited to help us celebrate. Bring the whole family. And be prepared for a great time.

For more information on the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Centennial Celebration, phone 620-762-5911 or visit the department's website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us.



Events and contests will include the following:

- team relay event — the Pratt Recreation Department will organize a running, biking, and canoeing relay, which will begin in downtown Pratt and finish at the Pratt office by 10 a.m.;
- kids fishing pond — the KDWP Fisheries and Wildlife Division will organize a kids fishing contest, for three age categories. WalMart will donate prizes for contest winners, and one-spot digital color photos will be provided to contest participants. Winners will be presented photos in frames imprinted with the KDWP centennial logo;
- general fishing — Centennial Pond will be open for catch and release fishing by all ages.

For those looking for education or information, KDWP staff will man a number of booths and conduct training seminars on outdoor skills.

Displays and demonstrations currently scheduled are:

- hatchery tours;
- education center tours;
- Laser Shot system;
- K-9 Unit;
- Law Enforcement Division patrol boats;
- Fisheries and Wildlife Division shocker boat;
- flint knapping;
- trophy scoring;
- tackle making;
- retriever demonstration;
- flyfishing; and
- archery

The event will also be an opportunity for visitors to learn more about the state's conservation organizations. The following organizations have been invited to exhibit:

- Audubon of Kansas;
- Ducks Unlimited;
- Kansas BASS Chapter Federation;
- Kansas Furharvesters Federation;
- Kanrocks Recreation Association;
- Kansas Recreation and Parks Association;
- Kansas Sport Hunting Association;
- Kansas Trails Council;
- Kansas Walleye Association;
- Kansas Chapter, National Wild Turkey Federation;
- Pheasants Forever;
- Quail Unlimited;
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation;
- Kansas Bowhunters Association;
- Kansas Wildlife Officers Association;
- Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education; and
- Kansas Wildscape



Opportunities To Learn

by Roland Stein,
wildlife education coordinator, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

The Wildlife Education Service of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks provides youngsters a variety of opportunities and methods to learn about Kansas wildlife and the conservation of our natural resources.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks created the Wildlife Education Service (WES) in 1981. Its goal was to help promote the wise use and stewardship of our natural resources. The first WES coordinator was Joyce Depenbusch (Harmon), who filled that role from 1982-1989. I accepted the position in 1990. The following is a brief history and description of some of the programs WES has provided.

Education Centers

The Pratt Education Center is housed in the building that was constructed in 1912 and served as the headquarters office for the department until 1966. The Center underwent a major renovation in the early 1990s, adding air conditioning, a new lighting system, and painting of the interior and exterior. Later that decade, the glass fronts of the aquariums were replaced.

The emphasis of the Pratt

Education Center is to help visitors discover wildlife species that live in Kansas. Numerous displays, dioramas, and living exhibits provide encounters with native birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians of Kansas. The exhibits also include a working bee colony, a fantastic bird egg collection, and 12 aquariums displaying fish common to Kansas.

The Education Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday

through Friday (except holidays.) Admission is free. The Center is located 2 miles east and 1 mile south of Pratt on HWY Spur 64. For more information call (620) 672-0751 or e-mail shelbys@wp.state.ks.us.

The Milford Nature Center is another educational facility providing visitors a better understanding and appreciation for Kansas natural communities. Pat Silovsky has been the Milford Nature Center's director since it was built in 1989. Visitors can see and touch native animal furs, print their own animal tracks, and discover mystery items using their sense of touch. In addition, visitors can hike the nature trail, view the butterfly house, and visit a habitat demonstration site. Included in the living exhibits are snakes, lizards, birds of prey, prairie dogs, eagles, and a bobcat.

Two spectacular dioramas are found at the Milford Center. One is an aquatic exhibit featuring more than 300 life-like models of fish, turtles, and other aquatic life. The other is a terrestrial diorama featuring wildlife of the prairies, marshes, and woodlands. Naturalist programs, such as Thunder in the Sky (Birds of Prey), Nighttime Diners (Owls), and The Un-huggable (bats, opossums, snakes, and vultures) are available to groups upon request.

The Milford Nature Center is located below the Milford Reservoir dam in the Outlet Park area, just north of Junction City. To reach the Nature Center from Interstate 70, take exit 295 and continue 5 miles north on US 77. Turn west on US 57 and follow the signs. Hours are from 9:00



This historic building near the Pratt Operations Office was originally the department's first administrative office. It now houses an education center complete with wildlife dioramas, aquariums, and unique educational displays.

a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, April through September. Admission is free. For additional Milford information, call (785) 238-5323 or e-mail pats@wp.state.ks.us.

The Prairie Center serves the Kansas City area. KDWP obtained this property from the Grassland Heritage Foundation in 1990. Alaine Neelly-Hudlin has been the coordinator of the Prairie Center since 1997. The property covers 300 acres of virgin tallgrass prairie, riparian woodlands, and wetlands. This natural setting provides visitors a unique opportunity to experience these three ecological communities in their natural settings. The Center's 5-acre lake supports fishing for such species as bluegill, catfish, largemouth bass, and hybrid sunfish. Special fishing regulations are posted at the lake. Six miles of hiking trails meander through the prairie, woodland and wetland

areas.

The Prairie Center is located at 26325 W. 135th Street in Olathe. Workshops for educators and special groups are given throughout the year. School groups are welcomed by reservation. Limited interpretive programs are also available. For additional information, contact (913) 856-7669, ext. 1, or e-mail Alaine@wp.state.ks.us

Other Programs

The Education Resource Library, formerly referred to as the Reference Center, has been in existence since the early 1970s. It is presently housed on the second floor of the Pratt Education Center. This free-loan library has thousands of resources in many media formats, including videos, learning kits, books, and posters, that cover a variety of topics relating to Kansas wildlife and other natural resources. Learning kits containing the skins and skulls of Kansas mammals are also available for check-out.

The only cost for utilizing these resources is return postage. A catalog listing resources is available in printed format or on CD. To receive a catalog, call (620) 672-0751, or e-mail shelbys@wp.state.ks.us. Additional information is available at (620) 672-0776, or e-mail refercenter@wp.state.ks.us

Projects WILD & Aquatic

These nationally acclaimed in-service programs, emphasizing an understanding and appreciation of wildlife, were initiated in Kansas in 1990. They provide an invitation to explore and appreciate the fascinating world of wildlife, both aquatic and terrestrial. The programs motivate individuals to greater awareness of how they can help maintain and improve the quality of our natural resources. Since 1990, Project WILD and Project Aquatic facilitators have provided 155 Project Aquatic workshops to 2,704 par-

ticipants, and 343 Project WILD workshops to 6,380 participants. For additional information about the program, contact Shelby Stevens (620) 672-0751, Roland Stein (620) 672-0708, or e-mail Shelbys@wp.state.ks.us or rolands@wp.state.ks.us.

OWLS (Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites) Program

The OWLS program was initiated in 1990 through the efforts of wildlife diversity coordinator Ken Brunson. More than 208 OWLS sites are living testimony that Kansas schools can provide fantastic opportunities for students to learn more about nature and ecology. Hands-on environmental learning experiences, such as the planting of native trees and grasses, establishing butterfly and hummingbird gardens, and creating wetlands and ponds for aquatic life, are enhancing student awareness of and appreciation for their natural environment.

Any school or youth organization can apply for the \$2,000 OWLS grant to initiate the development of their outdoor learning site. For additional information about the program, contact Shelby Stevens (620) 672-0751, Roland Stein (620) 672-0708, or e-mail shelbys@wp.state.ks.us or rolands@wp.state.ks.us.

Wildlife Education Service Materials

The WES provides numerous educational materials that can help develop appreciation and awareness for Kansas wildlife, wetlands, and other natural resources. The most recognized is "ON T.R.A.C.K.S.," a newsletter that has been providing interested individuals with information, activity guides, and insights into wildlife topics since 1990. The original editor was Mary Kay Crall (1990-1993). Pat Silovsky has carried on the editorial duties since 1994.

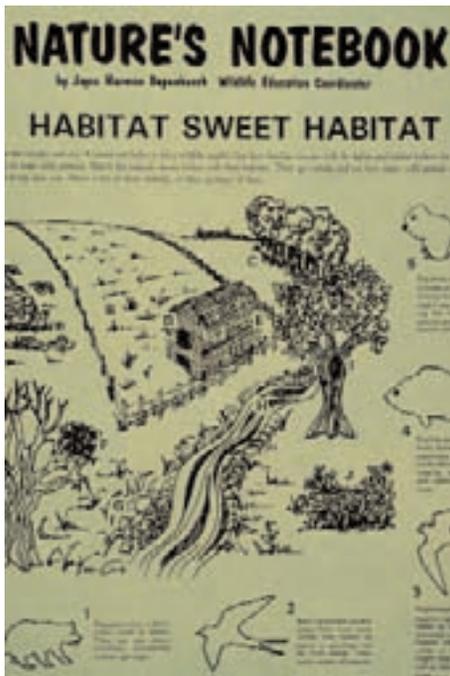
"Nature's Notebook" is a collection of articles from the "Wild Currents" section of the *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* magazine. Written for the younger readers, "Nature's Notebook" provides information sheets and activities on all forms of Kansas' wildlife. Copies are available in printed form or on CDs. "Nature's Notebook" was developed by Joyce Depenbusch (Harmon) in the early 1980s.

"Something WILD" is the newest publication. It is a compilation of wildlife fact sheets with illustrations by Robert F. Clarke Ph.D. These fact sheets provide interesting insights into many of the common animals of Kansas.

"Lower Primary Guide": What is Wildlife, Introduction to Habitat, and Food Chains and Food



While the aquariums at the Pratt Education Center are popular, the wildlife displays feature many unique and rare specimens. An amazing bird egg collection is also featured.

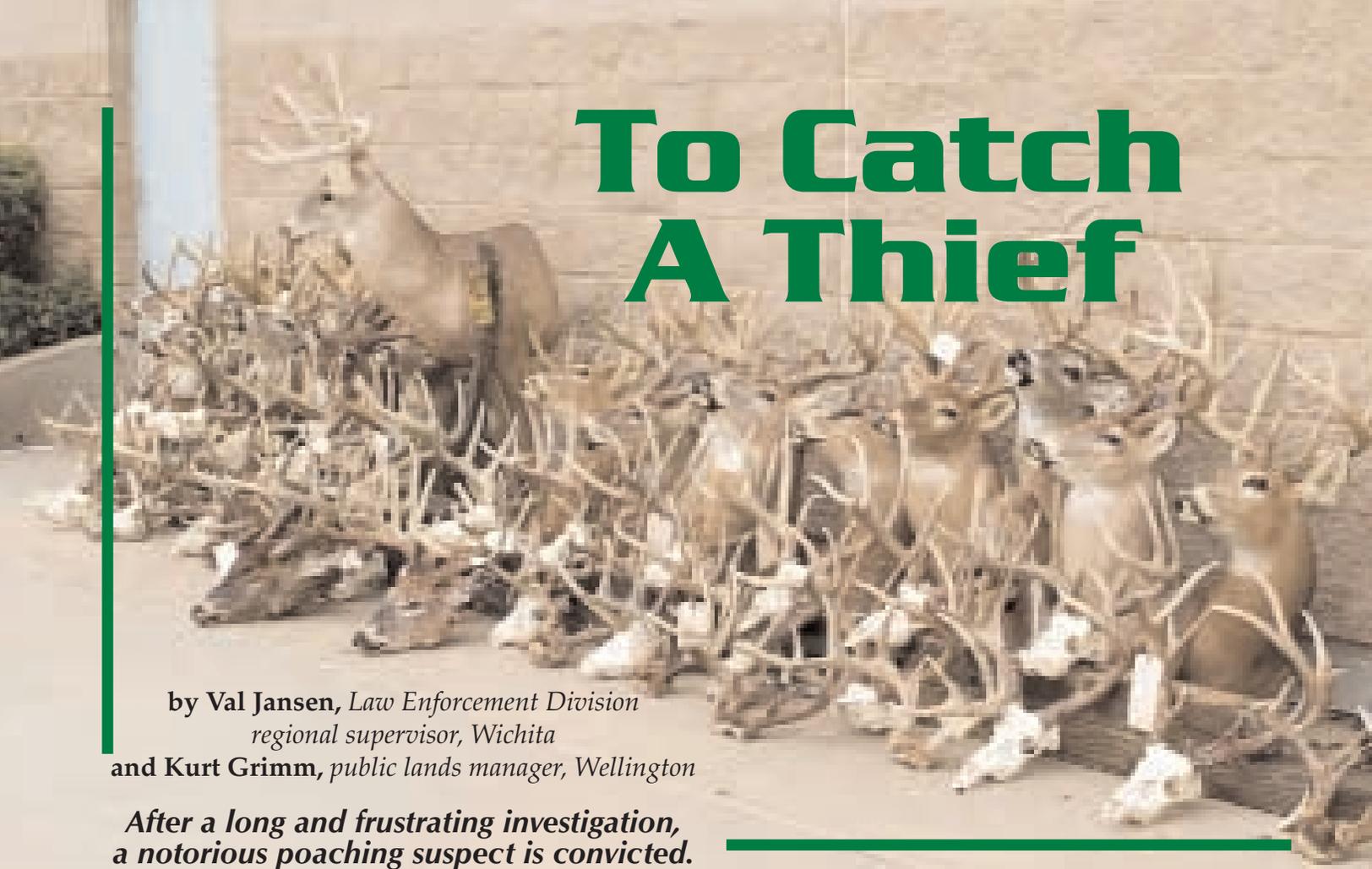


Webs, are the topics explored through this resource. These areas of inquiry are connected to one another by using the following themes as organizers: Models, Systems and Their interaction, Energy (Matter) Flow and Exchange, and Patterns of Change. The theme organizers are similar to those utilized in the Kansas State Board of Education Curricular Standards for Science. Contains text by Joyce R. Depenbusch (Harmon), Alaine Neelly-Hudlin, Pat Silovsky and Roland Stein.

“Upper Primary Guide”: Classification, Adaptation, and Threatened and Endangered Species. Through the investigation of structural “Adaptations” students will be better suited to identify why some species of wildlife are more prone to be listed as threatened or endangered than other. Contains text by Joyce R. Depenbusch (Harmon), Alaine Neelly-Hudlin, Pat Silovsky and Roland Stein. To order any of these resources contact: Shelby Stevens at (620) 672-0751 or e-mail Shelbys@wp.state.ks.us



The Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites (OWLS) program provides schools with grants to construct their own outdoor laboratories like the one pictured above. Since 1990, more than 200 OWLS projects have been completed on Kansas school grounds.



To Catch A Thief

by Val Jansen, *Law Enforcement Division regional supervisor, Wichita*
and Kurt Grimm, *public lands manager, Wellington*

After a long and frustrating investigation, a notorious poaching suspect is convicted.

It was a dreary February afternoon in 1998, and a concerned citizen had just provided information about a poacher. The suspect had allegedly been bragging that he had killed a number of deer that winter, along with several turkeys. After offering sincere thanks, the two KDWP natural resource officers (NRO) exchanged troubled glances as the visitor excused himself.

The conversation angered, but did not surprise, the officers. Similar reports, dating back to 1991, had been coming through the Operation Game Thief (OGT) hotline about the same man. It was always the same — large numbers of deer killed. The deer were nearly always left where they were shot before the poacher returned later for the heads. There was no concern for

the meat.

Another informant told about his first-hand view of a January buck being hauled in the bed of a white Toyota pickup. But the report was given in November, and the chances of building a case after so much time were slim. A photograph of a deer, the informant related, was circulating. It was big.

Farmers were getting upset — one chased a man who had killed a deer on his place at night. Ironically, the suspect hit a doe with his vehicle while he was being chased. And there was the bragging. The alleged poacher could not keep from shocking others in the community with tales of his exploits. It's hard to imagine how someone like this thinks. Did he think the stories of his illegal slaughter

made him appear more respected as a hunter?

The calls indicated that he wasn't having the desired effect on his listeners. Since the initial reports, every enforcement tool and technique had been employed unsuccessfully. Officers grew more frustrated, since most reports were received long after the violations occurred. The investigation was getting nowhere because of the officers' large areas of responsibility, a backlog of ongoing investigations, and a lack of advanced equipment. However, few poachers escape capture in the long run, and this one was running out of time.

In December 1998, an OGT call was received reporting an extraordinary number of deer killed by one individual. This



caller believed the racks were being sold to people in Florida, and that a local taxidermist was involved. As the file grew, another report indicated that a record-sized rack was hanging in a store in Texas.

By May of 1999, the Augusta hunting community was fed up. A suspect is now brave enough to call local people to help him load deer. He's still bragging about the big one and showing pictures. Information leads law enforcement to a bait shop in Texas.

In early December of 1999, a suspect was caught. A landowner near Augusta reported two people in a pickup had taken a deer from his property. An officer arrived in time to make the stop, after a brief chase during which the deer carcass

bounced out of the back end of the pickup. The passenger in the pickup had shot the buck from the vehicle, on land without the required written permission, and without a deer permit. The driver was identified as a suspect in many previous reports. Under aiding and abetting laws, both men were charged. The passenger was convicted in Butler County District Court and fined \$350. The county prosecutor declined to charge the driver with the aiding and abetting, which carries the same penalties as the crime.

In 2001, Kurt Grimm transferred from a park ranger position at El Dorado State Park to the NRO position in Butler County. It didn't take long for Grimm to begin hearing stories about a suspect and his son poaching deer and turkeys from their vehicle.

In October, Grimm received a call from a landowner accusing a suspect of shooting deer, cutting their heads off, and leaving the carcass to waste. By November, Grimm was getting reports about a suspect driving area roads and killing three or four deer that fall. However, no new information or evidence was received through the end of 2001.

In September of 2002, Grimm received a report from a landowner who had heard a shot and saw someone leave the area in a black Toyota pickup. Two officers watched the deer carcass for several hours, but the poacher didn't return.

Through the rest of 2002,

few reports were received. But 2003 was a different story. After a two-year investigation, officers got the break they had been waiting for. On November 26, 2003 an informant provided information that the suspect's son had just shot a 10-point buck south of Augusta. He'd left the deer and was planning to come back to get it. Officer Larry Hastings took the call and investigated the scene and the body of the deer. He waited for several hours to see if they would come back to get the deer, but had no luck. The next morning the informant called Hastings and said he had just received a call from the suspect's son that he and his dad had retrieved the head of the deer and put it in the garage at their house.

Officer Grimm had just returned from vacation when he learned the latest news, and he immediately began working on a 14-page search warrant. The search warrant was executed on December 18, 2003 at the suspect's house. Officers found parts of 60 deer heads, 114



In addition to parts of more than 60 deer, officers collected 114 turkey beards when the search warrant was served on the suspect's home.

turkey beards, a number of turkey legs, one eagle talon, several waterfowl, firearms and ammunition.

On April 21, 2004 Steve Pittman was charged with 26 counts in Butler County District Court. Pittman's son was charged as a juvenile with 36 counts.

The charges against the older Pittman include contributing to child's misconduct, commercialization of wildlife, illegal display of coyotes, failure to possess donor notes, possession of untagged deer carcasses, aiding and abetting wanton waste, aiding and abetting hunting or taking without a tag or permit, hunting and taking without a permit, misrepresentation to purchase a permit and license, aiding and abetting hunting with the aid of a vehicle, aiding and abetting exceeding the possession limit of deer and failure to tag deer.

The juvenile's charges included commercialization of wildlife, hunting or taking without a tag or permit, wanton waste, hunting with the aid of a vehicle, possession of an untagged deer carcass, exceeding the possession limit of deer, taking deer and turkey by illegal means, failure to have a furharvesting license and the education certificate, hunting with the aid of artificial lighting, and hunting before/after legal hours.

On October 28, 2004 Steven Pittman pleaded no contest to the felony charge of commercialization of wildlife. He also pleaded guilty or no contest to five misdemeanor wildlife charges. His son later pleaded guilty to 12 misdemeanors of



This tremendous trophy-class buck head was located in a bait shop in Texas.

wildlife charges. All other charges against them were dismissed.

On December 21, 2004 Steve Pittman was sentenced to serve a six-month sentence with the state Department of Corrections for commercialization of wildlife, as well as 12 months probation. He was ordered to pay a total of \$2,400 in restitution to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for the animals involved in the counts he pleaded guilty to. And he was handed a 60-day jail sentence and \$5,250 fine for aiding and abetting hunting or taking without a permit. The other charges against the elder Pittman brought with them a 30-day jail sentence and \$250 fine. The jail sentences will be served through 30 consecutive weekends in the Butler County Jail. Pittman is also prohibited from hunting and trapping for 10 years. In April 2004, Pittman also pleaded guilty in federal district court to illegally possessing parts of an eagle. He was fined \$2,000 and banned from hunting and trapping in the

United States for two years.

On January 14, 2005, the juvenile was sentenced to pay \$2,000 in fines, 24 months probation, he must attend school and maintain a 3.0 average, he must write a 500-word essay on ethics of hunting, perform 40 hours of community service work, and have no contact with anyone who is actively hunting. He was also prohibited from hunting for seven years, he cannot obtain deer permits or tags for 10 years, he must retake the Hunter Education course, and he cannot possess a firearm during his probation.

On February 16, 2005, the Court ordered that all of the seized wildlife parts be forfeited to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. The firearms and ammunition will be turned over to an agreed upon third party for sale, and the proceeds, less any reasonable commission, shall be paid into the Clerk of the Butler County District Court.

This case illustrates why poaching is so destructive. These actions hurt all hunters, not to mention the damage to the local wildlife populations. Poaching trophy-sized deer robs opportunities from all citizens, whether they enjoy hunting or wildlife watching. And killing deer, cutting off the heads and leaving the carcass to rot is the worst kind of poaching. But these kind of poachers pose an additional threat. Shooting deer from roads with high-power rifles, especially at night, is extremely dangerous, especially in an area as populated as Butler County. These acts show no regard for the safety of local residents and livestock. ♡

Edited by Mark Shoup

GIVE BLAIR A MEDAL

Editor:

I am 73 years old and very seldom write any magazine but this time, I must. Mike Blair should have a large shiny medal for the story, "Mabel" [*Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine, July/August 2004, Page 25]. 'Nuff said.

*Clayton Clark
Abilene*

Dear Mr. Clark:

You just got your wish. See Page 42 of this issue. Blair received first place honors in the Outdoor Related Essay category of the annual Outdoor Writers Association of America awards for that story.

–Shoup

LATE BLACK POWDER

Editor:

The letter in the Nov./Dec. 2004 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine (Page 33) from Mr. Griffith about the black powder season got my attention. I am 85 years old and have hunted in Kansas for at least 60 years. I have also hunted in Colorado and Wyoming, but it's easier to hunt at home and not near as expensive.

Mr. Griffith is right about the season for muzzleloader hunting; it's too hot, and the does still have milk and are taking care of their young. I think a January season would be okay, but a season in November would be better. That would be in rut and give the black powder hunters an easier shot. I know the bowhunters would not agree, but I think they have the best season to hunt. The rifle season is tough because the rut is mostly over, and it can be cold and windy. I think a rifle season at the end of October and beginning of November would okay, too.

*J.A. Marsh
Farlington*

Dear Mr. Marsh:

Thank you for the suggestions. The idea of a later muzzleloader season may be considered, as I mentioned in the issue to which you refer, but at this point, no disruption of the archery season is in the works. Rifle hunters, even muzzleloaders, have a distinct advantage and during the rut could have a negative affect on the state's trophy deer herd.

–Shoup

TRESPASS & PURSUIT

Editor:

I have a question about the new criminal hunting law that was passed by the 2004 Kansas Legislature. What is a licensed hunter permitted to do with regard to retrieving wounded or dead animals upon adjacent property where they do not have permission?

*Tom Laisure
Shawnee Mission*

Dear Mr. Laisure:

As stated in our July/August 2004 issue (Page 36): "A new crime of intentional criminal hunting was created, effective July 1, 2004. Intentional criminal hunting is hunting, shooting, furharvesting, or pursuing any animal or bird, or fishing upon any land or water body of another, by anyone who knows they are not authorized to do so and 1) remains there after being told to leave or 2) the premises are posted with purple paint or signs stating "written permission only." Conviction or diversion for this offense requires forfeiture of hunting, fishing, or furharvesting privileges for six months, one year, or three years, dependent on past criminal history."

However, the statute states explicitly that "a person licensed to hunt and following or pursuing a wounded game bird or animal upon any land of another without permission of the landowner or person in lawful possession thereof shall not be deemed to be in violation of this provision while in such pursuit, except

that this provision shall not authorize a person to remain on such land if instructed to leave by the owner thereof or other authorized person."

In simpler language, if you shot an animal on property where you had permission, and it ran or fell onto property where you don't have permission, you could go after it but would have to leave if the landowner told you to. In that case, you should probably contact your local natural resource officer to see if the situation can be resolved.

–Shoup

TRUE DEDICATION

Editor:

I am writing this letter to see if you people can help me out. My hunter safety certificate is a little worn out. I have carried it from near the top of the world to near the bottom, so its well-traveled. Could you see that I could get another one issued please?

I would like to thank the numerous people who prepare *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine. I read it from top to bottom on nearly every issue. It has a special meaning to me. After having a stroke and losing the ability to read, the first word I could read upon partial recovery was "duck."

I have read the magazine from the time it was free. I have sent many issues to people across the country telling them that Kansas has the best hunting and fishing in the country.

Now that my health won't let me hunt anymore, I can look at the pictures and read the articles and dream of all the wonderful times I had in the fields of Kansas.

*Harold E. Washburn
Hutchinson*

Dear Mr. Washburn:

Your hunter education certificate, issued in 1979, is indeed tattered, and by now, you should have gotten a replacement. Your certificate shows that you were born in 1945, so you wouldn't have needed the certificate in

Kansas or any other state I know of. It's a tribute to you that you took the course, and I am touched by the fact that you want a replacement even though you can no longer hunt. I hope our magazine continues to be a source of pleasure and comfort to you for many years.

—Shoup

WHERE'S THE PERCH

Editor:

When I was younger, I used to love to catch perch, and it seems like you could catch them just about everywhere — pond, creek, or river. Now all a person can find around here are bluegill or sunfish. What has happened to all the perch?

I know most people would rather catch a "whale," but those perch could put up a whale of a fight, and they were tricky to catch.

Also, when I was a kid and lived in the Flint Hills, the little creek behind our place had goldfish in it the year round. Is there a special way to keep them in a small farm pond, or is it too cold for them?

*Wilma Wohler
Brookville*

Dear Ms. Wohler:

Perch are actually relatives of the walleye. The only Kansas perch is the yellow perch, and it is confined to a few eastern counties of the state. It is believed to have been introduced to the state in the 1880s. In recent years, white perch, also non-native, have shown up in some of our larger reservoirs.

Many Kansas anglers mistakenly call members of the sunfish family "perch." Usually what they are referring to are bluegill, green sunfish, or hybrids. Other related sunfish that may be mistakenly called "perch" are redear sunfish, warmouth, and pumpkinseed, among others. Many anglers do not know that largemouth bass are also in the sunfish family.

I can't say for sure what you were catching without seeing one, but what you were likely catching were green sunfish, sometimes referred to as black

perch. They are longer and darker than bluegill and have a much larger mouth. And they are still common throughout Kansas waters.

A good resource for this information would be the book, *Fishes In Kansas*, by Frank B. Cross and Joseph T. Collins. This book is published by the University Press of Kansas and may be available at some KDWP offices.

—Shoup

QUAIL INITIATIVE

Editor:

I am a wildlife management biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation. I subscribe to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine and was very interested in the article about the Southeast Kansas Quail Initiative. I worked on that project for about a year trapping, radio-collaring, and tracking quail. In the article (Page 2, July/August 2005 issue) that is me holding the quail, recording data, and radio-tracking.

I would like to request some reprints of that article because I am the biologist over a quail emphasis area in southwest Missouri and would like to share the article, and some details about the Kansas program, with some of the staff here. Thanks for your time.

*Frank Loncarich
La Russell, Missouri*

KENTUCKY QUAIL, TOO

Editor:

Hello from beautiful "Sterile Land." That may sound funny, but here in central Kentucky it's true. Manicured horse farms and fence row clearing maniacs have created a manicured golf course look that may be pleasing to some but continues to be deadly to our small critters.

I just got my latest edition of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine and read with the greatest interest of the Quail Initiative (July/August, Page 2). Quail in Kentucky have declined dramatically, leaving everyone shaking their heads. Your article is the best I have seen for a logical explanation. Could I get extra copies of the article? I want to forward them to friends in state government and farmer friends who have been trying desperately to preserve our small game hunting heritage. What's good for quail is also good for so many other needy critters.

*Joe Westbrook
Lexington, Kentucky*

WAY outside BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"LARGE PEPPERONI WITH ANCHOVIES. TELL THE DRIVER TO GO TEN MILES WEST OF TOWN, THEN TURN RIGHT AT THE DIRT ROAD. GO TWO MILES AND STOP AT THE BRIDGE. WALK FIVE HUNDRED YARDS UP THE BIG HILL"

CONSISTENCY 1949 & NOW

An Average Citizen was walking to his office one morning. His way led past the hardware store, and he stopped to see what was new in the sporting goods display. Happening to glance into the store, he saw a loungeer snatch a pocket knife from a rack and conceal it in his coat pocket.

The Average Citizen was outraged. Bustling into the store, he called the proprietor and told him about it, pointing out the culprit who lingered by the counter. Mr. Citizen and the owner accosted the thief and held him until a policeman could be called. In jig-time, the scoundrel was on his way to jail, and the Average Citizen was receiving the owner's thanks for his prompt, public-spirited action.

Later that morning, a friend called on the Average Citizen. Both were ardent quail hunters, and the talk soon turned to the late quail season. The friend passed on some information about a certain locality where, he said, a mutual acquaintance had reported getting his limit easily in one day. The Average Citizen laughed.

"You don't know how Jim got his limit so fast? He slipped in on the refuge. And it wasn't just a limit; it was quite a bit over"

"No!" exclaimed the friend. "That's hard to believe. Are you sure?"

"I ought to know," said the Average Citizen. "I watched him do it."

"But that's breaking every law in the book! Why didn't you tell the game warden?"

Mr. Citizen glared. "Think I'd tell on a man? Besides, it's the warden's job to catch him; it's none of my business."

They said goodbye then, and the Average Citizen returned to work. When he got home that night and sat down to dinner, he regaled his family with events of the day, emphasizing – with conspicuous virtue – how he had twice demonstrated his code of ethics. Mrs. Citizen applauded dutifully, but 14-year-old Joe was silent.

"What's the matter, Joe?" his father asked, with heavy humor. "Don't you approve of my conduct?"

"I, I guess so," Joe said, squirming, "but Dad, if you helped arrest the man in the store, why didn't you help the

he declared. "Jim was just outsmarting the warden."

Joe slipped from his chair. His face was red. "Mr. Jim was stealing, too!" he declared. "I want to go hunting when I grow up, and so does Jim Junior. If his father and other fathers break the laws and kill more'n they oughta, there won't be anything for us kids to hunt. He was stealing – from us!" And then Joe ran from the room.

The Average Citizen, his mouth open, stared after him for a moment and then picked up his fork. "That boy!" he exclaimed. "I can't figure him out. Saying Jim was stealing those quail, arguing that I should have told on a fellow sportsman!"

Mrs. Citizen didn't look dutiful now. "Well, he was breaking a law!" she snapped. "That isn't his game, but Joe's, too. What's the difference if it's quail or a jack-knife?" And she walked out also.

The Average Citizen looked hurt. "Women!" he growled. "Kids! You can't reason with 'em. They're so inconsistent!"

–*Kansas Fish and Game,*
October 1949



warden? Wasn't Mr. Jim breaking the law, too?"

"You don't understand, son," was the indulgent reply. "The man was stealing!"

WHAT'S TRESPASSING?

It is illegal to hunt, shoot, or trap on private land without the owner's permission. Hunting from public roads and railroads requires permission of landowners on both sides of the road or railway. Railroad rights-of-way also require permission from the railroad.

Written permission is required to enter land posted with hunting and/or trapping "by Written Permission Only" signs or having trees or fence posts painted purple.

Landowner permission should be obtained before pursuing wounded game onto private property. If you cannot find the landowner or get permission, contact your local natural resource officer.

It is both trespassing and dangerous to mount blinds or treestands on power poles, whether they appear abandoned or not.

–*Shoup*

AUTOMATED LICENSING

Kansas hunters may now purchase over-the-counter big game permits online for the first time. Such permits include resident Whitetail Either Sex and Whitetail Antlerless Only Deer permits, Whitetail Antlerless Only Deer game tags, and resident Archery Antelope permits.

In addition, hunters may enjoy the convenience of a streamlined, automated licensing service wherever licenses are sold. With this point-of-sale electronic licensing system, no longer will clerks and hunters have to fill out hand-written forms, and the waiting time for purchase should be greatly reduced. Kansas hunting and fishing licenses are also available by phoning 1-800-918-2877 toll-free.

The new systems will provide more convenient access to licenses and permits for anyone who hunts, fishes, boats, or visits state parks in Kansas. Customers may now purchase most licenses, permits, and registrations from their homes, either through online purchase via computer or by calling the toll-free telephone number. As in the past, they also will be able to purchase any of the same issues from any department office or license vendor in the state.

The department and its vendor partners (county clerks, sporting goods stores, discount stores, and other outlets) no longer hand write each license and permit they sell. The system will be paid for by fees, ranging from 50 cents to \$1.15, attached to each license, permit, or registration sold. In addition to more convenient access for customers, the department's operations will be significantly enhanced. Advantages include the following:

- eliminates the need to print licenses, ship to license agents, and warehouse past years' license books for audit purpose;
- eliminates waste of unsold preprinted licenses;
- provides a true accounting system for all vendors;
- allows law enforcement officers to verify license and permit information in the field any time of the day or night;
- allows cross-checking of licenses and permits to prevent issuance of multiple permits;
- allows customer to replace a lost or stolen license or permit by allowing them to go to any vendor for replacement, not just the vendor where the original purchase was made;
- allows vendors to sell all licenses and permits, and eliminates the problem of running out of preprinted license books;
- enables more efficient surveys of users due to real-time collection and availability of names and addresses; and
- allows real-time monitoring of license and permits sales so that facilities and resources can be more efficiently managed.

Automated License Systems (ALS) developed the Kansas system, as well as the first online recreational licensing system in the U.S. and systems for nine other states.

—Mathews



CHENEY IMPROVEMENT GRANT

By next summer, Cheney State Park campers will have a new place to get wet and clean. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) has received a grant for almost \$170,000

to build a new shower house at Cheney and make improvements to roads and parking areas. The money spent on roads and parking will also be matched dollar-for-dollar with funds from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The grant was awarded by the National Park Service

through the U.S. Department of the Interior. Linda Lanterman, assistant director of KDWP's Parks Division, said roads and parking will be upgraded as needed. Construction began in mid-summer.

"Any money left after road upgrades and the shower house construction will be

used on playground equipment," Lanterman said.

She was not sure when the construction on the shower house will begin, but that it should be ready by next summer. It will be a year-round round facility and will be located in Geifer Hill. KDWP is working to update its older shower houses at other parks,



as well. "New shower facilities are also planned for Tuttle Creek, Kanopolis, Cedar Bluff, and Lovewell state parks," Lanterman added.

The grant will also provide money for construction of a new interpretive educational center at Meade State Park as well as road upgrades and campground improvements at El Dorado State Park.

— Travis Mounts, *Goddard Times Sentinel*

HUNT FOR PROSPERITY

By any measure, American hunters are among the most prominent and influential of all demographic groups. Hunters throughout the U. S. spend more than \$20 billion annually on hunting-related expenditures such as hunting gear, fuel, lodging, and food. More than 500,000 American jobs are supported by hunters' purchases.

In Kansas, some 290,000 hunters spend more than \$245 million annually on hunting-related purchases. Those purchases generate about 5,400 jobs in the Sunflower State, producing more than \$113 million in salaries and wages which, in

turn, generates \$18.8 million in state sales, gasoline, and income taxes, as well as \$11.6 million in federal income taxes.

On average, each hunter spends \$1,896 per year on goods and services associated with his or her hunting. These expenditures then "ripple" through the economy, generating three times more impact as hunters' purchases enable earnings and expenditures by other segments of the population. When a sporting goods store pays employees to sell hunting gear, those employees use that money to buy food, clothes, housing, and other goods and services. Rural economies benefit substantially because they're situated where most hunting occurs. In short, each purchase made by a hunter sets off a chain reaction of broad-based economic benefits.

In addition to their important role in the American economy, hunters are responsible for the most successful wildlife restoration program in the world. Most Americans have no idea that hunters and the manufacturers of sporting firearms, working with state wildlife agencies, lobbied for and successfully implemented the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act in 1937, also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act. In the 1930s, when many wildlife species were scarce, these farsighted individuals and organizations convinced Congress to enact an excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition. Proceeds from the excise tax ever since have been combined with hunting license fees to underwrite the cost of on-the-ground conservation projects in every state. In addition, an excise tax on archery equipment, established in 1972, enabled the archery industry to contribute significant funding for wildlife conservation and hunter education. This year, Kansas received about \$4.1 million in federal aid revenues for wildlife and hunter education programs.

Hunting is more than a positive economic force, however. Like baseball and apple pie, hunting is an American tradition shared by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican. It includes men and women from every geographic and ethnic category. It is a strong influence on American society, steeped in our nation's heritage, and an important part of our economy and our national character.

—Mathews,
compiled from the "2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Association Recreation," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

• ***The average hunter spends \$113 per day for goods and services when hunting.***

• ***The total time spent afield by Kansas hunters annually is about 3.6 million hunter/days, led by upland game hunting (1.85 million days) and deer hunting (1.3 million days).***

• ***Kansas deer hunters spend \$80 million annually in support of their hunting activities.***

• ***Kansas migratory bird hunters spend about \$30.5 million annually in support of their hunting activities.***

• ***Kansas upland bird hunters spend about \$121.3 million annually in support of their hunting activities.***

• ***Nonresident hunters spend about \$67.6 million annually in Kansas.***

• ***Nationally, about 13 million men and women participate in hunting annually.***

No Young Dogs

September marks the traditional opening of hunting season with the dove opener on the first of the month. Because the action is fast and furious and the weather warm, it can be one of the most fun hunts of the year. However, these very elements can make this a bad time to introduce very young kids – and especially young dogs – to the hunt.

Kids too young to hunt or anxiously awaiting their first hunt may get hot, bored, and frustrated by bugs, giving them a negative early hunting experience that may cloud their view of hunting in general. It just depends on the youngster, so each parent should be sensitive to these issues before taking their child out during dove season. In this case, father (or mother) knows best.

For young dogs, however, dove season can be truly frustrating. If your dog has

never hunted before, it might not be a good idea to start with doves. Although a good retriever can be essential to find downed birds in thick weeds and grass, an inexperienced or very young dog – less than nine months in most cases – can be overwhelmed. Every dove hunter has seen a seasoned retriever trying to rid its mouth of dove feathers in hot weather,



and it doesn't look like much fun.

And the heat itself, can be a problem, with early September temperatures ranging well into the 90s. If you do bring a young dog, or any dog, make sure it gets plenty of water – as much as it will drink as often as it will drink, and if possible, hunt near a pond or stock tank, so the dog can cool off with a swim.

Also keep in mind that the fast action that hunters so love may equate to total confusion for an inexperienced retriever. This can be frightening for some dogs, as well.

If you have a young dog this season – or a young person anxious to go afield – evaluate the situation carefully before bringing them. It's better to wait the few short weeks to teal season than to turn them off with a hot, frustrating first-time experience.

–Shoup

NEW FOR 2005

A number of new regulations and laws affecting deer hunting, hunter education, age for hunting big game, furharvesting, and turkey go into effect this year. The following is a brief summary, also found in the 2005 Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary, available at department offices and most hunting equipment dealers.

BIG GAME PERMITS:

- There is no minimum age to apply for and receive a big game permit, and youth younger than 16 may hunt without hunter education, if supervised by an adult 18 or older. Persons younger than 14 must have bowhunter education to hunt big game with archery equipment.

DEER:

- All deer hunters must possess a valid antlered deer permit before they can acquire an antlerless-only permit or game tag.
- Archery permits are no longer valid statewide. Nine archery units have been created. Archery permit purchasers may select up to two archery units, plus Unit 19.
- Archery permit holders may hunt during the firearms season (Nov. 30 through Dec. 11) with legal archery equipment only. Archers hunting during a firearm season must wear orange clothing, as required of firearms hunters.
- Unit 16 has been added to units requiring firearms hunters to register harvested deer at check stations. Other mandatory check station units for firearms hunters include 1, 2, 3, 17 and 18. Deer taken outside of these units and outside the regular firearms deer season do not need to be taken to a deer check station.
- Deer Management Unit 19 boundaries have been modified to include a larger portion of the City of Leavenworth.

- Landowner/tenants who are successful in the permit drawing will not receive a permit valid for use in the field. Instead, a transferable permit voucher will be issued and mailed to the applicant. The voucher may be redeemed for the original permit.

- The fee for a nonresident antlered deer permit (including Landowner/Tenant Transferable) is \$321. This fee includes a non-refundable \$20 application fee.

- Any applicant who was unsuccessful in the permit drawing earned one preference point. Preference points were also available for purchase – \$20 for nonresident and \$5 for resident Any-Deer.

HUNTER EDUCATION:

- Anyone born on or after July 1, 1957 must successfully complete an approved course in hunter education before hunting in Kansas EXCEPT THAT anyone 15 years old and younger may hunt without hunter education certification provided they are under direct supervision of an adult 18 or older. Hunters 12 years of age and older may hunt without adult supervision provided they possess a valid hunter education certificate and the appropriate licenses and/or permits. Youth must be 11 to be certified.

FURHARVESTING:

- Nonresidents may purchase \$100 bobcat hunting permits that allow the take of one bobcat per permit during the furbearer hunting season. This permit does not allow trapping.

TURKEY:

- During the youth season, the accompanying adult must be 18 or older.
- A preference point system has been implemented for the limited spring turkey unit.

In addition, an automated licensing system has been established, as described in the "Issues" section of this magazine.

–Shoup

CHASING DOVE HUNTING IMMORTALITY

by Marc Murrell



Just as St. Louis Cardinal slugger Mark McGwire was stepping to the plate in search of his 60th home run in the late 1990s, I was searching for a bit of history myself. McGwire's search was being covered by millions of baseball fans and relentless media hordes while my search only had one witness (or two if you count the lone cow wondering aimlessly around the pasture). I was dove hunting in search of completing the hunter's version of baseball's perfect game or single-season home run record. I was looking to retire 15 straight doves with the same amount of shells.

While I pride myself in being a pretty good shot, a few stragglers in a box of shells after a limit was my best to date. I usually think that's pretty good, especially considering the national average is one dove for every seven empty hulls. And generally it's early in a hunt when my perfect game flies out the window and I reach for more shells. But on September 4, 1998, I nearly etched my name in the dove hunting record book.

My attempt at history began innocently enough on an evening dove hunt in Rice County. As my hunting partner Mike Miller and I walked to a pond, we parted ways but continued talking. I was looking over at him when I stepped in a huge hole that sent me straight down and my can of pop, gun, and stool flying in all directions. I didn't feel any pain from what could have been a serious injury but figured it might be like a sharp cut, something you don't feel until you see it. I realized I was okay but amazed I hadn't heard any laughter. Miller is usually the first one to give me a hard time about most anything, and watching that spectacle had to be funny.

"It looked like you could have broke your leg," he said later as to why he didn't laugh.

Despite the rumors, I guess he does have a heart. We settled into our spots, and I assured Miller we would shoot our guns hot. It wasn't long before I made an easy shot to my left. Another bird to my

right a few minutes later and I was thinking about the record.

"Two for two," I hollered across the pond. "Think I can go 15 for 15?"

He must have been saving it because that's when the laughter came, "Yeah, right!"

Miller connected on a couple shots, and I brought my perfect total to four.

"What are my odds?" I hollered.

He laughed some more and said, "About a 100 to 1."

I should have been offended, but Miller and I (mostly me) like to keep score when we shoot sporting clays or 3-D archery. Miller says I remind him of days when my expertise exceeds his but that I fail to ever mention, or even remember, days when he's got the upper hand. He says my memory is bad. I call it selective.

After four more shells and four fallen birds, my odds with Jimmy the Greek across the pond were dropped to 50 to 1. Unfortunately, I had also fallen two more times while trying to keep a mark on downed birds and not watching where I was going. Miller was now laughing and commenting, mostly sarcastically, about my cat-like prowess and sheer grace. I think he was jealous because his bid at history had long since vanished. It even got to the point where he accused me of cheating.

"You're getting selective now," he jabbed after I twisted myself into the ground on a bird behind me but didn't shoot. "You let that one go."

I wondered if I got the record if my shell bag, stool, and gun would come under scrutiny for possible violations. As far as I knew, my Diet Coke and a couple deer sticks weren't laced with any performance-enhancing drug. The only steroids I had

were years earlier for a bad case of poison ivy that swelled my eyes shut.

As I hit double digits I knew I had a legitimate shot at the perfect tally. My hands started to sweat (actually, it was nearly 100 degrees so even my hair and fingernails were perspiring). I now had the weight of the hunting world on my shoulders with nobody in particular rooting for me except me. Mike was likely rooting against me because he knew he'd have to hear about it forever, and the cow seemed a bit indifferent about the whole event. Cows are stupid that way.

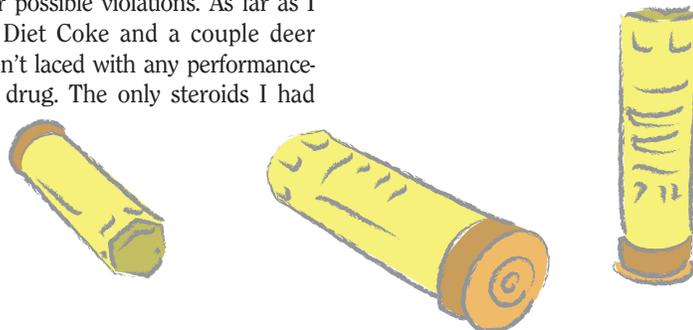
My streak continued as three more birds were added to my bag with the same number of shells. A baker's dozen and I was dreaming of endorsements. And then it happened.

It looked like a chip shot. The bird fluttered in and started to land. I swung my barrel through the bird and yanked the trigger. The bird spun and left on wings no worse for wear, and with it went my shot at the title.

"Now you did it!" Miller hollered, adding insult to injury. "You'll have to settle for being a legend in your own mind."

Although my shot at history didn't have a happy ending, I was proud to be a part of it. But I often wonder what would have happened had I broken the record. Would my 15th dove been worth \$1 million? Would Miller have given it back had he retrieved it or sold it by auction to the highest bidder on E-Bay? What about the book deals and appearances on Letterman and Leno? And what about the way my life would have changed with all the media attention and the three autograph seekers (my kids, Ashley, Brandon and Cody) constantly bothering me.

I guess I'm better off without the record. Plus, it just gives me something to shoot for each September as I search for my place in dove hunting immortality.



FISH ART CONTEST WINNERS

Last spring, Wildlife Forever announced the winners of the 2005 State-Fish Art Contest. Winning entries from each state were selected by a panel of judges in three school grade categories: 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. The Kansas winners were Ann Powell, Iola, grades 4-6; Rebekah Gieringer, Ottawa, grades 7-9; and Dean Barksdale, Iola, grades 10-12.

"The announcement of the winners of the State-Fish Art Contest every year is a fun and exciting time for the young artists, educators, and Wildlife Forever," said Douglas H. Grann, president & CEO of Wildlife Forever. "We would like to take this opportunity to commend the winning artists and all the students and educators who participated in the 2005 State-Fish Art Contest. The quality of artwork submitted this year was consistently outstanding. The judges had a very difficult time choosing the top entries."

Judges for the 2005 State-Fish Art Contest were Larry Horn of The Art Institutes International Minnesota, Mark LaBarbera of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Kelly Gohman of the North American Fishing Club, Eric Gislason of Kent Hrbek Outdoors, and Kevin Robb of Mall of America.

Contest winners were invited to the 7th Annual State-Fish Art Expo at Mall of America in Minneapolis on July 2. A massive art display in the Mall's Sam Goody Central rotunda featured all the artwork from across the country and an awards ceremony recognized the young artists before a large mall crowd.

Contest winners received many prizes. Each young artist received a gift certificate for art supplies from Cheap Joe's Art Stuff plus fishing gear from Rapala. In addition, artists and their families attending the Expo received free entry to the Metrodome to watch the Minnesota Twins face the Tampa Bay Devil Rays where the artists and their artwork were recognized in a special pre-game ceremony on the playing field.

To view winning artwork and for information about entering next year's contest, visit www.statefishart.com on the internet.

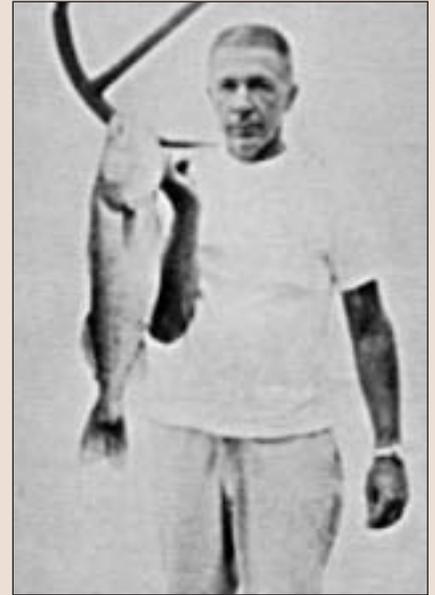
—Wildlife Forever

1960 RECORDS

At least two official Kansas state fishing records fell by the wayside during the year 1960, and two other classifications, which had no prior recording, were filed. That's the big fishing news for sportsmen of the Sunflower State as we go into the centennial year of 1961.

The biggest news was the announcement of a whopper flat-head weighing 64 1/2 pounds caught by Wesley Whitworth and Ira White, both of Erie, on the Neosho River. The other record-breaker was a 1-pound, 4-ounce bluegill caught by Jack H. Douglass of Wichita at Rainbow Lake in Barber County.

Two classifications that previously had no official records were drum and walleye. The official walleye record is now held by Virgil L. Maxey. The fish was caught below Kanopolis Reservoir and weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce. The drum, which weighed 25 pounds, was taken by Robert C. Irwin in the Neosho River. —*Kansas Fish and Game, January, 1961* [The 2005 state record fish list shows the flathead at 123 pounds, which is a world record. The current blue gill record is 2 pounds, 5 ounces; the walleye record 13 pounds, 2.56 ounces; and the drum record 31 pounds, 4 ounces.]



1954 LARNED FISHING RODEO

The seventh annual Kid's Fishing Rodeo at Larned on August 28 was the best ever, according to Mr. Vincent G. Fleming of Larned. More kids caught more fish and had more fun getting practical experience in outdoor sportsmanship, Fleming said. There were 193 youthful anglers registered for the derby, and 153 fish were caught in the two and one-half hour fishing period.

Grand champion boy fisherman was Mike Brannan of Larned, who caught a crappie weighing one pound. Grand champion girl fisherman was Cathie Foster of Radium, who landed the biggest fish of the

day — a 12-inch channel cat. Each received a complete fishing outfit from Better Fishing, Inc.

Steve Hall, of Garfield, one of the reserve champions for the day, was also the youngest prize winner. Only three years old, Steve landed a crappie weighing 1 pound, 6 ounces, all by himself. His prize catch won him a new rod and reel.

The junior fishermen not only caught fish, but they consumed 288 bottles of pop. The annual Fishing Rodeo at Larned is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of that city.

—*Kansas Fish and Game,*
October, 1954

FOR LOVE OF PARKS Verne Hart, Manhattan

Age: 77

Education: McPherson High School, attended McPherson College

Years of Service: 31 years – July 1, 1958-Aug. 17, 1989

Original Hometown: McPherson, Kansas

Positions Held: Kanopolis State Park superintendent; Tuttle Creek State Park manager (managed both Kanopolis and Tuttle in 1963 and '64); chief of Park Operations, Maintenance, and Law Enforcement; acting director of the Park and Resources Authority; chief of state parks Law Enforcement; Parks Division operations administrator; acting park manager at Pomona State Park

Most Admired Employee: "I really looked up to Lynn Burris. Another was Gary Haller. Those two in particular. Gary had a great sense of humor, and Lynn was a guy who just said 'Get the job done.' If you made a mistake, he didn't chew you out. He would just say, 'What did we learn?'"

Toughest assignment: "When we had two rangerettes kidnapped and killed. That was tough, tough, tough. Drownings were always tough, too, but the worst of those was when the steamboat Whippoorwill at Pomona got hit by a tornado (June 17, 1978). It was a supper club and theater boat, and 15 people were killed. We had to carry those young people out and set up a temporary morgue in the shop until the ambulances could take them out."

Most Important Issue Facing KDWP in the 21st Century: "I suppose you guys are going to have a heck of a time with financing the parks. Things get more expensive, and that's going to be a big issue."

Hart started work with the Kansas Park and Resources Authority, before that agency and the Kansas Fish and Game Commission were combined in 1987 to form the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Although Hart modestly states that he started with the agency "by luck" as park superintendent at Kanopolis State Park, the first state park in Kansas, there's much more to the story. In his case, "luck" would be a euphemism for tenacity and hard work.

"I was working in the oilfield for state Representative John Casebeer. I was always extremely interested in Kanopolis, spending a lot of time up there hunting, fishing, and camping, and John talked to me about the Park and Resource Authority. He told me to get a hold of Al Grauerholz, who was the Park Authority chairman at the time and lived in Coffeyville. So I called him and then drove down to see him. He said, 'You drove all the way down here to talk about a job at Kanopolis,' and I said 'Yes, sir, I did, and I'm real interested in it.'"

"He took me under his wing and started inviting me to all the Park Authority meetings, and I went to all of them. This was before the agency had any money appropriated. I got to know all the commissioners. When it came time to hire someone, they were looking for a park superintendent for Kanopolis and a director for the agency. I told them I was only interested in being the park manager at Kanopolis."

Hart was very active in the McPherson County Fish and Game Association at the time, and he got a number of recommendations from them, as well.

"They interviewed about 100 people in Topeka, and Lynn Burris and I were the last two. Lynn got the director's job, and I got Kanopolis."

Like most long-time park or wildlife employees, Vern's career memories are overwhelmingly positive. "The dedication of Kanopolis State Park in 1958 is one of my fondest memories. Then I went to Tuttle, and in 1965, we got seven new parks overnight, so Lynn made me his

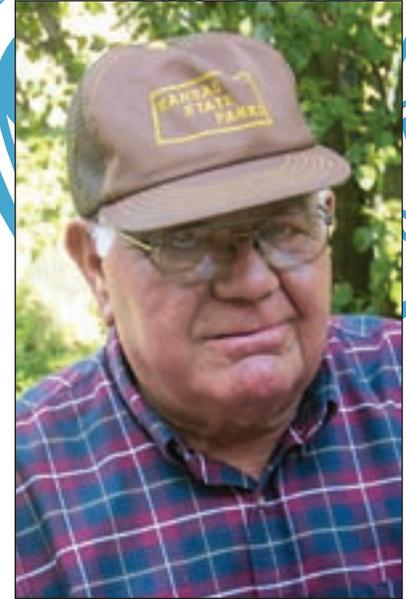
assistant in Topeka. I had over 30 years that I thoroughly enjoyed. I really, really, really enjoyed my job."

Although it's been 16 years since Hart retired, he still remembers folks who still work at KDWP with fondness. When asked to name a few, he hesitates for fear he'll leave some out, but when coaxed, he names a several.

"Mark Goldsberry at Meade, Rick Stevens at Scott, Steve Mathes at Prairie Dog, Rick Cleveland at Lovewell, my good friend at Cheney Jerry Schmidt, Bill Porter at Topeka, Randy Curtis at Elk City, Jerry Schecher at Clinton. I just always enjoyed these guys. And when I went to Pratt, Bill Hlavachick was one of the great friends I had. Hlavachick was always a true friend. But it was all the managers and maintenance people who really made my career."

When asked what advice he would give these men, as well as other park managers, his answer is as easy-going and upbeat as his personality: "Oh, just hang loose, and you'll be alright."

EDITOR'S NOTE: To celebrate the 100th anniversary of our agency, this and the following issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine's "Nature" page will be devoted to profiles of retired, long-time employees of the agency, folks who dedicated their lives to the nature this page usually features.



ON THIS DAY

Huge deer crop

It all started just a few years ago. Kansas, the last of the states to have a deer season, began to make preparations for the inevitable. In 1956, it was estimated that there were 3,000 deer in the Sunflower State, and by 1965, this small population had mushroomed to an incredible 30,000 plus animals. If we add to this the fawn crop of last spring, it can be conservatively stated that there were at least 35,000 deer in "Midway U.S.A." last fall and *more than 22,000* [emphasis original] in the management units open to firearms hunting.

—*Kansas Fish and Game, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1966*

Be happy

If you wish to be happy for an hour, get intoxicated.

If you wish to be happy for three days, get married.

If you wish to be happy for eight days, kill your pig and eat it.

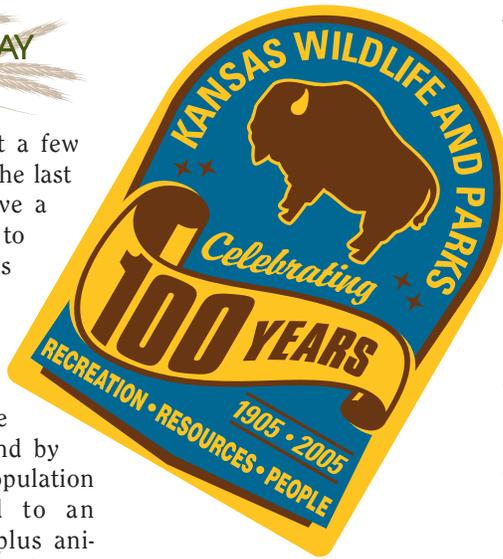
If you wish to be happy forever, learn to fish. (Chinese Proverb)

—*Kansas Fish and Game, October 1955*

Wag the dog

The ordinary dog wags his "tail," but the hound wags his "stern." An otter wags his "pole," a rabbit his "scut," a fox his "brush," and a deer his "single."

—*Kansas Fish and Game, October 1949*

**New reservoir**

The newest edition to the fast-expanding network of dams and reservoirs built in Kansas by the Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Corps of Engineers is the huge Cedar Bluff Dam, just recently completed on the Smoky Hill River, about 18 miles southwest of Ellis.

The 12,560-foot earth-filled dam will impound a reservoir covering 6,600 acres, measuring 9 miles long and nearly 5 miles in width. The length of shoreline at this time is 54 miles.

—*Kansas Fish and Game, October 1951*

Cameras for guns

The San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals offered to exchange cameras for all the small rifles and air guns that boys would bring, in an effort to increase appreciation of wildlife.

So successful was the venture that it is to be made a permanent part of the society's program.

—*Kansas Fish and Game, July 1939*

New duck stamp

The new "Duck Stamp" inaugurated in 1934 has become familiar to all migratory waterfowl hunters and to philatelists and conservationist throughout the country.

It costs one dollar, and migratory waterfowl hunters over 16 are required by law to carry the stamp. It does not take the place of a hunting license.

The money realized from duck stamps is used by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey to supplement other funds for the purchase and maintenance of waterfowl refuges throughout the country. Already in the current year, more than 900,000 stamps have been purchased by hunters, bird lovers, and philatelists.

—*Kansas Fish and Game, July 1939*

Year of the hunt

Some people will remember 1958 as the year of the Sputnik, another Berlin crisis, or the hula hoop. But to a large number of Kansans, 1958 stands as the year that hunters dream about.

Quail were present in almost unbelievable numbers. The pheasant season was an outstanding success, and the two-day prairie-chicken season fulfilled the fondest hopes of the chicken hunt enthusiast. Waterfowl hunting got off to a good start but tapered off as weather remained mild through the late fall, then ended with good hunting in December when cold weather brought in the big flights.

By the time the game bird seasons had closed, rabbit hunting came into its own. Large numbers of rabbits

awaited the winter hunter. Squirrels, too, were abundant during the September through December season.

—*Mary Anne Crabb, Kansas Fish and Game, January 1959*

Unprotected hawks

Most hawks are protected by law. However, the members of the accipiter family are not. The accipiters, or the "true hawks," are not protected due to the fact that they do considerably more damage than good. There are 17 species of birds that are commonly called hawks found in Kansas. Of the 17, three belong to the accipiter family: the goshawk, the Cooper's hawk, and the sharp-shinned hawk. The remaining 14 are all protected by law in Kansas.

—*Kansas Fish and Game, Summer 1964*

[Today, all raptors are protected by both state and federal law, and these three hawks — once often referred to as "chicken hawks" — are considered more beneficial than harmful.]

BLAIR NABS
NATIONAL HONORS

Staff photographer Mike Blair snagged two top honors at the annual Outdoor Writers of America in Madison, Wis. June 19. His essay "Mabel," published in the July/Aug. issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* (Page 25), won top honors in the Outdoor Related Essay contest.

In addition, Blair won first place in the Photo Contests, Color Fauna, for his picture entitled "Surprised Raccoon." —*Shoup*

TARANTULA!

If its big, hairy, and has eight legs and eight eyes, what would you call it? A tarantula, right? Would you be scared of it? There are more than 50 species of tarantulas native to the southwestern and central portions of the United States. Tarantulas are not found east of the Mississippi River or north of the Missouri River.

The tarantula that calls Kansas home is the Texas brown tarantula (*Aphonopelma hentzi*). Bodies of the females of this spider average 2 inches long while males average a little over 1 1/2 inches. The bodies and legs are dark brown. These tarantulas live in dry, rocky areas where they may inhabit natural cavities they find or burrows left behind by rodents.

Tarantulas produce silk and line their burrows with it, but they do not spin webs. Males may go out to hunt at night, but females prefer to wait in their burrows for prey to come by.



Favorite food of the tarantula are insects such as crickets, June beetles, ground beetles, grasshoppers, cicadas, and caterpillars.

Wandering tarantulas may be encountered at different times of the year. In late summer and fall (August through November), most of these wandering spiders are males looking for the burrow of a female.





Because it is big, most people automatically assume the tarantula is dangerous, but it's not. Modern television and movies have perpetuated this myth. "Fear Factor" contestants made to lie still as tarantulas crawl all over their bodies uses this myth to scare viewers. However, the bite of North American tarantulas is not considered dangerous, and contrary to popular belief, the bite is not deadly. Usually, the bite produces nothing more than mild to moderate pain and slight swelling. Most people liken the bite to that of a bee sting.

Tarantulas do, however, possess a different line of defense that can have a "bristling" effect. The hairs on the body, particularly the belly, of tarantulas

may break off very easily and penetrate into the skin of the attacker. These hairs are called "urticating bristles." You are more likely to get stuck by one of these, if you are handling a tarantula carelessly, than you are to be bitten.

How did the tarantula get such an undeserved reputation? The sinister reputation of tarantulas dates back at least as far as the 14th century, and the story goes something like this:

In medieval times, the bite of the European wolf spider (*Lycosa tarantula*), while not fatal, was believed to cause a serious condition called tarantism. Victims believed that only dancing to a special kind of music could cure the victim. The dancing, which came to be known as the tarantella, was very energetic and often lasted for three or four days. The fast-paced music associated with this dance has become one of the most recognizable folk tunes from Italy, often used in Italian restaurants and

pizzerias. It can be heard in *The Godfather* movie and the CBS sitcom "That's Life."

As people began to move about the world, the name "tarantula" was mistakenly given to large, hairy spiders seen in the New World by Italian sailors. The name stuck. What is even stranger is that the animal that bears the scientific generic name Tarantula is not even a spider. The true tarantula is a tailless whip scorpion that is only indirectly related to the spiders.

So the next time you turn over a rock and find one of these large, hairy spiders, don't run. Watch. Although it will likely be more afraid of you than you are of it, you never know; it may even dance for you.





Backlash

by Mike Miller

What Are Friends For?

Last August was unseasonably cool, and one fresh morning had Lennie thinking about deer stands. When he called, I figured I would hear the same pitch I hear every year; how he needed a south wind stand and wanted me to help him decide where to move one of his treestands. And like every year, I knew we'd end up leaving them all where they were. But Lennie surprised me. He was scouting a new area.

"I got permission from Old Man Myles to hunt the creek behind his cabin. There's some *yeeeuuge* monster bucks that run that creek bottom," Lennie started. "But I need some help scouting, and I'd appreciate your advice on stand placement."

I figured that meant Lennie wanted to put up a ladder stand he couldn't carry by himself. But I bit.

"Is that where that good bass pond is?" I fished. "We could take our poles and wet a line."

"That's where the bass pond is," Lennie sighed. "But Old Man Myles said he saves the fishin' for his grandkids. And he got kind of agitated when I mentioned that you might help me put up stands this weekend. I had to promise we wouldn't have fishing poles with us."

"Whatta ya mean he got agitated when you mentioned me. I don't even know Old Man Myles," I shot back with hurt feelings.

"He's just protective of his fishing pond — doesn't want a couple of anglers with our skills to educate his big bass. Com'on, go with me. I really need your expertise," Lennie begged.

Now I knew Lennie had some monstrous homemade ladder stand that weighed 200 pounds. And if my instincts were right, there was probably a quarter-mile of swamp to be crossed to get to the only trees tall and straight enough to put the stand in. But I had always wanted to see what kind of deer sign there was in that creek bottom, and I really wanted to see the legendary Myles bass pond, even if I didn't have a fishing pole in hand. I agreed to help.

When Lennie came by to pick me up, I glanced in his pickup bed, expecting to see a massive tree stand. There was just one little hang-on stand. I was still leery because I knew Lennie could have dropped the big stand off on the property earlier.

As he drove, Lennie relayed all he knew about the spot. As we got out of the pickup, Lennie threw the little hang-on stand over his shoulder and started for the trees.

"Where's that giant ladder stand?" I said, baffled.

"The what?" Lennie said with a blank look. "This is the stand I'm going to put up. You're acting strange."

As we reached the trees, Lennie volunteered to take the north edge and motioned me to take the south edge through the bottom.

"We'll split up, then compare notes at the other end," he said matter of factly.

It sounded good to me, since I was already looking at deer tracks. As I came to an open area about half-way through, I spotted Lennie outside the timber by a good margin. He saw me and waved. He was a long ways from any good stand trees, so I couldn't figure out what he was doing. But as I examined the deer trail that crossed in front of me, I understood. An acre of ground was covered with poison ivy, most of it knee high.

"Now I know why you wanted my help," I hollered.

"What?" Lennie cupped his ear like he couldn't hear what I said.

Lennie is as allergic to poison ivy as anyone I know. But he avoids it so well, I'm convinced he can smell it. So I knew he "forgot" to tell me that this bottom was full of ivy.

When we met up at the west end of the trees, I was giving him a squinty-eyed look.

"Got a bug in your eye?" he chuckled, knowing exactly what I meant.

Playing along, I said, "I found a great tree for a stand right in the middle of that low area."

Lennie wrinkled his brow and said, "I don't want to set up too close to the bedding area. I want a tree closer to the north edge of the tr . . ."

" . . . away from the poison ivy," I finished the sentence for him.

"Poison ivy?" he said with a sheepish grin.

"So, you were willing to sacrifice me for a big buck?"

"You're always bragging that poison ivy doesn't bother you," he countered. "And I couldn't tell where that one trail crossed the creek bottom. I needed you."

We found a good stand tree in an open area with no poison ivy, and Lennie left with dreams of a monster buck. However, Old Man Myles put about 100 cows and calves in the pasture right after our scouting trip, and they liked the area around Lennie's treestand, too. After one evening of watching, hearing and smelling cows and seeing no deer, he never hunted the stand again.

But it wasn't a total loss for me. Lennie was right, I'm not very allergic to poison ivy and I didn't get a rash. But I've still got plenty of mileage out of my selfless act of generosity, which is how I describe what I did for Lennie whenever I need a favor. I'm sure I'll get a few more out of it before Lennie runs out of guilt.

